

PLACE-BASED LEADERSHIP: A NEW AGENDA FOR SPATIAL PLANNING AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE



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Study an example of bold and imaginative planning and you will encounter leadership – probably inspirational leadership. Planning professionals understand this well enough. In contrast, planning theorists have paid very little attention to the importance of leadership in public policy making and this would appear to be a serious weakness in planning scholarship. This article aims to encourage planning academics and practitioners to give more attention to the nature of public leadership in modern spatial planning and local governance.

When viewed from an international perspective the evidence suggests that successful spatial planning is closely intertwined with imaginative place-based leadership. This article discusses evolving debates about local governance and leadership, and sets out a new conceptual model for understanding place-based leadership. The political space within which place-based leaders operate varies across countries and over time. With the rise of globalisation place-less forces have gained momentum, and these forces constrain local agency. This article argues, however, that place-less power cannot extinguish community-based initiatives and local public service innovation, nor can it erase progressive planning. By drawing on recent international research on place-based leadership, the article points towards new possibilities for spatial planning and local

governance, and encourages universities to participate more actively in place-based leadership.

Introduction

This article starts out by exploring two propositions. First, it will be suggested that effective spatial planning and local governance depend on good leadership. Indeed, it will be argued, for purposes of intellectual challenge, that all examples of successful spatial planning demonstrate leadership in action – that effective planning without leadership is a chimera. Second, it will be claimed that planning theory says virtually nothing at all about leadership. This is troubling as a core quality in the nature of successful spatial planning – leadership – is being neglected.

In the last issue of *Borderlands*, Paddy Harte offered a perceptive analysis of the work of the International Fund for Ireland. Interestingly, he points to the importance of valuing and encouraging civic leadership:

The Fund recognised the need to develop effective community leaders in marginalised areas. Leadership is a very illusive thing and it is easier to recognise it in retrospect than it is to predict it. However, it is also possible to recognise it in action and to nurture its development. I have worked with some remarkable community leaders and without them no real change would have been possible (Harte, 2013:17).

Harte is surely on solid ground in making this claim – it is beyond doubt that community leaders have made a remarkable contribution to the Peace Process. This article explores what Harte describes as this ‘very illusive thing’ called leadership and, in particular, presents a case for advancing the cause of place-based leadership.

The argument unfolds in the following way. First, this article presents evidence to support the argument that leadership matters in spatial planning and governance¹. Second, a scan of the literature on planning theory suggests that leadership barely features. Stepping away from academic planning debates, the paper then considers the shift from government to governance, and notes that this has important implications for local leadership. This is followed by a discussion of the power of place in modern societies. Here, the view that globalisation has all but erased the ability of local leaders to advance the quality of life in the communities they serve will be contested.

This paves the way for the presentation of a conceptual framework for understanding place-based leadership – one that highlights the role of local leaders in facilitating public service innovation. The closing section returns to the ongoing debate about how to improve approaches to spatial planning and local governance. It will be suggested that the notion of place-based leadership can, perhaps, provide a way of injecting leadership theory into planning theory to the benefit of planning scholarship and practice. More broadly, the discussion suggests that the notion of place-based leadership can provide useful intellectual underpinning for politicians, professionals and community activists as they strive to strengthen the power of local governance in a rapidly changing world².

The central importance of leadership in spatial planning

Our first proposition is that spatial planning depends on good leadership. Evidence to support this claim can be drawn from two sources: the history of urban and regional planning, and present practice in spatial planning.

Sir Peter Hall, in his classic study of the intellectual history of urban planning and design in the 20th Century, identifies many examples of influential planners who have exercised remarkable civic leadership (Hall, 1988). In *Cities of Tomorrow*, Hall discusses the achievements of, amongst others,

Patrick Abercrombie, Jane Addams, Daniel Burnham, Patrick Geddes, George-Eugene Haussman, Ebenezer Howard, Jane Jacobs, Robert Moses, Janice Perlman, and Clarence Perry. In important ways these individuals have made significant contributions to the theory and practice of urban planning. By exercising bold civic leadership they, and others like them, have influenced large numbers of planning professionals, urban designers and social reformers. Few would deny that most, if not all, these figures influenced the trajectory of urban planning and ideas relating to place-making. How did they make an impact? Three dimensions can be identified: first, the imaginative, even visionary, quality of their thinking; second, their ability to communicate their ideas and to persuade others of their merits; and third, because they applied their ideas in the real world. Like successful leaders in other fields, these high profile planners practiced what they preached. They reshaped attitudes and practices – they attracted followers, they exercised leadership.

Turning to a second source - the current practice of urban planning - we can identify numerous examples of cities where planners have exercised bold civic leadership. These examples demonstrate that successful city planning is driven by people with passion and commitment, people who are comfortable seeing themselves as civic leaders, people who deliver results on the ground. By way of illustration, here are just four examples of inspiring civic leadership. In all these cases, planning has had a beneficial impact not just on the cities themselves but also on international thinking relating to planning and urban design.

