Conflicting rationalities, knowledge and values in scarred landscapes

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Abstract

Incorporating public or local preferences in landscape planning is often discussed with respect to the difficulties associated with accurate representation, stimulating interest and overcoming barriers to participation. Incorporating sectoral and professional preferences may also have the same degree of difficulty where conflicts can arise. Planning theory calls for inclusiveness and collaboration, ideally egalitarian, and analysis of the process often uses case study scenarios that may offer examples for practice and further research. Much of the literature takes case studies in urban landscapes as the starting point for discussion and little is known of the collaborative process in rural landscapes, especially damaged landscapes such as those that may occur after extreme resource extraction. In this paper, we use industrially mined, or 'cutaway', peatlands as illustrative examples of the remaining 'scarred' landscapes. Using narratives of 'knowledge-holders' as iterative examples, we explore the perspectives of key actors within scarred landscape after-use planning. It is shown that though there is agreement that community 'stakes' are important, there are conflicts relating to the exact level of collaboration or to the extent that it is necessary at all. Traditional sectoral approaches predominate with community level narratives following established pathways. The prevailing rationalities revolve around protectionism and SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 1 OF 54

differing opinions of knowledge. Where a policy vacuum exists in relation to after-use of damaged landscapes, the resulting conflict may be an impediment to non-tokenistic stakeholder collaboration.

Keywords: Stakeholder, knowledge, post-industrial, scarred landscape, discourse analysis, conflict, rationality.

Introduction

Scarred landscapes are those where natural resources have been completely removed or transformed, thus fundamentally altering the terrain so that it cannot be restored to anything like the original (morphologically, ecologically or otherwise) over a reasonable timescale. Industrially mined peatland landscapes may be used as illustrative case examples of these post-industrial landscapes that can be found throughout the world. The use of industrial peatlands here as case studies is appropriate because they can be found throughout Northern Europe where the inter-association between people and peatlands is historically long and culturally intimate (Chambers, 1997; Ingram, 1997; Smout, 1997). Peatlands have yielded much information on past climates (Godwin, 1981), species movement patterns (Barber, 1993), and human agricultural and migrational patterns (Feehan and O'Donovan, 1996). Peatlands have also been important in modern times where society has exploited them for their fuel resources (Chapman, et al., 2003; Schouten and Nooren, 1990) while, at the same time, supporting rural communities, especially those involved in industrial production of the peat (for domestic fuel, horticulture and power generation). This is an SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 2 OF 54

example where the exploitation of natural capital draws on and also augments social capital. The more recent values that have been ascribed to peatlands revolve around their unique ecological and hydrological functions (Wheeler and Shaw, 1995), their extensive carbon sequestration potential (Immirzi, et al., 1992) and their unique and specialised biological diversity (Moore and Bellamy, 1974). As a result there is now a global effort to devise and promote wise use principles and, in some cases, 'wise' after-use policies (Joosten and Clarke, 2002). In those countries that have been exploiting peatlands for a long time, there now exist ever-increasing tracts of scarred landscapes, though the mining of peatlands has embedded within it an interrelationship with rural communities. Analysis of this relationship is problematic as descriptions of the interface between people and peatlands are often based on historical accounts which reflect the mores of their time. Early colonial descriptions convey negative associations within these landscapes (e.g. Boate, 1652). Later, with resource harvesting and other utilitarian uses being found for peatlands, local and national communities benefited greatly, and so peatland landscapes became regarded more positively (Freeman, 1950; Holmes, 1948; Walsh, et al., 1958). Today, with the modern current recognition of the non-market values and ecosystem services (such as carbon sequestration) of peatlands (Blodau, 2002; Grace, 2004; Immirzi, et al., 1992), a new form of negativity has emerged, not towards the peatlands themselves but the human effects on these landscapes in relation to continued degradation and harvesting (Foss, et al., 2001; Waddington and Price, 2000). An opportunity now exists to derive new social and ecological values in the after-use of post-industrial landscapes, with the design of new, multi-functional landscapes (Ling, et al., 2007; Naveh, 1998) and drawing on traditional knowing in conjunction with expert knowledge (Ramakrishnan, 2007; Vermeulen, 2004). SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 3 OF 54

This paper contends that after-use planning policies ought to respond to, and reflect, the knowledge and values of all communities of interest on an egalitarian basis (Selman, 2004). Planning practice is increasingly predicated upon 'stakeholder' inclusion and participation, and this paper will illustrate how there is a need for greater specificity in identification of what a stakeholder may be and for questioning the motivations of these stakeholders. Using discourse analysis of actor dialogues, it will be shown that there are conflicts regarding knowledge and power in post-industrial after-use planning and this may prove problematic in the preparation of policy instruments for these future-oriented landscapes (Choi, 2004). The intention of this paper is to discuss emerging rationalities within the planning process using actor narratives as examples of potential conflicts in knowledge. Though narrative enquiry is often used in rural research, narratives are not always used as a heuristic device in landscape ecology studies (Soliva, 2007), thus this paper will contribute to identifying rationalities in the people-nature debate.

Collaborative landscape management

In addressing issues of stakeholder engagement and community participation, deliberative and collaborative planning approaches have moved centre-stage in theory and practice over the last two decades (Forester, 1993; Murtagh, 2004). Deliberative approaches have been developed largely from Habermasian ideas, which in the 1990s were increasingly applied to fields related to planning practice and strategic formulation (see Forester, 1989; 1993; Healey, 1992; Healey, 1997; Innes, 1998; Innes, 1996; Sager, 1994). Collaborative SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 4 OF 54 approaches emphasise a discursive and interactive process as a means of identifying priorities and developing strategies for collective action, and can be summarised as a process whereby:

...stakeholders representing the different interests meet for face-to-face dialogue and collectively work out a strategy to address a shared problem. Participants work through joint fact finding and agree on a problem, mission and actions. The players learn and co-evolve (Innes and Gruber, 2005, p. 183).

