

CHAPTER 9

Deliberative democracy and sustainable business

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Summary: The main purpose of the chapter is an attempt of answering the question to what extent the ideas of deliberative democracy can contribute to the implementation of sustainable business. Universal realization of the concept of sustainable development requires involvement of all actors of socio-economic life and enterprises have a significant role to play in this process. Managing a company in a sustainable manner is an extremely complexed task that requires taking into account the expectations of broadly understood stakeholders, including the representations of natural environment. Though, the question is: how the companies should collaborate with their stakeholders in order to build good and sustainable relationships? One of the possibilities provides the idea of deliberative

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democracy. The results of the qualitative research, i.e. literature studies, including case studies of sustainable enterprises, have led to the conclusion that deliberative discourse and specific deliberation procedures can be used both on a macro scale to determine the economic and legislative framework of the business management and micro in relation to all stakeholders of an enterprise and deliberative democracy can become the basis of management of fully sustainable enterprises. Deliberative discourse, related to the principles of participatory democracy, provides the opportunity of actual involvement to all stakeholders of the enterprise and helps to achieve a reasonable consensus for sustainability based on a social dialog. Above presented conclusions contribute to the development of such areas as sustainable business management and broadly understood deliberative democracy.

Keywords: deliberative democracy, public discourse, sustainable business, CSR, sustainable development

1. Introduction

Nowadays one of the most serious challenges is the implementation of the sustainable development concept. The idea of sustainable development (SD) is related to the contemporary threats to human life, which are connected with the rise in global consumption, increasing environmental degradation, rapid population growth, unsatisfied basic human needs or deep destabilization of natural and socioeconomic systems. It is accepted that the 1969 UN Report: The Problems of Human Environment, launched a new era of perceiving and thinking about development. When we think of sustainable development the following three interdependent dimensions should be considered: ecologic integrity, economic vitality and social well-being. It means that the model of sustainability provides a sense of balance between three pillars: environmental, economic and social. The basic element of this model is of course the responsibility of meeting the needs of present as well as future generations.

The implementation of SD at the macroeconomic level is widely described in the literature with special regard to the ideas provided by the theory of deliberative democracy (Spijkers, Honniball, 2014; Leach, O'Connell, 2017; Thinyane, Goldkind, Lam, 2018; Frint, 2019). However, there is an urgent need of scientific discussion and setting out further directions for the research on deliberative democracy as a tool for the sustainable business. The present achievements in this

area have a marginal character yet, which was a direct reason for addressing the topic.

The main purpose of the chapter is an attempt of answering the question to what extent the ideas of deliberative democracy can contribute to the implementation of sustainable business. The chapter was prepared on the basis of qualitative research. The method of the research is based on the analyses of the literature with a special focus on the definition of deliberative democracy, place and importance of the public discourse within the process related to the implementation of sustainable development and finally the emphasize was put on the validity of deliberative discourse within sustainable enterprises. The main conclusion assumes that deliberative discourse and its specific procedures can be used both on a macro scale to determine the economic and legislative framework of sustainable enterprises functioning and also on a micro scale in relations to all stakeholders of sustainable enterprise (Bocken, Short, Rana, Evans 2014).

2. Concept of Deliberative Democracy

Basically, there are two models of democracy in the contemporary political theory. First, it is the liberal model of democracy, sometimes called as aggregative democracy, where a political man is identified as economic one. According to this approach voters play a role of consumers on the political market choosing goods supplied by political parties as producers. According to Anthony Downs both political parties as well as voters should be motivated by the maximization of their particular interests (Downs, 1957, p. 28). Similarly, Joseph A. Schumpeter identifies democracy when he argues: *[...] in order to understand how democratic politics serve this social end, we must start from the competitive struggle for power and office and realize that the social function is fulfilled, as it were, incidentally – in the same sense as production is incidental to the making profits* (Schumpeter, 2005, p. 282)¹. The second type of modern democracy is often described as deliberative democracy. It has evolved as a response to the weaknesses in liberal democratic theory and practice (Smith, 2003). This improvement

1 Among supporters of liberal model of democracy there are among others: (Riker, 1982; Dahl, 1971; Sartori, 1987).

would consist in spreading deliberative decision-making procedures and conflict solutions at various levels of social life organization (Krzewińska, 2017).