- *Freiburg, Germany*. In November 2009, the British Academy of Urbanism gave the award of 'European City of the Year 2010' to Freiburg. In the following year, the Academy made Wulf Daseking, Director of Planning in the City, an Honorary Member of the Academy in recognition of his outstanding contributions to city planning and urban design. At the same time, the Academy launched *The Freiburg*

Charter for Sustainable Urbanism to draw out guiding principles for urban planning and design (Academy of Urbanism, 2011). The nature of civic leadership in Freiburg has been examined elsewhere (Hambleton, 2011) and, more recently, Peter Hall has produced a detailed analysis of planning practice in the city (Hall, 2013:248-274);

- *Malmö, Sweden.* In the three-year period 1992-94 the City of Malmö lost a third of its jobs. A decade or so later and Malmö is lauded as one of the most far sighted cities in Europe for sustainable development. In an astonishing turn around, the city has reinvented itself as an eco-friendly, multi-cultural city. Malmö has an array of imaginative environmental initiatives delivering new ways of responding to climate change, and provides an inspiring example of urban planning allied to innovations in urban governance. Like Wulf Daseking in Freiburg, Christer Larsson, Director of City Planning in Malmö, will be the first to say that many leaders have contributed to the achievements of the city and that leadership is multi-level (Hambleton, 2009a). As with Freiburg, Hall's recent book provides useful evidence on Malmö's urban planning achievements (Hall, 2013: 238-247);
- *Melbourne, Australia.* In the early 1980s the city centre of Melbourne was, by all accounts, a dump. Private interests, concerned only with urban development profits, were busy taking advantage of weak political leadership and poor planning policies to manufacture a boring 'could be anywhere' town centre. Leap forward to 2013 and we find that the *The Economist* identifies the city as being the 'most liveable city in the world' for the third year running (Economist, 2013). Indeed, Melbourne, has now established itself as an international leader in how to create a people friendly public realm at the heart of a major metropolis. Local leaders, and Rob Adams, the Director of Design and Urban Environment for Melbourne deserves great credit, having transformed the city centre into a delightful, liveable and attractive district for residents,

workers and visitors (Gehl Architects, 2004; Hambleton, 2008); and

- *Portland, Oregon.* It is possible to argue that the City of Portland is the best example of metropolitan urban planning in the USA. The city has a long established reputation as a pioneer in the field of sustainable urban development. Leaders in the metropolis have, and this is very unusual in the US context, developed an effective metropolitan approach to urban planning and governance (Ozawa, 2004). The city has a robust spatial plan and there are numerous examples of imaginative urban development taking place in the city. For example, Portland State University (PSU) has worked with various stakeholders to develop an Educational Renewal Area (ERA) bringing together a range of local stakeholders. Many leaders have contributed to this recent initiative but it is interesting to note that Wim Wiewel, President of the University, is making an important contribution to the planning of the city. This illustrates how effective urban leadership can involve actors outside city hall working alongside political leaders and community-based organisations.

In summary, evidence drawn from the history of urban planning and from the present practice of some of the most innovative cities in the world suggests that successful urban planning is inextricably linked with good civic leadership. It can even be suggested that good urban planning is improbable without good place-based leadership. It follows that a detached observer might expect planning theory books to be brimming with insights on leadership in planning practice. However, as the next section explains, this particular observer will be disappointed.

The neglect of leadership in planning theory

The second proposition is that, despite the central importance of leadership in successful urban planning practice, planning theory pays virtually no attention to it. Peter Hall's book, *Cities of Tomorrow*, is a *tour de force* (Hall, 1988). His analysis of the history of urban planning is both imaginative and

meticulous, and it is full of valuable insights relating to planning theory. Yet, and this is somewhat surprising, this volume does not refer to theories of leadership at all - even though it is crammed with examples of bold civic leadership. In fairness, Hall's neglect of leadership theory is consistent with the approach adopted by other planning theorists. It would seem that leadership - theories of leadership and scholarship relating to leadership - is an intellectual 'no-go' zone for planning theorists.

Consider for a moment the contents of a dozen or so planning theory books, published in the last forty years: Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones (2002); Faludi (1973a; 1973b); Forester (1989); Hall (1988); Healey *et al* (1982); Healey (1997; 2010); Hillier (2007); Marris (1987); Rydin (2011); and Taylor (1998). This is not a comprehensive list of planning theory books but each has, at one time or another, made a valuable contribution to planning theory. Yet, unless I am mistaken, none of these books discusses the role of civic leadership in the shaping of localities, cities and city regions. The word 'leadership' does not appear in the index of any of these books. Scant, if any, attention is given to theories of leadership and to the roles of various kinds of leaders in shaping urban development. This is puzzling. While the aim here is not to attempt to undermine the value of these books - they are all respected works and have enhanced the understanding of urban planning - it must be asked why is there so little discussion of leadership and the role of planning and planners in place-based leadership?

Fainstein (2005) provides, perhaps, one possible clue to understanding the absence of a discussion of leadership themes in planning theory. She draws a distinction between planning theory and urban theory. She notes that much of planning theory discusses what planners do, with little reference either to the socio-spatial constraints under which they work or the purposes they wish to achieve. She suggests that:

... a narrow definition of planning theory results in theoretical weakness arising from the isolation of process from context or outcome (Fainstein, 2005:121).

Stated simply, she argues that planning theory has tended to focus on processes of decision-making. She contrasts this approach with the different approach encountered in urban theory. Here, scholars are concerned with the substance of public policy as it affects the quality of life in the city. By engaging actively with scholars in the fields of urban sociology, urban political science and environmental sustainability, those concerned to advance urban theory have highlighted the distributional impacts of planning policies.

Fainstein makes a plea for future developments in planning theory to bridge process and substance and, in her view, a focus on the creation of the 'just city' will repay dividends (Fainstein, 2010). Her analysis can be seen as a contribution to a neglected topic - equity planning. In an influential American book, *Making Equity Planning Work*, Krumholz and Forester (1990) highlight the role of urban leadership in bringing about progressive change. It is one of the few planning books to draw attention to the importance of public leadership. It is encouraging to note that John Forester has returned to leadership themes in his more recent work. For example, his edited volume on *Planning in the Face of Conflict* provides a useful collection of essays examining the way facilitative leadership can contribute to community building and peace-making (Forester, 2013). We can suggest, then, that scholars concerned with urban theory pay at least some attention to leadership themes and theories. Indeed, urban political scientists have made significant contributions to our understanding of city leadership (Judd, 2000; Stone, 1995).