This process is primarily a form of critical listening to the words of others and modes of interaction (Forester, 1993) with an emphasis on reasoned dialogue among participants to get around the deficits of other policy process models (Vigar and Healey, 2002). The aim of deliberation is to encourage a plurality of perspectives in the policy process in order to overcome narrow self-interest (Jones, 2003). Therefore, in essence, collaborative planning is proposed as a model for consensus-building based on interactive, inclusive and transparent dialogue and a process of mutual learning among participants and stakeholders. As Healey (1996) argues, rebuilding trust across contemporary social divides is more than a question of inviting people to participate in governance, but the style and the tone of the process are critical too.

Much of the focus within collaborative planning literature is a concern with communicative routines and arenas for argumentation. In other words, there is an emphasis on style and process. However, a wave of criticism of collaborative planning as a theoretical basis for SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 5 OF 54

public participation has emerged in recent years, especially as regards its capacity to deal with power relations, political actions and access to decision-making processes (Allmendinger, 2001; Murtagh, 2004). Some commentators, for example, have questioned the political prospects of achieving Habermasian ideals of power-neutral arenas and consensus-based decisions within intense environmental conflicts and contested land-use decisions (Davies, 2005; Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger, 1998). For Jones (2003), this suggests that although the arguments for communicative reasoning may appear attractive, they must be balanced by political realities of entrenched self-interest, disparities in institutional capacity and the ability of powerful interests to manipulate and coerce agendas. Furthermore, as Yiftachel and Huxley (2000) argue, the focus on the deliberative arena within analysis of collaborative processes often draws attention away from the underlying material and political processes which shape place.

'Stakeholder' rationalities

Rydin (2003, Ch. 6) illustrates the three kinds of rationality in environmental planning (table 6.1). She demonstrates that while scientific rationalities are now more relied upon there has been a gradual move from instrumental or economic rationality to communicative rationality or social discourse in the environmental planning arena, and this has seen an increased emphasis on academic investigation into the role of stakeholders. As discussed, Habermasian communicative rationalities (1984) relate to decisions that are arrived at via the acquisition of stakeholder consensus through an egalitarian and legitimate process. These rationalities are derived from an 'emancipatory knowledge', that is knowledge of SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 6 OF 54

what is right rather than having a vested interest in the process, politically or otherwise. Thus, collaborative planning with multiple actors is preferred to the sectoral approaches of the past (Healey, 2006).

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Selman (2004) sees collaboration by stakeholders as an "essential ingredient of landscape planning and management" (p. 367) and notes that this is now enshrined in the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000). Selman had earlier pointed out that environmental initiatives rely heavily on a collaborative process between local citizens and institutions, that is communities-of-interest and communities-of-place (Selman, 2001). But the lines between the two sectors are often blurred in practice, especially when establishing a research methodology to assess stakeholder willingness to participate in either planning or management. Establishing 'what is right' rather than 'what is right, for me' is difficult and is central to Foucauldian criticism of Habarmasian theory, which sees the process as prone to power asymmetries. This may be because nearly all stakeholders can be seen as belonging to communities of interest, that is vested interest (which can alter over time and with exposure to the planning process), and the notion of 'place' is reliant on an awareness of boundaries that are not often readily identifiable. In addition, stakeholders may form power coalitions in order to strengthen their position and better influence policies (Sabatier, 1993). Analysing actor discourses can reveal what underpins values or 'stakes' and can aid in the mitigation of conflicts which Duane (1997) argues requires participation on which 'communicative rationality' and social capital are dependant. SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 7 OF 54

When initiating a collaborative process it is necessary to establish actual and potential communities of interest. Numerous methods may be used in this regard, such as 'deliberative mapping' (Burgess, et al., 2007) or 'stakeholder analysis' (Ramírez, 1999), that is the use of diverse methods to describe key actor rationalities whose level of interest can range from specific to broad (see Grimble and Wellard, 1997) in order to reveal potential conflicts and consensus between stakeholders (Zografos, 2007). For example, typologies for stakeholder involvement are wide ranging in the planning and sustainable management of forest (Buchy and Hoverman, 2000), wetland (Wattage and Mardle, 2005) and marine (Chaniotis and Stead, 2007) systems. Because the degree of stakeholder desire for involvement in after-use planning in post-industrial landscapes is unknown, this paper will examine those stakeholders that were deemed to have key knowledges on this matter. Within this research there were two objectives. The first was to ascertain the technical considerations relating to cutaway industrial peatland landscapes. The second was to ascertain rationalities or fundamental viewpoints, that may identify possible conflicts that may relate to the management of these depleted landscapes. The former task was relatively straightforward in that there are a limited number of activities that are technically possible in these landscapes, many of which are reliant on financial issues as well as geological and hydrological parameters. The latter was more complex since stakeholders can have many different 'stakes' as well as depth or degrees of interest, while we also recognise that stakeholder perspectives are also underpinned by cultural meanings, processes and (dynamic) experiences of places and landscapes and a dynamic relationship between nature, environment and landscape (Cloke and Jones, 2001; Wylie, 2003). SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 8 OF 54

In an attempt to clarify the stakeholder issue, this paper will use as a starting point Schmitters' matrix of differing 'holders' in issues of governance (from Schmitter, 2000; Swyngedouw, 2005, p. 1995, see table 2). Schmitters' reworking of Arnsteins' (1969) 'ladder of participation' seeks to tease out the constituent elements of what stakeholder can mean. However, it does not identify the nature of the 'stake' nor does it recognise that one may be a multiple 'holder' who may wear multiple "hats" (Ramírez, 1999, p. 103). It is also not clear how to uncover 'holder' interests and during the process of establishing the 'holders' in this study it became clear that they could all be included in the category of knowledge-holders. This is because they 'participate because they have particular knowledge about the matter concerned'. This paper will show that the 'holders' in damaged landscapes have contested forms of knowledge (scientific, practical and cultural) that makes the definitions in table 2 cumbersome. All actors seek to impose their knowledge on the landscape planning process (Murdoch and Pratt, 1993) which implies that this knowledge is a central feature of their 'stake', perhaps defining that 'stake' in practice. For practical purposes we will loosely use Schmitters idea of knowledge-holders for broad descriptive purposes. However, following from Selman (2004), there may be a case for using the term, communities of knowledge.

