

**Critical reflections for environmental decision-making:
Habermas, participation and rationality.**

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Abstract

This thesis aims to explore insights from Habermasian critical theory for environmental decision-making processes. Though traditionally such decision-making has relied upon scientific criteria, it is now widely recognised that the justification and legitimisation of environmental management requires the representation of public values. The thesis argues that market based approaches which claim to capture the full range of public values for the environment can be unsatisfactory, particularly in terms of utility maximisation as a sufficient model of rational action.

In this respect, the model of communicative action developed by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas is considered to provide a more adequate understanding of rationality. Despite the epistemological challenges of ‘speaking for nature’ within such a theoretical framework, it is argued that communicative action offers a promising means for engaging wider publics in environmental decision-making.

The thesis centres around two main premises. The first of these is that it is important to gain an epistemological understanding of the concept of nature within the historical complexity of the Enlightenment. The thesis aims to mediate a view of the natural world that is neither romantic nor positivist, but rather based in the validity claims and understandings of ordinary people. In this way, an ecological rationality may derive through the development of the communicative dimensions of social life.

Second it is argued that through examining the sociological problems of how to conceive rationality, action and society, communicative action provides a programme through which participatory processes may be both developed and assessed. The thesis examines the merits and shortcomings of a various applied Habermasian approaches to participatory processes for decision-making within the environmental and planning literature.

Finally, an empirical examination of two case studies will demonstrate the insights to be gained from critical theory. A tension is highlighted between institutional concerns for substantive outcomes and consensus, against more procedural benefits of engaging in the methods themselves. In conclusion it is argued that while such methods represent an advance upon solely economic means of valuing nature, evaluation is needed to assess how legitimate these forms are in practice. Critical theory, it is contended, provides such a perspective.

Key words: Habermas, rationality, nature, participatory processes.

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For dad

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'If a commitment is to be voluntarily entered into, then there must be sound reasons for it. Theories too can provide solid grounds. But reasons mediated by theory can only acquire will-forming force in political and moral-practical discourse. And since every commitment is concrete and specific, you cannot have a standard form of discourse, any discourse once and for all. In other words, not even a theory with practical intent can provide anything other than, in the optimum case, a set of plausible hypothesis. It will depend on continuities, not only in the system of knowledge itself, but also in the discursive will formation and in the self-reflection of those who orientate themselves in action. For that there can be no substitute'.

Jürgen Habermas - Autonomy and Solidarity, 1986.

Chapter 1.

Introductory thoughts:

Science, the environment and politics.

1.0. Introduction:

The environment has become increasingly political over the past few decades (see Grove-White 1999). Traditional institutional means of environmental decision-making have been found wanting in light of different values to the natural world. A major aspect of this has been the specific and privileged role of science as a form of knowledge within environmental debates. The public's trust in science as an arbiter of disinterested truth has waned (if it ever existed). Competing discourses of science are now often seen as tied to various institutional aims. Moreover, a deficit view of the public as a homogenous mass who would, given the appropriate information, be in full support of science is now discredited (see Irwin 1995).

Renn *et al.* (1995) have noted that thorough an emphasis on scientific analysis and judgements, traditional environmental decision-making strategies tend to neglect particular interests and other forms of understanding the natural world. Wynne (1996 p. 68) has developed the tensions within expert and lay understandings in some depth. In a broader discussion of the cultural dimensions of risk, he argues:

- scientific expert knowledge embodies assumptions and commitments of a human kind, about social relationships, behaviours and values
- it also embodies problematic 'structural' or epistemic commitments, for example about the proper extent of agency, control or prediction, or standardisation;
- it neglects and thus denigrates specialist lay knowledges
- at a secondary level it then defines lay resistances as based on ignorance or irrationality rather than on substantive if unarticulated objections to these inadequate constructions of lay social identity which the expert discourses unwittingly assume and impose;

- thus a further reinforcement takes place, of tacit public ambivalence about being dependent on social actors (experts) who engender such alienation and social control.

In short, Wynne (1996) highlights there are cultural, social, and epistemological factors governing what might be described as the communicative remoteness of an expert institutional community to broader understandings. This reinforces the mistrust of publics concerning the ability of such institutions to adequately deal with environmental problems. This not only forges problems for the legitimization of decision-making it furthermore creates pathological conditions, concerning the agency of actors to control their lives. Wynne thus identified within his critique ambivalent relations between public and institutions in terms of agency, identity and dependency.

Such a perspective resonates with the ideas of the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas. Habermas (1972, 1984, 1987a) believes pathology within modern society has been the reduction of moral and political questions to technical ones. For Habermas, there has been a one-sided approach to western modernisation, namely concerning the encroachment of instrumental reason in all forms of social life. This has caused a set of cultural and social pathologies, such as lack of control and alienation. This withdrawal from social life thus has implications for the legitimacy of democratic institutions. To alleviate these pathologies, greater control needs to be given back to people in terms of civic determination.

Such concerns thus highlight the need for new institutional procedures for decision-making. They highlight the primacy of communication. Only through understanding various claims upon the environment may social action be co-ordinated. Through a theory of society and human action, Habermas provides insight into how we might conceptualise new forms participatory practice. These procedural ideas have emancipatory intent. Through creating the spaces for uncoerced public will-formation, so it may be possible to provide a means through which people seek their autonomy in solidarity with others. Habermas's work also has substantive implications for

environmental decision-making. There is contained within the idea of the rationalisation of the lifeworld an epistemic commitment to 'better decisions'. In short, the more rationalised a claim, the more refined through argumentation, the more it has theoretical purchase. Indeed the substantive implications of environmental quality are all important. The ability of expert decision-makers to adequately protect the environment in the United Kingdom has been increasingly held up to scrutiny in the past few decades (see Adams 1996, 1997; Evans 1997; Poore 1987; Sheail 1988). Particularly, the failure of the site safeguard approach to conservation has been highlighted. Well-publicised incidents, such as the loss of Widdybank Fell (Adams 1996), have only underscored the inadequacy of conservation agencies to protect the natural environment through the discourse of science alone. In the past, through the neglect of local knowledge, policy outcomes have sometimes been partial, impractical and even unworkable (Renn *et al.* 1995). In light of these shortcomings, wider social values have attempted to be captured with institutions increasingly seeking to involve the public in environmental decision-making.

My own interest within the environment emerges from my background as a natural scientist. In particular, I have spent a number of years examining the problem of eutrophication of freshwaters. It should be noted, I am strongly of the belief that scientific knowledge has an important role to play within environmental management. It is thus not so much the 'truth' of various scientific claims that is of issue here, as the way in which the problems science focuses upon are shaped and framed (Grove-White 1999 p. 280). For instance, in my own scientific experience, whether or not to increase agricultural yields through the application of nitrates is not in itself a technical but rather a social question. It matters to us all, whether this be in terms of aesthetics, amenity values, increased want of low cost agricultural produce, or indeed a wish to protect the habitat from further anthropogenic degradation. In short, good science needs be culturally validated. It needs to be opened up to different ways of valuing and different intellectual perspectives. The use of scientific knowledge thus needs to be explored and negotiated (Wynne 1994 p. 188, 1996 pp. 73-78).

This thesis is concerned with how we might begin to think about some of these problems. It concerns why approaches to environmental valuation need to be aware of broader social processes, if management is to have greater success than the site safeguard approach developed in the United Kingdom through the 1970s and 1980s. In short, it aims to provide a coherent epistemological and sociological grounding to new forms of institutional approaches of the valuation of nature. Indeed it is only through understanding the social mediation of ecological questions, that we may gain a critical purchase on a society out of which an environmental problems emerge.

1.1. Institutional environmental valuation:

There have been a variety of new techniques and institutional approaches that have been developed to capture public values for environment decision-making, with various successes. These methodological approaches may be broadly categorised within two different models of rationality. First, rational self-interest models of decision-making, such as cost-benefit analysis, have been very influential policy tools over the past decade (see for an overview see Pearce *et al.* 1989, Pearce *et al.* 1990; Turner 1993). Second, communicative models of decision-making, such as deliberative and participatory processes, are becoming increasingly widespread as they are believed to overcome some of the limitations of top down consultative styles (for an overview see Burgess *et al.* 1988; New Economics Foundation 1998; Renn *et al.* 1995; Wilcox 1996). The schemes for common approaches are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Processes of valuing nature - A schema of common approaches (adapted from Burgess and Harrison 1998).

Values of nature determined by	Value expressed through	Nature best protected by
Science	Scientific criteria	Standards/regulation
Individuals	Rational self-interest	Economic efficiency (cost benefit analysis)
Society	Communicative rationality	Political processes

Environmental economics has been held up to a sustained critique over the past twenty years, from philosophers, sociologists, geographers, psychologists, political theorists and indeed from other economists (for instance see Adams 1991, 1995; Arrow *et al.* 1993; Burgess *et al.* 1995; Burgess *et al.* 1998a; Carson *et al.* 1992; Foster 1997; Funtowitz and Ravetz 1994; Green 1994; Gregory *et al.* 1993; Holland 1997; Jacobs 1997; Norton 1994; O'Neill 1993; Sagoff 1988, 1994). In Chapter 2, these arguments will be examined more closely.

The evaluation of deliberative and participatory techniques is, however, less advanced. This is in no doubt due to the larger number of different methods appearing under the leitmotif of participation, the difficulties involved in analysing procedural and substantive benefits, and the unreflexive approach of institutions initiating new deliberative techniques (see Wilson 1999).

In this respect, Habermas's work also provides a normative and analytical evaluative framework. On the one hand, his minimal discourse ethics provide procedural insight into the institutional conditions for fair collective decision-making. Through such a perspective, attention is drawn to how participants both get to participate in deliberative institutions and how discourses are regulated in such exchanges. On the other hand, his ideas upon rationality provide a means for assessing outcomes of decision-making. These rationalisation processes not only express closure (towards generalised interests), but also means through which processes of social reproduction may be examined. In this way, they provide a heuristic through which we may discover the relations between discourse and power.

1.2. Thesis content:

This study aims to provide a framework through which the politics of the natural world may be explored. It provides a theoretical critique of both economic and participatory institutional approaches for environmental valuation. It further develops an empirical

analysis through which two deliberative methods are explored. The thesis is structured as follows.

In the following chapter, the rational self-interest model of neo-classical economics will be examined as a basis for engaging in environmental valuation. In particular, some of the assumptions underpinning the contingent valuation methodology will be explored. The chapter explores the economic model through six main frameworks, namely: objectivity; the fairness of decision-making, the notion of cardinal value, utility maximisation and well-being, cognitive approaches to nature, and finally the marketplace as a valuation institution. Through considering the method through each of these heuristics, the chapter argues cost-benefit approaches are unable to satisfactorily mediate decision-making where there are different and conflicting ethical or political priorities. This is in the main part due to the constrained view of rationality underpinning such methods, compounded the reason blindness of the valuation procedure itself. As such, though the method has a role to play, other deliberative methodologies offer better political purchase to environmental decision-making.

In this way, Chapters 3 and 4 consider a theoretical grounding for a discursive, participatory approach to environmental decision-making, through the work of Jürgen Habermas. Habermas's model of communicative action is believed not only to inform possible models of participatory engagement in the public sphere but also furthermore provides a compelling model of action.

Habermas's work, however, has been criticised by green political theorists as not providing any moral foundation to protect the natural world. As such, in Chapter 3, Habermas's early work is explored and with it his relationship to the natural world traced. The epistemological distinction that he develops in *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1972) between the natural and social sciences are seen as pivotal to informing Habermas's relation to nature in this respect. It is argued that his early work is an attempt to get beyond the impasse of the early Frankfurt school thought. Through a critique of

positivism and epistemology Habermas illustrates the complexity of Enlightenment thought. His distinction between the natural and the social sciences endeavours to reconcile both a transcendental and naturalist approach to natural world. This move forges a particular epistemological distinction of nature that is crucial to debates upon concerning the use of excessive positivism on the one hand, and the romanticist and mythical claims of green-based political ideologies on the other.

In particular, naturalistic based ethics renounce theoretical reason and sever the links between normativity and language. Culturally, this has potentially disturbing ideological implications for Habermas. In this light, Habermas offers epistemological purchase to the concept of value. By developing humanist arguments, it is contended that all valuation is necessarily a human activity and as such criticisms of Habermas's anthropocentrism are not only misplaced they also obscure the capacity for political change in modern societies. In this light it is argued that Habermas's communicative programme offers a promising means of conceiving an invigorated democracy to examine the complex and multi-faceted environmental problems within a policy arena.

In Chapter 4, Habermas's programme of communicative action (1984, 1987) is explored in some depth. After tracing the shifts in his thought after *Knowledge and Human Interests*, his communicative programme is reviewed within three broad themes, namely:

- i) rationality and action,
- ii) moral and political life, and
- iii) society and the pathologies of modernity.

Through exploring the idea of communicative rationality, it is argued that actors are able to contribute to rational debate not only through instrumental rationality, but also through normative and subjective claims. Furthermore, through understanding these claims and challenging their legitimacy, participants within a decision-making process can discuss and come to rational conclusions upon environmental management decisions through making claims as to the validity of their argument in terms of the objective,

social and subjective world. It is argued that through the latter two discourses in particular, the social mediation of natural environmental values may best be captured.

Habermas discussion of moral consciousness is then explored. It is maintained that a decentred understanding of the world fosters consideration of the other, and hence may promote consideration of environmental themes. Moreover, Habermas's distinction between the good and the just highlights the prospect for the idea of consensus within participatory processes. Finally, the sociological context of his work is explored through his analysis of system and lifeworld. It is concluded that engagement in participatory processes can be seen to have procedural benefits in terms of the cultural reproduction of the lifeworld. In such a way, the emancipatory and critical value of his programme may be realised.

From this theoretical background, the thesis then takes an applied turn. Chapter 5 considers the role of critical theory as a research programme. After a discussion of the broader political context to the resurgence of participatory techniques, a variety of perspectives from the planning literature are explored. Here the work of Forester (1982, 1983a, 1983b, 1985, 1986) and Healey (1996, 1997, 1998) are believed to provide a geography of deliberative processes. Insight is given in terms of how knowledge production, discourse, identity and power are played out within a policy process.

The chapter concludes with some ideas for the evaluation of deliberative techniques. Here, both procedural and substantive frameworks are developed. Procedural evaluation explores the representation of participatory processes through ethical-normative arguments concerning fairness. These arguments are derived from the transcendental pragmatic justification of Habermas's ideal speech situation. Substantive evaluation explores rationalisation processes and hence epistemic commitments to 'better decisions'. Furthermore, it provides a theoretical horizon through which substantive themes emerging from discourse may be explored. Using insights from speech act theory

(Habermas 1984) and discourse analysis (Fairclough 1989, 1992), social and cultural reproduction within such processes can be examined.

Chapter 6 reviews the two case studies developed through the thesis in some depth. The first study, called *Land and Life*, worked with an organisation called the Norfolk Coast Project in developing a management plan for the North Norfolk Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). After gauging responses from an initial questionnaire survey, local residents were invited to attend one of five public meetings held along the Norfolk Coast throughout the summer of 1997. Here, through a series of focus group formats, participants explored a number of issues concerning the rural environment. These were broadly categorised under themes of local distinctiveness, social infrastructure, living communities and making decisions.

The second study involved a stakeholder approach to environment policy-making in the North Norfolk area. Here, working with the Environment Agency, a novel technique was developed to prioritise environmental options in Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs). This technique, called Stakeholder Decision Analysis (SDA) aimed to combine systematic multi-criteria analysis with insights from deliberative group processes (see Clark *et al.* 1998; Burgess 2000). Through a series of four workshops, stakeholders developed a series of environmental, social and economic criteria. Working collaboratively in small groups, each of these criteria was then used to appraise LEAP issues and hence produce a prioritised list as a plan of action.

The chapter provides a detailed description of both of the case studies, before reviewing a number of procedural concerns. Here analysis focuses upon how the methodological design of the process and the broader political context functionally acted to create spaces for the emergence of certain forms of claims making. A number of themes are explored in this context, namely: representation, power, translation, legitimacy and institutional culture. The tension between new normative democratic practice and exiting styles of

bureaucratic governance is discussed. Moreover, the analysis highlights the need for greater reflexivity in the subsequent presentation of policy documents.

Chapter 7 deals with a substantive evaluation of the case studies. Through an in-depth analysis of a series of transcripts within the case studies, the chapter explores the theoretical ideas developed throughout the thesis. In particular, the role of expertise, the idea of consensus in relation to understanding and identity, the institutional valuation of nature and the development of environmental values are all explored. Through an analysis of these substantive issues, a series of critical geographies emerge. These include the rationalisation of discourse in relation to better decision-making, the micro-politics of group process, the institutional spaces of emergence, the ontological role of nature and fundamental role of communication articulated within these geographies.

Finally, Chapter 8 explores insights developed through the thesis for environmental decision-making. First, the idea of an ecological rationality is explored in more depth. Second, the role of institutions in developing the space to mediate public environmental values is reviewed. Third, the importance of practice is highlighted through the grounded insights from the case studies. Finally, a number of ideas are developed from critical theory are used to assess prospects and problems for deliberative and inclusionary approaches to environmental decision-making.

1.3. Summary and research questions:

This thesis seeks to explore the idea of environmental decision-making through critical theoretical and empirical perspectives. These will focus on the idea that environment problems are both political and technical ones, and hence decision-making needs to be both democratically legitimate and effective. In exploring what this might mean in practice, a variety of claims will be explored upon ideas of rationality, nature and society. The critical theory approach developed also aims to provide a theoretical foundation for institutional and discursive designs. Furthermore, it will illuminate the possibilities and the shadows inherent within such approaches. In short, the aim of this thesis is to provide

a theoretically informed empirical approach to environmental valuation. With this in mind, developing insights from White (1988) and Gandy (1997b) I would like to draw four main research questions for such a programme:-

- i) what institutional forms can assist the transmission of moral, aesthetic as well as instrumental reason for environmental decision-making?
- ii) how do we begin to evaluate the success of such processes?
- iii) how can we reconcile expert cultures with the everyday communicative practice of citizens?
- iv) does the development of the communicative and democratic dimensions of social life lead to the development of an ecological rationality?

These ideas will now be explored in more depth.

Chapter 2.

Monetary valuation and the environment.

2.0. Introduction:

In this chapter, the role and the application of cost-benefit analysis will be explored with regard to environmental valuation. In particular, the contingent valuation methodology will be discussed in some depth. This hypothetical method for environmental valuation aims to give a total economic value to the natural world and promote the efficient allocation of natural resources in relation to other scarce goods. In the first part of the chapter a review of the history economic application of such methods within the environmental field is discussed. From this background, the methods assumptions are explored in some depth. It is argued that the assumptions of neo-classical environmental economics may be found wanting at a number of levels. First, the methods claim to objectivity and fairness cannot be met. Second, the method is essentially blind to the reasoning behind the valuation procedure. Third, utilitarianism does not provide an adequate model for rational action. Finally, at a level of social institutions, the market place is a problematic extension of instrumental rationality into the realm of politics. In conclusion, while such methods may have a role to play in localized environmental decision-making, the use of monetary valuation techniques is not a substitute for the political process. Indeed, in circumstances where differing notions of rights and responsibilities prevail, deliberative techniques provide a more adequate model for environmental valuation.

2.1.0. A brief history of environmental cost-benefit analysis

The use of economic techniques for environmental appraisal has a long past, particularly in the United States, where the Gallatin Report first suggested the measurements of cost and benefits in proposed water projects as long ago as 1808. However, interest in the method did not really grow until the flood control acts of the 1930s and in particular the publication of the 'Proposed Practices for Economic Analysis of River Basin Projects' (Hanley and Splash 1993).

From its inception, the notion of monetary valuation of public goods was seen to have shortcomings by the economists of the day. In particular, Samuelson (1954) believed that in the absence of market pricing mechanism reflecting individual preferences, the allocation of such goods will be inefficient.

To this end, Ciriacy-Wantrup (1952) proposed the use of survey methods for obtaining values towards public goods. Through the careful design of questionnaires he inquired as to whether '[i]ndividuals... may be asked how much money they are willing to pay for successive additional quantities of a collective extra market good' (quoted in Cummings *et al.* 1986).

By the 1960s specific methods were developed for the capture of environmental value. Notable was the travel-cost method by Clawson and Knetsch (1971) who examined the recreation benefit of environmental resources. In 1974, Rosen introduced the Hedonic Pricing method, and in that same year Randall had made alterations to the methods first advocated by Ciriacy-Wantrup, in an effort to elicit behavioural responses to public goods, in what has since become known as the contingent valuation method (for an overview see Cummings *et al.* 1986).

The first major use of such surrogate valuation procedures in the UK was undertaken by the Roskill Commission. The commission was concerned with the matter of where to site London's Third Airport in the late 1960s and early 1970s. To this avail, they employed cost-benefit techniques as an aid to decision-making, and finally settled on the site of Cublington in Buckinghamshire as a suitable location.

However, the scale and the scope of the project attracted a good deal of media interest, and controversy was soon to centre around the commission's actions. In particular, the sole use of money as a criteria for deciding such an ambitious planning issue was held up to parody (Adams 1971). Further, the costing mechanisms for parts of the valuation

procedure, such as the decision to value a Norman Church at Stanley at £50 000 (its commercial insurance value) angered many local residents and non-government organisations (NGOs). Detractors from the methods questioned the fairness and legitimacy of cost-benefit techniques as an aid to decision-making.

Further concerns were highlighted throughout that 1970s, when the Department of Transport (DoT) used a version of cost-benefit analysis known as COBA, to assess road projects and essentially to predict its road building programme. Friends of the Earth were particularly vocal in their criticism of this policy arguing that within the cost-benefit technique, practitioners had given undue weight to the small number of variables that were counted as benefits, such as the savings in driving time. Again, it was suggested that the valuation procedure muddled rather than clarified the debate over the potential impacts of the road building programme (Grove-White 1997).

Moreover, Adams (1995) notes that objectors to the use of COBA at road inquiries were barred from doing so under the premise that the cost-benefit mechanism was objective and hence was not the place for political comment. Such was the controversy of the debate that a separate Standing Committee on Trunk Road Assessment was set up to inquire into the political justification of the motorways programme.

Throughout this period economic methods were used by organisations as diverse as the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), who examined the cost effectiveness of their land drainage programmes, to even that of the National Radiological Protection Board who used the cost-benefit analysis as a means to assess the public's exposure to low level radiation. Unsurprising, due to the political subject matter, some of the uses of CBA at this time drew dissent. Essentially, critics argued that upon projects where many staunch and varied views were held difficult decisions were being glossed through preoccupation with methodology. This became particularly apparent in the land drainage case against MAF, who like the DoT insisted that their use of the method was apolitical; only being used to disinterestedly aggregate environmental preferences. In their defence,

they stated the real place for the debate of the wider issues concerning land drainage was in the House of Commons.

One should not dissociate the attack from the NGOs upon such methods from the wider political backdrop of the day. At the time, dissent was aimed particular at the COBA schemes of the Department of Transport, and the governments policy of predict and supply. In terms of the Realpolitik, there was much to be gained from highlighting the limitations of a method that in terms of practice, favoured the developers over environmental concerns.

However, such adversarial attitudes were to some extent appeased after Margaret Thatcher's speech to the Royal Society in 1988. Here 'green issues' were elevated as a central concern of within her government administration. As a result of this speech, Chris Patten, the then Secretary of State for the Environment, appointed Professor David Pearce, a leading advocate of the environmental cost-benefit approach, and key-player in the advocacy and practice of contingent valuation methods, as an advisor to the government on environmental policy and decision-making.

Such a manoeuvre was to champion the environmental cause to the very heart of the treasury, as now the figures could be balanced between the Department of the Environment (DoE) and other Departments. Thus environmental issues could gain the authority and respect that they deserved gleaned through the language of economics. In effect, this was a statement of the Conservative Party's commitment to the environment, as for the first time environmental issues could compete on a level pegging with those of other Departments.

Pearce's work became a cause célèbre for many of the environmental NGOs at the time. In particular, Pearce advocated the use of contingent valuation as a method to capture the full range of values for any environment in question, as opposed to a suit of other economic methods that capture some but not all the values for an environmental good.

Indeed, his prior work undertaken for the Department of the Environment was soon to be published in the path-breaking *Blueprint for a Green Economy* which was to be hailed by the Guardian as 'a political event of the first importance'. Indeed, even Friends of the Earth claimed that the book was 'a new agenda for environmental protection', a stance somewhat curious after their somewhat hostile response to environmental economics during the COBA programmes in the 1970s.

There was a wider acceptance of the contingent valuation approach within Government policy in 1990 when the DoE published the document *Policy Appraisal and the Environment* which noted that

'[a]ny form of quantification is likely to provide a better basis for decisions. Almost all appraisals will be built around estimates of quantities. Thus estimates of financial costs, both to government and to the financial sector, form a central plank of almost all policy appraisals' (para 2.8). 'It may be possible to go further and derive values for public preference for environmental goods. [Though] it may be considered immoral to place a value on such goods as clean air and water... a monetary standard is a convenient means of expressing the relative value which society places on different resources.' (para 4.14, 4.15).

Further political credence was given to the method as it meshed well with a good deal of the sustainable development literature prevalent at the time. Here, prudent economic and ecological natural resource management was advocated towards meeting the needs of today's society without compromising the needs of future generations. As such, policies needed to be seen to address what may be described as an inter-generation trade-off.

Ideas of a natural capital or a natural fixed stock of assets have been particularly mooted within such thinking. Sustainable development rhetoric represents an ideological shift in environmental policy thought where environmental protection and economic prosperity as seen as co-determinate. As such, economistic methodologies were of particular resonance to much of the political metaphor of the late 1980s and early 1990s. In particular economic models were advocated for conceptually accounting sustainability (see Pearce *et al.* 1990; Duchin and Lange 1994).

Such economic approaches to sustainable development were taken on board at the time by many of the conservation agencies in the UK. For example, the Nature Conservancy Council (now known as English Nature) gave the following consideration to the Pearce Report in their Annual statement:

"[it] requires more account to be given to the effect of man's activities on the environment, so as to avoid irreversible loss and a reduction of 'natural capital'... Where areas of general wildlife value may be destroyed or damaged by a development, the concept requires compensating provision to be made so that there is no net loss' (NCC 1990).

The political legitimacy for environmental cost benefit analysis, and in particular the contingent valuation method, was further promoted by policy makers in the USA with the emergence of the method as a legal framework for compensation. For example, the NOAA panel have considered the role of CVM as a method for defining compensation for large scale environmental disasters, such as the 1989 *Exxon-Valdez* oil tanker wreck in Alaska (see Carson *et al.* 1992; Arrow *et al.* 1993)

Throughout the 1990s, the approach has gained favour within many government agencies and larger NGOs, both within the UK and abroad. For example, CVM has been used as a method for capturing the values such diverse things as bathing water quality (Georgoiu *et al.* 1998), recreation and environmental preservation value (Bateman *et al.* 1992), wildlife resources (Wills *et al.* 1995; Klein and Bateman 1997), compensation from oil spills (Carson *et al.* 1992), coastal zone management (Turner *et al.* 1992; Penning-Rowsell *et al.* 1992), mining (Adams 1993), global warming (Peace *et al.* 1994), and even, and perhaps most ambitiously, the value of the entire world's ecosystems; valued at \$33 trillion (Costanza *et al.* 1997; see also Pearce 1998).

However, the method was to come under some intense scrutiny and attack from many academic commentators in the country. Some reminded us, quite critically, of the past failings of such a method when applied to policy appraisal (Adams 1991, 1995; Green 1992), others attacked the philosophical basis of the methods themselves (Funtowitz and

Ravetz 1994; Holland 1997; Norton 1994; O'Neill 1993; Sagoff 1988, 1994), some drew attentions to the shortcomings of the economic project as a political institution (Jacobs 1997; Foster 1997) while some criticised the method through drawing upon practical experiences to contingent valuation studies, with follow up interviews with participants to find out more about their valuation approach (Burgess *et al.* 1995, Burgess *et al.* 1998, Gregory *et al.* 1993).

Similar concerns were voiced by practitioners of the methods in the US. The NOAA commission were concerned with extreme responses to environment costing measures (see Arrow *et al.* 1993). Likewise in the UK, Tim O'Riordan, a member of Pearce's CSERGE group, was concerned with the legitimacy of the large monetary valuations given to the damage of environmental goods, forged in part through the emotional responses that people may give when high profile environments are at risk (see O'Riordan 1997).

As such, within many major environmental organisations, there is now a more cautious approach to the capturing costs and benefits, to include wider values than those which might be described as purely monetarist.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is critical of two broad strands of the CBA approach; these are the transparency and legitimacy of the decision-making process. This was particularly in light of the problems perceived in the use of the methods in the 1970s by the DoT and MAF. As such they suggest that if an appraisal needs be developed it should be undertaken by an outside agency with no vested interests in the outcome (Harley 1995).

Nonetheless, though rejecting that economic appraisal alone should determine environmental decision-making, or policy, they still recognise a role for CBA; but only as a tool for decision-making, rather than a substitute for the political process. As such, the RSPB recommend that appraisal through CBA should be done only where the science is

well understood, and the costs and benefits are clearly defined, and should include a subsequent stage that assesses intangibles that were not readily quantified monetarily. As such, the RSPB claim the methods are only of limited appeal for setting targets and objectives of environmental policy (Harley 1995).

The World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) again takes a pragmatic line concerning monetary valuation of the environment, believing that though CBA gives a weight to the environment that was not captured in prior economic appraisal, alone such weights have difficulty handling aspects of equity, irreversibility and the intrinsic value of nature (these are discussed in some detail later). Instead they believe that such a balance may be achieved through building an economic component into a multi-criteria analysis.

As such, the use of CBA within the policy framework is now shifting. In their *Environmental Strategy Directorate* (1997), the Environment Agency, the statutory Agency for Environmental Protection within England and Wales, note that they have 'a duty to account for wider costs and benefits' (para 2.2) further '[t]he public perception of the issues and the Agency's response should also be considered' (para 6.3 – my emphasis).

To this effect, within the Environment Agency novel mechanisms have been introduced for the economic appraisal of their Local Environment Agency Plans, which seek to capture not only economic concerns, but a variety of criteria that have been deemed to be valid by stakeholders in the process (Clark *et al.* 1998; Burgess *et al.* 2000). This technique, known as Stakeholder Decision Analysis, forms one of the case studies within the thesis, and is discussed in depth in chapters six and seven.

The history of economic methods for environmental appraisal has been one of mixed success. Many former protagonists of the method now believe that the process of negotiation of environmental values is perhaps not best served by the use of economic measures alone (O'Riordan 1997). David Pearce, perhaps the leading exponent of

contingent valuation methods in the UK, has seen the need for multiple approaches to accounting for environmental values (Pearce 1996).

It is perhaps prudent now to explore in some greater detail some of the difficulties that have been experienced with the methodology. There have been concerns not only from detractors of the method *per se*, but to from within the economic community itself.

2.2.0. Economic Valuation:

Neo-classical environmental economics is a wide discipline, with a number of methods employed to give some form of economic value to the natural world. These methods range from hedonic pricing, through the travel cost method, to utility function models, to hypothetical value mechanisms. It is not the purpose of this chapter to review each of those methods, but rather to tease out the underlying assumptions involved in such a valuation procedure (for an overview of such methods see DoE 1991; Harley 1995; Rudall Blanchard Associates 1997; Turner 1993; UEA 1994).

At a general level, monetary valuations belong to the economic technique of cost-benefit analysis. There are two broad camps to monetary valuations; surrogate indicators of market values (such as the travel cost method) and hypothetical valuations (such as the contingent valuation method).

Contingent valuation, however, is the only method that provides a total economic value for the environment, and a good deal of what follows will be based around a critique of that as a methodology. To varying degrees, some of the criticisms can be leveled at surrogate indicators of market values; particularly concerning notions of objectivism, fairness, and appropriate political institutions for decision-making.

However, as noted, without some method of capturing the total economic value of the environment it will be undervalued. As such, charges over parity and the integrity of

decisions can be leveled at any other methods if used in isolation for decision-making (for instance as with the COBA road programme).

2.2.1. The environmental problem - an economic perspective.

'Modern environmentalism has failed to address the underlying cause of environmental degradation which lie in the economic sphere' (Pearce 1998).

Environmental economists see the forces fundamentally driving environmental change to be ones of competition for the natural resource for economic gain. The major problem for the natural world however is that there is no real market for environmental goods and services. As such, there is an inefficient allocation of the resource; nature is protected either too little, or indeed too much, in relation to other scarce resources. As such, nature may be said to be suffering from a form of market failure (see Jacobs 1994). To address this balance, nature needs to be viewed as a set of goods and services to which an economic value may be ascribed. In a CVM procedure, this value is ascertained through the creation of a hypothetical market, where a total economic value may be calculated to provide a level of environmental protection representing the most efficient allocation of the resource to that society. Thus, in effect, the market equilibrium will be calculated.

The principle method for such valuation procedures has been the use of the contingent valuation methodology, and it is worthwhile exploring how such values are calculated for the purposes of this review (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. The Contingent Valuation Equation

Total economic value = user value (x) + options value (y) + existence value (z) (from Pearce *et al.* 1989).

(x): the user value of a resource can be defined as the benefits that may be derived from the actual use of an environment, such as the joy of a walk or the pleasure derived from fishing.

(y): Options values are expressed through options to use the environment, that is, the potential value of an environment, as opposed to their present use value. Options values again can be broken down into another simple equation:

Option value = value in potential use (by the individual) + value in potential use by future individuals (descendants and future generations) + value in use by others (vicarious value to the individual).

(z): The existence value, refers to the intrinsic worth of the environment. This value is thus the value of the environment in itself. It is therefore independent to the valuer.

The CV equation can thus be calculated. The project has a positive total economic value if the winners are able to compensate the losers and still leave a net benefit. This is known as the potential *Pareto* improvement.

In a contingent valuation exercise the valuer is asked to decide the worth of the environment in relation to other scarce goods. There are two main ways of surveying this information. They are as follows:

1. The willingness to pay method. This ascertains the value that an individual is willing to pay to preserve a natural resource.
2. The willingness to accept method. This surveys the value an individual is willing to accept in terms of the compensation for the loss of an environmental good.

There are a number assumption underpinning such an approach to the valuation of the natural world. For the rest of this chapter, six main premises of the neo-classical economics will be explored in some depth.

2.3.0. The foundations of neo-classical environmental economics:

(adapted from Adams 1995; Harvey 1996; Jacobs 1994, 1997; O'Neill 1993, 1997 and Sagoff 1994; Turner and Pearce 1990).

1. It is objective.

One of the main beliefs in environmental economics as a method is that it is objective; that is, it does not make judgements upon the preferences of a consumer, rather it merely aggregates them. As such, the discipline has been promoted as a positive one.

What this might mean is that in the cost-benefit scoresheet, the cost-benefit analyst merely aggregates preferences in a disinterested way, rather than in a selective way. There is no guiding principle for making choices, rather we are all free to choose and value in any way we please. The role for the cost-benefit analyst is to describes these choices rather than evaluate them.

2. It is fair.

Tied strongly to the above notion of objectivism, is that of fairness, and of being applicable to all. There are three broad notions to the term fairness that may be considered here. The first primarily concerns fairness to individuals alive today, and the welfare that a standard of money may provide to those individuals. The second represents fairness to the values of future generations, and as such these principles tie strongly to the concern of government policies advocating sustainable development. The third concerns fairness to the non-human community, and hence towards the capture of the rights and well-being of nature in-itself.

3. Cardinality.

The cost benefit analyst believes that when we view the natural world we are conceptually able to reduce all of our feelings and values towards a place into a single measure. For the economist, because of its ubiquity and familiarity in the social world, this measure is money. As such, the economist believes our values to be commensurable

to one another. Moreover, as these values can be reduced to a common measure they can be compared meaningfully and precisely.

4. Cognitive value.

The economist believes that rational economic activity may be explained in terms of people's individual cognitive psychology. This assumption relates to the notion that people respond to a commodity in a rational economic way by comparing it to other scarce goods.

In order for this to be achieved with natural resources, which is the commodity in question with regard to environmental economics, the environment must be broken down conceptually into separate goods and services. This is so that the 'consumption' of these goods and services may be compared to the consumption of other, perhaps more familiar, goods and services. It is only through knowledge of such characteristics of the natural world that the economist may be able to speak of a demand arising from it from individuals' preferences at different prices, for the efficient allocation of scarce resources.

Conceptually what this means is that we approach the environment in the same way that we may approach the goods in a supermarket. We have a scarce resource (our money). There are a number of different goods (the environment, a road or a development). We must face up to the choices involved in the selection of some goods over others (money spent is a cost). The price of such goods will effect their demand. The demand, and hence price, can be in some way ascertained to the utility that the consumption of that good will give to the individual.

5. Rational self-interest.

The economist will believe that in all actions people maximise their utility, through the consumption of goods, and this in turn leads to well-being. As such, this leads to the premise that our wants and well-being are the same thing. In utilitarian terms, this is normatively tied to the notion that actions that promote the greatest good for the greatest

number are the right actions. As such, through neo-classical economic method, an increase in welfare for society can now be measured through the aggregation of the utility individual preferences.

6. Market based institutions.

This last point concerns procedural standards for decision-making. As a value articulating institution, economics moves away from a method that aims to capture a view of a psychological commitment to how people behave in society, to a normative principle for that society to undertake public decisions. In other words, this is a claim that the method is a value articulation institution for society that best captures the complexities of the public good.

The preceding pages have summarised a few of the main points concerning the foundations for an economic orthodoxy. A belief economic methods of environmental valuation is a belief in each of these points as a guiding principle. This is not to say that the economist may truly believe that of these six states exists in reality, but rather they are useful abstractions to work towards concerning such themes as social action and rationality.

As such, the assumptions inform the economist worldview and provide a foundational matrix on which to build mechanisms for introducing wider values into an environmental decision-making process. Particularly the orthodoxy has laid the foundations for the most prominent and controversial of all of the valuation procedures; the contingent valuation method.

What will now follow is a consideration of each of these points. The critique aims to be constructive through gauging the usefulness of such economic assumptions when considering how people come to value the natural world. Put simply, one might ask how meaningful is this as a valuation procedure. Through such inquiry, it may be able to better

judge the appropriate place and scope for economic valuations in environmental decision-making and where other methods for valuation may be more suited.

2.4.0. Exploring the promise of neo-classical economics:

2.4.1. Objectivity

The notion that economic methods are objective falls in two parts. First concerns that there is a form of objectivity to the values given by the participants. The second concerns the objectivity of the cost-benefit method for aggregating values.

a) Values of the participants are objective.

In order to examine the first of these claims, it is useful to capture what such a notion of objectivity might mean. For some economic practitioners, our values to the natural world are objective because they are pre-existing, and implicit of actual worth, rather than being actively influenced at the moment of valuation. Hence these values escape a local contingency. This notion is important as it implies that there is a correct market value to the environment with economic techniques the best means to describe this value.

Problems regarding this assumption have been noted within the economic literature over what is called vehicle bias. For example, Bishop and Herberlein (1979) and Coursey *et al.* (1983) have demonstrated that where real and hypothetical payments were involved, values substantively differed for the same commodity in question. Hence the figure produced would seem in some way to be dependent upon the vehicle for payment; whereas hypothetically they should be identical.

However, some authors (notably Mitchell and Carson 1989) have taken issue with the analysis of such results, claiming that the differences between actual and hypothetical payments are purely inferential. As such, Mitchell and Carson believe that well structured questionnaires that create life-like markets will lead to accurate valuation responses from the participants.

Further research has explored participants' understanding of the contingent valuation method, through post-CV discussion of the valuation procedure. There have been a variety of conflicting evidence arising from such research. On the one hand Gregory *et al.* (1993) and Hutchinson (1995) claim that individuals do not have pre-existing value for exotic environmental goods. Similarly Burgess *et al.* (1998) argue that the market context is set discursively and is open to interpretation; as such information given to respondents may be actively helping to form preferences, rather than inform existing preferences. On the other hand, Brouwer and co-workers (1999) suggest that the majority of respondents to a CV survey did not have substantial problems either with the overall approach, or that in general values were not overtly constructed during valuation procedure (pp. 336-338).

At best, there can be said to be some uncertainty as to the role of cost-benefit analysis in this respect. What all the work illustrates is that there is a need to flesh out the valuation procedure through deliberative approaches. Such approaches clarify the valuation process in the mind of the participants, and furthermore add interpretive insight for the economist in their analysis of the attitudes and preferences constructed during the decision-making process.

b) The method for aggregating values is objective.

The second part of the objective argument is that cost-benefit technique may aggregate preferences without any normative dimension. The basic implication is that the method is purely one of mathematics, and any aggregation is done in a disinterested sense; the method is not trying to steer our preferences to a certain outcome and is therefore fair. The valuation institution is therefore theory neutral. This has proved a powerful argument for the political legitimacy of cost-benefit analysis.

However, there are problems in this assertion. By its very nature the contingent valuation exercise forces participants into a consumer approach where private income is exchanged for personal benefit (Jacobs 1997). Both this consumer approach, and the notion of

economic efficiency as a means of judging the approach, must be treated as a preference or a value judgement of the economist that are being imposed on the participants

Such a claim may be borne out through the examination of some of the responses to contingent valuation exercises. Forms of protest bids, where people refuse to take part in the survey, are a good example of this. There is some evidence to assume that such behaviour is because such participants were displeased with such a method for making choices. Research by Blamey (1994) has shown that in a CV exercise over 20% of participants did not like the CV question. Reasons for this included in the main part the notion of making trade offs for environmental goods, and further the fact that environmental protection 'should not cost money in the way specified' (quoted in Jacobs 1997). Other research has suggested that people feel that they have a fundamental right to environmental goods and services (see C3ED 1996).

Further work by Burgess *et al.* (1995) and Clarke *et al.* (2000) explores the motivations underpinning willingness to pay figures. Through the medium of focus and in depth discussion groups they flesh out the valuation procedure. Again, their work illustrates how economists may force people into approaching nature in a consumer approach that they are perhaps unhappy with. For example, participants have stated that:

'You can't put a price on the environment. You can't put a price on what you are going to leave for your children's children.... It is a heritage' 'It is not ours to sell' (Burgess *et al.* 1995). 'I struggled with this money business' 'I think that you can put a value on nature, but not in monetary terms. A value is something we teach our children' (Clark *et al.* 2000).

As such, in some cases, the medium of money would not seem to be an appropriate language to capture environmental values. Thus with regard to the first claim of the economic orthodoxy, it would appear that rather than being objective (a claim that no method could meet), cost benefit analysis is just good at disguising its subjectivity.

2.4.2. *Fairness.*

As mentioned earlier, there are three broad strands to a concept of fairness within the cost-benefit mechanism. These are:

- a) it is fair to individuals alive today
- b) it is fair to future generations
- c) it is fair to non-humans

Each will now be explored.

- a) It is fair to individuals alive today

The idea that the method is fair for all of the individuals in society today rests upon the notion that each individual can have a stake to the decision-making process, and that the economic calculus will articulate that stake into an action for society.

Aside from problems of representation, and the epistemological detachment of claims to universability within the method forged through subjected centred reason¹, this premise may also be faulted as it assumes that all individuals involved in the decision-making process start under conditions of equity. Obviously this is not the case; there are for example pronounced inequalities in the distribution of wealth in our society. As such, the notion of a monetary consideration for the valuation of environmental goods will further compound the situation, exactly because an individuals willingness to pay is fundamentally related to income. The poor are hence given an unequal bargaining power within the economic calculus.

To overcome this, it could be argued that within such a calculus one could weight the preferences of poor differently to those of the rich. However, if we do this the decision criteria of such judgements are normative, rather than ones based on preferences. One

¹ This is explored in more depth later in the chapter. It is also explored in depth in a later discussion of Habermas (chapter 4).

either makes the value judgement that one pound gives the same amount of welfare to a poor person as it would a rich, and the inequality of bargaining power is of no consequence to our judging of environmental valuation. Or one weights claims according to individuals income. However, if this latter option is taken, we are no longer concerned with preferences for the environment *per se*, but rather with the preferences of the decision maker, and this is somewhat at odds with the economic theory underpinning the calculus (see Jacobs 1991).

A further problem to this approach is that it fundamentally ignores the fact social and environmental quality often goes hand in hand. The distributions of environmental externalities, for example pollution, are not equitable. The old adage that pollution is truly global, in that it effects all no matter of what class, or race, is somewhat of a misnomer. The more affluent members of society are able to move away from areas of lower environmental quality.

Furthermore, the calculus has created an economic incentive for distributional costs of environmental damage to fall on the poorer members of that society, in terms of the optimal allocation of resources reflected through a willingness to pay. Put simply, the less well off damage more cheaply (see C3ED 1996).

For instance, the economic provision of fairness is met through the notion of potential *Pareto* improvement. Here, the theory holds that as long as there is a total positive sum increase in welfare, defined in monetary criteria, the decision is equitable. In other words, as long as the winners can compensate the losers out of their winnings, the decision should go ahead. However, potential *Pareto* improvements are only theoretical and never have to be realised.

It is thus a dubious notion of fairness to inform someone that in theory they could have been compensated for a form of environmental suffering, say having a chemical waste plant built near them, when this compensation never materialises. Further, to explain to

them that the decision to place the plant there in the first place was optimal because of the very fact that they were poor is likely to add insult to injury.

Indeed, perhaps some of the most inappropriate uses of purely focusing on economic rationality have been tied to the notion of a perverse incentive structure to place the poor near areas of poor environmental quality.

Such issues were raised to the fore in 1992 when *The Economist* leaked a World Bank internal memorandum from Lawrence Summers, an economic practitioner of some considerable reputation, who advocated the movement of dirty industries to 'less developed countries' because

'[t]he measurement of the costs of health impairing pollution depends on the forgone earnings from increased morbidity and mortality.... I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage countries is impeccable and we should face up to that... The demand for a clean environment for aesthetic and health reasons is likely to have a very high income elasticity. The concern over an agent that causes a one in a million change in the odds of prostate cancer is obviously going to be much higher in a country where people survive to get prostate cancer than in a country where the under-5 mortality rate is 200 per thousand' (Quoted in Harvey 1996).

Though one can not perhaps discredit the methods in terms of the abstract world of numbers, in terms of practice it has been criticised as toxic colonialism.

b) It is fair to future generations

Problems also present themselves when attempting to address wider themes of equity concerning future generations. These values are specifically addressed within the contingent valuation method.

The rights of future generations to enjoy environmental quality, which as previously mentioned is a central concern of sustainable development, is covered by the options value of the CVM calculus. One of the fundamental problems of this approach is self evident; in the plain fact that future generations are not present in current markets and exercise no rights over them (Jacobs 1991).

This difficulty is not overcome through the options value in the economic calculus because, even though it lends weight to the value of future generations, it is not *ergo* the values and interests that these generations may have. Furthermore, the monologic way in which the individual calculates values obscures the intersubjective co-ordination of values which may be used to inform the valuation of future generations (problems of paternalism aside - see Krebs 1995).

There is a second problem for the cost-benefit analysis procedure with regard future generations due to the utilitarian underpinnings of the methods. This makes explicit notion that the consumption of goods is preferred in the present than in the future. This may be posed as if I asked you to give me a pound now, and in return I would give you a pound back in a years time, there is no utility incentive for you to do so. Hence the consumption of a pound today is preferred to that in the future.

This loss in utility over time is expressed as a discount function by the economist. This thus creates problems for future generations, as the discount function discriminates against them. This has been attempted to be dealt with by economists suggesting that current generations may have to bear a higher burden of the costs today in order to keep within the sustainability notion of a constant fixed stock of natural assets (see Turner and Pearce 1990). As such goals within utilitarianism now reflect an inter-generational distribution of benefits and costs rather than the notion of utility maximisation. This stance thus once again becomes normative rather than a means to aggregate preferences.

c) It is fair to non-humans

The final argument of fairness concerns the rights for nature, and particularly notions of the existence value of the environment, which is supposed to encapsulate the value, in monetary terms, of the environment independent of the valuer. Fundamental to this are the idea of an intrinsic value to nature and with this an extension of the moral community to include plants, animals, and even the cosmos (see Naess 1989; Elliot 1996, Mathews

1998). There are two basic arguments concerning this; the first believes that nature has a non-instrumental value and hence is of direct moral concern, and the second believes nature is only of instrumental concern to humans.

The first of these arguments are illustrated well by the philosophy of Deep Ecology. This essentially relational philosophy suggests that the essence of the ourselves is related to our environment. For example, if a human lived in a vacuum they would no longer exhibit characteristics that make us truly human. As such, environments make us what we are. However, this argument is not just anthropocentric, as the same can be said of a mouse. All organisms presuppose milieu, and like humanness, the essence of mouseness is relational to environment (see Naess 1989). We are all hence defined through our environment, and our moral norms arise relationally to the larger biotic/cosmic community of which we are a part. As such morality cannot be detracted from any specific part of it.

The second of these arguments is that nature is of instrumental value to humans only, and hence not of direct moral concern. However, within this argument is the notion that nature has a form of rights as expressed by the moral valuer. As such, as long as there are moral beings capable of gaining a form of value from, say, viewing a beautiful landscape, then that landscape should be protected. Such rights can encompass a broad spectrum of values, for example an ecologist may express scientific values for a bog, despite of it perhaps having more limited aesthetic appreciation.

The notion of the communicative impossibility between humans and the natural world is explored in some depth later (section 3.3.1.), where it is argued that the best that can be hoped for through any method is perhaps a form of rights expressed through the valuer for the silent others. With regard to the human world, we may articulate moral concerns due to the epistemological coherence of a morality tied to language. This is not the case for the animal world, where a subjective-expressive form of value is the most that can be hoped for from a transcendental framework (see Habermas 1982, 1987a; Nagel 1974).

Even though CBA may accommodate an instrumental relationship to nature, the fundamental problem for the method is that the decision-making process remains opaque. There is no means of challenging the validity of claims made in relation to the natural world. For instance, if someone provides a low economic value for the environment on the cost-benefit scoresheet (as such environment is less protected relative to other goods) they may do so for a number of reasons. Perhaps they feel they have a right to consume environmental resources. Perhaps they feel that a Promethean relationship to nature promotes economic growth, and through this society may be able to innovate and technologically develop their way out of an environmental crisis. Perhaps they wish to free-ride on other decisions.

What is important here is not that they hold such views, but rather that they should be prepared to defend such values to others. These values need to be linguistically mediated and intersubjectively understood. In economics we are blind to the reasons behind these values: all that we are presented with is a number.

2.4.3. Cardinality.

In order for economic valuation to work our values must be able to be meaningfully compared by a single measure or rank. In the economist case, this ranking value is money. This is not to say that the money value is implicit to the actual worth of an environment, but rather that it indicates environmental preferences. Money is a good measuring rod for these preferences because of its general acceptance and familiarity in the world as a comparative commodity.

O'Neill (1993, 1997) has produced a conceptual framework for the consideration of this reductive ordering of values. He argues that for objects to be ranked together, one can believe that objects are either strongly or weakly commensurable. Strong commensurability (or cardinality) is the economist standpoint, as it believes that there is a supervalue through which all other values can be compared (i.e. money). Weak

commensurability (or ordinality), allows a kind of conceptual ranking, but not a single term in which things may be ordered by.

These concerns may be best described through the use of an illustration. Here I will imagine my own valuation process if asked to participate in a CVM study on a place on the South Devon coast called Sharkham Point. Now there are many values that think about when I consider this area. The first concerns that it is a lived landscape, and that I spent a good part of my childhood exploring it. In later life it has been a place of happiness, such as when I proposed marriage, and a place of sadness, such as where I went for solace after the death of my father. As such this place has played a strong ontological role in my life. A second form of value to the area is one that is more scientific. I have a background in the field of ecology, and can appreciate the area for its rare birdlife such as the cirr bunting, the characteristic botany such as goldielocks aster, and the dynamic geology of mudstone slipping slowly into the sea. Thus irrespective of perhaps more aesthetic forms of value, I regard this place to have special meaning due to an appreciation of its ecological and geographical characteristics. A third element however does indeed include an aesthetic element. At the top of the Point there is a superb view out over the cliffs and across to Mansands. Many times I have stood there and watched the dawn rise across the bay, fresh and rosy-fingered. Such contemplation leads me to a fourth form of value and that is reflections on the self. Finally, because of these different forms of value, I would argue that the area should not be destroyed or developed. The environment should have a form of rights because of these different value relations it evokes within me.

Now I use this as an example precisely because it is emotive and real. When considering an environmental option, these are some of the many feelings and values that people may bring to a decision-making process. When thinking of the area, and then confronted by the question, 'how much am I willing to pay for its conservation?', I do indeed have to try and account these values in some way. The problem is that each of these values evokes a different discourse: aesthetic, scientific, subjective, rights based or indeed monetary.

These discourses do not properly have comparative term in which they can be grounded. To attempt to do so will obscure the value dilemma I am facing and will lack meaning.

An economist would argue that we have to make choices in the real world, without this it is impossible to choose between one value and another. However, the above objection does not mean that I cannot choose things. Rather it means that such values need to be contextualised. Moreover, this context will give me the judgement to choose between certain states of affairs without having to say that I value them more highly. Our choices thus are weakly commensurate, and they combine the plurality of values in different ways. This may be more simply put as it is the reasons for our judgements that count, rather than a cardinal preference. We use such judgement throughout our lives. Everyday we are used to making choices that really have no comparative grounding.

For a simple example, I may choose to spend £1 on a bar of chocolate, or I may give it to a charitable cause such as homelessness. Now, in the former example, this does not mean that I value chocolate more than I do people. In the latter example it does not mean that I should be paid a pound to accept that person homeless. To make such a comparison does not mean anything. Rather it is that different circumstances will bring themselves to bear on my choice. The best that we can hope for in such circumstances is to explicate such reasons and understand them each in their own terms.

2.4.4. Cognitive value.

In this section, the distinctiveness of ecology will be reviewed in relation to the method. As mentioned earlier, in order for the 'goods and services' of the environment to be compared to other scarce goods, nature has to be broken down into its essential parts. The consequence of perceiving nature as goods and services is that the environment can be consumed in the same way that other goods are able to be consumed; the basic tenet of thought is that decisions over the valuation of a wetland or the value of a species can be cognitively approached in the same way as valuation for a loaf of bread. It is only through knowledge of such characteristics of the natural world that the economist may be

able to speak of a demand arising to it from individuals preferences at different prices, for the efficient allocation of scarce resources.

To examine such a claim it is first prudent to consider the notion of ecosystem. There has been a shift in thinking within the ecological sciences over the past few decades, aiming to appreciate that the complexity of natural environments is best understood through a whole systems approach, rather than on a reductive approach. This so called ecosystem concept treats the natural world as having a community structure, with each part essential to the operation of the community as a whole.

This thinking is somewhat dissonant to the method of contingent valuation. One of the fundamental problems with the economic approach is that the spatial scales of definition commanded by the consumer are likely to be arbitrary and demarked to an aesthetic nature, rather than demarked by community structure (Vatn and Bromley 1994).

Ecosystems are operationally related to each other. It is not possible to separate them out into essential goods and services. What conceptual approach to an ecosystem is likely to match a commodity that can be encompassed by participant in the valuation process? Indeed, it is not understood whether peoples valuation procedures are specific to the environmental good in question, or instead a general valuation towards the principle of nature conservation (Green 1992; Garrod and Willis 1990).

Furthermore, the public and private good distinction is important with regard to the natural world. If I consume a loaf of bread, the consequences of my choice fall primarily on me because of the private nature of the good. If I consume a wetland, the consequences of my choice fall on everyone, because it is a public good. Would I therefore, indeed should I therefore, approach the wetland as a private good?

This may be alternatively phrased as, should we approach nature with the question 'what is it worth to me' or the question 'what is best for society to do?' (see Jacobs 1997). The cost-benefit analysis advocates the consumer approach. Jacobs advocates the latter.

There is likely a more fluid relationship between these two extremes. What is more important is providing a mechanism wherein such values can be expressed and redeemed in their own right. We are both consumer and citizen. But more than this we are people. As Clark (1995) reminds us, 'when confronted with environmental choices people will draw on far richer arrays'.

2.4.5. Rational Self-interest.

The utilitarian tradition of neo-classical economics suggests the greatest happiness for the greatest number should be the guiding principle for conduct. Within economic terms this notion may be captured through utility maximisation of an individual's actions. Utility in this sense may be viewed as people actions being instrumental (i.e. profitable or useful).

A problem with this notion is that it does not allow for altruism within a strict definition of utilitarianism. As such, in terms of economic rationality, it is hard to account for why anyone would act selflessly, there being no direct gain in utility for his or her actions. As such, utilitarianism has come under criticism, as to solely equate the actions of people in terms of their individual profit perhaps casts a rather impoverished view of humanity.

Economists have recognised this, and have expanded the conception of utilitarianism to cope with such problems, to include wider conceptions of morality and benevolence; hence moving from a preference based orthodoxy to a principles based orthodoxy (see Pearce and Turner 1990 - for distinctions of such political orthodoxy see Sagoff 1998). Both will now be explored in more depth.

First, in the preference based conception of utilitarianism, the economist believes that our choices reveal our preferences, or more specifically our choices made in the cost-benefit survey (e.g. our willingness to pay) represents our preferences for environmental quality.

Sagoff (1994) has problematised this claim in terms of the narrow conception of preference that may be inferred through a superficial examination of choice. Sagoff

illustrates this point through considering the example of a woman attending church early on a Sunday morning. He suggests that an economist would conclude that the choice to attend the sermon demonstrates that she has a preference for being in church than spending an extra hour in bed.

But can we really infer this; it may only be a circumstantial view. As such, perhaps she is in church to socialise and see her friends. Perhaps she is there to please her husband who is a regular churchgoer. Perhaps she is there to set an example to her children. Perhaps she is there to show off a new hat. Sagoff even suggests that for all the economist knows, she might even go to the church to fall asleep.

The point Sagoff makes is that if we knew the woman, or talked to her to find out a bit about her character, perhaps we could estimate more reliably what her choices actually meant. As passive observers to the choice however, we are blind to the reason behind it. As such, because the nature of the cost benefit analysis, the economist never gets to the heart of actual preferences, and more importantly the reason behind those preferences. They are merely inferring from circumstance.

The work of Burgess *et al.* 1995 demonstrates this well. Their work has explored the motivations behind the valuation procedure of participants involved in a contingent valuation of the Pevensey levels Wildlife Enhancement Scheme, and a section of the transcript follows. The original contingent valuation was undertaken by Wills *et al.* 1995.

Sally: But I will be quite honest, when I was asked that question, because of my financial situation my husband and myself are in my answer was..... I could not afford to give anything extra at the moment because we are stretched to our limits. Because of losing jobs and that sort of thing. So then I missed the bidding which I was quite pleased about.

Susan: But the trouble with that could be is that it could be misinterpreted couldn't it?

Sally: Absolutely. Absolutely. That's right.

Susan: As if you don't want it, you don't care....

The above quote demonstrates how simple it is for such misinterpretations to occur. It illustrates how the notion of choice (not providing a WTP figure) may be misconstrued as preference (indifference to environmental quality). Rather the interpretation should be read as choice forged through financial hardship, and the preference of caring but feeling unable to attach such values to the vehicle of money. Preferences are complicated. The economists view of rationality is too constrained do any real justice to the notion of wants in society.

A second problem for this claim of the economic orthodoxy is again tied to a narrow conception of utilitarianism, and concerns the notion that the well being of society will be increased through the aggregation of its members preferences. From this we may infer that preferences and well-being are interchangeable. However, a problem with this approach can be examined through the notion that preferences and good judgement are not necessarily the same thing.

For example, I may have had a penchant for rare hamburgers throughout the 1980s, though with hindsight eating numerous portions of undercooked beef was perhaps misjudged. The competence of the actor is thus related to well-being, whereas preference is less so. In terms of the above example, a competent actor would have perhaps made a different choice in light of some knowledge of the risks of BSE.

A corollary to this point can then be posed as are the preferences that individuals have for the environment likely to increase their well-being? This notion is particularly cogent when considering the complexities of environmental systems, and asking people to make a valuation judgement upon them. A good example of this can be drawn from the popular view of wetlands, which have traditionally be seen as wastelands and drained, but now are believed to be of specific value because of a variety of biological functions that they perform, such as nutrient stripping. How in terms of aesthetics are people able to appreciate the values of wetland functions and services?

Perhaps it could be argued that one could increase the soundness of the choice through education. The problem with this approach, with regard to the economic orthodoxy, is that the notions for preferences then vanish as we move towards notions of objective truth. More tellingly, methodologically cost-benefit analysis does not allow a forum where ideas can be refined through debate, and its emphasis on the individual deliberation alone means that the reasons behind such preferences remain in the mind of the valuer, opaque to the decision-making process. Indeed it is in light of such criticisms that CVM approaches are now often fleshed through with deliberative methods (see for instance Brouwer 1999).

So far we have seen that choice may not be a reliable indicator of preference, and even if it is such presence may not be a reliable indicator of well-being. This brings us to the third point, and an attempt to deal with this in a larger conception of utilitarianism. Here a sophisticated notion of wants and well being is put forward to the effect that the satisfaction of wants may provide an indicator of well being though that may be characterised in different terms than the choice itself.

This notion is perhaps best illustrated through a critique of altruism in relation to well-being. The economist would argue that a soldier, who dies a death in battle, does so in the belief that the utility satisfaction gained from the moral imperative of fighting in what he believed outweighs the utility of life itself. This is hence a non-altruistic act.

This enlarged utilitarian notion of the moral imperative, or the warm glow of benevolence of undertaking actions that are right, means that the pleasure or utility of actions outweigh a narrow conception of the costs.

These moral imperatives cover every aspect of selflessness. As such, they range from doing a friend a favour, to undertaking charity work, to the care for future generations, or the belief in environmental egalitarianism. The point is that such decisions are made in terms of a utility trade off, and result in a positive sum of utility to the individual no matter how broadly defined (see O'Neill 1993).

However, if this is the case argued by the economist, the conception of well being becomes so enlarged that the loss of information in the subsequent reduction to a single number is meaningless.

As Sagoff (1994) rightly observes:

‘if economists expand the utility function to comprise every preference - including political convictions, and ideological positions, then they reduce the relationship between preference and utility to a specious, empty and trivial identity, incapable of explaining why public policy should respond to preferences priced at the margin rather than to views and opinions judged on their merits’.

The major shortcoming of the method is that is opaque to the reasons that reveal such preference and choices.