The distinction between planning theory and urban theory might be seen as providing a reasonable explanation of why planning theory books tend to neglect leadership. It could be claimed that these books focus on the process of planning, and that

these authors do not pay attention to leadership because this is a topic more than adequately covered by their colleagues working in the field of urban theory. This, however, is not a convincing argument. First, even the urban theorists have given relatively little attention to leadership themes. The literature on leadership within the field of urban theory is expanding but it is still not that well developed. Second, and this is a key point to emphasise, any analysis of the process of planning that neglects to consider leadership is a weak analysis in its own terms. The world of planning practice shows us that leaders shape planning processes to achieve public purpose. To discuss planning theory without discussing leadership is startling – it diminishes the usefulness and relevance of planning theory. The next section steps away from debates about planning theory and adopts a different perspective – one that is familiar to students of government, public management and urban politics.

Evolving debates about governance and leadership

The shift from local government to local governance is a familiar theme in modern debates relating to the governance of place (Goss, 2001; Denters and Rose, 2005; Haus *et al*, 2005; Heinelt *et al*, 2006; Davies and Imbroscio, 2009). In broad terms, local governance refers to the processes and structures of a variety of public, private, and community and voluntary sector bodies at the local level (Hambleton and Gross, 2007). It acknowledges the diffusion of responsibility for collective provision and recognises the contribution of different levels and sectors. As Peters argues:

Governing has never been easy, but it has become all the more complicated. . . The process of governing now involves more actors, more policy areas that impinge upon one another, and most importantly involves a wider range of goals. With the multiplicity of targets being pursued by public action, designing programmes and processes becomes all the more difficult (Peters, 2011:11).

The UK Coalition Government, elected in May 2010, advocates the development of a 'Big Society' (HM Government, 2010a; HM Government, 2010b). The central idea is to encourage communities to help themselves, rather than rely on a continuing expansion of state-run services (Norman, 2010; Tuddenham, 2010). The emerging national policy is, then, clearly aligned with a governance approach. Ministers argue that the state can only do so much. Indeed, they go further and argue that, because of the structural deficit in the national accounts, the state must do less. Some observers detect an anti-state philosophy in the approach the government has adopted thus far. Certainly, the scale of the cuts in public spending is unprecedented in recent times and many consider these reductions to be seriously misguided.

The implications of the shift from government to governance for local political leadership are significant. Firstly, just as approaches to governing have evolved, so too have approaches to leadership in general and local leadership in particular. Changes in society and culture are constantly reshaping the meaning and nature of leadership, and theories of leadership are, not surprisingly, evolving and developing (Burns, 1978; Grint, 1997; Keohane, 2010). Explanations of the evolution of leadership theories are contested. At risk of oversimplifying, we can highlight four major elements or approaches:

- Personal qualities of leaders;
- Leadership and institutional design;
- The nature of the leadership task; and
- The context for leadership.

The 'Great Man' theory of leadership of the 19th century placed the emphasis on the characteristics of the individual leader – 'heroic' figures, with the right personality traits, were the focus of attention. This way of thinking was challenged in the early 20th Century by the notion of scientific management. This approach – exemplified by the Taylorism and Fordism of production line management in large factories – stressed the important role of leaders in designing procedures and practices in order to establish

control over the workforce. In scientific management, roles and relationships, as well as tasks, are carefully defined and the monitoring of performance is central. Morgan (1986) suggests that the scientific approach envisages the organisation as an instrument of domination. This approach was, however, challenged by a third strategy. Human relations theories gave more attention to the motives and feelings of workers, albeit often with the continuing aim of exploiting them. A fourth theme – one that cross cuts the other three – is the recognition that leaders need to tune into the context both within and outside their organisation:

The size and culture of an organisation, the expectations of followers, the purposes the organisation is intended to pursue, and its history and traditions are all relevant in considering what kind of leadership is most likely to succeed. Behaviour by a leader that seems perfectly appropriate in some contexts may appear quite out of place in another (Keohane, 2010:10)

These four themes all find expression in modern leadership theory and practice. Thus, some leadership writers focus on the development of the leadership skills of individuals by drawing lessons from inspirational leaders (Adair, 2002). Until relatively recently, this biographical approach dominated the discussion of urban leadership within political science (Stone, 1995). The high profile planners identified by Hall (1988) in his history of urban planning could be said to fit within this mould. Some writers have highlighted the role of leadership in shaping strategy, and driving organisational performance through the development of, for example, 'joined up' government, and the imposition of measurable performance targets on public servants (Mulgan, 2009). An updated version of the third theme, that of human relations, is now deservedly receiving much more attention as both scholars and practitioners have come to recognise the importance of the emotional dimension of leadership (Goleman *et al*, 2002; Heifetz and Linsky, 2002; Haslam *et al*, 2011).

As part of this, there has been growing interest in the important distinction, made by Burns (1978), between 'transactional leadership' and 'transformational leadership'. In the former, leaders engage in a process of exchange with their followers – for example, a pay rise for outstanding work. Burns argues that the latter is both more complex and more potent – the transforming leader tunes into the feelings and emotions of followers, and seeks to stimulate enthusiasm and commitment through a process that is more like bonding than bartering. The fourth theme of developing context sensitive approaches to leadership, including developing the role of leaders in both responding to and reshaping organisational cultures, is now mainstream thinking in modern leadership programmes in both the private and the public sectors (Sashkin and Sashkin, 2003).

These four themes have influenced debates about local leadership in the UK and in other countries. It is possible that all these themes feature boldly in undergraduate and postgraduate planning courses. But, given the absence of leadership themes in the planning literature, it is conceivable that they are not given the attention they deserve.