This study utilised a systems approach, where the researcher is a non-objective part of the process rather than an objective observer, and thus the researchers' knowledge of the landscape and the issue at hand had some bearing on the study. This has proven useful in examining social-ecological relationships in 'cultural' landscapes (e.g. O'Rourke, 2005; SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 9 OF 54

Oreszczyn, 2000). Thus, the aim was to uncover narratives both formally presented to the researcher as well as informally interpreted, where the researcher identifies or infers concurrent themes in actor discourses.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Research approach

Target actors were identified and semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted, consisting of open-ended questions to enable a discourse to develop. Closed questions, to gather descriptive data, were used at an earlier stage in order to gather technical information on peatland restoration techniques and feasibility, as well as to permit actors to reveal their 'stake', that is from what standpoint they wished to be viewed within the study. Such technical analysis of expert opinion was utilised in other social-ecological studies where it proved very useful at the earliest stage of the study (Collier and Feehan, 2004). Following each interview, communications were sent to the interviewee containing descriptions of the discussions with verbatim quotations, some of which are presented here. The participants were requested to read over these details and to contact the interviewer with any amendments and additions within a defined period. None of the participants responded with any contradictions or additions, though some clarified the context of the quotation ascribed to them or wished them to be removed from the record as they may jeopardise their professional standing or be libellous. However, all participants were generally comfortable with their responses and that their views and opinions were SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 10 OF 54

accurately recorded and transcribed. Permission to reproduce all data was secured from each participant once anonymity was assured and any personal references removed.

Initially, twenty-five individuals were interviewed having been identified as being key stakeholders, some to a greater degree than others. In addition, seventeen actors emerged and were also interviewed (n=42) over the research period, having been identified from national and international conference presentations, media appearances, recent appointments or referrals from a key stakeholder. Other local or residential stakeholders (or *space-holders*, if following the Schmitter (2000) participant definitions in table 2) were interviewed via random, targeted ethnographic sampling and these are reported elsewhere (Collier and Scott, 2008). The interviews reported here yielded a large body of technical information that will be necessary for the potential creation and management of new landscapes after cessation of harvesting.

To stimulate the revealing of knowledge, the interviewer suggested discussing the creation a 'National Wetlands Wilderness Park' (NWWP) on harvested peatland landscapes. Though there are no concrete plans or institutional policies for this, there are several active community interest groups (actor networks) promoting this as a viable proposal. There are also some working examples of scarred landscapes that have been permitted to revert to wildness in Ireland (Barron, et al., 1994), and there are several examples of assisted natural recovery in the UK (Smart, et al., 1989) and The Netherlands (Lamers, et al., 2002). The concept of a network of 'wild' landscapes has been gaining purchase within local rural communities recently. This is mainly due to the activities of small actor networks (Dáil SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 11 OF 54 Éireann, 2005) and the publication of a contextualised proposal (Feehan, 2004). Industrially harvested peatlands are all in the ownership of one company, Bord na Móna, which is a semi-state company and thus as the land is in the ownership of the State appropriate after-use policy instruments could provide an ideal mechanism for realising the return of nearly 80,000ha of land to a natural state for multiple uses such as biodiversity conservation and amenity.

This was presented to the interviewees as a viable after-use option, and that their 'stake' would be an important variable in its creation and may even be elevated as the planning process gained momentum. They were also made aware that nationwide and local (quantitative) surveys on this subject were in the field, thus emphasising the extent and intent of the NWWP proposal. All transcriptions were analysed by taking a systems thinking approach where narratives were examined with respect to connectiveness and context. This appears to be a suitable mechanism within managed rural landscapes (see Oreszczyn, 2000). These narratives yielded three main discursive themes (mirroring Rydins' (2003) three differing rationalities mentioned earlier). These were labelled:

- Ecology discourses
- Utilitarian discourses
- Social discourses

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Research findings

Ecology discourses

In the natural sciences there has been a concerted effort to mobilise interest in transdisciplinary research which is equally inclusive and representative of other disciplines, and it is often seen that the social sciences have a great deal of insight to offer ecological research, especially in the area of management planning (Blandford, 2006; Walkerden, 2006). However, while the importance of governance ecological management is often expressed, the reality is that there is little by way of agreement on exactly what the role that social science may have or to what level it should be utilised in research and, especially, its application in practice. This has as much to do with the lack of a common language as it is to the lack of epistemological commonalities as well as trust in local actors. In specialised, value-laden disciplines such as restoration ecology and landscape ecology, adaptive collaborative management (co-management) is now seen as best practice, having been derived from an integration of conservation theory, advocacy and conservation practice (Clewell and Aronson, 2006; Folke, et al., 2005; Olsson, et al., 2004; Ruitenbeek and Cartier, 2001). But, this social-ecological interface often uses examples from illustrative case studies from pristine or near-pristine ecosystems. In so-called 'cultural' landscapes, especially in the highly altered rural landscapes that permeate the European countryside, socio-cultural interactions are well described, often from historical perspectives (e.g. Aalen,

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1978; Aalen, et al., 1997), but their relationships with modern spatial planning and management are not as well explored.

New motivations for habitat restoration have recently emerged and these focus on the restoration of the functions of a system (hydrology, carbon sequestration, etc.) rather than specific species or groups; functions that have added value to society and thus are the main drivers in modern restoration projects. This future-oriented restoration (Choi, 2004; 2007), in combination with the restoration of natural capital (Aronson, et al., 2006), is an attempt to derive multiple societal benefits. It is seen as being ideally suited to 'cultural' landscapes (McGhee, 2007) as well as mined landscapes (van Eeden, et al., 2007). Though economics offers the rationale for conservation and restoration via ecosystem services, other areas of the social sciences, such as anthropology, can reveal the cultural values that shape the landscape (Mascia, et al., 2003). With this new recognition, and as there has been a considerable degree of discussion among restoration ecologists on the values and practicalities of sociological integration in recent years, Hobbs (2007) has called for better integration between ecology and sociology. This is a long-running debate on people-nature and people-place relationships between restoration ecologists and practitioners, which Hobbs believes may be addressed by incorporating socio-economic and philosophical issues within landscape restoration.