The main idea of this model of democracy is focused on the participative character of society in the political decision-making processes. The emphasis is put on drawing attention to otherness and diversity of citizens' opinions as well as their indispensable rights to be heard. Deliberation itself should be understood more as a form of communicative interaction rather than as a simple articulation of people's individual claims. In that case deliberative democracy is focused on providing the optimal conditions of grasping the idea of common good, though its "material formation" usually requires a proper time, effort and perseverance (Dryzek, 2016; Elstub, Ercan, Mendonca, 2016).

According to Joshua Cohen the point of departure for deliberative democracy is the reflection on public communication as the source of convincing views and judgments related to the crucial problems of concrete community (Cohen, 1997, pp. 412–416). The basic tool of communication is a deliberative discourse. Deliberative discourse is a group process of achieving agreement through discussions in which individuals participate on the basis of equal status, free from all external constraints, each of them has the right to be heard, all group members show mutual respect, they accept repeated returns to the same topic in subsequent discussions because of decision flexibility that may change due to new information taken into account in the next deliberation round. Among other forms of communication, it stands out due to cooperation between the parties, rational and substantive argumentation, open presentation of positions and their justifications by the parties, searching for what connects rather than divides the discussants and cooperation in developing the final solution (Sroka, 2009, pp. 9–42; Wesołowska, 2010, pp. 91–92). In that case the term "deliberation" cannot be applied to any public debate or discussion, because there are many public discourses which play the role of confrontational and manipulative strategies. According to Habermas the ideal condition for the rational communication ought to regard such a communicative situation which includes the following criteria: 1) argumentative form of communication; 2) rationally motivated consent regarding both assessment and understanding of crucial matters; 3) open and inclusive character of public disputes based on an equal access to the processes of agreeing on the common good; 4) freedom from

cohesion with a special concern for providing and sustaining equal chances to be heard; 5) focusing debates around such matters which can be regulated with a special regard of achieving common good (Habermas, 1999; Płachciak, 2009, p. 86; Boswell, 2016).

The Habermasian understanding of deliberative democracy succeeds undoubtedly from the republican conception of deliberative society but does not depend on collectively acting citizenry but rather on the institutionalization of the adequate procedures and conditions of public communication (Habermas, 1994).

Habermas, as well as Rawls (1995), believes that there are two basic elements of the contemporary world: 1) the “system” – which comprises the vast of different institutions; 2) the “life-world” – which reflects the socio-cultural conditions of a rational lifestyle of concrete community. The Enlightenment project of modern society, mostly dominated by the accumulation of capital and bureaucratic governance, has significantly influenced the “lifeworld” having caused its colonization and destruction of communal sense of identity. Markets of goods, capital and labour – Habermas writes – obey their own logic, independent of the intentions of human subjects. Alongside the administrative power incorporated in government bureaucracies and money has become an anonymous medium of societal integration operating above the participants’ heads. This “system integration” competes with the form of integration mediated by the actors’ consciousnesses, that is, the “social integration” taking place through values, norms, and mutual understanding. The “political integration” that occurs through democratic citizenship represents one aspect of this general social integration. For this reason, the relation between capitalism and democracy is fraught with tension, something liberal theories often deny (Habermas, 1995, pp. 500–501).

In conclusion, presented above mainly the Habermas’s concept of public discourse as the essential foundation for development of democratic society is an unquestionable alternative to the contemporary encountered social projects based on the idea of market expansion, state administration, mass culture, etc. Although, the Habermasian theory of communicative action might seem to be highly abstractive, it is essentially a convincing attempt of verification that deliberative democracy is the most natural form of social relations (Sroka, 2008, p. 91; Neblo, 2015; Achen, Bartels, 2016; Boswell, Hendriks, Ercan, 2016).