Local leadership debates in the UK

The UK government interest in 'community leadership' can be traced to a government report produced twenty years ago. Revealingly, this report focussed on the 'internal' – not the external – management of local authorities (HM Government, 1993). There was an implicit belief in this report that the institutional design of local government could help - or hinder - effective community leadership, and it set out various ways of strengthening the political executive. Prime Minister Tony Blair, in a remarkable intervention, built on this earlier work and wrote a pamphlet urging local authorities to develop a highly visible, outgoing approach to community leadership (Blair, 1998). Again, the underlying theory was that institutional redesign could bolster improved approaches to local leadership.

The Labour Government was quick to pass legislation creating not just a new directly elected

mayor and strategic authority for London, but also opportunities for all English councils to develop new leadership models (Hambleton, 1998; Hambleton and Sweeting, 2004). The London reforms have undoubtedly strengthened the political leadership of the capital. Few voices are now raised arguing that the strategic model for governing London by means of a Directly Elected Mayor (DEM) and an assembly should be discarded, even though many in local government opposed the idea at the time³.

Research on the impact of the UK *Local Government Act 2000* suggests that the institutional design of councils does, indeed, influence the way they operate and that thoughtful redesign can have a positive impact on public service performance (Gains *et al*, 2009). Sullivan (2007) notes, however, that 'community leadership' is an elastic term that contains multiple meanings – she rightly seeks to sharpen the debate about what this term actually means. Other scholars have added to this critique and argued that relatively little attention has been given to the challenges of managing the tensions that now arise in the new governance spaces created by the various moves to 'partnership' working (Howard and Miller, 2008). Research by Purdue (2007) supports this view – he examined the role of community leaders in neighbourhood governance and shows how neglect of capacity building often leads to burnout for the individuals involved.

Three important points relating to planning theory emerge from the discussion in this and the previous section. First, as emphasised by numerous scholars, the debate about local leadership is first and foremost a **political debate** (Leach and Wilson, 2000; Leach *et al*, 2005). The managerial literature on leadership can offer prompts and suggestions to discussion of the politics of place, but much of it is of limited value because it does not engage with politics. While the leadership powers of senior councillors in English local authorities have been strengthened by the legislative changes introduced since 2000, research on the changing roles of councillors in England suggests that many are

finding it difficult to adapt to the new political structures (Copus, 2008). Planning theorists have been relatively slow to contribute to this debate about the restructuring of local power, even though one of the key powers of 'DEMs' is strategic spatial planning.

Second, the shift from government to governance places a premium on facilitative leadership skills. American experience is relevant in this context as governance models have been in use for a longer period of time in the USA than in the UK. Various US urban scholars have shown that traditional notions of 'strong' top-down leadership are unsuited to situations in which power is dispersed (Svara, 1994, 2009; Stone, 1995). Recent research on collaborative leadership in UK local governance supports this argument. For example, Williams (2012: 100-109) outlines helpful ideas on the leader as 'boundary spanner'. Planners often operate as boundary spanners, and the shift from government to governance should provide opportunities for planners to develop their potential as facilitative leaders. Professor Deborah Peel explores this idea of spanning boundaries and encourages spatial planners to take on the mantle of the new reticulist (2013). She discusses the importance of developing community resilience and suggests that:

... planners actively assume a professional leadership role and facilitate development of stronger conditions to support a new civic infrastructure (Peel, 2013:72).

Lastly, it seems clear that much of the UK local government literature on leadership has concentrated on the internal operations of the local government system – on the roles of political parties, councillors and officers. A relatively small amount of research has been carried out on the leadership contribution of locality leaders operating outside the local state, and this would seem to be an area that would repay further study.

Framing the power of place

As mentioned in the introduction, civic, or place-

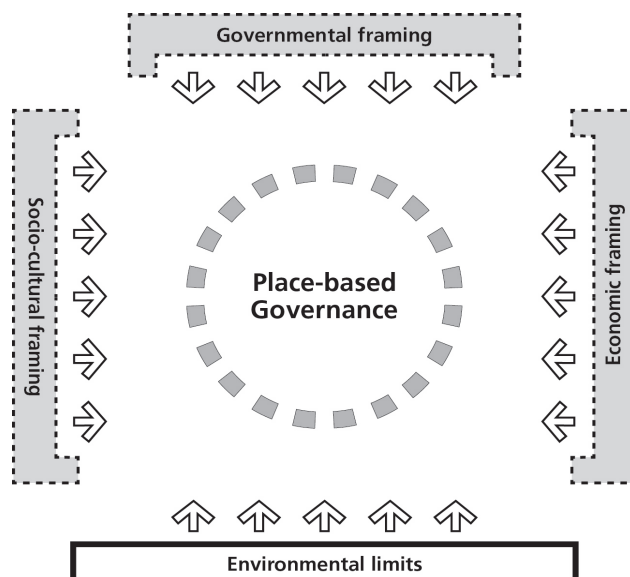
based leaders, do not operate in a vacuum. On the contrary, various powerful forces shape the context within which civic leaders operate. These forces do not disable local leadership. Rather they place limits on what civic leaders may be able to accomplish in particular places, and at particular moments in time. Figure 1 provides a simplified picture of the forces that shape the world of place-based governance in any given locality.

Let's run through this Figure. At the bottom of the diagram are the non-negotiable environmental limits. Ignoring the fact that localities are part of the natural ecosystem is irresponsible, and failure to pay attention to environmental limits will store up unmanageable problems for future generations (Boone and Modarres, 2006; Girardet, 2008; Jackson, 2009). This side of the square is drawn with a solid line because, unlike the other sides of the square, these environmental limits are non-negotiable. On the left hand side of the diagram are socio-cultural forces – these comprise a mix of people (as actors) and cultural values (that people may hold). Here we find the rich variety

of voices found in any locality - including the claims of activists, businesses, artists, political parties, entrepreneurs, trade unionists, religious organisations, community-based groups, citizens who vote, citizens who don't vote, children, newly arrived immigrants, anarchists and so on. The people living in any given place will have different views about the kind of place they wish to live in, and they will have differential capacity to make these views known. Some, maybe many, will claim a right to the city (Lefebvre, 1996)⁴. We can assume that, in democratic societies at least, elected leaders who pay little or no attention to these political pressures should not expect to stay in office for too long. Expression of citizen voice, to use Hirschman's term (1970), will see them dismissed at the ballot box.