The true complexities of restoration can be seen in community reaction and there is a constant challenge when dealing with the vagaries of societal expectations of what to expect from restoration projects (Hobbs, 2004). Gobster and Hull (2000) argue that the SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 14 OF 54

creation of new wilderness is as much a social construct as an ecological one and as such a restored landscape can bring greater benefits, socially. Light and Higgs (1996) had earlier argued that the act of restoring produces a "simultaneous positive value" for the restored landscape and the communities therein (p. 236). In addition, volunteerism in conservation and restoration can have numerous added benefits and can draw from differing knowledges and secular expertise and so can strengthen relationships between communities and landscapes (Ellis and Waterton, 2004), sometimes referred to as citizen science (Cooper, et al., 2007). Others have argued that while in the restoration of landscapes there is an inherent non-market return to communities, there is a more profound effect within communities that brings a focality or a deepening of people-nature inter-relationships in an ever urbanising society, and hence contributes to a wider awareness of environmental issues (Higgs, 2003). This points towards the linking of the restoration of natural capital with the enhancement or even rehabilitation of social capital by building "visceral connections to natural processes even in... ravaged landscapes" (Higgs, 2003, p. 285). Social scientists have overlooked the significance of the restoration of landscapes since they were "not a conspicuous, widely recognised, or storied part of environmental perception and culture" (Jordan, 2000, p. 24).

In this study a similar dichotomy emerged among ecologists, one that is sceptical of the contribution of social discourse to ecological practicality and doubtful of the validity of social discourse in landscape planning:

[I'm] not sure what there is to be gained from speaking with people living in bogland areas. Naturally they'll love the idea of new parklands [in their area]... but the 'devil will be in the detail'. Anyway, by the time it happens... most of them will be dead and buried a long time. **SCI-15**

Locals are stakeholders, sure, and they probably won't miss the [peat harvesting] machines; they'll all want parklands and lakes. So why bother them with questions? We [ecologists] will design the landscapes that return after harvesting, they can use them for strolling and picnicking. We need to get our end right: to maximise biodiversity as much as we are able. They need to make sure it's not destroyed by ignorance. Maybe we'll stick a park bench for them to have a rest! **SCI-4**

These comments indicate an 'us and them' attitude that once typified the expert-driven or sectoral approaches to conservation management (Phillips and Clarke, 2004). It is, in essence, a reticence towards recognising that there are other knowledges, each with their own validity and relevance and that scientific or empirical knowledge is one kind and that this can differ greatly from cultural knowing (Blackmore, 2007). It can be seen as a denial that cultural landscape restoration projects are essentially anchored in social constructs in that they are often inspired, funded and maintained by policies, social motivations, economic interests and other socio-cultural and socio-economic drivers rather than the quest for purely scientific knowledge or engineering prowess. Thus, the motivations of these actors may also be value-laden without due thought and recognition of this

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possibility, which negates much of their formal arguments. Here, expert actors may be anxious of the potential challenges that lie in the interface between ecology and sociology:

I cannot see the point of spending time talking to people in those [peatland] places. SCI-12

There is a lot of time [that can be] wasted in the field leaning on farm gates and drinking tea at kitchen tables. [You will] not get far asking for opinions. The main energy needs to be focussed on protecting existing habitats and convincing them [the mining company] to release the land so we can get on with restoring [the bogs]. **SCI-6**

The actors here appear to embrace the transdiciplinary approach to current scientific research notionally but not necessarily in practice (see Tress, et al., 2001). While it may be easier to view ecological processes as linear and somewhat predictable, this is certainly not the case in reality. Ecosystems, landscapes and socio-cultural systems are adaptive systems and thus follow non-linear trajectories (Berkes and Folke, 1998; Olsson, et al., 2004). Understanding social-ecological resilience means taking a holistic view including adaptive *and* collaborative methods in planning and management in order to buffer against sudden change (Adger, 2000; Gunderson and Folke, 2005; Walker, et al., 2002). The inherent irony in the discourses presented here is that the scientific actors are also conveying the futility of being consulted themselves, and that they do not consider themselves as having a cultural 'stake', though when restoring any landscape their ecological expertise is central and this SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 17 OF 54

had been made clear from the outset of the consultation process. These sceptical narratives are also reminiscent of historical dialogues in the natural sciences, which are at variance with the more modern rationality of holism. This is reflected in the literature where multifunctionality in cultural landscapes has become accepted, normatively (Fry, 2001; Naveh, 2001; Palang and Fry, 2003). At the same time there are others who appear to be more aware of cultural landscapes and express more holistic and humanist viewpoints:

The advantages of parklands revolve around what they deliver at a social level. **SCI-18**

The [social] value of being surrounded by biodiversity will be more 'mature' in the future. Humans are 'at home' in the cultural / agricultural landscape that reflects our original landscape in Africa... When experience of the natural world is absent, the human experience is lacking... Unless we are surrounded by the natural world we cannot be happy. **SCI-9**

However, when presented with a site-specific scenario (the NWWP, for example), there is some degree of scepticism as they are forced to stray outside their area of theoretical expertise and are asked to enter the area of practice and onward to personal opinion, and a reticence to engage with other knowledges for fear of conflict.

As soon as word gets out that there's a park proposal two groups will be formed – one to lobby for it the other to protest against it. **SCI-18** SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 18 OF 54 The notion of knowledge being expressed in scientific discourses is one of academic reserve or detachment. This is noted elsewhere where Cabin (2007) comments that in ecological restoration projects, many actors will advocate "objective science" as a reason for carrying out a particular course of ecological action, until science conflicts with personal beliefs and values. Here, two of the international 'knowledge-holders' that were interviewed take a broader view, but offer less specificity:

Ireland needs to create new opportunities for nature because of its poor track record with existing nature. **SCI-3**

Ireland has never embraced its cultural landscapes. Consultation with locals is rare and, but they say 'sure, it costs to communicate, but have you tried the alternative?' **SCI-20**

The ecological 'knowledge-holders' in this case study claim to espouse inclusion, and are convinced of the merits and practical utility of integrating ecological knowledge with cultural knowing when speaking of abstract situations on a macro scale. Though there is generalised agreement that the local community are important stakeholders, these narratives do not reflect a recognition that their 'stake' has any more relevance than one of consultation and informing, one which may perhaps be influenced by information-giving mechanisms such as social learning. It is a viewpoint of participation as 'tokenism' (Arnstein, 1969) or 'passive participation' (Pretty, 1995). Indeed, the academic SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 19 OF 54

'knowledge-holders', while advocating the restoration of ecological potential, do not appear to consider themselves as stakeholders in the consultative process as they would maintain that their 'stake' is scientifically rational and thus open to scrutiny. Yet, there is also a sense that the consultation process may alter their 'stake' and that instead of maximising the ecological potential of the cutaway landscape (which would be a suitable overarching academic target), there might be an attempt to integrate social constructs into these new landscapes, which might then dilute ecological trajectories, influence habitat or species management regimes and perhaps frustrate the restoration process with "too many stupid opinions" **SCI-18**.