3. Sustainable Development in Public Discourse

The authors of the Brundtland Report from 1987 recognized the idea of sustainable development as [...] development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (*Report of the World [...]*, 1987) One of the central elements of the Report concerning global problems of development was the so-called concept of “the same boat”. The idea suggests that all mankind ought to share the same limited Earth’s resources for the purpose of development. So, until people learn how to use them in a just way the world would face the risk of global catastrophe. Primarily, this concept was used in the context of the threats posed by the possibility of the nuclear war scenario in the 1980s. Later, the idea of sustainable development was brought up in the relationship to other environmental risks such as resource exploitation, acid rain, ozone exhaustion, green house warming, climate change – the facts which were recognized as above and over the national boundaries. The Brundtland Commission drew the attention to the need of “global environmental management” as the way sustainable development would be progressively implemented. It was expected that such a management supposed to be based on three complementary aspects: 1) creating global scientific programs which could objectively estimate environmental damages and the maximum carrying capacity of the Planet; 2) transformation of the world’s leaders who would become new global managers of the Earth’s commons pursuing for a mutual agreement (such opportunities would be provided e.g. at the world’s summits); 3) creating the optimal conditions for the education and enlightenment of citizens, who willingly would support such programs (Macnaghten, Urry, 1998, p. 214).

The Brundtland Report encouraged both citizens as well as governments of particular countries to obtain a reasonable consensus which would reduce unsustainable processes of development in the world. It was expected that the mechanism enabling to facilitate such a project ought to depend on a social dialogue. It was beyond of any doubt that a new rhetoric of partnership and participatory democracy, where all parties of interest could collaborate alongside with states, business and other interest groups, would be the optimal solution for

the process. The engagement of the variety of non-profit organizations within the UNCCED projects at the end of 1989s appeared to be a very optimistic.

Although, the climactic moment for understanding the rationality and necessity of sustainable development came along with the 1992 United Nations Rio Earth Summit. The proposed definition of sustainability which was suggested during the Conference pointed at the fundamental matter – the need of building intra- and intergenerational solidarity in the world. The Delegates of the Summit put a special emphasize on the organization of human life within the carrying capacity of natural resources, to guarantee the needs of present generations without neglecting the needs of future generations. It was clearly specified that obtaining such a goal without a wider social engagement would be impossible. The Signatories of the Rio Declaration in the 10th principle wrote: *Environmental issues are the best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided* (Rio Declaration[...], 1992)².

Since the Summit in Rio de Janeiro the idea of sustainable development has been widely accepted by the world governments, NGOs and business. Though, the main concern was focused on establishing proper tools and methods which could translate the goals of sustainability into concrete actions, and evaluate what progress was made on the way to achieving them. Within this framework, the indicators of sustainability began to play such a role. More recently the indicators have come to be seen as suitable tools for communication (MacGillivray, Zadek, 1995; Seidel, Zarembo-Warnke, 2019). Reflecting the indicators of sustainability as a guideline the society can recognize

2 The novelty of Rio – as Sachs argues – was certainly the fact that for the first time, governments of the world jointly acknowledged the threat of global crises and moved to formulate common obligations for conducting politics in the future – see: (Global Ecology..., 1993, p. xv).

and comprehend the trends which are not available sensory perceived such as energy consumption, waste production, structural poverty etc. The indicators of sustainable development inform not only about the factual or potential threats caused by the economic activity, but also have a meaningful impact on a sense of the individual and social responsibility for human action causing social, economic and environmental consequences (Kozłowski 2002, p. 285; Latawiec, Agol, 2015, pp. 1–6).

The attempts of motivating people to participate in the moves towards sustainability shows that governments of particular countries cannot manage alone the problems linked to the global environmental threats. It is impossible to implement the recommendations of Agenda 21 – as T. Borys argues – without wider communal participation in the process towards sustainable development. This applies primarily to the civilians' participation in decision making. The form of participation in the process is the direct activity of different social agents pursuing to build a partnership for sustainable development or social lobby responsible for securing the Earth's resources (Borys, 2003, p. 225). Such a partnership refers to the idea of an active democracy with more creative civilians for developing and applying solutions to the problems which the world struggles with. The authors of Agenda 21 commonly argued that the results of decision-making processes are to be evaluated correctly only when the particular members of the community, especially those the most impaired, can be regarded as the immediate participants.