2.4.6. Market based institutions.

With the shortcomings associated with science based approaches outlined in chapter one, new models for environmental decision-making institutions are needed to capture some idea of the public good. The instrumental rationality of the marketplace has been advocated by some economists as a model for institutional valuation. The use of cost-benefit analysis in this sense moves beyond the notion of a method to disinterestedly aggregate preferences, but rather becomes a normative democratic principle.

A problem within this approach is revealed through the work of the philosopher Jürgen Habermas, whose ideas are explored in some depth over the next two chapters.

Habermas believes that within modern life, politics has been treated as another sphere for control through instrumental rationality. Important political decisions are increasingly posed in terms of instrumental efficiency, and as such best examined through expert discourse and remedied through technical scientific control. In other words political questions are treated essentially as technical ones. The use of technical economic methods thus prioritises certain types of understandings (specifically technical ones) over more discursive and communicative lay understandings. Reducing public valuation of the

environment to a technical discourse removes it from other forms of understanding (such as subjective and norm-guided).

This does not just mean that the environment is undervalued. Habermas also holds that communicative approach to such political problems is need for the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld. The lifeworld is essentially a set of interpretive cultural horizons through which we legitimate social action and form our identities. If important political decisions are posed in such a manner, the way in which we reproduce these functions is disturbed, and hence so is the way we legitimate social life and forge our sense of self in relation to others. In short, cost-benefit analysis reduces politics to mathematics and hinders communicative understanding. With it, it retards the valuable cognitive and social role of communication in the modern world. This hardly seems an adequate normative grounding for value articulating social institutions.

A main criticism thus, is that neo-classical economics offers a constrained view of human action, solely conditioned by instrumental actor-world relations. By contrast, and as will be developed later, Habermas's communicative action provides a more meaningful conception of rational action and from this communicative methods can overcome many of the above objections.

2.5.0 Conclusions:

There are a number of problems to the notion that neo-classical economics represents framework for making decisions in the world, with regard to environmental resources. With regard to objectivity it would appear that the method does little more than hide its subjectivity well. With fairness, it does not well handle issues of the distributions of wealth, indeed if anything it discriminates against the less affluent of society. With the notion of money as a catch all for value, the values for public goods are not well described through such language. With the notion of utility maximisation, the definition of utility is too narrow to deal effectively with choice in society, or becomes so large that it becomes meaningless within the economic calculus. And finally, within the context of a

modern social world, the reduction of politics to mathematics is a problematic extension of instrumental rationality into the understandings of ordinary people.

However, irrespective of the methods limitations, it remains a fact that cost-benefit analysis remains a strong component of financial ministry control. As such, the essential thing to remember when applying such techniques is that they are an aid to decision-making, and should not substitute for the political process.

Economic analysis will lend itself well to 'localised and individualistic resource use situations, where uncertainties and distributional conflicts, typically fuelled by competing notions of justice and moral priority, do not dominate proceedings' (C3ED 1996). Essentially, while such a monetary economic approach to the environment may be valuable in making transparent the distribution of costs, risks, and benefits between social groups, its is perhaps more limited in their negotiation.

Thus though the economic approach should not be ignored, there is perhaps room for a more conciliatory and mediated approach for ascertaining views and values on the natural world.

In their conclusions for the European Parliament for a report into costing environmental damage, researchers at C3ED and CSEC (1994) tell us that:

"[s]cience and economic analysis do not, on their own, bring self evident answers on environmental management decisions. Rather people from different cultural settings articulate their sense of value about nature in multi-layered ways... For each problem situation, a procedure needs to be found that is 'revealed' to be socially legitimate and effective in the sense that, to some extent at least, the stakeholders accept it as adequately dealing with their concerns."

As a counterpoint to this view of rationality and action, the work of Habermas will now be explored, and his project reviewed both in terms of its relation to nature and its relevance to modern society.

Chapter 3: Habermas and the Challenge of Nature.

3.0. Introduction.

Over the course of the next two chapters I want to consider the work of the Frankfurt school, particularly that of Jürgen Habermas, and the potential role that critical theory as a research programme may have to play both in broadening public participation within a policy process. We have seen so far that decision-making and policy procedures based solely within the aegis of either scientific or economic discourses are both problematic extensions of instrumental rationality into the realm of politics and furthermore are unlikely to give sufficient expression to social values concerning the natural environment. As such, other means of capturing social values within the policy process are now considered. The exploration of such values through the creation of public spaces will now be argued for at both a theoretical and empirical level throughout the rest of this thesis.

The following chapters aim to examine the epistemological role of nature in Habermas's thought (chapter 3) and how his theory of communicative action relates to environmental decision-making (chapter 4). It should be noted that Habermas's work spans some forty years and is marked by a general eclecticism, assimilating a broad range of ideas from German idealism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, positivism, linguistics, philosophical hermeneutics, systems theory and law (for an overview see Braaten 1991; Held 1980; McCarthy 1978; Outhwaite 1994; White 1988). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss this entire breadth of work. However, there are two main areas of Habermas's project that are of particular relevance to debates upon discursive approaches to environmental management. These concern his earlier work on epistemology and his subsequent shift to a philosophy of communication.

In this chapter Habermas's epistemological view of the natural world will be examined. Habermas's early work concerning a theory of knowledge constitutive interests positions his project within broader Frankfurt school debates concerning the historical complexity

of the Enlightenment. It develops insights concerning the dialectic of reason and humankind's relation to nature. Significantly for Habermas, the pathologies of modernity are not best served through attempting to facilitate a fundamental change in our relationship to the natural world, but rather through examining the problem of the scientization of politics. This chapter aims discuss some of the implications for human-nature relations as a consequence of this early work and explores the legacy of this idea within his subsequent philosophy of communication.

In part one of the chapter, the historical and intellectual background to Habermas's thought is examined. It is argued that Habermas's project can be read in response to two main counter Enlightenment discourses. First, his work represents a critique of the romanticist and irrationalist strands early twentieth century German thought and culture, in particular the quest for primal origins. Second, his work aims to develop the early critical theorists' insights into the dialectic of Enlightenment. Though these discourses take antithetical stances on the idea of rationality, both contain the idea of reconciliation or remembrance of nature as a means of combating the pathologies of modernity, in particular the anomie pervading from instrumental rationality.

In part two, Habermas's stance upon modernity will be traced in relation to this intellectual heritage. His early work, a theory of knowledge constitutive interests, is an attempt to get beyond the impasse of the early Frankfurt school thought and concerns a critique of positivism and epistemology to illustrate the complexity of Enlightenment thought. In this work, Habermas makes a distinction between the natural and the social sciences and endeavors to reconcile both a transcendental and naturalist approach to natural world. This move forges a particular epistemological distinction of nature that is crucial to debates upon concerning the use of excessive positivism on the one hand, and the romanticist and mythical claims of green-based political ideologies on the other.

The concluding part of the chapter develops three main ideas in relation to the previous discussions. The first brings more to the fore arguments concerning the communicative

impossibility between humans and non-human, and the problems of social constructivism. The second examines the distinctiveness of ecology in relation to Habermas's broader debate upon the natural and the social sciences. The final section explores the critique from Green theorists, in particular the 'failed promise of critical theory' (Eckersley 1992). In response to these criticisms it is argued that ecologism obscures rather than illuminates modern nature society relations. As such, a more coherent epistemological approach is advocated through development of a humanist ecological rationality.

3.1.0. Orientations: the historical context to Habermas's thought.

There are two main social and intellectual legacies that have provocatively informed Habermas's thought over the past few decades. The first of these concerns a broad cultural dynamic prevalent at the turn of the twentieth century, specifically the quest for primal origins in German society. The links of this movement to the rise of National Socialist Party has had a profound effect upon the direction of Habermas's work, in particular the rationalist and critical approach that has underpinned his writings. Habermas's critique of Martin Heidegger phenomenology is of particular relevance in this light.

The second background develops specifically from the writings of the Frankfurt school and in particular their concern of the rise of an unchecked instrumental reason. Habermas's early work can be viewed as an attempt to get beyond this impasse in early Frankfurt school thought, restoring the normative and emancipatory potential to the modern project while wary of attempts to enter into epistemologically tenuous relations to the natural world. Both of these backgrounds will now be briefly explored, before the idea of nature in Habermas's work is developed more fully.

3.1.1. The shadows of the past: Heidegger and the myth of primal origins.

After a world war, the Great Depression, spiraling inflation and mass unemployment; the political and social hardships in Germany that precipitated the rise of the Nazi party are now well documented (see Abel 1986; Remak 1986). However, these material accounts

do not fully explain how a civilized and educated society was motivated to elect the National Socialist Party to power in 1933. Namely they do not give much insight into the broader cultural aspects of German society.

Key to this cultural horizon is an understanding of primalism, and the resonance of such an intellectual dynamic within Germany as a whole. Primalism concerns a search for roots or origins, often articulated through different myths of nature, in an attempt to connect to a fundamental life or world force. In his excellent book, August Wiedmann (1995) explores the quest for such primal origins within a variety of artistic, literary, cultural and intellectual movements at the turn of the century. Wiedmann is keen to point out that primalism is not a specific set of beliefs; he illustrates throughout his work the eclectic cultural manner through which the idea of origins is interpreted. Rather, the idea of primalism attempts to articulate an instinct or basic impulse that is essentially pre-conscious; it informs reflection and shapes views of the world. This fundamental attitude spanned cultural divides, being found in myth, and folk song and legend, as well as expressionist art and literature of the European avant-guard. As Wiedmann notes, one of the principle features of primalism was

‘a compulsive and incessant appeal to nature. Used in reverentialist tones and with manifestly moral implications, primalism figured prominently in the reformist writings of the age. As Lovejoy Boas once pointed out, nature provided a standard of value, a model of excellence, which man was encouraged to follow in everything he considered of importance. It was this standard or model which obviously lay behind the German’s praise of the simple life, their praise of peasants and primeval man and, among aesthetic modernists, their praise of primitive art, including the untutored art of folk and children. All of these were single out because each in its own way was believed to be more natural than the denatured modes of being thrust upon man by modern civilization ’ (1995 p. 11).

For the purposes of this review, I will limit discussion to some of the key philosophical ideas linked to primal origins, in particular the work of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger’s critique of metaphysics is the subject of some scrutiny by Habermas in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1987b). Heidegger was concerned with totalitarianism of the modern epoch, believing that subject-centred reason and the dominance of

anthropocentrism conversely led to the objectification and domination of humankind. Heidegger's phenomenological approach attempts to delineate the domination of the subject within modernity through a critique of the philosophy of consciousness.

Specifically, Heidegger believes one may overcome transcendental inquiry or epistemology through the development of a fundamental ontology. For Heidegger, during the course of modernity the rise of subject centred reason has caused an ontological shift in thinking resulting in a forgetfulness of *Being*. *Being* refers to an original state, a pre-ontological understanding of the world. For Heidegger, modern life is a tragic forgetfulness of *Being*, manifest through such symptoms as rootlessness, loss of meaning and lack of identity. Heidegger's project aims to examine the conditions and the possibilities of human *Dasein* or 'being-in-the-world'. By this he means to understand what human existence is about in terms of the self and in terms of relations to nature and other human beings. Essentially he advocates meditative reflection upon what it is to 'be in the world'. *Being* is antithetical to a subject centred philosophy. Within *Being* the world precedes, shapes and discloses meaning to the subject, with human life woven within this fabric of meaning. With regard to the natural world, *Being* is thus a relational rather than domineering ontology (Heidegger 1962; see Dallmayr 1997 pp. 74-78; Habermas 1987b pp. 141-155).

Heidegger believes that the categorical structure of things supplied through a transcendental scientific philosophy are projections of a modern consciousness. For him, there is a deeper ontological pre-understanding. He suggests that through encouraging a new means of meditative contemplation, through thoughtful remembrance, we may grasp such a horizon and *Being* will be unconcealed. Through rekindling our relationship of *Being*, we remind ourselves of a primal conceptual framework where subject-object relations are overcome through relationships of encountering and caring. In his later philosophy, Heidegger articulates this notion of *Being* as an ontological destiny to which we must submit and surrender.

Heidegger attempts to overthrow metaphysics through an examination of our deepest thought and through meditation on such primary images arrest the spiritual decline of western thought. As Wiedmann (1995 p. 186-187) notes, for Heidegger the task was to 'redeem an alienated and alienating reason by recapturing (i.e. recalling) an older forgotten truth commemorating the union of *logos* and *physis*, spirit and earth, beings and *Being*'. There was thus a great resonance within Heidegger's writing towards the broader cultural idea within German society of primalism, of seeking a 'primordial and inclusive household of the soul' as a bastion against the disembedding processes of modernity giving meaning to a world rooted in oneness. It offered sanctuary to a spiritually uprooted generation.

Habermas's discussion of Heidegger in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1987b) concerns a missed opportunity in the critique of subject centred rationality to develop a communicative basis for rationality. Contained within this discussion, there are three elements that are key to understanding Habermas's anxiety of the political implications of Heidegger's work.

First. Habermas argues that Heidegger's critique of metaphysics obscures the difference between reason and understanding. As will be discussed in more depth later, central to Habermas belief in the modern project is the notion that modernity has the capacity to create normativity out of itself; through universal intersubjective understandings of morality developed through modern structures of consciousness. By removing *Being* from a modern framework, Heidegger is unable to sufficiently distinguish the normative from the authoritarian dimensions of the Enlightenment. Habermas notes that:

'the same understanding of *Being* that spurs modernity to the unlimited expansion of its manipulative power over objectified processes of nature and society also forces this emancipated subjectivity into bonds that serve to secure its imperative activity; these self-made normative obligations remain hollow ideals. From this perspective, Heidegger can so fundamentally de-struct modern reason that he no longer distinguishes between the universalistic contents of humanism, Enlightenment, and even positivism on the one side, and the particularistic, self-assertive representations of racism and nationalism on the other side' (Habermas 1987b pp. 133-134).

As well as this totalistic thinking, there is a second implication of placing *Being* outside of any rational framework for critique. While Heidegger was right to expose the fallacy of an ultimate grounding for metaphysical thinking, there is a problem in his alternative ontological view concerning thinking of *Being*, namely it 'can only be meditatively experienced and presented narratively, but not argumentatively retrieved or explained' (Habermas 1987b p. 152). *Being* is not amenable to discursive rational justification; it is thus not subject to epistemological critique thus as a concept may function as a form of ontological authoritarianism. Such concerns are further compounded in Heidegger's later philosophy, wherein *Being* is articulated as a destiny to which one should surrender. Once more, this stance is antithetical to the Enlightenment thesis of the autonomy of human thought. Within such a thesis, normative responsibility for action gives way to fatalism with consequences for political life.

Indeed, the disturbing implications of the normative and epistemological detachment of Heidegger's ideas came to fruition with his association with the Nazi Party from 1933-1935. As an artefact of his philosophy, Heidegger remained unrepentant for many years concerning his wartime politics. As Habermas notes '[Heidegger] detached his actions and statements altogether from himself as an empirical person and attributes them to a fate for which one cannot be held responsible for' (Habermas 1987b p. 154).

During the war, Heidegger subverted elements of his philosophy to suit Nazism. The 'who' of *Dasein*, articulated in his early work unmistakably as 'the I, itself, the subject, the self' (Heidegger 1962 p. 150) is now portrayed as the collective awareness of *Being* of the German people. *Dasein* now chimed with Nazi idea of a 'new consciousness' that would embody the ancient will of the beginning. Heidegger promoted the Führer as a conduit or catalyst, awakening the will of the German people, popularising his relational philosophy through broader metaphors of blood and earth. Even when Heidegger became disillusioned with the party, he still saw the movement as mismanaged rather than morally bereft. For Heidegger, there was still the possibility of a second beginning and an inner truth to National Socialism (see Habermas 1987b pp. 155-160, 1992 pp. 190-192).

Intellectually, Heidegger represents a dangerous consequence of the undermining rational thought. There is a specific warning contained within Habermas's critique that to base normative and societal goals outside of any epistemological framework, such as through appeals to a primal, nature-based ideology, may have disturbing consequences for politics and morality. Moreover, detachment from rationalist and realist conceptions of knowledge not only risk relativism through eliding the relationship of modern consciousness to normativity, but furthermore undermines the fundamental role that instrumental and scientific knowledge plays within the maintenance and organisation of society. To resolve environmental problems, a more adequate understanding of the relationships between societal action, normativity and knowledge needs to be developed that is subject to critique within the terms of modern consciousness. Such problems cannot be ahistoricised or placed out of a framework for rational debate¹. An epistemologically coherent relationship to the natural world is thus not only of *critical* importance to Habermas's overall programme, but to any model attempting to mediate modern environmental values. Before considering this in more depth, it is worthwhile viewing the approach to the problems of modernity within the work of Adorno and Horkheimer.

3.1.2. Modernity, rationality and the role of Critical Theory.

Though contrasting strongly with the stance of Heidegger, the work of Adorno and Horkheimer are essentially concerned with the same problem of the role of reason within modern societies and the relation humans to the natural world. However, as critical theorists, their work was necessarily rationalist, emancipatory and political. In what follows I will briefly describe the idea of critical theory and the formation Frankfurt school, before reviewing one Adorno and Horkheimer's key texts; *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

¹ This point is discussed in more depth later in the chapter. See also Gandy's (1996) discussion of postmodern epistemologies and environmental problems.

The term critical theory refers to the writings of a number of scholars from the Institute of Social Research at the University of Frankfurt, known collectively as the Frankfurt school. Their writings may be characterised as a re-focusing of a broadly Marxist intellectual project in the context of twentieth century modernity. In particular, critical theory examines the hiatus between the existing conditions within society and a possible future state. This exposure of these spaces has a transformative political force, being aimed towards the development of political action and critical consciousness.

Fundamentally for the theorists, though they believed in the historical contingency of knowledge, they anticipate an independent moment of criticism through which truth claims can be rationally mediated, separate from social interests, implicit within modern structures of consciousness.

The Frankfurt school was interdisciplinary and aimed to develop a multi-methodological suite of heuristics through which the fallacies of the Enlightenment programme could be exposed. These critical perspectives were to build upon Kantian insights into the limits of reason, Hegelian concerns with the emergence of Spirit, and the particularly the historical materialism of Marx. However, they were concerned to exposing the limits of orthodox Marxism, with its focus on the economic sphere and a corresponding Promethean relation to nature. As such, their work fundamentally paid fuller attention to cultural and aesthetic phenomena to disclose historical conditions underpinning social reality. An analytic focus for the Institute concerned an examination of the pathologies within modernity associated with the unchecked rise of instrumental reason (for an overview see Jay 1973; Held 1980).

The particular insights of Horkheimer and Adorno to these problems are fleshed out in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1997). As the title suggests, Adorno and Horkheimer sought to show that the principles of emancipation and rationality governing the Enlightenment are in fact equivocal to our actual conditions of existence. The authors' central thesis is that in an attempt to control and secure the material conditions needed for survival, humankind has enslaved itself to instrumental reason. Indeed they aimed to expose a

fallacy heart of Enlightenment; insofar as our sovereignty and autonomy can not be secured through a dualistic ontology between nature and culture.

Adorno and Horkheimer criticise the emancipatory notion of 'progress' tied to Enlightenment thought. For them, Enlightenment can be viewed as the attempt of instrumental reason to gain emancipation for humanity by granting itself absolute status over objects. However, a paradox ensues, in that we have become disenchanted from nature in our attempts to possess it. 'Men pay for the increase in their power with alienation from that over which they exercise their power' (Adorno and Horkheimer 1997 p. 9).

As such, this sense of power is illusory. Adorno and Horkheimer seek to expose that the exploitation of external nature and the exploitation of social relations between humans are intricately related and arise from the dominance of instrumental reason. For the authors, instrumental rationality aims to reduce the world to a set of objects that may be quantified and manipulated. Reason becomes powerful through its instrumental application and increasingly confines itself to the task of prediction and control. With this shift, the instrumental aspect of reason becomes hegemonic and other aspects of reason anathema to this task are renounced. The instinctual, aesthetic and expressive parts of the human psyche hence become rationalised and the full potential of reason is forsaken.

Through the hegemony of instrumental reason, science and technology begin to dominate social relations. History itself thus appears to be structured or pre-given. Through the laws of science, society becomes distorted. Society is essentially perceived as a second nature, as humankind becomes an object for manipulation and domination. Human agency becomes subservient to broader social objective structures; people become a commodity in the arena of exchange. In short, Enlightenment collapses into the very conditions of repression that it set to overcome.

Seyla Benhabib has noted that *Dialectic of Enlightenment* represents a tension between two views upon reason within modernity (1986 p. 163-166). The first, emerging from Adorno's chapter on Odysseus, sees reason more as an instrument of domination. The second, emerging from Horkheimer's chapter on morality, views reason as having an emancipatory potential which is latent under the current conditions of modernity. These two excursions will now be explored.

Adorno, examination of Homer's *The Odyssey* and the journey of Odysseus back to his homeland in Ithaca after the Trojan War is representative of 'the earliest representative testimonies of Western bourgeois civilisation' (Adorno and Horkheimer 1997 p. xvi). Tracing his journey, the authors concentrate on the relationship between humanity and nature, identified respectively through Odysseus's encounters of self and otherness.

Key to their reading is the notion that humankind has a fear of the other. The self sees all that is alien, all that is 'non-self' as a threat. For humans, this other is identified with nature. Humanity's response to this through the course of history has been to renounce and dominate nature. However, a paradox ensues. We are part nature, and therefore to subjugate the other is in part to subjugate the self. Thus the authors note that

'with the denial of nature in man not merely the telos of the outward control of nature but the telos of man's own life is distorted and befogged. As soon as man discards his awareness that he himself is nature, all the aims for which he keeps himself alive- social progress, the intensification of all of his material and spiritual power, even consciousness itself- are all nullified' (Adorno and Horkheimer 1997 p. 54).

The tension of this relationship to self and nature is a theme that runs throughout the *Odyssey*. For Adorno and Horkheimer, through attempts to overcome the other, humanity only manages to internalise the victim: such as when Odysseus physically restrains his body from the allure of the sirens or when he denies his own identity escape the Cyclops. For Adorno and Horkheimer, Odysseus guilefully appeases the nature during these encounters through acts of mimesis; that of acting out otherness and becoming like the surrounding world (Adorno and Horkheimer 1997 pp. 58-60, 67-68). Mimesis is not mere repetition or mimicry, but rather 'an exchange of the subject with

nature that is free from violence' (Habermas 1984 p. 453). For the authors, this mimetic cunning of Odysseus can be seen as the origin of western rationality.

However, they contend that throughout Enlightenment this mimetic act of appeasement has been replaced by one of false projection. No longer does humanity aim to become like the other, through mimesis. Rather there is a rationalising impulse to project onto the world to make it like the self: to make otherness disappear. This notion of projection is later examined in *Dialectic* through a chapter on anti-Semitism and the rise of the National Socialist Party (Adorno and Horkheimer pp. 187-190). Here the Jew is viewed as other and the self identified with the Aryan race. Through an extension of instrumental reasoning, the other is not treated as an end-in-itself, but rather only as an object devoid of worth. The primalistic, holistic, organic vision within Nazism aimed at the supremacy of such a whole over the individual. As such the Jews' extermination is viewed as an instrumental means to secure a national autonomy; an autonomy of the identical self. Thus authors thus aim to show how the rationalisation processes mobilised within Enlightenment reason may readily sink into barbarism.

The second excursus, penned mainly by Horkheimer, concentrates more fully on this dark side of Enlightenment reason and the aspect of instrumental rationality as anathema to autonomy. In particular, this section of *Dialectic* examines the relation between Enlightenment reason and moral vacuity. The authors show the ideological component of instrumental rationality through examining the writings of Kant, Nietzsche and particularly De Sade, who they suggest represents the embodiment of Enlightenment thought. De Sade acted out an unfettered instrumental reason in terms of the separation of subject and object, and with it facts and values, in the pursuit of ends. Through a study of De Sade's *Histoire de Juliette*, they examine the dark of Enlightenment thinking; the possibilities immanent within instrumental thought. Through Nietzsche, they examine how the undermining of belief systems through Enlightenment has resulted in nihilism, and how any moral belief grounded in want or need can claim an equal and legitimate validity. Both of these writers anticipate the horrors of the twentieth century through an

examination of reason. Adorno and Horkheimer express sympathy with De Sade and Nietzsche for their courage to express this will of reason:

‘unlike its apologist, the black writers of the bourgeoisie have not tried to ward off the consequences of the Enlightenment by harmonising theories. They have not postulated that formalistic reason is more closely allied to morality than immorality. Whereas the optimistic writers merely disavowed and denied in order to protect the indissoluble union of reason and crime, civil society and domination, the dark chroniclers mercilessly declared the shocking truth’ (Adorno and Horkheimer 1997 pp. 117-118).

For Adorno and Horkheimer the Enlightenment is a contradiction. The values that were once at its heart, those of freedom from unquestioned tradition, justice and equality become under its own reason just a set of beliefs. Enlightenment reason was to offer relief from the myth of the past. However, at the end all it is able to do is negate. It can not provide reason to believe in something further. Once again, this lack of meaning within modernity, the sense of alienation, precipitated the desire for belonging. From Heidegger’s *Being* to Hesse’s description of *Urheimat*, there was a longing in German culture to retrieve a lost place; humankind’s primeval home.

Adorno and Horkheimer expose Enlightenment thinking not as truth but as contingent and a form of social practice. They view its manifestation culturally as a wholesale deception of the masses (Adorno and Horkheimer 1997 p. 120-168). For them, perceptions of the objectified world are not the ultimate foundations of knowledge, but rather always our own objects. The given is active form and is historically conditioned.

Following Hegel, they thus hold that historical, rather than solely epistemological conditions, determine truth. As such, the alleged natural social order in the world to which the individual subordinates is too socially conditioned, and thus may be subject to change. A possibility thus is to rescue reason in such a way that instrumental reason is brought under the control of critical reason. In this sense, critical reason functions as an inquiry, as a means of critical reflection examining the shadows between thought and reality.

The authors realised from their analysis that a new relationship needed to be developed between the domains of the social and the natural. The authors reject the Marxist model of labour as an agency for change, challenging as they do throughout their work the assumption that 'the humanisation of nature through labour contains an emancipatory dynamic' (Benhabib 1986 p. 11).

Another model for human relations is thus needed; one that does not seek autonomy but rather reconciliation with nature. Reconciliation does not aim towards the restoration of total identity. As such, it does not aim for the domination of man by nature, but rather aims to recreate something of a unity. Instead of the inward desire to dominate nature from the application of instrumental knowledge, the authors argue that we need rather to recapture something of the mimetic relationship that humankind enjoyed with the natural world in the past, where neither domination nor discipline reigned supreme. However, the authors are wary of a critique that lacks grounding in theoretical knowledge: indeed Adorno was one of Heidegger's strongest critics. As such, the authors warn that fundamentally this new relationship must be wary of slipping toward myth, regression and hence sacrificing critical reason. Furthermore, such a vision of society must not regress the current levels of technological progress that are needed to secure the material conditions needed for existence (for discussion see Whitebook 1979).

However, through their analysis of dialectic Adorno and Horkheimer are cynical as to the possibility of success. As their final chapter on anti-Semitism grimly observes, the individual within society has undergone such psychological distortion, due to the ideological character of instrumental reason, that they have little optimism in perceiving an agency to rupture society's false consciousness. While hinting at reconciliation with nature, Horkheimer and Adorno renounce its explication, due to the epistemological aporias involved. Rather, their suspicion of any real opportunity to break through the false consciousness generated through the growth of instrumental rationality, mass culture, and technological change tied to the hegemony of capitalist ideology, paint a rather dark picture of the future of humanity. At best, they perhaps see the function of

such a critical theory is to gain a critical perspective from which to view society. Such vision may aid complacency against such subtle forms of domination.

The tension realised in the work of Horkheimer and Adorno between our ontological view of nature and our epistemological access to knowledge is also fundamental for Habermas. However, their solution to this dialectic, involving reconciliation with the natural world lies remarkably near to Heidegger. As Habermas notes:

‘as opposed as the intentions behind their respective philosophies of history are, Adorno is in the end very similar to Heidegger as regards to his position on the theoretical claims of objectivating thought and of reflection: The mindfulness [*Eingedenken*] of nature comes shockingly close to the recollection [*Andenken*] of *Being*’ (Habermas 1984 p. 385).

As such, though modernity in its current embodiment is problematic, the intellectual and normative aspirations arising through modern structures of consciousness are ones that cannot be discarded. This calls for caution over the seduction of a nature-based philosophy. As Wiedmann (1995) notes:

it could be said that those who see too deeply into the nature of things – and I don’t doubt for a moment that Heidegger did – run the constant risk of succumbing to the sirens’ voices, voices whispering sweetly but prematurely of origins and primal times, of the sanctity of the beginning which beckons to be renewed in the form of a volkish-national awakening’ (p. 360).

There is thus much to be heeded in Habermas’s warning that ‘a philosophy which withdraws behind the lines of discursive thought to the mindfulness of nature pays for the wakening powers of its exercises by renouncing the goal of theoretical knowledge’ (Habermas 1984 p. 385). Habermas’s revision of these problems is considered next.

3.2: Habermas: nature, society and critique.

3.2.1. Habermas and Enlightenment.

The *Dialectic of Enlightenment* does not do justice to the rational content of cultural modernity that was captured in bourgeois ideals (and also instrumentalised along with them). I am thinking here of the specific theoretical dynamic that continually pushes the sciences, and even the self-reflection of the sciences, beyond merely engendering technically useful knowledge; I am referring further to the universalistic foundations of

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law and morality that have also been incorporated (in how ever distorted and incomplete a fashion) into the institutions of constitutional government [and] into the forms of democratic will formation' (Habermas 1987b p. 113).

The tensions within the Enlightenment programme examined by Horkheimer and Adorno, the relativism of a total critique of reason, and possibility of developing a new relationship to nature represents a challenge for Habermas. For him, reason is not purely an instrument of domination, but rather, has an emancipatory potential latent under the current conditions of modernity². Habermas thus aims to develop an account of Enlightenment that more adequately captures both its pathologies and its achievements.

Through his analysis of modernity, Habermas stresses that it is important distinguish the modern structures of consciousness that constitute cultural modernity. At issue for Habermas is the concern of how certain types of rationality have become all pervasive in modern life. In particular, Habermas believes that there has been an over extension of instrumental rationality into the political domain and hence within the social world of citizens. Habermas thus views one of the main problems within modernity as the scientization of the political realm and the corresponding growth of scientism where all knowledge is reduced to the nomothetic world of empirical analysis. Thus it is the philosophical and sociological problems of scientism that concern Habermas, rather than an anxiety with instrumental rationality *per se*, which he views as legitimate when it operates within natural sciences' sphere of interest (Habermas 1970, 1972, 1984, 1987a; for discussion see Honneth and Joas 1991).

Habermas believes that within modern life, politics has been treated as another sphere for control through instrumental rationality. Important political decisions are increasingly posed in terms of instrumental efficiency, and as such best examined through expert discourse and remedied through technical scientific control. In other words moral and political questions are treated essentially as technical ones. This has led to an increasingly bureaucratised world, where public opinion is supplanted through market surveys and the

² The development of this idea in terms of a theory of communicative action is discussed next chapter.

media. As the colonisation of public life grows, so the public is increasingly excluded from political decisions and democracy is eroded (Habermas 1970; 1987a).

Habermas believed his predecessors at the Frankfurt school were either too critical of the objectivising force of science and technology, without giving due credence to the considerable advances that such spheres of knowledge had provided for humankind, or placed too much weight on instrumental rationality as a mode of domination so that social emancipation cannot be conceived without a radical rethinking in our relations to the natural world. However a critique that aims towards the 'resurrection of fallen nature' has for Habermas irrationalist, regressive and romantic implications.

Habermas thus develops a different account of the epistemological foundations of critical theory. and with this quasi-transcendental approach, precludes the necessity or even the wisdom of such reconciliation. Essentially, he sees the earlier theorists as not being able to sufficiently distinguish between the separate cognitive realms of work, interaction and critical reflection. For Habermas, it is not so much important to either break with reason or even attempt to qualitatively re-forge it, but rather to provide an account that allows different processes of inquiry to operate within their respective spheres of interest. The development of this work into a theory of knowledge constitutive interests is now explored.

3.2.2. Knowledge Constitutive Interests.

In *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1972), Habermas begins to develop a framework to explicate these ideas through a study of the epistemological foundations of the natural, social sciences and critical sciences. The aim of this analysis was threefold; the first was to show how through history there had been a positivist reduction of epistemology to methodology, or in other words, a reduction in the theory of knowledge to the theory of science. The second, as a consequence, was to reveal that this dissolution of epistemology had regressed too far, and essentially the process of self-reflection had been obscured by the hegemony of positivism. The third was to demonstrate that different

interests in the world guide different knowledge types, and from this grounding develop an epistemological separation between the social natural sciences. Finally, Habermas aimed to establish the role for a reflective critical theory in response to this broader framework

Habermas believes that there is not just a single science, but rather a number of different forms that inquiry may take and these are directly constituted through interests that we, as human beings, have in the world. Habermas thus seeks to show that knowledge is not disinterested; rather is actively constituted through an interest that is bound to the processes of life, and hence tied both socially and naturally to the evolution of the human subject.

The main separation between the sciences that Habermas makes is to distinguish the realms of work and interaction. The former he believes is constitutive of prediction and control of the natural environment, with the model of the natural sciences the exemplar. The latter is predicated to mutual understanding in the social world, being typified through the social sciences. Habermas argues that as a species we have evolved in the world according broadly to two different needs or interests, which are each separately tied to these specific forms of action and knowledge. The first concerns our physical well-being and the need to secure material goods through the activity of work. The second is characterised through the discursive realm and the need for interaction to secure social relations with our fellow humans (Habermas 1972 pp. 191-198; see also McCarthy 1978 pp. 22-24; Vogel 1996 pp. 105-106).

Fundamentally for Habermas, these different types of cognitive strategies, be they work or interaction, guide different forms of systematic inquiry and have their basis in the natural history of the human species (Habermas 1972 p. 310-313). With this move he is able to forge a separate epistemologically distinct role for the sciences.

Moreover he demonstrates that critical theory does not fall within these two models, and hence able to open up the role for critical reflection within a third emancipatory interest. This type of knowledge is more predicated on uncovering processes that are parasitic upon communication and awareness. Only through reflection upon all social practices, including scientific inquiry, can humans adequately grasp modes of power and domination. As such, the critical sciences can mediate between the two other forms of knowledge; they act to uncover relevant unconscious factors that may be initially opaque but still influential within theoretical inquiry. The emancipatory potential of the critical sciences can thus be seen in terms of autonomy; it is through the process of reflection that humans can be seen to be self-determining. Self-reflection can thus be equated with the struggle for freedom. Habermas uses psychoanalysis as a methodological model for this type of reflective understanding (for discussion of problems with Habermas's interpretation of psychoanalysis see McCarthy 1978; Held 1980).

For Habermas, the problem with positivism is that it is unable to differentiate between different categories of knowledge linked to interests in the world. For him, science is not free of normative commitment but rather is constituted through these interests. Where positivism falls short is that it 'fails both to reflect on the technical interest which informs science and to differentiate this normative orientation from the practical interest of mankind' (White 1988 p. 27). In the positivist reduction of knowledge to method, there is no longer political purchase for social and cultural questions, except through terms of efficiency.

Through his distinction between different realms of knowledge tied to a species interest, Habermas aims to show that through practical knowledge values and norms can be accounted for within the realm of rational discussion. The practical interest in maintaining intersubjective relations gives rational grounding to the issues of social and political life. The study of this lagging development of practical rationality can be viewed as Habermas's insight into the one-sided approach to western modernisation.

The central relations between Habermas model of knowledge-constitutive interests are summarised in Table 2³.

Table 2. Knowledge-constitutive interests

Knowledge	Cognitive Interest	Action
Empirical-analytical knowledge of natural sciences: knowledge towards nomological understanding.	Technical interest in prediction and control of external environment.	Work (purposive rational action/ Instrumental action).
Historical-hermeneutic knowledge of the social sciences.	Practical interest towards mutual understanding in social world.	Interaction (communicative action).
Critically orientated sciences of critical social theory.	Emancipatory interest from domination by exposing ideologically frozen relations.	Reflection upon power and domination.

As such, Habermas develops a tripartite framework in which purposive rationality governs our dealings in external nature, communicative rationality governs action of internal nature, and critical reason governs a self-reflective attitude that mediates an emancipatory interest. This provocative stance, where instrumental rationality governs action in the non-human world and communicative rationality governs relations between human subjects, has unsurprisingly attracted a good deal of criticism from both political

³ As can be seen from Table 2, Habermas does not so much distinguish between the natural and the social sciences as between sciences that produce nomological knowledge and those that produce interpretive understanding and meaning. As such, any predictive, law giving social science would be characterized through having a technical interest. For sake of simplicity, here the term 'natural sciences' will refer to the empirical-analytical sciences, and likewise the term 'social sciences' to those in the historical-hermeneutic tradition.

theorists and environmental academics⁴. Habermas's relationship to nature will now be elaborated more fully, before these concerns are reviewed.

3.2.3. *Habermas and nature.*

Habermas's dualist position with regard to the natural world comes as a consequence of his attempts to resolve the problematic outlined earlier; that of attempting to restore the role of critical theory through his critique of positivism. It is important to remember that the aim for *Habermas in Knowledge and Human Interests* is to critique positivism through the restoration of the concept of self-reflection and in doing so establish an epistemological foundation for critical theory.

Essentially for Habermas, through this critique he needed to show that science is not independent but rather is tied to a species interest. On the one hand, a consequence of this species interest provides foundation for the claim that science is a particularly fruitful branch of knowledge (i.e. has most theoretical efficacy) when applied specifically to the technical control of the natural environment. Correspondingly it is ideological when applied to the social realm. On the other hand, through revealing the role of knowing subject in constituting reality, Habermas attempts to reject the objectivist excesses of natural science. As such, Habermas thus aims to develop a non-objectivist account of the validity of natural science while at the same time maintaining its epistemological independence forged through its constitutive interest.

Habermas develops the notion that there exists within the human species particular types of human interests that have a certain type of action associated with them. Habermas takes a quasi-evolutionary approach to the development of the conditions that posit these interests over time. Essentially, he suggests that the activities of both work and interaction are deep-seated in the make up of our species and are initially forged through

⁴ See for example Alford (1985a, 1985b); Dobson (1993); Dryzek (1990a, 1990b); Eckersley (1992); Gandy (1997); Giddens (1982); Krebs (1997); McCarthy (1982); Ottmann (1982); Outhwaite (1994); Thompson (1982); Vogel (1996); Whitebook (1979).

adaptive processes of humans to their environment. These activities or actions are thus equiprimordial in origin (Habermas 1972).

Habermas makes a three-fold distinction of nature within his development of knowledge constitutive interests. First is that of *natura naturans* or nature-in-itself; a pre-social category of nature. Second is that of the subjective nature, i.e. the subjective nature of humans. Finally there is that of an objective nature; or that of humans' objectified external environment (Habermas 1972 pp. 25-36)

Natura naturans refers to the equiprimordial pre-human nature that constitutes our species. This pre-social nature locates the naturalist part of Habermas argument. Nature-in-itself thus grounds our subjectivity: it materially constitutes the human subject.

However, at some point through the course of human evolution there is 'a cultural break with nature' (Habermas 1972 p. 312). With this burgeoning consciousness, we in turn begin to constitute the two other forms of nature. It is through evolutionary process and the rise of a cognitive capacity within *Homo sapiens* that humankind dissolves *natura naturans* into the concepts of the subjective nature of humans and what confronts us; the objective nature of the human environment. As such, objective nature becomes a 'knowledge of a system of appearances'. Nature is thus constituted through our objective interpretations. This objective nature is one of possible technical control, and in turn is mediated through the subjective nature of man (Habermas 1972 p. 286).

Natura naturans is an unknowable reality existing beyond the realm of knowledge. For Habermas, it works as an ontological postulate acting to ground a realist interpretation of the world. However, such an interpretation 'is scientifically accessible to us only as objectivated' (Habermas 1982 p. 242). This is thus the transcendental moment for Habermas; 'the nature of natural science has no existence independent of human interest' (Vogel 1996 p. 112).

It is thus this twin tracking between an equiprimordial material/naturalistic origin and a transcendental interest in prediction and control that Habermas posits to explain how the natural sciences are legitimate when applied to their own realm, and yet ideological when applied to the social sciences. The naturalistic part of his argument sediments a natural science view of the nature within an 'anthropological endowment' of the species. This materialist component cannot be transcended. As a consequence of his naturalism grounding the facticity of our objective nature, nature is not open to arbitrary interpretation. It is this grounding of our objective nature that leaves the claims of the empirical-analytical sciences as epistemologically distinct and mutually irreducible from knowledge claims of the social science.

Correspondingly, the transcendental part of his argument ties each of the sciences to their respective interests. For Habermas, though nature-in-itself is unknowable, epistemologically our most theoretically fruitful attitude towards the natural world is furnished through the empirical sciences as this best grasps our objective experience of the natural world (Habermas 1982 p. 243-244).

In this manner Habermas asserts that the natural sciences are the most fruitful branch of knowledge to objectivated world, providing a nomological understanding of the natural environment, tied to an interest in prediction and control. The social sciences are the most fruitful branch of knowledge to examine historical and hermeneutic activity, tied fundamentally to an interest in mutual understanding in the lifeworld. Hence as Vogel writes, the natural sciences

'do not investigate reality as such but rather that segment of the world constituted by the human interests in the prediction and control of the environment – just as the *Geisteswissenschaften*, marked not by empirical method but by hermeneutic ones, investigate a different segment, constituted by a human interest in achieving mutual understanding' (Vogel 1996 p.108).

Through demonstrating these realms as epistemologically distinct, Habermas is able to develop the latent potential of reason within modernity through an examination of the social realm alone. As mentioned, he views the main pathology within modernity as the

over-extension of instrumental rationality within the social world. Due to his cleavage between nature and society, there is no longer a need to mediate reconciliation with nature for human emancipation. For Habermas, the dialectic of Enlightenment can only be addressed through alleviating the one-sided approach to western rationalisation within the lifeworld of humans, through a focus on the lagging development of critical rationality in the public sphere.

In this manner, Habermas has attempted to save critical theory from what he essentially has viewed as a cul-de-sac. He has attempted to sufficiently differentiate between the concepts of science, Enlightenment, knowledge and critique, through positing a materialist distinction between the realms of the social and the natural sciences, and mediating a role for critique. He attempts to save science from scientism, while still providing a transcendental foundation for its legitimacy in the prediction and control of the natural environment.

As a consequence of this quasi-transcendental move, he is able to show that rather than science being tied fundamentally to an interest in some social project, as an ideological reflection of a dominant social order, it is rather connected to an interest in the species as a whole; that of the prediction and the control of nature. As such, a new science (i.e. a qualitatively new means of relating to the natural world) is not needed, rather the old science just needs to be understood differently (for discussion see McCarthy 1978 pp. 114 and 123-124; Whitebook 1979 pp. 48-49).

Before Habermas's early thought is reviewed, it should be noted that he has revised many of the claims made within *Knowledge and Human Interests* through a productive debate with a variety of commentators (see for example Habermas 1973; Habermas 1982; Habermas 1992 pp. 95-130). However, despite the subsequent reformation of his work within a communication theory, the relationship to nature that he articulates within his early work is still characteristic to Habermas's project as a whole. Indeed, as he later describes in an interview:

'I hold by the fundamental idea that there are constitutive relationships between scientific enterprises and everyday orientations. These internal relationships are so strong that they can determine - via the formal pragmatics of research - the possible channels of application or implementation of different types of knowledge' (Habermas 1992 p. 193).

I will now explore the implications of Habermas's view of nature articulated within *Knowledge and Human Interests*, before exploring the criticisms of his work and its role within environmental management.

3.2.4. The implications of quasi-transcendental interests.

Within *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas has attempted to provide both a transcendental and a naturalist/materialist grounding of interests in the natural world. As such, for Habermas, 'nature appears not only as constituted by the interests, but also as the independent physical realm that generates them and so underlies the possible act of constitution' (Vogel 1996 p. 113).

There is thus an obvious paradox to this position; nature cannot be our constituted objectivity and at the same time ground our subjectivity. In other words, nature-in-itself cannot also be nature for us. Furthermore, as Tom McCarthy notes, there is a deeper irony involved here; the concept of *natura naturans* indulges in exactly the same kind of metaphysics that Habermas was keen to criticise from Heidegger; with a notion of an ultimate origin shrouded in a pre-social moment (McCarthy 1978 p. 124).

Habermas is aware of this paradox and in a later work engages with the comments of his critics and the concept of 'nature-in-itself' (Habermas 1973 pp. 311-312; Habermas 1982 p. 242-250). Habermas takes a pragmatic stance on his account of the natural world. He provides an ontological, rather than an epistemological secure account, in an attempt to ground his transcendental position. For Habermas, this stance is quite simply a due to the fact that it is impossible to attempt to resolve this paradox; essentially philosophy is unable to 'get behind reasons back and secure its own foundations' (Whitebook 1979 p. 46).

For Habermas, any attempts to provide ultimate origins to materially ground his transcendental claims are self-contradictory. As such, he puts forward his position in terms of best explicating the relationship between *natura naturans* and our objectively known nature, even if he cannot provide some ultimate justification for this standpoint. He thus sees the task of such a theory as being able to critically mediate between a question that cannot be 'logically deduced or empirically demonstrated.' His statements essentially do not

'have the single character of being neither arbitrary or compelling. They prove appropriate or inappropriate. For their criterion is that the metalogical necessity of interests that we can neither prescribe nor represent, but with which we must come to terms' (Habermas 1972 p. 312).

Essentially, he views nature-in-itself as a necessary ontological construct needed in order to grasp realist interpretations of the world within transcendental understanding. As such, he notes that the concept is 'only accessible in the transcendental orientation, that is by rationally reconstructing pre-theoretical knowledge' and with this notes the paradox 'but pragmatism has to reject the assumption of transcendental consciousness, without origins as it were' (Habermas 1982 p.242). Hence the systematic foundations of these interests cannot be accounted for exclusively within the realms of life or knowledge.

Habermas thus hints at a dialectic conception of interests, themselves a 'product of the very empirical world they transcendently constitute' (Ottmann 1982 p. 82). Though his answer is perhaps unsatisfactory, wanting the best of both worlds, the alternative choice of becoming ensnared in either materialist or transcendental accounts of nature are in turn insufficient. Namely they both have the shortfalls outlined above; the former unable to fully take account of the active role of the subject in creating reality, the latter running the risk of relativism. For Habermas there is no answer to this; he essentially places this issue on the shelf, believing it to be irresolvable.

In 'A reply to my critics', Habermas then explores a further series of difficulties within his quasi-transcendental theory of knowledge, which may be surmised within the overall

concept of whether or not our species' interest in the natural world may be solely conditioned through instrumental reason (Habermas 1982 p. 243). During this commentary Habermas explicitly clarifies that he does not deny the possibility of other interpretations to the natural world. Habermas demonstrates that a variety of basic attitudes that may be adopted towards the different domains of reality. For example, with regard to the external environment, he describes that it is possible to adopt an aesthetic relationship to a non-objectified environment, for instance through works of art. He indeed goes on to illustrate nine broad categories of formal-pragmatic relations that exist between basic attitudes and domains of reality. However, what he does stress is that 'only a few of these formal-pragmatic relations are suitable for the accumulation of knowledge' (Ibid. p. 245, emphasis in original).

As such, Habermas thus does not rule out entering into what he describes as a 'performative attitude' to external nature, and with it entering into 'communicative relations', 'aesthetic experiences' and 'feelings analogous to morality' with the natural world (Habermas 1982 p. 243). However, he states that there exists within

'this domain of reality only one theoretically fruitful attitude, namely the objectivating attitude of the natural-scientific experimenting observer' (Ibid. pp. 243-244, emphasis in original).

By theoretically fruitful knowledge, Habermas argues that there are some ways of knowing that are more effective than when applied to some domains of reality than others. Thus as Alford notes, though it is possible to discuss art through the concepts of natural science, the natural sciences are more theoretically efficacious when used to examine the natural environment (1986 pp. 133).

A final point for Habermas concerns the idea of an environmental ethic. For Habermas any attempt to get behind the concept of nature-in-itself is condemned. Hence to make claims for intrinsic value residing in the natural world places too much of a burden on the epistemological grounding of his framework. As such, he believes that theoretically one can satisfactorily mediate relations between society and nature without having to regard

nature as an end-in-itself. The environmental crisis may be best thought of as a social crisis. In short, due to the epistemological impossibility of communicative relations between humans and nature, a moral framework can not be directly ascribed to nature-in-itself⁵. However, regarding the natural world with compassion and decency is perfectly compatible with a transcendental standpoint. The good for nature must thus be derived from the good for humankind (Habermas 1982 pp. 238-250; see also Alford 1986 pp. 126-129; Whitebook 1979 pp. 52-53).

3.3.0. Habermas and the challenge of nature.

3.3.1. Epistemology and nature.

It is unsurprising from the account given above a number of commentators have disagreed with Habermas's stance to the natural world. In this section, the epistemological and ontological distinction of nature will be explored. Three main points are considered below. First Vogel questions whether the concept of *natura naturans* is tenable and suggest that nature should only be viewed as a social category. Alford suggests that non-instrumental approaches to nature can too yield fruitful knowledge. Finally, Dryzek argues for communicative proxies in the natural world and Eckersley extends this assertion into an idea of natural justice. All of these arguments will be briefly summarised before discussion.

Steve Vogel (1996) has questioned the whole notion of knowledge constitutive interests. Developing a social constructivist framework, he argues that the species can not be said to be working towards one interest or another. For Vogel, epistemologically the concept of *natura naturans* is has to be given up as nature can only be regarded as a social category (*Ibid.* p. 123). As such, human interests in nature are '*real social interests, which arise historically and also pass away*'. Once this insight is accepted, there are no longer strong reasons why such a detached, nomological approach to the natural environment by the natural sciences should be granted an epistemologically higher status

⁵ The links of normativity to language are discussed in depth next chapter.

due to some imagined equiprimordial grounding. Rather, for Vogel, scientists should see their work as part of a broader public discourse about the environment (*Ibid.* p. 124).

Alford (1986) highlights a related concern. He questions the notion of empirical-analytical sciences furnishing the only theoretically fruitful knowledge to nature as an assertion. Critically, he highlights the fact that there is little blending of Habermas's basic attitudes towards different domains of reality. In essence, as a function of the way in which Habermas construct the argument, his position is immutable. There can be no blending of different ways of knowing without a loss of theoretical efficacy. Alford comments that in any environmental problem a variety of attitudes need to come into play and the epistemological role of these knowledges should not be neglected (*Ibid.* p. 136-137). For instance, Alford criticises Habermas's approach for dismissing evidence from medical anthropology and the insights of non-instrumental approaches to nature, such as the diagnostic accuracy of hand-trembling and the role of talk therapy in healing patients.

A further critique comes from John Dryzek who hints at the possibility of developing a communicative relationship to nature (1990b pp. 204-210). Here, drawing upon scientific evidence for agency in nature, he provides analogues for communicative links from the natural world, such as body movements, flourishing, self-determination, all tied to a broader perspective of a relational philosophy (*Ibid.* pp. 206-207). Eckersley (1997) argues in similar vein to Dryzek that it is possible for nature to represent itself communicatively through 'grunts and gestures'. Further, through reviewing arguments by Habermas that human participants raise ethical questions concerning relations with non-human nature, she concludes that the interests of nature (all non-human species – including plants) may be represented vicariously (Eckersley 1997 pp. 13-14). These three criticisms will now be considered.

Vogel's main argument centres on the premise that nature is purely a social category. Such an argument obscures the ontological significance of *natura naturans* (that nature exists separately from us) from the epistemological significance of how we might furnish

knowledge upon the natural world. Though there is some force to Vogel criticisms of science as a broader social discourse, the problem with social constructivism is that we are left with the paradox that changes in our knowledge lead to changes in our physical reality. This results in the nonsensical position wherein by stopping all discourse upon environmental problems, environmental problems would cease to exist. This would be irrespective of any normative commitment to change consumption patterns around the world (see for instance Gandy 1996 p. 34-35). Vogel's comments thus undermine rationalist approaches to environmental management.

Alford's suggestion that non-instrumental, hence communicative relations to the natural world, may yield knowledge fruitful knowledge may also be held up to some scrutiny. There are two strands to the questions of non-instrumental relations to the natural world that are important to distinguish. First, a variety of attitudes can indeed come into play concerning the social mediation of the natural world, for instance a subjective aesthetic appreciation. However, these are human values, socially mediated in the communicative realm. They have no epistemological foundation to the natural world, only ontological relevance. In this sense, non-instrumental relations to nature can reveal knowledge: but only concerning our subjectivity and the ontological role that nature plays in our life, not about our knowledge of 'reality'.

Second, Alford larger claim, that non-instrumental relations to nature yield knowledge concerning 'reality', reverts to myth and magic. Hand trembling may well have diagnostic efficacy, but Alford needs to begin to rationalise such non-instrumental approaches and justify such claims with more precision. We have already seen the dangers of attempting to remove the grounding of claims from rational discursive redemption, and one could certainly interrogate Alford's argument. Where is he drawing his evidence? What are the exact techniques involved? Are there modern analogues to such techniques? Who are the patients? What social practices precede the meeting between patient and hand-trembler? What accuracy is involved? Are certain dispositions better suited to hand-trembling than

other? By removing statements from such critical discussion, and hence founding such practices within a rational framework, Alford only articulates an ideology.

Finally, the comments of Dryzek and Eckersley also elide a key rationalist understanding of Habermas connected to the theory of language. For Habermas, we will never know the consciousness of non-humans or have access to the goods of nature in itself: specifically as we cannot enter into communicative relations with the natural world. This position contrasts with that of absent human partners in dialogue, such as future generations. Whilst being wary of paternalism, decentred modern consciousness projects the idea of a linguistically mediated universal morality. For nature no such proxy exists.

In such a manner, Dryzek overlooks the critical idea of communicative ethics by relating such concerns to the biosphere. Dryzek uses the notion of communication interpretively, with communicative meaning perceived naturalistically from the world. He equates such perception with communication (1990b p. 209). While one may empathise with this stance, it moves a long way from the raising of validity claims towards consensual realisation of a generalisable interest. Habermas's communicative programme developed in such a way loses its critical edge. The perception of flourishing is not a proxy of communicative action in the natural world.

Thomas Nagel (1974) has illustrated this point well in his paper 'What is it like to be a bat?'. Through his examination of the mind-body problem, Nagel explores the idea of consciousness and the insurmountable problem of any attempts to gain access to the goods of nature in themselves. For Nagel, there are no proxies that enable us to intrinsically understand otherness. Relating to the problem of 'batness', he argues that though one can imagine a life of flying around, perceiving objects through echo-location, hanging upside down and eating insects, such thoughts only shed light on the problem of 'what it would be like for me to behave as a bat behaves'. This is categorically different from the questions of what it is like 'for a bat to be a bat'. Any organism's conception of

objects in the world thus rests on a completely different subjective character of experience. Beyond the species barrier, there can be no commensurate analogues.

Eckersley also elides this distinction. Her claim that the interests of nature (all non-human species – including plants) should be represented is a category mistake. The interests of people with an aesthetic-subjective appreciation of the natural world are not the same as the interests of nature-in-itself. Further, as with Dryzek, she conflates perception of language in the natural world with communicative action. Though intuitively Eckersley's comment that 'a just common structure of political action must be common to all of those effected, irrespective of whether they are able to speak' (1997 p. 15) seems correct, attempts to practice such convictions are epistemologically tenuous. In short, questions of justice must appeal to a generalised interest and can only be achieved via human valuation. Essentially, the contractual reciprocity that underlines human morality cannot hold in the same way to nature.

3.3.2. The distinctiveness of ecology.

The distinction Habermas makes between the natural, the social and the emancipatory sciences has a particular bearing upon the ecological sciences. As mentioned Habermas believes each of the sciences to be an exemplary mode of inquiry each tied to a specific pursuit of knowledge forged through deep-seated human interests in the world. As such, the natural sciences are concerned with the development of laws to predict and control the natural environment. The social sciences are those disciplines concerned with renewing cultural heritage through interpretation of texts and works from the past and as a consequence making intelligent the process of communication. Finally the emancipatory science are concerned with an analysis of power and ideology. For Habermas, as mentioned, the goal is to establish the role and limits to each of these sciences. The main distinction for Habermas is between the natural and the social sciences and this will be examined first.

When Habermas wrote *Knowledge and Human Interests* his discussion of science engaged with the positivism dispute within German Sociology in the 1960s. Habermas's central attack upon positivism was to refute the claim that it was independent of any normative commitment, as it was tied to a species interest. His engagement, however, needs to be reviewed in light of the subsequent insights of the post-empiricists, and in particular Thomas Kuhn's critique of positivism. Kuhn problematised the deductive model of science through highlighting the sociological aspects of the production of natural scientific knowledge. As such, rather than the scientist as developing laws from hypothesis, neatly separating their theoretical propositions from the facts of the world they observe, science instead was shown to be a hermeneutic activity involving a community of researchers (see Kuhn 1962: for discussion in the context of Habermas see Held 1980 p. 392-393; Outhwaite 1994 p. 35; Vogel 1996 p. 114-115).

It should be noted that Habermas is aware of the discursive nature of scientific practice. Indeed, he states of scientific practice that

'the only propositions that count as true are those about which an uncompelled and permanent consensus can be generated by means of a scientific method, then reality means nothing but the sum of those states of fact about which we can obtain final opinions' (Habermas 1972 p. 95; quoted in Vogel 1996 p. 116-117, emphasis in original).

The problem is hence not that Habermas denies discursive practices within the natural sciences, but rather the rather rigid boundaries he draws around such insights. For Habermas there is a strict division between the constitutional features of science and the subjectivity of the scientific practitioners. He believes that though discursive activity is a part of the broader hermeneutic processes surrounding science, the underlying values guiding the researcher are non-discursive, and derived from the 'independent realm of monological purposive-rational action where hermeneutic categories do not apply' (Vogel 1996 p. 119). Thus for Habermas, as a consequence of our anthropological endowment, there is only one theoretical context for the constitution of natural science. Habermas does not admit the post-empiricist insight that there is not one but many socially mediated theoretical contexts out of which competing facts may arise.

This situation is further complicated as the field of ecology takes up a special relationship between expert and lay understandings of the world. Of all of the sciences, ecology is perhaps one of the most accessible. From the advent of naturalist clubs in the 1850s, to the amateur naturalists of today; perhaps more than any other science the division between expert practitioner and casual observer is a particularly fuzzy notion. Furthermore, the way in which ecological ideas lend themselves to our day to day experience has meant that the discourse of ecology has become communicatively accessible. Furthermore, due to their political nature, ecological problems lend themselves to broader communicative rationalisation within the lifeworld of citizens. As Eder (1996 p. 215) notes: 'the symbolic packages of environmentalism have taken on a format that enables their use in public communication and debate: they have become cognitively well-organised packages'. The implications of this are that, with regard to objectivating discourses on the natural world, both lay and expert alike may share elements of a vocabulary and thus ecological concepts take on new modes of social meaning. As such, the reproduction of knowledge furnished through such discourses is less bounded than Habermas allows. The character of scientific fact through debates in participatory fora becomes more amenable to sociological mediation. Ecology is not just a means of describing the world, it too can be related as a political ideology.

A final related point could be made in reference to whether knowledge furnished by the ecological sciences can be adequately captured through the deductive model. Ecology has undergone numerous paradigm changes in the past 100 years that would seem to refute this claim. From Clement's notion of succession and the superorganism at the beginning of the last century, to the idea of an ecology of chaos and complex systems toward its close, a nomological approach would not seem to adequately grasp the key insights of ecological learning. Even the exemplar in physical systems thinking within ecology, that of Tansley's concept of the ecosystems, has been holistically translated through Odum's 'functional unit of ecology' (for an overview see Worster 1994). A key learning to arise from the discipline is the concept that ecological properties emerge

together and cannot be grasped reductively. As such, the Habermasian approach would seem to be insufficient to grasp the development of knowledge within the more unified, holistic systems theory approach that has been hegemonic within the field from the 1960s onwards.

3.3.3. Anthropocentrism and ecological rationality.

As mentioned earlier, Habermas denies any epistemological purchase on the category of nature-in-itself. As such, his stance towards valuation of the natural world will be correspondingly anthropocentric. In light of this anthropocentrism, Habermas might seem to offer only limited scope for debates concerning environmental protection and management. How can a schema that derives the good for humans alone too derive the good for nature? With this concluding section, some reviews from Green theory will be described in what Eckersley has termed 'failed promise of critical theory' (Eckersley 1992 pp. 97-117).

Eckersley claims the two 'most problematic aspects' of the Habermasian perspective are firstly that, unlike the earlier critical theorists, it privileges the emancipation of humans over that of nature. Secondly, that it claims we only know nature in as far as we can control it. As such only instrumental value may be accorded. Correspondingly this legitimates the exploitation of the natural world and does not challenge dominant anthropocentric perspectives. Indeed it is precisely this challenge that Eckersley sees as fundamental to any political theory adequately attempting to deal with environmental problems (Eckersley 1992, p.104).

Eckersley's critique of Habermas, however, does not adequately deal with the historic complexity of the Enlightenment and with it the concept of reason. As mentioned earlier, the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* centres on two opposing views of reason; that viewing reason as domination and that viewing reason as possessing an immanent emancipatory logic latent under current conditions of modernity. Eckersley problematises Habermas for

renouncing the notion of reconciliation with nature and hence betraying early Frankfurt school thought. However this characterisation misses the mark.

Habermas is concerned to develop the potential of reason and parry the totalising critique of counter discourses. In order to salvage the historical-philosophical legacy of modernity he examines epistemological questions at the heart of the dialectic. It is as a consequence of this analysis that Habermas's anthropocentric stance towards our dealings with the natural world is forged. As such, his work can only be viewed as progression of the insights of Horkheimer and Adorno. There is no 'failed promise of critical theory'; rather such a perspective comes from an ecologicistic reading of the tension between Enlightenment and modernity. Eckersley overlooks the core of Habermas's insight: that of the underdeveloped potential of modern structures of consciousness within a partial modernity and the ideological implications of ecologism.

Habermas provides neither a positivist nor a romantic view of nature. Rather he gives purchase an essential question: 'whether there can be an ecological rationality derived from the full development of the communicative and democratic dimensions of social life' (Gandy 1997b p. 241 my emphasis).