A recurring theme in the discourse warns of the risk, globally, of the non-fulfilment of international agreements, implying that local communities ought to heed ecological justifications for the greater good. This is at variance with the spirit of the Rio agreement which sees the cumulative efforts of numerous actions at a local level as being of global importance (UNCED, 1992), giving rise to the now acceptable practice of community participation in sustainable development projects (Principle 10) (Freeman, 1996). Thus, the ecology 'knowledge-holders' are holding a sectoral position though individuals affirm an awareness of deeper, philosophical rationalities that reflect their own beliefs of the people-place relationships. This, however, does not appear to transcend their 'stake' in this case study as community or local views do not have enough standing to merit a more considered application within the planning process. Perhaps it is the opportunism that these emerging landscapes offers, where these 'knowledge-holders' can envision ecological opportunities

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that may be derailed by too many vested interests. This clearly points to a potential policy vacuum conflict.

Utilitarian discourses

The technical or operational 'knowledge-holders' that were interviewed present narratives from a utilitarian landscape worldview. These are based on practical experience in combination with knowledge of economic considerations. The peat mining company (now called Bord na Móna) was established by the State in the 1920s to extract peat industrially from the raised peatland landscapes of the Irish midlands. In the past, when mining activities of a peatland complex ceased the land was either abandoned or utilised for forestry or agriculture. Now semi-privatised, the company is charged with being financially independent, and it must now find commercial after-uses for all its ca80,000 hectares of State land. The mining company participated willingly in this research, maintaining that they should play the lead role in after-use planning. It is not surprising that they regard the peatlands from a productivist point of view and their discourses contend that the postproductive landscape ought to be, again, 'productive' (i.e. commercially). Attempts to reconsume scarred landscapes are dismissed by long-term company staff members, with many 'off the record' comments revealing a lack of confidence in the abilities of higher management (though not that the landscapes should be considered for non-use).

Now we're private those above us want money for nothing. The bogs have given their all and now they [company directors] want us to squeeze more out of them SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 21 OF 54 [peatlands]. 'Blood from a stone', I say; they'll want to sell it to anyone with a halfbaked idea and God knows what the countryside will look like then. **MIN-7**

These 'knowledge-holders' do recognise the value and importance of their role in shaping or transforming landscapes for productive use. It is a worldview that recalls the functional negativity with which peatlands were often associated in the past (Smout, 1997).

Peat is associated with wildness as well as poverty. Remember, peatland landscapes were once seen to be 'inhabited by miserable wretches'. **MIN-2**

The reference to 'miserable wretches' occurs often in discourses from the utilitarian 'knowledge-holders', and it is taken to be from Gerald Boate (1652) who accounted for the presence of such vast areas of un-useful peatlands by the lack of initiative ("laziness") on the part of the Irish peasants. The date is interesting here; that a narrative from so long ago still prevails. Thus, the re-wilding of these scarred landscapes might rekindle the former negative social associations with poverty, that is, the perception of poverty of the past and the actuality of poverty – company losses – of the present, as these landscapes loose their productive capabilities. Today, wildness, or wilderness, is more positively associated, in social terms, with recreation or amenity and this is at the heart of the NWWP proposal. As a second interviewee noted:

You wouldn't be getting enough value out of the cutaway by just going for wilderness alone – the sooner people see this the better. **MIN-1** SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 22 OF 54 So, the creation of wild landscapes with amenity benefits is therefore a 'non-use' and not, in itself, a form of 'productive' re-use. Technically, the company expounds the virtues of natural regeneration and wetland creation (Bord na Móna, 2007) but this natural re-use is a result of not being able (technically or financially) to find any suitable economic return for the cutaway landscape. This is despite over 50 years of research that has yielded numerous potential post-productive uses, though few of which are practical under current global economic conditions (Renou, et al., 2006). This notion of post-productivity extends beyond the company's recent privatisation and follows centuries of attempts to 'improve' peatlands to a 'productive' state in the first place (Andrews, 1982; Feehan and O'Donovan, 1996). Productivity here is associated with community health and well-being and hence we follow the medical analogy by using the term 'scarred' for these post-productive landscapes.

Economic justifications are often cited as being the reason for permitting these landscapes to be re-wilded as a last resort – that is when no other market use can be found for them. It is often stated that this will benefit civil society, but there is no actual desire within the mining company to release physical or notional ownership of the lands (though they are still technically under the ownership of the State).

Who decides whether cutaway bogs will be leased or sold for amenity and conservation purposes?... A wetlands park is not the way to go – too long and too misleading to local people. The idea should be to return to landscape. If people are made more aware of this I'm sure they'll support it; it's for their own good. **MIN-1** SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 23 OF 54

Analysis of discourses from within the mining company reveal that there may be a genuine desire to include citizen-expert participation in principle but again, this may be 'tokenism' in practice and there is no attempt being made to elucidate any new ideas for re-use that may arise from truly inclusive collaboration, or to share the planning burden in any way. Thus any consultation process is merely rubber-stamping the decisions that the mining company have already taken or propositions that they do not believe will be worth pursuing (financially or otherwise). This position with regard to inclusion, is essentially consultation in its broadest and least effective sense, simply information-giving. It is a view that is similar among some of the actors with broader operational knowledge and thus there is some degree of confusion on what the community 'stake' may be, or who the community may be.

