

Society, Space & the Citizenry: Future-Proofing Places for Evolving Service Needs

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ICLRD 10th anniversary conference, Feb 9, 2017, Sligo

What is the role of citizens in the place making agenda?

According to the cultural critic Declan Kiberd, “W. B. Yeats believed in a sense of place, in a mythology that married people to rock and hill.” However, he has argued that one legacy of the Celtic Tiger is “a people who no longer feel married to rock and hill,” (Irish Times, Aug 28, 2009.

Is he right?

Defining place

- Unique geographic location
- Constitutes a material form
- Is invested with meaning and value (Gieryn, 2000)

Developing a sense of place

- ▶ Environmental backdrops both natural and constructed
- ▶ Existence of associational life at the level of the locality
- ▶ Embeddedness” or “rootedness” within a particular culture that holds up familiar ideals and standards of “good” places to which we respond (Molotch, Freudenberg and Paulsen, 2000).

Place and localism

- ▶ Localism often negatively connoted. It is related to backwardness, political atrophy and inward-lookingness.
- ▶ Can we come at the local differently, through the lens of place and place narratives?
- ▶ Pay attention to the lived experience and sentiment of the people who live in localities- urban, rural or suburban-, who have an orientation to their locale and who give it expression through a particular 'structure of feeling' (Williams).

What makes a sustainable community that evolves with the needs of its citizenry?

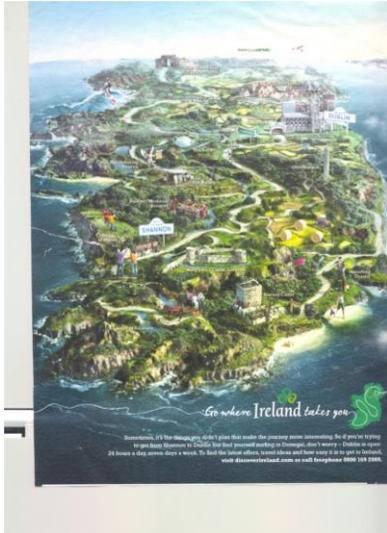
Place Attachment

- ▶ History/Heritage
- ▶ Memory
- ▶ Particularity
- ▶ Community
- ▶ Territorial identity

Place Making

- ▶ Competition
- ▶ Civic-Boosterism
- ▶ Branding
- ▶ Commodification
- ▶ Aesthetization

Place-making as place-marketing



Can our towns and cities be future-proofed against the changing needs & roles that places will have to play?



- ▶ We need to recognise place as an empirical mediator between individuals and institutions (Borer, 2006, p. 174).

The power of civicism

- ▶ Bell and Al Shalit's in *The Spirit of Cities: why the identity of a city matters in a global age* [2011] write about the power of civicism which can be accessed through strolling (Benjamin) and story-telling.
- ▶ What we have in Ireland is a version of micro-civicism which is given voice through pride in place, strong associational life, levels of mutuality and trust.
- ▶ Local places are the sites of micro-publics, “getting on with the business of getting on” with creativity and and resilience.

Urban agriculture: place-making from the ground up

“I think this [allotment gardening] is one way of bringing people together. Its an alternative way of life, a good one, educational and offers them somewhere to go that they can feed their families while taking charge of the course of their lives too”



Micro-civicism in action: UA

Strengths

- ▶ self-efficacy and resilience
- ▶ reconnection with nature
- ▶ ‘food commoning’
- ▶ crisis as a catalyst for activism and change
- ▶ civil interfaces
- ▶ collective belonging

Challenges

- ▶ Governance and policy context deficient
- ▶ municipal reticence
- ▶ uncertainty of external environment
- ▶ accumulation trends
- ▶ Increased atomisation

Citizens, place making and the way forward

- ▶ Recognise what is shared in common and work from that basis
- ▶ Cultivate a sense of place
- ▶ Create circuits of sociability
- ▶ Provide opportunities for affiliation and engagement
- ▶ See people and place in terms of positive resource model rather than a deficit model
- ▶ Challenge prejudice

References on Urban Agriculture

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