Eckersley does not sufficiently differentiate issues of epistemology in her critique of Habermas, and the failure to do so confounds her second criticism of anthropocentrism of the modern worldview, wherein issues of ethics are treated in isolation to such insights. This will now be explored in more depth.

The term anthropocentrism quite literally means 'human-centredness'. It implies that everything in the universe can be described in terms of human values (Watson 1983 p. 245). Hence this is an ontological as opposed to an ethical statement. As Hayward notes, though anthropocentrism can be criticised ontologically as an inflated conception of the human beings place in the universe, it is an error to categorise this as an ethical mistake (Hayward 1998 p. 42).

Alternative non-anthropocentric models of value have been placed forward from the environmental ethics literature, and three dominant conceptions include pathocentrism (that sentient beings count morally), biocentrism (that all life counts morally), and ecocentrism (that all of nature counts morally) (Krebs 1997 p. 269). Though there are obviously different ethical conceptions within each of these notions, they are all non-anthropocentric and hence retain the notion of the intrinsic value of non-human nature; that is value a value of the thing-in-itself; a value independent of the human valuer.

The concept of intrinsic value has been examined in some depth by Hayward (1998 pp. 21-41). who notes that it supports a broad thesis that non-humans should be given moral consideration irrespective of human interests. Hayward develops a convincing argument that the concept of intrinsic value is redundant, essentially being unable to convey the notion of the good of natural beings in themselves, without reference to a subjective valuer. Hayward argues that intrinsic value is non-derivative (i.e. non-instrumental) and objective. He notes that any category that may be predicated to capture the notion of the good of nature; whether this be a measure of a state of affair (for example flourishing), or a quality that an entity possessed, or the capacities involved in having a good, are all categories that fundamentally can be traced to the existence of human valuers (*Ibid.* p. 34-35). Essentially, these categories are cognitive⁶. In the absence of having access to the goods of non-humans (something that could only be achieved through achieving intersubjective relations with them) the concept of intrinsic value is dependent on human estimates. Moreover, the substantivism involved in environmental ethics falls short of modern minimal ethics, defined in terms of proceduralism (this is discussed in more depth next chapter).

A second problems arises through a confusion running through some of the environmental ethics literature, that in some way morality can be read from nature, obscurely tied to the notion that such truths may be derived from knowledge produced from ecological science. G. E. Moore drew attention to this as the naturalistic fallacy,

⁶ However, see O'Neill (1997b p.38-39) as to whether flourishing can be accounted for in such a manner.

premising that what ought to be can not be derived from what is. Though it is reasonable to say that science may be able to shed light on moral choices, in terms of what 'is', it more dubious to suggest that moral imperatives (what ought) may arise from ecological facts (Popkin and Stroll 1986 p. 52). To extend ecology as a meta-narrative is to be caught between Scylla and Charybdis. On the one hand, accepting the Habermas's epistemological insight that an ideological view of science is pathological within modernity. appeals to ecologically based ethics to reveal a way out of our modern impasse are fundamentally misplaced. On the other, referring to deep ecology as a ontological basis to engage in the world once more has the pitfalls associated with a disavowal of theoretical and communicative rationality, and the normative and emancipatory role of such reason.

The general problem underlying an environmental ethics approach towards natural valuation may thus be rendered as the fact that issues concerning ethics can not be dealt with in isolation to those concerning epistemology. As Gandy notes, to do so will result in 'spacious appeals to nature-based political ideologies that obscure the capacity for historical change in human societies' (Gandy 1997b pp. 231-232).

Though thus one can empathise with the intentions of environmental ethicists, the concept of intrinsic value or attempts to read an ethical doctrine from nature are both epistemologically incoherent and furthermore do not really achieve basic aims. Hence, as Habermas cautions, though 'our intuitions tell us that attempts to open up moral access to nature-in-itself are by no means absurd; but we should not permit ourselves to be cajoled by these intuitions into ignoring the difficulties that we encounter here' (Habermas 1982 p. 248). Rather than pinning hopes on a wholesale change in the value systems of people, through appeal to such a nature based ideology, better purchase may be made from a more radical engagement with existing moral frameworks (Nelson p. 263 1979).

Any possible ethics must reside with an anthropocentric framework. As Hayward notes, no matter ‘whatever is of value in the world, only humans appreciate it in the form of value’ (Hayward 1994 p. 53 emphasis in original). All valuation is thus necessarily human based. Though, as described above, anthropocentrism may ontologically suspect it is not guilty of what more accurately be described a speciesism; that of discrimination on the basis of species (Hayward 1998 p. 42-46). As a consequence of an anthropocentric starting point, it is perhaps best to conceive a progression of our relationship to the natural world in terms of an enlightened humanism.

The term humanism can be used to convey a number of meanings (see O’Neill 1994 pp. 21-29). however, at its heart is the notion that the nature of being human is unique to humans. As such humanness can not be adequately explained through reference to religion or nature (Hayward 1994. p. 53). Two considerations arise from this. First, without divine assurance, human self-knowledge should proceed in humility. Second, features of human life can not be accounted for in terms used to describe the rest of nature. As such, a humanist perspective for our relations to the natural world should pay particular attention to questions of human autonomy and emancipation within an ecological era (*Ibid.* p. 74).

As Hayward notes:

‘the emancipation of human creativity, the realisation of freedom in a humanistic sense, [should be conceived] by developing potential in all spheres of life – affective, creative, spiritual, cognitive and so on. This is what I would call a distinctly humanist aim... Human flourishing need not depend on the ability to force nature to conform to human ends... but rather in terms of attempts to develop human capacities of internal development and adaptation... It may therefore be argued that if human emancipation is conceived in terms of learning to live within natural limits, rather than continually push them back, this will mean the development of self mastery, discipline and a responsible exercise of freedom... the pursuit of human goods is not intrinsically hostile to the goods of the rest of nature’ (1994 p. 75).

Fundamentally, an enlightened humanist conception of value would aim to show that environmental integrity is not anathema to Enlightenment ideals; indeed it depends upon

the emancipatory values at the heart of the Enlightenment programme. Through examining the inter-connectiveness between environmental and social quality, so the environment will enjoy a form of rights through being articulated in relation to broader human discourses on justice, equity and freedom.

Thus, as Habermas notes, there is no need to regard nature as an end in itself in order to properly mediate between society and nature (Habermas 1982 p. 247). Rather, where purchase is needed for environmental management is through an understanding of the socio-economic context in which nature is objectified. Habermas quotes Whitebook in concluding that the 'proper norms for regulating between society and nature would somehow follow from the communicatively conceived idea of the human good life without reference to nature as an end-in-itself' (Whitebook 1979 p. 61; quoted in Habermas 1982 p. 247). A radical form of humanism is thus likely to provide more political purchase an idea of these 'proper norms' than those forged through a nature-based philosophy.

It is thus through a Habermasian perspective that we may be able understand the social mediations of ecological questions, in order to get a critical purchase on a society out of which a politics emerges and upon which it has to make an impact. Essentially by abandoning the modern project we risk undermining any epistemological purchase on environmental problems.

3.4.0. Concluding thoughts.

Habermas's early work represents an ambitious exercise to restore both a normative dimension and an epistemological foundation to critical theory. It reflects a progression from the stance of the theorists discussed at the beginning of this chapter through a theoretical focus on the possibilities of Enlightenment, wherein a 'critique of modern society may be pursued within the parameters of modern consciousness' (White 1986 p. 425). Indeed this aspect of his work should be considered as an important counterpoint

to post-structuralist writers such as Foucault and Derrida (see Habermas 1985; d'Entrèves and Benhabib 1997).

His work has also demonstrated important ontological and epistemological relations to the natural world. The concept of *natura naturans* nature plays a vital role in the mediation of our own belief systems and values tied as it is to the material basis for the reproduction of human life. As Gandy (1997b p. 637) notes, 'Nature is not merely a physical backcloth to human history but also forms part of a psychological metastructure in perpetual tension with the critical and reflexive discourses of modernity'. This ontological relevance of the natural world may be examined through practical discourse, particularly subjective and expressive forms of reasoning. In contrast, our epistemological purchase upon nature may be examined through empirical and analytical sciences. Each of these types of knowledge does not have access to the goods to nature in themselves. Each develops particular actor world relations, the subjective-aesthetic understandings of ordinary people or the instrumental view of the science. Ecology mediates a particular role between these views, both as a political idea of human-world relation and epistemologically concerning our transcendental knowledge of nature. Of importance thus is the development of framework through which such understandings may come together and be critically mediated.

Habermas provides a theoretical grounding to politically conceive of a relationship for mediating our relations to the natural world. An enlightened humanist perspective demonstrates that it is possible for environmental commitments to be made from within an anthropocentric framework. Habermas's critical theory retains the normative idea of a transformative potential. Through the creation of spaces where our relationships and values to each other and to the natural world may be explored, so ideology may be exposed. Only a politically astute and socially connected framework is likely to succeed in gaining environmental security.

As noted, there are a number of conceptual problems with regard to Habermas's development of the epistemological foundations and his knowledge constitutive interests. That said, it should be noted that much of this criticism directed towards Habermas is aporetic. Alternative transcendental or materialist conceptions are equally disputable (Alford 1985 p.123-124). To his credit, Habermas has been willing to engage with a number of his critics (Habermas 1973; Habermas 1982). Indeed in part through this engagement, that Habermas 'came to the conclusion that it was of secondary significance to defend or establish critical theory in epistemological terms' (Habermas 1992 p. 192). As such, Habermas has revised his strong transcendental claims of constitutive interests within his subsequent work on communication towards moved towards a reconstructive model of the sciences and tied to his own theoretical developments in action and language. It is particularly this aspect of his work on such themes as communicative rationality, discourse ethics and universal pragmatics that is of significance to a radicalised notion of environmental governance. This shift to a philosophy of communication will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 4.

The promise of communicative action.

4.0. Introduction.

In 1971 Habermas left Frankfurt and moved to the Starnberg research institute in Bavaria. Here he acted as Director of the Max Planck Institute for the Study of the Conditions of Life in the Scientific Technical World, before a return to Frankfurt in 1982. This move marked a break in his overall intellectual programme. This break was characterised through the development from a focus on epistemology to that of communication within his work, culminating with the writing of *The Theory of Communicative Action* in 1981. The insights of Habermas's communicative turn will be the focus of this chapter.

For the purposes of this investigation, Habermas's communicative programme will be reviewed within three broad themes. These are:

- i) an analysis of rationality and action,
- ii) an analysis of moral and political life, and
- iii) an analysis of society and the pathologies of modernity.

It is suggested that through the review of these themes, a set of theoretical heuristics to both justify and interrogate participatory processes for environmental decision-making may be developed.

The chapter is structured in five sections. In the first part, the differences between Habermas's work on knowledge constitutive interests and his communication theory will be examined, particularly in response to some of the criticism reviewed in the last chapter.

Second, Habermas's concept of rationality and action will be explored. This section aims to show how it is possible for actors to contribute to rational debate not only through

discussion of objectivity through instrumental rationality, but furthermore through discussions of normativity and subjectivity. As such, participants within a decision-making process can discuss and come to rational conclusions upon environmental management decisions through making claims as to the validity of their argument in terms of the social and subjective world. It is argued that through such discourses in particular, the social mediation of natural environmental values may best be captured.

Third, Habermas's discussion of moral and political life will be explored. It is argued that his separation of issues of the good and the just provides insight for the prospect of consensus within participatory processes. His programme of communicative ethics will further be discussed in terms of the capacity for participants to engage in post-conventional moral reasoning. It is suggested that such a 'decentred understanding' of the world specifically fosters discussion of the *other*, and hence may facilitate the discussion of environmental themes.

Fourth, Habermas's view of society and his ideas upon the pathologies of modernity are reviewed in terms of his discussion of system and lifeworld. Such a review assists in considering the role of institutions and expertise within participatory processes, and furthermore spotlights the centrality of process within such methods.

Finally, the chapter will consider some criticisms levelled at Habermas's communicative programme, in terms of his distinctions between moral and political life, and the implication of these discussions for environmental decision-making. In conclusion, Habermas's communicative action is summarised and ideas are developed to interrogate and evaluate the use of participatory processes.

4.1.0. Orientations.

'The role of *Knowledge and Human Interests* has changed in my mind, since I came to the conclusion that it was of secondary significance to defend or establish critical theory in epistemological terms. This is what I didn't see when I wrote the book... [I] was fascinated by methodological problems and gave them great importance. I don't any

more. But that does not mean I dismiss them. Today I think one should go ahead from a different angle' (Habermas 1992 p. 192).

The above shift in Habermas's analytic focus marks a significant moment in his work orientating from a philosophy of consciousness to a philosophy of communication. This development of his work can be read at two levels; both in terms of the normative structure of communication and in more concrete terms of action, specifically that of claim making performances. As such, this focus upon language represents an applied turn for Habermas; a means of accessing social and political action.

For Habermas, the challenges to his critical theory, as well as the aporias of Enlightenment articulated by Adorno and Horkheimer, required a means of refocusing and drawing together some of the themes anticipated in his earlier work. Habermas needed to conceive a theoretical grounding for the possibility of critical social transformation. He needed thus to develop 'the possibility of rational moral and political discourse in the public sphere of modern societies' (Outhwaite 1994 p. 39). In essence he had to bring together the various strands of his critical theory in a way that would coherently provide such a theoretical perspective without falling into some of the pitfalls of philosophical foundationalism; one that ascribes to a universal concept of knowledge or morality.

Habermas's focus on communication enables him to get beyond the philosophy of the subject by recasting the pitfalls associated with a subject-object distinction. For Habermas, rather than viewing the model of 'subject- confronting-object' in the world as theoretically pivotal, an intersubjective locus forges attention to linguistically mediated relations among subjects. This shift hence highlights the primacy of other types of rationality than instrumental reason. Rationality is no longer defined in terms of the efficient mastery of objects, but rather in terms of validity and consensus within intersubjective relations.

Habermas can thus recast the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* through a new lens. Through asserting the primacy of intersubjective relations, modes of domination and emancipation are not derived through instrumental relations between subject and object. Rather, they are derived through communicative relations. Such a move fundamentally cements the relationship between normativity and language. The significance of these insights is explained in more detail in due course. However, before going on to consider his work on communicative action in more depth, it is important to outline broadly the main theoretical shifts his work, in response to some of the criticisms outlined previously (see section 3. 3), and how these orientations set the stage for Habermas's communicative programme.

4.1.1. The shift between Habermas's early and recent thought.

There are two main distinctions that Habermas makes after his theory of knowledge constitutive interests that anticipate Habermas's work on communication. These are the concept of self-reflection and the strong transcendental claims Habermas made in forging the sciences to their interest. Both will now be discussed.

The relation between reflection and emancipation that Habermas draws in *Knowledge and Human Interests* was criticised by some authors for conflating epistemological and historical dimensions. In his '*Post-Script to Knowledge and Human Interests*' Habermas (1973) thus clarifies and distinguishes two distinct meanings within the concept and the role of reflection; on the one hand reflections upon the conditions of knowledge and action, and on the other that of critical self-reflection. He names these *rational reconstruction* and *self-reflection* respectively.

In the former sense, rational reconstruction refers to a reflective examination of the operation and conditions of possible knowledge and action, with the aim of explicating general rules of competency in a specific area. Rational reconstruction hence concerns a reflection upon the type of competence employed by subjects to function within a rule governed system. For Habermas, as will be seen, his reconstructive theory focuses on the

know-how and cognition of language. This type of reflection hence differs from the transcendental interests highlighted in the last chapter, insofar as it refers to empirical competencies by empirical subjects (Habermas 1973 pp. 182-184; for discussion see Held 1980 pp. 326-327; Thompson 1982 pp. 118-119).

Self-reflection refers more to a traditional sense of reflection as critique of ideology. Here knowledge is viewed as interest bound, and through reflection upon such interest, it is possible to uncover subjectivity. Self-reflection encourages the subject to question the unquestioned practice of knowledge. As such, ideology is exposed and the subject emancipated (Habermas 1973 p. 182; for discussion see McCarthy 1978 pp. 100-102).

These two elements of reflection are closely tied together and are essential for the progression of an emancipatory critical theory. For Habermas, any critique of ideology cannot avoid rational reconstruction. For instance, within his communication theory, to understand any notion of power and ideology distorting communication, there needs to be an understanding of 'undistorted communication'. Within his work, his reconstructive theory of universal pragmatics reflects upon the necessary competencies of subjects for communication.

The second main development in Habermas's work in the transition from epistemology to communication is to revise the strong transcendental claims that Habermas makes between species interest constituting the possible objects of scientific experience. Within '*Postscript*', Habermas (1973) makes a distinction to lessen this connection, between what he terms action and discourse. By action Habermas means social interaction and the exchange of information through language. By discourse, he refers to a mode of communication in which actors search for arguments that aim more towards co-operation and understanding. With this move, Habermas maintains that though the

'object domains of the sciences still can be said to be constituted by interests that operate at the level of action, the validity claims that these sciences raise are subject to the unitary conditions of discursive argumentation' (Thompson 1982 p. 119.).

Hence validity claims raised through social action are now subject to discursive redemption. In this way Habermas manages to retain the interested features of knowledge, but modified within a communicative model, with the technical and practical features of knowledge drawn out within a relationship between action and discourse.

With regard to the more concrete concerns of the thesis, these theoretical moves provide a basis for participants within a dialogue to assess a rational basis for understanding. As will be explained, the notion of the interactive competence as a quasi-transcendental feature of communication means that modern subjects have the capacity, specifically to test the validity claims of actors through different types of discourses. In short, we each have within us an intuitive know-how that enables us rationally to discuss and justify the basis for our actions. Habermas's programme of communicative action will now be explored in some depth.

4.2.0. A programme of Communicative Action.

4.2.1. Introduction.

Habermas's communicative programme is developed throughout a number of works, most notably the two volume *Theory of Communicative Action*, and throughout the rest of this chapter the ideas contained within these texts will be explored (see Habermas 1984, 1987a, 1990a, 1993). There are a number of sociological themes that Habermas develops within these works, and for the purposes of this review they may be summarised as follows:-

- i) how do we approach the problem of rationality and social action?
- ii) how can we view morality and political life?
- iii) how do we conceive society and the pathologies of modern life?

It is argued that Habermas's development of each of these aspects of his work have significance for participatory processes and in particular environmental decision-making. It is contended that first, through his discussion of different models of rationality and action, a broader platform for considering the social aspects of environmental problems

can be attained. Second, his ideas upon discourse ethics and the development of moral consciousness draw attention to the idea of consensus within policy arenas. Finally, Habermas's view of rationalisation and society through the dual lens of lifeworld and system gives theoretical purchase to the relationship between ordinary and expert understandings of the world, and furthermore what institutions may best facilitate such knowledge. Each of these three key ideas will now be traced in more detail.

4.2.2. Reconstruction, rationality and action.

One of the key themes within *The Theory of Communicative Action* is how our beliefs and actions might be considered to be rational. This section will briefly examine some of the arguments that Habermas provides for an understanding of rationality and how communication is fundamentally tied to questioning and reaffirming those beliefs. This section thus aims to cement the links between communication, rationality and understanding; and how such a framework is useful when considering models of action.

Essentially, to augment this programme, Habermas develops insights from linguistic theory through the lens of rational reconstruction. As mentioned, rational reconstruction involves reflection on the conditions of possible knowledge and action, with the aim of explaining general rules of human competency in a given area or context. Habermas believes that through reflection on the structure of language, we are able to construct the competencies needed by an actor using sentences aimed at reaching understanding. Habermas thus contends that there are a number of implicit formal-pragmatic relations within language that form the basis of a *universal pragmatics*. Hence it is Habermas's aim to:

'grasp structural properties of processes of reaching understanding, from which we can derive the general presuppositions of communicative action. ... [T]his is not a question of the predicates an observer uses when describing the processes of reaching understanding, but of the pre-theoretical knowledge of competent speakers, who can distinguish situations in which they are causally exerting an influence upon others from those in which they are coming to an understanding with them, and who know when their attempts have failed. Once we are able to specify the standards upon which the distinctions are implicitly based, we will be in a position to explain the concept of reaching understanding' (Habermas 1984 p. 286; emphasis in original).

There are two main points that Habermas distinguishes in the above passage, and they are pivotal to his project overall. First, the distinction between causally influencing people and coming to an understanding with them, or in other words between the strategic and communicative use of language. Strategic action can be thought of in terms of the model of rationality and action highlighted in chapter 2; namely that articulated within neo-classical economic theory and other rational choice theorists. In this human behaviour is viewed through the lens where individual actors confront a world of objects in terms of their self-interested behaviour. Action is thus seen as efficient behaviour in terms of the realisation of individual goals, through egocentric calculations of utility. As we have already seen, such a model is not a particularly meaningful concept of action¹. Habermas thus aims to develop a broader understanding of rationality and action tied to communication.

The second point to highlight is that actors possess an implicit 'know-how' of the rules of language. This communicative competence is important, as through a cognitive mastery of discourse actors are able to rationally assess the validity of claims made within a dialogue. Furthermore, such a model provides a means of examining the use of language strategically, it provides a counterfactual heuristic through which power and ideology may be exposed. These aspects will now be considered in more depth.

Habermas begins to develop a model of communicative rationality through developing insights from J. L. Austin (1962) and John Searle (1969) upon the illocutionary force of language. The illocutionary force of an utterance contends that when speakers *say* something they also do something (Habermas 1984 p. 289). For Habermas this foundation of language can be classified within three main types of rationality or validity claims that are raised every time a speaker makes an utterance aimed towards reaching an understanding. These validity claims are truth, normative legitimacy and truthfulness or sincerity. Fundamentally, if a speaker can redeem the validity claims raised within speech acts, then these claims can be thought of as rational (*Ibid.* p. 325-326).

¹ See 2.4.5.

There are three main types of performative verbs that characterise the speech acts to their corresponding validity claims raised above. They are as follows:

- i) constative speech acts which raise truth claims
- ii) regulative speech acts which raise normative claims
- iii) expressive speech acts which raise sincerity claims

(Habermas 1984 pp. 99, 325-326).

Hence for speakers to understand one another within a dialogue they must have mastered and distinguished between the use of different modes of language use, different performatives and their corresponding validity claims.

Habermas articulates the idea of communicative competence within a broader framework of rationality and with it different corresponding models of action. He aims to distinguish the relations between different ontological conceptions of the world and in turn their associated action frameworks. Such ontology has been made available to us, Habermas argues, through a rationalised lifeworld; it is thus specifically a feature of a modern structure of consciousness (*Ibid.* p. 43). The significance of modernity to our capacity for communicative action will be developed in considerable depth later. However, it is first necessary to explore how these relationships between different worlds and their associated aspects of rationality form his model of communicative action. The following summarises four action concepts and the model rationality articulated within each between actor and the world (see Habermas 1984 pp. 75-101; for discussion see Held 1980 pp. 337-338; White 1988 pp. 37-40).

- The teleological model.

Within this conception of rationality, actors relate to a world of objects and states of affairs. The teleological model describes two basic types of rational relationships between an actor and the objective domain. The first of these is that of an objective appraisal of the world, i.e. does an actor's perceptions fit with what can be said to be objectively 'true'? The second concerns bringing the world in to line with an actor's desires or intentions. In such a way rationality can be described as the successful manipulation of

the objective world. The action associated with this domain can be instrumental, when dealing with external nature, or can be strategic when dealing with social actions. As such, possible relations towards the objectified world concern the truthfulness of opinions upon it and the success of interventions within it. As mentioned, such a model is indicative of the utility maximisation discussed in chapter 2. The relations to this world can thus be judged in terms of criteria corresponding to their truth or efficacy respectively (Habermas 1984 pp. 87-88).

- The norm-guided model

Within this concept of rationality actors relate not only to a single objectified world, but also to the normative context of the social world. The normative context arises relationally and can only maintain legitimacy when recognised as having social force or currency by valid actors. As such, action within this domain of reality is developed through intersubjective relations. The relation of action to the social world may be rationalised by actors through the concepts of normative correctness or normative legitimacy. Correspondingly, action may be assessed as to whether it deviates from a given norm, on the one hand, or whether the norm itself is legitimate on the other. Behaviour can thus be described in terms of both its cognitive and motivational aspects. To make the claim for normative legitimacy, Habermas contends that actors have an intuitive sense of the 'ought' quality of norms; as to whether they truly constitute generalisable interests (Habermas 1984 pp. 88-90). In this way we can begin to distinguish universal moral standards from more individual realisations of the good within a rational framework.

- The dramaturgical model.

The dramaturgical model is related to the above models of action, but here it is the subjective world of actors that are revealed through an individual's actions. Specifically this realm examines how the performance of action reveals something of the actor's subjectivity. As such, this model is concerned with how in dialogue, individuals express their own desires, feelings, and hopes and how in turn they represent this to others. In

this way dramaturgical action is the reflexive character of self-presentation before others. For Habermas, this mode may be open to rationalisation through examining what an actor may articulate about themselves, their use of language, their feelings and desires. In this sense, actions may be assessed in terms of their truthfulness or sincerity (see Habermas 1984 pp. 90-93). Furthermore, the hearer may be able to explore the hiatus between intention and whether the ensuing actions fulfil the expressed intention. As dramaturgical action essentially deals with a relationship between an objective external world and the subjective internal world, the expressive and aesthetic language used within claims to this would be of particular importance in examining relations of the self in terms of nature. This model of action can further be captured in terms of subjective reflection, and hence shed light onto how the ego is projected onto the external world. Such reflection is a means of examining and probing false consciousness (Habermas 1984. p.94). The uncovering of self-deception may be facilitated through reflective examination of one's thoughts and practices; and this may be particularly facilitated through the communicative model of rationality discussed next.

- The communicative model.

The communicative model of rationality acts as a linguistically mediated overarching system through which all the other preceding models of rationality may come into play. For Habermas, the communicative competence of actors allows them to grasp and bring together simultaneously the teleological, norm-guided and dramaturgical aspects of rationality for the purpose of co-ordinating action (Habermas 1984. pp. 94-95). What this means is that actors can distinguish and reflect upon their objective, social and subjective worlds respectively. From this, actors come to understand each others' stances in relation to the claims made in these worlds; 'they are able to negotiate a common definition of the situation' (*Ibid.* p. 95). In such a way, language plays an interpretative role. Actors relativise their utterances in the understanding that their validity may be contested by other actors. In this way actors are thus able to co-ordinate their actions through a consensus on how to proceed arising from this understanding (Habermas 1984 p. 99).

The communicative model of rationality is thus one forged through the domain of language. Rational understanding can be intuitively grasped by each individual actor through the mastering of a communicative competence and reflecting this onto a pre-interpreted lifeworld. What this means is that people involved in interaction have an intuitive sense of how to test the claims made within speech acts; they have a culturally ingrained preunderstanding. Actors are able to reflect upon the speech act made and understand it in relation to its corresponding model of rationality. There are no single correct interpretations. Rather, the task is to relativise interpretations to coincide sufficiently. In other words, to understand another's actions is to be rationally motivated to accept the content of their claims (Habermas 1984 pp. 100-101). In this way, communicative action is neither reducible to normative or strategic imperatives, but rather is forged from the need for co-operation rationally to progress the lifeworld. The function of language is thus aimed towards communicative understanding, with the purpose of forging action through a consensual plan of agreement.

The relationships between different types of validity claims and their associated actor-world relations within a general model of communication action are summarised in Table 3 (developed from Habermas 1984 p. 329).

Table 3: A model of communicative action

Models of action	Domain of Reality	Type of Speech act	Discourse	Theme	Validity Claim	Attitude
Teleological towards understanding	Objective world	Constative	Theoretical	Representation of states of affairs	Truth	Objectivating
Teleological towards strategic action	Objective world	Perlocutions Imperatives	Strategic	Influencing one's opposite number	Effectiveness	Objectivating
Normative	Social world	Regulative	Practical	Interpersonal relation	Rightness	Norm-conforming
Dramaturgical	Subjective world.	Expressive	Therapeutic	Speaker's intention	Truthfulness or sincerity	Expressive
Communicative	All worlds	Communicative	Explicative	Understanding	Intelligibility	Reflective

To illustrate how such a model can be conceived as a more meaningful way of viewing rationality, I will use the example described in chapter two concerning my experiences of Sharkham Point on the Devon Coast. As will be remembered, this example highlighted the difficulties of sufficiently capturing plural relations to the environment through the model of rational economic man (see 2.4.3). In particular, this difficulty was confounded in the attempt to distil environmental values into a single economic figure.

With regard to a model of communicative action, the first major point to make is that in the Sharkham Point example I did indeed make claims to the objective external world, the world of social relations, and the subjective world of the self. But now rather than these being conceived as meaningless unless reduced to a form of instrumental value, each can be judged according to their themes and validity claims. As such, my claims described the world of objects; that of the mudstone cliffs, the rare curl bunting, and goldilocks aster, as a form of truth. Those specific rocks, birds and grasses, I contend, make up the physical environment of the Point. In particular, my claims touched upon the aesthetic sphere, on the relations between the objective world of things in terms of the sincerity of my subjective feelings towards them. As such, Sharkham Point may be described for me not only as a place of drama and beauty, but also in terms of my relation to it as a lived landscape. Here reflection moves towards self-reflection; Sharkham Point, as will be remembered was a place where I went for solace after the death of my father, and a place of happiness, where I proposed marriage. From here, I expressed these feelings in terms of the world of social relations; I contended that we should not let the place become overly developed or become polluted, specifically because of my other feelings and values for the area. Through these claims I am articulating normative statements and hence expressing a form of rights for the environment. Finally, and most importantly, I can relate to these three world simultaneously, and make my argument through these different models of rationality in an attempt to co-ordinate a collective action. Moreover, hearers are correspondingly able to relate to and evaluate my claims concerning these worlds. Their decentred understanding of the world permits them, in Habermasian terms, reflexively to penetrate the horizon of their lifeworld. In other

words. they are able to take on a form of ideal role playing; to position themselves from my standpoint². They are able to challenge my assumptions, bring new validity claims into the debate. and, as a collective, we may be able to reach an understanding through which action may be co-ordinated. In short, claims are made within the objective, the social and the subjective world, and the validity of these claims may be assessed in relation to their truth or effectiveness, to their normative legitimacy, or to their truthfulness or sincerity respectively. Moreover, through such through refinement and debate, the outcome of such a process will engender the best form of political judgement. This epistemic, rational function of argumentation thus provides the 'best outcome' in such circumstances.

Habermas's project can thus be seen to have taken on a sociological, rather than epistemological form. His work is now aimed more towards an interpretative social science: that is, he aims to develop a social science geared towards rational interpretations. This social science aims to reconstruct the formal pragmatic rules of speech, in which we draw upon knowledge from the objective, social and subjective worlds in order to understand each other and co-ordinate action.

Understanding thus occurs at two levels within Habermas's communicative theory. First is at the grammatical level of being intelligible, and thus the hearer is able to understand the conditions under which a speaker forges a position. The second is understanding towards consensual action. Here agreement concerning the co-ordination of action is to take place, and this process is forged through the hearer being able to grasp cognitively, and if to necessary test, the validity claims made by the speaker. This intuitive sense of being able to grasp legitimacy, particularly within the norm-guided model of the social world, brings Habermas to consider cultural rationalisation processes within late modernity. Before elaborating the significance of communicative action within Habermas's view of modernity, it is necessary to elaborate his framework to ideas of moral competence and with it issues of the just and the good.

² The notion of a decentred understanding is explained in more depth later, particularly in terms of its importance for environmental values.

4.2.3. *Discourse ethics and moral consciousness.*

Habermas's development of Karl Otto's Apel's (1967, 1980) discourse ethics (also known as communicative ethics) aims to give a broader conceptual framework to some of the ideas posited on language and action. Essentially, discourse ethics presents an ideal procedure for moral argumentation. It asserts that norms are only valid if they can meet with the consent of all affected participants in a practical discourse (Habermas 1990a p. 197).

Habermas believes that for such a procedure to operate within actual discourses, participants need to be able consider the universability of interests to gauge the notion of consent to a norm. Hence specifically for Habermas, norms can only be justified through a principle of universalisation (U-principle) that acts as a formal rule, governing communicative argumentation:

Principle of Universalisation (U-principle): For a norm to be valid, the consequences and side effects that its general observance can be expected to have for the satisfaction of the particular interests of each person affected must be such that all affected can accept them freely (Habermas 1990a p. 120; emphasis in original).

It should be noted that the principle of universalisation is a procedure to reach communicative agreement; as such it is not intended to produce concrete principles of norms of action. Rather, universalisation acts as a rule through which participants can reach a consensus upon generalisable interests. Thus, it acts as a bridging principle that makes agreement in moral argumentation possible (Habermas 1990a p. 57).

Habermas argues the principle of universalisation is not mere convention, but rather is always presupposed by an actor who takes up normative argumentation. Habermas justifies this idea through the transcendental pragmatic approach of an ideal speech community. Drawing on the work of Robert Alexy (1978), Habermas develops an idea of 'an ideal speech situation', as a set of unavoidable presuppositions that are needed to undertake argumentation (Habermas 1990a p. 88). As such, these represent a set of procedural rules for human discourse, being intuitively realised as the only means by

which rationally motivated agreement or consensus may be obtained. They are as follows:

1. Each participant who is capable of speech and action is allowed to participate in discourses.
2.
 - a. Each is allowed to call into question any proposal
 - b. Each is allowed to introduce any proposal into discourse
 - c. Each is allowed to express their attitudes, desires and needs
3. No speaker may, by internal or external coercion, be prevented from exercising his [or her] rights as laid down in (1) and (2).

(Habermas 1990a p. 89).

Habermas argues that once the principle of universalisation governing argumentation can be derived through a transcendental pragmatic framework, the principle of discourse ethics (D-principle) may be formulated (Habermas 1990a p. 93). The D-principle acts as the context in which ethical discourse may take place:

Principle of discourse ethics (D-principle): every valid norm would meet with the approval of all concerned if they could take part in a practical discourse (Habermas 1990a p. 121).

The D-principle aims to highlight the need of real conversations between participants. Concrete principles thus cannot be deduced *a priori*. There can be no moral substantive claim prior to actual intersubjective agreement. Instead, generalisable interests may only be derived through real engagement by participants in practical discourse (Habermas 1990a p. 94). Importantly, actors are thus incumbent to reach consensus on such issues as a means of regulating social matters. For Habermas:

The principle of discourse ethics (D) makes reference to a procedure, namely the discursive redemption of normative claims to validity. To that extent discourse ethics can be properly characterised as formal, for it provides no substantive guidelines but only a procedure: practical discourse. Practical discourse is not a procedure for generating justified norms but a procedure for testing the validity of norms that are being proposed and hypothetically considered for adoption. That means that practical discourses depend on content brought to them from outside. It would be utterly pointless to engage in a practical discourse without a horizon provided by the lifeworld of a specific social group and without real conflicts in the social situation in which the

actors consider it incumbent upon them to reach a consensual means of regulating some controversial matter' (1990a p. 103; emphasis in original).

The ideas of generalisable interests and consensus are fundamental for Habermas. He makes a crucial distinction within discourse ethics between the moral and ethical-political use of practical reason, or in other words between the just and the good. For Habermas, there is a difference between universal moral (or *normative*) questions of justice that may be open to consensual resolution and ethical-political questions of the good life, (or *evaluative* ones) which cannot be resolved consensually. Valid and invalid norms can only be justified on the basis of their universability. As such, it is specifically because normative questions regulate interaction between subjects that they are amenable to consensual rational justification. The idea of universability is inherent within such values. In contrast, questions of the *good* invite questions of what is right in terms of self-expression within plural forms of life. For Habermas:

'under modern conditions of life none of the various rival traditions can claim *prima facie* general validity any longer. Even in answering questions of direct practical relevance, convincing reasons can no longer appeal to the authority of unquestioned traditions. If we do not want to settle questions of our everyday co-existence by open or covert force- by coercion, influence, or the power of the stronger interest – but by the unforced conviction of a rationally motivated agreement, then we must concentrate on those questions that are amenable to impartial judgement. We can't expect to find answers when we ask what is good for me or for us or for them; instead we must ask what is equally good for all. This 'moral point of view' throws a sharp, but narrow, spotlight that picks out from the mass of evaluative questions practical conflicts that can be resolved by appeal to a generalisable interest; in other words questions of justice' (Habermas 1993 p. 151; emphasis in original).

This distinction is fundamental to communicative action, as it is essential that moral principles need to be distinguished from a broader ethical-political framework. If this were not the case, morality would simply be reduced to politics, with the more powerful political groups articulating a notion of 'justice' in the name of their individual self-interest. Habermas thus seeks to develop a programme wherein action may be co-ordinated for the common or generalised interest.

Furthermore, the intersubjective onus within discourse ethics aims to move beyond the notion that morality is pre-given. Rather it is subject to argumentation and, for this to be achieved, democratic institutions to facilitate such debate need to be developed alongside the formal apparatus of the state (this is discussed in depth next chapter).

There are thus specific lessons to be learnt with regard to how such a framework may be applied within an environmental decision-making process. The need for closure and consensus is often articulated by institutions as a main aim for participation. It is a means for getting interests to agree upon a shared set of outcomes. This is a very different notion of consensus than in the Habermasian sense of the term. Unless such processes are specifically dealing how we might begin to think about questions of justice or rights, ascribed to the environment through social processes, then the idea of consensus on issues essentially of politics may be concealing unresolved conflicts through the use of power. This may be in the form of the overt use of strategic action, at one extreme, to more subtle uses of power developed as an artefact of methods themselves.

For instance, the design of a method may give primacy to certain forms of expertise over lay understandings. This is a particular problem for the environment, where scientists are often seen as expert witnesses for the natural world. Similarly, a method may prioritise instrumental rationality over other forms of rationality. This may result particularly from the fact that institutions and policy-making bodies often work within systems that broadly operate within arenas of power and money. The use of cost-benefit analyses is exemplary in this respect, as it produces neat bundles of information that can be integrated within such abstract media. Institutionally the monetary worth of an environment can be thus traded against an abstract worth of other 'projects', such as the building of a road or a housing development. Finally, if consensus is emphasised as the main goal for a method, participants may feel that they have to conform to this end, and not share their grievances for the sake of closure. A participatory method itself thus becomes a tool of power. These caveats will be explored in some depth within the empirical chapter of the thesis.

As such, perhaps the best role for practical discourse within such arenas is in the unmasking of false claims toward a general interest. In other words, where there is the strategic use of action, and modes of compromise rather than consensus, Habermas's programme is useful in examining how themes of power may be used for privileging one set of beliefs illegitimately over another.

These concerns do not mean to illustrate that consensus may never be gained within such processes. Indeed, issues of justice are ones often articulated within environmental decision-making processes due to the very fact that nature has no formal rights. The criteria used to judge environmental decisions may be seen as being consensual in this light. It is when one moves more from the justification to the application of such principles that issues of politics begin to be dominant within discourse. The main point to be gathered from such considerations is that attention needs to be focused upon the analysis of real discourse in real situations. Only here may normative structure of communication, the strategic use of power, and the validity of claim making performances be assessed.

The next section explores how Habermas's develops the idea of morality within modern consciousness, which draws heavily on the work of the developmental psychologist, Lawrence Kohlberg (1981). Issues of Habermas's view of consensus aside, it is argued that the underlying notion of a decentred consciousness is of particular importance in facilitating environmental concerns.

4.2.4. Kohlberg's Moral stages.

Habermas believes that Lawrence Kohlberg's (1981) model of moral development is an instructive means of considering broader aspects of his communicative model. As with communicative ethics, the Kohlberg model highlights the primacy of interaction and comprehension, in this case with regard to the reasoning associated with moral judgement. Significantly, Kohlberg argues that beneath the surface of substantively different moral judgements, there are universal processes of reasoning, which can be

viewed as a successive set of moral stages. In particular, he argues that these preceding stages each represents a development, not only in terms of an adaptation of the subject to an environment, but also in terms of the subject's active construction of potential environments forged through others' worldviews. In this way a moral competence comes not only from a speaker's perspective, but also in their understanding of world perspectives (for discussion see White 1988 p. 58-60).

For Habermas, actors have a decentered understanding of the world, forged through the differentiation of an individual's lifeworld from the broader worldview of the community. Such an understanding, however, is captured through language, specifically because the speech and language ontogenetically arose corresponding to these worldviews (Habermas 1990a p. 138).

To come to an agreement, actors must detach the emergence of a theme from its lifeworld background. In other words, they need to think beyond the unquestioned boundaries of their traditional knowledge and engage in self-reflection. In this manner, what becomes explicitly known is therefore distinguished from what is implicitly certain. Rather than appeals to tradition, knowledge is rationally mediated through the force of better argument forging a new understanding in which to ground a claim (*Ibid.* p. 138).

Kohlberg's model is conceived by Habermas to represent the idea that only specifically modern structures of consciousness have the requisite capacity rationally to forge such action through the comprehension and understanding of validity claims within communicative action. By fleshing out Kohlberg's model of cognitive behavioural structures with corresponding social perspectives, Habermas is able theoretically to elucidate a theory of moral competence into a broader theory of interactive competence. Indeed, it is precisely in the mastery of all six stages that actors can be said to have an interactive competence.

The relationships between Kohlberg's moral stages, interaction types and social perspectives are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. Moral stages, behavioural expectations and social perspectives.

Types of interaction	Stage of moral judgement	Behavioural expectations	Social perspectives
Pre-conventional level: Interaction Co-operation	Stage 1	The punishment and obedience orientation:- actions determined with regard to consequences of punishment from authority.	Egocentric perspective: order and obedience
	Stage 2	The instrumental relativist orientation:- an action is determined right when it satisfies ones own needs.	Egocentric perspective: Symmetry of compensation
Conventional level: Co-ordination of observer and participant perspectives	Stage 3	The interpersonal concordance orientation:- an action is determined as to whether it pleases others or is approved by them.	Conformity to roles
	Stage 4	Law and order orientation:- actions determined through fixed rules and the maintenance of social order.	Conformity to existing norms
Post conventional level: Integration of speaker and world perspectives	Stage 5	The social-contract legalistic orientation:- actions determined by individual rights and standards agreed and examined by whole of society. This is a fluid boundary changing in terms of social utility.	Orientation towards principles of justice.
	Stage 6	The universal ethical principle orientation:- actions determined in accord with ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality and consistency.	Orientation towards procedures for justifying norms

(Adapted from Kohlberg 1971 and Habermas 1990a pp. 166-167).

Habermas argues that Kohlberg's pre-conventional, conventional and postconventional moral stages need to be viewed as separate stages of interactive competencies. Crucially, for actors to be able cognitively to grasp increasingly differentiated claims made within

the higher structures, they must be able to exhibit competence in a decentred understanding of the world. Only in such a manner will an actor be able to grasp the complex structure of perspectives needed to make rational decisions in the modern world.

As such, the pre-conventional level of interaction can be viewed in terms of a simple understanding of action and expectations. Here, punishment or obedience (stage one), or satisfaction of one's desires (stage two), may be seen as egocentric and individualistic guides for action respectively. There is no reflexive cognitive grasp of other worldviews at this level: the only means of co-ordinating social action is through discouragement by sanctions or punishment, or through an instrumental need (see Habermas 1990a p. 128). Stage one can be illustrated through imagining the kind of competencies governing a child's interaction and understanding of the world, which may be governed through obedience and notions of a symmetry of compensation – 'I will do this if it satisfies me'. Stage two represents more of an individualist perspective, and may be considered as the model of rational economic man, where goals are realised in terms of egocentric calculations of utility. Cost-benefit analysis would thus seem to augment a rather impoverished model of moral competence within a decision-making process.

At the conventional level, these processes of understanding and expectation become socialised as roles and social norms are incorporated into action. Here an actor may undertake an action if it pleases another (stage three) or the actor will act in a certain manner if directed by authority and will do so without question (stage four). Although some notion of reciprocity in such actions is being cognitivised in the expectations of actors; it is incomplete to the extent that it is not reflexive. There is no complete questioning of actions other than through other actor's perspectives or a systems perspective respectively. There is only conformity to existing roles or norms (*Ibid.* p. 128).

At the post-conventional level, complete reciprocity is realised in co-ordinating action. Here actors are able to choose between and distinguish a variety of roles and normative

expectations that may be articulated by other actors. At stage five, people are able to examine rights through a legal framework, and importantly critique such a social contract. There is hence the ability to differentiate between a moral and a legal point of view, and establish principles of justice. At level six, actors are fully competent to derive the nature of moral premises in treating others as ends and not means. Social arrangement and actions may be co-ordinated at this level through communicative action as a procedure for justifying norms (*Ibid.* p. 129). Moral principles may thus be examined not in terms of tradition or authority, but rather through communicatively agreeing the generalisable interest.

It is worthwhile illustrating the theme of moral consciousness through a consideration of some of the methodologies considered for environmental decision-making. It can be seen that such tools as contingent valuation essentially work within the pre-conventional level, at stage two. Here the socio-moral framework can be seen as individualist and pertaining to an egocentric perspective. Though, as argued in chapter 2, some economists do claim that both altruistic and decentred understandings of morality may be articulated through a cost-benefit framework, such a model of action loses explanatory power once we move beyond a utility framework. Hence as Sagoff observed:

‘if economists expand the utility function to comprise every preference - including political convictions, and ideological positions, then they reduce the relationship between preference and utility to a specious, empty and trivial identity, incapable of explaining why public policy should respond to preferences priced at the margin rather than to views and opinions judged on their merits’ (1994)

It is only through a framework of communicative action that the spectrum of moral frameworks may be meaningfully articulated. Again, following the illustration given in chapter two, I will use the example of a soldier in battle (see 2.4.5). It will be remembered that the cost-benefit model had difficulty explaining a soldier’s action in battle in broader terms than individual utility. Through a communicative framework, a soldier may fight a battle to please others (stage three) or fight as he is told to do so by his commanding officer (stage four). However this does not mean his actions are just. Rather it is only when a soldier communicatively reviews a complicated and conflicting

set of moral priorities, such as *thou shall not kill*, against a variety of moral and political applications, such as *if I do not kill many others will suffer*, that some notion of the justification of actions may be derived (stage six). It is here that Habermas's notion of real conversations comes into force; there is a fundamental difference between the justification and the application of norms, depending upon particularity (see Habermas 1992 pp. 153-154). Essentially if the battle is to be justified, these contextual applications need to be taken into account from a decentred understanding of morality. Again this highlights the procedural nature of discourse ethics. Only in the concrete particularity of real discourses can actions, such as the possibility of killing another, be morally justified.

On a less macabre note, I wish to contend that a decentred understanding is best suited, and indeed most justifiable, towards gaining a form of rights for the natural environment. In this way, participants in a process will not argue solely for their own point of view but rather to attempt to adopting an impartial standpoint, and indeed take up the role of others when attempting to distinguish broader moral questions from those of the political plurality of life. As mentioned, particularly through the enhancement of moral and aesthetic questions, such a way of thinking may open up the spaces to examine critically an ecological rationality. The modern aesthetic, and a decentred subject's ability to question concepts and identity facilitates such an understanding. As such, it is possible to see that traditional ways of managing meaning may be deconstructed. Thus meanings of nature as purely an object for instrumental control will be critiqued alongside those values of nature with an aesthetic significance (see Luke and White 1985). In a nutshell, the same cognitive processes that permit us to grasp such abstract themes of justice through the consideration of the other's point of view can too forge a new means and understanding towards 'thinking naturally'.

Before some criticisms of Habermas's project are reviewed, and how these might inform an applied research programme, it is instructive to develop and conclude Habermas's account of communicative action and rationality within a broader view of society and diagnosis of modernity.

4.2.5. *Modernity, lifeworld and system.*

Habermas views modernity not just as a distinct epoch separating the old from the new, but specifically as a period of cultural maturation and as an advancement within human learning. As mentioned in the last chapter, Habermas believes that previous writers of the Frankfurt School have failed sufficiently to differentiate the constitutive features of rationalisation processes of society within the modern era. And this is essential, Habermas believes, not only to understand the complexity of modernity but furthermore to attempt to alleviate its pathologies.

Habermas's analysis of modernity builds specifically upon Weber's (1930) understanding of societal rationalisation in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. In this work, Weber argues that the emergence of world religions began slowly to break down magical-mythical worldviews. In particular he highlights the rise of the Protestant ethic, and the associated aesthetic and methodical conduct for acting in life, as fundamental precursor to societal modernisation; wherein areas of social life began to be organised according to instrumental or purposive rationality (Habermas 1984 pp. 166-168). Weber thus subsumes rationalisation within the one concept of societal rationalisation. Such rationalisation is thus only linked to the increasing institutionalisation of purposive-rational action and this leads to crisis tendencies in modernity (Habermas 1984 p. 219, 233).

However, Habermas argues that there is a broader potential for the rationalisation of action residing within the culture of modernity than Weber adequately distinguished (Habermas 1984 pp. 249-250). The problem is that this has largely remained latent under current conditions of western modernisation. It is Habermas's contention specifically that this potential may be realised if social action can be organised in terms of communicative action. In other words, for Habermas modernity is an incomplete project, with the current dominant expression of purposive rationality in the guise of capitalistic modernisation under-utilising society's full cultural potential (Habermas 1984 pp. 140-141, 233-242).

To conceptualise adequately this potential, Habermas conceives society simultaneously in terms of lifeworld and system. The concept of lifeworld aims to complement his understanding of communication action. Following on from this, a systems-theory approach aims to complement and give a fuller understanding of the concept of action in society (see Habermas 1987a chapters 6 and 7). Habermas argues that we need to distinguish how rationalisation processes affect these different aspects of society. Hence it is possible to characterise processes of rationalisation of the lifeworld (cultural modernisation) distinct from processes of the growing complexity of societal systems (societal modernisation) (Habermas 1987a p. 118).

The lifeworld is an important, though slightly ambivalent concept within Habermas's work. Essentially it is used to describe the shared social horizon of people acting in the world. It thus refers to the intuitive expectations and definitions that integrate and reproduce societies; to 'a culturally transmitted and linguistically organised stock of knowledge' (Habermas 1987a p. 124; see Benhabib 1986 p. 238; Schnädelbach 1991 pp. 17-19 for discussion).

Through the cultural rationalisation of the lifeworld, modern subjects are increasingly able to differentiate between objective, social and subjective worlds. In this way, the corresponding value spheres of science and technology, law and morality and aesthetics become relatively autonomous. Increasing rationalisation of the lifeworld thus provides the actors with a decentred consciousness or framework, through which new experiences may be accommodated. Habermas develops this notion of rationalisation through integrating them with his own concepts of development of a modern consciousness and the associated differentiation in language. The three worlds thus correspond to the earlier ontological presuppositions of teleological, norm-guided and dramaturgical models of action. Habermas argues that a rationalised lifeworld thus represents an advance in the learning potential of society as they are now able to relate validity claims to a variety of world perspectives. Specifically, it is the case that through the communicative model actors are able socially and symbolically to constitute their identity with a reflexive or

self-critical perspective (Habermas 1984 p. 233-242). Furthermore, Habermas believes that only modern structures of consciousness have the capacity to become 'dissociated from the local conventions and the historical coloration of a particular form of life' and as such are specifically suited to considering universal questions justice (Habermas 1990a p. 109).

For Habermas, communication action performs a number of crucial functions in reproducing the symbolic structures of the lifeworld. These are the renewal of cultural knowledge through the aspect of mutual understanding, the establishment of solidarity through the aspect of co-ordinating action, and the formation of personal identities through the aspect of socialisation. These processes are described as cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation respectively and refer to the structural components of the lifeworld; namely culture society and person (Habermas 1987a p. 137-138).

However, a rationalised lifeworld has been a fundamental condition for western societal modernisation. Particularly, rationalisation processes associated with purposive-rational action have institutionally manifested themselves through the growth and hegemony of economic and administrative systems co-ordinating society. It is Habermas's thesis that through societal modernisation, abstract systems have colonised the lifeworld and distorted the cultural means for the symbolic reproduction of society. The lifeworld is unable to reproduce itself because abstract media, such as money and power, are unable to perform the functions of the lifeworld; namely reproducing culture, and forging social integration and socialisation. Indeed, action that is co-ordinated by money or power requires only an objectivating attitude and an orientation to success.

As such, social integration and socialisation are endangered, and dysfunctions, such as the loss of meaning within life, the lack of social identity and an increase in hedonism may arise in society. In this way the lifeworld can be said to have undergone systematically induced reification; a 'pathological deformation of the communicative infrastructure of

the lifeworld' wherein action co-ordination and principles of sociation are taken over by steering mechanisms. Communicative action is replaced by media-steered interaction. Language is replaced by power and money (Habermas 1987a pp. 374-375).

Furthermore, the imperatives of capitalist growth act as a dynamic through which these cultural value spheres have slowly become institutionalised. As such professional or expert discourses such as theories of science, jurisprudence and aesthetic criticism have increased. Through such mechanisms the language of experts becomes autonomous with ordinary language disencumbered. As a consequence, traditional means of organising the norms and the principles of social life through society are increasingly institutionalised through the operation of abstract systems. In this way the reproduction processes of the lifeworld can said to be disturbed. It is specifically the removal of understanding, discussion and communication from citizens that generates a set of modern cultural pathologies, that Habermas describes as 'cultural impoverishment' (Habermas 1987a pp. 327-331).

For Habermas, the problem of modernity can be seen as a paradox of the rationalisation processes underpinning it. As such he writes:

'the contradiction arises between, on the one hand, a rationalisation of everyday communication that is tied to the structure of intersubjectivity of the lifeworld, in which language counts as the genuine and irreplaceable medium of reaching understanding, and, on the other hand, the growing complexity of subsystems of purposive-rational action, in which actions are co-ordinated through steering media such as money and power. There is thus a competition not between the types of action orientated to understanding and success, but between principles of societal integration – between the mechanisms of linguistic communication that is orientated to validity claims – a mechanism that emerges in increasing purity from the rationalisation of the lifeworld – and those de-linguistified steering media through which systems of success-orientated action are differentiated out. The paradox of rationalisation of which Weber spoke can be abstractly conceived as follows: rationalisation of the lifeworld makes possible a kind of systemic integration that enters into competition with the integrating principle of reaching understanding and, under certain conditions, has a disintegrative effect on the lifeworld' (Habermas 1984 pp. 342-343; emphasis in original).

What this quite simply means is that cultural rationalisation has made available the resources for societal modernisation. However, paradoxically, societal modernisation in its current expression undermines those very cultural rationalisation processes. Thus as Benhabib succinctly notes is that 'the rationalisation of the lifeworld, initiated by modernity, contains an emancipatory potential that which is constantly being threatened by dynamics of societal rationalisation spurred on by capitalist growth' (Benhabib 1986 p. 236).

Through his distinction between rationalisation processes associated with purposive-rational action which lead to societal modernisation and rationalisation processes of the lifeworld associated with communicative action which lead to the phenomena of cultural modernisation, Habermas is able to frame the pathologies of the lifeworld through a different lens. Specifically this lens can allow a reinterpretation of loss of freedom and loss of meaning in terms of systematically induced reification and cultural impoverishment of the lifeworld respectively.

As such, with regard to the former, the lifeworld needs to be protected from the processes of societal modernisation, i.e. the colonisation of the lifeworld by systems of the economy and the state. With regard to the latter, the differentiated domains and expert spheres of science, morality and art, need to be reconnected with communicative praxis in the lifeworld. This is the task of his critical theory.

Habermas realises that forging a critical consciousness against the colonisation of the lifeworld is an extremely arduous task. This is because as the colonisation and the rationalisation of culture within expert systems increases, so the very resources to develop a critical consciousness, that of a rationalised communicative lifeworld, is further diminished. As Stephen White (1988 p. 121) notes

'alienation, disintegration of collective identity and cultural impoverishment or loss of meaning are all lifeworld pathologies that help to hinder the emergence of a critical consciousness and action. The effect of such pathologies would be that the state is relieved of some of the pressure for legitimating actions. The sort of solidarity necessary for oppositional movements is impeded by the growing experience of

alienation and isolation. And the sort of cognitive changes necessary to develop interpretations that challenge the legitimacy of the state are undermined by the fragmentation of consciousness'.

Habermas thus offers a means of noting the legitimacy and transformative potential of new social or political movements, or mechanisms to reform the apparatus of the state. Specifically, such movements should enhance the capacity of actors for cultural reproduction of the lifeworld, and re-exert a citizen's understanding of everyday practice against fragmentation by expert cultures. His communicative programme gives a means of understanding how the systematic organisation of society may undermine the rational potential of the lifeworld on the one hand, and of critically comprehending the distortions of communication that fragment consciousness on the other.

Habermas's project thus provides good reason why participatory processes are a promising means of conceiving and mediating society-nature relations for decision-making. Specifically, it is here that deliberative value articulating institutions can be said to hold by far a more progressive means of conceptualising both nature and society.

Moreover, it can create spaces in which people may express communicatively a broader range of rational claims to environmental decision-making processes, with each argument judged on its merits. In chapter 2, it was argued that purely conceiving the environment institutionally as a set of goods for the consumption by individuals was a telling criticism against contingent valuation methods. In reducing the natural world to the marketplace, it is unclear how an ecological rationality may be developed. With deliberative, participatory processes, there at least is the promise that a sympathetic rationality towards the natural environment may flourish. As noted in the last chapter, the proper norms for regulating between society and nature may follow from the full development of the communicative and democratic dimensions of social life.

Finally, Habermas's analysis provides a useful heuristic through which to view new means of organising participatory spaces. The creation of such spaces for rational debate

needs to be seen as distinct from the formal political system, else such movements run the risk of being subsumed within the apparatus of the state, within a legal or administrative system. Concerns over how new spaces would operate in response to the more formal structures of governance forged through societal modernisation is a crucial aspect effecting the success or otherwise of environmental decision-making processes. The operation between formal and informal modes of governance, or what Munton and co-workers (2000), have termed the 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructures of governance, will be a particular analytical focus of this thesis (see also Crosby 1993 and Healey 1997).

Before drawing together the strands of Habermas theory in the conclusions part of this chapter, it is worthwhile considering criticisms of communicative action. Particularly, the discussion of communicative ethics in terms of the separation of the just and the good by a number of authors have a particular bearing on the application of such a critical theory as a research programme, and these will form a focus of the next section. It should be noted that there have been a variety of debates and criticisms with regard Habermas's views of modernity generally, and his communicative theory specifically (for example see Benhabib and Dallmayr 1990; Honneth and Joas 1991b; Kelly 1990; d'Entrèves and Benhabib 1997; Thompson and Held 1982a). Rather than attempt to review all of these challenges to Habermas programme, this section will explore an area of criticism that sheds theoretical insight on concrete issues of critical theory in practice. This particularly concerns the problem of discourse ethics. In a nutshell this section will examine whether the separation between moral and evaluative questions is tenable and will ask whether consensus on such issues may be obtained?

4.3.0. The problem of discourse ethics

'The development of the moral point of view goes hand in hand with a differentiation within the practical into moral questions and evaluative questions. Moral questions can in principle be decided rationally, i.e. in terms of justice or the generalisability of interests. Evaluative questions present themselves at the most general level as issues of the good life (or of self-realisation); they are accessible to rational discussion only within the unproblematic horizon of a concrete historical form of life or the conduct of an individual life' (Habermas 1990a p. 108; emphasis in original).

Discourse ethics can be described as a minimal ethics. They not only restrict themselves to questions of justice, as opposed to evaluative questions, but furthermore concern purely procedural rather than substantive claims. Discourse ethics thus holds that philosophy does not have privileged access to moral truth. Rather than giving a substantive conception of the principles needed for individual conduct and justice, such as claims to the good life in neo-Aristotelian ethics, Habermas only gives a universal procedure for testing the validity of normative claims. In this way his ethics can be described as deontological and formalistic; they explain morality in terms of normative validity of commands or actions and they promote universalibility of practical discourse as a procedure for testing the validity of such norms (Habermas 1990a pp. 103, 121-124, 196).

The concept of discourse ethics is fundamental to Habermas's programme of communicative action. This brief analysis will concentrate on criticisms of the principle of universalisation and, moreover, consider whether some principle of the good always has to be articulated when contemplating the just. Essentially, this section will examine whether a normative consensus can be maintained as distinct from plural conceptions of the ethical-political life.

Habermas's claims for discourse ethics have been criticised on foundationalist grounds, in so far that, albeit in weakened form, his ethics espouse a notion of a universal validity. The basic premise underpinning much of this criticism originates from Hegel's critique of Kantian ethics, and concerns the problem that abstract universalisation does not necessarily determine moral rightness; there must be some minimally shared notion of the human good (Habermas 1990a pp. 195-196).

Habermas does differ in his approach from traditional Kantian foundationalism. For Habermas, universality is 'an intersubjective procedure of argumentation geared to attain communicative agreement' (Benhabib 1990 p. 6). As noted earlier, universalisation only acts as a test procedure for determining what is morally permissible or impermissible. It

does not give valid principles for action; rather these can only be generally observed in real discourse (Habermas 1990a p. 206). In such a way Habermas make a distinction between justification and application of moral principles (see Habermas 1993 pp. 1-17, 150-154). Crucially, the principle of universalisation acts for Habermas as a 'razor' through which issues of the just and the good may be dissected. For Habermas, only issues of justice invite consensus, as the consequences and side effects of a proposed norm have to be freely accepted by all.

However, Seyla Benhabib (1990 p. 12) has argued that the universalisation principle places too great a burden for consensus on discourse ethics, and suggests that such a principle is redundant. For her, consent alone cannot illuminate truth nor moral validity. She argues that the process of rationality underpinning such argumentation is all-important. Rather than attempting to foreclose on moral issues through consensus, Benhabib suggests that normative claims should rather be seen as an ongoing moral conversation. As such she argues that:

'when we shift the burden of the moral test in communicative ethics from consensus to the idea of an ongoing moral conversation, we begin to ask not what all would or could agree to as a result of practical discourses to be morally permissible, but what would be allowed and perhaps even necessary from the standpoint of continuing and sustaining the practice of the moral conversation between us. The emphasis now is less on rational agreement, and more on sustaining those normative practices and moral relationships within which reasoned agreement as a way of life can flourish' (Benhabib 1990 p. 13; emphasis in original).

Such a shift thus helps when considering the challenges to discourse ethics that they do not furnish any concrete form of political life. This neo-Aristotelian line of argument would suggest that no principle of legitimacy could be founded without a substantive conception of the good (*Ibid.* p. 14). Similarly, neo-Hegelian arguments suggest that by cleaving 'ought' from 'is', there is no light shed on how moral insight should be practised (Habermas 1990a p. 196).