The community might be consulted all right, but they are not the 'drivers' of a project. **PRA-3**

Still, the mining company have given support to one local community coalition by creating a dual amenity and wild area in one post-industrial peatland (The Lough Boora Parklands Group, 2007), and this has been viewed as being beneficial, both ecologically and socially (Barron, et al., 1994; Egan, 1999). However, the company has maintained a firm leadership role in this project and when representing their accomplishments, community consultation and participation are not featured as being *central* to the success of the project rather as a result of the project (which can be seen as a post-productive benefit). In company reports SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 24 OF 54

there are references to 'community participation', but this refers exclusively to informationgiving, and not that the public participate in active after-use planning. In this manner the company retains an 'ownership' over the notion of wild re-use as a productive after-use notion. Indeed, interviewees often alluded to 'owning' the technical knowledge that will enable them to re-wild the cutaway peatlands if no other use can be found. There is an undercurrent of the mining company appropriating the after-use process as well as restoration techniques and this has been shown elsewhere to result in anti-egalitarian and undemocratic corporate restorations (Light and Higgs, 1996).

We [the mining company] have been caretakers of this landscape for many years and it would be reckless to abandon it to *vested interests*. **MIN-7** (emphasis added)

The use of evocative language such as "reckless" and "vested interests" illustrates an isolationist position similar to that of the ecological 'knowledge-holders'. The years of experience built up within the mining company has brought about such knowledge capital that it must be protected, itself a kind of vested interest. There is no recognition, however, of the inherent irony of this stance, as many from outside the company believe that the company is being reckless in protecting its stake so vigorously. Some of the wider technical 'knowledge-holders' (such as local authority employees, foresters, National Park rangers and managers, tourism officials) all convey their sense of impotency in the process if new parklands and wetlands were to be a viable after-use proposal:

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The sooner that people understand that [the mining company] are not in the business of selling off land the better. It would be reckless to allow *ad hoc* development, as has been the case in the past. **MIN-11**

If [the mining company] have been planning for the future, the local communities don't know this. I'm sure we'll all know soon enough and by then I hope it's not too late. *Q. For what?* A. To have our say. The leftover bogs can be used for many things that could be a boost biodiversity – like [re] introducing the Bittern. **PRA-5**

Again, we observe a (post-)productivist paradigm emerging, in that there may be opportunities in the new landscape for the creation of conservation initiatives that have broader appeal, such as recreational facilities for example, which ought to have social gain. It is still a productivist stance (non-use as re-use) where mere abandonment is not an option (even though it could further conservation objectives in the longer term). There is also a clear lack of communication of any sort between the operational and the technical 'knowledge-holders' even though their experiential knowledges are invaluable. For example, under the IUCN classifications for landscape protection, Irelands National Parks are similar to North American parks – Category II. Whereas, the UK (where the rural landscape is most similar to that of Ireland) opts for a protected landscape system (Category V) (Phillips and Partington, 2005). There are, of course, no protective classifications for emerging landscapes. So, the contribution of the operational 'knowledge-holders', in this case wildlife managers, is one that recognises deficits in the practical application of new landscapes:

[New nature] is a great idea but we haven't got the [right] people to design, build and manage it. Under current legislation we have little say in what goes on. Cultural landscapes are not a classification in Ireland even though we signed the [European Landscape] Convention. If we had the English system [Category V] it would be possible to plan for new landscapes, but try selling that to the politicians. **PRA-7**

When it comes to the after-use of mined landscapes, and the new landscapes that may arise from them, it is clear that there is a great deal of experiential knowledge within the mining company, specifically individual personnel, most of whom are locally resident. As local residents they are subject to wearing different stakeholder "hats" and so there will be significant knowledge overlaps:

Open landscape is a problem because of scrub encroachment. People out walking will call us and complain that they don't feel safe – and these are the same people that wanted a park to walk in the first place. We can't afford to hire on guys to manage the scrub and clear paths; we're not park keepers. The [National Parks and] Wildlife Service manages their little piece of cutaway and they're paid to do that. We do our bit to keep to the [extraction licence] conditions and then some, because we feel a responsibility to local communities. After all, everyone who works here lives in the local communities – we're more than owners. **MIN-4**

On a further practical level, ownership is a narrative that pervades other dialogues. SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 27 OF 54 The most important issue is who owns the land. The ownership issue is important and as soon as we know we'll be able to get on with the process of managing these new landscapes for the betterment of wildlife. **PRA-2**

The mining company maintains that of the ca80,000 hectares of peatland they own, only ca20,000 hectares will "be suitable for parkland and lakes" (MIN-2) and that the remainder will be used to "plant trees, some for commercial purposes, some not. It's the best use of the good land that is left" (MIN-2). Indeed the company affirms that though there will be a mosaic of landscapes they will be "dominated by forestry and grassland" (Bord na Móna, 2001), though it is now known that grassland is no longer viable due to the recent decoupling of agricultural payments in the EU. Still, this has been a dominant strategy platform for some time and much of the current after-use decisions are taken on an ad hoc basis. Thus, the mining company may be attempting to influence the eventual decisionmaking process, which will rely on community participation, without being open to considering that all 80,000 hectares could be utilised for nature conservation and public amenity. Company calculations are not based on anything but the type of landscape or terrain that will remain after peat extraction has ceased. Calculations, such as they are, are presented by representatives of the mining company at public events and academic presentations, as well as in this case study, as if they are a *fait accompli* and not open to challenge. This 'prepare-reveal-defend' approach is common in land-use planning of the past (Bedford, et al., 2002). Such sectoral influence has been noted elsewhere in the rural housing issue in the UK, where it was shown that as calculations filter downward through SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 28 OF 54

the various hierarchies, they become "harder to resist" (Murdoch and Abram, 1998 p.49). The future debates on the after-use of cutaway peatlands in Ireland will revolve around the 20,000 hectares of land regardless of its potential to be useful for community amenity (such as being in inaccessible locations or surrounded by private land) and not on the validity of other after-uses at local levels.

Social discourses

The communities of common interest in this case study consist of several small coalition groups located throughout the townlands of the wider peatland landscape. They identify their participatory role as being one of advocacy. Their principal starting point is the belief that they, as local actors, are best placed to identify landscape issues of local concern as well as local norms and practices. These social 'knowledge-holders' do not believe that they are part of any process of after-use decision-making at any level, and so have formed these loose coalitions in order to campaign to be included. The theme of not being listened to pervades most of the community discourses.