Nevertheless, the public participation is often associated with the change of the way how the former administration and local government work. Within this framework, the main initiative is to create the optimal communicative conditions between social, political and business sectors. In this situation the public dialog is a meaningful challenge that requires a certain cognitive perspective towards the activities being accomplished by non-profit organizations and the ideas initiated by individual citizens. Such a dialog plays a fundamental role for developing a joint agreement and cooperation of all participants focused on enhancing the quality of life. This undoubtedly helps citizens to control decision-making processes which gives them also awareness of not being ignored. Whereas, regarding civic involvement in the sphere of decision-making as something unimportant would always lead to frustrations, tensions and antagonisms. In conclusion,

it is beyond any doubt that well integrated and responsible civil society is the unconditional starting point for a successful implementation of sustainable development. It is impossible to attain this goal aside from an active local community or without stimulating its individual inhabitants or away from of building partnership between public sector, business and non-profit organizations. A deliberative democratic partnership is a vital source of a new social awareness and plays a fundamental role as a challenge for those who consider participative society as a point of departure for building sustainability in the world. Deliberative democracy techniques can be successfully implemented by various subjects such as industry, community and government due to the circumstances and actual problems. (Knobloch, Gastil, 2015).

4. Sustainable Business

As it was mentioned above, the realization of sustainable development (SD) requires the involvement of all possible actors creating socio-economic environment in the contemporary world. This is especially important for the processes relating to the modern enterprise (Adamczyk, Nitkiewicz, 2007, pp. 43–45; Adamczyk, 2013).

Nowadays, the trend of growing role of enterprises as socio-political actors can be distinguished. Due to the increasing pressure of corporations on society in the global context, there is an urgent need of enhancing a corporate accountability and corporate social responsibility which would reflect the expectations of particular participants (stakeholders) (Felicetti, 2018, p. 803). One of the responses to such a need is a growing popularity of sustainable enterprises, identified as the socially responsible corporations (Brzozowski, 2010, pp. 208–214).

Nonetheless the commonly accepted concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the selective use of its instruments, mainly to make a desirable image of the firm, can cause a serious distortion of the practical dimension of a sustainable enterprise. Therefore, the authors of the article trying to recognize the need of identifying the most important features of a sustainable enterprise propose to include the following factors:

- social responsibility of the owners, managers, and employees. Such a responsibility deals with the belief that the purpose of enterprise

is to meet the needs of all stakeholders in a manner related to the principles of SD. The owners and/or top managers are usually the main actors initiating global changes towards sustainability. Without their comprehensive knowledge, the awareness of social responsibility and acceptance of the principles related to the implementation of SD, the bottom-up changes, introduced by single employees, would have a very little chance to develop on a larger scale. So, the model reflecting sustainable enterprises requires the leaders who would be unconditionally convinced about the rationality and importance of the corporate social responsibility where the benefits resulting from their activity have not only economic but also social and environmental implications. In other words, those leaders would be the initiators of the significant and comprehensive transformations paving the way into the direction of SD. Moreover they would increase the employees' involvement and enthusiasm due to their knowledge, example and support (Kearins, Kljyn, 1999, pp. 285–299; Moral Leadership[...], 2006, pp. 1–53; Hipp, 2012, pp. 177–187);

- defined system of values related to sustainable development. The concept of SD has a strong axiological implications where the basic values can be divided into three categories relating to three dimensions of SD – ecological, economic and socio-cultural. The basic ecological values include: biodiversity, stable climate, beauty of the natural landscape, renewable and non-renewable resources, health security (no threats to natural environment). Among the main economic values are: low unemployment, employment stability, decent wages, good working conditions, effective competition, price stability, fair prices, product price affordability for the majority of society and low operating costs, regional production and consumption, high efficiency of energy and resources, internalization of external costs. In terms of the socio-cultural value one can list: participatory democracy, rule of law, intra- and intergenerational justice, peaceful cooperation (avoidance and constructive resolution of conflicts), and high quality of life on a global scale (Rogall, 2009, pp. 37–52). The values are internalized ideals. The key requirement for the success of a sustainable enterprise is an adequate identification of the values related to SD with a clear employees' recognition of the relationship between their individual values and the values of SD. Without this convergence the employees

cannot be fully engaged in the realization of SD (Saint-Onge, Armstrong, 2004, pp. 7–18);