In this light, Charles Taylor argues that any separation between questions of justice and good cannot be made due to the very fact that any formal or procedural criterion of justice is already contained within an understanding of the good life. For Taylor,

‘we express our moral values and our understanding of ourselves as humans by at the same time justifying our ends: we articulate the implicit understanding which comprises the background of our social norms, customs and institutions, and which is closely bound up in our understanding of moral ends’ (Taylor 1991 p. 34).

Following on from this, Heller (1984 pp. 13-14) argues that any process in which participants cognitively determine whether a norm is good or just inevitably results in a bargaining process towards collective will formation. Heller hence believes that interests always enter into the process of determination. Concurring with Heller, Murphy argues that consensus thus becomes not a true consensus based on the notion that all can accept the consequences of a proposed norm, but rather a series of compromises acting in the name of justice (Murphy 1994 p. 133).

It should again be emphasised that Habermas attempts to bring about the distinction between the just and the good specifically because modernity has opened up the possibility of plural forms of life. The dynamics underpinning cultural rationalisation, and the increasing specialisation of knowledge, have specifically undermined the public’s capacity for moral reflection.

For him, consensus within communicative action can only be within themes of justice. Issues of justice forge attention to a collective or universal concern, they articulate social virtues. As mentioned, moral judgements can not merely become questions of politics as we risk making broader moral claims subservient to self-preservation of powerful political groups (see Habermas 1993 pp. 113-132). The concession Habermas makes in light of such criticism is that ‘there must be a modicum of fit between morality and socio-political institutions... moral universalism is a historical result’ (Habermas 1990a p. 208).

This does not mean to imply that discourse ethics are redundant for evaluative questions, but rather it aims to highlight the fact that such questions of politics are more contextual, that is to say they are always embedded within culture and forge the identity of individuals. For Habermas:

‘a deontological moral theory that concentrates on questions of justice pays for the presumptive general validity of moral judgements with a narrow conception of morality. But it does not thereby banish questions of the good or unfailed life from the pale of rational treatment. It need only maintain that ethical discussions, in contrast to moral arguments, are always embedded in the traditional context of hitherto accepted, identity-constituting form of life. Moral judgements differ from ethical judgements only in their degree of contextuality’ (Habermas 1993 p. 105).

Identity-constitutive values and ideals are thus, for Habermas, not obligatory in the same way as moral norms. The most promising way to augment discourse ethics within arenas of politics where compromise is likely, is thus not to focus on consensus as a means of expressing a universal will, but rather through examining and unmasking claims that claim to be for the general interest. Certainly, many of the criteria for environmental fairness underpinning rational debate can be held up to such scrutiny.

Habermas’s universalism has been criticised for articulating an understanding of the personal as ahistorical, immutable and unchanging. This criticism aims to highlight that in abstraction from the particular to the universal, discourse ethics become insensitive to context. Though Habermas argues that the universalisation principle acts as a means to prevent such problems, as a ‘built in mechanism that insures awareness of consequences’ (Habermas 1990a 196), Benhabib notes that such actions makes us look upon other people as an abstract ‘generalised other’ (Benhabib 1991). These notions in particular, Benhabib argues, fail adequately to grasp the ethical experience of marginalised groups within society, such as women. Once again, to take account of others’ moral views in their ‘concrete particularity’ can only lead to a situation where a universal consensus is elusive (see Moon 1995).

It would thus seem again that, as with the concluding remarks at the end of the last chapter, Habermas overly rigid in the boundaries he draws around concepts. Though there may be good philosophical reasons for his stance, the practice of real life is far more complicated. Rather than some *a priori* acceptance that questions of the good life are inappropriate to moral argumentation, Benhabib highlights the need that

‘we view our conception of the good life as matters about which intersubjective debate is possible, even if intersubjective consensus, *let alone* legislation, remains unattainable in these areas. Only through such argumentative processes, can we draw the line between issues of justice and the good life in an epistemologically plausible manner, while rendering our conceptions of the good life accessible to moral reflection and moral transformation’ (Benhabib 1990 p. 16).

Benhabib’s comments contain, I believe, very important insights into the application of Habermas’s communicative theory. I would however contend that, with regard to participatory decision-making procedures, Habermas’s programme offers greater insight not in terms of the closure of consensus, but in the procedural benefits of lifeworld reproduction. When issues of environmental justice are debated, issues of the good and the just will be described conjointly, corresponding to the multi-layered sense of value people articulate about nature from different cultural settings, and the competing wants and needs for the natural environment. The best that we can hope for in such circumstances, as mentioned earlier, is that false claims to a general interest can be unmasked within such processes.

Decisions are needed in a substantive sense, as a means to create policy for environmental protection. However, decisions need to be seen as ongoing and dynamic. This statement is not just meant metaphorically. It hints at an institutional form to integrate fully decision-making as a means of sustaining normative practice. Stakeholders or publics, particularly at a local level, can be consulted not just as a one off survey of opinion, but rather in a sustained way to contribute to natural resource management. Such efforts may nourish the development of trust, efficacy, empowerment and responsibility concepts; the leitmotifs of participatory processes. It is these process

elements in particular, rather than a focus on institutional outcomes *per se*, that should be perhaps regarded as the true strength or failing of these methods.

4.4.0. A summary of Communicative Action and its application for environmental decision-making.

Habermas's programme of communicative action is a remarkable thesis on how to conceive of rationality, social action and society in our late modern era. There are undoubtedly difficulties, in no small part forged through the sheer scale of the task. Often the rather abstract means through which Habermas develops his arguments for theoretical purposes seem removed from practical life.

At its most promising, communicative action offers us a way of conceiving rationality beyond the cognitive-instrumental lens. For Habermas, there is within the structure of language itself the means to interpret rationally the claims of actors with regard to both moral and aesthetic spheres of knowledge. The enhancement of such spheres of knowledge in everyday life would, in particular, be suited to the articulation of values by ordinary people for environmental protection. It is at the heart of how we relate and learn to relate about the world. Such a claim thus begins to erode the notion that only the expert witness of science may socially mediate the natural environment³. Though pragmatically, as Dobson (1993) tells us, even if the public sphere has been reinvigorated, there is no guarantee that free and equal conversations will grant a stronger status to the non-human world. However, articulating environmental concerns through an aesthetic appreciation of our lived lives, resisting the colonisation of the organic foundations of our lifeworld, may offer the best promise for such a relationship (see Habermas 1987a p. 394; 1993 pp. 105-111). Habermas notes that:

'human preservation of plants and the preservation of whole species cannot be derived from duties of interaction and thus cannot be morally justified. Nevertheless, I am in accord with Patzig in believing that, aside from prudential considerations, there are

³ Habermas would, however, argue that the instrumental manipulation of nature would best be served through the eyes of a scientist.

good ethical reasons that speak in favour of the protection of plants and species, reasons that become apparent once we ask ourselves how, as members of our own species, we want to treat other species. In certain respects, aesthetic reasons have even greater force than ethical, for in the aesthetic experience of nature, things withdraw into an unapproachable autonomy and inaccessibility, they then exhibit their fragile integrity so clearly that they strike us as inviolable in their own right and not merely as desirable elements of a preferred form of life' (Habermas 1993 p. 111; emphasis in original).

Habermas draws attention to how the effective participation by citizens in the reproduction of social life is increasingly under attack through the systematic imperatives of capitalism. Places in which 'traditions and knowledge are transferred, normative bonds are intersubjectively established, and in which responsible persons are formed' (White 1988 p. 112) have become de-linguistified through the media of power and money. The normative significance of this area of Habermas's writings are of particular value for a research programme aimed at examining the emancipatory potential of new spaces for social and political action, such as those developed through participatory methods. It is here that the aforementioned processes of trust, efficacy, empowerment and responsibility come into play. Moreover, I would hold that the ecological and social complexity of environmental problems requires a participatory process that mirrors such complexity.

Through his analysis of modernity, Habermas's distinction between cultural and societal modernisation allows the critical purchase of his reconstructive science specifically against the systematic imperatives of the state. In this way he offers a rational potential to a cultural modernity, together with its selective utilisation in societal processes of modernisation. Rather than appealing to traditionalism and the restoration of a romanticised past, his notion of a rationalised lifeworld opened up to us offers the potential that modern society may be critiqued specifically within the parameters of modern consciousness. The task of critical social theory is thus to show the potential for rationality and emancipation implicit in the present.

Some attempts to suggest answers to these above questions will be explored in the next chapter. Here, the use of a Habermasian inspired critical theory within the political, environmental and planning literatures will be examined. Drawing on these insights the following chapter will discuss empirical illustrations of groups and institutions at work.

Chapter 5.

Critical theory as a research programme: democracy, institutions and communicative practice.

5. 0. Introduction.

This chapter will discuss the application of critical theory, in terms of its potential for examining institutional practices, as a means of conceiving the spaces between the state and civil society, and as a framework for analysing for social and political action. In particular, various applications of critical theory as a research programme will be considered from the deliberative democracy and collaborative planning literatures.

The chapter will be broadly structured around three main frameworks. The first of these aims to examine the political horizon of deliberative democracy together with the question of why policy makers are increasingly seeking to involve members of the public. Here ideas for the discursive design of new institutions and participatory practices will be reviewed in light of traditional decision-making procedures.

Second, the application of participatory processes in practice will be reviewed. Here the use of small groups for ascertaining environmental values is of particular interest. This section will focus upon some of the tensions highlighted last chapter between the reconciliation of expert cultures with the everyday communicative practice of citizens. It is argued that a Habermasian perspective is useful means of studying knowledge, power, consent and social identity.

Finally, some ideas for the evaluation of participatory techniques in terms of their substantive and procedural outcomes will be highlighted. Procedural criteria include the fairness of a decision in terms of representation, access to knowledge, continuity, and responsiveness. Substantive criteria provide dual evaluative insight. First, they may be used in terms of assessing rationalisation processes and hence to explore epistemic views upon 'better decisions'. Second, they may be used to explore substantive themes

emerging from discourse and hence for the study of social and cultural reproduction. As such, analyses will not only focus on a counterfactual critique of the claims underpinning deliberative and inclusionary processes, but will also examine experiences of real conversations in practice. Ideas from discourse analysis will provide a framework for the interrogation of the two case studies presented next chapter.

5.1.0. Democratic and institutional designs for environmental policy.

In this section, a number of arguments are examined that support a deliberative approach to democracy and institutional design. It should be noted that Habermas's account of discourse ethics is one that operates in the public sphere - a space between civil society and the formal apparatus of the state. As such, in *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984, 1987a), Habermas has been relatively reluctant to specify the precise form of institutional organisation that democratic discourses would take¹. Rather, commentators have applied the concept as a procedural framework for democratic legitimacy (see for instance Dryzek 1990a). Policy formation hence should fall into accordance with fair process of political action. Some of the ideas underpinning a deliberative democratic approach to policy and decision-making will now be outlined.

In its broadest sense, the resurgence of deliberation can be viewed in terms of the shortcomings of a representative model of democracy in addressing the concerns of governance. The term governance aims to express something greater than the formal system of government. Rather it articulates the rules and procedures concerning how collective affairs should be organised. In other words, it specifically aims to convey how a set of institutional arrangements may legitimately express the public good (see Painter and Goodwin 1995; Healey 1997; Munton *et al.* 2000).

Dahl (1989) proposes five criteria which may be used to judge the effectiveness of governance. These are:

- i) the level of participation,

¹ See Ingram 1993 and 1997 pp. 277-279 for critical discussion.

- ii) equality of judgement,
- iii) the value of enlightened understanding within debate,
- iv) the public control of the agenda, and
- v) the level of inclusiveness.

The efficacy of representative democracy to deal adequately with such processes has been increasingly called into doubt in the United Kingdom over the past few decades. For instance, the decline in voting at elections, particularly at the local level, has been a major democratic failing. The so-called 'democratic deficit' has been explained in one of two ways: either centralised government is perceived unresponsive to local concerns and needs, or conversely that local government is relatively powerless and hence unable to effectively deal with such concerns (Stewart 1996). Certainly, there is little sense of agency between the act of voting and change to the status quo.

Indeed, lack of agency manifests itself through the linear model of decision-making that is often prevalent within representative systems. Here politicians are the main agents for the formulation of policies, with expert administrators the main agents for implementation. Within such linear models, the values underpinning decisions are often based upon instrumental criteria (Dryzek 1990a). In this way, the public tends to be marginalised or excluded from effectively dealing within such debates, with agenda setting remote from the public sphere. In short, the legitimacy and responsiveness of current institutions to a broad range of public concerns has been found wanting, and with this there has been a growing mistrust and cynicism towards decision-making institutions (see Habermas 1970; Healey 1997; Rydin 1999). In this light, it is possible to see why specific policy areas such as the environment are not well served through the representative model, due to their local nature, the complexity of social values, and the differing notions of rights and responsibilities articulated in such arenas (C3ED 1996; Munton 2000).

The failing of representative democracy is in no small part due to the increasing complexity and fragmentation of modern society (see Button and Mattson 1999; Dryzek

1990a; Dunn 1993; Mason 1999; Munton *et al.* 2000). In modern pluralist societies, there is no longer a homogeneous public with a coherent public interest (if such a 'public' ever existed). This has tended to undermine the effectiveness of traditional forms of government as a means of organising collective affairs. As such, it is now particularly difficult for a representative to speak for a single 'constituency'. Moreover, attempts to capture the voice of a heterogeneous public in the face of diverse societal issues are increasingly impractical. In this sense, the failing of representative democracy is one of representing this plurality of opinion. In light of these shortcomings, participatory approaches are believed to compliment representative models. They aim to give an opportunity for those who feel excluded from traditional democratic institutions to make themselves heard (for critical discussion see Button and Mattson 1999).

In this light, the legitimacy of any institutional design must pay particular attention to language and culture. Often decisions are developed through languages far removed from ordinary understandings and judged upon technical efficiency. Rather, mechanisms need to be encouraged that foster a critical public consciousness against the fragmentation of place and society that have occurred through processes of societal modernisation.

Dryzek has reviewed these notions of complexity and exclusion through the context of effective environmental decision-making (1990a pp. 217-218, 1992b pp. 180-181). For Dryzek, the same dominance of expertise and instrumental rationality that pose problems for social political debate, are manifest when deliberating environmental options for instrumental rationality lends itself to the description of the 'objective' natural world. Through the use of instrumental reason, scientists have attempted analytically to solve large-scale environmental problems through the development of sophisticated models. However, Dryzek argues that the ecological and particularly social complexities of many environmental problems are such that systems variables are too conceptually dense. In this light, developing a 'perfect model' is not the solution (Dryzek 1990a p. 65).

Rather, Dryzek argues environmental problem-solving is far better suited to the development of an ecological rationality within an informed citizenry, whereby a wide variety of voices can be raised for a variety of concerns. A complex problem requires a hermeneutically sophisticated procedure. For Dryzek, a deliberative approach would thus promote 'the free harmonisation of action by individuals concerned with the different facets of such problems' (1990a p. 202). The promotion of generalisable interest could thus promote ecological interests, as they constitute part of the aesthetic good for people. Reflexively, the development of an ecological rationality would be more sensitive to the feedback signals and complexity of the natural environment.

For Dryzek (1990a. pp. 10-11, 53), important social and environmental problems are characterised by conflicting values which instrumental action alone cannot resolve. The search for over-arching criteria for expert rational choice is repudiated. However, rather than a retreat to relativism, rational persuasion is possible across the boundaries of scientific paradigms, political theories, cultures and normative positions even in the absence of transcendental criteria. Criteria are multiple, mutable, open to criticism and defence. In other words they are resources for rational arguments and debates between proponents of different views. Communicative rationality allows for more reasoned consensus on normative judgements that, if ascertained, could motivate actions. Instrumental rationality and administration have a role to play, but this role must be regulated and governed by communicative action (Dryzek 1990a pp. 218-218; 1992a p. 409). Arguing in similar vein, Mason observes 'as a theory of political legitimacy, discourse ethics could reinforce the rational grounding for environmentalists demanding an open justification of policy decisions and the extension of public participation in administrative decision-making' (1997 p. 299).

In this sense it is important to emphasise that deliberative democracy is viewed as a complement to rather than a replacement of traditional forms of democratic arrangement. Indeed, Habermas is not advocating a model of the communicative co-ordination of action that is incompatible with the state for he believes that the principle of discourse

ethics can only be realised within a democratic legal framework: 'in exercising political autonomy, citizens must not violate the rights that first constitutes this autonomy' (Habermas 1996). Rather, a relationship needs to be developed wherein agencies 'interpret and apply policy options generated by the public sphere' (Ingram 1993 p. 300). The flexibility within administrative and legislative procedures to the changing demands of participatory processes is thus of vital importance.

The relationships between the systematic and process aspect of democracy have been brought to the fore by Munton *et al.* (2000). Building on the work of Bryson and Crosby (1993) and Healey (1997), Munton *et al.* (2000) have described the differentiation between formal and informal aspects of governance through the terms 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructures respectively. In this sense, 'hard' infrastructure consists of the systematic institutions of government. Such systems include political institutions (e.g. government), social institutions (e.g. education), and regulatory systems (e.g. the judiciary). As such, these systems represent the structure for civil society; they are a means through which complex societies are able to organise themselves. Moreover, they are loci of power and as such, from a Habermasian perspective, attention needs to be focused on the illegitimate use of power for the setting of societal goals. In this way, as Healey notes, such institutions need to negotiate with the public sphere about how to conduct and employ their authority (Healey 1997 p. 303).

The importance of the 'soft' infrastructure of governance is thus in the development of an institutional capacity for 'collaborative planning' through the systematic apparatus of the state. Institutions need to propagate new inclusionary and participatory spaces through which to involve stakeholders and the broader public. In these fora, people will be able communicatively to express their interests towards the establishment of policy goals. Importantly, the development of soft infrastructure of governance needs reflexively to mediate formalised systems of bureaucracy and become more responsive to public will-formation. Citizens, in turn, are empowered and trust is promoted between parties (Healey 1998 p. 314; see also Dryzek 1990a p. 20-21).

O’Riordan (1998 pp. 1-10) has highlighted a further point in the need to facilitate deliberative decisions alongside and within existing systems of government. In a discussion of hard and soft infrastructure, O’Riordan draws attention to the need for participatory processes to be attentive to the changing procedures of accountability through the modernisation of local government. Fundamentally, he warns against alienating traditional networks of power. The challenge thus becomes for the need to co-evolve ‘executive procedures of accountability and responsiveness with the “new” democracy of informal governance’ (O’ Riordan 1998 p. 9). This point is particularly salient to the actual methodological design and outputs from deliberative procedures. From a representative perspective, there is a case for arguing that participatory processes are essentially unaccountable. Political representatives are elected to speak for their constituency and their actions can be held to scrutiny. There are no such safeguards within participatory democracy (except for the idealised notion of representative participation). As will be demonstrated in chapter six, there are a variety of political, economic and indeed methodological factors why participation may fall short of this ideal. Thus estranging traditional lines of power needed to execute a set of policies developed from such processes can be politically problematic.

Pennington and Rydin (1999) have explored the practical aspects of mediating between hard and soft infrastructures of governance. They argue that there is a need to specify more closely the conditions for successful public participation within the realities of bureaucratic life. Again through consideration of policy scale, they note that ‘there may need to be rules that prevent participation in the policy process from spatially distant groups who will not carry the full burden of policies they propose’ (Pennington and Rydin 1999 p. 15). Moreover, the authors suggest that simply increasing participation may not result in the development of such process benefits as social capital. Thus as well as the procedural ‘good’ of participation, they highlight the need for concern with appropriate outcomes: are the policy goals achieved, are there unintended or undesired consequences, and importantly are the resource costs of implementation appropriate to the benefits of meeting policy goals (Pennington and Rydin 1999 pp. 3, 15-16). These

important points will be developed in more detail in an evaluative framework at the end of the chapter. Before this is considered, it is worth highlighting the specific challenges that environmental policy making brings to such processes.

5.1.1. The environment and participatory processes.

The environment has been a fertile ground for the growth of new institutional ways of capturing public values for the natural world. These have broadly been through the use of either economic or participatory instruments. As mentioned in chapter 2, Jacobs (1997) explores two these main models for value-articulating institutions for the environment in some depth. For Jacobs, the environment is for the most part a public rather than a private good. In this way, policy choices effecting the environment should reflect social values rather than the private interests. As such, valuation institutions should not survey private preferences for environmental management, as within cost-benefit methods, but rather should develop fora where people are brought together to discuss and make judgements. In other words value-articulating institutions for the environment should be deliberative in character.

For Jacobs, such institutions aim to develop ‘a space between civil society and the state, in which uncoerced, reasoned political argument among citizens can occur’ (Jacobs 1997 p. 221). Moreover, Jacobs argues for a normative institutional design. As will be remembered from chapter 2, cost-benefit analysis is not an objective means of disinterestedly aggregating preferences. Rather it constructs them towards a consumer approach (see 2.4.1.). In a similar manner, it is specifically because deliberative institutions encourage people to engage in ‘good public thinking’ that institutional design should be facilitated along such lines.

While such observations are worthy, perhaps Jacobs underplays the complexity of participatory processes through this discussion. It is perhaps more the case that participants negotiate both aspects through deliberative processes. In this way, they socially mediate both participants’ autonomy and their solidarity. While ‘public thinking’

should indeed be given methodological space, it is specifically in relation to others that individuals reinforce or adjust their own expectations. Indeed, communicative action aims to express how both processes of socialisation and individuation are forged through interaction².

Another major driver towards participatory approaches for environmental governance concerns meeting the requirements of sustainable development. Susan Owens has noted the paradoxes within the rhetoric surrounding sustainability, which particularly focus on consensual outcomes (Owens 1997a). She argues that the demand led approach for the development of environmental resources is politically inconsistent with the need for environmental protection. Furthermore, the policy framework for sustainability provides insufficient safeguards for natural protection, often being couched in terms of the need to provide for development while only taking account of environmental needs (DoE 1995; quoted in Owens 1997a p. 575).

This inequality has legitimated the way in which the environment is negotiated; without a reciprocal institutional transformation for the articulation of environmental concerns. For Owens (1997a p. 576), if environmental values are to be considered as defensible as those for development, there is at the heart a problem in reconciling political differences at the level of value judgements. There is thus a necessity to consider such decisions at the fundamental level of needs. In this way, as with Habermas, Owens (1997) suggests that the aesthetic judgement of ordinary people needs to be given an equal and legitimate role to play within the planning process. The 'objective' values of the market and consumer sovereignty can be negotiated within a collective rationality³.

² For observations of the self in discursive democracy, see Warren 1995.

³ For an account of community participation in sustainable development, see Warburton (1998).

It should be emphasised that participatory methods in which to facilitate the development of public environmental values have concrete, substantive concerns as well as more procedural considerations of governance and social transformation. In this respect, David Held's (1991) conception of a democratic institutional design is noteworthy.

For Held, such institutions should not embody a set of procedures that entail substantive rights. Rather, they need to be viewed as a 'form of life or substantive space, conditioned and constrained by a set of principles, structures and forces, that together define a common structure of action' (Held 1991 p. 880). There is a very strong sense in which deliberative processes need to be seen to produce demonstrably better decisions for environmental management, not only from a social but also from an institutional perspective. Indeed, both elements are closely intertwined; process benefits such as the building of trust should assist in the implementation of workable outcomes. In real life, the politics of deliberation are likely to involve negotiation and compromise, and hence consensus on a decision moves away from the Habermasian understanding of the term. Nonetheless, such processes should aim to augment more than strategic compromise, and in particular there is an emphasis within participatory processes for coming to an understanding of other positions.

As such, institutions need carefully to consider the significance of place and culture if they are to effectively engage lay groups in decision-making. Only in this way will local forms of knowledge find communicative expression alongside more traditional forms of power. Only when participants in a process are able to understand the validity claims raised by others, can role-sharing taking place and some conception of the common will be expressed. In this way, power relations within such arenas are redistributed and become transformative. Seyla Benhabib's description of power in such a context is striking:

'what institutionalists neglect is that power is not only a social resource to be distributed, say, like bread or automobiles. Power is also a socio-cultural grid of interpretation and communication. Public dialogue is not external but constitutive of

power relations: there are officially recognised vocabularies in which one can press claims; idioms for interpreting and communicating one's needs; established narrative conventions for constructing the individual and collective identities; paradigms of argumentation accepted as authoritative in adjudicating claims; the repertoire of available rhetorical devices, and the like. These constitute the meta-politics of institutional dialogue and, as a critical theorist, one is interested in identifying those social relations, power structures, and socio-cultural grids of communication and interpretation at the present which limit the identities of parties to the dialogue, which set the agenda for what is considered appropriate or inappropriate matter of institutional debate, and which sanctify the speech of some over those of others as being the language of the public' (Benhabib 1990 p. 19; my emphasis).

As Benhabib notes, the focus upon language is therefore crucial. Only through such an understanding will the process attributes of trust, the equality of judgement, enlightened public reason, and inclusiveness come into being. And through this, substantive concerns may be negotiated. In this way, critical theory becomes not just an idealised set of propositions, abstracted from the real world. Rather it acts as a heuristic through which discursive designs may be interrogated. Such uses of critical theory as a research programme will now be explored.

5.2.0. Critical theory as a research programme.

From the broad institutional perspective outlined above, the use of critical theory as a research programme will now be discussed. A number of authors in the planning and environmental field will be reviewed, and their applications of a Habermasian based approach to empirical studies examined. The insights gleaned from these perspectives will thus be used in terms of the analysis of the case studies presented in this thesis.

Perhaps the major proponent of critical theory to the field of planning is John Forester. Forester develops a Habermasian framework to assess the relationship between broader societal structures and the actions of individuals, or in other words between system and lifeworld. In particular, he examines how the dimensions of social reproduction (cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation) are made possible by and structured through institutions (1986 p. 190-191). He is thus keen to examine how the processes

that forge the lifeworld are encroached upon through the systemic imperatives of the economy and state administration. Forester's application of critical theory is concretised through specific discussion of such themes as power and powerlessness (1982), legitimisation and democracy (1994), and the systematic distortion of communication (1986 pp. 196-197). In such a way, he emphasises that in applying critical theory the aim is practically to engage in the analysis and critique of social practices and institutionally situated actions, rather than attempting to realise the ideal speech situation.

Forester aims to develop a planning theory that moves beyond instrumental and technical problem solving to one that is grounded upon practical organisation and political reality. As such, he views planning as an interactive process through which public meanings are constructed and social learning is developed. Specifically, planning may be seen as a process through which social reproduction is mediated through communicative action (Forester 1983a p. 164-168). Forester develops these ideas through a careful attention to what he describes as the geographies of planning practice.

These are:-

- i) the cognitive geography of knowledge production, wherein attention is paid to the processes through which knowledge is established and gains priority through a method;
- ii) the political-legal geography of power and consent, wherein attention is paid to the formal and informal processes through which discussion is recognised and legitimated;
- iii) the ritual geography of social identity, wherein attention is paid to how individuals present and negotiate themselves through a process; and
- iv) the economic resource geography of attention, wherein attention is paid to processes of capital, both in terms of monetary budgets and the development of social forms of capital.

(Forester 1983a p. 171).

Though Forester generally sees such a framework as a means of organising planning practice (see 1983a pp. 171-177), it is possible to develop it as a means of process evaluation. As such, it is possible to interrogate how specific methods for environmental decision-making may facilitate these geographies. This may be in terms of:

- i) The efficacy of objective, social and subjective forms of reasoning articulated by participants.
- ii) The role of the facilitator within the group process and whether the policy maker or individuals within the process have recourse to a legal framework for purposes of power.
- iii) How identities are formed not only within the group but also towards social reproduction and the mediation of environmental values.
- iv) The significance of quantitative and qualitative forms of capital through such processes, whether monetary, social and natural.

These perspectives will be developed in more depth later in the chapter.

Patsy Healey has been perhaps the leading exponent of a Habermasian based theory of planning in the United Kingdom. Her work is of considerable importance in attempts to develop institutions for collaborative planning, which she argues should be open and reflexive to accommodate local knowledges (see Healey 1997; Healey 1998; Healey 1999). In particular, Healey draws attention to the cultural context of reasoning when developing institutional perspectives for collective action (1997 p. 52-55, 62-68; Healey and Hillier 1995). Developing a relational philosophy, Healey argues that we make our identities and social lives in reference to others (1997 p. 57). For Healey, it is specifically through developing institutional design that a 'creative capacity' to facilitate relational bonds may be developed towards the building of intellectual and social capital.

In recognising the importance of culture within participatory designs, Healey has further noted the potential of deliberative institutions for place-making in increasingly

disembedded and fragmented societies (*Ibid.* p. 60). Such geographical concerns resonate with the Habermasian notion of a fragmented consciousness leading to a cultural impoverishment through the rise of expert cultures. In this way, through the building of social networks, institutions may gain a truly transformative potential (see Healey 1998). A participatory approach within institutions thus not only may act as a means through which the broader structural aspects of governance may be addressed. Rather they too can be conceived as the means through which a critical consciousness may be developed, to check the advance of processes underpinning cultural pathologies within the lifeworld. Re-connecting a communicative practice to the reproduction of the lifeworld enhances the capacity of actors to parry the pathologies within modernity. Such processes may foster an ontological security against the effects of global processes and threats that characterise contemporary social and environmental problems (see Giddens 1991).

As such, a major focus of Healey's work has been aimed towards facilitating new institutional forms and designs through collaborative planning. As with many authors, she is concerned with the 'straightjacket of instrumental rationality in its approaches to how identify problems in need of strategic attention and how to act on them'. She thus seeks to develop normative communicative practices for the arrangement of collective affairs (Healey 1996 p. 219).

In particular, Healey has identified a number of critical themes to emerge from strategic planning, and though similar in scope to those outlined by Forester, have more specific emphasis on cultural difference. Particularly she examines the role of process design, language and the importance of facilitation to promote inclusionary argumentation. In this manner, Healey highlights following:

- i) the significance of place,
- ii) the fora and style of the discussion,
- iii) the processes of raising claims and their legitimate redemption,
- iv) how new discourses evolve, and

- v) how such processes may be subject to critique within the political community (Healey 1996 p. 221-223).

Importantly, Healey recognises the plurality of lived lives, and hence is attuned to the contextual nature of social relations and politics individual situations. In this way, she not only recognises the value of local knowledge but also its multiplicity (1998 pp. 1539-1541). Healey's review of two community regeneration initiatives on Tyneside serves to illustrate how the design of a process can have a profound impact upon the ability of participants to articulate their sense of place. In one set of meetings, a traditional format was developed where policy makers talked to a large audience in an open public meeting. Such a process served not only to intimidate participants but also expert business partners who felt uncomfortable and exposed in such open contexts (Davoudi and Healey 1995: Healey 1998). A more intimate partnership approach was developed in a second study. Here local residents' views were examined and critique in more depth. Over time this process reciprocated trust between the two sectors, and moreover facilitated both business expert and local knowledge towards achievable goals (Healey 1998 p. 1540).

Such research demonstrates how institutional tools for decision-making have distinct effects upon relations of power, domination and exclusion. As will be demonstrated in the following chapter, the initial design of the processes is fundamental as it frames the places, the people and the means through which voices are heard, discussion developed and decisions taken. In such a way, emphasis needs to be placed on a collective capacity to establish arenas that are sensitive to cultural differences and too recognises multiple forms of knowing and valuing.

Following on from this, it is worth reviewing a critique of Habermasian collaborative planning and communicative rationality developed by Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger (1998). This review focuses upon the theoretical, practical and evaluative concerns of the Habermasian project and its various applications. The authors premise their argument on the following:

- i) that the theoretical foundations of communicative rationality are questionable, particularly concerning the implied promotion of process over outcome
- ii) that the notion of ideal speech is unachievable in planning practice
- iii) that consensus is neither desirable or even possible in modern societies
- iv) that communicative action prioritises lay knowledge over values articulated by professionals

However, Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger seem to have confused the concept of communicative rationality as developed in Habermas's work within their review at a number of levels. For instance, his model of communicative action was never meant to be independent from teleological, normatively regulated and dramaturgical action in the way the authors suggest (see Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger 1998 p. 1981). Rather it aims to convey an interpretative linguistic medium through which 'speaker and hearers, out of the context of their pre-interpreted lifeworld, refer simultaneously to things in the objective, social and subjective worlds' (Habermas 1984 p. 95). The concept of communicative action derived from this is meant as a more adequate means of conceiving action within society beyond a narrow instrumental base.

Second, and a common misinterpretation of Habermas, the notion of the ideal speech situation is not meant to represent an attempt to specify real discourse (see 4.2.2.). Rather it represents a set of quasi-transcendental arguments through which claims to justice may be realised. Speakers must presuppose the ideal speech situation, on pain of performative contradiction, in order to view their claims as morally justified.

Third, and related to this point, issues of consensus can only occur within themes of justice, due to the differentiation of knowledge within modern societies. Though Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger note that 'the basic assumption of communicative rationality is that consensus can be reached' (1998 p. 1979), as mentioned Habermas never attempts to claim that issues of politics can be resolved in such a way.

Fourth, the authors eclipse the significance of Habermas's work within an overall project of modernity. For Habermas, the task for within modernity is to balance out claims of instrumental reason with those of practical reason, not to subsume the former within the latter. Further, the main emphasis upon communicative action is that it aims to enrich the understandings to reconstruct the disintegrating lifeworld.

Finally, the relationship between system and lifeworld is not as parasitic as Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger imply. Habermas does not intend the analogy of 'lifeworld – good; system – bad', but rather views a complimentary role between the systematic imperatives of the state and the public sphere. In this way, as mentioned earlier, deliberative democracy assists rather than replaces tradition forms of democratic arrangement.

Part of the problem for Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger (1998) has been that in attempting to critique collaborative planning, they attribute unfounded claims to Habermas. Their only reference to Habermas's work is volume one of a *Theory of communicative Action* (1984), which does not elaborate his distinction between system and lifeworld that the authors seem keen to criticise. Further, the authors do not review his later work on the application of discourse ethics. They also are asymmetrical in their treatment of Forester, who generally is precise in his application of Habermas's ideas.

The main reasons for noting these inconsistencies is not academic, but rather because such critiques misinterpret the value of critical theory to applied research. Within the planning literature, application may be inconsistent, but this is a problem of interpretation than theoretical efficacy *per se*. The problem of consensus is notable in this respect, which is often applied within a number of different contexts. A similar point can be made with regard to the ideal speech situation, which is has been viewed by many commentators as attempting to specify real discourse (see for example Cullingworth 1999; Healey 1997; Innes 1996; Moote *et al.* 1997; Syme and Eaton 1989).

At a practical level, Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger's (1998) review does produce some interesting points concerning the concrete difficulties of a collaborative approach to planning. The authors draw attention to resource concerns and the ability to voice claims within collaborative planning processes. The problem of outcomes is further well highlighted, particularly concerning arbitration and rights to appeal. Indeed, for Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger's concern regarding whether such processes realistically deal with power relations and expertise, and specifically the problems of de-professionalisation of experts is one that will be explored in some depth in the conclusions chapter.

5.2.1. Expertise and participation.

This broader context of the role of expertise is particularly pertinent for this thesis, and it is worthwhile to explore how various authors have viewed the role of professionals within deliberative and inclusionary processes. For instance, Sabine O'Hara has examined the role of expertise in participatory techniques through a Habermasian perspective (O'Hara 1996). O'Hara illustrates how norms are articulated and expert and non-expert contributions are evaluated through a case study illustrating round table discussion of ecosystem valuation process for environmental policy-making in New York. The main normative commitments underpinning the process aimed towards economic development married to environmental stewardship. However, O'Hara notes the subjective and aesthetic criteria through which such claims were evaluated were subservient to the objective values of experts. Legitimate forms of value were thus ones where 'hard facts' took preference over 'soft values' (O'Hara 1996 pp. 103-105).

A further interesting point O'Hara (1996) raises was to note that ordinary people felt they had the authority to challenge experts such as theologians and ethicists on discussion of values, but felt less able to contribute to expert discussions of science. This is an important observation, as it demonstrates how rationality is culturally evaluated. O'Hara suggests that such evaluation needs to be sensitively facilitated within policy frameworks to secure an ethical base for the application of sound science.

A similar concern over the role of expertise is articulated by Button and Mattson (1999) in a review of deliberative processes in the United States. They suggest that public participation is often a difficult enterprise, marked by conflict between groups, different orientations towards the goals of deliberation, and compounded by political inequalities. Particularly, they highlight the need to examine asymmetries of power within such approaches. They observed that public groups would often defer to expert cultures upon various aspects of the decision-making process. In such a manner, the technical aspects of various issues were seen as the province of scientists. Moreover, experts such as political leaders often became the focus of group attention resulting in a 'questions-answer' dynamic between citizens and politicians (Button and Mattson 1999 pp. 623-629). The authors suggest that the use of such techniques will not necessarily transform pre-existing political and power relations.

Following on from this, administrative expertise and the scale of policy goals also forge power relations through a deliberative process. In a study of land management, Moote *et al.* (1997. pp. 884-887) note that administrators should be wary recruiting specialist interest groups in the name of the public (see also Rydin 1999). The authors suggest that even when representation is inclusive, the translation of participants' views through the more formal roles and responsibilities of an agency is often wanting. In particular, they highlight a concern wherein participants felt that they did not have the administrative authority to make decisions that would effect not only local but national interests. These points will be considered in more depth in the analysis of the case studies in chapter 6.

5.3.0. An evaluative and analytical framework for participatory techniques.

In this final section, some of the ideas discussed in this and the preceding chapters will be brought together through the development of an evaluative and analytical framework for deliberative processes. Such evaluation is important not only to assess the strengths and weaknesses of certain participatory methodologies, but also to examine the efficacy of the theoretical approaches that ground such methods. In this light, both the substantive and procedural aspects of public-will formation and institutional design will thus be

discussed through engagement with a number of authors, in particular the sociologists Ortwin Renn and Thomas Webler (1995).

Procedural aspects will focus particularly upon criteria such as fairness, and thus assist the framing of power within a process. Substantive aspects will involve more direct analysis of language. Some ideas will be explored from the perspectives of both pragmatics and discursive analysis. The aim of this section is to provide analytical purchase not only on questions of the parity of the methods themselves, but more specifically, how the environment is socially mediated and how this is translated into substantive policy outcomes.

5.3.1. Procedural evaluation.

As discussed throughout this thesis, procedural criteria to evaluate participatory processes should necessarily be developed from ethical-normative arguments, and these will particularly concern the equity of procedures for deciding collective action. In Habermasian terms, fundamentally these criteria should respect autonomy and solidarity of individuals. They should be consistent with political equality and popular sovereignty, in the sense that they should provide ‘every individual a chance to defend his or her personal interests or values and to contribute to the definition of the collective will’ (Webler 1995 p. 38).

Though used for a transcendental-pragmatic justification for communicative action, Habermas’s ideal speech situation has been developed by some authors as an evaluative critical yardstick. To recall, the ideal speech situation stated the following:

1. Each participant who is capable of speech and action is allowed to participate in discourses.
2. a. Each is allowed to introduce any proposal into discourse
b. Each is allowed too call into question any proposal
c. Each is allowed to express their attitudes, desires and needs

No speaker may, by internal or external coercion, be prevented from exercising his [or her] rights as laid down in (1) and (2).

(Habermas 1990a p. 89).

Given these rules, Dryzek views ideal speech as a form of indirect critique, through which the normative precept of communicative rationality may be used as a counterfactual ideal to criticise real world practices (1990a pp. 30-31, 36-37). In such a way, the ideal speech situation becomes a critical tool to explore real discourse. It is important to stress here that ideal speech is not an attainable goal but rather a critical principle (Dryzek 1995 p. 104). Indeed, following Habermas, he is wary of attempts to use the ideal speech situation as a institutional blueprint (see Habermas 1982 pp. 261-262).

A systematic approach to the evaluation of process in this light has been applied by Ortwin Renn and Thomas Webler (for example see Renn *et al.* 1995a, 1995b; Renn *et al.* 1993; Webler 1995; Webler and Renn 1995). In particular, Webler (1995) develops the ideal speech through the meta-criteria of fairness and competence. The criteria of fairness aims to promote equality of access for participants within a process, and in this way corresponds to ethical-normative arguments for justification. The criteria of competence aims to insure that participants have competent understandings of the terms, concepts, languages and definitions used within a process, and in this way corresponds to more functional analytic arguments for justification. Competence is of particularly relevance for environmental decision-making as scientific terminology may often be used to describe management problems. From the ideal speech situation Webler develops the following procedural standards for evaluation (Table 5):

Table 5. Conditions for the fair and competent speech (adapted from Webler 1995 p. 60).

	Fairness	Competence
A	Anyone may participate	There must be minimal standards for linguistic competence
B	Anyone may assert validity claims	There must be access to knowledge
C	Anyone may challenge validity claims	There must be a consensually-approved translation scheme
D	People have the right to influence final determinations of validity	The most reliable methodological techniques must be made available

As such, Habermas's rule (1) - each participant who is capable of speech and action is allowed to participate in discourses - breaks down into a criterion of fairness of participation and a criterion of communicative competence (see Table 5: A).

Communicative competence concerns thus concerns a mastery of the rules of logic, a mastery of linguistic rules, and a mastery of the rules of interaction (Webler 1995 p. 44).

As mentioned last chapter, for Habermas these skills are inescapable, developing as subjects learn to communicate. Communicative competence is thus routed in the structure of speech. In such a way, it is reasonable to assume that in western democracies 'cognitive and lingual competence have to be more or less taken for granted'⁴ (*Ibid.* p. 55).

For the rules listed in (2) by Habermas, Webler similarly develops associated competence criteria. As such, with regard to the raising of validity claims within a process (see Table 5: B), it is important that anyone may make claims (fairness) and that participants have sufficient information to make reasoned judgements (competence). Again this may be important specifically with regard to environmental decision-making, where participants may be asked to make judgements about the environmental quality of an area, for which they may need appropriate forms of information.

⁴ Excepting subjects with mental illness or the inability to use language.

With regard to the challenging of validity of certain claims (see Table 5: C), Webler suggests that there needs to be a consensually approved translation scheme to facilitate the comprehensibility of claims. These criteria are particularly relevant to the translation of expert forms of knowledge within a forum. Furthermore it aims to highlight the concern of how ordinary people may legitimately challenge such forms of expertise.

Finally, Webler develops a criterion concerning the mediation of disputes (see Table 5: D). This criterion take into account the fact that political questions will often arise with participatory process upon which it will be impossible to gain a unanimous consensus. In such instances, and where agreement is necessary, participants should agree appropriate formal mechanisms for decisions to be made. For instance, this may be through the use of such tools as the majority vote (see Webler 1995 p. 51).

The fairness and competence criteria developed by Webler essentially address the promotion of understanding within a process. Such understanding is a vital prerequisite of rationally motivated agreement (though understanding does not necessarily promote agreement). Renn and colleagues (1995b pp. 339-367) apply Webler's criteria of fairness, competence and understanding to evaluate qualitatively eight different models for environmental discourse. This application illustrates how different types of knowledge are augmented through different types of deliberative processes, and how participants gain access and representation through such processes. In particular, they relate the efficacy of different models to specific types of environmental and social problems⁵.

It is worth reviewing further evaluative heuristics that other authors have suggested for assessing participatory processes. For instance, the educational aspects of participatory processes have been noted by a number of authors (see for example Moote *et al.* 1997; Munton *et al.* 2000; O'Riordan 1998; Renn *et al.* 1995a; Warburton 1998). As hinted above, processes should promote not just information exchange but learning as well. In such a way, participatory techniques may have a transformative potential in the capacity

⁵ Aspects of such an application will be explored in more depth in the conclusions chapter.

to exert new modes of citizen understanding against systemic fragmentation. New modes of understanding shape horizons through which to view the world and culturally this may foster a social and environmental consciousness.

The continuity of participants attending a process is a crucial evaluative criterion (see Moote *et al.* 1997). This effects group stability and the development of what Foulkes (1964, 1975) has termed a group matrix, the distinct social nature and the formation of bonds within a process (see Burgess *et al.* 1988a). Such bond formation may specifically facilitate the discussion of subjective and aesthetic needs by participants, as they begin to feel more at ease with each other. Furthermore, continuity needs to be seen as not just limited to a series of meetings, but rather as an ongoing communicative dialogue with the public or stakeholders. This is essential if institutions wish to develop networks of social capital with interested parties in an area.

Finally, I will specifically develop the notion of 'representation' as an evaluative criterion next chapter. In this sense, representation seeks not only to describe how the selection of participants within a policy process reflects the broader community. It too aims to examine how the method themselves may act to prioritise and represent certain forms of knowledge and understandings. Though, ideally, representation should be as broad as possible, in practice this may not be possible due to financial constraints or indeed policy objectives. This is manifest through the distinction between 'stakeholders' and 'publics' within participatory techniques. Though both terms are fluid, stakeholders tends to be more closely defined through the specific context of a management strategy, and in particular the careful identification of partners who are needed to facilitate such a plan. Indeed as Pennington and Rydin note (1999 p. 6), large-scale active public involvement in policy processes are rare. Stakeholder mapping is thus one way in which effectively to identify and nurture social and institutional capital (see Healey *et al.* 1999).

5.3.2. *Substantive evaluation:*

This final section develops some heuristics to examine the substantive claims made within a participatory process. Through such an evaluation, outcomes of deliberative approaches to environmental management may be assessed. This framework specifically appropriates Habermas's (1984) account of the pragmatics of communicative action as a means for interrogating language. Furthermore, some insights gained from discourse analysis will aim to compliment this framework.

As will be recalled from chapter four (see 4.2.1), Habermas provide an intersubjective perspective to rationality through the model of communicative rationality (1984, 1987a). Here, as a function of modern structure of consciousness, subjects may rationalise a variety of ontological relations between actor and world. These are the teleological, norm-guided and dramaturgical models of rationality, corresponding to the objective, social and subjective worlds. It is precisely the rationalisation of claims made within these spheres of value that provides a context for what is meant by a substantively better decision in this context. It is specifically through refinement and debate, through challenging the claims made within these spheres of knowledge, that the decision arising through such a context will engender the best form of political judgement.

Thomas Webler has employed these aspects of Habermas's speech act theory as a means for such substantive evaluation of participatory processes. Webler uses this framework to interrogate some of the aspects of competence discussed above through the medium of language. He argues that a focus upon explicative, theoretical, practical and therapeutic modes of discourse (corresponding to communicative, teleological, norm-guided and dramaturgical worlds respectively) reveal how individuals constitute both their autonomy and their solidarity with others (1995 pp. 44-45, 67-71). The relations between different types of speech acts has been outlined earlier in a model of communicative action (see 4.2.1. Table 5.).

In particular, Webler highlights the powerful role that scientists may play in producing evidence to support validity claims made about the natural world through theoretical discourse. Hence, as mentioned above, he notes the procedural onus upon making available such necessary information in a clear and intelligible way. In other words, he stresses the need to make such information communicative. Within practical discourse Webler notes that norms may be appealed to from the horizon of the lifeworld (through citizen understanding) or through the system (such as appeals to law and jurisprudence)⁶. With regard to therapeutic discourse, Webler notes the importance of these for the reflection mediation of identity in solidarity with others. Only through discussion with people do individuals understand and reaffirm their own beliefs.

This aspect of language is particularly important within participatory processes. It aims to demonstrate that deliberation is a far more dialectical process than one that espouses either a 'citizen' or 'consumer' approach to environmental valuation⁷. Indeed, the truly transformative potential of deliberative processes resides in the ability to forge one's own autonomy through exploring differences with others.

John Forester (1992) has also developed a critical ethnography to assist in revealing the multi-layered political complexity of rationalisation processes professional planning practice. By 'critical ethnography', Forester aims to focus upon themes of power and hegemony, and specifically explores how meanings and identities are socially constructed within such arenas. Once more, through a Habermasian framework, he reflects upon how various models of action effect the thematisation of power, community and autonomy (Forester 1992 p. 47).

As with Webler, Forester develops specific insights from Habermas's pragmatics of communication and speech act theory. Focusing on the teleological, norm-guided and

⁶ Again in instances of the latter he notes a careful role for experts. This aspect will be reviewed next chapter in light of discussion with the Environment Agency and their role of a regulator.

⁷ See Jacobs (1997). This dualist aspect has also been overplayed in the criticism of collaborative planning by Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger (1998).

dramaturgical models of action, he demonstrates how speakers and listeners attempt to establish facts, invoke norms to legitimate action, and express their subjectivity during dialogue. Specifically, Forester analyses how these themes are represented communicatively.

Forester critically focuses upon the pragmatic validity claims arising in each of these modes of action, which ones are accepted and which ones are challenged. Moreover, his analysis takes on more of a sociological (as opposed to epistemological) form, as he explores how relations of sociality and power are forged, developed and reconstituted through such processes. He thus aims to establish which social and political relations are reproduced through patterns of belief, identity and legitimacy. Thus Forester notes that:

‘a Habermasian fieldwork tells us and helps us to ‘look and see’, neither to assume determinate structures a priori nor to expect any idealised discourse, but rather to shift from abstract discussions of truth and power, discourse and other, to assess actual flows of action that reshape our beliefs, consent, trust and even more subtle frameworks of attention’ (Forester 1992 p. 62).

In this light, some of the insights that Norman Fairclough provides from discourse analysis are of particular importance. Fairclough (1989, 1992) argues that discourse in particular, captures the internal dialectical relationship between language and society. In this way discourse can be read as a form of social practice; it has effects upon society as well as being effected by society (Fairclough 1989 p. 20, 22-27 1992 p. 8).

As discourse is a social phenomenon it is imbued with and shaped by relations of power. Different social structures, such as institutional structures, will in turn ideologically embody different discursive modes of power. It should be noted that power in this sense is not a property that agents or institutions hold and wield but rather a relational discursive field. Fairclough (1989 pp. 33-34) notes that such ideological forms of power seek hegemony through the notion of consent; that is ideology works to project a social practice as a form of universal or common sense. In this way, Fairclough distinguishes ‘inculcation’ - a mechanism of ‘consensus’ that conceals ideology and relations of power,

from the Habermasian communicative idea of consensus - a means of working towards issues of justice within rational debate (Fairclough 1989. p. 75).

Fairclough develops these insights along a broadly Habermasian framework. He highlights how different modes of language act to reproduce knowledge, social relations and social identities (corresponding to the objective, intersubjective and subjective domains of Habermas). However, his particular interpretative focus on vocabulary and grammar provides critical analytical tools that may be applied to interrogate the case studies presented next chapter (see Fairclough 1989 pp. 110-119). Through such detailed analysis of discourse within participatory processes, it is possible to apply a broader normative-descriptive framework for analysing public sphere dialogue that draws attention to:

- i) how contributions are regulated within discourse;
- ii) the 'spaces of emergence' where identities, relations and knowledges are (re)constituted in the course of dialogue;
- iii) the spaces within a social order of discourse, or in other word the flows and blockages between public sphere and governmental discourse
- iv) the focus upon action, through which the dialectical interconnection between word and deed are examined.

These substantive ideas will be specifically used to explore outcomes from the policy process. They will be used to examine the process of agreement, how such decisions were regulated, how participants relate to one another and what outcomes emerged as a result of these themes. Specifically, in chapter 8, these analyses will examine how processes of discourse, communication and understanding develop around a variety of substantive themes, namely: trust, consensus, identity, institutional valuation and environmental values. Finally, the procedural and substantive analysis will then be drawn together to interrogate the idea of an ecological rationality.

5.4.0. Conclusions.

This chapter has reviewed some of the implications of a critical theory in practice, particularly in terms of examining the emergence of new participatory spaces for social and political action. In particular, it has highlighted the importance of institutional design and the resurgence of deliberative approaches in light of the shortcomings of representative democracy. In this way, institutions need to develop mechanisms that may facilitate discussions across political and social horizons. Institutions need to be reflexive; they should focus more clearly on the importance of language, place and identity. They need to move beyond instrumental and technical problem solving and become grounded in practical organisation and political reality.

It is argued that a Habermasian framework is a useful means of exploring such themes within participatory practices. Particularly knowledge, power, consent and social identity may be illuminated through a critical perspective. Assisting the transmission of ordinary and expert understandings is a particular analytical focus in this respect. As such, processes should pay careful attention to what forms of discourse they prioritise. Drawing on insights into procedural and substantive evaluative frameworks, it is possible to examine participatory methods both in terms of their fairness, and more specifically in terms of their outcomes. Power and discourse are intimately related. Procedures of justice are thus of paramount importance for discourse. Where consensus does occur, it should be examined in terms of its broader inculcated or communicative context.

Discourse is a social practice; it captures the dialectical relationship between language and society. Through examining discourse so it is possible to illuminate how participants within a process share goals, define their own autonomy, build solidarity, legitimate courses of action and adjust their own expectations. Through discourse it is possible to explore participants' understandings of the objective, social and subjective worlds and more specifically how these complex web of relationships mediate our relationship to the natural world. The use of critical theory in North Norfolk will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 6.

The use of small groups

for environmental management: reflections on process.

6.1.0. Introduction.

The north Norfolk coastal area is a diverse and striking landscape, with desolate grazing marshes and heathland areas contrasting the villages and small market towns that comprise the local community. In this chapter, two separate plan-making processes for this area will be reviewed in some depth. The first of these involves the public participation in the development of a management strategy for the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The second concerns a stakeholder approach for the setting of environmental priorities for the Local Environment Agency Plan (LEAP). For each of these decision-making processes I devised a different methodology. In the former, a focus group method explored public values in a series of meetings in the area. In the second, a novel, deliberative form of multi-criteria analysis was developed to prioritise decisions. This process is called Stakeholder Decision Analysis (SDA) (see Clark *et al.* 1998; Burgess 2000).

This chapter has three main aims. First, a detailed description will be provided for each of the methodologies. Second, the substantive themes arising from both the focus group and the SDA processes will be explored. Finally, procedural aspects of these methods will be evaluated through a variety of ethical-normative arguments outlined last chapter (5.3.1), in particular through the meta-criteria of representation and fairness. Building on this review, the following chapter will then explore processes of communication in more depth, specifically developing insights from Habermasian speech act theory and discourse analysis.

6.2.0. *The Case studies.*

6.2.1. *Introduction.*

The north Norfolk coast has a long history of environmental management and has been protected through a large number of conservation designations. The area is renowned for its sand dunes, salt and freshwater grazing marshes at the coastal fringe, as well as the chalk downland, river valleys, heath and woodlands that characterise the inland landscapes.

The case studies reviewed in this chapter represent two very different plan making process on the Norfolk coast. The first of these is the development of a management strategy for the North Norfolk Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This process, called *Land and Life*, involved the participation of the general public at a series of meetings during the summer of 1997. The second case study reviews an Environment Agency project for stakeholder participation in the development of a LEAP. This process examined environmental priorities in the north west catchment area of Norfolk through SDA.

There are two important distinctions between the methods that should be highlighted. The first involves the distinction between the term ‘stakeholder’ from that of the ‘general public’. In the broadest sense, the term ‘stakeholders’ includes all of those who have a stake in the outcome of a decision. In practice, such a ‘stake’ is defined through the context of the policy process (in this case a LEAP) and through a particular focus upon key professionals within organisations. There is thus a distinct set of dynamics acting within a stakeholder group as compared to a public group. First, stakeholder groups generally have a greater level of expertise within the policy field, and this has a direct bearing upon the capacity to explore technical documents in depth. Second, such stakeholders have specific constraints within the policy process in terms of their time, budgetary and professional constraints. Third, stakeholders represent a specific organisational interest rather than the interests of the general public *per se*. These factors will be explored later in the chapter.

The second main distinction between the methods concerns their structure. The SDA method is far more task-orientated than the more open-ended focus group design. Furthermore, the policy making body has a far greater influence in LEAP than in the *Land and Life* Project. The Environment Agency not only set the specific policy guidelines for the inclusion and debate of new issues to be considered within a LEAP, but furthermore had their interests represented through the attendance of an Agency stakeholder at meetings. Both of these broader structural aspects are major factors shaping the discourses articulated through the method. The case studies will now be described in more depth.

6.2.2. The Norfolk Coast Project.

The Norfolk Coast Project (NCP) is a small team working in partnership for the development of a management strategy for the north Norfolk AONB. The role of the NCP is to engage all key players in a plan making process and to identify the issues thought to be of relevance to the area (see English Nature 1995; NCP 1995; NCC and CoCo 1995; NCC and NCP 1998). 'Key players', in this sense, concern a range of public, private and non-government organisations, through to tourists and the local residents. Through listening to all of the various viewpoints, the project aims to identify both areas of agreement and of potential conflict in planning for the sustainable use of the area. The NCP is co-funded through the Countryside Agency (formerly the Countryside Commission), Norfolk County Council, North Norfolk District Council and King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.

The north Norfolk AONB stretches from Heacham to Bacton, with outlying areas between Dersingham and King's Lynn to the west, and Sea Palling and Winterton in the east. A map of the area is illustrated overleaf (Map 1). The AONB management document is non-statutory; however it is used for guidance on many statutory plans in the area. The initial phase of the project, completed in 1995, had detailed a visitor management strategy and highlighted key tourism pressures upon sensitive wildlife

areas in the AONB (NCP 1995). The second phase of the management, known as the *Land and Life* project, was to involve local people in the development of a policy framework that would inform specific management objectives throughout the AONB. It is this process that forms the case study examined in this thesis.

6.2.3. The Land and Life Project.

In February 1997 staff at the NCP contacted researchers at the Department of Geography, University College London, for assistance in the production of a questionnaire. This questionnaire aimed to gauge public opinion upon current environmental and social issues in the AONB, concerning such issues as transport congestion, the area's natural beauty and the pressures upon local communities. On March 18th 1997, Darren Bhattachary and Jacquie Burgess visited the manager of the project, Tim Venes, and discussed the aims and expectations of the public consultation process. In a productive meeting, it was decided that though a questionnaire would be useful in broadly gauging public attitudes towards such issues in the area, it would not be particularly fruitful in gleaning in-depth local knowledge. As such, Bhattachary and Burgess developed a separate research design, recommending a two-phase field method.

In this collaborative planning approach, the first part of the method would develop a questionnaire to be designed and distributed to all of the households and businesses approximately within the AONB boundary. The questionnaire would aim broadly to describe the values and concerns held by local people in the area and provide a mechanism to recruit participants for more a more detailed discussion of these concerns. Following on from this, the second phase of the method would consist of a series of five local meetings, to be planned across the AONB in July. It was envisioned that at each meeting, the views expressed by the locals in the survey could be explored in more depth. Both the survey and the public meeting process will now be described, and the substantive points emerging from each highlighted.

6.2.4. *The Land and Life Survey.*

The *Land and Life* Survey was designed in order to gain viewpoints from residents upon environmental and social issues in the Norfolk AONB. The questionnaire is illustrated in Appendix I. The first part of the questionnaire considered factors contributing to, or detracting from, individual experience of 'quality of life'. Quality of life was categorised into a framework of important themes for the area, such as community life, shopping facilities, natural beauty, peace and quiet, and employment. Respondents could then rank, on a five-point scale, the level of importance of each of these issues. The second half of the survey, at the request of the NCP team, was devoted purely to transport themes. Again, questions were ranked with people replying with a level of satisfaction or use to a number of transport issues.

Both Quality of Life and transport were further canvassed through open-ended questions within the survey, allowing respondents to explore issues that are particularly relevant to them. Such design aimed to overcome the limitations of a closed answer investigation. There were three open-ended questions within the questionnaire, two concerning themes of the quality of life and one specifically upon transport issues. A separate coding frame for the analysis of these questions, based upon a revised form of content analysis (see Krippendorff 1980), was developed subsequent to the questionnaire return. Eight such categories were developed namely: environment, law and order, transport, development, youth opportunities, tourism, village life and pollution.

The recruitment strategy for the *Land and Life* project aimed to be broadly inclusive all local residents living within the AONB boundary, and the postal survey was distributed to approximately 8 100 households. All recipients were invited to attend the public meetings held in the summer through a passive response question at the end of the survey. The invitation read: 'we are organising local meetings in June to explore issues raised from this survey. If you would like the chance to take part, please tick the box. We will be in contact soon' (see Appendix I).

The return rate was 20%, with some 1540 households completing the questionnaire. It is worthwhile reviewing the census data for the AONB boundary to that of the responses to the *Land and Life* meetings. A number of characteristics of the respondents were noted which illustrate how well the questionnaire reflected the population of the area as a whole. A comparative table is shown below for age and sex characteristics (see Table 6).

Table 6. A comparison of age data between the *Land and Life* survey data and the Office of National Statistics Census 1991.

source	Age						Sex	
	<i>Under 26</i>	<i>26-35</i>	<i>36-45</i>	<i>46-55</i>	<i>56-65</i>	<i>65+</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Land and Life</i> survey	0.6%	4.2%	9.7%	16.4%	20.5%	41.5%	49%	51%
AONB Census 1991	11.45%	10.2%	13.9%	14.3%	16.2%	34.05%	48%	52%

Table 6 shows the recruitment strategy led to an under-representation of the younger community within the AONB with an over representation of the elderly population. Proportions of men and women are broadly equivalent to the census data. Other information gleaned from the survey reflects the age distribution of participants. For instance, those who are retired from paid work (52%) are much higher than this group in the census (36%). The key findings of the questionnaire are summarised next.

6.2.4.1. Land and Life Questionnaire summary:

6.2.4.2. Representation

- 20% of all households in the AONB returned the *Land and Life* Survey.
- Gender and children in household compared well to census data for the AONB.
- Length of residence ranged from a few months to in excess of eighty years.
- The elderly population was over represented.
- The majority of participants listed their occupation as retired.

- There was no specific representation from minority groups (for instance ethnic minorities, the young, the disabled, and lesbian and gay communities).

6.2.4.3. *Quality of life*

- Quality of life was categorised into two distinct themes; those of the aesthetic environment, which contained elements of natural beauty, landscape and wildlife; and those of socio-economic issues.
- There was consensus as to the importance of the aesthetic environment in promoting the quality of life.
- Socio-economic issues were more contested, though generally described as important to the quality of life.
- Most notably, tourism was found to detract from quality of life in the area.
- Within the closed answer questions, the descriptive analysis could not attribute views upon the quality of life to one particular cohort; for instance respondents of similar age, sex, number of children, length of residence or geographical characteristics.
- ‘Incomers’ and ‘locals’ did not have significantly different views upon issues concerning the quality of life.
- Open ended questions showed there to be some geographical difference in themes mentioned; namely the prevalence of anti-development and pro-youth opportunities at Hunstanton, law and order issues at Wells, sea defence at North Walsham and Blakeney, and issues of wildlife at Cromer.
- The visioning exercise, where respondents were asked to think of improvements to the area, had a lower diversity of responses. This was especially with regard to themes of the aesthetic environment. Instead, issues of transport and shopping facilities dominated the data set.
- Views upon the Quality of Life were complex, multi-facet and often inconsistent.