On the right hand side of the diagram are the horizontal economic forces that arise from the need for localities to compete, to some degree at least, in the wider marketplace - for inward investment and to attract talented people. Various studies have shown that, contrary to neo-liberal dogma, it is possible for

Figure 1: Framing the political space for place-based governance



(Source: Author)

civic leaders to bargain with business (Savitch and Kantor, 2002). Recognising the power of economic forces, including the growth in global competition between localities, does not require civic leaders to become mere servants of private capital. On the top of Figure 1 we find the legal and policy framework imposed by higher levels of government. In some countries this governmental framing will include legal obligations imposed by supra-national organisations. For example, local authorities in countries that are members of the European Union (EU) are required to comply with EU laws and regulations, and to take note of EU policy guidance. Individual nation states determine the legal status, fiscal power and functions of local authorities within their boundaries. These relationships are subject to negotiation and renegotiation over time.

It is clear that Figure 1 simplifies a much more complex reality. This is what conceptual frameworks do. In reality, the four sets of forces framing local action do not necessarily carry equal weight, and the situation in any given locality is, to some extent, fluid and changing. The space available for local agency shifts over time, and a key task of local leaders is to be alert to the opportunities for advancing the power of their place within the context of the framing forces prevailing on their area at the time. The figure indicates that place-based governance, shown at the centre, is porous. Successful civic leaders are constantly learning from the environment in which they find themselves in order to discover new insights, co-create new solutions and advance their political objectives.

Note that the four forces are not joined up at the corners to create a rigid prison within which civic leadership has to be exercised. On the contrary, the boundaries of the overall arena are, themselves, malleable. Depending on the culture and context, imaginative civic leaders may be able to disrupt the pre-existing governmental frame and bring about an expansion in place-based power. Having outlined the frame within which place-based leadership is exercised, the paper will now explain in a little more detail what place-based leadership means – and, in

particular, the critical role of leadership in bringing about public service innovation.

Place-based leadership and innovation zones

This section provides a brief presentation of a conceptual framework developed to enhance understanding of place-based leadership and, in particular, the role of leadership in promoting public service innovation. It draws on recent research carried out at the Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments⁵. Civic leadership is place-based, meaning that those exercising decision-making power have a concern for the communities living in a particular place. Some of the most powerful decision-makers in modern society are place-less leaders in the sense that they are not concerned with the geographical impact of their decisions. Following Stiglitz, the view is taken that an unfettered market, especially in the context of globalisation, can destroy communities (Stiglitz, 2006). There is now a substantial body of literature on ‘social capital’ and the role that it plays in fostering a caring society (Putnam, 2000; Gilchrist, 2004). There are different kinds of social capital and sometimes this capital can be used to exclude groups – the creation of social capital will not necessarily reduce socio-economic inequalities. However, with the right kind of civic leadership it may be possible to encourage the bridging of social ties between different social groups.

As discussed earlier, there is a large body of literature on leadership - on leadership theories, leadership styles and alternative perspectives. In previous work, leadership has been defined as ‘shaping emotions and behaviour to achieve common goals’ (Hambleton, 2007:174). This implies a wide range of activities aimed at generating both new insights and new ways of working together – it prizes respect for the feelings and attitudes of others as well as a strong commitment to collaboration.

The approach to the analysis of place-based leadership, presented in this article, is informed by this perspective. The feelings people have for ‘their’ place, have, in my view, been seriously neglected in

both the leadership literature and the public service innovation literature. Following Hoggett (2009:175), the view is taken that approaches to leadership need to develop a form of ‘passionate reason’. How we feel is not a distraction from reason – on the contrary:

Not only are our feelings essential to our capacity for thought but they are themselves a route to reason (Hoggett, 2009:177).

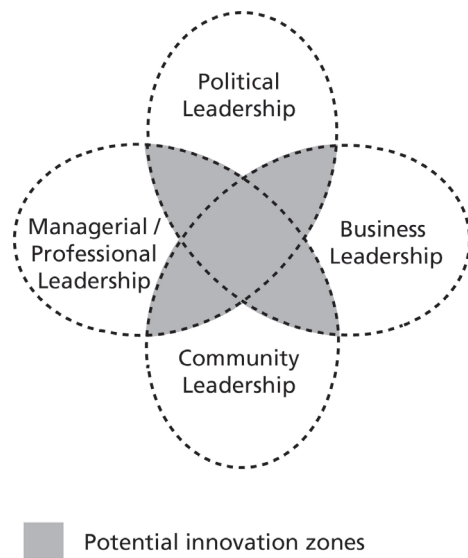
Civic leaders are found in the public, private, and community/voluntary sectors and they operate at many geographical levels – from the street block to an entire sub-region and beyond. It is helpful to distinguish four realms of place-based leadership reflecting different sources of legitimacy:

- **Political leadership** – referring to the work of those people elected to leadership positions by the citizenry. These are, by definition, political leaders. Thus, ‘DEMs’, all elected local councillors, and Members of Parliament are political leaders. Having said that, we should acknowledge that different politicians carry different roles and responsibilities, and will view their political roles in different ways;
- **Managerial/professional leadership** – referring to the work of public servants appointed by local authorities, central government and third sector organisations to plan and manage public services, and promote community wellbeing. These officers bring professional and managerial expertise to the tasks of local governance;
- **Business leadership** – referring to the contribution made by local business leaders, who have a clear stake in the long-term prosperity of the locality, and to trade union leaders who are committed to advancing the prospects for their members in the locality; and
- **Community leadership** – referring to the work of the many civic-minded people who give their time and energy to local leadership activities in a wide variety of ways. These may be community activists, social entrepreneurs, voluntary sector leaders, religious leaders, higher education

leaders and so on. The potential contribution to civic leadership of an independent and engaged voluntary and community sector is important here.