- sustainable business profile. According to that characteristic a strong emphasize shall be put on meeting a high degree of compliance of the enterprise's activities with the assumptions of SD. The examples of the activities which respect such a requirement include among others: organic food production and its processing, eco-tourism, renewable energy and many others. The main goals shaping the activity of many enterprises, which supposed to emphasize their own social responsibility, are often contrary to the principles of sustainable development and thus, in fact, exclude the full implementation of this idea. This applies to such cases as: the tobacco industry and most enterprises in the chemical or GMO commerce. Those enterprises can implement the concept of SD only partially, in selected aspects, which does not mean that they are opposed to the idea of sustainability. Yet, it should be emphasized that the greater negative impact on the environment, the more important it is for enterprises to take the responsibility;
- long-term operation strategy. It assumes a harmonious achievement of the economic, ecological, and socio-cultural goals. The enterprise's goal shall not be focused on a short-term profit maximization, but rather on a durable and sustainable development. This approach involves partner treatment of stakeholders and building long-lasting and good relationships with them;
- full transparency. It is an unquestionable condition for building a competitive advantage. Because the main asset of all sustainable enterprises is to be their credibility which can convince that the corporation functions fairly and sustainably. Full transparency is the basis for the communication with stakeholders, and at the same time it means that the enterprise has nothing to hide, which improves the requirement of its fully ethical functioning. Sustainable business excludes any dishonesty or willingness to do business for the sole purpose of making a profit. Ethics and transparency are at the same time an effective way to defend against unfair competition attacks and loss of a very sensitive image of a socially responsible enterprise;
- cooperative management style. Sustainable development is a concept based, among others, on the values which respect a unique significance of each human being along with the cooperation for the common good. So that is the reason why the principles of the

cooperative style should be regarded as the basic values in the business management. The main assumptions reflecting this type of management include: open dialogue between the managerial staff and employees, respect of the employees' opinions and their potential participation in making decisions, good atmosphere of cooperation, support improvement and favour, high independence in performing tasks and positive motivation for the creative initiatives. This style of management is often accompanied by a flattened organizational structure. The cooperative management style does not mean, however, the lack requirements for employees. Management should be based on clearly set goals, regular controls of both employees and managers, result analysis and assessments, which form the basis of the next cycle: planning – implementation – evaluation – improvement (Menedżer jakości[...], 2017, pp. 115–116; Sokołowska-Durkalec, Tabaszewska-Zajbert, 2019).

- cooperation with a local and/or regional community in order to obtain SD in the firm's area. Through the cooperation with a local and/or regional community the enterprise becomes an active entity engaged in sustainable development of the area. Among the main participants (stakeholders) there is of course the natural environment, so-called silent stakeholder³;
- gradual realization of all strategic paths of SD economics. There are three commonly identified strategic paths of sustainable economy: efficiency, coherence, and sufficiency. The efficiency strategy assumes tenfold increase of the resource's productivity. It means that existing products and processes are being changed in such a way as to increase resource efficiency while reducing pollutant emissions. The cohesion strategy is to develop new products that meet the requirements of sustainable development. However, the most problematic, the strategy of sufficiency deals with the voluntary decisions of individuals and organizations enabling them gradually to change their own ways of actions according to the principle of intra- and intergenerational justice. It mainly means limiting the use of natural resources, because the limits of environmental assimilation capacity have already been exceeded. (Rogall, 2009, pp. 174–177);

³ For more of the concept of a silent stakeholder, e.g. in (Starik, 1995, pp. 207-217).

- adopting an attitude of continuous monitoring and improvement in the field of the SD implementation along the entire value chain. This perspective implies the necessity of evaluation in the field of the enterprise's impact on the environment, continuous adaptation to current requirements and strivings to improve the results of SD (Seidel, Zaremba-Warnke, 2019).

The proposed set of features applies to a theoretical model, and therefore it should be emphasized that the attempt of attaining such characteristics is rather an evolutionary and long-term process, and there are still many enterprises functioning on the market at various stages of the process. Even newly established enterprises, which at their beginnings assume the realization of the SD goals, will never achieve the ideal because the set of features presented is dynamic – as socio-economic problems increase and new technical, product and organizational solutions appear, expectations towards enterprises, sustainability goals, criteria and indicators will change.