6.2.4.4. *Transport issues.*

- Use of public transport was more easily ascertained than views upon the quality of life.

- 80% of respondents to the *Land and Life* Survey do not use public transport.
- There appeared to be little knowledge of what transport service there was in existence.
- Car parking was thought to be more of a problem for visitors than for locals.
- General problems concerning the problems of safety, speed of vehicles and HGV's were endemic throughout the AONB.
- Descriptive analysis through age, gender, number of children and length of residence did not illustrate trends well.
- Regional analysis, however, disclosed some specificity.
- There was relatively greater contentment with the provision and price of public transport at Cromer and, to a lesser extent, North Walsham areas.
- At Wells, the problem of parking was relatively acute.
- Car parking provision is thought to be relatively less of a problem at Hunstanton and at North Walsham.
- Road congestion was particularly problematic at Hunstanton, Blakeney and Cromer.
- Generic problems, such as the speed of traffic, were not pronounced in any one area.
- Open answer questions upon public transport were dominated by themes upon the poor quality of the service.

6.2.4.5. *Overview.*

The response to the questionnaire was not representative of all sectors of the community. In particular minority groups were not well represented, with a comparatively large proportion of the elderly and retired over represented. Overall, the quality of life issues were complicated and not well elucidated by the questionnaire approach. This is likely to have been due to the fact that the survey is a relatively blunt methodological tool for revealing social and environmental values in any depth. For instance, themes of 'environmental quality' were often described together with 'economic development' as important for the community. However, the tension between these goals could not be explored through the confines of the questionnaire. In short, the broader context of

participant responses could not be explored. Transport themes were better described, due to the closed answer nature of many of the questions (e.g. how often do you use public transport). However, once more such responses did not reveal why preferences for certain modes of travel prevailed, and the conflict involved in such choices (e.g. monetary, necessity, environmental). This withstanding, the survey was useful in setting the agenda for the public meetings where this broader context could be explored in more detail.

6.2.5. The Land and Life Public Meetings.

Following the analysis of the questionnaire, five public meetings were arranged in the Norfolk AONB, at North Walsham, Wells, Blakeney, Cromer and Hunstanton (see Map 1). Approximately thirty participants were invited to attend each meeting. At each meeting, a focus group design was followed and facilitated by the following team from UCL:- Darren Bhattachary, Jacquie Burgess, Carolyn Harrison, Judy Clark, Diana Mortimer, Dan Bloomfield, Tracey Bedford, Simon Maxwell, Minelle Mathani and Nicole Dando. This process will now be discussed.

The main aim of the meetings was to give local people the opportunity to express their values and their concerns for the north Norfolk area. To achieve this, each the meetings was structured as follows. First, Tim Venes, the Norfolk Coast Project manager gave an informal presentation to explain the aims of the process, the nature of NCP's work and the hopes for the management strategy. Next, Gavin Smith detailed the transport plan in the area¹. Finally, a brief presentation followed by Jacquie Burgess, wherein the structure of the meeting was outlined. After this, the meeting broke into a series of focus groups of approximately eight participants, and two trained facilitators. Within each of the groups, the participants discussed a number of local area issues for about an hour, with the conversations recorded on audiotape. The facilitators had two main roles; one conducted the group while the other kept check upon group dynamics, taped the proceedings and noted the conversation arising.

¹ Gavin Smith was unable to attend all meetings. Tim Venes discussed the transport plan in his absence.

At each public meeting, it was envisaged that the participants would be split into five relatively homogenous groups break-out groups, structured according to preferences given in the survey. For instance, one group might contain participants who had particularly expressed concerns with transport, another group who had expressed sea-defence as a major issue, a further group who wished to increase the provision of local employment, and so on. This design aimed to promote group bonding and develop a form of 'best-knowledge' on particular themes². Furthermore, the informal character and conciliatory approach taken in these smaller groups aimed to promote trust, allowing space for participation by all. In each group a number of themes were explored, namely:-

- what makes the area special?
- what detracts from the quality of life in the area?
- what can we do to improve the area?
- how would we like to see the area in 10 years time?

After this time, while the participants were gathering refreshments, bullet point summaries were made of each of the group sessions. The meeting then closed with a brief plenary session, wherein the main points arising from each of the sessions were presented back by the facilitators to the whole group for comments. The participants were then informed of the next phase of the process, wherein their views would be written through by the team at UCL and then drawn together into a management strategy together with other partners work at the Norfolk Coast Project.

Each of the focus groups was subsequently transcribed. From the transcriptions, a theoretical framework for analysis was designed, with comments grouped into one of four themes; local distinctiveness, getting about, living communities, and making decisions. The key findings from the area meetings are listed below. For a full analysis of themes arising from each of the groups, see Bhattachary and Harrison (1997).

² As will be seen, the variations in numbers attending the sessions meant that such homogenous group design could not be followed.

From the initial *Land and Life* study, all participants were then sent details of the draft management strategy for additional comments. Furthermore, they were invited with other key bodies in the area to attend a series of discussion meetings in March 1998. At these meetings people were asked specifically to debate the policy options arising from the process so far, and thus agree the management strategy. However, only a relatively small number of the initial *Land and Life* participants attended this additional set of meetings (19%). Rather, these sessions were more dominated by attendance by specific interest groups and local parish and district councilors³. The process was once again conducted in small groups and facilitated by a team from UCL. However, due to the need for closure of the management strategy, the structure of the day was more task-orientated than the *Land and Life* meetings. After this last series of consultations, all participants were sent details of the final strategy and invited to the launch held at a local school late in the autumn of 1998 (see NCP 1998 for details of final management strategy).

6.2.5.0. *The sessions.*

6.2.5.2. *Meeting 1. North Walsham.*

The first *Land and Life* Meeting was held in the Town Hall in North Walsham on the 10th July 1997. Originally 24 participants were expected. The meeting was to be structured into four groups of six, with each of the groups expressing a preference to discuss following respective themes: environment, sea defence, transport and employment. In the event, 21 participants attended, and composition of groups 1 and 3 had to be slightly altered. The names of each of the group participants and their respective facilitators are listed in Table 7⁴:

³ This is discussed in more depth later in the chapter (see 6.3.2).

⁴ For a breakdown on all of the participant characteristics with the project, see Appendix II.

Table 7. Participants attending the North Walsham meeting.

Group 1.	Group 2.	Group 3.	Group 4.
<i>Facilitators: Carolyn and Tracy.</i>	<i>Facilitators: Jacquie and Minelle</i>	<i>Facilitators: Dan and Diana</i>	<i>Facilitators: Judy and Simon</i>
Thomas Sarah Jean John Heather	Paul Christine Jim Ron Geoff Frank	Norman Gwen Mike Shirley Chris	Robin Jean Tony Enid Henry

After presentations Tim Venes and Gavin Smith from the Norfolk Coast Project, and Jacquie Burgess, four discussion groups were formed. These groups talked for around one and a half hours on issues concerning their local environment. What follows is a brief synopsis covering the main points that arose in those discussions. The are points grouped into four main analytical categories: local distinctiveness, getting about, living communities and making local decisions.

Local Distinctiveness.

North Norfolk was valued for its peace, tranquillity and quiet. The enjoyment of the countryside was often contrasted with the urban other - 'It's tranquillity and I love it - I would not go back to London' (Sarah – G1). Norfolk was felt to be a very special place, and its inaccessibility added to this character. It is a place 'heading towards nowhere' (Shirley G3).

It was felt that tourism in the area had to be of an appropriate scale and kind consistent with maintaining this special character. 'If you start bringing people in for the sake of it, extension to theme parks or whatever ... you end up with what everybody else has' (Jim – G2). Finding ways of developing the economy of the area sympathetic to its natural beauty was encouraged. The relationship between local people and the landscape was strongly interconnected, particularly in terms of the woodland and hedges which were felt to be of great local importance (G 2&3). Indeed, this sense of how a lived landscape creates different spaces for nature was noted in complex ways. For instance, in Group 4,

the importance of existing road designs gave a distinctive character to the area, and historically has led to many wildlife corridors across the AONB.

Getting About.

Here discussion concerned the lack of public transport provision for particular community groups, especially for the old and young. Many people felt that the public transport system did not cater for local needs - for example in terms of access to shops and local facilities. Bus information was thought to be poor and ill co-ordinated - 'It used to be all in one book, now it does not work any more; now we have a bunch of little leaflets' (John G1).

Provision for specific interest groups were also desired, for instance cyclists. Indeed, cycle tracks could be used to encourage less use of cars. Cycle routes were discussed as alternatives to dangerous roads and the idea of opening and servicing a long distance cycle route near the coast itself, along a Sustrans model, which could ease tourist vehicle pressure and provide employment and income locally.

Although many of the roads have quite heavy traffic, the groups did not believe improving the roads system would necessarily solve this. Greater accessibility from improved roads would lead to the loss of peace and quiet. There was scepticism of the effectiveness of bypasses often felt to have been built 'just because someone couldn't say no' (Mike G3). Additional problems on the roads are caused by an increased number of heavy good vehicles, including structural problems with bridges, and the destruction of bank and hedges.

Living Communities.

Much of the conversation centred upon different ideas of place. Visitor numbers needed to be managed and directed to places that can withstand the pressure. It was believed that visitors could gain a richer understanding of the countryside and rural life, through education and better information provision.

Problems were often articulated in terms of ‘incomers’ attempting to project their idea of place onto a rural area - ‘ They obviously move here because they like it here. Why is it that they want to change it exactly the places that they came from?’ (Jim G2).

There was perceived to be a lack of amenities in the villages and lack of employment opportunities in the local area, in particular opportunities for the young. There was some discussion as to how young people’s expectations should be met. Opinion was divided between resisting the changes needed by villages to keep young people from moving away: to those who felt that without the young, communities die. This was also articulated through the problems of identifying self with place: as one participant noted - ‘I think that it is really sad that the young people don’t know their own area’ (Gwen G3). More broadly, it was felt that there was a general lack of amenities, especially of shops and post offices. However, some felt that this lack of development added to the character of the area. ‘I think what I like particularly about living here is shopping - or rather lack of it. I hate shopping!’ (Gwen G3). It was recognised, however, that any ideas for planning needed to be socially and community-oriented. Young people need to be involved pro-actively. Participants believed attempting to involve young people in existing village organisations such as Parish Councils would fail. More radical action was thus needed. As John (G2) noted ‘if you want the place to live, and not become a retirement home, you’ve got to have a little bit of action’.

Making Local Decisions.

Lack of faith in local authorities was recognised as a key problem. One participant told how the chair of Norfolk County Council arrived at a seminar on transport problems in a chauffeured Jaguar. Indeed, participants had often taken local initiatives themselves, monitoring traffic and putting in verge protection. It was felt that the local authority needed to both respond to these initiatives and take a pro-active lead.

Clarification about the ways in which the land is separated and designated into different areas along the shoreline was needed. There was confusion over the numerous

designations and the role of such protection - ‘Why don’t they have any teeth?’ (Geoff G2). There was a general concern regarding the ‘*Blue Line*⁵’; in particular people doubted the science around its creation. There was a lack of knowledge and unease about the system - ‘I think what local people should press for is either to have the Blue Line removed and have the rates reduced. Because until the blue line was put there, we did not have this demarcation. How can they say that that house won’t be there in sixty years time?’ (Frank G2).

6.2.5.2. Meeting 2. Wells-next-the-sea.

The second *Land and Life* Meeting was held in the village Hall in Wells-next-the sea on the 11th July 1997. Originally 30 participants were expected. The meeting was to be structured into five groups of six, with each of the groups expressing a preference to discuss following respective themes: conservation of village life, youth opportunities, increasing local economy, transport and tourism. In the event, 15 participants attended due to a local fair being held on the same evening. The group composition had to be radically altered, and was reduced to two main groups. As will be explored in more depth later, this structure had a detrimental effect on group stability. The names of each of the group participants and their respective facilitators are listed in Table 8:

Table 8. Participants attending the Wells meeting.

Group 1	Group 2
<i>Facilitators: Jacquie, Minelle and Nicole.</i>	<i>Facilitators: Carolyn, Simon and Darren.</i>
Eric	Derek
Mollie	Philip
Scott	Jake
Sue	Robert
John	Judith
Matthew	Mary
Martin	Kathleen
Irene	

⁵ The blue line refers to geographical demarcation relating to flood risk. Insurance companies have refused to cover properties at risk within this area.

After presentations from Tim Venes, Gavin Smith and Jacquie Burgess, two discussion groups were formed. These groups talked for around one and a half hours on issues concerning their local environment. Again a brief synopsis is given covering the main points that arose in those discussions, through the categories of local distinctiveness, getting about, living communities and making local decisions.

Local Distinctiveness.

The area was cherished because it was remote, unspoilt and different from other places. Comments thus included 'Wells to me is paradise' (Sue G1), 'this is the nearest thing to heaven as far as I'm concerned' (Philip G2). The area was believed to have a history, and this connection with the past was had made the area what it is today. The beauty of the area, the community, the traditional ways of life were all recognised as things that needed preserving. The changes associated with modern life were believed to be a key threat to this tradition.

Living Communities.

Here discussion concerned the balances and imbalances in the communities within local villages. One major factor that was identified was the different roles played by locals and incomers. Participants who have moved to the area had to felt that they had adapt to local tradition, and felt they often had to explain their motives for living in the area. They often felt that their views were somehow discounted against this tradition.

Age structure was a concern to the community, particularly the absence of young families – 'life is so much more interesting when there's more than your own age group around' (Kathleen G2). This imbalance was related to that of the provision of local employment opportunities. There was also a call for the local authorities and agencies to increase the training and employment opportunities for skilled environmental work, which was seen as a growing area of opportunity. The reliance upon work from the tourist industry was seen as problematic, because it was highly seasonal and poorly paid.

Tourism was a major theme in the discussions. Though not well liked, the role of tourism was recognised as an important part of maintaining the social fabric in the area - 'we have to remind ourselves that we wouldn't have the amenities that we have if it wasn't for the tourists in the summer' (Eric G1).

Getting Around.

The two groups had quite different views over public transport. Group 2 included younger people that relied on public transport to get to Kings Lynn, However, they found it to be very expensive. One suggested solution was for bus companies to have a reduced return fare for use throughout the year instead of increasing the return fare in the summer. This group also wanted to see buses, trains and cycleways integrated in the area, in a way that would both benefit visitors and locals. However, many people felt that they had no real alternative to using the car to get around.

Group1 generally felt that improvements to public transport provision would be pointless because there was no demand. Cycling was not a solution because the roads were too hilly and dangerous – 'nothing could be done except widening the roads, and we wouldn't want that' (Mollie). Rather, the transport issue for this group centred on parking and accessibility for traffic. These problems were highly localised, and therefore the group believed the solutions needed to be equally specific.

Making Local Decisions.

With regard to how the area was managed and planned, three related issues emerged. First was a desire to see a stronger planning approach generally extended to other parts of the area, especially the coast. Second was a wish to see holistic coastal management – 'people are too worried about their individual coastline rather than as a whole' (Jake G2). All those with an interest, including the local public generally, should be engaged in dialogue. Third was the matter of the public accountability and information provision. Again, this was in part related specifically to the coast – with the large number of actors in the area, people did not know who was responsible for the coast.

6.2.5.3. Meeting 3. Blakeney.

The third *Land and Life* Meeting was held in the village Hall in Blakeney on the 12th July 1997. Originally 43 participants were expected. The meeting was to be structured into five groups of approximately eight participants, with each of the groups expressing a preference to discuss following respective themes: tourism, conservation, transport, community and development opportunities. In the event, 30 participants attended. The group composition had to be reduced to four main groups. Despite this alteration, the group dynamics were generally good, in no doubt due to the fact that many of the residents already knew each other. The names of each of the group participants and their respective facilitators are listed in Table 9:

Table 9. Participants attending the Blakeney meeting.

Group 1.	Group 2.	Group 3.	Group 4.
<i>Facilitators: Carolyn and Tracy.</i>	<i>Facilitators: Dan and Diana</i>	<i>Facilitators: Darren, Nicole and Jacquie</i>	<i>Facilitators: Judy and Simon</i>
Jim Janet Frank Dorothy Gillian Keith Lesley	Ray Patricia Martin Morris Sally Tony David Paul	Ron Rachael Mike Tom Anne Richard Mel	Kirsty Robert Peter Roland Clare Mary Dorothy Enid

After presentations from Tim Venes and Jacquie Burgess, four discussion groups were formed. These groups talked for around one and a half hours on issues concerning their local environment. The key points are summarised below.

Local distinctiveness

Much of the discussion concerning local distinctiveness focused upon the aesthetic appreciation of natural beauty, the sense of wilderness that the area has retained. For many the place remained still and unspoiled, static in time, and was 'a place close to heaven' (Janet G1). The naturalism of such comments is explored in more depth next chapter.

Tourism was recognised as a necessity, though anathema to the natural beauty of the area. 'Blakeney used to be a beautiful place - now it is a place of ice creams' (Anne G3). Protecting the aesthetics of the area from tourist development was thus of paramount importance, caravan sites were a particular case, and landscaping them was promoted as a possible solution. Tourists were often described in a language of limits, and it was felt that many places were nearing their capacity. Tourism was recognised as a diffuse entity by the local residents; and methods were needed for 'maximising economic uptake while minimising environmental impact' (Ray G2). Again the idea of developing different places for different people was discussed.

The issue of shoreline management⁶ was explored in groups 1 and 3. In Group 1, the effects upon the local community of shoreline management were discussed widely. In particular, it was felt that community was something that the conservationists all too easily seemed to forget. In such instances, people felt moral priorities were confused - 'Birds are sacrosanct; human beings aren't' (Gillian G1)- 'I think that the Wildlife people would scream if the freshwater marsh became salt. But Salthouse would then be much safer.' (Jim G1). Nature was articulated as robust, not in need of absolute protection and able to recreate itself in quickly in other areas.

Group 3 talked more about nature in terms of cost and benefits, and saw nature as undervalued, literally, in economic appraisals of shoreline management. Nevertheless, nature was seen to be always changing, and people should not be afraid of that. 'Change is part of nature, we can't freeze everything as it always has been' (Richard G3). Cley shingle bank was seen as an example of trying to prevent the inevitable; 'You cannot stop the force of the sea - you only push it somewhere else' (Mike G3). It was suggested that compensation for flooded properties should therefore be realised and realistic - for example it would not be prudent to renovate damaged properties that would still be at risk of flooding in the future.

⁶ An initial focus of the Ph.D. had been to examine participatory approaches in shoreline management.

Getting about.

Transport issues were talked about within two contexts - the immediate and everyday need for locals, and the wider problems of infrastructure provision for tourists. Group 2 discussed local public transport demand through four themes; those of work, school, shopping and entertainment. Using existing resources more efficiently, such as the multi-use of school buses for other types of travel, or the possible use of post buses could better meet provision. Community resistance to change was also a strong metaphor within these discussions. For example, the idea of 'transport clubs' was suggested where collectives of friends and neighbors could hire minibuses for specific purposes. This could be a practical, social and fun way of going shopping or to the theatre for example. However, people wanted to see more effort being placed in on the behalf of the authorities. In group 4 this was expressed as the need for more radical and demonstrable public transport projects that aid both tourism and create employment opportunities. 'We need more initiatives, the more daring they are the better; we should stop pussyfooting around the problem' (Roland G4). It was also suggested that larger employers, such as supermarkets, could take on more responsibility for the area and lay on a bus service to and from the store for its staff, and indeed for its customers.

Living communities.

The predominant theme concerning the groups was the gentrification of villages, especially in terms of the influx of retirees. 'There is not the mix of population - its amazing. Where are all the children?' (Sally G2). In group 3, the problem was seen as borne out of the 'Right to Buy' council houses, having removed the stock of houses for the next generation as individuals sold them on. The work of the Blakeney Neighborhood Housing Society had done a good deal locally to address this problem, though the price of property now meant the scope for acquiring future houses was more or less limited to local good will and benevolence.

However, this provision was seen in terms of a wider social problem of facilities and employment prospects for young adults in the area. 'It is totally boring for sixteen year

olds here. They move away after school or university and there is no way they want to come back. The area has been destroyed for them' (Janet G1). As such, people were unsure as to the actual demand that there would be for low cost housing for young people in the area, and they felt more research should be done into this area before resources were committed. There was perceived to be a good relationship between incomers into the area and the 'local' population; with the slower pace of life allowing people the time to actually talk to one another and support each other. The sense of community in the area was stressed by many of the groups as adding to the quality of life.

Making local decisions.

Generally the problem was seen as an information and interaction paucity between all levels of government, from parish to the county level. A genuine effort was required on the behalf of all involved - 'communication means listening, doesn't it?' (Ron G3).

Engaging people to take an active role in their area had resulted in some chaotic scenes at Parish level 'the meetings were either too large and people just argued and vented their spleens or too localized resulting in a boring consensus' (David G2). Complicated senses of agency and priorities were often articulated through this theme: as one participant noted - 'Locals have not made the effort to come to this meeting....as incomers we are fighting for something that we have adopted; is not truly ours' (David G2). Nevertheless, people felt that they needed to be consulted upon issues, and a greater effort at communicating all round would be a welcome start to this process.

6.2.5.4. Meeting 4. Cromer.

The fourth *Land and Life* Meeting was held in the Norfolk District Council offices in Cromer on the 13th July 1997. Originally 36 participants were expected. The meeting was to be structured into five groups of approximately eight participants, with each of the groups expressing a preference to discuss following respective themes: local facilities, transport, visitor management, nature conservation and development opportunities. In the event, 18 participants attended. The group composition had to be reduced to three

main groups. In two of the groups, the group dynamics were generally good. In group 1, however, two of the participants (Mary and Peter) did not contribute much to the debate, despite efforts to engage them. The names of each of the group participants and their respective facilitators are listed in Table 10:

Table 10. Participants attending the Cromer meeting.

Group 1.	Group 2.	Group 3.
<i>Facilitators: Darren and Nicole</i>	<i>Facilitators: Tracy and Minelle</i>	<i>Facilitators: Judy and Simon</i>
Mary Pam Phil Peter Liz Robin	Ned Sarah Alan Gertrude Geoff Judy	Ron Charlie Tony David Margaret Trevor

After presentations from Tim Venes and Jacquie Burgess, four discussion groups were formed. These groups talked for around one and a half hours on issues concerning their local environment. The themes are discussed below.

Local Distinctiveness.

The isolation, rich heritage, natural beauty and peace of the area were valued – ‘I can walk with the dog and meet nobody - it’s absolutely incredible’ (Alan G2). The area was often anthropomorphised. For instance, Charlie (G3) believed Norfolk had a ‘charm that beguiles you in a way’. Again the notion of a lived landscape was articulated with an emphasis was placed upon maintaining a sense of the traditional architecture of the area – ‘if the AONB is going to maintain its character it’s going to have to have something that distinguishes it from other areas. There has to be some sort of vernacular style that is ours’ (Geoff G2). The distinctive natural landscapes of the area meant conserving some things and allowing others to change in sympathy with the vernacular. Old barns needed to be restored and let for local industries rather than being allowed to fall derelict. There was often expressed a deep ontological sense of place for Norfolk – ‘I’ve never wanted to live anywhere else! If I win the lottery, it’s got to be a house in Norfolk. I don’t know why I like it, it’s just me, my roots, my parents’ (Ned G2).

Living Communities.

The strong sense of rural community was contrasted with the fragmentation of cities – ‘London, where I lived before, was a place of strangers. People were always in their cars. Whereas here, there is so much to enjoy locally...people actually just walk around and go to places locally and people contact each other more which is something I really like about the area’ (Robin G1). The question of how to maintain that sense of community was widely discussed, particularly with regard to providing employment that does not rely on the tourist trade. The creation of more permanent jobs was too problematic- ‘if you make lots of employment, immediately more people will come here to live’ (David G3). For this participant, development would be detrimental to the Norfolk aesthetic – ‘scenery is the biggest asset that this area has got. If you allow that to be damaged you destroy the very reason why people come to North Norfolk, and the main reason we’ve all come to live here’ (David G3).

Getting Around.

Transport was a major issue for many people, with a variety of views being held. In terms of public transport, the general view was that it was poor, under-used or non-existent. Complaints included a train service that was too expensive and bus information that was so difficult to get hold of that it ‘was a bit like the secret service’ (Trevor G3). The role of the free market in transport provision was too questioned; for the participants in Group 1 buses and trains were running in competition with each other, when in fact their timetabling should be complementary. In terms of car use, the specific requirements of Cromer were discussed. Many favoured the bypass scheme, to improve the environment in the town, but were concerned for lost trade. The possibility of a car park near the town centre was discussed. Others felt that there should be no road improvements because ‘building bigger roads means more cars’ (Judy G2). Many felt that they would personally benefit from an improvement in the provision for cycling. Within the AONB it was suggested increasing the number of designated green cycle lanes.

Making Local Decisions.

A major problem that was identified was the lack of trust in the process of local decision-making, and a feeling that one's views would not be heeded – 'I nearly persuaded my daughter to come but she said "oh well I'm only eighteen, they won't listen to me"' (Margaret G3). Again, with regard to issues of coastal management community engagement was seen as essential. Participants in G3 felt that local knowledge had been ignored in decisions effecting coastal planning in Weybridge and Salthouse, and cast doubt on the role of expertise to sufficiently deal with these problems – 'the experts...put in all sorts of sea defences, pulled in all sorts of spoil, thinking that it would work, all the locals told them it wouldn't work, and it didn't. And now we've got a frightful mess on the beach' (Trevor G3). Generally people felt the need for 'more of a pro-active role, more responsive channels in which to feed these concerns' (Trevor G3). There was a need for a constant process of communities appraising and addressing their own needs. Adequate finance was believed to be central to the making of good decisions.

6.2.5.5. Meeting 5. Hunstanton.

The final *Land and Life* Meeting was held Smithdon High School in Hunstanton on the 14th July 1997. Originally 56 participants were expected. The meeting was to be structured into five groups of approximately eleven participants, with each of the groups expressing a preference to discuss following respective themes: nature conservation, development opportunities, law and order, pollution and transport. In the event, 38 participants attended and five groups were formed. Though the mix of participants was fairly heterogeneous, in many of the groups debate was vigorous and stimulating. In group 3, however, the participants did not bond well. In group 4, the unexpected attendance of a county councilor created a distinct set of group dynamics (this is explored in more depth later in the chapter see 6.3.2). The names of each of the group participants and their respective facilitators are listed in Table 11:

Table 11. Participants attending the Hunstanton meeting.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5.
<i>Facilitators: Carolyn and Tracey</i>	<i>Facilitators: Jacquie and Minelle</i>	<i>Facilitators: Diana and Simon</i>	<i>Facilitators: Darren and Dan</i>	<i>Facilitators: Judy and Nicole</i>
Sally Andrew Anne Christine Hillary Bob Brenda Rachel	Gary David Jean Faith Betty Harry	Richard Tony Trevor Sally Carrie Mary Joe Susan	Murray Sarah Chris David John Mike Lucy	Colin Jean Gerald Sid Joyce Peter Brian Ryan

After presentations from Tim Venes, Gavin Smith and Jacquie Burgess, five discussion groups were formed. These groups talked for around one and a half hours on issues concerning their local environment. A summary is given below.

Local distinctiveness.

Local distinctiveness was discussed in terms of space, serenity and wilderness. Norfolk is on a 'road to nowhere' (Gerald G5) and such remoteness had promoted a different pace of life. However, encroaching upon this was the impacts from tourists and newcomers. Specific groups of visitors were felt to bring with them specific problems; twitchers were singled out in many of the groups in terms of the congestion they cause. For the participants, with rights came responsibilities. It was felt that visitors needed to take a greater pride in the area that they come to and should look after it. The demands of tourists need to be effectively managed.

Getting about.

There was a wide discussion upon transport in all of the groups, and again a wide variety of views of how best to cope with the issue. At the local level, views ranged from those wishing to see a full and integrated transport system for the area, to those who thought that there was no latent demand for public transport - 'I have been here for twelve years and in all that time I have never been on a bus!' (David G2). The existing public transport

system was thought it to be poorly co-ordinated and expensive. Somehow, visitors needed to be persuaded to leave their cars and use alternate forms of transport. The cycle was promoted in many instances, with a greater provision of cycleways and facilities for cyclists mooted. These ranged from cycle lanes along or next to the coast road, old railway lines, and by-roads, as well as specific 'cycle stations' where hired bikes could be left after use.

The sheer volume of traffic on the road was too discussed. Here, ideas of a road hierarchy were toyed with, where weight restrictions would be placed upon some roads to deter HGV delivery to shops. It was believed instead that out of town distribution points could be set up, where goods are unloaded onto a smaller vehicle for the final stretch of the journey. It was also suggested that a signage system could be employed to move traffic off of the coast road and onto the A148, with feeder roads connecting the villages in a dendritic fashion. However, it was realised that such systems also effect villages elsewhere and NIMBYISM could lead to problems of implementation.

Living communities.

The gentrification of the area was seen as an issue, with some believing that incomers brought their own special qualities and added to the area, while others concerned at the loss of local identity. This was expressed through a variety of ways. For instance Bob (G1) believed the area was at risk of 'loosing the Norfolk accent'. Almost all felt that the area was in danger of becoming a retirement home, 'Life is so much more interesting when there is more than one age group around. It is like being in a family - it keeps you alive' (Jean G5).

As such, the countryside was recognised as a working area and jobs would need to be maintained to keep the area viable. Employment from tourism was seen as poorly paid and unsustainable. There was a perceived problem of the real lack of opportunities for young people with regard to employment prospects in the area. Nonetheless, the area

was seen as a good place to raise children by one family, because of the ‘values’ that the area could develop in their children (Murray G4).

Making local decisions.

A good deal of this theme was discussed in relation to coastal defences, with responsibility and accountability being the overriding themes. Generally there was a feeling that it was futile to try and work against the force of nature, but people were unsure as to where management decisions came from and indeed who owned the coast and who was responsible for it. One member had recently attended a shoreline management meeting, and reported that ‘ I have here part of the report and there are 54 statutory authorities. It is a major problem as there is no single authority from the start.’ (Mike G4). There needs to be more effective communication and information for such debates. Moreover, there needs to be a willingness on the behalf of the authorities to recognise that local people have a great deal of knowledge to contribute to the process.

Groups were also concerned about aspects of development, especially in regard to the planning system and the quality of decisions being made by local authorities - from Parish to the county level. Once again, communication was thought to be poor, with a desire that the authorities make their workings more transparent to the public at large. All in all, the groups realised that, like it or not, the area is changing. As such, it would be better to have an integrated plan of action, with an input from all with an interest, in the face of that change. Continuing this style of communication and openness will perhaps be the only way for this to be achieved.

6.2.5.6. Summary.

As can be seen from the above, The *Land and Life* Process had produced a rich and diverse account of values in the area. Participants were aware of the challenges that managing the north Norfolk AONB presented. There was very strong support for the inclusion of local people in the strategic approach. The process not only gave context to

these values, but too allowed them to be expressed in distinct ways. The sessions were often vital, humorous and allowed people to connect to each other. Many participants said they found the meetings a worthwhile venture. However, there were shortcomings of the approach. A more critical form of discourse analysis is developed next chapter to explore participant interaction and the development of values in more depth. The procedural shortcomings of the method will also be explored in more detail below (see 6.3.1. and 6.3.2.). Prior to this critical analysis, the second case study will now be explored.

6.2.6. The Environment Agency, LEAPs and the SDA process – a background.

The second case study involves a project with the Environment Agency, the chief environmental regulatory body in England and Wales. The Agency is funded through central government and has statutory functions within six broad remits:-

- pollution prevention and control (land, water and air);
- water resources (monitoring and abstraction);
- flood defence;
- conservation;
- fisheries;
- navigation and recreation.

The Agency often has direct contact with a variety of sectors of the community through their routine work. In their *Environmental Strategy Directorate* (1997) the Agency have 'a duty to account for wider costs and benefits' i.e. non-economic benefits to the environment, (para 2.2) and further '[t]he public perception of the issues and the Agency's response should also be considered' (para 6.3). This combination of factors has led to a promotion of a partnership approach to integrated environmental management within the Agency, and this has particularly been encouraged at the local level. It is here that Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs) are viewed as a specific vehicle for the Agency to gain stakeholder and community support for policy decision within local catchment areas (see Baker Associates 1997). LEAPs are non-statutory documents,

hence voluntary and consensus-building approaches are believed to present a promising means to engage stakeholders in policy delivery.

In contrast to the *Land and Life* project, the methodology developed for the LEAPs process involved a far more structured and analytic participatory process. Specifically, a novel methodology termed stakeholder decision analysis (SDA) was used. The Environment and Society Research Unit (ESRU), originally developed SDA in 1998, specifically with the aim of prioritising LEAP issues in the New Forest⁷ (see Clark *et al.* 1998; Burgess 2000). The method aimed to produce a framework and practical guidelines for the inclusion of novel forms of economic appraisal into the LEAP process. This was done in three stages:

- review and evaluation of neo-classical and welfare methods economic appraisal
- preparation of a framework for a deliberative approach to economic appraisal of LEAPs through multi-criteria analysis
- setting up Stakeholder group to test the framework by applying it to a LEAP in progress.

It should be noted that the Agency requires economic appraisal of LEAPs for a number of reasons, namely:

- to provide information to assist prioritization of actions within and between LEAPs to provide an economic justification for the subsequent Action Plan
- to satisfy the requirement of Section 39 of the Environment Act 1995 that the Agency take into account the likely costs and benefits of its actions
- to communicate the value of LEAPs to business planners and stakeholders
- to aid negotiation for resources.

⁷ The core team from ESRU was involved in the work in North Norfolk.

Rather than a standard CBA, the UCL team proposed a deliberative and inclusive approach to satisfy these requirements. This method aimed to produce a framework through which multiple social, environmental and economic criteria could be developed to appraise policy options. The SDA approach was novel with its focus upon deliberative and intersubjective understandings. There were six main stages to the development of the SDA process, and these key principles are outlined below (Table 12).

Table 12. Levels of participation through the SDA process

Methodological stage	Level of Participation
Scoping the issues	Group based discussion
Developing criteria	Individual and group based discussion.
Weighting the criteria	Individual
Applying the criteria to the issues	Small group based
Analysis	Research Team
Discussion of prioritisation.	Whole group.

The method thus aimed to combine the insights of group processes with multi-criteria analysis. With in-depth group methods, as the name suggests, a group of participants meet over a series of weeks to discuss and advance a particular topic. The time taken with in-depth groups allows participants to get to know one another, and to explore each others values for the subject under discussion (see for example Burgess *et al* 1988a, 1988b). In doing so, the method gives a richly layered understanding of these values, and promotes trust between members engaged in the process. Furthermore, communication provides the opportunity for networks and social capital to be developed through the process.

Multi-criteria analysis is a simple technique that basically ranks decision options through the application of a number of weighted criteria. It should be noted that there are many different styles and applications of MCA, and many of these are quantitative. The method has been used in planning for a number of years (see for example Keeny and Raiffa 1976;

Voogd 1983), and furthermore for the organisation of primarily scientific and economic criteria for environmental decision-making (C3ED 1996; Gregory and Slovic 1997). The method essentially aims to rank a number of policy options by many separate factors or criteria. More recently, Stirling has developed such techniques towards environmental policy option appraisal, attempting to combine the rational and analytical aspect of decision-analysis with multi-criteria mapping (Stirling 1997). It is this combination between qualitative and quantitative rational insights that the SDA method aimed to capture. The process will now be explored in some depth.

6.2.6.1. The North West Norfolk SDA process.

After the trial of SDA for the New Forest LEAP in 1998, members of both the Environment Agency and ESRU were keen to develop the method further. As a member of the original SDA team, I discussed this possibility with the head of local government liaison at the Agency. After a number of phone conversations over a period of months, it was decided that north west Norfolk would present a good opportunity to develop the stakeholder approach, as the LEAP was still at the initial stages of planning and the study fitted well with previous work undertaken for the Ph.D.

The north west Norfolk LEAP area covers some 1007km² and notably encompasses three main towns of Hunstanton, King's Lynn and Downham Market. The area is rich in wildlife sites, and enjoys a variety of nature conservation protections. Due to the coastal and riverine geography of the site, flood defence is an important function of the Agency in this area. A map of the site is given overleaf (Map 2).

After the scoping of site potential, more detailed discussion then took place in March 1999 with the LEAP team officers. After considering some of the shortcomings of the New Forest approach, such as the isolation of some of the debate from the environment in question, it was proposed that the Norfolk SDA process would offer stakeholders the opportunity to address potential LEAP issues through site visits. These 'in the field' experiences aimed to contextualise the debate in subsequent meetings, as well as provide

a stimulating setting in which some of the richness and complexity of environmental issues could be explored. This method has been used successfully in the past to generate criteria for the evaluation of wetlands (see Burgess and Clark 1997).

The proposal was then placed before the North West Norfolk the Area Environmental Group (AEG), who advise the Agency in respect of its objectives and vision for the LEAP. Darren Bhattachary made a presentation to the AEG on the 22nd April 1999, describing the aims of the process and illustrating the New Forest work. The AEG gave support to the project, and the recruitment process began.

6.2.6.2. Recruitment of the Stakeholder Group

The Norfolk LEAP recruitment process was very different from that undertaken in the *Land and Life* project. First, as the name implies, SDA involves initial close working with a stakeholder group to identify and prioritise options, before a draft LEAP is produced for broader public consultation. The range of stakeholder approached was defined through the context of the LEAP and particularly aimed to take account of the major interests and concerns within the local area. LEAPs are local technical documents that focus on the environment. These criteria were essential for the recruitment of individuals to the workshops. As such, recruitment was aimed at organisations whose remit covers the LEAP area and/or whose activities can substantially affect the local environment.

Specifically, criteria for membership of the LEAP Stakeholder group were recommended as follows (from Clark *et al.* 1998):

- they cover interests from the public, private and environmental sectors
- they live and/or work within the LEAP area
- they command authority within their own organisation
- they are able to represent their constituency
- they possess excellent local knowledge
- they are skilled in the assimilation and assessment of technical information

- they can work to a tight timetable
- they can attend all four workshops

The recruitment for the North West Norfolk LEAP stakeholders was undertaken by the Agency staff rather than by facilitators from ESRU. Recruitment began just under one month before the first workshop. Due to national Agency timetable constraints concerning LEAP development, there was insufficient time for face-to-face recruitment. As such, invitations were sent out via post to a broad range of organisations from the public, private and environmental sectors. A stakeholder mapping process, developed by Darren Bhattachary in consultation with the LEAP officers, assisted this process. Members of the AEG further suggested potential participants for the workshop group, and indeed two AEG members were included as representatives on the stakeholder group. Those organisations that expressed an interest were further canvassed through telephone conversations. A list of the confirmed invitees attending the four workshops is illustrated in below in Table 13.

As Table 13 illustrates, response was initially very encouraging. Representatives were drawn from a wide variety of perspectives, with some twenty-two organisations expressing interest in the workshop programme.

Table 13. Organisations invited to and attending the four LEAP workshops.

Interests	Participant name	Organisation represented	invite	W1	W2	W3	W4
Farming	Jim Charles Ted	CLA	✓	✓	×	×	×
		Private land owner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		NFU	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fishing	Adam	Salmon and Trout Association	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Nick/ Keith	Anglers Association	✓	×	✓*	✓	✓
Councils	David	County council (Rights of Way)	✓	✓	×	×	×
	Mary	County council (Norfolk)	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
	Geoff	District council (Fenland)	✓	✓	×	×	×
	Betty	Borough Council (planning)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	John	Borough Council (Environmental Health)	✓	✓	✓	×	✓
Environmental NGOs	Murray	RSPB	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
	Tom	Breck Countryside Project	✓	×	×	×	×
	Peter	FoE	✓	×	×	×	×
	Richard	Norfolk Wildlife Trust	✓	×	✓	✓	×
Internal Drainage Boards	Alan	Ouse, Plover and Nar IBD	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
	Nicky	Kings Lynn IBD	✓	×	✓	✓	×
Navigation	Arthur	Conservancy Board	✓	✓	×	×	×
Industry	Mike	Dow Chemical Company	✓	×	×	×	×
	Phil	Anti Waste	✓	×	✓	✓	×
Water Services	Thomas/ Kate	Anglian Water	✓	✓	✓	×	✓*
Archaeology	Paul	Norfolk Landscape	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Environment Agency	Ian	Environment Agency	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total invitees/ participants			22	13	15	13	11
✓ denotes attendance at workshop * denotes change in representative from organisation × denotes non-attendance at workshop							

However, as with many projects recruited by letter, a number of confirmed participants did not attend the first workshop. Indeed, through out each of the workshops numbers

and individuals varied from week to week. Indeed, only five members managed to attend all four workshops, not including the Environment Agency's representative⁸.

6.2.6.3. The North West Norfolk LEAP workshops.

The SDA process was tackled in stages during a series of four workshops. In the first workshop, the group undertook site visits to environmental management schemes within the LEAP area. In the second, the group developed the issues list and derived a list of criteria to appraise such issues. The criteria were weighted according to their importance and the least important criteria were discarded. During the third workshop, the group 'scored' each issue against each of the criteria. The final workshop involved a discussion of the prioritised issues list and then reflection upon the success of the process overall. It should be noted that within each of the workshops, participants had an opportunity to deliberate, both in determining the criteria, in assessing the issues against the criteria and in reviewing the results. The group met at approximately fortnightly intervals. The dates, venues and summary of the tasks for each of the meetings are given below (Table 14). After the final workshop, participants were invited to an evening meal at a nearby pub, both to thank them for their time and effort, and to consolidate the relationships forged through the process.

Table 14. North West Norfolk LEAP Workshop Summary.

Workshop	Date	Venue	Tasks
Workshop 1	3rd June 1999	Westacre Estate	Site visits and de-brief.
Workshop 2	17th June 1999.	King's Lynn Consortium IDB	Development of issues list. Development of criteria.
Workshop 3	1st July 1999.	King's Lynn Town Hall.	Ranking of issues against criteria
Workshop 4	16th July 1999.	Environment Agency offices at Denver Sluice.	Discussion of the prioritised issues list. Reflection upon the SDA process.

⁸ A critical examination of this process is given later (see 6.3.1).

The workshops were facilitated by the following team, all from ESRU: - Darren Bhattachary, Dan Bloomfield, Kevin Collins, Kersty Hobson, and Simon Maxwell.

I conducted all of the whole group discussions. One or two facilitators ran the tasks that involved division of the group into smaller units (2 or 3 sub-groups). All whole group and sub-group discussions were recorded and the facilitators made written notes of these discussions after the meetings. A description of each of the workshops will now be given.

6.2.6.4. Workshop 1.

Objectives :

- undertake site visits
- introduce LEAP issues
- clarify the process
- clarify the roles of the participants in the process
- clarify the role of the Agency in the process
- create a stimulating environment in which to begin to think about appraising the LEAP
- promote partnerships between the agency and the stakeholder group

The first LEAP workshop attempted to give the participants an ‘in the field’ experience of north west Norfolk, through site visits to areas where environmental quality and management issues predominate. This process aimed to contextualise stakeholder values specifically to the LEAP. This part of the process differed from the original LEAP methodology set out by Clark *et al* (1998), and was in direct response to some of the perceived shortcomings of the New Forest experience. In particular, participants in the New Forest LEAP were concerned over the range and the depth of experience that they possessed to discuss the Agency plan. Moreover, some of the debate appeared isolated given the complexity of the environment in question. This was particularly the case for the generation of criteria used during the workshop sessions.

The first Norfolk workshop thus aimed to give participants the chance to experience a LEAP, to walk around a site area, to discuss the science underpinning the issues, and

generally to use the experience to broaden their thinking upon the environment. More specifically, it was intended that this experience would aid the generation of potential criteria through which LEAP issues could be evaluated. It was hence hoped that the site visit would act as both a stimulating process and a learning tool, as well as a profitable way of the group to meet each other and develop their own identity. After the site visits, it was planned that the participants would break into small groups and de-brief the experience. These sessions aimed to generate ideas for potential evaluative criteria for the LEAP issues.

The session

The first workshop of the north-west Norfolk LEAP occurred on June 3rd 1999 at the Westacre Estate, in a small village hall near to the River Nar. It had been proposed that two site visits should be undertaken. The first was to the River Nar SSSI. The second visit was to a sewerage treatment works in the area. The first session was under-subscribed, with only 12 of an expected 22 participants arriving for the workshop, with one further participant joining the group later in the day. The low attendance delayed the start of the workshop for thirty minutes.

Prior to the visits, short presentations were offered from the Environment Agency and from the facilitating group at UCL. After welcoming the participants, Rona Chellow from the LEAP team gave a brief talk upon the roles and responsibilities as of the Agency as a regulator. The Agency stressed that LEAP were an important vehicle for engaging wider publics in their work, and that this was a new process for them where they would only act as one stakeholder among many. I then gave a short presentation concerning the format of the workshop programme.

The first site visit was to the River Nar SSSI. Here a number of water issues were discussed, including riverine management and conservation objectives. More specifically conversation centred on demand led abstraction licenses and sustainable water usage, particularly with regard to perceived notions of fairness over rights and responsibilities

The second visit was a tour of a sewerage treatment works in the King's Lynn area. During this tour, people discussed the science, the context, the scale of operation, and centred on the complexity and multiple use of an environmental resource such as wastewater.

The final small group session was not undertaken due to lack of time. Instead a question and answer session took place between the participants and myself. Discussion was broad ranging during the final session, and a number of other points were considered, including:

- the complexity of environmental problems
- regulatory difficulties and the regulatory framework both EU, national and local
- private/public interests
- limits of resources
- limits of technology
- role of science
- role of lay knowledge
- public / media interest as drivers of change.

The day finally ended with a task sheet for workshop 2 where individuals were asked to think about new issues for the LEAP and well as criteria to appraise them (see Appendix III).

6.2.6.5. Workshop 2.

Objectives

- to clarify the aims and context of LEAP and the SDA
- to discuss potential issues
- to develop potential criteria
- to weight the criteria.

The second workshop explored issues to be considered within a LEAP and criteria through which these issues could be appraised. Participants had completed a survey prior to the workshop and responses outlined the above themes (see Appendix III). The survey was sent out to all 22 invitees, and responses were collated prior to the second workshop. The workshop was structured according to these two main tasks. First, stakeholders were to discuss LEAP issues in the draft document, as well as contributing new issues. There were two main guidelines for the inclusion of new issues:

- new issues must fall with the Environment Agency's remit
- new issues must be most effectively addressed through a LEAP.

The second task for the workshop involved the development of criteria through which issues could be appraised. To formulate criteria, a step-wise process was recommended:

1. Make a general observation that applies to all/some of the issues in the LEAP or with the costs/benefits/risks associated with them
2. Make explicit the value judgement involved in this judgement
3. Restate the value judgement as a criterion against which issues can be qualitatively assessed.

For example:

1. **Observation:** Some of the issues are more likely to promote biodiversity than others
2. **Value judgement:** Biodiversity should be maintained and promoted, and the EA should contribute to the biodiversity action plan.
3. **Criterion:** To what extent would tackling this issue benefit non-human species and habitats?

The twin devices of making value-judgements explicit and asking people to consider the 'measurability' of criteria helped to focus discussion. The value-judgements were particularly important in making meanings clear and helping people to see quickly where

there was agreement and where there was difference. Conflict over the importance of different criteria was avoided because participants did not have to reach consensus on this, only on the validity of different criteria. At the end of the session, criteria were individually weighted by participants to rank their relative importance on a scale of 0-100.

The session

The second workshop was held on 17th June 1999 at the King's Lynn Consortium of IDB's offices. Fifteen stakeholders attended the meeting though 21 participants were expected. I introduced the workshop through a discussion of the process as a whole and the tasks for the day. There were six individuals who had not attended the first workshop, so I spent time attempting to clarify the process, and the roles and responsibilities of both the stakeholders and the Agency.

From the task sheet handed out at the end of workshop 1, some 38 extra issues had been identified by the stakeholders, above those in the draft document. To effectively explore these issues during the time available, as well as ones that might emerge during the course of the day, the main group was split into three smaller groups of five participants. Hence, each of the smaller groups concentrated on approximately 13 new issues. Each break-out group had two members of Agency staff in attendance to specifically discuss the suitability of new issues with regard to the Agency's roles and responsibilities, and to assist with expert help. New issues were written through on flip-charts by the facilitators. The groups, agency staff and facilitators are listed below (Table 15). The new issues list developed by participants are illustrated in Appendix IV⁹.

⁹ A substantive analysis of the development of issues, criteria and policy appraisal is given next chapter.

Table 15. Workshop 2 group structure - issues.

Group 1.	Group 2.	Group 3.
Participants:	Participants:	Participants:
Ian	Adam	Richard
Ted	Charles	Nicky
Nick	Phil	Mary
Murray	Alan	Bob
Terry	John	Paul
Facilitators: Kevin and Dan.	Facilitator: Simon and Kersty.	Facilitator: Darren.
Agency experts: Simon (LEAP officer) Janet (conservation)	Agency experts: Cathy (river management) David (flood defence).	Agency experts: Jane (LEAP officer) Martin (flood Defence).

Within the sessions on new issues, the groups entered a lively discussion on the LEAP, and more generally, the roles and responsibilities of the Agency as an institution. For example, group 3 discussed a complicated set of themes, including:

- problems concerning environmental integrity over time,
- spatial considerations of the environment with regard to the LEAP boundary,
- institutional considerations over partnerships
- inertia to tasks that were not easily incorporated within the Agency's *modus operandi*.

Through the group process, the issues list was reduced to nine potential new issues, with seven amendments to existing issues. At the break, coffee and tea was served, and then all of the participants reconvened in the main room. Here, the facilitators for each of the sessions read out new issues from the flip chart, and the group as a whole had the chance to add or amend the issue if they so desired. After further discussion, some six new issues were eventually assimilated into the final LEAP document.

During the second part of the workshop, participants considered criteria. Again, tasks were undertaken in small groups. However to allow for a greater range of discussion within the process, the composition of each of the groups was changed. This group composition is listed below (Table 16).

Table 16. Workshop 2 group structure - criteria.

Group 4.	Group 5.	Group 6.
Participants:	Participants:	Participants:
Richard	Alan	Ian
Nicky	Mary	Thomas
Ted	Phil	Charles
Paul	Terry	Bob
Adam	John	Murray
Facilitators: Kevin and Dan.	Facilitators: Simon and Kersty.	Facilitator: Darren.
Agency experts: Janet (conservation) Simon (LEAP officer).	Agency experts: Cathy (river management) David (flood defence).	Agency experts: Jane (LEAP officer) Martin (flood Defence).

Participants spent time generating their criteria. Some of the criteria developed in New Forest were used as a means to get participants thinking. Both the criteria and their associated value judgement were written upon flip charts by the facilitators of the groups. By the end of the break-out sessions, the three small groups had produce some 46 potential criteria to evaluate LEAP actions, some of which were duplicate (for a full list of criteria generated by each of the participants see Appendix V). Time considerations meant that duplicate criteria could not be discarded prior to the voting session. Rather the facilitation team took a pragmatic decision that all of the criteria generated would be weighted and then sorted at a later time. The discarded criteria could then be discussed during the next workshop. The workshop closed with participants individually ranking criteria on a scale of 0-100 according to their relative importance.

6.2.6.5. Workshop 3.

Objectives

- discussion of the revised criteria list, as well as the highest 12 ranked criteria
- discussion of the discarded criteria
- discussion of the cut off point
- the evaluation of each of the issues by the criteria

The third workshop concerned the prioritisation of the LEAP. This was to be achieved through the evaluation of each of the LEAP issues by the 12¹⁰ highest weighted criteria generated during the second workshop. Prior to workshop 3, I had weighted¹¹ the 46 criteria produced at the end of the last workshop. After discarding duplicate criteria, a revised list of 25 potential criteria remained, out of which the top 12 were to be used for prioritisation of the LEAP. Once this list had been agreed, the prioritisation could begin. To undertake the prioritisation the participants were divided into a number of small groups. Each of the groups systematically applied a single criterion to every issue within the draft LEAP. The issues were assessed qualitatively on a score of low, medium or high. This process was repeated until all of the issues were evaluated by the criteria.

The following example illustrates the process.

1. A criterion is selected by the group. The value judgement underpinning each of the criterion indicates the direction of the assessment. E.g.

Criteria	Underlying Value Judgement
To what extent is tackling this issue a legal requirement?	Legal obligations should be met.
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit non-human species and habitats?	Biodiversity should be maintained and promoted, and the EA should contribute to BAP.
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit the local economy?	The EA should have regard for the local economy.

¹⁰ The number of criteria used for appraisal originally was to be 14. This figure was subsequently reduced to 12 due to low attendance. The top twelve issues were chosen as it reflected the maximum number that could be undertaken with the participants in the time available.

¹¹ For a description of the weighting process, and the mathematical model used, see Appendix VI.

2. The issues are assessed against the criteria.

CRITERIA	Issue 1 A number of river stretches fail to meet their River Ecosystem targets	Issue 2 There is concern over eutrophication of the estuary	Issue 3 Groundwater is vulnerable to pollution from agricultural land and landfill sites
To what extent is this issue a legal requirement? <i>criteria weight = 10</i>	LOW	HIGH	HIGH
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit non-human species and habitats? <i>criteria weight = 9</i>	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit the local economy? <i>criteria weight = 6</i>	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW

An issue that scores 'high' against many criteria becomes a high priority for action. Likewise, an issue that scores lots of 'lows' will become less of a priority for action.

3. A quantitative scale is produced from this qualitative ranking,

- high = 3 points
- medium = 2 points
- low = 1 point.

4. The facilitating team substitutes scores for the group's qualitative assessments

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3
criterion 1	LOW	HIGH	HIGH
criterion 2	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
criterion 3	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW

BECOMES

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3
criterion 1	1	3	3
criterion 2	3	3	2
criterion 3	1	2	1

5. The facilitating team calculates a total score by multiplying the assessment against the weight of the criteria:

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3
criterion 1 (weight = 10)	$1 \times 10 = 10$	$3 \times 10 = 30$	$3 \times 10 = 30$
criterion 2 (weight = 9)	$3 \times 9 = 27$	$3 \times 9 = 27$	$2 \times 9 = 18$
criterion 3 (weight = 6)	$1 \times 6 = 6$	$2 \times 6 = 12$	$1 \times 6 = 6$
Total	43	69	54

In this manner, all criteria are applied to all issues. The scores are ranked and the issues list prioritised.

The workshop session

The third workshop was held at King's Lynn Town Hall on the 1st July 1999. The meeting was attended by 13 of the 15 expected participants. Due to late arrivals, the meeting start was delayed by approximately twenty minutes. The first part of the workshop discussed the criteria list in a whole group workshop, was facilitated by myself. Discussion particularly centred on the top 12 ranked criteria. As an artefact of the process, many environmental criteria were weighted reasonably high. More social and economic concerns came further down the criteria lists. After weighting, the list became skewed, with 5 of the top 12 being related to environmental concerns in particular. This needed to be addressed.

The criterion concerning:

- to what extent would tackling this issue promote sustainable development?
- sustainable environments should be safeguarded

was believed to be problematic, due the flexibility of interpretation of issues concerned with sustainable development. As Collins (1997) notes, sustainable development ‘invites consensus while generating considerable debate over meaning’. As such, the criterion was considered to be effectively impotent, as all issues are likely to score highly on its application due to the flexibility of meaning. As such the criterion was discarded, to permit an issue on the local economy to be included. There were no other criteria specifically on economy in the top 12. The final criteria list used in the north-west Norfolk LEAP are illustrated in Table 17 (overleaf):

For the remainder of the first session, two main concerns were touched upon. The first of these was deciding a suitable wording for the above criteria. Particularly, a debate ensued with regard to the economic criteria, and whether the promotion of economic well being should be a factor to evaluate a LEAP. The second centred on the cut off point between the highest weighted criteria, and those that were discarded. In particular, one criterion that narrowly missed inclusion concerned the effect of tackling issues in a LEAP upon the historic environment. An archaeologist had been invited to attend the stakeholder group. Effectively, without the inclusion of a historical criterion, the ‘archaeological stakeholder’ no longer could articulate their professional interest. After some debate, it was decided not to add the criterion to the final list.

The rest of the workshop thus centred on the application of the twelve criteria shown in Table 17 to the potential issues in the LEAP process. The ranking procedure was undertaken in small groups over a period of two sessions. During the first session, the group was split into four groups of approximately three participants, and the lowest eight listed criteria were applied.

Table 17: Criteria used to appraise the North West Norfolk LEAP.

Criteria	Value Judgement	Criteria Weight
To what extent is tackling this issue a legal requirement?	Legal obligations should be met.	10.5
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit non-human species and habitats?	Biodiversity should be maintained and promoted, and the EA should contribute to BAP.	9.98
To what extent would tackling this issue protect and enhance environmental resources?	Priority should be given to issues that protect environmental integrity and preserve it	9.90
To what extent would tackling this issue improve scientific knowledge and understanding of environmental quality?	Decision-making should be based on scientific fact.	8.64
To what extent would tackling this issue represent value for money?	The EA's work should maximise value for money	8.50
To what extent would tackling this issue improve mutual understanding and exchange of knowledge with other organisations and the public?	Mutual understanding should be enhanced.	7.90
To what extent would tackling this issue help other Agencies meet their objectives?	The EA should work in partnership with other bodies	7.76
To what extent would tackling this issue address imminent environmental changes?	The Agency should tackle issues that are likely to get worse sooner rather than later	7.70
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit the quality of life for residents in the LEAP area?	Improving amenity and addressing nuisance should be given high priority.	7.60
To what extent would tackling this issue maintain, improve or develop fish stocks and fish diversity?	Priority should be given to issues where fish stocks are increased.	7.46
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit public health?	Public health should be safeguarded; danger to human life is unacceptable.	7.37
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit the local economy?	The EA should have regard for the local economy.	6.54

In the second session, the top four criteria were applied in larger groups of approximately six participants, allowing a broader range of discussion. Details of this process are listed below in Tables 18 and 19.

Tables 18 and 19. Group composition and criteria used for appraisal in workshop 3.:

Table 18. Group composition in workshop 3.

Group 1.	Group 2.	Group 3.	Group 4.
Participants:	Participants:	Participants:	Participants:
Terry	Murray	Ted	Charles
Bob	Phil	Alan	Adam
Paul	Ian	Mary	Richard
			Nicky
Facilitator: Kevin.	Facilitators: Simon and Kersty.	Facilitators: Dan.	Facilitator: Darren.
Agency experts: Janet (conservation) Simon (LEAP officer).	Agency experts: Cathy (river management) David (flood defence)	Agency experts: Martin (flood Defence).	Agency experts: Jane (LEAP officer)

Group 5.	Group 6.
Participants:	Participants:
Richard	Phil
Adam	Charles
Mary	Murray
Ian	Alan
Ted	Terry
Nicky	Bob
	Paul
Facilitators: Kevin and Dan.	Facilitator: Darren, Simon and Kersty.
Agency experts: Janet (conservation) Jane (LEAP officer) David Flood defence).	Agency experts: Martin (flood Cathy (river management) Defence) Simon (LEAP officer).

Table 19: Criteria used by groups for appraisal in workshop 3.

Group Number.	Criteria used for assessment.
1	<p>Criterion: To what extent would tackling this issue benefit the local economy.</p> <p>Value judgement: The Agency should have regard for the local economy.</p> <p>Criterion: To what extent would tackling this issue benefit public health?</p> <p>Value judgement: Public health should be safeguarded; danger to human life is unacceptable.</p>
2	<p>Criterion: To what extent would tackling this issue improve mutual understanding and exchange of knowledge with other organisations and the public?</p> <p>Value judgement: Mutual understanding should be enhanced.</p> <p>Criterion: To what extent would tackling this issue represent value for money?</p> <p>Value judgement: The EA's work should maximise value for money</p>
3	<p>Criterion: To what extent would tackling this issue benefit the quality of life for residents in the LEAP area?</p> <p>Value judgement: Improving amenity and addressing nuisance should be given high priority.</p> <p>Criterion: To what extent would tackling this issue represent value for money?</p> <p>Value judgement: The EA's work should maximise value for money</p>
4	<p>Criterion: To what extent would tackling this issue address immanent environmental changes.</p> <p>Value judgement: The agency should tackle issues that are likely to get worse sooner rather than later.</p> <p>Criterion: To what extent would tackling this issue maintain, improve or develop fish stocks and fish diversity?</p> <p>Value judgement: Priority should be given to issues where fish stocks are increased.</p>
5	<p>Criterion: To what extent would tackling this issue benefit non-human species and habitats:</p> <p>Value judgement: Biodiversity should be maintained and promoted, and the EA should contribute towards Biodiversity Action Plans.</p> <p>Criterion: To what extent would tackling this issue improve scientific knowledge and understanding of environmental quality?</p> <p>Value judgement: Decision-making should be based on scientific fact.</p>
6	<p>Criterion: To what extent is tackling this issue a legal requirement?</p> <p>Value judgement: Legal obligations should be met.</p> <p>Criterion: To what extent would tackling this issue protect and enhance environmental resources?</p> <p>Value judgement: Priority should be given to issues that protect environmental integrity and preserve it</p>

As mentioned previously, the groups applied each criterion to all issues in the LEAP, ranking them low, medium or high. At the start of each of the sessions, the meaning of the criterion was debated by the group before its application. All participants made contributions to the ranking procedure. When the ranking could not be settled through consensus, it was decided by a majority vote. The following example of Group 5 at work illustrates the process. The group is applying the criterion: 'to what extent would tackling this issue benefit non-human species and habitats' to an issue concerning the abatement of groundwater pollution. Kevin and Dan are the facilitators.