These roles are all important in cultivating and encouraging public service innovation and, crucially, they overlap. The areas of overlap between these different realms of leadership can be described as **innovation zones** – areas providing many opportunities for innovation (see Figure 2). This is because **different perspectives are brought together** within these zones, and this can enable active questioning of established approaches. Heterogeneity is the key to fostering innovation. Civic leadership has a critical role to play in creating the conditions for different people to come together – people who might not normally meet – to have a creative dialogue, and then to follow up their ideas. The circles in Figure 2 are presented as dotted lines; thus seeking to emphasise the connectivity, or

Figure 2: Realms of civic leadership



(Source: Author)

potential connectivity, across the realms of civic leadership.

It can be claimed that the areas of overlap identified in Figure 2 are 'conflict zones', not 'innovation zones'. It is certainly the case that these zones often provide settings for power struggles between competing interests and values. And it is important to acknowledge that, within these settings, power is unequally distributed. It is possible that formalised partnership settings can operate as innovation zones, but this is often not the case. Research on public service innovation suggests that it is the more informal, open-ended, personal interactions that matter in a creative process (Hambleton and Howard, 2012). This creativity can be cultivated if leaders step out of their own 'realm' of authority and engage with the perspectives and realities of others. This means going into what one public service leader described as one's 'ZOUUD' – or Zone of Uncomfortable Debate. Here, different approaches, values and priorities collide, and leaders need to be prepared to work in this zone and to support others to do so⁶.

Wise civic leadership is critical in ensuring that settings of this kind – sometimes referred to as the 'soft spaces' of planning (Illsley *et al*, 2010) – are orchestrated in a way that promotes a culture of listening that can, in turn, lead to innovation (Kahane, 2004). Inventive place-based leaders can reconfigure conflict zones into innovation zones and, indeed, this is one of the main challenges that they face.

In sum, leadership capacity in modern society is dispersed. Recent work in the UK by NESTA supports the findings of research carried out at the University of West of England (UWE)⁷. Facilitative leadership skills are becoming increasingly important:

In more open, emergent systems, with many players operating in more fluid environments, and where the task is to create solutions rather than repeat tasks, then successful leadership will be more like leading a community of volunteers, who cannot be instructed. Leadership is likely to be far more interactive and distributed rather

than concentrated and instructional (Leadbeater, 2013:50).

Our systems of local governance need to respect and reflect that diversity if decisions taken in the public interest are going to enjoy legitimacy. Further, more decentralised approaches – both across localities and within each realm of civic leadership – can empower informal leaders to be part of the dialogue.

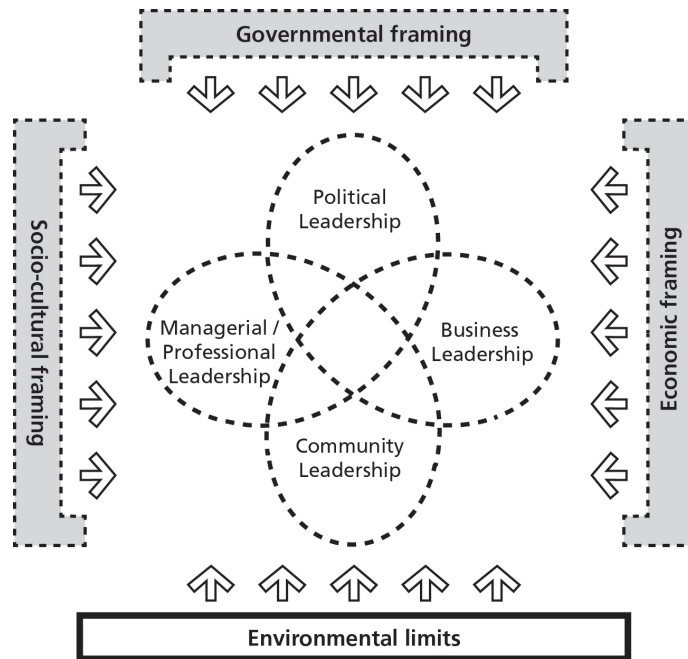
Figure 2 represents a drastic simplification of a more complex reality. It is not intended to show how the dynamics of local power struggles actually unfold. The relative power of the three realms varies by locality and this would imply different sized circles, whereas in this Figure, they have all been kept the same size. Moreover, the realms shift in influence over time. The interactions across the realms are also complex and, of course, there are many different interests operating within each realm. Nevertheless, the notion of three different realms – with leadership stemming from different sources of legitimacy within each realm – provides a helpful way of framing discussion about civic leadership.

Place-based leadership in context

Earlier in this article it was explained how various forces shape the context within which place-based leadership is exercised, and this was set out in diagrammatic form in Figure 1. Having now explained the three realms of place-based leadership it is possible to advance the discussion by locating the three realms within this broader context (see Figure 3).

Skelcher *et al* (2013:24) provide an interesting framework, a kind of flow chart, for the analysis of governance transitions. In their model, they argue that, aside from the imaginative agency of individuals and groups, governance change is driven by two factors – the big ideas that take hold within a community of actors (the ideational context) and the normative logics inherent in the institutions of government (the institutional legacy). An attractive feature of their model is that they show how

Figure 3: Place-based leadership in context



(Source: Author)

emergent practices can, in turn, reshape the big ideas and the institutional legacy.