Regarding the above set of features, it is worth remarking that under the current system conditions, various types of social economy enterprises (including cooperatives, enterprises run by non-profit organizations) as well as small and medium-sized family enterprises maintaining close relations with the local communities and enterprises founded by enthusiastic scientists with the comprehensive knowledge of sustainable management are predestined for the full implementation of sustainable business. The democratic management is observed in such enterprises (Defourny, Nyssens, 2010, pp. 6–7; Polowczyk, 2014, pp. 72–77). They are also a response to the needs of sustainable consumers (Pieńkowski et al., 2018, pp. 87–107). The new trend in the field of business sustainability, which is the result of technological revolution, may also be reflected in the enterprises relating to the economy of cooperation, as they focus more on community and cooperation than on ownership and wealth maximization (Jastrzębska, Legutko-Kobus, 2017, pp. 444–447; Agarwal, Steinmetz, 2019).

On the other hand, large enterprises and global corporations can become full-fledged entities of sustainable business, under the conditions of systemic changes (Rogall, 2009, pp. 133–156). Systemic changes for sustainable development would be fostered by the strengthening and institutionalization of deliberative democracy that would increase

society's knowledge of the complexity and importance of the SD values and their significance for improving the quality of life of present and future generations (Smith, 2003, pp. 103–130).

5. The Idea of Deliberative Democracy in the Implementation of Sustainable Business

The idea of deliberative democracy can be regarded as a meaningful contribution to the implementation of sustainable business in a multidimensional sense. Deliberative discourse and its specific procedures are generally developed both on a macro as well as micro scale. In the first case deliberative discourse deals with the framework conditions of socio-economic and political governance. Within the micro perspective it considers all potential stakeholders related to the activity of an enterprise and deliberative democracy can become the basis of management of fully sustainable enterprises.

The result of deliberative discourse on the macro scale should be related to the establishment in the public sphere basic, commonly shared, principles of sustainable development (SD) and the way of their implementation by individual entities of socio-economic life. Deliberative discourse uses the rule of the “people” to support the autonomy of all individuals. Through the rational discussion they can shape their lives and collectively create politics. The Habermasian requirement of participation in public discourse applies to both politicians to justify their decisions and citizens to take part in debates on these decisions (Wonicki, 2005). The contemporary democracies are often criticized for not responding appropriately to the problems of SD, and the political institutions are frequently accused of not representing the values of SD in decision-making processes (Smith, 2003). It happens among other things, too, because the opportunities favourable for all (win-win options) do not exist spontaneously, but they are rather created and defined in a social context (Steurer et al., 2005). Deliberative discourse offers an interesting answer to the question: how you can begin to reform and restructure political institutions to make them more sensitive to requirements of SD. It enables to reform institutions in such a way that they promote democratic deliberations (political integration dialogue), which

makes them sensitive to the diversity of the values related to SD, and solutions reflecting different perspectives with a special regard to natural environment (Smith, 2003).

The activities of such institutions have a direct impact on functioning of those enterprises that want or even are obligated to regard the opinions of stakeholders. The standardization of the initiatives in the field of corporate social responsibility are the example of such impact, and their implementation or subjugation to the social audit is one of the enterprises' responses according to the growing expectations of stakeholders (Adamczyk 2009, pp. 170–177).

The institutions and organizations dealing with the promotion of sustainability in the enterprises can use the instruments of deliberative democracy to acquaint companies with this comprehensive idea and problems of its practical realization. Deliberative discourse allows to indicate the idea of sustainable business as a possibility for the enterprise to have a positive influence on the environment and gaining a competitive advantage as well as proper acceptance on the side of the owners and managers (Adamczyk, 2013; Zaremba-Warnke, 2015;). In the long-term, neither pressure nor lobbying or political coalitions will be ineffective for the enterprise resistance to sustainable activity. There is no other way than partner, widespread and autonomous deliberation. For the conclusive conversations, deliberation should offer alternative solutions. It is necessary to assign specific significance to jointly identified problems of SD and evaluate them to exclude lower rated alternatives. There must be a possibility to make a real choice supported by rational, evidence-based and also dialogically oriented argumentation (Sroka, 2017). One of the key distinguishing features of deliberative search for a solution to differences of views is cooperation between the parties. This task can be hampered by authoritarian belief (Wesołowska, 2013).