398
 399 Kevin: Contamination of groundwater.... Would it benefit species and habitats?
 400
 401 Adam: On the river Nar it would but..., not all rivers... medium
 402
 403 Kevin: Medium? Any dissension from that?
 404
 405 Ian: A lot of groundwater feeds rivers... I am not sure how much it does in this area,
 406 but it does in others.
 407
 408 Mary: I think we should stick with high on that one
 409
 410 Adam: In this area I would have thought medium...
 411
 412 Ian: Just for clarification; this issue only applies to those rivers that are fed by
 413 groundwater? It will only apply to some rivers in the catchment, like the Nar and the
 414 Babblingly and things like that
 415
 416 Mary: And to those it matters very much
 417
 418 Richard: It does matter very much
 419
 420 Jane: But the whole of the LEAP area...
 421
 422 Ian: You can itemise something and it might be important to one aspect or all over the
 423 LEAP area
 424
 425 Adam: So it is a scale issue then?
 426

427 Mary: But these are issues of principle aren't they, so whether they apply to the part or
 428 the whole, they matter.
 429
 430 [general agreement]
 431
 432 Ian: Shall we put it to a vote, democracy again
 433
 434 Kevin: Democracy.... Who is in for a high... er 3 ... who is in for a medium, 3.
 435
 436 [laughter]
 437
 438 Adam: Well I am halfway, so I will change my vote for a high, I think
 439
 440 Kevin: yeah
 441
 442 Adam: For some of those rivers it has got a big... big benefit
 443
 444 Kevin: High it is then.
 445

As can be seen from the section above, participants discussed the application of criteria through a number of complex processes. Within just this small section of transcript, a number of themes are raised including: water charges in lotic systems and variations in local environments; different ideas of the relation between the issue and biodiversity; the context of different geographical scales; statements of principle; and ideas for the determinations of final validity. To make these arguments speakers refer to a variety of actor world relations: the teleological (line 412), the norm-guided (427) and the dramaturgical (line 438). These communicative processes will be reviewed in more depth later next chapter. However, it is worth noting the richness of thought and complexity of thinking, given time considerations for the evaluation of each of the issues. The approach was thus generally sympathetic with regard to a broad variety of stakeholder values and positions.

At the end of the session each of the groups had applied all 12 criteria to all 33 LEAP issues. Before the next workshop, I converted all qualitative assessments into numerical scores and ranked each of the issues (see Appendix VI for mathematical model and Table

20 below). This document was mailed out to each participant for discussion at the next workshop.

6.2.6.6. Workshop 4.

Objectives:-

- review the results of the SDA
- agree any changes to the ranked list of issues
- evaluate the whole process as a means for prioritizing issues within LEAPs.

The fourth and final workshop gave participants the chance to discuss the prioritised LEAP. Though the workshop was essentially a review session, it is important to emphasise that the LEAP decision process was still underway. As such, the task of the final workshop was to review the LEAP, review any difficulties with the prioritised list, and amend them in the group. Further, the session provides the chance for participants to review the process as a whole, to reflect upon earlier workshops, to discuss their views of the Agency, as well as the facilitation of the groups overall. The workshop was thus structured in two sessions. The first was to discuss the prioritised LEAP. The second was to reflect back upon the process. After the workshop, participants were invited for an evening meal at a nearby pub, to thank them and to consolidate relationships formed through the process. The following table shows the prioritised LEAP sent out to participants prior to the final workshop:

Table 20: Prioritised LEAP issues for North West Norfolk

Rank	Score	Issue
1	279	Groundwater is vulnerable to pollution from agricultural land and landfill sites
2	271	A better understanding is needed of the water requirements of the environment and the impacts of abstraction
3	270.7	There is concern over eutrophication of the estuary
4	270.2	There is concern over the impact of siltation on flood defences and navigation in the Tidal River
5	268	There is concern over the impact of poor water quality on River Nar SSSI

Rank	Score	Issue
6	253	There are problems with fish being washed out of the Middle Level System during times of high flows
7	250	The allocation of the water resources and the licensing policy requires restating
8	245	A better understanding of the water balance of the LEAP area is required
9	241	Hunstanton North and Heacham Main beaches fail to meet guideline bathing water quality standards
10	239	The use of managed retreat as part of the coastal defence strategy in the east of the Wash needs to be evaluated
11	237	Water Level Management Plans need to be completed
12	236	There is concern over the impact of engineering works on riverine habitat diversity
13	235.8	There has been a failure to meet Environmental Quality Standards (EQS) for tributyl tin in the estuary
14	235.2	BAP targets specific to the LEAP area are unknown
15	233	There is a need for effective management of Blackborough End waste sites
16	225	Navigation has been impeded by siltation of the Tidal River
17	221	There is unmet summer demand for water resources
18	218	A number of river stretches fail to meet their River Ecosystem targets
19	183	There is concern over the impact of river structures on sea trout populations in the rivers Nar and Babingley
20	178	Sea defences at Sea Banks East, Wolferton - Snettisham need re-shoring and re-profiling
21	172	Re-assess the mowing regime of river banks to minimise disturbance to wildlife
22	171	There is a need to protect habitat outside designated areas
23	167	Water movement behind the tidal defences at South Quay (King's Lynn) is insufficiently understood
24	161	There is concern that tidal defences between Hunstanton and Snettisham generally provide inadequate protection against flooding
25	158	Meeting the requirements of the Bye Report for improving flood defences
26	153	There is an absence of grayling in the River Nar
27	147	Flooding on the lower Nar needs to be addressed
28	136	The future of Snettisham beach groynes needs to be evaluated
29	134	Recreational access to Agency-owned land on the Relief Channel and the Cut off Channel is inadequate
30	119	Proposed development behind River Nar flood defences is of concern because of insufficient flood protection
31	113	Heacham River: Kalajuga Sluice lacks secondary flood defences
32	112	Following a request from GOBA (Great Ouse Boating Association), the Environment Agency is preparing a business plan to assess the feasibility of opening navigation to the Relief Channel.

The workshop session.

The fourth workshop was held at Denver Sluice, on 16th July 1999, and was attended by 11 of an expected 15 participants. I gave a lengthy introduction to the task, and then a more general debate ensued upon the LEAP. During the first part of the workshop, the whole group discussed difficulties with prioritised LEAP. This mainly centered on the fact that issues concerning flood defence seemed to fair relatively less well in relation to other issues, despite the fact that flood defence is an essential element of the Agency's remit. Indeed, seven of the lowest twelve ranked issues were related to flood defence (see Table 20).

After some discussion, the group believed the reasons for this were twofold. The first was an artefact of the criteria. Flood defence, as an issue, had scored relatively less well on many of the environmental criteria. Further, there were no criteria upon the protection of human life, and indeed none specifically on flood defence. Thus such issues fared poorly overall. The second concerned information provided by the Agency for each of the issues. Certainly, the importance of some of the issues for the Agency was not reflected by their description in the issues list. This matter was complicated further through the cross funding of some flood defence from other sources. Hence due to a combination of factors, issues concerning coastal flood defence were not adequately dealt with in the prioritisation process, relative to other issues.

However, after some discussion a number of solutions to these problems were generated by the group (agreed by a majority vote):

- All of the 33 issues should end up in the finalised LEAP
- There should be a separate section for flood defence issues due to the above concerns
- There should hence be two prioritised lists for action
- Some of the issues should be tackled consecutively if they could be meaningfully linked.
- The LEAP should be sent out for broader public consultation

- After this time the stakeholder group should re-convene to discuss the wider public comment, and to agree the final list.

During the second session, the participants were split into two smaller groups and reviewed the project overall. The composition of the groups is listed below in Table 21.

Table 21. Breakout groups for workshop 4.

Group 1.	Group 2.
Participants:	Participants:
Charles	Richard
Murray	Adam
Alan	Mary
Terry	Ian
Bob	Ted
Paul	
Facilitator:	Facilitators:
Darren	Kersty and Simon
Agency experts: Janet (conservation) Jane (LEAP officer)	Agency experts: Martin (flood Cathy (river management) Defence) Simon (LEAP officer).

Group 1 worked well in this session, and reviewed a number of concerns with the process, namely:

- representation and attendance of the group
- the organisation of the sessions, particularly concerning time allotted for tasks
- knowledge and information on issues
- the adequacy of criteria
- the role of the Agency within the process and the wider public

Group 2 worked less well, and much of the session revolved around the discussion of the LEAP issues list discussed earlier, rather than a review of the process overall. In spite of these shortcomings, which will be explored in more depth later, Workshop 4 was an

encouraging session, as it highlighted the relationship that had been built between the stakeholders and the Agency. There was a need to re-evaluate the prioritised LEAP in light of the concerns described for flood defence. The stakeholders developed solutions to these problems, and further were able to listen and negotiate the Agency's concerns with the document. The opportunity to relax at a meal at the end of the process was enjoyable, and allowed participants to talk more informally to each other, as well as to members of the Agency and the facilitating team.

6.3.0. The procedural evaluation of the methods: the role of Habermas.

The aim for the final part of this chapter is to explore the fairness of these methods through a Habermasian perspective, in relation to some of the ethical-normative arguments outlined in chapter 5. It specifically builds upon the fairness criteria of Weblar (1995) and other authors, and concerns the broad issue of representation. Representation seeks not only to describe how the selection of participants within a policy process reflects the broader community. The section also examines how the method themselves may act to prioritise and represent certain forms of knowledge and understandings. The broader institutional political processes underpinning the methods will be explored, and the policy implications outlined. As such, this analysis explores functional relations between methodology and the fairness of each of these underlying processes. The evaluative yardstick is derived through Habermas's transcendental-pragmatic basis of communicative action, namely:

1. Each participant who is capable of speech and action is allowed to participate in discourses.
2.
 - a. Each is allowed to introduce any proposal into discourse
 - b. Each is allowed too call into question any proposal
 - c. Each is allowed to express their attitudes, desires and needs

No speaker may, by internal or external coercion, be prevented from exercising his [or her] rights as laid down in (1) and (2) - (Habermas 1990a p. 89).

To recall, these principles translate into Weber's (1995) criteria for fairness:

Fairness
A. Anyone may participate
B. Anyone may assert validity claims
C. Anyone may challenge validity claims
D. People have the right to influence final determinations of validity

This section will thus assess the above, not through Webler's notion of competence, but rather through broader methodological, political and structural relations. Criterion A (anyone may participate) will be examined through the recruitment process and the idea of representation. Criteria B-D (the assertion, challenge, and influence of validity claims) will be explored through the design of the process and how this may functionally act to create spaces for the emergence of certain knowledge claims.

6.3.1. Participatory Representation.

The *Land and Life* and SDA processes are methods with different recruitment strategies, reflecting different policy needs and outcomes. However, as both methods will create policy decisions that have the potential to effect a broad local area, the issue of representation is key, as it frames the legitimacy of policy formation through fair process.

The two case studies involve two different processes of recruitment and have characteristically different representation objectives. In the *Land and Life* Project, the general public was invited to take part in the meetings. In the Norfolk LEAP, involvement was more specifically defined through the recruitment of stakeholders. Each of these recruitment strategies has their own representational aspirations, which the methodology sought to address. Each will now briefly be described and evaluated, before suggesting how any shortfalls in recruitment may have had an effect on the values articulated through the process.

The *Land and Life* process aimed to include all sectors of the community in the public meetings. However, it used a traditional passive means for recruitment, relying entirely on individuals taking the initiative in responding to a relatively anonymous questionnaire. An examination of the questionnaire (see Appendix I) is revealing. First, the document is primarily a survey, rather than a specific invitation letter to the *Land and Life* meetings. Indeed, the request to attend the meetings reads: ‘we are organising local meetings in June to explore issues raised from this survey. If you would like the chance to take part, please tick the box. We will be in contact soon’. Not only does the text occupy a very small part of the survey, there are no precise meeting details given. Moreover, the text is non-specific; such a generic format meant that specific audiences were not targeted. Following on from this, there was no active recruitment specifically to enrol marginal groups to the process, such as the young, ethnic minorities, the disabled, and lesbian and gay communities. No ‘gatekeepers’ within these communities were contacted to augment a strategy more sensitive to their specific needs.

It should be noted that many the shortcomings of a traditional minimal consultation were understood prior to the recruitment process. However, for a small-scale project such as the NCP such factors as budget, personnel and time vastly limit the scope of consultation. With an increased budget, many of these points could have been addressed. It should not be inferred that such groups were not interested or keen to express their values for the area. For instance, after discussion with teachers at a local secondary school, I found there to be much enthusiasm to run a focus group with school children. Essentially, due to financial constraints, the recruitment and facilitation of such groups could not be undertaken.

The recruitment procedure thus had a strong bearing on non-response. A consequence of this has meant that a majority of socially active and previously engaged citizens replied to the survey. Those who attended the meetings were keen to have a voice in decisions that may affect the area. Indeed, it emerged from the meetings that many participants took an

active role in local Parish Councils, local Trusts and other community organisations, and were already reasonably well informed about the planning process.

A second major effect of an open participatory process was its effect upon meeting attendance and structure. As mentioned, the individual participants within the *Land and Life* project had originally been organised into specific groups depending upon their preferences expressed in the survey. As such, one group comprised local residents who had all expressed an interest in the natural environment, one group comprised residents who expressed an interest in the local economy and so on. This was to assist group stability (as far as possible¹²), and furthermore to gain ‘best-knowledge’ upon certain types of issues.

However, due to the open recruitment process, not all of the expected participants actually attended the group meeting. As a consequence groups often had to be mixed up fairly heterogeneously. Though this generally worked well, in some of the group meetings differing political opinions caused friction. While in Blakeney, this generally stimulated debate, in other sessions, such as Group 1 at Wells such antagonism caused problems for the group. In Cromer (G3), some individuals felt marginalised and did not feel able fully to contribute to the sessions, despite the facilitators best efforts to encourage their participation. A consequence once again was that often the more active and informed citizens would dominate the discussion.

In summary, the *Land and Life* augmented an ordinary, minimal consultation process. The limitations of such an approach were fairly apparent, and certainly would fall a long way short of any notion of ideal representation. However, in the absence of suitable alternative funding mechanisms that could have increased the scope of the project, it was an efficient means to recruit participants. The shortfall has been that such participants are often already engaged in local political debate. The implications of this will be discussed at the concluding part of this section.

¹² Participants will belong to more than one interest group.

In contrast to the *Land and Life* project, the Norfolk SDA process specifically aimed to enrol stakeholders into a long-term decision process. Such a recruitment mechanism would not aim to be inclusive of all voices in the area. Rather, specific key interests and organisations would be represented, defined through the policy context of the LEAP and the Agency's activities, before a broader public consultation mechanism was administered. The value of such a process was in the fact that such individuals could be targeted, and enrolled on a one-to-one basis. Commitment could then be gained for the workshop programme and a balanced of opinion developed.

However, in as far as the policy framework set the context for participant recruitment, it had strong constraints on the process overall. Due to central Agency requirements concerning the timetable for LEAP documents, the recruitment process had to be reduced to just one month. Furthermore, the short timescale meant that I only had an advisory role in the recruitment procedure. In a number of telephone and e-mail correspondence to the LEAP officer, I emphasised the importance of gaining face-to face commitment for the process. However, due to Agency constraints and a relative lack of social science understanding of the LEAP staff member conducting the process, recruitment was undertaken primarily by letter and followed-up through telephone conversations.

It should be noted that the initial consultee list had indeed been reasonably diverse (see Table 13). As the lead facilitator for the groups, I spent time talking to the Agency staff and developing a stakeholder map. However, the time spent fostering these contacts was minimal given the complexity of the process, and the amount of commitment required from each stakeholder. Complacency had arisen after written responses had expressed interest in the meetings.

It is likely that the Agency staff member focused upon the substantive representation of the group, rather that the process through representation would be achieved. When dealing in the day-to-day professional culture of the Agency, particularly in view of their

role as a regulator, it is easy to assume that other organisations will respond to written communications. Indeed, much of the Agency's routine work centres upon statutory compliance, rather than voluntary agreements. It is perhaps the case that the Agency staff member did not fully realise the very different social processes that were needed to develop and maintain a voluntary group. Without the letter of the law to gain commitment, there was no adequate social mechanism developed to encourage participation.

With hindsight, it was extremely unfortunate that greater effort was not placed into the enrollment process. As well as the structural difficulties this caused for the method, such as planning each of the sessions and the effects upon group stability, the main shortfall concern the legitimacy of the process. For the document to succeed, it needed to both jointly empower and accommodate all of the stakeholder interests identified through the mapping process. Critically, if the stakeholder group did not adequately represent all of the concerns in the area, its legitimacy could be called in doubt.

As mentioned, in the Norfolk SDA process, representation from industry was wanting. Moreover, the group was skewed towards environmental interests, with wider community and economic concerns marginalised. Though this might intuitively seem (according to one's normative bent) to be a breath of fresh-air, in practice the policy document needs to be workable, and thus economic consequences of policy options need to be considered. Indeed, it took some debate in the third workshop, mainly driven by me in light of the representative shortcomings, for a criterion on the economy to be agreed by the group.

These shortcomings are also relevant in terms of the discursive negotiation of all other criteria. Without an economic stakeholder, the social learning and definitions of the group were only partially realised. In consequence, the criteria developed reflected group composition and led to some policy options, particularly related to the economic consequence of flood defence, having a low rank in the analysis. At a subsequent AEG

meeting, the broader acceptance and legitimacy of the document was questioned in this light.

This problem is particularly acute as one of the main roles of the SDA method was in the specific targeting and recruitment of the stakeholder group. Indeed, the financial resources of the Agency should have permitted such a consultation procedure. There was a fundamental misunderstanding concerning the role of the process by key members of Agency staff. For the Agency, the method was seen as a tool that would be able quickly to bring a LEAP at the initial stages of the plan making process to its fruition before the National September deadline. Furthermore, it would promote an open and conciliatory reputation for the Agency. It was not seen as a means through which minimisation of power relations and the promotion of dialogue would reflexively mediate formalised systems of bureaucracy making it responsive to public will formation (see Healey 1998 p. 314; see also Dryzek 1990a p. 20-21). In short, the Agency approached the method with the same attitude that they approached their regulatory work. This compromised the success and legitimacy of the project. Indeed, even participants within the process questioned the recruitment approach during the plenary session at workshop 1:

Geoff (district councillor): I wonder whether we are too ambitious in the attempt at this. I look around and we are probably under-subscribed by... although we are supposed to be over subscribed, we are under-subscribed by perhaps a third. That concerns me. Now. Who decided on the list? And were they the people that should have been selected anyway?’

Such concerns resonate with the problems found in the *Land and Life* process. Once more, without an adequate recruitment mechanism, there was a self-selection to the group: only those already involved in some form of environmental planning were keen to attend the process. Others, such as representatives from industry who perhaps have less experience in such debates, were not actively recruited to the process. The result was that range of opinion and the subsequent debate of issues was limited. Unlike the NCP, though, the resources at the Agency’s disposal should have mitigated these concerns.

There is one other key point to raise within the idea of representation in the SDA process. and this concerns the fact that stakeholders were not, as in the *Land and Life* project. speaking from a personal perspective (i.e. representing the general public) but rather representing some form of collective organisational interest. This complicates the ideal of representation in terms of other stakeholders that may have been marginalised. Though this point has been brought to the fore very obviously within the Norfolk SDA (economic and industrial stakeholders were marginalised), there are more subtle problems concerning how one defines the term stakeholder. Though as illustrated earlier (6.2.6.2.) the composition of the group was defined through a variety of criteria concerning the policy context, such a strategy is to some extent limiting. If the range of participants is defined through the policy document, how is it possible to truly broaden the range of thinking within the policy framework?¹³

6.3.2. Representation and Power

As highlighted last chapter, different modes of expertise have the capacity to shape different power relations through a participatory process. The design of a method is fundamental to how participants both gain access to and articulate different forms of knowledge. This section explores how certain modes of power, may be forged and prioritised structurally through the methodological design. Here power is described in terms of how knowledge is prioritised, e.g. efficacy of scientific and administrative knowledge. Furthermore, it is explored in terms of how the policy framework and the management documents are translated through different policy contexts.

The *Land and Life* project essentially followed a focus group design in its breakout groups. In these groups, between five and eight individuals were brought together to discuss a subject in the presence of a trained facilitator. The staff from the Coast Project did not participate in any of the group discussions. The aim of the focus groups was to

¹³ Stakeholder mapping proved an important tool in the Norfolk SDA, particularly in revealing key groups that may not have traditionally been involved in such fora. Particular emphasis here was given to ENGOs, however, once more the recruitment process failed to successfully enrol of these representatives.

progress discussion around a series of themes, while maintaining informality to the proceeding. The facilitator took the group through a number of set questions, namely:

- what makes the area special?
- what detracts from the quality of life in the area?
- what can we do to improve the area?
- how would we like to see the area in 10 years time?

The group discussed these questions, with the facilitator helping to link broader points, and also making sure that no one participant dominated the proceedings. It should be noted that within the discussions there was no need to gain consensus on an issue, or indeed recommend an action, though there were instances where specific policy recommendations were made and were supported unanimously in the group. Essentially, the aim of the group was to negotiate values are within a shared setting. The informal nature of the proceedings sought to minimise power relations between the policy-maker and participant, through the mediation of the facilitators and the social context of the groups.

The group dynamics within *Land and Life*, though informal, were complicated however. As mentioned, the open recruitment process created unpredictable social dynamics. For instance, a county councillor had a profound effect one of the groups during the meeting in Hunstanton (see group 4). As with the Button and Mattson (1999) study discussed in chapter 5, the councillor increasingly became the centre of group attention resulting in a 'questions-answer' dynamic between citizens and politician. In spite of concerted efforts by the facilitation team, the councillor would often negate ideas suggested by the participants before they had the chance to be developed. While the councillor played an important role in terms of political realism, he stifled the creativity of the group and would often assert the necessity of expert solutions where uncertainty about how to resolve specific local problems was expressed by the other participants.

Open techniques of group membership and facilitation will not necessarily transform pre-existing political and power relations, and indeed such processes may be subject to subtle (or not so subtle) administrative inculcation. This is not to say that individuals with more power attempted overtly and strategically to manipulate the group, but rather that the practice of power is culturally generated and may be reaffirmed within a group setting, particularly when such settings are one-off and informal. When the councillor was able to refer to specific administrative governmental procedure to refute claims, it was likely that participants did not feel they had the necessary authority, both socially and in terms of their knowledge, to question such judgements. Indeed, more broadly across all of the sessions when bureaucracy was criticised it was often described in terms of a generalised other (particularly in terms of 'the system').

This withstanding, it is not to convey that such rationality was never questioned. In the same group (Hunstanton G4), Sarah challenged an engineer, Chris, in terms of his claims regarding the efficacy of a coastal recharge defence work that his company installed:

Chris: It was basically an integrated system- putting pipes in the beach- letting the beach dry. So that as the waves come in, it seeps into the beach and leaves some sand behind so the beach fills. Very simple. It took us 4 years to get the trial put in, and they ran it for 3 months. It worked and then they took it away...

Sarah: Oh, come on. It didn't work. I live right beside there, and it did not work.

Chris: It was working, it was working.

Similar views were expressed in other groups:

'... the experts put in all sorts of sea defences, pulled in all sorts of spoil, thinking that it would work, all the locals told them it wouldn't work, and it didn't. And now we've got a frightful mess on the beach' (Cromer Trevor G3).

There were strong spatial metaphors operating throughout the groups in terms of power and agency. When discussion centred upon decision-making that was alienated from local

understandings, these were communicatively expressed as something other, in terms of 'them' or the 'the system', of something disembodied. Hence:

- 'how can they say that that house won't be there in 60 years time?' (Frank - North Walsham G1),
- 'They were expecting 11m tides at some point in the year. Nobody knew why' (Mary - Blakeney G 4)
- I have no idea where to go for information [about bus timetables]. It is like trying to find out about the secret service (Ray – Blakeney G2).

It is likely that participants felt able to challenge expertise when such claims were made at a local knowledge level. Where they had been excluded from forms of expertise such challenges were disconnected, projected at a broader system. Such concerns were often reinforced through participant alienation from the planning system. Communicatively, there are thus strong links between inclusion and agency. Information provision was often seen by participants as one way to reduce this communicative distance. More tellingly, direct and inclusive decision-making was viewed by many as a means to promote such understanding.

Another form of expertise within the *Land and Life* project concerns the role of the facilitator, not only as a mediator of group views, and the power relations forged therein, but textually too, in terms of the translation of the discourse into the policy document. Indeed, there were two main expert hermeneutic processes that operated within the project. First, the discussions developed through the *Land and Life* meetings were subsequently interpreted and translated into documents by the facilitation team at UCL. Second, professional staff at the Coast Project developed these documents into specific policy recommendations and actions. Through this translation, undoubtedly some of the richness, diversity, meaning and context of various claims and values have been distilled. The decision-maker thus holds interpretative power over the process.

Such power does not imply that the decision-maker is actively seeking to subvert the process, but rather illustrates a genuine concern over how it is possible effectively to translate values into a policy framework in an administrative culture. Indeed, as there was no direct systematic mechanism for prioritising knowledge within the *Land and Life* project, there was no effective means for the decision-maker to judge the relative importance of the claims raised. To this extent there was a problem of the marginalisation of public values from an institutional perspective. One way in which this was overcome was to examine how points were reinforced across a variety of group sessions. Undoubtedly, however, the hermeneutic resonance of some of the issues described by the participants led to their uptake within the policy process. It should be noted that this mode of translation is not only textual but also structural. In addition to writing the draft document, the Coast Project had to disseminate and encourage its acceptance.

From this, a final point concerning the *Land and Life* Project pertains to the uptake and legitimisation of the policy document within broader political circles. Due to the informal nature of the *Land and Life* sessions, some of the more traditional networks of power for making decisions in the area had been overlooked through the process. Such alienation had implications for not only the political responsiveness of the policy document, but furthermore in terms of the accountability for policy options arising from the process. At local council level across the coastal area, some concerns were raised regarding which individuals or organisations would be answerable for policy recommendation and implementation. Furthermore, many interest groups (e.g. wildfowlers, right to roam groups) did not feel their views had been adequately canvassed. There were thus further representation concerns augmented further down the policy framework. Again this highlights the broader policy context of the Coast Project. The NCP were relatively powerless, a weak partner within the broader political spectrum of the Norfolk Coast. Estranging traditional executives and local gatekeepers needed to deliver the document were thus problematic.

These concerns over the authorship of the project document were borne out at the subsequent series of discussion meetings in March 1998. At these meetings participants from the Project were asked specifically to debate the policy options arising from the process so far, and thus agree the management strategy. As mentioned earlier, these sessions were more dominated by attendance by interest groups and local parish and district councilors. Indeed only a relatively small number (19%) of the initial *Land and Life* participants attended this additional set of meetings. It should be noted that the final management strategy was politically endorsed by a broad spectrum of decision-makers across the region (see NCP 1998). However, the collaborative process through which this was to be achieved was only partially realised. As O’Riordan (1998) notes, the challenge thus becomes for the need to co-evolve ‘executive procedures of accountability and responsiveness with the “new” democracy of informal governance’ (p. 9). Adequate funding mechanism thus becomes essential for a small-scale project in this light.

In contrast, the *North West Norfolk LEAP* developed a different methodological approach to decision-making, and correspondingly augmented a different formal relationship to expert knowledge and administrative control. There were two distinct characteristics of the method that are worth noting in relation to the *Land and Life* project. The first of these involves the discussion and assimilation of scientific knowledge. Participants in the SDA process had to read technical details about a variety of potential issues within the LEAP. Any additional issues by raised by the participants, above those originally provided by the Agency, had also to be considered. As such, contributions by participants had to be negotiated within the Agency’s regulatory framework. The interpretation of this framework for the inclusion of new issues was the cause of some debate during the process. As such, by virtue of the method alone, technical, administrative and scientific knowledge was often given priority over other forms of reasoning.

The second main characteristic of the LEAP case study was that it combined a systematic and a deliberative approach to policy formation. The method was structured through a

series of workshops wherein policy options were appraised through the application of discursively agreed criteria. Within each of these workshops, discussion and deliberation was curtailed to the specific task in hand, be it the development of issues, the development of criteria, or the ranking of criteria against policy options. Due to concerns regarding the time taken to complete each workshop, facilitation in these sessions were far more task orientated than the focus groups, with the team from UCL explaining in detail how each stage of the decision analysis would be undertaken. Further guidance was on hand from the Environment Agency in the provision of technical and regulatory support. Furthermore, the general emphasis on decision analysis and regulatory aspects of policy within some of the sessions promoted and reinforced a technocentric flavour to the discussions.

As an artefact of these two characteristics of the method, a further process consideration arose with regard to ownership of the LEAP document. The Environment Agency was far more closely involved in the deliberations throughout the SDA process, than were policy-makers in the *Land and Life* meetings. The Agency not only provided the majority of policy issues and the policy framework for discussion to take place, but also had their own interests represented in the process through the presence of an Agency stakeholder. This caused some debate among the stakeholders not only as to whether such a document could legitimately express the views of the stakeholder group, but also in terms of to what extent the Agency were willing to negotiate their own roles and responsibilities. Specifically, the participants were concerned as to how the Agency viewed their regulatory roles and whether or not they saw room for negotiation within this framework. These concerns were raised with particular reference to the Agency's openness to new issues.

This issue was further debated during the critique of the process in the final workshop (4). In the second session of the day, group 1 discussed the role of the Agency within the process, and particularly the flexibility of their approach. One of the main themes to

emerge was the reluctance of the Agency to move beyond rules and regulations when conducting work. The following comments illustrate these concerns well:

- 504 Jane (Agency staff): I think that when we came here we wanted to come as equal
 505 stakeholders to yourself. And not to be seen to be running it and telling you... you
 506 know these are what the environmental issues are and these are the options. The whole
 507 idea is that we come to a conclusion through a consensus rather than....
 508
- 509 Charles: I think that the thing is that your remit limits the options that you want us to
 510 look at.
 511
- 512 Ted: I would agree with that.
 513
- 514 Murray: The way our organisation works with voluntary organisations differs from the
 515 way the Agency works with them. The problem with the Agency is that they are driven
 516 by statutory concerns. Thus they are afraid to listen to what people say because at the
 517 end of the day they feel that they must deliver the statutory duty. Now my view of that
 518 is... our agency has to obey the law, we work for instance with English Nature in
 519 delivering nature conservation in the wider countryside... but what our agency and
 520 English Nature try to see is the elbow room that there is within the statutory duties...
 521 you are a very complex organisation as well.. people did not know quite what you
 522 wanted to do' [participants emphasis].
 523

The participants were thus unclear as to the Agency's role within the process. Indeed, the idea of the Agency as an equal partner was not one that resonated well with the group. This was borne out through quantitative reflections upon the second session: 38 potential new issues were sent in by participants through the postal survey, yet due in large part to the Agency's reluctance, only six new issues and amendments made it on to the final prioritised LEAP. Furthermore, during the final workshop it emerged that some issues would have been prioritised irrespective of the groups' decisions due to external power relations (indeed the lowest ranked issue concerning the Great Ouse Boating Association was one such example).

More broadly, this perspective highlights a tension between the Agency and the stakeholders in terms of an expert and lifeworld perspective of values and responsibilities.

For the participants, connecting the values articulated from their own perspectives to those articulated institutionally was not easy, as reflexivity on the part of the Agency was wanting. The method aimed to provide the institutional spaces where the interstices of power could be transformed, and where a fluid relationship between communicative practice and policy-making bodies could be developed to facilitate such knowledge. However, as the 'elbow room' metaphor contends, there were some concerns from the participants that culturally the Agency often found it difficult to negotiate these spaces.

Though the Agency expressed (dramaturgically) a genuine attempt to share power, their institutional function as a regulator was parasitic on this aim and such claims were often unredeemed. Reciprocally, the Agency were often cautious to give advice on certain issues, in case the stakeholders felt that they were attempting to railroad the process. The critical theory analysis developed next chapter highlight this complexity, not in terms of domination or inculcation, but rather in terms of how roles were shaped and reaffirmed and how language shape power relations.

The broader policy context also played a further role within the Norfolk SDA. Unlike the *Land and Life Project*, the method provided the policy maker with a transparent and systematic means of reaching decisions. The policy options raised within the LEAP process could be incorporated into the draft document without need for further translation. Furthermore, as each of the policy options had been appraised systematically through each of criteria, the general level of importance of each of the options to the stakeholders could be realised. The decision-process was thus made more explicit and the values expressed were integrated and co-ordinated. While this may have stifled some of the creativity and freedom of the discourses realised within the group, it remains that the policy outcomes had greater institutional purchase. This is significant within the LEAP context due to the fact that funding for each of the action plans has to be agreed centrally. Some common means of assessing documents, such as the prioritised issue list, was thus of fundamental importance.

It is here that the differences between the Agency and the Coast Project come to the fore. The Agency is a large institution, with much greater administrative and political power. As a single authority, they could drive the policy process through without the need of consent of other executive bodies in the area. Given this, internal disputes concerning timetables and central funding priorities were of greater significance. What thus becomes of paramount importance for the radicalising of institutional practices within such an organisation concerns not so much the external architecture, but rather how to convince a regulatory culture of the necessity to move beyond an instrumental rationale. Participation involves a reassessment of the roles, responsibilities and decision-making legitimisation of a large organisation such as the Agency. Without fostering a suite of social scientific understanding to achieve this change, such expectations may not be reached.

6.4.0. Conclusions.

The case studies illustrated in this chapter represent two very different approaches to plan-making in the north Norfolk area. The methods have involved a tremendous amount of time, effort and energy from all of the participants involved, both institutionally and publicly. They have been rich in material and, each in its own way, has sought to address the accountability and representation of decision-making. Both the Coast Project and the Agency have shown willingness to trial novel methods, and to risk criticism internally and externally. They have attempted to become more representative of the concerns expressed in their areas.

The analysis developed in the later part of the chapter has questioned whether even adequate representation is ever possible, in light of policy and financial constraints. How institutions should envisage a 'public' in such circumstances is thus problematic. Even Habermas's notion of an authentic public sphere has come under attack for identifying public consciousness primarily with the bourgeois property owning male (see Fraser 1996; Ryan 1996; Schudson 1996).

There are important implications for the legitimacy of such process and the ownership of policy and documents emerging from these case studies. In particular, institutions engaging new normative participatory processes must be very wary of readily repeating the institutional practices and patterns of the existing styles of bureaucratic governance. Such policy formation should be wary of masquerading under the fiction of an authentic public or stakeholder voice. Where possible efforts should be made to recruit those interests and groups that are not represented. When this is not possible, such shortcomings need to be fully recognised within the subsequent policy formation.

This culturally, however, becomes problematic, as often the development of such new processes needs to be seen in terms of a positive light. They need to be seen to succeed, particularly when they have involved many different participants in their formation. There is thus a risk of an uncritical spin or gloss articulated with such participatory designs. Indeed this has happened within both of the processes. At the launch of the Coast Project's management strategy, Tim O'Riordan congratulated the project as a model for its inclusive and participatory approach to plan making (O'Riordan 1998). At a recent ESRC sponsored Deliberative and Inclusionary Processes (DIPs) seminar at UEA, LEAP officers presented the Norfolk SDA process as more participatory than the trial in the New Forest, by virtue of the fact that more issues had been assimilated into the Norfolk LEAP document (Guthrie and Nichols 1999). While there is a need for such promotion, a process cannot be deemed to be a success just by virtue of consultation. Ideas of representation and difference need to be more adequately developed through such procedures. The rhetoric of participation: the leitmotifs of accountability, legitimacy, responsiveness and transparency, needs to be understood through a variety of lens; communicatively, sociologically and geographically. A Habermasian perspective is useful in this light for not only does it promote consideration of the intersubjective other, it also provides a bulwark through which constraints to the ideal speech situation may be explored. Postmodern ideas upon identity and difference may too play an important role in identifying the voice of the other (see Flyvbjerg 1998; Hillier 1996; White 1986).

As noted, broader institutional and policy context may be anathema to these ideals.

Without developing the social skills needed to develop such processes, and this may well be the case in small projects where finance is limited or in large environmental organisations where natural scientific expertise is more valued, then participatory techniques risk becoming just another strategy for domination rather than an insightful way for people to creatively value natural world (see also Philips 1994). The tension between these ideas is explored next.

Chapter 7.

Discourses of environment and society: a critical perspective.

7.0. Introduction.

In this chapter a number of transcripts from the two case studies will be analysed in detail. This analysis examines how processes of discourse, communication and understanding develop around a variety of substantive themes, namely: trust, consensus, identity, institutional valuation and environmental values. In this way, the chapter examines different theoretical ideas developed throughout the thesis in light of the discourses articulated through the case studies. The chapter is structured in five parts.

Initially, as a foundation to the review, a section of transcript will be used to illustrate how Habermas's communicative model may be used to assess social actions. In particular, his insights from speech act theory will be used as a heuristic to explore how understanding is reached through actors relating to their teleological, norm-guided and dramaturgical worlds (see Habermas 1984 pp. 100-101 and chapter 4). It is demonstrated that such a framework provides a more meaningful platform to examine rational argument than those offered through more utilitarian rational choice approaches. From here, the four substantive themes are explored in more depth.

First, the idea of trust in experts systems is examined through the relationships described between participants and the administrative decision-making body. The communicative legitimacy of institutions and the perceived agency of actors engaged in the process are highlighted.

Second, the ideas of consensus, understanding and identity are explored. Here the relationships between discourse, power and identity are key. The section examines how methodological and institutional forms of power may mask the idea of consensus. Then participants' own ideas of consensus are explored in terms of communicative

understanding. Finally, this section illustrates the role of communicative action in the reproduction of social life, particularly in the negotiation of identity.

Third, institutional approaches to the valuation of nature are explored through discussions of the role of cost-benefit analysis and science for describing the natural world. Though the participants were aware of the need for rationality and analysis within decision-making, the problems associated with attempts capture natural values through the measure of money and the plurality of institutional science were seen as communicative constraints to these goals.

Finally in the fourth section, a variety of environmental values developed through the two different case studies are discussed in some depth. While generally the natural world was articulated through both studies as something that contributed greatly to the quality of life, the meanings behind this were complex, ambivalent and sometimes provocative. Here environmental and social relations between objective description, aesthetic judgements and normative commitment will be examined. From this foundation, the idea of an ecological rationality will be explored in more depth next chapter.

7.1.0. A communicative model: rational discussions and claims making.

This thesis has argued that a sole focus upon instrumental or utilitarian views of rationality is an impoverished means of considering rational action. Rather, it has proposed that the social aspects of environmental problems may be better examined through a focus on communication. Using the model of communicative action, understandings may be explored and rationally debated through appeals to the validity of our claims in the objective, social and subjective worlds.

As mentioned in chapter 4, this understanding comes about from the ability of modern subjects to rationalise their lifeworld. As such, actors may make claims as to the truthfulness of objective states of affairs, they may invoke norms to legitimate actions, they may refer to subjective feelings and emotions to express their inner thoughts on a

subject. They co-ordinate such claims through the communicative use of language towards understanding.

Communicative action does not just describe this comprehension of social action. Rather it is a sociological concept to describe the medium for the reproduction of the lifeworld. Through being rationally motivated to accept claims towards understanding, actors reaffirm various aspects of culture, society and personality that are under threat from the one-sided progression of the rational potential of modernity and the material reproduction of social life. In this way, discursive institutional designs that aim to promote the use of communicative action may develop these symbolic structures of the lifeworld. This bolsters the lifeworld against crisis manifestations in modernity, particularly in the withdrawal of legitimation, motivation and the increasing sense of alienation (see 4.2.4. and Habermas 1987 pp. 119-152).

In this initial section, a close analysis of a transcript will explore how a Habermasian perspective illuminates arguments constructed through a variety of actor-world relations between participants. This section aims to illustrate how understanding, legitimacy and the communicative co-ordination of action is articulated. Once this framework is established, it will then act as a heuristic through which substantive themes may be explored through the rest of the chapter.

The transcript is taken from the *Land and Life* study and concerns a discussion regarding the public involvement in shoreline management planning in the Hunstanton meetings (group 4). There are three main protagonists in the section. Sarah, a young mother, moved to the area three years previously with her husband and children. David is also a newcomer, recently retiring to the area. Robert has lived in the north Norfolk area for much of his life and is a county councillor. Along with Dan Bloomfield, I facilitated the group. As we join the session, I am attempting to explore different perceptions of coastal management and administrative communication.

1148 Darren: Do you as a 'public' feel that you have been consulted on these issues? Or do
1149 you feel that this is going on in the ether somewhere, and you pick up snippets?
1150

1151 David: I think the problem is that nothing really has happened at an official level
1152 and what seems to be happening now is that other people are concerned about
1153 other issues, like the beauty of the banks or whatever, which means that if
1154 somebody comes in and says, you know, I want to do this bank up - nobody has
1155 got any confidence because they do not know what they are doing, any more
1156 than the people living there. So, my point is that we should leave things as they
1157 are, OK, and let people protect their own properties. Because I think the whole
1158 thing is moving anyway. The golf course will be washed away soon. And the
1159 people along the coast at Cley.....
1160

1161 Sarah: I don't like that attitude. We have got to look after each other....
1162

1163 David: When I say that, I don't mean we don't look after each other. I am
1164 saying that if you get someone in from outside, they are coming in, and they are
1165 saying we are going to do something about this, we are going to put a bank up -
1166 you have lost control.
1167

1168 Sarah: Yeah, but surely it would have to go to the planning officer?
1169

1170 David: The bank is about a mile away from where we are and that is going to
1171 breach. We can't really rush down there with our own little buckets and spades
1172 and build it up...
1173

1174 Robert: You see, what you are saying- you have got two choices. You either
1175 become like the fens. The fens are totally under control, everybody pays their
1176 tax to the drainage authority - they have diesel electric pumps that are all
1177 automatic and everybody keeps their fingers crossed that if there is a sudden
1178 deluge of rain, because the whole thing is dry and they are keeping all of the
1179 water levels up - they are just hoping to the heavens that if there is an enormous
1180 rainfall that the pumps are going to be sufficient to cope, to move the water
1181 away to prevent a flood. Or in the winter, they have the washes. Now, we can
1182 do the same along the North Norfolk Coast if we want to. And there are two
1183 choices. Lord ***** has taken the decision as far as I know, that he is
1184 abandoning all of the land that was enclosed by his forefathers, at huge expense
1185 at the time, and he is going to make no attempt to continue farming those
1186 marshes. It is simply, as far as he is concerned, not worth the expense. Further
1187 down the coast at the Royal Estate at Sandringham they have in fact built sea
1188 defences, in addition to the nineteenth century sea defences, they have built
1189 them recently, since the war, and there is a huge area enclosed and it is farmed,
1190 intensively. Because it is estuary silt and it is very valuable. But nobody, but
1191 nobody is allowed anywhere near it from the general public.
1192

1193 Dan: Well the public is particularly a part of this argument that I would like to
 1194 come back to. Sarah was about to say something, you said you were not pleased
 1195 about a certain sort of style of management?
 1196
 1197 Sarah: attitude
 1198
 1199 Dan: And I would like to focus on that if we may...
 1200
 1201 Robert: [interrupts] And the choice is as with at Sandringham, if you protect
 1202 your beach, build your defence et cetera, then you have got to keep your public
 1203 out entirely...
 1204
 1205 Sarah: What did you say about Lord *****.... that he is not repairing sea
 1206 defences?
 1207
 1208 Robert: Yes
 1209
 1210 Sarah: And that he is not doing it because it is not going to profit him?
 1211
 1212 Robert: That's right
 1213
 1214 Sarah: So he is only thinking of himself?
 1215
 1216 [overtaking – Robert, Sarah and Mike]
 1217
 1218 Dan: Can we please not talk over each other. Sarah what is the alternative that
 1219 you have in mind then for that one?
 1220
 1221 Sarah: Um.... I don't know? I think that, if it is on his land, and he has the
 1222 wealth that he has, and is reaping a lot of public money, through his car parks
 1223 and things, he should have a conscience and put it back into sea defences, like
 1224 Sandringham have. I know that the public are not allowed in, you have just said
 1225 that. But they are benefiting, all the people that are behind that defence.....
 1226
 1227 Robert: No, no, no, no. Nobody is benefiting from that, except the Royal
 1228 Estate.....
 1229

The section of transcript illustrates a variety of arguments concerning responsibilities for shoreline management. In the discussion, values are developed, and meanings are understood and negotiated in light of different claims arising through the process. These claims involve the discursive redemption (or otherwise) of a variety of actor world relations. The session begins with two questions from a facilitator [lines 1148-1149].

Darren asks the group to articulate their “feelings” on public consultation in shoreline management. In this way, the question invites the participants’ subjective, rather than objective views on the subject. Moreover, the question raises relations of identity between self and public, and articulates a view of system, in this case shoreline bureaucracy, as separate to the lifeworld of the residents; as “going on in the ether somewhere”.

In response, David articulates a view of the system as ineffective; the fact that “nothing really has happened” at an official level and that “nobody has confidence” in such expert viewpoint [1154]. He notes that this expertise is no better than the knowledge of the residents who face the risk of flooding everyday. For him there is a problem in dealing with this issue at the societal level; such institutions are ineffective in light of a plurality of values in coastal management (“other people concerned about other issues” [1151]) and adequate knowledge in the face of environmental complexity (“they do not know what they are doing ... the whole thing is moving anyway” [1155, 1158]). David’s solution suggests an individual rather than collective response to these problems: “people can protect their own properties” [1157]. It is worth noting that David does not suggest this in terms of individual rights; there is no normative claim raised. Rather it is suggested objectively, that individuals can intervene in the natural environment with an attitude towards successfully defending their property from the sea.

Sarah, the only woman present in the session, responds to this through the line “I don’t like that attitude. We have got to look after each other...” [line 1161]. This response serves a dual communicative purpose linking both the norm-guided to the dramaturgical world. She expresses the fact that she is unhappy with David’s individualist perspective (subjective response). She then expresses a duty to look after other people in the area (norm-guided).

David’s reply to these statement aims communicatively to clarify meaning. He claims that he did not normatively express that an individual’s rights should take precedence over

collective responsibilities. Rather he suggests a concern that engineers may interfere in issues without political legitimacy. “Someone in from the outside” warns of the unfamiliar, the remote power of the bureaucracy over the lifeworld. This separation between state and individual is punctuated with the last line “you have lost control”. At the level of reproduction of the lifeworld, again there is no social integration and no collective identity articulated with David’s reply.

Sarah’s response refers to a norm-guided regulation of the social world through the application of law. The line “[y]eah, but surely it would have to go to the planning officer?” [1168] may be interpreted in two ways. First, she may be suggesting that it is not possible to bypass the system such a manner (a rather totalitarian interpretation). Second, and indeed reinforcing other comments made throughout the transcript, she may be suggesting a more sympathetic relation between system and lifeworld, and the fact that both are needed to maintain the social world. It is possible that the local expression of the state (the planning officer) is seen in some sympathy with the local world: the system is there for a (public) good and legitimate reason.

Robert, a county councillor, then enters the conversation [1174]. In a lengthy passage, he alludes extensively to a teleological model of rationality to justify action. He explains objectively how there are two main options to the problem of flooding; controlling nature artificially through the application of technology or abandoning land to the sea. However, his description may conceal normative reasons to adopt one or the other approach. For Robert, there are essentially only cost-benefit reasons for maintaining flood defence and these operate outside of the realm of politics. Robert is keen not to make a normative commitment; his description of the issue speaks on the behalf of others (note Robert’s use of “he” and “they”), though one suspects that it conceals his own views. The line “it is simply, as far as he is concerned, not worth the expense” [1184-1186], it is noteworthy in this respect, but is perhaps undermined by the preceding comment concerning the effort that it has taken to create that part of the marshes.

Sarah's responses to these comments at lines 1205-1218 are notable. She communicatively clarifies Robert's statements concerning his Lordship's sea defence, both objectively in terms of a description of the world and then normatively in terms of his reasons for not undertaking such action: "what did you say about Lord ***** That he is not repairing sea defences?" – [1205]... "and that he not doing it because it is not going to profit him?" – [1210].

After understanding these claims, she then challenges their validity. She rationalises the legitimacy of action should not only be judged in terms of individual benefit, but too in terms of a broader social and moral responsibility. As such Lord ***** "should have a conscience" and fund sea defence for the wider good. It is also worth noting Sarah's reflection that upon this issue. Her hesitancy at the beginning of the passage is representative of the fact that she is considering such matters through a complex set of social relations and behavioral expectations, rather than viewing the matter as one simply of expense (as Robert claims).

As such, the outcome of the communicative process can be seen to have undergone a variety of rationalisation processes. Political judgement is promoted through debate. This is not to say that all of the participants have to agree with each other in such instances: it is rather that the subject under discussion is refined. The concepts underpinning the debate upon shoreline management become thickened: meanings are clarified.

More broadly when considering this passage overall, it is worthwhile noting how the contributions are regulated, and how themes emerge through discourse. The context is set by one of the facilitators, and builds from an earlier discussion on the science of shoreline management. The two male protagonists discuss the theme through an objectivating discourse and mainly describe a world of things. It is specifically Sarah who articulates themes through a subjective and normative perspective. The second facilitator, Dan, plays an important role at line 1188-1194, and highlights both the terms "public"

and “attitude” as a focus for speech. Dan thus specifically aims to open a space to permit reflection on discussion. At line 1211 he silences the group, while Sarah considers and explains her reasoning. She then expresses a moral view of behavioural expectations, before a final interjection by Robert closes the conversation [1220 – these words are the beginning of a long monologue through which the theme of angling emerges, and is then picked up by one of the other male members of the group].

What this passage has illustrated is the variety of ways in which individual actors may rationalise and interpret a single situation. There are a variety of different claims-making processes involved and these range from descriptions of the outside world, to subjective reflections on feelings, to norm-guided relations and acting for the common good. The communicative competence of participants enables them to judge and anticipate the validity of each others’ claims. There are, in short, processes of rational motivation for the acceptance of action. Meanings are redefined, claims are disputed, understanding are negotiated.

Moreover, the plural and various reasons for conceptualising shoreline management placed forward by participants are each understood and related in their own terms. There is no need or attempt to reduce the conversation to some cardinal measure of value. Rather, the transcript illustrates a rich and multi-layered process of communication. It illustrates how patterns of belief about the world are negotiated, such as responsibilities to our neighbours and ourselves. It shows how problems are constructed and bounded, such as Robert's description of shoreline options. It demonstrates how identities are reproduced and relations of power, both in terms of authority (such as the rational councillor) and in terms of gender (the collective rights and responsibilities argument articulated by Sarah).

As such, what this analysis demonstrates is that rather than developing a Habermasian perspective as an approximation of an ideal discourse, it may be more profitably used assess actual processes of communication and action that not only promote better

judgement but reshape identities and beliefs. In short, the Habermasian perspective permits an examination of the double structure of language where both interpretive interaction and the micro-politics of speech may be examined (see Forester 1992 p. 62).

This analytical framework will now be used to interrogate a variety of substantive themes that have emerged through the thesis and have been articulated in complex ways by participants both in the *Land and Life* project and in the Norfolk SDA method. These analyses provide a critical perspective upon ideas of trust, legitimacy, consensus, value, rationality, institutions and nature, as well as exploring the reproduction of social relations in the lifeworld. To begin, the next section will explore the theme of trust in expertise and institutions.

7.2.0. Expert cultures and communicative space.

This section aims to explore two different aspects of participants' constructions of administrative and scientific expertise. These views of expert cultures often emerged through discussion of decision-making and managing the local environment. Such discussions were socially rich and demonstrated a complex set of relations between the everyday understandings and expectations of participants. Though people were generally sympathetic to the problems inherent within any planning or decision-making system, they often expressed their frustration in attempting to voice their own concerns to cultures that were deemed either bureaucratically rigid and/or communicatively remote.

For instance, within the *Land and Life* project, people generally expressed a concern to maintain "the quality and the character of the area" in the face of changing economic and social circumstances. While recognising the difficulties in plan making, many voiced the concern that their own knowledge and understandings of the area were often discounted or ignored by decision-makers in the area. The following passage concerns a housing development in Hunstanton and develops from a broader discussion of participants' experiences in dealing with planning problems. In this session (group 3), both Trevor and Richard are retired and have been living in the area for the past ten years. Carrie is also

retired. though has been in the area for some 30 years. Susan is a young teacher. The facilitator was Diana.

1015 Trevor: Last July a builder came along and dumped a great pile of breeze-blocks there
1016 and built a concrete base. And that is just been standing in my Area of Outstanding
1017 Natural Beauty now for one year, just standing there and nothing has happened. And I
1018 have written to the council saying.... "it is an Area of Outstanding Beauty", which
1019 presumably is meant to be for my benefit as well, it is not just for the Countryside
1020 Commission who designated it and now we have had a pile of breeze blocks on us
1021 for over a year, and I know for a fact that this guy has not got the money to build any
1022 property, because he has not got any help from the Housing Association. The Council
1023 have permission, they could withdraw a consent. But this is an incident of ribbon
1024 development. It happens....

1025
1026 Richard: Well I was going to say on the same subject that there was a terrific outcry
1027 against this development in the village, and a lot of people complained and I wrote
1028 personally, because ribbon development should be stopped.

1029
1030 Trevor: I have written to the planning officer many times and I have said that it is not a
1031 constructive start, but, you know, this is iniquitous, this is in an Area of Natural Beauty
1032 and the council is ignoring it

1033
1034 Diana: Do you feel that you have an ability to talk with these people...?

1035
1036 Trevor: I have an ability to communicate with them, it is their ability to communicate
1037 with me

1038
1039 Richard: They also ignore parish councils

1040
1041 Carrie: That is true too

1042
1043 Diana: So do you see a way that you could improve your communication?

1044
1045 Trevor: I would like to see the council answer me for encouragement. I think that I
1046 might be on the verge of a breakthrough at the moment. I don't know - things are slow.
1047 On the other hand I have seen in the local paper incidents where they have had pull
1048 down a perfectly acceptable house that he had built on his father's own 20 acre land
1049 was not bothering anybody. I have kept a record of it just in case...

1050
1051 Carrie: It is something of a jobs-worth situation... they really stick to everything, and
1052 then they take ages and ages to respond, and they pass you from one person to another,
1053 and...

1054

- 1055 Richard: District, I think that district councillors could do a bit more to get involved at
 1056 the village level. I mean they come around and they shake your hand and say what great
 1057 guy that you are, at the election, and then you never see them again...
 1058
- 1059 Carrie: Yes that is right
- 1060
- 1061 Susan: The county council has quite a say in the development over here but they are
 1062 very remote from this area
 1063

There are a number of themes that emerge from the discussion above on administrative expertise: the sense of ownership and responsibility for the environment, processes of communication between local residents and elected officials, and the sense of individual agency and trust of bureaucracy. These are all articulated in ways that reproduce particular relations between the participants' lifeworld and the state.

The session starts with Trevor who is describing the problem of ribbon development in the area. Trevor is incredulous that an area renowned for its natural beauty has been turned into a building site. He contrasts the aesthetics of the natural to the (newly) built environment. Central to Trevor's argument however is the failure of the planning authority to intervene in the matter. Furthermore, he questions the role of such designations as 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' within the broader planning picture. The line "it is an Area of Outstanding Beauty, which presumably is meant to be for my benefit as well, it is not just for the Countryside Commission who designated it" [1018-1020] suggests such designations are only meaningful or legitimate when they express some notion of common ownership. In practice, such designations seem to be little more than an institutional signifier. Finally, Trevor's comment highlights the relative ineffectiveness of the council. Despite having power of consent in this decision the council does not exercise such authority to express local concerns.

Richard [1026] reinforces this view through subjective expressive means. There was in the village a "terrific outcry" at the proposed development. He then relates these feelings to a normative claim: "ribbon development should be stopped". The local residents

appeal to their political representatives in the planning system through writing letters of complaint: however their views do not seem taken into account.

Trevor [1030] reinforces the effort involved in communicating with the system: he has “written to the planning officer many times”. As with Richard, this is not just a matter of opinion but one of principle: he describes the council’s inaction as “iniquitous”. He once more emphasises the powerlessness of the term “area of natural beauty”. It is interesting to note that in both cases norm-guided action is founded principally in aesthetic claims rather than the rights of nature in-itself.

The facilitator, Diana, brings the issue of communication to the fore [1034], asking of Trevor’s perceived ability to talk with the council. His reply “I have an ability to communicate with them, it is their ability to communicate with me” [1036] suggests a communicative failure in the legitimacy of the council to carry out an effective role in planning. It should be noted that the participants are not arguing for a blanket ban on development in the AONB. Rather, the concern is for an equitable process to be devised wherein all opinions are heard and through which decisions may be based upon. Communication is highlighted through the passage as a key mechanism to address problems.

The crux of the matter is how to facilitate such communication. Formal methods such as letter writing seem to have faired poorly. Traditional structures of power, too, seem to have failed: as Richard laments “they also ignore parish councils” [1039]. Another elderly participant, Carrie, who has lived in the village for many years, confirms this view.

A number of comments then highlight a concern expressed with regard to the remoteness of some mechanisms of representative democracy. When such representatives no longer express the consensus of opinion in the area, so such a system is seen as unresponsive and unaccountable. Trevor suggests that such decision-making is no longer seen as

rational, the incident where an old farm building was pulled down “that was not bothering anybody” [1048] is seen as indicative of administrative rationality acting unto itself.

Carrie highlights the inflexibility of a system built upon rules and regulations to be responsive [1051] “they really stick to everything, and then they take ages and ages to respond. and they pass you from one person to another”. Richard [1055-1057] questions the dramaturgical sincerity of councillors who “shake your hand and say what great guy that you are, at the election, and then you never see them again”. The everyday experience of bureaucracy is thus faceless, the only contact for the participants have with their representative is at election time, where false claims and hopes are raised, only to be left unfulfilled when the councillors are in office. Finally, Susan explicitly highlights the idea of a remote, unaccountable form of power, distant from the lived experience of local residents. The question for the participants is how to gain agency and control over remote form of bureaucracy.

The above passage has related a number of themes. First it has explored the belief that the local environment is a public rather than an individual or institutional good (Jacobs 1997). As such, some form of social processes should be developed to take account of public environmental values. Second, it has highlighted the primacy of communication. A variety of communication processes have been undertaken by participants, which have been unsuccessful in the main part. The problem identified by participants has been the centralisation of power and the erosion of local and traditional mechanisms to facilitate such communication. Finally it has suggested some ideas as to cause, effect and solution in this matter: people often felt that the planning system had not kept pace with the changes undergoing modern society and hence the system itself has become unaccountable. As such, new mechanisms need to be generated to legitimate institutional action.

Administrative culture, roles and responsibilities were also reviewed through the *Norfolk LEAP process*. Here, discussions were often framed through a different lens than in the focus group sessions, no doubt due to the fact that many of the stakeholders involved in the project were themselves representing various organisations and institutions, such as councils, private businesses and nature conservation bodies.

However, though content of discourse was more specific and technically detailed, debate once more centred upon communicative processes for legitimating action. For instance, the following dispute between a local landowner (Charles) and two members of Agency staff (Cathy and David) occurred in the second workshop (group 2). Here participants were asked to develop new issues to be appraised within the workshops overall. Charles claims that the Agency is not doing enough to prevent pollution from sewerage works resulting from pumping failures and is seeking the development of an issue that will secure such safeguards. Cathy and David claim that it is not within the Agency's remit to give advice on installation systems. The facilitator of the group is Simon.

92 Charles: The Agency should be monitoring these systems so that when something goes
93 wrong they are happy with the consequences of it going wrong.

94
95 Cathy: There is only a certain length you can go to with industrial discharge. So it
96 would be looked at in terms of how much an industry was going to discharge. But in
97 terms of how.... I don't think it is up to the Agency to tell the industry how they were
98 going to do that. It would matter if that, [pause] if the industry did not do what they
99 said that they were going to do, it would be up to the Agency to prosecute them.

100
101 Charles: Maybe, but I think that it is the sort of issue that the EA should take a lead
102 on... to assess the worst case scenario.

103
104 David: The Agency only has their regulations and guidance to go by, and I think that
105 this probably lies outside their guidance and their statutory rights really.

106
107 Cathy: Because the Agency is a regulatory body, it is very difficult for the Agency to
108 give advice on how to do something. If you say this is the best way to do something
109 and do it to this limit... if something goes wrong, it is the Agency that will have to
110 regulate. So you don't give the advice to the company about how to do it.

111
112 David: I understand what Cathy is saying there is a difference, you can give
113 guidance, but you can't say you need to build this to X, Y and Z

Charles: I am sorry but they have told me to do that. I have to have a system of disposable chemicals or something. I have to have a certain system in my business to prevent pollution. We have to bund oil tanks, you know simple things. But they do actually insists upon ... you know this latest thing upon the discharge of chemicals was an Environment Agency thing. So they do have powers to regulate on systems. [pause] I mean here on number 3, the issue says that the Agency can regulate issues around a major borehole

Cathy: Maybe I not explaining myself... the difference between the powers that we have to regulate and to say that you have a consent that you have to meet, and that is within an EC Directive that you have to meet those certain levels. To advise someone on how to do that, and to tell someone how to do it is the difference between what we do do, and what we don't do

Charles: Sorry, but you have got that wrong because I have had a directive from you saying that it is these activities that are.....

David: I think that the Agency are backing down from that position now

Charles: This came out in April 1999, it is a new regulation

[silence]

Simon: I think that we should be wary of getting bogged down in the specifics of certain issues. While I am aware that theses are very real issues, we need to move the discussion on.

This section of transcript is different from that of the *Land and Life* project because individual participants within the process now have a direct voice to the policy-making body involved, in this case the Environment Agency. Nonetheless, claims making within the process follow similar actor world relations. The session begins with Charles articulating Agency responsibilities in terms of norms. For him the Agency have a duty to protect the environment from wastewater and “should be monitoring these systems”[92]. In response, Cathy attempts to place the Agency's work within a broader administrative and policy framework and as such “it is not up to the Agency to tell industry how they are going to do that [reduce industrial discharge]” [98].

Charles [101] re-emphasises the claim that the Agency should take a lead on this issue, that their function is protect the environment and they should active seeking to undertake that responsibility rather than merely reacting to pollution incidents. Roger's response is noteworthy "the Agency only has their regulations and guidance to go by". Here, as in the last chapter, the Agency is rather static in its response. There seems to be an institutional inability culturally to negotiate wider environmental concerns.

Cathy then attempts to clarify the Agency's duties and promote understanding of the institutions position [108-111]; she describes the Agency both in terms of states of affairs ("a regulatory body") and in terms of subjective impression of working ("it is very difficult for the Agency to give advice"). Roger communicatively reinforces Cathy claims at line 113: "I understand what Cathy is saying". Normatively, through the expression of the law, they are constrained as a regulator.

There is a thus clear relation here concerning what the Agency accepts as a legitimate argument in this matter. It does not relate to a sense of duty, but rather to the letter of the law, and how through different regulations such responsibilities are determined. As such, for Charles to challenge the legitimacy of their claim, he has to attempt to articulate his reasoning through a technical discourse and demonstrate irregularities in the Agency's regulatory function.