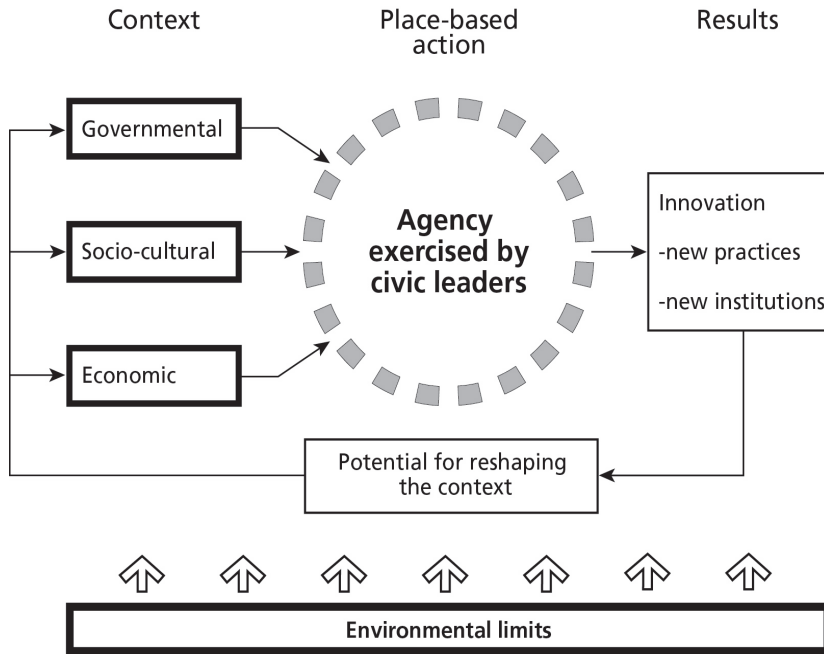
The following model is closely aligned with their approach (see Figure 4). The main differences are that four forces, not two, shape the space for local action. The associated analysis suggests that environmental limits are critical, while also noting the tensions between the political and the economic drivers of local change (rather than collapsing them into one 'ideational' driver). Figure 4 has the benefit of highlighting the dynamic possibilities for place-based leadership.

In the next section attention is drawn to two important matters – the purpose of place-based leadership and the need for local leadership to transcend parochialism.

Purpose-driven local leadership

Leadership is inextricably linked with purpose. Stone (1995) examines modern urban politics and observes that aimless interaction requires no leadership. In contrast, in cases where a compelling vision emerges from an inclusive process, and is then articulated by a leader or leaders, the results can be inspiring. A clear statement of purpose (or mission) can provide a formative experience, shaping the identity of group members, and articulating shared values and aspirations. In the mid-1990s, Sir Steve Bullock, who is now the directly elected mayor of the London Borough of Lewisham, and I were commissioned by UK local government to develop national guidance on local political leadership (Hambleton and Bullock, 1996). In carrying out this research, leading figures in UK local government were asked what they thought constituted successful local authority leadership, and the indicators of good political leadership that emerged are summarised in Figure 5.

Figure 4: A process model of civic leadership



(Source: Author)

Figure 5: Indicators of good local political leadership

- *Articulating a clear vision for the area:* Setting out an agenda of what the future of the area should be and developing strategic policy direction. Listening to local people and leading initiatives.
- *Promoting the qualities of the area:* Building civic pride, promoting the benefits of the locality and attracting inward investment.
- *Winning resources:* Winning power and funding from higher levels of government and maximising income from a variety of sources.
- *Developing partnerships:* Successful leadership is characterised by the existence of a range of partnerships, both internal and external, working to a shared view of the needs of the local community.
- *Addressing complex social issues:* The increasingly fragmented nature of local government and the growing number of service providers active in a given locality means that complex issues that cross boundaries, or are seen to fall between areas of interest, need to be taken up by leaderships that have an overview and can bring together the right mix of agencies to tackle a particular problem.
- *Maintaining support and cohesion:* Managing disparate interests and keeping people on board are essential if the leadership is to maintain authority.

(Source: Adapted from Hambleton, R. and Bullock, S. 1996).

There is no suggestion here that the indicators listed in Figure 5 are comprehensive or appropriate in all settings. Rather, they are offered as a possible set of aspirations for local political leadership and to stimulate fresh thinking.

Transcending parochialism

Back in 1975, US Senator Mark Hatfield (Republican – Oregon) advocated the introduction of neighbourhood government legislation in the USA – the *Neighbourhood Government Act 1975*. His aim was to bring about a massive transfer of tax monies from higher levels of government to the neighbourhood level. The legislation went nowhere, but it provides us with a warning note. This Act was intended to make rich neighbourhoods formidably wealthy at the expense of less well off areas. Advocating a much stronger role for place-based leadership in urban governance does not equate with seeking to promote this kind of selfish, parochial behaviour. Rather, following George Frederickson (2005), place-based leaders should be guided by ‘instincts of appropriateness’ and what is understood to be right and fair. Place-based leadership calls for the ability to hold onto the ethical purpose of governance while also containing the uncertainties and complexities inherent in the leadership role.

Frederickson, as well as grasping the importance of facilitative leadership in the modern city, also makes a strong case for leaders to transcend the geographical limitations of municipal boundaries:

Although they are working from the vantage point of particular jurisdictions, leaders practicing ... governance see the big social, economic, and political context in which they are embedded... To serve a city well, its leaders must transcend the city (Frederickson, 2005:6).

It follows that civic leaders must be able to build strong grassroots relationships alongside their horizontal and vertical relationships. Local leaders need to be able to see the bigger picture, but at the same time remain connected with people across the city, in ways that empower them to take action.