Deliberative democracy procedures at the micro level allow sustainable enterprises or interested in pro-social activities to formulate better their visions, missions and goals in line with the principles of SD, due to deliberative discourse with stakeholders. Enterprises can also use standardized tools for managing sustainable relations with stakeholders, which are based on the principles of social dialogue and meet the requirements of deliberative discourse⁴.

4 For example the standards of the AA1000 series.

Among many benefits of properly and regularly conducted deliberative discourse with the enterprise's stakeholders, there are several most important: informing the key stakeholders about company's operations in the SD field, gathering critical information on the expectations and preferences of key stakeholders, stakeholders' help in identifying high priority areas of SD, developing jointly accepted solutions, building trust and strengthening the company's brand, inducing involvement of stakeholders in achieving enterprise's goals, preventing serious conflicts with stakeholders, increase of social capital (*Zrównoważony rozwój*[...], 2005; Adamczyk, 2009, p. 103; Krzewińska, Wiśniak, 2013).

Proponents of deliberative develop specific procedures determining the type and way of conducting deliberations appropriate for a given situation or group of participants. The subject literature includes descriptions of such procedures as: deliberative surveys, deliberation days and civic panels, consensus conferences, planning cells, citizens' courts, 21st century city meetings, deliberative city planning, Charrette procedures, The world Café or deep democracy instruments (Mindell, 2008, pp. 214–223; Krzewińska 2017, pp. 51–53;). It is emphasized that decisions taken during deliberation are decisions different or maybe even better than decisions made without such reflection. It is due to the process of looking for agreement, hearing and accepting the arguments of others, as well as seeking a common stand. Then a transformation of the consciousness of individuals that helps them to understand complex problems takes place. The added value of deliberation is that the decision-making process becomes closer to those who are directly affected by the effects of decisions, which promotes an increase in the level of legitimacy of decisions. Usually it is not possible to develop decisions that would maximally meet the needs of all parties debating a given problem, which is why in deliberative democracy procedures it is rather about establishing a position that a majority can accept. In such situations, the effect of deliberation is to define shared areas where agreement can be achieved, areas of disagreement where there is no chance of agreement, and areas of persistent controversy with recommendation to postpone discussion for some time, perhaps until there is a chance for obtaining consent (Krzewińska, 2017, pp. 48–49).

6. Conclusions and Discussion

The contemporary enterprises have been facing serious organizational challenges related to the implementation of SD. This becomes more and more urgent due to the dynamic changes in the company's environment which enforce the management according to the principles of SD. Managing a company in a sustainable manner is an extremely complex task that requires taking into account the expectations of broadly understood stakeholders, including the representations of the natural environment. Though, the question is: how the companies should communicate with their stakeholders in order to build good and sustainable relationships? It is also highly important to regard priority needs and solutions acceptable to all partners. One of the possibilities provides the idea of deliberative democracy. Deliberative discourse, related to the principles of participatory democracy, provides the opportunity of actual involvement to all stakeholders of the enterprise, and helps to achieve a reasonable consensus for sustainability based on a social dialog.

If sustainable business is to be achieved on the best of its values, it should be actively evolved in deep understanding and implementation of democratic processes. The central role of deliberative democracy for building sustainable enterprise refers to such a form of democracy in which deliberation is an essential to decision-making. It includes elements of both consensus in decision-making and majority rule. A real deliberation takes place only among decision-makers who are free from variations of unequal political power, usually obtained through economic wealth or the influence of interest groups.

Procedures of deliberative democracy can be used on a macro scale in political discourse to define the framework of governance in such a way that they support the implementation of sustainable development by all socio-economic entities. On the micro scale, instruments of deliberative democracy should be used in a dialogue with all the company's stakeholders. The principles of deliberative democracy are also conducive to achieving the goals of fully sustainable enterprises which, by definition, should be democratic.

The conducted considerations on the possibility of using the procedures of deliberative democracy in the implementation of

sustainable entrepreneurship imply the following questions, which should be the subject of separate studies:

- Is sustainable management based on the principles of deliberative democracy?
- What instruments of deliberative democracy are currently used in sustainable enterprises?
- In what way the instruments of deliberative democracy should be promoted in sustainable enterprises?

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