Local people know best what to do with the land, and the bogs as well. We've been working with bogs and living on them for years. We don't need Government telling us what we need to do. *Q. Then what would you do with the cutaway?* A. I suppose some kind of community enterprise like [blue]berries or windmills [i.e. wind farms], maybe forestry. *Q. What if they're too deep for that.* A. Maybe a floating casino!

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Ah, no; probably lakes for locals to fish in. It would be nice to see birds again – maybe even shoot a few! **COM-8**

Readily evident is their opposition to being viewed as passive 'consultees' in a planning scenario and see themselves as active 'drivers' of change, locally, regardless of national or international interests. They reflect a knowledge of the practical possibilities for these new landscapes (lakes, woodlands, etc.) as well as multi-functionality (wind farms). There are strong opinions among local actors of the validity of the mining company's' activities in this matter and its ability to plan for the future. Many social actors are suspicious and somewhat negative or derogatory, with some being unaware of their own 'stake' and their abilities to participate and influence the process, if and when it may arise.

I doubt that [the mining company] will part with their land holding willingly. They'll try to squeeze as much out of it as they can, and then some. And I suppose we'll just sit back and let them. **COM-2**

The [industrial] bogs have always been used by local people for some kind of recreation and amenity over the years, as well as for cutting their own turf. Now that [the mining company] is private that will all change. They should give back the land they took in the 80s and let farmers use the land for something useful. But they'll never give that land back. God knows what they're planning to do with it. **COM-5**

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The perceived threat from outside the area is also prevalent with a high degree of interactor agreement on that point. This is not necessarily a mistrust of other actors who move into the community, or reside outside the community, rather a concern over planning corruption and inconsistencies, and the motivations of other 'knowledge-holders'.

If [outside] people had an interest in it, they would not tell anyone else and that is a danger. **COM-1**

The more rural Ireland becomes populated by people from the city; the more the land is closed off to walkers and the more dangerous it is to walk the side roads. **COM-6**

If such a place went out of State ownership, it would be the end of it. *Q. Why?* A. Well, you would have people buying up the land and building holiday houses and the like. **COM-8**

As is the case in other areas, many actors do not wish the landscape to be put to uses that may be negative to their livelihoods and quality of life (Davies, 2008). There is a commonality of desire for the land to remain in public ownership and to be open to all, for example, and a view that the cutaway landscape ought to be allowed to re-grow and recover. The idea of 'letting it go' is used by numerous actors, meaning allow the cutaway peatlands to 'go wild', a return of and to nature. It is a theme that describes the release of ownership from resource depletion and the re-ownership of these scarred landscapes by SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 31 OF 54 wildness. It is on this point that cultural knowing is most evident. Despite the fact that these scarred landscapes are open, barren, industrialised landscapes, there is a clear desire to retain the wildness it once had. It may be postulated that one reason for this is that local communities have become familiar with the open landscape over the years and are unable to conceive of another landscape. This openness is sometimes used metaphorically and interchangeably:

Wildness will provide open places for people in the light of the [Celtic] Tiger [the recent Irish economic boom]. People need space, now more then ever. These lands need to be retained by the State and planning restrictions need to be placed on farmers around these lands. **COM-9**

We should have somewhere safe to walk and to let the kids out in. The roads are too busy these days. Parks would be nice – but not trees: too many badgers. Though trees are lovely, and lakes too. *Q. Wouldn't they be dangerous as well?* A. Maybe, but [the] children will learn more with wildness. **COM-3**

Accordingly, there is little desire to see new industries that would employ local people despite the fact that the mining operations have become ingrained within the physical and cultural landscapes of the area and have employed many people for many decades often in time of most want.

People will only support a park if they don't want anything else there [employment]. *Q. But these are productive lands that have given employment for decades; don't you think they might be used to develop different industries*? A. No. There's too much money sloshing around to be bothered with old bogs. Most people are too lazy to get out of they're cars and work on a bog, let alone walk on a bog! Anyway, we've taken a lot from the bog... time to let them grow back. **COM-6**

On the other hand, there are narratives of 'letting it go', meaning releasing it back to the community or 'letting go, *of it*' **COM-4**, with some actors believing that it ought to be returned to the original owners (though many would now be dead or retired from farming), others maintaining that local farmers might buy the land for productive reasons (despite the technical unfeasibility and expense of this in an age of declining farming activities). Though there are many statements on what the land *could* be used for, there is, however, little agreement on what the newly emerging land *should* be used for, in reality.

[The mining company] should give back the land to the farmers they took it from 20 years ago... let them develop it. *Q. What kind of developments?* A. Forestry probably. *Q. What if the area is below the water table and will always be wet?* A. I dunno! **COM-4**

Everywhere you look on that bog you can see the hands of people. Mine are in there somewhere. **COM-6**

Embedded within these social discourses is a complex and nuanced relationship between local communities and peatlands where cultural meanings and processes and imagined geographies of place are as important as material geographical spaces of rurality (Cloke, 2007). These cultural dynamics include practices and routines (and performativity) which have defined and redefined the relationship between local people and the rural landscape. So, while environmental management and conservation can be viewed as 'rational' projects, a more important guide for local people may be linked to emotional biogeographies (Trudgill, 2008), whereby values and a willingness to participate in deliberative arenas have a fundamental emotional underpinning. Thus, mined landscapes perform an important role in local memories of place, past struggles and transformative cultural change. In this sense, as Cloke and Pawson (2001) argue, non-human elements of nature (and landscape change) can be understood as active agents, relationally entwined in the (re)production of ecological, social, economic, cultural and political formations, and therefore nature and culture are bound together in place (Cloke and Jones, 2001). Places and landscapes within these cultural processes can therefore be considered as dynamic rather than static. It may be argued that these narratives, which see the fate of the emerging cutaway landscapes as being decided upon by locals, also deny the validity of other stakeholders' opinions, and that this rationality is merely used as a tool for regaining ownership (figurative or actual) by the community or by nature. The policy vacuum in relation to the after-use of industrially mined landscapes may mean that the social 'knowledge-holders' are searching for some mechanism to argue for an egalitarian role in the process, in light of their lack of inclusion thus far.