This however is communicatively difficult. His hesitancy [line 116-122] and inability to grasp the necessary language to make this claim (for instance his overuse of the word "thing") is symptomatic of his attempt to find the necessary language to express these claims. However, this is interpreted by the Agency as a misunderstanding of their position. As such, Cathy again attempts communicatively to clarify the Agency's role [124-128]. However, Charles is not having trouble in understanding but, rather, is more challenging the legitimacy of the Agency's response. At line 130 he is more direct. "Sorry, but you have got that wrong because I have had a directive from you saying that

it is activities that are.....". Charles thus directly challenges the truth of the objective claims articulated by Cathy and David in terms of the Agency's remit.

David's comment [133] then concedes the point for the first time in the passage. The Agency may indeed have attempted to advise Charles. The line "I think that the Agency are backing down from that position now" is revealing: it confirms the Agency were once in such a position (i.e. that what Charles claims were once true). However, also claims that this is no longer the Agency's stance on such matters. Charles's final comment is thus incisive at this point; he suggests that such advice came out in "April 1999" and as such "it is a new regulation". There is a short silence after this claim, and the facilitator uses this space to progress the group, realising there to be a fundamental difference of opinion.

The above section is complicated, and illustrates a variety of power relations between participants. In the main, the group session seems strongly to favour the discourse of the two Agency representatives. It should be recalled that these neither of these representatives were the Agency's stakeholder within the process and were attending the group in a purely advisory role. Communicatively they adopt a powerful role, using the remit of the Agency to regulate contributions to the debate through a technical discourse.

This places Charles at a disadvantage, reflected by his difficulty in attempts to express his claims at lines 116-122. The fact that Charles still manages successfully to challenge the validity of the Agency's claims highlights the primacy of the force of better argument within direct communication. Unlike the *Land and Life* project, and there are no tiers of bureaucracy between stakeholder and decision-maker. As such, the redemption of various actor world claims is immediate. The communicative process thus rationally exposes and redefines the assertions and context of debate. Unfortunately, the broader power of the institution prevailed on this issue and subsequently as no wording could be agreed between decision-maker and stakeholder, the issue never made into the LEAP document.

More broadly, both of the transcripts highlight the problem of administrative culture and communication. The policy-making bodies can be seen as communicatively remote from the participants. In the *Land and Life* illustration, such remoteness was spatial: county councillors were removed from the local, only to be seen at election time. Mechanisms for communicating with them thus were not proximate and discursive, but were either textual (the writing of complaints) or rather had to be interpreted through other representatives and further layers of bureaucracy (telephone conversations). In the SDA process, there was direct access to the regulatory body. However, in this example, the Agency was remote from participants concerns in terms of actor-world relations. Contributions to discourse were regulated through asymmetrical power relations: the policy-maker endowed certain discourses with more authority and hence promoted such understandings as a means to control the policy document.

Indeed, it was here that a problem is identified in both studies: both the decision-making authorities were seen to be inflexibly interpreting their bureaucratic functions and hence perpetuating an unresponsive culture. Both Trevor in the *Land and Life* study and Charles in the LEAP example stressed the idea of duty; of a responsibility to protect the natural world above institutional statutory functions. As the definition of such rights and responsibilities defined through the law is placed outside communicative redemption, so such institutions in their interpretation of this framework lack social legitimation. Indeed it is the interpretation of function that is at stake here. It is the elbow-room; the institutional spaces where such concerns can be played out that participants found wanting (see also Murray's comment in the last chapter p. 240).

7.3.0. Consensus, understanding and identity.

Decision-making processes by their very nature require some kind closure; policy recommendations must be made at the end of the day and there is need for a working consensus. However, as discussed in chapters four and five, the problem in modern society is that, due to the very differentiation of knowledge into different cultural spheres, values are increasingly plural. As such, the hopes for true consensus are limited.

As mentioned, for Habermas consensus is limited to moral as opposed to ethical questions wherein “the moral point of view throws a sharp, but narrow, spotlight that picks out from the mass of evaluative questions practical conflicts that can be resolved by appeal to a generalisable interest; in other words questions of justice” (Habermas 1993 p. 151). Habermas’s distinction between the good and the just has been conflated by critics who have mistakenly accused him of articulating a false consensus upon questions of politics. For Habermas, identity-constitutive values and ideals are not obligatory in the same way as moral norms.

In the first part of this section (i), this view of consensus is explored as a substantive evaluative tool. Here a Habermasian perspective is augmented not to focus on consensus as a means of expressing a universal will, but rather through examining and unmasking claims that claim to be for the general interest. As mentioned, Fairclough (1989 p. 73-75) distinguishes an ‘inculcation’ mechanism of ‘consensus’ that conceals ideology and relations of power from the Habermasian communicative mechanism of rational debate. This use of power will be explicitly explored in the first transcript.

In the second part of the section (ii), participants’ own ideas of consensus will be examined. Here consensus is not so much consensual policy outcomes, but rather maintaining common definitions of a subject. Such understandings were, for some participants, the most promising role for deliberative and collaborative processes.

These reflections lead to the third part of this section (iii), and how identities may be forged in such participatory processes through discourses of autonomy and solidarity. It is specifically in relation to others that individuals reinforce or adjust their own expectations. Indeed, communicative action aims to express how both processes of socialisation and individuation are forged through interaction, rather than attempts to project a single lifeworld (see Warren 1995). A final transcript explores these ideas further.

i) The following transcript, taken from the second workshop of the SDA process, involves a debate about the content and context of new LEAP issues (group 3). This passage will be used to illustrate consensus as a substantive evaluative tool. The conversation centres on the complicated issue of habitat replacement and the role of the LEAP in recreating freshwater habitats. Specifically, the debate concerns whether or not habitat replacement is an issue that should be addressed by a LEAP. Such action would require administrative and management co-ordination with different regional Agency actors and a broader range of partners in the Norfolk area.

There are two Agency advisors involved in the discussion, Jane a LEAP officer and Martin, a flood defence engineer. The stakeholders are Nicky, a conservation officer for an internal drainage board; Richard, a representative from a wildlife trust; and Mary, a county councillor. I was the facilitator of the group. The section begins with the EA staff member Jane attempting to explain the role of the LEAP and how new issue must fall within the LEAP remit.

- 1458
1459 Jane: I will try to give you an example of issues that we have under Habitats....
1460 we have river and floodplain habitats are degraded, and under that we are
1461 actually talking about specifics under that title to the actual LEAP area. We also
1462 have aquatic habitats need to be restored or improved to benefit fish stocks and
1463 other associated wildlife¹.
1464
1465 Darren: Could we use this [new issue] as an appendix to those specific issues?
1466
1467 Nicky: This is quite different though... That refers to riparian, rather than large
1468 tracts of reed bed. I think this is something that should be addressed under the
1469 LEAP, I mean you have a responsibility to this under the Habitats Directive.
1470
1471 Martin: What we should be doing is saying there... is there a problem in a way,
1472 is there something that needs to be addressed; not something global, but... is
1473 there something here that we have identified that specifically needs some action,
1474 and therefore specifically needs to go in to ensure some action is carried out?
1475 Um, I don't think that we can sort of create things out of nothing and then go
1476 and look for the problems. I have got a feeling that we are in danger of doing
1477 that.

¹ For context see Table 20, pp. 220-221.

1478
1479 Richard: Yeah... I see your point, the trouble is that, I think it is on the whole
1480 issue of habitat loss on the coast has been... it is a real issue, we are facing it...
1481
1482 Martin: Quite. But we have not got it specifically here. If we have, fine. If we
1483 have not then let us not...
1484
1485 Darren: If you can perhaps narrow that down to a particular case within the
1486 LEAP area....
1487
1488 Martin: It is a bit like saying... you know as I am a flood defence engineer I will
1489 give you a flood defence analogy, that there are places where flood defence are
1490 not up to standard. So you go out looking at all the flood defences to see if they
1491 are up to standard when basically you know that they are OK. And I have just
1492 got a feeling that we might be looking for something that does not exist
1493
1494 Jane: Yeah, you are doing it the wrong way around.
1495
1496 Richard: I think it is a different... well I suppose what I am looking for is for
1497 you to lay down a marker that this is an issue.
1498
1499 Jane: On coastal habitats?
1500
1501 Richard: I am talking about coastal freshwater habitats..... I mean we have this
1502 whole.... chance...
1503
1504 Jane: Coastal freshwater habitats are degraded... I mean we have seen a decline
1505 over the past five years...
1506
1507 Richard: I am not so much talking about the loss, though that is an obvious
1508 issue. I am talking about the replacement of those... the means by which they
1509 will be replaced.
1510
1511 Jane: So they need to be regenerated?
1512
1513 Richard: Sorry?
1514
1515 Jane: They need to be regenerated?
1516
1517 Richard: Effectively yes.
1518
1519 Mary: How? Regenerate land as well, or freshwater?
1520
1521 Richard: Well, I mean look at what the RSPB are doing at Lakenheath, and that
1522 is partly being created in terms of what has been lost...

1523 Darren: I mean is there no way of tying these in with some of the issues on
 1524 flood defence or not? In the sense that there are [issues] 11 to 15 on this list...
 1525 there are a number of issues specifically concerning flood defence. I mean, I can
 1526 see this being of concern when considering such issues of whether to defend or
 1527 retreat etc. but I think that the role of the LEAP is far more a kind of specific
 1528 thing, when these are more general concerns of nature conservation per se,
 1529 rather than I know that, perhaps it is not quite as black and white as that
 1530

1531 Richard: I think that part of the problem is that whenever you sort of have
 1532 discussions about shoreline management, the LEAPs are often seen as solving
 1533 problems when you talk about other issues. You know... "this issue can be
 1534 tackled in a LEAP". And I know..., and I will give you an example, you know
 1535 we have been talking about water.
 1536

1537 Darren: Yes
 1538

1539 Richard: Water availability ... it is often said in planning document that LEAPs
 1540 can address this issue. And it is through this idea of communicating locally. And
 1541 also, I think that when you talk about shoreline management plans, and habitat
 1542 replacement, the fallback is always LEAPs can address this issue. And I know
 1543 that we are not talking at this time about a specific loss that you can add up and
 1544 say this is what we need to replace. But there is a general trend towards the idea
 1545 that you need to replace losses...
 1546

1547 Darren: Could we maybe combine these two, so that review of strategy includes
 1548 the issue of Habitat replacement... would that be OK?
 1549

1550 Richard: Yes...
 1551

1552 Darren: [laughs] Phew.... well I guess we got there in the end....
 1553

1554 [laughter]
 1555

1556 Mary: Yes well done.

The section centres on the understanding of the concept of habitat replacement within the context of the LEAP planing process. The Environment Agency advisors are attempting to focus the discussion on concrete specific examples. Thus the section begins with Jane communicatively explaining how the issue of habitats have been articulated so far through the document. The facilitator is attempting to integrate these concerns into existing LEAP issues [1465], being very conscious of time and attempting to complete the session

to schedule. So far the group has been talking for some twenty minutes and no single issue has been agreed.

However, the stakeholders find both the Agency's framework and the facilitator's solutions limiting. Thus Nicky suggests that attempting to incorporate the issue in such a manner is unsatisfactory. For her, such claims miss an objective point; that the replacement of habitats refers to marshland rather than riparian areas. Nicky thus grounds the validity of her claim through an appeal to theoretical discourse [1465-6]. She then shifts the emphasis to a norm-guided appeal for the inclusion of the issue: the Agency should address this issue as they have a responsibility under the Habitats Directive [1466-7].

Martin then appeals to a combination of objective and subjective reasoning in order to convince the group [1470-1475]. First, he alludes to the need for a geographical specificity within issues. Then his language is more active and emotive; and he alludes to the legitimacy of the restoration process as a phantom issue. The group is thus in danger of "creating things out of nothing". Richard, who first raised the issue some ten minutes ago, then replies to these statements [1477-1488]. Though emphasising with such Martin's perspective, he challenges the objective validity of the claim; for Richard "it is a real issue... we are facing it".

In response, Martin then refines his claims, making them geographically specific. He goes on to illustrate his argument through the use of analogy emphasising his position of expertise ("I am a flood defence engineer") and uses this authority to add weight to his concept of a "real issue". Jane then affirms Martin's arguments.

There are then a series of brief interchanges between Richard and Jane [1494-1514]. Jane is constantly striving for Richard to be specific. Richard's argument is subtle; it attempts to express an opportunity for the Agency to take a lead on habitat replacement issues. Such a concept though is hard to verbalise; the issue of habitat replacement does not

exist immediately in the LEAP area. For Richard, attempting to express such concepts as future spaces in future times, within the specifics of a management issues list, is communicatively difficult. In this passage his language is broken and his claims are left unfinished: “I am talking about freshwater habitats... I mean we have this whole.... chance.....”. What is not said in this exchange is as important as what is said.

As facilitator, I attempted to adapt these concerns into the policy document, through discussing flood defence. However, my distinction concerning the difference between specific issues and general principles of conservation was perhaps overly rigid and so I concede the argument “is not quite as black and white as that” [1526-1527].

The final section concerns the development of a sophisticated argument by Richard [1521-1541]. He describes the LEAP as a communicative vehicle through which concerns such as habitat recreation may be articulated. Further, he explores the sincerity of claims previously made about the LEAP; that there was a dramaturgical intention for the LEAP to act as a problem solving mechanism, specifically due to its emphasis upon local communication [1536-1539]. I then attempt to incorporate these concerns into a strategic review [1543-1544]. Richard finally agrees.

It is here that the notion of closure is critical. Though eventually a form of consensus is obtained, through the fact that Richard agrees that the issue may be placed under a review of strategy, it is likely that this is inculcate rather than communicative consensus. The time constraints for the group, and the pressure from both the Agency staff and myself to move on, quite likely had a bearing upon issue closure.

Indeed, as mentioned before, the process endows certain discourses with more power than others: particularly administrative, technocentric and analytic. The concept of habitat replacement does not readily fit into those categories. Moreover, the method brings far more to the fore the role of the facilitator, due to the need for closure in the task orientated structure of the sessions. Indeed, the my lighthearted comments at the end of

the section [1555] were used to diffuse not only to political differences in the group but also my own unease in closing the issue in such a matter.

The passage illustrates a variety of claims and communicative understandings that actors use to make sense of a situation. Essentially, discussion concerns the validity of the issue of habitat replacement and its role within a LEAP policy document. Though much of the underlying assumptions are more technical than within the *Land and Life* Project, for instance it is assumed that all participants broadly understand responsibilities under the Habitats Directive, the definitions and negotiation of concepts once more appeal to a variety of actor-world relations. As such, Nicky suggests responsibilities and duties are important for environmental management. Once more, Richard feels that the Agency should act as a leader on this issue, rather than being purely dictated by an exact application of the letter of the law. Expertise is used both socially to legitimate authority on given subjects (such as Martin's flood defence analogies) and procedurally as a regulatory space. Within such a culturally and communicatively complex passage, it is unsurprising that with the variety of claims making processes articulated, true consensus thus remained illusive. Rather consensus is achieved through the power of the facilitator. My discourse was fundamentally tied to the method, was sanctioned by the Agency, and these relations were culturally translated through a process. Though the rationalisation processes of debate led to better constructions of such concepts as habitat replacement, and communicative vehicles, it was not sufficient to forge a consensual outcome.

ii) The second idea of consensus was articulated through both case studies and centres on the idea of categories of understanding. It was explicitly explored in the LEAP process. In the following session the building of consensus through deliberative processes was specifically discussed within one of the groups as a possible criterion through which environmental issues could be evaluated. Interestingly, the participants develop a communicative notion of consensus.

The session takes place in the second workshop (group four). There are a number of stakeholders involved in the discussion; Richard an environmental NGO member, Nicky a representative from an internal drainage board and Ted from a waste minimisation industry. Janet was the advisor from the Environment Agency. The facilitators of the session were Kevin and Dan.

2034 Kevin: Let's go back to Richard's criterion of communication between organisations
2035
2036 Richard: Would it improve...? what you are looking for at the end of the day is an
2037 agreement between the Agency and other organisations about views of the world
2038
2039 Kevin: So it is building consensus?
2040
2041 Richard: It is not consensus *per se*, but rather those processes that promote improved
2042 understanding?
2043
2044 Dan: Advance understanding?
2045
2046 Richard: It is not a question of everyone understanding what the Agency's point of
2047 view is. it is more a case of .. actually a coming together of opinions.
2048
2049 Nicky: We could use facilitate, but I really don't like it
2050
2051 Richard: Oh no... [laughter]
2052
2053 Dan: Engender? Mutual understanding?
2054
2055 Richard: Yes...well it is not, and this is more than semantics, but it is not just a
2056 question of people understanding the Agency's point of view... it is more about
2057 organisations coming together and agreeing... or just having a better understanding of
2058 what a problem is. Or what an issue is.
2059
2060 Janet: You are not actually saying that it is the Agency's response...?
2061
2062 Richard: Um... taking the problem we have at the moment with water resources. The
2063 Agency has a view and other people have a view. And they don't trust the Agency. And
2064 I presume that the Agency thinks that people don't understand the issue as they have
2065 got the data. What we want is everyone to come together, examine the information,
2066 and come out with an all round better understanding. Hopefully a single understanding
2067 of what... if there are problems, what those problems are.
2068
2069

2070 Kevin: But Ted has also got a suggestion here “to what extent would tackling this issue
 2071 inter-link with the environmental priorities of other organisations” ... so it is kind of
 2072 that thing as well... so would it be easier to address it through environmental priorities?
 2073
 2074 Ted: Well...but it is not just environmental is it? It is different organisation's
 2075 constructions of, and understandings of, a problem or an issue. And it is about
 2076 ensuring.... we understand what other peoples points of view are, it seems to me...
 2077
 2078 Richard: It is improving mutual understanding and knowledge I suppose
 2079

This section deals more explicitly with the various contexts and interpretations of the ideas of consensus within decision-making. The session starts with Kevin, one of the facilitators, asking the group for their ideas on the development of a criterion concerning communication. Richard's response to this at line 2036 is interesting. It develops a specifically modern view of knowledge and actor world relations: a plurality of opinion that should aim to coincide. Notably, it is the facilitator who explicitly brings up the theme of consensus as a possible criterion (line 2039). Richard challenges this assertion: for him it is not so much a single definition of a situation that is important (i.e. the closure needed for consensus) but rather a form of communicative understanding (line 2041). The reasons for this come more to the fore at lines 2046 where he specifies that the Agency in particular should not expect a consensus around a point of view. It is likely that Richard is well aware of the power relations being articulated through the process and the fact that the Agency are first among equals in terms of stakeholder representation. As such, to expect views to coincide in a process, may mean in practice the Agency projecting their view as a common will. And those who disagree with this view are believed to have misinterpreted the situation (for instance, as with the earlier debate concerning Charles and wastewater pollution).

The observations are borne out by Richard's comments at lines 2055-2058. Here understanding, or coming to a legitimate definition of a situation is perhaps the most promising way to augment these processes [line 2058]. In lines 2062-2067, Richard further emphasises his meaning through a water resources example: “the Agency have a

view, other people have a view, and they don't trust the Agency. And I presume that the Agency thinks that people don't understand the issue as they have got the data. What we want is everyone to come together, examine the information, and come out with an all round better understanding. Hopefully a single understanding of what... if there are problems, what those problems are" (my emphasis). Here Richard allows for multiple political views to be ascribed to a single situation. The provision of information and understanding will not, *per se*, lead to a single definition of how to proceed with the problem. This is thus not an information provision concern but, more telling, an issue of the circulation of meanings and social reproduction towards the establishment of trust.

As such, what Richard highlights is that a deficit model of understanding, wherein improved knowledge is thought to lead to the public acceptance of particular (technocentric) interpretations of (environmental) problems, needs to be problematised (see Irwin 1995). Rather he invokes a model of understanding much like Kohlberg's (1981) decentred understanding of the world, where interaction is fundamental to comprehension. As will be recalled (see 4.2.3.), through reflexively differentiating ones own worldview from the worldview of a community, it is possible through language to grasp the complex structure of life perspectives to make rational decisions in the modern world (see Habermas 1990a).

As Ted thus notes at line 2075 "it is different organisation's constructions of, and understandings of, a problem or an issue" that is the crux of the matter. The problem often within environmental management is that expert knowledge embodies epistemic and structural commitments about agency, control and prediction, and too social assumptions concerning behavior and values. In this way it may denigrate knowledge (for instance lay knowledge) that does not coincide with such a perspective (see Wynne 1996).

Thus, rather than attempting to view environmental management as a discreet set of issues to be overcome through the application of either science, or increased information,

it should be viewed as a dynamic social process. Consensus in this light, specifically upon issues of politics, should not appeal solely towards ends but more towards allowing agreement upon what counts to be rationally motivated to undertake an action. What the passage illustrates is that perhaps the most that can be hoped for in such decisions involving different perspectives is an understanding of definitions and evaluations of the problem. Solutions are unlikely to gain unanimous consensus in this light, given the different social and cultural differences involved. However, unanimity may be restored on a decision if at least, to some extent, the stakeholder feel that the process has adequately dealt with their concerns.

Furthermore, this broader role of process permits different identities and commitments to be forged through participation: and this is a fundamental role of such techniques in the reproduction of social life. In this way, participation develops individuals' capacities for practical reasoning: it allows us more clearly to see the other point of view (see Habermas 1975). These broader aspects of participation will be explored in more detail next.

iii) In the final transcript in this section, I want to illustrate that consensus is not necessarily the only function of participatory processes: rather questions of identity, difference and social reproduction play an all-important part in communication. In this transcript, which is taken from group 5 of the Hunstanton meetings of *Land and Life*, a variety of claims concerning how the area has changed in recent times are discussed. Key within this are the roles and identities of incomers and how the community should adapt to such change. While there are fundamental political differences within these discussions, the transcript demonstrates the social role of communication in reproducing different aspects of the lifeworld. The conversation concerns a debate between Gerald, a born and bred local and retired farmer, and Ryan, a student who has just finished college. Now in his early twenties his family have lived in the area for the past six years. The facilitator of the group is Judy.

112 Gerald: I think one has to emphasise the point because there are older people in
113 Thornham at the moment and they often talk to me and they tell me what worries them
114 and some of their feelings. And, it is something that will only finally settle down over
115 quite a long period. They do feel ousted. I could raise an army if I went around some of
116 the farm labourers just around where I live at Choseley. I could raise an army in about
117 five seconds of people who are so upset with the house prices going right up, so that
118 they...all they can do is to leave the area..

119
120 Judy: This is the local...

121
122 Gerald: It is a hell of a problem, and you can't bring... have any discussion like this
123 without saying well, you know, you have only just come have you? And so you want
124 street lighting, do you? And you want a public drain, do you? And you want this and
125 that, and everything else and burglar alarms, and you generally smother the place with
126 the concrete block type urban mind of the incomer

127
128 Judy: Right.... What makes the area.. I mean Ryan you are a lot, a lot ... bit younger
129 than some of the people here, so it would be interesting to hear what make the area
130 special for you...

131
132 Ryan: Well it is special because basically the wide open spaces. I mean, I have only
133 been here for about 6 years

134
135 Judy: Definitely an incomer [laughter]

136
137 Ryan: Yes. And I came from a much busier more crowded place. And it is great here. I
138 really do like the population as it is, and, just the space. But in some ways, I do
139 disagree with, is it Gerald there, because... I think that it is great that we have the
140, we have the old traditions around here. But in some ways we can't leave it as it is.
141 Things are going forward, and ... you were saying about farm labourers, and problems
142 with house prices, well there is a lot fewer people have to work on the farms now,
143 which is for many people might be a problem, but um.. the way people are living
144 around here is changing. And we can't say no we don't want it. So house prices I think
145 are just going to have to go up. And the way that people live around here is going to
146 change, there is no way we can stop it

147
148 Gerald: I was not arguing about...

149
150 Ryan: No?

151
152 Gerald: I simply said that it is a basic problem....

153
154 Ryan: Yeah, but sometimes change is not a bad thing

155

- 156 Gerald: Well it is not a problem for you so much, it is a problem for the people who
 157 have been here some time.
 158
 159 Ryan: For many I guess it is.

The arguments articulated through this section of transcript are powerful, particularly considering this discussion develops at the beginning of the group session. Gerald begins by articulating a sense of change, and describes how modernity is suffocating a traditional way of life. For him, this has particularly effected farming communities in the area. As a retired farmer (see Appendix II), Gerald firmly identifies himself with this community. For him, modernity is disembedding: people “feel ousted” from ways of life that have been keenly interwoven into the social fabric of the area [115]. There is anger in his first statement, for instance, concerning “raising an army” [116].

At line 120 the facilitator Judy attempts to interject, but Gerald continues his description with more force. “It is a hell of a problem”. In this passage, Gerald develops his identity from that of farm worker to that of local. He specifically contrasts the local with that of the urban other. A series of points concerning change (housing – work - street lighting - drainage - burglar alarms) are emphasised. The final line “generally smother the place with the concrete block type urban mind of the incomer” [869-870] suggests a whole different means, or set of cultural horizons, through which to assess the way in which life is lived. Incomers are an annihilating force, projecting different notions of place onto rural life². Furthermore, the passage is personalised. Gerald emphasis the term ‘you’ as other, as the incomer. It is possible that this conversation may have been rehearsed many times before.

The facilitator [128] is quite struck with the force of Gerald’s description, particularly as it was in response to the broader question of what makes the area special. In an attempt to diffuse the situation she moves the conversation onto Ryan.

² Parallels may be drawn here in the distinctions between mimesis and projection developed in chapter 3 - see Adorno and Horkheimer (1997).

Ryan is a newcomer and he is young. He is the other of Gerald. He expresses a different set of values for the area; an aesthetic and subjective enjoyment for the wide-open spaces of Norfolk, though again he contrasts this freedom with the “crowded places” of the city. However while valuing the area and the “old traditions around here” [line 140], he too realises that places can not be eternal and immutable. Materially, socially, culturally things have moved on. “Fewer people work on farms” and “the way that people are living is changing” [line 143]. The values they bring and the social and economic circumstance that effect communities, these are all forces that individuals have little control over.

The discussion then moves to a series of quick interchanges between Gerald and Ryan [lines 148-159]. Gerald clarifies that he did not expect areas to remain still and unchanging: rather he suggests that change in society is a basic problem [152]. Ryan then challenges the validity of this normative claim: change is not necessarily a bad thing. Gerald specifies his argument at line 157: for some, particularly locals, this change can be a huge problem. Finally, Ryan exhibits solidarity with Gerald. What is notable is that the meanings and reproduction of both of their discourses have been developed through the discussion.

This section of transcript explicitly deals with questions of identity and how social life is reproduced through acts of communication. The main argument revolves around the problem of the maintenance of tradition in the face of the ubiquitous consequences of modern life. It concerns how politically communities might respond to such issues and the efficacy of any resistance.

Through his description of tradition, Gerald articulates a cultural stock of values through which he draws his identity, particularly in difference to the urban other. The process is thus important in allowing participants to develop and express such identity: to affirm beliefs. However, the critical force of the process comes to the fore with Ryan. He is able to expose the unquestioned legitimacy of tradition may be just as problematic as the changes brought by incomers. An area not responding to change will not move on: it will

cease to grow. He holds up to scrutiny the definitions and boundedness of such social memberships. He questions the role of farm labour within the area in maintaining such tradition.

However the rationalisation of the process is at best partial. There are two possible interpretations concerning the end of the conversation. On the one hand, the tacit agreement forged may be through the fact that Ryan was able to challenge and expose Gerald's position. Thus through debate, the concept of tradition is reproduced and rationally legitimated. In this sense, though Ryan and Gerald will never agree on the fundamentals of this argument, they can move their redefine positions of difference through reflection (see Habermas 1987a pp. 140-144).

On the other hand, it could be the social dynamics of the group that made Gerald back down in his claims. The session had only just began and the force of Gerald's first intervention was powerful. He may well have felt slightly uncomfortable within such a public setting. In short, it might be that social and relational forces are important in creating spaces of emergence. In this case the context of the local holds sway, rather than the force of better argument (for broader discussion see Warren 1995).

7.4.0. Institutional valuation of nature: discussions of cost-benefit analysis and science.

Different institutional approaches for valuing the natural world and their role within policy making were discussed in both the case studies. There were two main contexts in which these discussions emerged: first, the extent to which monetary appraisal could capture values for the environment; second, how science operates in the face of uncertainty and how it positions its role within broader value contexts. In this section, three transcripts will be explored. The first from the LEAPs process specifically discusses the idea of cost-benefit appraisal for environmental valuation. The second from *Land and Life* provides a broader context to economics and science within debates concerning

shoreline management. The final transcript, again from LEAPs, explores a complex set of relationships between science, institutions and environmental values.

i) As discussed in chapter 6, the second LEAP workshop involved the development of criteria through which the LEAP could be appraised. Within group 4, a criterion centred on the issue of cost-effectiveness when considering the appraisal of LEAP issues. In what follows, the group debates the relevance and efficacy of such an approach to policy formation. There are a number of different participants involved: Ted is a representative from the NFU, Adam is a member of a fishing interest group, Nicky represents an internal drainage board, Richard is the member of a wildlife trust member. The Agency advisor in this group is Janet. The facilitator is Kevin.

594 Kevin: To what extent is tackling this issue cost effective? The value judgement is that
595 funds are limited. Are we happy with that; it is a straightforward cost issue? Do we
596 know what we mean by cost effective?

597 :
598 Ted: There is a question of how you measure it.... environmental benefits?

599
600 Adam: There is a government methodology to assess cost-benefit ratios

601
602 Janet: Are you saying environmental economics, that sort of thing? Or is it
603 straightforward allocation of funds?

604
605 Adam: I mean you have to look at it in light of the benefit that it is going to bring...
606 You try to look at it in terms of the benefit it is going to bring.

607
608 Janet: In which case for example, to which extent is tackling this issue cost-effective?
609 um... if you were looking at environmental economics it would be.... It is the whole
610 notion of putting a cost to a whole number of trees.....

611
612 Adam: yes.....

613
614 Janet: Which...

615
616 Adam: It's difficult.....

617
618 Janet: ...which may not ... if when you ask a number of people, what would they
619 imagine the worth of a river being, and all of the various habitats, and then you multiply

up the number of people going in a car from a city or whatever... So, this particular criteria, are we discussing something at the outset or at the end?

Adam: I don't really mind how you assess it, but it has got to be assessed in some way.

Kevin: OK, but the question is.... the question is "is it cost effective in terms of the use of existing resources that have been allocated to it?", or "is it cost effective in terms of the output?"

Janet: If the underlying judgement was value for money...

Nicky: Or the criterion says to what extent is tackling this issue value for money. Because it is the cost-effective phrase that makes it sound like according to standard cost-benefit analysis which is notorious for under-valuing the environment

[agreement]

Kevin: So the recommendation is that we change it to "to what extent would tackling this issue represent good value for money" and the value judgement would be.....?

Richard: We are looking to maximise benefit per pound spent... that is the value judgement. Resources are limited. That is why you want to maximise the benefit for the limited amount of money you have

Janet: But... if you actually take that angle... it actually means that... the next step is actually undervaluing the environment. If you immediately go down the financial route. I am trying to put a value to the environment as well... so you can't do that.

This discussion concerns the development of criteria through which to appraise LEAP options. The participants realise that there is a need to have some form of financial consideration for potential issues that might arise. During this discussion, a participant suggests a criterion on cost-effectiveness. From here, a discussion of cost-benefit analysis proceeds.

After introducing the criterion and value judgement, the facilitator Kevin asks the group to clarify what it means by cost-effectiveness [596]. Ted immediately highlights the key problem within the debate: how do you measure environmental benefits? [598]. The next two contributions from Adam and Janet demonstrate the technical competencies of the

stakeholder group. Adam is aware of “government” methodologies to assess cost-benefit ratios [600]. Janet further differentiates between the role of environmental economics and contrasts this with “straightforward” fund allocation.

The next few contributions from Adam and Janet are noteworthy. Their discourses shift from being objectivating in the first part of the transcript, describing the world of things (i.e. methods, funds, economics), to that subjective-expressive as they describe values. They attempt communicatively to express the notion of benefit to the natural world. Aside from the problems of naturalism inherent in such a communicative process, the framing is further hindered through attempts to express such benefit monetarily. As such, Adam thus is only able to repeat the terms “you need to look at the benefit it is going to bring” [605] without attempting to clarify what such benefit envisages. Janet [609-610] goes further: “it is the whole notion of putting a cost to a whole number of trees”.

The sentences that follow further highlight these problems of communicative expression. As Adam and Janet attempt to come to an understanding on this issue their sentences are broken [612-616]. It is likely that both intuitively know what the other is attempting to articulate, though neither seem to have the vocabulary to express this well. The monetary valuation procedure, they conclude, is “difficult”.

Janet then attempts articulate the problem in more detail. She highlights a number of points: how does one define the habitat in question? Who are the participants in such a process? Are hedonic or hypothetical methods to be use? In what context does the valuation procedure occur? Adam then articulates a common institutions stance in this light: “I don’t really mind how you assess it, but it has got to be assessed in some way” [623]. This subjective view maintains the need for economic rationality and analysis within decision-making. The facilitator then attempts to communicative clarify the meaning of the criterion in terms of “cost-effectiveness” [625] and with it Janet articulates the value judgement of “value for money” [629].

Nicky then enters the debate and iterates the point. This issue is not just a matter of semantics but rather a real difficulty in expressing environmental worth through cost-benefits mechanism. For her, the language of numbers is insufficient to grasp environmental values; there will always be a residual and in this light nature will be undervalued. There is some agreement to this view. Richard then attempts to use the language of money to grasp value: in terms of value per pound spent [641]. The section ends with Janet: if you go down the financial route the environment is undervalued. The last phrase [646] “I am trying to put a value to the environment as well... so you can’t do that” serves a dual meaning: First, personally the language of money is remote from her values. Second, there is the recognition that environmental values are her values.

ii) A second transcript from the *Land and Life* study also explores the application of cost-benefit methodologies, though this discussion appears within the context of shoreline management more generally and institutional expertise in particular. The issue under debate was an important one for the local community at Blakeney and concerned the protection of properties from the sea through the (expensive) re-profiling of a shingle bank and building of sea walls. The issue is further complicated by the fact that freshwater grazing marsh was also protected by the bank and this housed many internationally important wildlife sites for migrating birds. Indeed it was felt that the sight, nominated SPA and SAC under the European Habitats Directive, was held to be more important by conservationists than the local communities in the area. As one participant said in group 3 at Blakeney there was a feeling that “birds are sacrosanct... human beings aren’t”.

The situation was further complicated by a number of methodologies being developed in the area to ascertain values to aid in decision-making. This ranged from hedonic economic analysis for flood defence values (Mouchel and Partners 1996), to a contingent valuation of Cley wildlife reserve (Klein and Bateman 1997) to a more communicative process for shoreline management (see O’Riordan 1997; O’Riordan and Ward 1997).

The discussion thus arises in the Blakeney meetings (group 1) from this broader backdrop. Jim is a company executive, Frank is an architect and Dorothy is a secretary. All are in their forties and fifties and have lived in the area for about ten years. The final participant is Janet, who is retired and has lived in Blakeney all of her life. The facilitator is Carolyn.

1708 Jim: I think that you have to say that, er, you have to make a judgement, and the
1709 judgement should be made that you have got to protect Cley from the sea.

1710
1711 Frank: The judgement is made on strict, you know, economic value of the properties.
1712 Not lives, but properties. And they say that defences will cost so much and there are so
1713 many properties at risk, and because you have got Cley and Wiveton up the valley
1714 there, that builds up a big enough value to make it worth putting a new bank around.
1715 That is what they do.

1716
1717 Jim: Do you think that that is the right way of doing it?

1718
1719 Frank: It would be the right way of doing it if they could value things sensibly, but I
1720 don't think that people really know... the answers. But, certainly in the past, hard
1721 defences have proved, you know, fairly vulnerable. I think that managed retreat is far
1722 more likely to be feasible in future. But if you are one of the people who owns property
1723 low down at Salthouse, you must feel... very worried and very annoyed that people in
1724 Cley are now protected, and you are not. But there are just not enough of you at
1725 Salthouse to build up enough, you know, value, for the government to say, you know,
1726 we will pay for that little bit we will pay for that bit of bank. They must change their
1727 sums.

1728
1729 Jim: I thought that you were arguing that the freshwater marshes should be protected...

1730
1731 Frank: I am not arguing that they should, no. I wasn't at all. I was very annoyed when I
1732 found that the decision had already been made on economic valuation.

1733
1734 Carolyn: And part of the purpose of these sort of consultation exercises is, is, is to,
1735 embrace, perhaps, a wider range of views about how that process itself should be
1736 conducted... I think that that is really the hope from this kind of thing

1737
1738 Janet: But the shovelling up of the bank at Salthouse was absolutely stupid. Because
1739 once you shovelled up your shingle, it is all loose and sea goes swoosh through it and
1740 into the marshes. But when it is held down, the sea just pounds against it. It might
1741 come over the top some of the times...

1742

1743 Frank: I think that the natural form was a series, a series of ridges. And when the waves
 1744 came in the energy was taken, gradually when it came in. And it overtopped the whole
 1745 lot more than it does now. But to pile it all up to a height where it won't be
 1746 overtopped, means that the full energy of the wave come in and smashes against it, and
 1747 stirs it all up, and the longshore drift ... [inaudible] and so on. I can't... But I think that
 1748 the engineers recognise that.. since 1955 there has been a battle.
 1749

The passage above concerns how the institutional basis for making decisions concerning the protecting property from flooding. Jim starts the session with a normative claim: that in terms of judgments Cley should be protected from the sea. Frank, replies that it is not so much the judgment in itself that is the issue in shoreline planning but rather the means through which such judgements are made. There thus needs to be a legitimate basis for action. In making decisions “not on lives but properties” [1712], attention is focussed upon a material rather than communicative reproduction of the lifeworld (see Habermas 1987a pp. 141-142). There is no valid consensually approved translation scheme for knowledge claims: rather arbitrary decisions based on economics hold sway. As such, Cley and Wiveton as villages of some size are protected from the sea, whereas other smaller villages will not be so lucky. Jim [1719] then correctly frames such a debate in terms of the norm-guided model of the social world: “is it the right way of doing it?”

Frank's response concerns two main claims: first it questions whether such economic values are meaningful (“if they could value things sensibly.... they don't really know the answers”). Second he questions the whole notion of protecting properties from the sea in the long-term (“I think that managed retreat is likely to be far more feasible in the future”). These discourses highlight “they” and “the government” as a distinct body whose decision-making is not locally accountable or legitimate. The people of Salhouse are thus unfortunate in this respect: there are not enough houses in the area to build up an economic value to justify protection from the sea. The notion of procedural justice in making such a decision is however wanting. As such the government “must change its sums”.

Jim's statement at line 1729: "I thought that you were arguing that the freshwater marshes should be protected..." refers to the broader debate about coastal protection and the rights of wildlife in the decision-making process. While generally in the case studies people had very high regard for wildlife, this political issue was now so locally emotive³ that Frank quickly and unequivocally distances himself from such a stance - "I am not arguing that they should, no. I wasn't at all". He then refers to the Klein and Bateman study (1997) that projected an economic value of the site at line 1732, beyond the cost of a sea wall. It was felt that this study was used politically by some conservation groups in the area to argue for the preservation of the marshes, over and above the needs of community. Carolyn [1734] then notes that processes such as *Land and Life* are one way in which decisions could be made to be more accountable.

From here the conversation changes and discussion moves on more towards broader scientific management of the shingle bank itself. In an objectivating discourse, Janet enters the debate [1738] and notes the artificial re-profiling the bank has obviously effected its stability. Finally, Frank articulates the idea of natural form as being most able to cope with changes in the wave environment and wave energy. Both participants articulate these ideas through a combination of local knowledge and scientific descriptions. They do not dispute that the engineers in the area are aware of such problems: rather they highlight the action taken in light of such knowledge.

Within both the LEAP and the *Land and Life* studies, the discussion of CBA concerns the complexity of the notion of value and how this, in turn, might relate the environment. Both transcripts highlight the limitation of economic analysis to ascertain such values. In the former, the value of nature was not well captured through the language of money. In the latter, essentially political and moral questions were not well articulated through such method. Of importance, thus, are questions concerning how society and institutions should come to make choices in this light. Here the interplay between the systematic

³ The environmental implications of these debates are explored later in the chapter.

imperatives of the state and the needs of community are key. Mechanisms need to be found that are sympathetic to these different social processes.

Furthermore, in comparison to the LEAP discussion about CBA, the *Land and Life* participants seem to find the discussion of economic values easier to verbalise and critique. This may be because the discussion in the latter transcript focuses on social welfare rather than attempts to express value in terms of naturalism. However, questions of equity resound in both sessions. Cost-benefit analysis would seem disempower those most in need of a stronger voice. In the *Land and Life* study this was the local people marginalised by decision-makers. In the LEAPs process it was the rights of the natural world derived from our own values for nature.

iii) The final transcript in this section explores in more depth another institutional means of augmenting environmental policy and decisions: namely through the application of science. The discussion takes place in group 1 in the second SDA workshop. In this session, new issues to be considered within the LEAP were debated. Once more, discussion centres on the idea of coordinating issues across the LEAP: though this time in the context of flood defence and bank management. Here science was discussed in a variety of roles and contexts, particularly in terms of social and political relations. In particular, science was not articulated as a homogenous practice, but rather as a tool that applied for different environmental ends. Broader environmental ideals, such as the promotion of biodiversity, articulated through discourses of ecology do not seem to resonate well with the science of engineering. The participants are as follows: Nick is a representative from the anglers association, Murray is an RSPB official, and Janet is an advisor from the Environment Agency. The facilitator of the group is Dan.

1559 Dan: Do you feel that some sort of co-ordination of the plans is an issue should be
1560 there?

1561
1562 Nick: I think that... one side of the Agency works quite well on biodiversity, but if you
1563 go into the engineering side, they are not interested. They want nice straight channels,
1564 ... lets get rid of the water. They are not interested in biodiversity. They are the people

1559 we need to tackle and I think that we need some quite strong words to be quite honest.
 1560 You have tried to tackle them [to Murray], and I know that the fisheries have tried to
 1561 tackle them, and they have not got anywhere. And I presume other parts of the Agency
 1562 have tried to tackle them as well.

1563
 1564 Dan: OK, so you think that there is a co-ordinating role within the Agency...?

1565
 1566 Nick: They have got quite valid reasons why they do what they do, I quite believe it.
 1567 But...

1568
 1569 Janet: Should that particular issue be considered under the flood defence issue or under
 1570 wildlife? It is a flood defence issue of how the banks are managed. Now how the banks
 1571 are managed obviously needs to take the environment into account. But it is the type of
 1572 management. Now at the moment Anglian Region is actually addressing grass cutting,
 1573 particularly on flood embankments that obviously have a conservation input, but it is a
 1574 flood defence remit and a flood defence budget. So should we put it under the flood
 1575 defence umbrella or under a separate conservation section?

1576
 1577 Dan: Should this be a separate link with biodiversity....? so that biodiversity drive the
 1578 way that rivers are managed or.....?

1579
 1580 Nick: That is quite a good point, in actual fact... that is quite a good point. Should
 1581 biodiversity concerns shape the way that you manage a river, rather than...?

1582
 1583 Murray: It is difficult to know where the balance will be, because clearly if you think
 1584 back to Easter of last year then the driving concern would have to be the ability to
 1585 defend property from flood. And it is therefore back to the idea of partnerships not only
 1586 between different interests within the Agency, but different interests beyond the Agency
 1587 as well.

1588

The segment begins with Dan the facilitator asking the group if they feel the co-ordination of issues across the LEAP is a separate issue that needs to be addressed in its own right. Nick's response raises a number of questions concerning science and institutions [1562-1564]. His comment does not so much concern the efficacy of science *per se*, but rather how different application of science were informed through different ethical- political relations to the natural world and society. Nick articulates a view of the Agency where, on the one hand, ecologists promote a scientific worldview that is holistic and relational to the natural world and on the other, engineers adopt an instrumental and

domineering scientific practice. Again, this highlights the rather distinct role that ecology occupies within the natural sciences.

Nick then makes a subtle point concerning the communicative legitimacy of the practices. This suggests that the Agency not only needs to facilitate the views of broader stakeholders within its decision-making, but internally needs to increase communication between different structures within the organisation, each of which seem to be working to different rationales and lack co-ordination. Thus, though the engineers have “quite valid reasons why they do what they do” [1559] without opening up such reasoning to broader critical perspective, it will remain anathema to other institutional and stakeholder goals. The response from Janet, the Agency advisor, suggests that to some extent such communication is going on (“there is obviously a conservation input”) but that there are broader structural and financial hurdles to be overcome within the organisation for a totally holistic approach to management.

Indeed, rather than such a holistic approach, the facilitator advocates the notion that biodiversity could be the overriding principle governing the way rivers are managed. Nick reinforces this view and concurs that such sentiments are “a good point”. Murray’s response to this is telling [1576-1580]: such principles of duty would be fine until human life was endangered through flooding (a moral principle). This would prevail over a regard for biodiversity *per se*. As such, he reiterates the need for communicative arrangements to be made both inter-agency and more broadly in terms of the general public to facilitate the most equitable decisions for all parties.

There are a number of further issues raised in this segment of discussion. First, the communicative competence of the participants to discuss the technical details of environmental expertise was high, emphasising important distinctions between the role of stakeholders and publics within different policy processes for environmental decision-making. Second, the Environment Agency was not seen as a monolithic organisation carrying out a single function. Rather, the objectives for environmental management

within the institution were debated as different forms of social practice. As such, these roles needed to be mediated intra-Agency as well as with the external architecture of the organisation.

However, one key difference between such internal discussion was highlighted by Janet (the Agency advisor) later in the same meeting. This alludes to the trust in information informing different worldviews. Specifically, Janet says that she trusts institutional scientific advice irrespective of whether she has communicatively understood what was being said:

Janet: “Knowledge is actually very important and I think that the science is very important as well. I mean, going back to water resources, I can go up to water resources and ask them to explain something to me. And because I am not a hydro-geologist or whatever I would certainly not be able to repeat what they had said. But because I work in the organisation, I actually trust what they are saying despite the fact that I don’t actually understand the science of it” [my emphasis].

Such trust is not an artefact of rhetoric within this passage. Janet does not believe in these scientists because of the means in which they deliver information. Rather, it is a functional attribute of the institution itself. Through these institutional fields of trust, rational claims are now removed from discursive redemption or, more accurately, communicative clarification. These structural processes may thus be acting to reinforce an insular approach to how science is communicated by the institution. This becomes a crucial problem when such discourse leaves the confines of the organisation and need to be negotiated with other understandings. Without the institutional mediation of trust, the broader political acceptance of Agency actions for environmental protection is held up to scrutiny in such cases. By then relying on similar bureaucratic and expert discourses to articulate the claims, understanding is obscured and participants’ views are marginalised. Once more this highlights the primacy of communication and institutional reflexivity in deliberative policy processes.

7.5.0. *Subjectivity and environmental values*

A key idea argued throughout this thesis is that attempts to gain access to the goods of nature-in-itself suffer the pitfalls of naturalism. Rather, better purchase is given to the idea of environmental values by facilitating spaces through which human subjects are able to articulate a subjective-aesthetic appreciation of the natural world. Through these discourses a form of rights for the environment may be described. Subjective and expressive environmental values have a rational basis: Habermas's notion of a rationalised lifeworld opened up to us offers the potential that such values may be critiqued specifically within the parameters of modern consciousness. The task of a critical perspective upon such discourse is thus to show both the potential for rationality implicit in such values, and the shadows of tradition and power that are parasitic on these ideals.

Before a more specific analysis, it should be noted that generally the transcripts have illustrated that publics have a sophisticated grasp of the problems of co-ordinating (environmental) action within late modernity. They are fully aware of the difficulties in attempting to express a single and unified view of the environment in the light of various cultural and social worldviews, compounded by systematic imperatives. They neither suggest that the formation of policy is impossible or that it is easily obtained. Rather, these extracts from discussions have articulated that opinions need to be brought together and explored, where power relations are minimal, to give the best purchase to finding a common path that all may be able to accept. This thus leads to a democratic paradox for environmental outcomes: there is no guarantee that free and equal conversations will grant a stronger status to the non-human world (see Dobson 1993). Indeed the environment may be negotiable in such a context.

It should be noted that in both of the case studies people overwhelmingly had high regard for the natural environment. In the *Land and Life* project, participants described the Norfolk coastal area as “the nearest thing to heaven”, people often remarked on the sense of desolation and space in the area “the big skies”, “the solitude and innocence” and the

“primitive wilderness of the marshes”. Such values for the environment were often articulated in short statements while people reflected upon what they thought to be special about the area. Such claims were rarely challenged, and generally people felt that nature significantly improved their well-being. Some 80% of respondents to the survey listed wildlife as being very important to their quality of life. In the SDA process, many of the 46 criteria developed by the participants to appraise the LEAP can be seen as environmental values. As such, people have expressed the idea that “biodiversity should be maintained and promoted” or that “priority should be given to issues that protect environmental integrity and preserve it”.

Rather than concentrating on these utterances, what is of more significance to this study is exploring in detail how participants articulated values about the natural environment at the level of everyday practice; that is how peoples identities and preferences are constructed and reconstructed through a social discussion of nature. The social mediation of natural environmental values will thus be considered next through the description of three transcripts. A broader analysis of environmental values will be developed at the end of the section.

i) The first transcript explored is taken from the Hunstanton meeting in the *Land and Life* process (group 4). The session has just began and, as facilitator, I am going around the group, getting participants to introduce themselves through the question “what makes the area special for you?” The responses of one young father, Carl, are noteworthy in this light. He explains why he moved to the area and his sense of place and identity.

89 Darren: OK, thank you Sarah. OK, um, Carl. I wondered if you could tell us a little
90 about what makes the area special for you?

91
92 Carl: I’m Carl Thompson. I have lived in the area now, with a growing family, for 7
93 years, 7 coming on 8 years. Um. The particular interest for me, in the sense that er, first
94 of all is the attractiveness of the area that actually brought me here as an area in which I
95 wanted my young family to grow.

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97 Darren: Right

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Carl: In other words for me there was something about the area and the values that I could develop within my own children. And that is if you like, is a conjunction of um rural life, freedom, beauty umm, less emphasis on the materialistic side of life, and um, just a greater awareness of the heritage if you like.

Darren: Right

Carl: For me, what brings me here tonight is, that I think that there is such a richness and such a treasure in this coast, both in terms of not only the actual beauty that we actually see, but also in terms of its communities. Because I am very much a people's person. I very much like the idea of communities, people talking to each other, working and pulling together. So the whole process that you are engaged in here, as well as the content, the process as well as the content...

Darren: Yes

Carl: ...I find very enthralling. But it is also like how can the communities enjoy their wonderful location and at the same time benefit from it in a way that is alive? We live in Holme, my wife and I live in Holme, and so there is the whole thing about coastal protection, but also there is the question about the community itself by 50-60% now being holiday homes.

Darren: Yes, right

Carl: And that has obviously had a dramatic impact on a lot of things.

Darren: Right, OK thank you.

In response to my question, Carl begins the session by articulating the natural environment as being explicitly related to his own and his children's well-being. The discourse is one of subjective reflection: Carl has moved to the area for its aesthetic qualities and the values it promotes [92-95]. He emphasises the ontological relationship between place and self, through which the development of human values is intimately connected. For Carl, modern life increasingly seems to mean that society neglects the aesthetic. There is too much emphasis on a material, objectivating consciousness. In this sense, place is articulated as a means of resistance to the disembedding processes of modernity: a means of connecting with the past and promoting a sense of rootedness. Carl draws strong connections between valuing the environment and the development of

social values, and indeed has moved to the area explicitly to develop these other spheres of value within his family.

However, this sense of place is not just physical: it is communicative. Through communication traditions and knowledge are transferred and normative bonds are intersubjectively established. Such values and responsibilities he hopes to nurture in his children. His words at lines 99-102 are articulated as resistance against the material reproduction of social life in modernity. Communicative relevance is also expressed through the connections Carl draws between environment and community [106-110]. For Carl, the natural world is socialised; a place is vital because of the people living and working in the area. This “beauty” and “treasure” is expressed as a subjective enjoyment; community and nature come together in the making of place. Society and nature are interconnected; landscapes are lived, places have value because they are “alive”. Carl too notes the spaces for communicative action. His comments at lines 110-112 are again telling: both the procedural and the substantive aspects of the *Land and Life* process are for him “very enthralling”. These are the opportunities through which individuals are able to socially reproduce the lifeworld, and affirm their identities in terms of the broader collective community. Finally, Carl articulates some of the pressures of the modern world upon village life. He draws attention to increases in holiday homes as having “a dramatic impact”. This again highlights the connectedness he feels between local people and the natural world; if the heart of the community is abandoned so the place will die. In this way, Carl connects the importance of participatory processes not only communicative transference but for resisting colonisation of locality.

It should be noted that there is undoubtedly a dramaturgical or performative aspect to Carl’s claims. These statements came at the beginning of the session, and could well have been used to create persona to both to the group (Carl’s expresses identity with other locals) and to the facilitators (his enthrallment at the process). This withstanding, it is still interesting is how Carl creates his identity through the idea of place and particularly the natural environment. This sense of the natural seems to play a strong role in the lifeworld

- as an organic foundation, through which other sense of a social community were interwoven.

ii) I now want to turn attention to the LEAP process, where more specific values to the natural world were discussed in relation to different social constructs and concepts, particularly the idea of the naturalness. The transcript is taken from the third workshop, and concerns the application of criteria to issues. In group five, participants are discussing the criterion “to what extent would tackling this issue benefit non-human species and habitats?”. The issue concerned is the reintroduction of grayling back into the river Nar. There are a number of contributions made to the issue. Ted is a farming representative. Nicky is the conservation officer for an internal drainage board. Adam is from the Salmon and Trout Association. Richard is a wildlife trust officer. The Environment Agency advisor is Janet. The facilitator of the session is Dan.

786 Dan: So the issue of absence of grayling on the river Nar?

787

788 Ted: [this should be ranked] High

789

790 Nicky: there is only one species though... they have specifically asked for grayling

791

792 Dan: Would it benefit non-human species or habitats?

793

794 Adam: It is fine if you are a grayling

795

796 Richard: Well, it would be in competition with trout, so it gets quite complex

797

798 Adam: Yeah.. if you improve it for them.. I think in the big picture it is likely to be
799 low... in the big picture across the LEAP, to be quite honest.

800

801 Nicky: Were grayling ever found in this LEAP area anyway?

802

803 Janet: Well, the Agency has no record of them.. I think that you might have to go back
804 to the historical records.

805

806 Nicky: So you could be introducing a non-native species?

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808 Janet: Well it is native, it is just not that common... we would not do that though, it is
809 against Agency policy to introduce fish to rivers where they have not been.

The criterion “to what would tackling this issue benefit non-human species and habitats” is naturalistic and brings out a variety of complex social and ecological interrelations in the discussion. The reintroduction of the grayling into the river Nar would intuitively seem to promote the well-being of non-humans; as Adam notes [794] “it is fine if you are a grayling”. What is interesting about the transcript is the way that the conversation quickly moves from some attempt to capture the intrinsic flourishing (or otherwise) of a species in themselves, to one where more social constructs from science begin to take precedence in the conversation.

First discussed is the notion of trophic interactions and the relational nature of environmental integrity [796-799]. The participants note that the graylings’ well-being are fundamentally tied to that of other creatures within the system. The promotion of grayling stocks hence may adversely effect other species, such as trout, as food becomes more limiting. However, after pursuing a holistic appreciation of lotic habitats, Adam suggests that the overall impact of a single fish is likely to become relatively insignificant.

The conversation markedly changes when Nicky asks whether the grayling were found in the area traditionally [801]. This question again raises a number of important questions about the value placed upon the idea of naturalness, and particularly what historical baselines are considered to be worthy of recreating. While there are good scientific reasons for such knowledge, particularly concerning niche exploitation by introduced species, there too are complex social constructions of what might represent a natural environment. The fact that grayling would still have to be introduced by the Agency seems not to be so much the point as whether at some, presumably pre-anthropogenically disturbed time, the species existed. The Agency states that institutionally such actions would not be endorsed.

iii) A similar set of relationships between nature, society and communication were explored in one of the other *Land and Life* sessions. However, within this process a

more complicated set of social relations was articulated. The following transcript demonstrates how natural and social values may not always be commensurate, and explicitly explores the problems of mediating various claims to the environment. The session is taken from group 3 of the Blakeney meetings. Anne and Ray are retired and have lived locally for the past ten years. Richard, a potter, has lived in the area for a similar length of time. Mike has lived in Blakeney for forty years, and though retired is very active in the community. The facilitators are Jacquie and Nicole.

It should be remember from the earlier discussion that the debate concerning the protection of the Blakeney from the sea was an emotive one: particularly as there was a local perception that conservationists were more interested in saving the bittern than the local community. The session starts with Jacquie, asking the group about some of these concerns.

1569 Jacquie: OK... But in terms of the Norfolk Coast Project, am I picking up a sense that
1570 you believe the Norfolk Coast Project should actually do more to represent the local
1571 people interests than the wildlife interests and the conservation interests...? Is that
1572 what...?

1573
1574 Anne: Wildlife is important, but I think that people are more so..... or the communities
1575 are more so.

1576
1577 Richard: I was very pleased to see in capitals letter on Tim's presentation the words
1578 "local people". That is very, very important, because I think that over the last twenty
1579 years that has been forgotten. And certain things, doctrines if you like, that people have
1580 followed... they think about wildlife and not anyone else...

1581
1582 Ray: But surely what could be done is a compromise, because wildlife is mobile,
1583 basically. So if you lose, shall I say 500 acres of freshwater marshes, we have the
1584 possibility of recreating those somewhere else, so that the homes that are in Cley will be
1585 protected and the shoreline will move elsewhere. As long as there were nesting sites
1586 somewhere with 15 miles of here.....

1587
1588 Mike: Judging from the tenor of the management strategy the Norfolk Coast Project is
1589 aware that it is necessary to get sort of a ... consensus... between all of the various
1590 competing interests groups; the interests of all of the wildfowlers... the bird watchers
1591 and all of the rest of it. The residents and all of the local people. I will just tag on the
1592 end there. I think they are bearing that in mind. They are addressing that issue.

1593
 1594 Nicole: It is interesting that local people value the area because of its natural beauty,
 1595 and they recognise that, and at the same time they say that on some occasions it has to
 1596 come second.
 1597
 1598 [overtalking]
 1599
 1600 Richard: It is a fluid situation. It is a change. I think that local people also have to think
 1601 about the evolution these things. It has not been like this for the past 1000 years.
 1602 Things are changing all of the time. I think that it is a problem. A lot of people get it
 1603 out of perspective. And this is the difficulty; there are so many vested interests; English
 1604 Heritage, the Crown Agency. And all of these vested interests, all of these quangoes,
 1605 they all have got their finger in the pie.

This discussion centres upon the relationship between environmental and social values. For the participants, their rights and their views with regard to these issues need to be more adequately represented. After the introduction from the facilitator, concerning the representation of environmental value in relation to that of the local people, Anne replies “Wildlife is important, but I think that people are more so..... or the communities are more so” [1573-1574]. This is a powerful comment hinting at the role of morality (and the location of moral consideration) and too the needs of collective provision in such decision-making over the individual. Richard [1576-1579] then elaborates these sentiments, highlighting the needs of local people as “very, very important”. He describes the naturalistic values of certain wildlife concerns as “doctrine”, suggesting dogmatism: an irrational blindness to broader ways of value. Moreover, he hints that these views are culturally relative and that such means of value were not so pronounced twenty years ago (corresponding broadly to the rise of environmentalism).

Ray articulates a more contentious view of the rights for wildlife in environmental management. First he hints of “compromise”: and the bottom line of nature is negotiable (in the context of shoreline realignment). He then suggests that wildlife is essentially mobile and that nature can be recreated if necessary. For Ray, humans can simply fashion and transform the environment if need be to protect houses from loss. There is an

objectivating, instrumental view of the world articulated, through a teleological discourse. This is very different than the aesthetic-subjective views of Carl reviewed in the earlier transcript. For Ray, the ontological significance of faking the natural world is never mentioned nor do other participants challenge his claims.

The issue of better decisions thus becomes key in this section of the transcript. The (ecological) rationalisation processes appear to have broken down. Good political judgement requires adequate debate. No-one in the group however challenges the legitimacy of Ray's claim. I would interpret this case not as a matter of competence: participants earlier in the session had already indicated that nature performs a strong social function in reproducing the lifeworld. Rather, this issue may concern the micro-politics of emergence. As noted, the issue of protecting the freshwater grazing marshes in the area was a highly emotive one. It may have been that other members of the group did not feel able to challenge such claims through micro-fields of power.

Mike then enters the conversation and describes the need for fair process in the mediation of value [1587]. Again the role of local people within these negotiations is highlighted. He believes that *Land and Life* process is attempting to address some of these concerns. The second facilitator Nicole then re-examines the idea of negotiation of nature and community [1599]. The overtaking that follows is illustrative of the dilemma involved in the choice. Richard's comments at the end of the passage are instructive [1599-]. For him, the environment is constantly changing; 1000 years ago the area looked very different, as it will 1000 years hence. Attempts to place views upon the environment must be seen as historically and culturally specific.

This is not to suggest that such views have no specific privileged claim to the environment, but rather that they should not be mistaken as a form of ontological truth. The values of conservationists are just that; they do not have access to an intrinsic value residing in the natural world. They are an institutional set of discourses, and though informed by science, they are still historically situated and articulated by social actors. In

this light, it is important to discuss the various social mediations of the natural world, as Mike suggests. For the participants, the all-important question becomes “whose environment is being debated within such management schemes?” Their responses would seem to suggest that the environmental values of the local communities often seem to get sidelined in comparison to other environmental values of different organisations. Indeed, his comment of “all of these quangoes that have their finger in the pie” suggests an asymmetrical distribution of power in such negotiations, tied to representing vested interests (rather than the interest of nature *per se*).

More broadly, the fluidity of nature was a strong metaphor in the session. Indeed, it should be noted that many of the local residents felt strongly that the freshwater grazing marshes are artificial environments anyway. They exist only due to land reclamation. For some, to attempt to maintain these habitats against the force of the sea on the grounds of being natural was thus antithetical. The fluidity of value was another metaphor. The participants note that value comes from a human perspective. In some cases they suggest that human interests will take precedence over nature. However, rather than suggest that such points illustrate communicative ethics to be redundant for discussion about the natural world (as nature has no direct moral protection), what perhaps is more compelling is an examination of the legitimacy each of these various actors claim to nature (as Mike notes).

The participants may well have different values and priorities than conservation agencies; what counts is how such differences of opinion may be examined and developed in a creative way. However, what we have seen is that sometime the rationalisation processes that might provide a better decision in this light may breakdown. This might be due to the fact that the actors did not have the cognitive competencies to connect the ontological role of nature to such an argument (however there is broader evidence that this might not be the case). Or, it might be due to the fact that the politics of certain issues prevents the emergence of claims and thus power is a contributing factor. Indeed, it might be instances of both occurring.

What is of critical importance then is in creating the spaces through which all of these various beliefs and opinions beliefs need to be questioned and worked through. Such values thus need to be concretised, based at the level of everyday practice rather than romantic or institutionally biased. Non-rationalised discourses may elide other forms of political power. This is relevant both in terms of Ray's politics and politics of conservationists claiming to speak for nature. Such claims need to be held up to closer scrutiny.

What the three transcripts have demonstrated is that any discussion of the natural environment is likely to articulate human values. Valuation is necessarily a human trait. Rather than seeking to suppress such values, for instance through attempts to conceal them through an objectivating discourse of instrumental rationality or through meta-physical speculations of the natural world, through the use of deliberative processes such political relations are revealed in discourse and may be challenged.

7.6.0. Conclusions

This chapter has explored a variety of values articulated through different policy process. Such values have been debated in both social and institutional settings. Analytically, a Habermasian perspective upon rationality has opened up the critical spaces to examine these various claims making. It is now possible to draw the analysis to a close with five main points.

First, with regard to the natural world and environmental values a number of themes were explored. First, there is a strong sense of the ontological role and significance of nature to the reproduction of social life. Such views have resonated throughout the study as a whole. Nature generally was not expressed in terms of ecocentric viewpoints, in terms of the value that nature holds in-itself. Indeed, as we have seen earlier in the cost-benefit example and the discussion of grayling, such descriptions were not well suited to either discursive articulation or justification. Rather, nature was socialised: it is a lived landscape, a place for community, a place for working, a place for walking dogs. Nature

is a place for developing values through the reflection upon self in the broader context of the natural.

Second, the sense of place was reflective and often articulated as something other: other than modern society or the urban. Modernity was expressed as a power that disembedded place: broke down tradition and community. In this light, tradition was valued as it was found to play a strong role in such places: not in terms of an unquestioned means of action, but rather as providing links to the past, a sense of history and roots in a place of change. Tradition was thus forged and connected anew to the future.

Third, the participants recognised the complexity of policy making in such an area. Most participants within the processes held the natural environment in high regard. Of critical interest has been when environmental values come into play with other forms of value. In this light a theme often articulated was the fact that a fair process needs to be developed in the examination of different claims. The two case studies thus have represented an opportunity creatively to value nature. Such creative value for the natural world may reside in the ability to develop new solutions for management through exploring a variety of perspectives.

Fourth, the problem with such a perspective for creative value thus becomes one of adequate rationalisation. When such processes breakdown, the legitimacy of the decision can be called into account. The role of a critical theory in this light is to examine the spaces of emergence that may govern such claims making and redemption.

Five, the role of communication was as seen central in rationalisation. A problem identified by participants has been the centralisation of power and the erosion of local and traditional mechanisms to facilitate such communication. As such, new mechanisms need to be generated to legitimate institutional action. This is not only in terms of the coordination of action for decision-making, but also in terms of reproducing these values in the lifeworld.

Sixth, the role of institutions is thus fundamental in this respect. As we have seen both in this chapter and the last chapter, the way in which different organisations negotiate such participatory spaces can be remote: both spatially and communicatively. The exposure of rules and regulations to discursive redemption can be revealing. Institutions need to be more reflexive in their use of knowledge and their sharing of power. These processes, however, should not only be seen in terms of closure and consensus. They too act as societal spaces through which people may come together to reaffirm and develop own understandings with others. Identity is open to rational debate. In this way the unquestioned power of tradition may be exposed, much like the power of bureaucratic practice.

Participation in such deliberative processes thus may be able to promote certain dispositions, receptive to other understandings and forms of difference. Political deliberation is important not only towards the development of policy goals but also in terms of presenting opportunities for self-development and self-realisation in post-traditional societies. It is here that the ecological potential of rationality within participatory decision-making may be realised. A fuller elaboration of this idea is given in the following, final chapter.

Chapter 8.

Critical reflections for environmental decision-making: concluding thoughts.

8.1.0. Introduction.

This thesis has sought to explore the idea of environmental decision-making through critical theoretical and empirical perspectives. These perspectives have focused on the idea that environment problems are both political and technical ones, and hence decision-making needs to be both democratically legitimate and effective. In exploring what this might mean in practice, a variety of claims have been made upon ideas of rationality, nature and society. A critical theory perspective has been of paramount importance within this, in terms of providing a theoretical foundation for these concepts, in developing perspectives for institutional and discursive designs, and illuminating the possibilities and the shadows inherent within such approaches.

This final chapter aims to explore a key question that has been posed throughout the thesis. Namely, does the development of the democratic and communicative dimensions of social life facilitate the transmission of an ecological rationality? This question will now be explored in some depth through four different perspectives. In part one, the concept of an ecological rationality is developed in more depth. In part two, institutional designs and evaluations that promote such rationality will be discussed. In part three, processes of discourse in practice will be reviewed. Finally, the prospects that critical theory offers environmental valuation through participatory approaches are highlighted.

8.2.0. An ecological rationality.

In this section, some ideas developed from the thesis will be used to explore the concept of an ecological rationality. In the first part, Habermas's contribution to what might be considered to be rational action is briefly reviewed in light of other competing models. From here, the sociological aspects of Habermas's programme are then developed in

terms of the limits to knowledge and, in this light, the fostering of an ecological dimension to rationality.

The concept of rationality essentially aims to express plausible accounts for human action. It aims to consider why people are motivated to pursue certain ends in terms of reason, principles and judgement. A central concern of this thesis has been in developing an adequate account of rationality through which various claims to environmental values and interests may be articulated and redeemed. There have been two broad models of rationality discussed: single-orientation models such as the strategic-rational accounts of neo-classical economic theory and more plural accounts of rationality, namely communicative rationality.

In Chapter 2, the rational self-interest model was explored in some depth. This model of rationality is paradigmatic in the economic sciences, due to its descriptive power in categorising market behavior. Essentially, this model conceives of action in terms of the utility maximisation of individuals. Such behavior is particularly prevalent in the context of modern economic societies. Indeed, rational self-interest is a dominant way in which individuals make decisions throughout their day to day lives. As a model of rationality it thus represents real and powerful motivations. Moreover, as Hayward (1998 p. 90) notes, 'in the context of normative theory, these interests can claim some legitimacy'. *Ceteris paribus*, people have the right to pursue their own interests.

This withstanding, as noted in Chapter 2, rational self-interest is not a particularly effective model for describing action in certain situations. These situations generally tend to be ones where social or moral norms prevail. In particular, notions of altruism and decentred understandings of morality are not well accounted for within the economic framework. As such, the model is of limited value in accounting plausibly for social action in complex moral and political arenas where self-interest is overridden by other motivations. These motivations may be more properly recognised as having an intersubjective or social character (see White 1988 pp. 14-15).

In this light, Habermas (1984, 1987a) aims to bring a broader, intersubjective perspective to rationality through the model of communicative rationality. Here, as a function of modern structure of consciousness, subjects may rationalise a variety of ontological relations between actor and world. These are the teleological, norm-guided and dramaturgical models of rationality, corresponding to the objective, social and subjective worlds. Key for Habermas is the focus on language as a medium to co-ordinate action between these realms. As such, actors can distinguish and reflect upon rational claims made to their different actor-world perspectives. Moreover, actors come to understand each others' stances in relation to the claims made in these worlds; 'they are able to negotiate a common definition of the situation' (Habermas 1984 p. 95). In such a way, language plays an interpretative role. Rational understanding can be intuitively grasped by each individual actor through the mastering of a communicative competence and reflecting this onto a pre-interpreted lifeworld.

In this sense we have seen that, rather than attempting to ascribe complex motivations in society through the narrow lens of utility maximisation, actors can be seen to claim validity to their actions through descriptions of their truth or effectiveness, their normative validity, and their sincerity. Rationality thus becomes contextual. Moreover, the communicative model means that other actors can relate to the claims raised in such discourses, reflexively mediate such claims, and use such understanding to co-ordinate action.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, communicative action does not just refer to a model of rationality, but rather is a sociological concept that performs a number of crucial functions in reproducing the symbolic structures of the lifeworld. Through mutual understanding actors renew cultural knowledge. Through co-ordinating action actors establish solidarity. Through socialisation, actors forged their personal identities. These processes are described as cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation respectively and refer to the structural components or cultural value spheres of the lifeworld; namely culture, society and person (Habermas 1987a p. 137-138).

It is here that the broader context of Habermas's work may be realised in terms of the historical complexity of the Enlightenment thought. For Habermas, the problem within modern societies has been the extension of instrumental rationality into all spheres of cultural life. The cultural value spheres have slowly become institutionalised through the language of experts and ordinary language has become disembedded. It is specifically the removal of understanding, discussion and communication from citizens that generates a set of modern cultural pathologies. Processes of societal modernisation have colonised the lifeworld leading to systematically reduced reification and cultural impoverishment. In short, questions of morality and politics have essentially been treated as technical questions. Important political decisions are increasingly posed in terms of instrumental efficiency with solutions developed by experts, rather than informed debate among the public. This leads to an increasingly bureaucratised world, with the public increasingly excluded from political decisions. Decision-making thus becomes unaccountable and non-legitimate to broader public spheres of value (Habermas 1970; 1987a). It is here that a telling criticism can be leveled against rational-self interest models, such as neo-classical economics. Such models describe instrumental efficiency. At a level of normative action, there can be seen to be broader cultural problems of institutionally normalising instrumental economic discourses to articulate environmental values.

The above discussion would seem to thus seem to endorse Habermas's theory of communicative rationality for the discussion of environmental problems. As mentioned, due to their political nature, scientific discourses do not produce self-evident answers on environmental management decisions. Rather socially legitimate procedures need to be found (C3ED 1996). However, there is a problem with regard to the environment in Habermas's work - namely the problem of nature.

Habermas's project has not only aimed to provide a plausible account of human action. It also aimed to define the conditions and the limits to knowledge. This epistemological strand of his work, as we have seen in Chapter 3, has important implications in the discussion of naturalism and the ideological role of instrumental rationality and science.

For Habermas, it is important to realise the boundaries of theoretical knowledge. With regard to the environment, Habermas provides particular insights into our epistemological access to nature (see also Nagel 1976). Nature is accessible to us only in transcendental consciousness. Nature-in-itself can only work as an (important) ontological construct – as the organic foundation of the lifeworld (Habermas 1987a p. 394). Fundamentally for Habermas, basing normative and societal goals outside of any epistemological framework, such as through appeals to a primal, nature-based ideology, has potentially disturbing consequences for political life (see Habermas 1987b pp. 131-160). As he notes, ‘a philosophy which withdraws behind the lines of discursive thought to the mindfulness of nature pays for the wakening powers of its exercises by renouncing the goal of theoretical knowledge’ (Habermas 1984 p. 385). Renouncing such knowledge risks relativism through eliding the relationship of modern consciousness to normativity.

Rather, values regarding the natural world should always be seen as what they are: human values (Hayward 1998 pp. 21-41). This relationship between an objective, external world and the subjective, internal world is well captured through dramaturgical action. Thus, as Habermas notes, there is no need to regard nature as an end in itself in order properly to mediate between society and nature (Habermas 1982 p. 247). Where purchase is needed for environmental management is through an understanding of the socio-economic context in which nature is objectified. It is, thus, through a Habermasian perspective that we may be able to understand the social mediations of ecological questions, in order to get a critical purchase on a society out of which a politics emerges, and upon which it has to make an impact (see Gandy 1997b).

The idea of an ecological rationality thus emerges, not as some attempt to secure access to nature, but rather in terms of the way in which we can come to understand modern consciousness. To come to agreement, actors must detach the emergence of a theme from its lifeworld background. In other words, they need to engage in self-reflection, and reaffirm their beliefs through the questioning of others. This decentred understanding is

also suited towards gaining a form of rights for the natural environment. By articulating the expressive and aesthetic, dramaturgical claims within language, ontological relations of self and nature may be explored. In this meanings of nature as purely an object for instrumental control will be critique alongside those values of nature with an aesthetic significance (see Luke and White 1985).

Moreover, through articulating our subjective relations to nature into generalisable normative interests, a form of rights for the environment may be developed. The social justice elements of sustainability (such as the right to a healthy environment) are generalisable interests *par excellence*. The modern aesthetic and a subject's decentred ability to question concepts and identity facilitates such an understanding. As Eckersley (1997) notes, the expression of other-regarding values is more likely to promote nature regarding virtues. Such ways of thinking may open up spaces in which critically to examine an ecological rationality. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the same cognitive processes that permits us to grasp such abstract themes as justice through the consideration of other points of view can also forge a new understanding of 'thinking naturally'. Values articulated through both a subjective and intersubjective perspective thus can be seen as a rational basis in which to consider the natural environment. Moreover, they are a necessary compliment to other instrumental values; they give a social context to debates about environmental management.

It is thus the rational foundation and the associated, plural forms of reasoning of communicative action that makes Habermas's project sympathetic to ecological concerns. Moreover, as Dryzek (1990c) argues, environmental problem-solving may best be facilitated through processes where a wide variety of voices can be raised for a variety of concerns. A complex problem requires a hermeneutically sophisticated procedure. As a reflexive process, the development of an ecological rationality among citizens would be more sensitive to the feedback signals and complexity of the natural environment.

Before reviewing the role of institutional design for environmental decision-making, it is worth considering one final challenge to the idea of an ecological rationality. This does not so much concern ideas about the natural world, as attempts to qualify the idea of rational public life. Here a debate between John O'Neill (1997c) and John Dryzek (1997) is instructive. O'Neill rightly argues that Dryzek conflates and confuses Aristotelian and Kantian (Habermasian) conceptions of political deliberation. Not only are the approaches different but they are also inconsistent (O'Neill 1997c pp. 3-4; see Dryzek 1997 pp. 78, also 1990 pp. ix, 14-15). Specifically, the Aristotelian accounts hold central the role of rhetoric in deliberation, whereas neo-Kantian or Habermasian accounts focus upon rationality, and a defence of the public use of reason as a condition of the Enlightenment.

While expressing sympathy with a normative conception of rational public life, O'Neill (1997c) articulates the concern that, in real life, discourses of power and conflict are parasitic upon such an ideal. In particular, he holds that social preconditions for rational dialogue (i.e. the ideal speech situation) are never met. Moreover, O'Neill (1997c p. 8) suggests that the rhetorical force of an argument, rather than the force of better argument, often holds sway in deliberative processes, particularly when the laity review expert witnesses. For O'Neill, as an artefact of the differentiation of spheres of knowledge within modernity, discourses are often articulated that are beyond the competence of the laity. As such, judgements are based on trust rather than rational debate. Such insight, O'Neill (1997c p. 18) argues neither advocates irrationalism or authoritarianism, but rather aims to repudiate a conception of deliberation that rejects accepting claims on authority alone.

While O'Neill's (1997c) argument is compelling, as a model it is unable to account for why actors motivated by rhetoric would also subscribe to a normative set of beliefs or commitments. This point is particularly important when examining models for the co-ordination of action in society. O'Neill argues that rhetorical argument involves giving grounds to belief and, as such, is compatible with reason. However, the example used by O'Neill (1997c p. 20) to make this claim, that he may be able to placate our anger at a

farmer who destroys a valuable habitat by eloquently expressing his plight in the context of grinding poverty, could be better argued through an appeal to practical discourse and norm-guided action. I would thus hold that it is the complex set of normative relationships developed by O'Neill in relation to the farmer in such circumstances (relations of self, family, basic rights, nature, and broader political structures) that would convince me (or otherwise) that such actions were legitimate. In this sense, though I would indeed pity the farmer (as O'Neill contends) my judgement upon such claims would not be based on pity. In terms of a theoretic approach to the co-ordination of action, it is the rational content of his claims to a variety actor-world relations would lead me to say that he was justified (or not) in destroying the habitat. Rhetoric may be a function of the claim, but it is the appeal to normative elements of the argument that is compelling in such a case.

8.3.0. Institutional designs.

The environment has been a fertile ground for the growth of new institutional approaches to decision-making, in part because environmental concerns are not well served through representative model of democracy. Furthermore, broader political drives such as sustainability have stressed the need for greater equity and inclusion in policy-making debates. Due to the local nature of many environmental problems and the complexity of social values often articulated within these arenas, methods have been designed to be more responsive to context.

As explored in Chapter 1, there have been two main approaches - economic or participatory - for the institutional valuation of the natural world prevalent in the United Kingdom. With regard to the former, this thesis has argued against the extension of instrumental rationality into the realm of politics and the method's constrained view of reason. As such, the role of economic instruments needs to be carefully delineated. The use of monetary valuation is not a substitute for the political process. As such, techniques such as contingent valuation will only lend themselves to 'localised and individualistic resource use situations, where uncertainties and distributional conflicts, typically fuelled

by competing notions of justice and moral priority, do not dominate proceedings' (C3ED 1996). Indeed, in circumstances where differing notions of rights and responsibilities prevail, deliberative techniques provide a more adequate model for environmental valuation.

Within such deliberative, participatory designs, one goal is to provide the space through which a variety of public values may be articulated. The main aim of such techniques is for impartial collective decision-making. Due to the variety of rights and responsibilities prevailing in environmental valuation, the focus of such institutions is to provide fair procedures through which free and open communication can be achieved. The research presented in this thesis allows the following conclusions:

- Fairness: managers may not be fully informed of a range of concerns, or may even neglect known preferences in environmental decisions. Conversely, wider users may not be fully informed of an institution's intentions, motives and ideals. Participatory processes are believed to promote the exchange of information and promote social learning.
- Power: unequal relations of power have the capacity to prioritise forms of understanding over others. Power relations should be minimised, with no one individual or organisation dominating the process. The process needs to be clear and accessible to all that take part. Consensus should be based solely upon reasoned argument. Trust needs to be promoted within such processes. Thinking should be broadened towards a community of understanding.
- Legitimacy: participatory methods provide a communicative forum for decision-making. Citizens are entitled to have their values for the environment heard. Outcomes need to adequately address the concerns both of the participants and the policy-maker. Legitimacy aims to make decisions responsive to the will of all those who are effected.
- Effectiveness: A decision rationalised through the lifeworld of participants engenders the best form of political judgement. Through refinement and debate, challenging

claims made within different spheres of knowledge, better decision-making is promoted. The broad use of public reason will thus improve environmental policy. Moreover, the purchase power of consensual decisions is increased.

In developing these processes, particular attention should be paid to the relations between civil society and the state. Here, the formal political institutions of government need to create participatory spaces where collaborative planning may be encouraged (Healey 1997; Munton *et al.* 2000). In these arenas, people will be able communicatively to express their interests towards the establishment of policy goals. Reflexively, formalised systems of bureaucracy should become more responsive to public will-formation. In turn, such policy formation needs to be sensitive to formal structures of accountability. In short, institutions need to negotiate with the public sphere about how to conduct and employ their authority (Healey 1997 p. 303).

To meet these general concerns regarding deliberative institutions, empirical research has highlighted the role of the geographical and the local. Here, my research resonates with the work of Forester (1983a) and Healey (1996) in identifying a number of geographical themes to emerge from strategic planning. Planning is an interactive process through which public meanings are constructed and social learning is developed. However, such interaction needs to pay careful attention to:

- i) how knowledge is produced, how themes are regulated, and how new discourses evolve
- ii) how discussion and claims raised within the process are mediated
- iii) how identities are negotiated through a process
- iv) how the broader political geographies and policy frameworks regulate discourse
- v) how place is significant in the development of value

These concerns highlight the importance of process design, use of language and the role of facilitation in the promotion of inclusionary argumentation. As noted in Chapter 6, the

design of a method may give primacy to certain forms of expertise over lay understandings. Design of the processes is fundamental as it frames the places, the people and the means through which voices are heard. Due to the technical and instrumental character of environmental decisions, this is a very real problem for institutional design. Following on from this, with the prominent role of experts within such procedures, the language through which value gains legitimacy must be examined.

These observations also draw attention to the role of deliberative process in reproducing the lifeworld. Key within Habermas's understanding of a decentered consciousness is the development of identity and the mutual respect of difference. For Habermas, identity-constitutive values and ideals are not obligatory in the same way as moral norms and, as such, participatory processes aim to create the spaces through which we may come to define ourselves in relation to others. In short, through communicative action, actors socially and symbolically to constitute their identity with a reflexive or self-critical perspective (Habermas 1984 p. 233-242). In such a way, emphasis needs to be placed on a collective capacity to establish arenas that are sensitive to cultural differences and to recognise multiple forms of knowing and valuing. The truly transformative potential of deliberative processes resides in the ability to forge one's own autonomy through exploring differences with others.

As such, institutions need to develop mechanisms that may facilitate discussions across political and social differences. They need to move beyond instrumental and technical problem solving and become grounded in political reality. Mechanisms need to be encouraged that foster a critical public consciousness against the fragmentations of place and society under modernisation.

From these broader concerns of procedural fairness, that it is possible to think about how to evaluate new institutional tools for participatory processes. Once more a critical theory perspective is valuable. Procedural evaluative criteria for participatory processes may be developed from ethical-normative arguments concerning equitable procedures supporting

collective action. Here Habermas' notion of the ideal speech situation is exemplary: it provides a transcendental-pragmatic justification for communicative action. In short, it provides a critical tool through which we may be able to evaluate participatory practices. In Chapters 5 and 6, the meta-criteria of fairness and representivity were used to examine methodological, political and structural tensions. These functional attributes acted to create spaces for the emergence of certain types of knowledge.

Analysis also focused substantive aspects of discourse. Drawing upon Habermas's model of rational action, claims regarding actors objective, social and subjective worlds could be explored. This perspective illuminated how a variety of rational perspectives may inform any one situation. Furthermore, it illustrated how actors communicatively related to these different perspectives in attempts to negotiate a common definition of a situation. In this way, it provided theoretical access to the notion of 'better decisions' through a study of the rationalisation processes.

Moreover, through a broader study of communicative rationality, it was possible to explore how relations of sociality and power are forged, developed and reconstituted through such processes. In short, such analysis shows the reproduction of social and political relations through debate. The primacy of discourse in this respect was key. Developing ideas from Fairclough (1989, 1992), the analysis in Chapter 7 highlighted the internal dialectical relationship between language and society. Through examining discourse it was possible to illuminate how participants within a process share goals, define their own autonomy, build solidarity, legitimate courses of action and adjust their own expectations. Furthermore, as a social practice, the relations between discourse and power were of particular analytic importance. In terms of consensus, communicative or inculcate agreement was explored.

As such, the role of critical theory was to identify those social relations, power structures, and socio-cultural modes of communication and interpretation which limit the

identities of parties to the dialogue, and which set the agenda for what is considered appropriate or inappropriate matter of institutional debate.

8.4.0. *Discourse in practice.*

The two different case studies explored in the thesis provided different methodological, institutional and political contexts through which ideas about deliberation and inclusion could be examined. The *Land and Life* process, a small scale project ran by the Norfolk Coast Project, aimed to facilitate public ideas for the management of North Norfolk's AONB. Funded through local and district councils, as well as the Countryside Agency, the financial constraints within the organisation were limiting. Furthermore, the project wielded relatively little political power in the area, and as such was reliant upon compliance from the formal and executive procedures of accountability. The method augmented within this process was a focus-group design. Participants were enrolled into the group meetings through a traditional minimal recruitment process developed through a survey invitation.

In contrast, the second study was developed with the Environment Agency, the regulatory body for the environment in the UK. The Agency is a powerful institution, funded through central government, and has statutory responsibilities concerning water resources and waste management. They are obliged, under section 39 of the Environment Act (1995) to take account of the costs and benefits of their routine work. These costs have been interpreted by the Agency as not necessarily restricted to those which can be expressed in terms of monetary valuation (see Environment Agency 1997, para: 2.2). In this light, the Agency was keen to develop new tools for policy evaluation. In short, they wished to augment a deliberative approach to policy formation while still retaining the analytical aspects of decision-analysis. It was in this light the Stakeholder Decision Analysis method was developed. The method was used to priorities environmental options in Local Environment Agency Plans. LEAPs are non-statutory documents with a focus on local areas. Due to the technical aspects of LEAPs, participation within the study was restricted to professional stakeholders, defined from the policy context.

An analysis of the case studies has shed light upon how particular critical geographical processes came into being. With regard to how knowledge is produced, how themes are regulated, and how new discourses evolve, the analysis has highlighted the primacy of methodology and the role of expertise. For instance, the specific functional designs of the methods acted to close down certain avenues for debate and reflection. On the one hand, the task-orientated nature of the SDA process reinforced a technocentric feel to the discussion and foreclosed on unresolved issues, due to time constraint and the need to complete workshop schedules. On the other, the open recruitment process of the *Land and Life* process meant that the heterogeneous mix of participants within sessions created unpredictable social dynamics which often stifled creativity and debate.

On reflection, it is clear that the role of facilitation within process is critical. Within the LEAP, the facilitator had a powerful role in shaping the contributions to debate, and used their authority within the process to take executive decisions in order to progress the SDA process. Within the *Land and Life* project, though the facilitators were vital in creating spaces for reflection within the group session and for regulating contributions among the participants, specifics of group dynamics and existing power relations were beyond their control. If participants did not feel able to contribute to the sessions in light of such dynamics, the facilitation team was remarkably impotent at altering socio-cultural power relations.

This issue is brought home in a broader consideration of expertise. As mentioned in Chapter 6, the presence of a local councilor in one of the *Land and Life* sessions had a profound effect upon the group, often resulting in a question-and-answer dynamic between the political representative and the local public. Open techniques of group membership and facilitation will not necessarily transform pre-existing political and power relations. Indeed this calls for caution, as such processes may thus be subject to inculcation, be this from administrative bodies or representative from specific interest groups in the area, keen to get their voice heard in the policy process.

That withstanding, the role of expertise was not so much a dominant factor regulating discourse within the *Land and Life* project, as it was outside the group processes. There were a number of critical factors worth highlighting. First, the claims made by participants within the public meetings went through various modes of translation. These were textual, as the ESRU facilitation team drew out key policy views arising from each of the groups. This text was further interpreted by expert staff at the Coast Project, who not only had to develop group accounts into specific policy options for the management of the AONB, but also had to mediate these values to a broader set of policy discourses developed by other profession partners in the region. Undoubtedly, the hermeneutic resonance of some of the issues described by the participants led to their uptake within the policy process.

The role of expertise was also structural. The Coast Project had to disseminate the policy findings and encourage their acceptance. Here, relationships between the hard and soft infrastructure of governance were of importance, as the traditional policy making networks in the area had been to some extent sidelined through the Project's work. Indeed, at a subsequent meeting to review the draft strategy, these broader policy actors dominated the proceedings. Traditional representatives thus had the final say in the specific policy options arising from the process.

In the LEAPs process, the role of expertise within the decision-making process was more related to the culture of the institution. The Agency played a central role in the negotiation of values within the SDA workshops, having their interests represented through a stakeholder within the process. Furthermore, the contributions of participants were mediated through the regulatory framework of the institution by Agency advisors. In Chapter 7, the dialectical relationship between language and power was explored, as the Agency representatives endowed certain discourses with more authority and hence promoted certain understandings as a means to control the policy document. The Agency was seen as being communicatively remote from some of the concerns of other stakeholders within the process. Of central importance here was how the Agency were

able to negotiate their role as a regulator of the environment, to the participatory culture of the LEAPs process. The method aimed to provide the institutional spaces where the interstices of power could be transformed, and where a fluid relationship between communicative practice and policy-making bodies could facilitate knowledge. However, there were some concerns from the participants that the Agency often found it difficult to negotiate these spaces. As such, the resonance of new deliberative forms of policy making to the broader institutional culture is key. In short, such institutions should be wary of readily repeating remote bureaucratic practices when attempting to share power.

In a field dominated by the ecological and economic sciences, with power intimately linked to such discourses, how is it possible to find a new language through which to articulate new forms of nature-society relations? The environmental values described in the case studies were often tied to the idea of place. Nature and society were often described as ontologically related. Nature provides the framework onto which life is projected: the idea of nature was one often tied to traditional forms of life, to the idea of human history. Through their subjective and aesthetic reflections, participants articulated a strong sense of the value that they placed upon the wildlife and the landscape.

However, environments of difference were also articulated. In some discourses, nature was as essentially mobile and fluid, able to be recreated should human need dictate. For others, nature was static – a physical backdrop to modern society. Nature was seen as fragile, for instance with regard to the freshwater grazing marshes. In other contexts, nature was the robust pounding sea, threatening villages along the coast. Essentially, nature played a variety of political roles according different social perspectives. As Eder (1996 p. 215) notes nature: ‘has become the lifeworld discourse *par excellence*’. Of critical attention therefore was how such claims were rationalised within deliberative process.

In some instances, natural values were rationalised. For instance, during the debate concerning the alleged claims of the conservationists, participants challenged the morality

of placing the fate of 'nature' before the fate of humans was misplaced. This was not to say that nature had no form of rights in such a discussion. Rather, it was to highlight that a variety of political claims need to come together and be explored.

In other cases natural values were not rationalised. For instance, the unreflexive discussion of habitat recreation, as articulated by a participant in the Blakeney meetings last chapter. The broader significance of nature, which had been recognised by members of the group earlier in the session, was not used to dispute the ontological significance of re-creating the natural world. Moreover, the scientific integrity of such a claim could also be radically thrown into doubt (see for instance Barker 1996). The issue of better decisions thus becomes key when such rationalisation processes break down. Good political judgement requires adequate debate. This may not always occur within participatory processes. This is not just an issue of competence (though indeed this may well be a factor in environmental decision-making). It also concerns the micro-politics of emergence: of creating the spaces necessary when all sides feel they can adequately contribute to debate. As mentioned in chapter 7, the subject of the freshwater marshes at Blakeney was an emotive one for the group.

These observations have significance for valuing nature creatively. As an academic researcher, here I believe the role of geography is key. Research needs to address the possibilities of re-shaping society-nature relations, in light of plural environment discourses, the tyranny of the many and the broader role of expertise within these processes. Geography provides a unique perspective between the social and environmental sciences. The challenge for the new institutional approaches within collaborative planning is to weave together these alternative ways of knowing, to be wary of prioritising certain forms of knowledge, and to encourage others when critical space is needed. Attention should be paid to three critical themes that may foster the institutional conditions to promote ecological rationality:

Spaces of understanding:

With the disappearance of community and the fragmentation of social life, issues of how to identify the 'public' or 'stakeholders' become paramount within any policy process.

Spaces need to be created which directly aim to foster different understandings.

Analytically, attention should be drawn to non-discursive spaces: what is not said is often as important as what is said in these contexts. This is both a procedural and a substantive concern. Improved decisions will only be achieved through the refinement of debate, in line with the methodology's rational foundations. Where there are absent partners within dialogue, policy formation will fall short, as seen within the LEAPs process.

Communication:

The role of communication is pivotal in legitimating policy formation. The communicative styles and instrumental rationality of experts and professionals was often seen as remote from the understanding articulated by participants. This was both in terms of structural and spatial remoteness from the planning community, and communicative remoteness from the discourse of policy professionals. This is reinforced by broader political financial and time constraints. In light of these profound resistances, attention should thus be paid to mechanisms that promote communicative understanding.

Reflexivity:

The tension in the above two points highlights the pivotal role of reflexivity.

Representation will never be perfect. Indeed, given particular policy, political and financial constraints, it may not even be adequate. This calls for recognition of marginalised voices. It calls for recognition of co-determinant relationship between the actual process of gathering and representing information and the development of policy. The policy-maker and the researcher are both manager and analyst of this process. As such, they have a responsibility to maintain a critical perspective.

8.5.0. Critical theory, environmental values and participation: problems and prospects.

The critical theory developed throughout this thesis has given an epistemological grounding and a critical yardstick through which institutional forms that may best facilitate public reasoning towards an ecological rationality. At the level of theory, it has mediated possible concepts of knowledge, views upon rational deliberation and procedural foundations governing institutional design. At the level of practice, Habermas's discourse principle (1990a) has emphasised the importance of attention to real life conversations. Concrete principles concerning valuation cannot be deduced *a priori*. It is in the examination of the minutiae of debate that it is possible to discover how society values nature. Thus as Forester (1992) has noted, it provides a framework to shift from abstract discussions of truth, power, discourse and the other, to assess actual flows of action that reshape our beliefs, consent, trust and even more subtle frameworks of attention.

The value of a critical theory is important in this respect. Critical theory is by nature emancipatory; it predicates the development of a critical consciousness to uncover processes that are parasitic upon communication and awareness. Its emancipatory potential can thus be seen in terms of autonomy; it is through the process of reflection that humans can be seen to be self-determining. Participatory designs offer a critical space through which truth claims can be rationally mediated, separate from social interests. Self-reflection encourages the subject to question the unquestioned practice of knowledge. As such, ideology is exposed and the subject emancipated. Self-reflection is equated with the struggle adequately to grasp modes of power and domination. Critical theory teaches us to respect both the autonomy and solidarity of individuals.

Participatory processes should be consistent with political equality and popular sovereignty, in the sense that they should provide 'every individual with a chance to defend his or her personal interests or values and to contribute to the definition of the collective will' (Webler 1995 p. 38).

Developing new participatory spaces may also have specific educative worth, they may promote attentiveness to different forms of understanding, and different contexts in which the environment is problematised, through which our own understandings are renewed (see Foster 1997). Engagement thus should promote public competence to deal with environmental decision-making. Conversely, through the attendant processes of trust, engagement should promote public confidence in institutions to deal with environmental decision-making.

Critical theory is also concerned with interdisciplinary research efforts. Environmental decision-making offers the potential to develop new methodological tools with other social scientists. Such a community should not just be restricted to philosophers, psychologists and geographers. Speaking to the converted will not provide best purchase. Collaboration thus needs to be widened. Indeed debate with economic practitioners has proved useful in developing methodological tools in this respect over the past decade (see Splash *et al.* 1997; Clark *et al.* 1998; Brouwer *et al.* 1999). Such developments should have the elasticity required to both deliver contributions to policy while also being sensitive to context. Moreover, the environmental field provides particular scope to broaden out beyond a social science perspective. Working with natural scientists in promoting their work communicatively to achieve a reasoned balance in the framing of ecological problems and the development of policy goals is one such promising application. Reflexively, discussing with scientists the worth of deliberation is another. Indeed only working with such a plurality of values, interests and knowledges will an ecological rationality be fostered.

A critical theory is also one of practical intent. The sessions brought to life the uncertainties and ambivalence that surround the complex ontological relationship between citizens and the natural world. Participants developed complex ways of understanding a variety of concepts from communication, trust, expertise, nature and value (see Chapter 7). Moreover, the debate brought home the distinctly social aspects of the methodologies. The sessions had hope, ideas, and humour, but also contained

cynicism, hubris and indeed bad temper at times. But more than this, the processes provided the opportunity to talk to and listen to others. With the fragmentation of community within modernity such procedural benefits should not underestimated. As Andrew, a participant in the Hunstanton meetings (group 1) notes:

‘One of the saddest things, and it’s a product of modern times, is that people are not communicating so much because they’re cocooned in their own little worlds...they don’t have the facilities to get together so much. The village shop used to be a regular place. the buses used to be a meeting point and so on. But on a day to day basis, people jumping in their cars, you can not communicate with someone in another car. I have learnt a lot about the area today. That is why I think things like this are a good idea’.

Critical theory also tells us to be critical. Hence there should be a caution examination of the practice of such processes. A number of social, political and cultural factors may alienate people from engaging in such processes. Indeed non-participation can too be read in the form of active resistance, as protest against the hard infrastructure of governance. Furthermore, when participants do engage in deliberative methods debate may be restricted and social relations reified.

The uncritical presentation of practice thus should be highlighted. The need to succeed will often be prevalent within institutional settings engaging in new practices, particularly against an unresponsive administrative culture, when the focus on instrumental outcomes are key. Indeed without the cultural skills to facilitate the design and implementation of such methodologies, there is likely to be attendant problems in the success of deliberative techniques. While acknowledging that real achievements are possible, participation alone can not be deemed to be the sole criterion of success. Appeals to democracy to justify policy formation when the legitimacy can be questioned will not succeed. The role of institutions thus becomes of central importance in evaluating how practice resonates with the underlying theoretical foundations of such valuation processes. Furthermore, research should be directed towards exploring the myths surrounding new deliberative institutions.

A final role of critical theory is in highlighting how social relations sustain certain human nature relations. Attention needs to be placed on illuminating the lifeworld backgrounds that give meaning to claims. Rational discourse can thus scrutinise the constructions, applications and ideological distortions of thinking naturally. The valuation of the natural world needs to be extended beyond the expert community. This is not to depreciate such knowledge, but rather to show the contributions that other forms of discounted knowledges can make towards the policy process.

At the last, practice will differ from theory. Not all practices will succeed. In short, critical approaches to environmental valuation can only exist as a form of a promise. Whether such promises are realised, there is much to be learnt in our attempts at doing so.

Appendix I.

Questionnaire design for *Land and Life* Project.

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17



LAND AND LIFE

A local survey on the Norfolk Coast

What contributes to your quality of life? Are you satisfied with your local environment? The Norfolk Coast Project is trying to find out what you value about your area, about your views on local transport issues, and what improvements you think could be made. By answering this survey, and perhaps coming to one of the public meetings that will be held in June, you can help decide the future of the North Norfolk Coastal Area. The area is renowned for its wildlife, unspoilt coast and landscape, and is popular with visitors.

But what are the important issues for you? Help us strike a balance between local people and visitors, natural beauty and local prosperity – let us know what you think. All completed survey forms returned before 17-6-97 will be entered into a draw with five £20 tokens as prizes.

Thankyou for completing the Questionnaire. Please fold, stick down and return to the pre-paid reply service.



Thinking of the area as it is now, can you say how important each of the following issues is for you. (Please circle level of importance, where 1 is unimportant and 5 is very important).

	Unimportant					Very important				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Family connections										
Natural beauty										
House & land prices										
Wildlife										
Local amenities (eg. libraries)										
Income from tourism										
Character of the area										
Local prosperity										
Opportunities for the young										
Historic buildings										
Local shopping facilities										
Breakdown of traditional communities										
Safeguarding all properties from sea										
Environmental pollution										
Peace and quiet										
Local employment										

Would you like to make any comments about these or other issues not mentioned?

What would you like to be done to improve the quality of life in your area?

Transport and mobility

Do you use public transport for any of the following reasons? (Please tick boxes)

Go to work?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 never	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 often
Go out at the weekend?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 never	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 often
Go shopping?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 never	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 often
Go out in the evening?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 never	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 often

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of public transport? (Please tick boxes)

Availability?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 not satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 satisfied
Routes?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 not satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 satisfied
Fares/Prices	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 not satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 satisfied

6 Do you have use of a car? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7 In your area, how satisfied are you with? (Please tick boxes).

a Local Car Parking for Shops etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Not enough	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 OK	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Too much
b Car Parking for Holiday Visitors	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Not enough	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 OK	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Too much

8 Do you find any of the following cause you problems? (Please tick boxes).

a Road Congestion in Holiday Periods?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Severe Problem	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Problem	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 OK
b Heavy Goods Vehicles?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Severe Problem	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Problem	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 OK
c Speed of Vehicles through Village	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Severe Problem	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Problem	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 OK

9 How safe are the roads for walkers? (Please tick boxes).

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Not safe	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 OK	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Very safe
--	----------------------------------	---

10 Are there any other comments that you would like to make about transport issues?

To help with the analysis of the survey, could you please supply the following information. The survey is anonymous and you will not be identified in any way.

11 Sex ☐ 1 Male ☐ 2 Female

12 Date of Birth

13 Length of residence in the area

14 Occupation

15 Number of children in household

If you wish to be entered, then could you please supply the following Prize Draw information. (This information will not be used in the survey):

16 Name

17 Address

18 Telephone

We are organising local meetings in June to explore issues raised from this survey. If you would like the chance to take part, please tick the box. We will be in touch soon ☐ 1

Appendix II.

**A breakdown of participant characteristics in the
Land and Life Project.**

North Walsham 10th July 1997.

21 participants

Group 1. Carolyn and Tracy facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Thomas	M	56-64	West Somerton	10 years	Retired
Sarah	F	36-44	Roughton	39 years	Executive
Jean	F	55-64	North Walsham	30 years	Housewife
John	M	65-74	Roughton	45 years	Retired
Heather	F	35-44	Paston	10 years	Tourism

Group 2. Jacquie and Minelle facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Paul	M	45-54	Paston	12 years	Skilled prof.
Christine	F	45-54	Paston	12 years	Housewife
Jim	M	65-74	North Walsham	40 years	Retired
Ron	M	55-64	Trimingham	19 years	Retired
Geoff	M	55-64	Paston	26 years	Unemployed
Frank	M	25-34	-	2 years	Student

Group 3 Dan and Diana facilitating

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Norman	M	65-74	North Walsham	10 years	Retired
Gwen	F	45-54	West Runton	3 years	Retired
Mike	M	45-54	West Runton	3 years	Retired
Shirley	F	55-64	Mundesley	4 years	Retired
Chris	M	45-54	North Walsham	12 years	Government

Group 4. Judy and Simon facilitating

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Robin	M	65-74	Trimmingham	14 years	Retired
Jean	F	45-54	Trunch	7 years	Housewife
Tony	M	55-64	Sea Palling	2 years	Retired
Enid	F	55-64	Sea Palling	2 years	Retired
Henry	M	65-74	Trimmingham	9 years	Retired

Wells-next-the-sea. 11th July 1997.

15 participants

Group 1. Jacquie, Minelle and Nicole facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Eric	M	55-64	Wells	4 months	Retired
Mollie Harvey	F	65-74	Burnham Market	5 years	Retired
Scott	M	65-74	Wells	11 years	Retired
Sue	F	-	Wells	-	-
John	M	65-74	Wells	45 years	Retired
Matthew	M	15-24	Wells	19 years	Student
Martin	M	65-74	Burnham Market	4 years	Retired
Irene	F	75-84	Burnham Market	8 years	Retired

Group 2. Carolyn, Simon and Darren facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Derek	M	35-44	Cromer	42 years	Farmer
Philip	M	65-74	Wells	-	Retired
Jake	M	65-74	Burnham Market	11 years	Retired
Robert	M	65-74	Burnham Market	42 years	Retired
Judith	F	55-64	Wells	2 years	Retired
Mary	F	45-54	Stiffkey	4 years	Teacher
Kathleen	F	45-54	Fakenham	8 months	Retired

Blakeney. 12th July 1997

30 participants

Group 1. Carolyn and Tracey facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Jim	M	55-64	Holt	14 years	Executive
Janet	M	65-74	Holt	70 years	Retired
Frank	M	45-54	Cley	10 years	Architect
Dorothy	F	55-64	Sheringham	12 years	Secretary
Gillian	F	45-54	Cley	10 years	Student
Keith	M	55-64	Holt	25 years	Retired
Lesley	F	65-74	Salthouse	10 years	Retired

Group 2. Dan and Diana facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Ron	M	45-54	Cley	5 years	Tourism
Patricia	F	-	Cley	1 years	Skilled prof.
Martin	M	45-54	Holt	10 years	-
Moris	M	55-64	Blakeney	60 years	Retired
Sally	F	35-44	Holt	44 years	Student
Tony	M	35-44	Holt	20 years	Skilled prof.
David	M	65-74	Blakeney	72 years	Retired
Paul	M	75-84	Blakeney	28 years	Retired

Group 3. Darren, Nicole and Jacquie facilitating

Participant name	Sex	Age	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Ray	M	55-64	Holt	11 years	Retired
Rachael	F	55-64	Holt	11 years	Retired
Mike	M	65-74	Blakeney	40 years	Retired
Tom	M	65-74	Holt	69 years	Farmer
Anne	F	65-74	Blakeney	8 years	Retired
Richard	M	45-54	Holt	10 years	Potter
Mel	F	65-74	Cornerchurch	4 years	Retired

Group 4. Judy and Simon facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Kirsty	F	45-54	Blakeney	10 years	Housewife
Robert	M	65-74	Cley	12 years	Retired
Peter	M	55-64	Holt	8 years	Retired
Roland	M	65-74	Letheringsett	20 years	Retired
Clare	F	65-74	Cley	17 years	Retired
Mary	F	75-84	Salthouse	12 years	Retired
Dorothy	F	65-74	Salthouse	35 years	Retired
Enid	F	85-94	Cley	10 years	Retired

Cromer. 13th July 1997

18 participants

Group 1. Darren and Nicole facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Mary	F	45-54	West Runton	5 years	Tourism
Pam	F	55-64	Weybourne	2 years	Retired
Phil	M	65-74	Cromer	7 years	Retired
Peter	M	65-74	Cromer	5 years	Retired
Liz	F	65-74	Cromer	9 years	Retired
Robin	M	35-44	Cromer	18 years	Retired

Group 2. Tracy and Minelle facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Ned	M	35-44	Aylmerton	3 years	Skilled prof.
Sarah	F	25-34	Aylmerton	23 years	Skilled prof.
Alan	M	75-84	Felbrigg	36 years	Retired
Gertrude	F	55-64	Kelling	1 year	Government
Geoff	M	45-54	Aylmerton	23 years	Mechanic
Judy	F	45-54	Cromer	47 years	Government

Group 3. Judy and Simon facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Ron	M	65-74	Cromer	4 years	Retired
Charlie	M	25-34	Weybourne	25 years	Environ.
Tony	M	25-34	East Runton	2 years	Unemploy.
David	M	45-54	Cromer	48 years	Designer
Margaret	F	55-64	West Runton	31 years	Government
Trevor	M	65-74	Felbrigg	16 years	Retired

Hunstanton 14th July 1997

38 participants

Group 1. Carolyn and Tracey facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Sally	F	65-74	Holme	20 years	Retired
Andrew	M	25-34	Hunstanton	26 years	Teacher
Anne	F	45-54	Thornham	25 years	Housewife
Christine	F	65-74	Old Hunstanton	4 years	Retired
Hillary	F	45-54	Sedgeford	8 years	Secretary
Bob	M	65-74	Hunstanton	7 years	Retired
Brenda	F	65-74	Hunstanton	7 years	Retired
Rachel	F	25-34	Hunstanton	25 years	Teacher

Group 2. Jacquie and Minelle facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Gary	M	65-74	Hunstanton	68 years	Retired
David	M	45-54	Wells	10 years	Tourism
Jean	F	45-54	Wells	53 years	Tourism
Faith	F	55-64	Hunstanton	10 years	Housewife
Betty	F	45-54	Sedgeford	12 years	Skilled prof.
Harry	M	65-74	Hunstanton	3 years	Retired

Group 3. Diana and Simon facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Richard	M	65-74	Brancaster	11 years	Environ.
Tony	M	65-74	Hunstanton	3 months	Retired
Trevor	M	65-74	Thornham	10 years	Retired
Sally	F	65-74	Thornham	10 years	Retired
Carrie	F	65-74	Sandringham	27 years	Retired
Mary	F	65-74	Sandringham	40 years	Retired
Joe	M	65-74	Brancaster	10 years	Retired
Susan	F	25-34	Holme	10 years	Teacher

Group 4. Darren and Dan facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Murray	M	45-54	Holme	7 years	Education
Sarah	F	35-44	Holme	7 years	Estate Agent
Chris	M	45-54	Holme	35 years	Engineer
David	M	55-64	Hunstanton	30 years	Government
Mike	M	45-55	Holme	25 years	Director
John	M	65-74	Brancaster	1 year	Retired
Lucy	F	65-74	Brancaster	1 year	Retired

Group 5. Judy and Nicole facilitating.

Participant name	Sex	Age Group	Area	Length of residence	Occupation
Colin	M	65-74	Holme	14 years	Retired
Jean	F	65-74	Sedgeford	39 years	Retired
Gerald	M	65-74	Holt	65 years	Retired
Sid	M	65-74	Old Hunstanton	11 years	Retired
Joyce	F	65-74	Old Hunstanton	11 years	Retired
Peter	M	75-84	Docking	75 years	Retired
Ryan	M	15-24	Holme	6 years	Student

Appendix III.

Task sheet for Workshop 2, LEAP Process.



2. Below is a list of 3 potential criteria that might be used for the evaluation of LEAP issues. Criteria can be drawn from a variety of perspectives, from the environmental, to the social, to the economic. In light of the first workshop, and thinking about the issues to be covered in the LEAP as a whole, can you suggest some other criteria that may be used to potentially evaluate LEAP issues. Please start each criteria with the term 'to what extent', and don't forget to include the all important value judgement. Again, these criteria will be the basis of a discussion in workshop 2.

Criterion	Value Judgement
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit non-human species and habitats?	Biodiversity should be protected and the Environment Agency should contribute to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan in line with government policy
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit the quality of life for residents in the LEAP area?	Improving amenity, reducing risk, and redressing nuisance should be given high priority.
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit the local economy?	Maintaining/ creating employment should be given high priority.
To what extent.....	
To what extent.....	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	

Criterion	Value Judgement
To what extent...	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	
To what extent...	

Name:

Thank you.

Appendix IV.

New Issues List for the LEAP.

List of potential new issues.

Peter (FoE)

1. Inclusion of springhead streams/wetlands in EA assessments, reports, maps etc. this point may be well covered by issue 26 in the handout. At present several small springhead streams and areas with seasonal water supply are not marked on EA maps. these are sometime sites most threatened with abstraction.

2. Access to local, small scale resources (and their management). Should the EA be involved in promoting the sustainable use of local resources, e.g. trying to ensure the samphire harvesting continues, but isn't excessive. Continuation of local resource harvesting adds to local sustainability, local distinctiveness and access to the countryside.

Adam (Angling)

3. The government policy that owners of SSSI's etc. should pay for compliance matters will mean that ownership has become a poisoned chalice: SSSI's will increasingly end up in public ownership and a drain on the public purse.

4. Absence of resident otters on the River Nar (c.f. occasional itinerant)

5. Absence of grayling on River Nar.

6. Presence of mink possibly at the expense of water vole

7. Re-introduction of extinct species esp. red squirrel, great bustard, salmon.

8. Possibility of pollution from landfill in headwaters of River Nar

9. Summer flows of River Nar are too low

10. Explosion of local cormorant population is reducing fish stocks

11. In the last 20 years more wet fenland has been lost than any other habitat area. Conservation should be given to creating more fenland reserves where appropriate.

12. Watercourse population from unlicensed discharge from private septic tank systems

13. Managed retreat from existing flood defence lines.

Charles (Landowner)

Water Quality issues

14. There is insufficient back-up power for sewerage works in event of electricity grid failure

15. There should be bio-chemical study areas to identify pollution risks and the behaviour of leachates - e.g. nitrates, heavy metals and pesticides.

Water resources

16. Assess feasibility of urban and industrial water re-cycling (as naturally occurs in some rural situations).

17. Creation of more reservoirs

Flood Defence

18. Reduction of flood defence budget through managed retreat.

Development

19. Automatic response to development proposals to reduce water usage to improve discharge risks in emergencies/ accidents and to re-cycle pollutants in discharge waters.

John (Environmental Health Officer).

20. Risk of degradation of local environmental quality by the uncontrolled disposal of 'inert' wastes since the advent of the landfill tax

21. The adverse effect on rivers and wetlands by abstraction

22. The poor quality of surface waters in non-main river watercourses caused by unregulated discharges

23. The degradation of surface waters in non-protected areas by farming activities

24. The loss of biodiversity associated with the above issues.

Arthur (Navigation)

25. Demand for water resources, low fresh water flows, increased siltation: all reduce effectiveness of flood relief. Impedes navigation.

26. Heacham flood defence - reduced height of sand dunes give a higher flooding risk and hence risk to life.

27. The impact of discharges from sewerage works upon bathing water quality.

Paul (Archaeology).

28. Damage to historic environment by EA projects

29. the impact of water abstraction on waterlogged archaeological sites

30. Positive management of water resources to preserve archaeological resources (WLMPs).

Ian (EA) - No new issues

Ted (NFU)

31. What amount of air pollution locally comes from Marham Air Base.

Thomas (Anglian Water) - No new issues

Nick (Angling).

Water resources

32. Continuing demand for irrigation has an impact on the environment; can this be reduced?

33. To the lay person irrigation often takes place at midday and in the maximum sun, can this be regulated to help satisfy both needs?

Fisheries and recreation

34. As discussed, access and safety, especially on relief and cut off channels

35. Regulation of flow rates assessing habitat improvements and angling capabilities.

Richard (Norfolk Wildlife Trust).

36. Need to flesh out the issue concerning demand for water (number 9 in Agency's statement) to include water dependent habitats in the wider countryside and not just designated nature conservation sites.

37. Communication should be stressed to manage water resources in the future; particularly with regard to availability of water for future development without environmentally damaging abstractions.

38. Emphasis should be given to those habitats and species covered by the biodiversity action plan, and the opportunity to incorporate these targets into LEAPs

Appendix V.

Criteria Generated in Workshop 2, SDA Process.

The New Forest LEAP criteria

CRITERION	UNDERLYING VALUE JUDGEMENT
To what extent is resolution of this issue a legal requirement?	Legal obligations should be met.
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit non-human species and habitats?	Biodiversity should be protected and the ENVIRONMENT AGENCY should contribute to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan in line with government policy.
To what extent would tackling this issue maintain the unique status/ international importance of the New Forest?	The Environment Agency's actions should not affect the 'New Forestness' of the area.
To what extent is the problem identified in this issue likely to get worse?	Issues which are likely to get worse should be tackled sooner rather than later; in particular high priority should be given to issues where delay would lead to irreversible decline. .
To what extent would tackling this issue require the Environment Agency to work in partnership with other agencies?	The Environment Agency should work in partnership with other organisations within a cross-organisation strategic approach.
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit public health ?	Public health should be safeguarded; danger to human life is unacceptable.
To what extent is the issue well understood scientifically?	Priority should be given to tackling issues which are well understood.
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit the quality of life for residents in the LEAP area?	Improving amenity and redressing nuisance should be given high priority.
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit the local economy?	Maintaining/ creating employment should be given high priority.
To what extent are actions relating to this issue likely to be affected by potential future legislation?	Future legislation will have to be complied with so its potential impact should be considered.

North West Norfolk Criteria

CRITERION	UNDERLYING VALUE JUDGEMENT
Peter (FoE) To what extent would tackling this issue benefit local sustainability?	Where possible, local people should be involved with the local provision of biodiversity and human resource needs (including nutritional, employment and recreational).
Adam (Angling) To what extent would tackling this issue remedy E.A. mistakes of the past?	E.A. is under a social and moral, if not also legal, obligation to put right past mistakes.
To what extent is tackling this issue cost-effective	Funds are limited
To what extent is tackling this issue wanted by the public?	Democracy is important
To what extent is the public against tackling this issue?	Democracy is important, and counter views may not have been canvassed?
To what extent is public opinion on either side of this issue out of touch with scientific fact?	Public opinion can be manipulated e.g. GM foods are seen as a greater evil than smoking!
To what extent are there downside risks of not tackling this particular issue?	Inaction has greater consequences for some issues than for others
To what extent do EA standards compare with other issues in the same sector? e.g. waterway maintenance standards	Does the EA have the issue in the right perspective?
To what extent would tackling this issue reduce pollution?	A cleaner environment benefits (nearly) all forms of life.
To what extent would tackling this issue maintain, improve or develop fisheries?	This is a main function of the E.A.

CRITERION	UNDERLYING VALUE JUDGEMENT
To what extent would tackling this issue attract co-funding?	E.A. contributions become more cost effective
To what extent does tackling this issue increase bureaucracy?	Red tape can strangle enterprise
To what extent would tackling this issue facilitate or hinder another issue?	
Charles (Landowner) To what extent would tackling this issue reduce air polluting emissions?	The future climate is dependent upon out (human) activities, and minimum impact should be a priority
To what extent would tackling this issue reduce the political pressures (on competing needs for water for example)	Community wide approval of priorities for water use is essential for the success of any water resource plan etc.
To what extent would tackling this issue duplicate the work of another Agency	Tackling issues costs money and resources should be used as effectively as possible.
To what extent is the E.A. capable of dealing with the issue (does it have staff with enough knowledge or research expertise?)	It is essential to procure the most effective resources for tackling issues, either from within or without (e.g. Universities).
John (Environmental Health) To what extent would tackling this issue promote sustainability	Protecting and enhancing the environment so as able to safeguard the future
To what extent would tackling this issue promote tourism?	Maintaining/creating employment should be given high priority
To what extent would tackling this issue add to the knowledge of environmental quality?	Improved decision making is based on adequate information

CRITERION	UNDERLYING VALUE JUDGEMENT
To what extent would tackling this issue address the environmental concerns of residents?	Priorities for action should take into account people living in the area
To what extent would tackling this issue inter-link with the environmental priorities of other organisations?	Agencies and official bodies should as far as possible be co-ordinated and aware of each others activities
Arthur (Navigation) To what extent would tackling this issue improve navigation to Kings Lynn	Seaborne traffic would reduce land-based traffic - improve the quality of life
To what extent would tackling this issue improve the local economy?	Port course employer - infrastructure
To what extent would tackling this issue improve Heacham flood defence?	We need to reduce the risk of loss of life
To what extent would tackling this issue improve bathing water quality?	Quality of life - improved tourism - greater employment
Paul (Archaeology) To what extent would tackling this issue benefit the historic environment?	The impact of EA projects on the historic environment needs to be assessed
To what extent would tackling this issue lead to a sustainable fenland farming economy?	The fenland landscape should be managed in a sustainable way.
To what extent would tackling this issue help other agencies meet their objectives?	The EA should work in partnership with other relevant bodies.
Ian (EA). To what extent would tackling this issue impact the aesthetic impact of rivers?	Improving the appearance of local rivers will in turn encourage the use of the river as a recreational amenity.

CRITERION	UNDERLYING VALUE JUDGEMENT
To what extent would tackling this issue raise the profile of the Agency within the local community?	To many the Agency is unknown and the knowledge of the work undertaken is a mystery. Raising the Agency's profile will improve links with the local community and facilitate environmental management.
To what extent would tackling this issue be detrimental to non-human species and habitats	Actions such as improving flood defences, increasing abstractions can reduce the diversity of rivers and their floodplains with resultant impacts on flora and fauna
To what extent would tackling this issue achievable with the resources that are available?	Some issues in the LEAP area may require resources above those which the Agency and other stakeholders can commit. The achievability of the issues therefore needs to be considered
To what extent is the issue a reflection of the themes of the Agency's environmental strategy?	Agencies development is focused on 10 themes. These ensure that we use integrated solutions and avoids the trap of dealing with problems in isolation
To what extent would tackling this issue involve partnerships with other outside bodies?	Through the initiation of partnerships resources can be distributed to maximise their benefits.
To what extent is the problem identified likely to get worse if the action is not carried out?	Priority should be given to those issues where the problem is worsening and the rate of worsening should also be a criteria
To what extent is there external pressure to undertake this action?	Those issues that are considered most important within the local community should be highly weighted. This will serve to improve the image of the Agency.
Ted (NFU). To what extent would tackling this issue change the environment that nature has provided?	Trying to provide less natural habitat for minority desires
To what extent can attraction be provided before the populous over exploits them?	Over commercialisation

CRITERION	UNDERLYING VALUE JUDGEMENT
Thomas (Water Company) To what extent is manpower available?	We need to be realistic of resources
To what extent is funding available?	We need to be realistic of resources
To what extent is the environment effected (e.g. climate, water quality)?	Need to be realistic and understand the implications for (energy usage) and its impact
To what extent is the environment adversely effected by current operations?	Is the precautionary principle cost beneficial, or is more investigation needed?
To what extent is 'whole of life' operation considered?	Construction, operation and de-commissioning impacts
To what extent would tackling this issue benefit other issues?	Effectiveness of effort is maximised
To what extent is the issue a priority for the government?	Prioritise issues in line with EC Directives, government priorities
To what extent would the environment/ economy/ social fabric be effected by not addressing the issue	Is it a minority interest, allows you to maximise benefit or minimise deterioration
To what extent are the solutions to the problems/ issues able to be solved by the stakeholder organisations alone?	Promotes resolution of easier issues, harvests quick gains
Nick (Angling) To what extent would tackling this issue improve the habitat of species?	Biodiversity should be increased or maintained
To what extent would tackling this issue improve the amenity and recreational value of an area?	Benefits from tourism need to be realised
To what extent would tackling this issue encourage partnerships?	The Agency should work together with other partners to take account of the various uses and values of a management area.

CRITERION	UNDERLYING VALUE JUDGEMENT
<p>Richard (Norfolk Wildlife Trust).</p> <p>To what extent would tackling this issue benefit non-human species and habitats?</p>	<p>Biodiversity should be protected <i>and enhanced</i>. The Environment Agency should contribute to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan in line with government policy.</p>
<p>To what extent would tackling this issue allow the agency to communicate and work in partnership with others?</p>	<p>Future sustainable use of resources is best promoted through partnerships.</p>
<p>To what extent does tackling this issue cover species listed in the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)?</p>	<p>BAP targets should be incorporated into LEAPs.</p>

Appendix VI.

Mathematical model used to weight the criteria in the

SDA Process.

(developed from Clark et al. 1998).

Weighting the criteria:

1. Procedure.

a) Normalising the scores.

Let an individual's scores for each criterion be $x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots, x_i$, where I is the number of criteria and x can take any value from 0 to 100.

For Each individual the total number of points used in scoring $T = \sum_{i=1}^I x_i$

Calculate T for each individual.

For each set of individual scores, multiply each score by $100/T$ to give the normalised set of individual scores.

b) Finding the 'group weighting for each criterion.

For each criterion, total the normalised scores and divide by the number of individuals. The 12 highest scoring criteria were used in the analysis. The weights for these 12 criteria were then renormalised.

Find the sum of the 12 weights (T_{12}) and multiply each weight by $100/T_{12}$.

2. Theoretical difficulties.

The problem with aggregating individual scores for criteria, scores which are effective an expression of an individual's values, is one of transitivity. That is, we cannot assume that moves from 0-100 on one person's scale will be the same as those of another's scale (Goodwin and Wright 1991 p. 250). It should be noted that intransitive values are also aggregated in contingent valuation studies.

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