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Discussion and conclusions

It can be seen from this study that many of the actors support the principle of re-wilding post-industrial, scarred landscapes, but they have conflicting viewpoints when it comes to a proposed landscape planning scenario or the process by which the future of these landscapes may be decided upon. Though all claim to value the importance of inclusion and participation, and many desire to be seen to participate constructively, the actors here exhibit protectionist positions, are suspicious of the motivations or interests of the other 'holders' and see their knowledge paramount. The worldview of the ecological 'knowledge-holders' stems from a detached standpoint that sees natural regeneration as being highly important to human communities (ecosystem services), but they do not suggest how these communities may be incorporated into the process or how the process can benefit from this. Indeed, these actors do not always see other knowledges as having a role in of the process *per se*, and as such the consultation process is a moot point – perhaps useful as an exercise in social learning, for example. Once the practicalities of the peoplenature debate are considered these actors often cite the greater good as reasons for excluding the wider community from the decision-making process lest ecological goals be lowered or diminished as a result. This protectionist stance may stem from the difficulty ecologists have had in the planning process and statutory arenas of the past (Goldman, 2003). By laying claim to owning a true 'legitimate knowledge', ecologists may fail to recognise that their knowledge is not always recognised as being the legitimate by others (Clark and Murdoch, 1997; Harrison and Burgess, 1994).

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From the point of view of the utilitarian 'knowledge-holders' there is a strong desire to maintain landscape ownership on one level but on a deeper level there is a strong belief that the knowledge capital that it has been built up over the many years of industrial activity and research may be diminished if after-use options were not to include their experiential knowledge or other knowledges were to be invited to contribute to the decision-making process. This internal conflict is matched with an external conflict between the mining company and the other (technical) 'knowledge-holders', who are mostly disbelieving of the honesty and motivations of the mining company's intentions. Despite the fact that the technical 'knowledge-holders' consist of individuals with different backgrounds and professional obligations, this mistrust is unanimous. There is a strong sense of pride in what has been achieved by the company both technically (restoration of some peatland systems) and socially (creation of a small number of amenity resources in local communities). Some actors within the mining company have even secured funding to carry out trial rehabilitation projects in small areas of cutaway landscapes. This is technically unnecessary under the requirements of their extraction licence. However, if these small trials are regarded as yet one more experiment in a long line of experiments of after-use ideas they can be seen as no more different than, say, a trial cranberry plot or a biomass plantation – in other words, a scattergun approach which is bound to hit on the 'right' strategy eventually. The engagement with one community grouping and the creation of small trial restoration plots may indicate also that this is an attempt to acquire knowledge that can be applied elsewhere as a consultative service, that is, a product. In the absence of political guidance these operational 'knowledge-holders' will continue with ad hoc planning all the while citing unreferenced calculations and opposing rationalities.

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In the wider field of technical 'knowledge-holders' there is an overwhelming view that while these actors have responsibilities in relation to management of the landscape (as local and national tourism promoters, local authority biodiversity and planning officers or wildlife service and forestry personnel), they maintain a reserved stance citing impotence in the absence of policy instruments and a lack of transparency from the operational 'knowledge-holders' (mining company). That there has not been any thoughtful debate between these two strands of sectoral actors, especially on the mining companies after-use calculations, may indicate that all actors are largely resigned to permit the mining company to drive after-use policies, despite many professional reservations about company motivations. The technical 'knowledge-holders' offer a modified post-production viewpoints, and are willing to accept 'non-use' as a viable re-use option, but again they are uncertain as to the extent or the necessity of involvement from local community groups or the exact nature or meaning of community involvement or inclusion. Again, there is the opinion that the sectoral professionals may have the better knowledge in this matter and the only reason to become engaged in communicative processes would be to further their (preconceived) plans rather than to elicit ideas from the cultural 'knowledge-holders'.

In this study the social 'knowledge-holders' are disparate coalitions with a strong belief that the future of these scarred landscapes lies in recognising local knowledge and willingness to participate. There is little agreement, however, on what planning approach would benefit the local community best, which indicates the lack of internal community discussion on this matter. Other 'knowledge-holders' may find this to be convenient because it assists in the SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 37 OF 54 preservation of non-inclusive planning and information giving rather than creating a space for knowledge transfer. But this style of planning is not consistent with communicative planning and actor engagement that predicates modern planning practice. This is also true for other fields of expertise. With calls for holistic and multi-functional post-industrial landscapes (Ling, et al., 2007) and with Hobbs' (2007) call for new methods to reconcile social and ecological differences in restoration ecology, collaborative planning and management mechanisms are growing in stature and appeal as a process of consensusbuilding, mutual learning and rebuilding trust relations. Indeed, stakeholder involvement, consultation, participation and inclusion are some of the more commonly utilised descriptors of the process of collaborative planning and management. Such engagement has proven valuable in Australia (Sobels, et al., 2001) and Hungary (Selman, 2004). Difficulties can arise when it comes to identifying or revealing a stakeholder, which is less an accurate descriptor and more a generalised concept. The notion of Schmitters knowledge-holders is quite useful in establishing *communities of knowledge*, and the planning process may be better served if the 'stake' were to be explored rather than the 'holder', and thus concentrate on the egalitarian notion of 'communicative rationality' in order to strive to overcome asymmetries of power and influence.

The lack of long-term policies for the after-use of scarred landscapes has created a vacuum that may give rise to conflict when planning eventually begins. Here, the use of discourse analysis is seen as being a useful tool in the examination of 'holder' dynamics and in identifying conflict areas of the differing 'actor-worlds' (Burgess, et al., 2000). Using a notional scenario as a method for elucidating opinions was key to revealing rationalities SCARRED LANDSCAPES PAGE 38 OF 54

and the conflicts that may arise from mistrust or misconception of the legitimacy of knowledge. Counteracting this may mean increasing the interaction between the various 'knowledge-holders' as increasing discursive contact, based on the egalitarian principles of collaborative planning, may change or transform knowledge (McCarthy, 1996) as it builds capacity.

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