Reflections and pointers

In this closing section, four pointers for future scholarship and practice are offered.

First, this analysis raises some challenges for planning theory. Forester suggests that: ‘Planning is the guidance of future action’ (Forester, 1989:3). If this definition is accepted, it suggests that planning is very closely allied with leadership, and this makes the absence of leadership theory in planning theory all the more mystifying. Perhaps scholars interested in examining the core purposes of planning could consider more actively the core purposes of leadership, and consider how alternative theories of leadership can illuminate the development of new theories of planning. This could be approached in a number of ways – as a philosophical enterprise, as a way of generating hypotheses or as a way of examining planning practice in particular places. Fainstein (2005) suggests there is merit in conjoining insights drawn from planning theory and urban theory. In fact, it would be desirable to add a third leg to this stool – leadership theory.

Second, places are not helpless victims in a global flow of events. In recent years, global economic forces have resulted in an erosion of the power of place in modern societies, but these place-less forces cannot extinguish community-based initiatives and local public service innovation. There is an important and ongoing struggle underway between place-less power that is unconcerned with the fortunes of particular communities, and place-based power that seeks to advance the quality of life of communities living in particular places. This struggle has been visualised in Figure 1. The political space available to place-based leaders in any locality is, to some extent, malleable. Spatial planning can play a critical role in helping to expand the reach and influence of place-based leaders.

The article has set out a conceptual framework for understanding place-based leadership. It is a very simple framework, with the realms of leadership set out in Figure 2 needing to be contextualised. The framework does not pretend to provide a way

of analysing the detailed dynamics of the power system of a given city or locality – other theories can assist with this. But an attraction of the model is that it connects to the 'lived experience' of urban leaders and practitioners. The distinctive realms of leadership help practitioners 'make sense' of local leadership activities and assist in clarifying roles and responsibilities. The model enables a contrast to be drawn between place-based leaders (who care about the communities living in a particular place) and place-less leaders (who do not care about the impact of their decisions on specific localities).

Third, the world is changing rapidly and this puts a premium on developing the innovative capacity of localities and the institutions of governance. The model of place-based leadership presented in this article represents a contribution to innovation theory. Much of the literature on innovation is managerial or technological. In this article, it is suggested that successful public innovation is more likely to stem from changing political dynamics than managerial fixes, and that place-based leadership can play an influential role in creating spaces for innovation and experiment. Perhaps there is an implication here for planning theory. This is not a cry for yet more enterprise zones in which anything goes. Rather, it is a plea for new kinds of civic leadership bringing together place-based activists to invent new possibilities. In an Anglo/Dutch research report on public sector innovation and local leadership, it is suggested that successful place-based leadership involves the 'orchestration of social discovery' (Hambleton and Howard, 2012:32-43). Perhaps new thinking on the relationship between planning theory, local leadership and public innovation is called for.

A final pointer concerns the trajectory of research in universities. In many countries, higher education performance management regimes are skewing research away from policy relevance and away from active engagement with the challenges faced by local communities. Despite the recent increase in interest in assessing research impact in some countries, the thrust of university promotion procedures and research council funding priorities

is to promote esoteric research. Learned journal articles are highly prized within these performance regimes, and it is certainly important to strengthen the quality of peer reviewed scholarship in the field of urban planning and local government studies. But it is also essential that universities reconsider the nature of modern scholarship to bring it into line with the expectations and requirements of modern society.

Ernest Boyer has provided a valuable start to this task by mapping out a holistic vision of scholarship (Boyer, 1990). A growing number of universities are following this model – particularly public funded universities in the USA – but there is much more to do on this front, and this could be of immense benefit to planning theory and local governance. It is encouraging to note that engaged scholarship is, at last, starting to receive serious attention in British social science circles (Flinders, 2013). The notion of place-based leadership can, perhaps, contribute to the development of engaged scholarship. It can certainly embrace the role of students and faculty in the governance of their city or locality. This can, in turn, help to generate new ways of building approaches to planning theory that engage with the lived experience of local residents.

In conclusion, scholars, policy-makers and practitioners who wish to improve the performance of spatial planning and local governance might find it helpful to pay more attention to the notion of place-based leadership.

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Shaping Future Authorities, in 1995 and has assisted many councils through radical change.

He has worked in four universities – Bristol, Cardiff, University of the West of England and University of Illinois at Chicago – and he has held five different professorial positions - in City and Regional Planning, City Management,

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Endnotes

¹ It may be helpful to clarify the way various planning terms are being used in this article. The following phrases are used interchangeably – spatial planning, urban and regional planning, urban planning and city planning. These approaches to planning differ from traditional land-use planning. Stated simply, the traditional approach – sometimes described as master planning or development planning – designates zones for particular kinds of activity and sees planning as controlling what developers do. Spatial planning focuses on coordinating and integrating the actions of different agencies and actors in a locality in order to achieve political objectives. For further discussion of the changing nature of spatial planning, see Morphet (2010) and Rydin (2011: 22-33).

² A book providing a more extended analysis of the arguments presented in this article is forthcoming: Hambleton R. (2015). *Leading the Inclusive City. Place-based innovation for a bounded planet*. Bristol: The Policy Press

³ Debate about whether or not Directly Elected Mayors (DEMs) can improve local leadership is, once again, on the public policy agenda in the UK. The *Localism Act 2011* provided the twelve largest cities in England, outside London, with the opportunity to introduce DEMs. Three English provincial cities have decided to introduce DEMs in the period since 2011: Leicester, Liverpool, and Bristol. Arguments in favour of this reform have been set out by the Institute for Government (Swinney and Blatchford, 2011), and research on the prospects for Mayoral governance in Bristol has appeared recently (Hambleton *et al*, 2013).

⁴ For the purpose of this discussion, we can note that the ‘right to the city’ does not have to relate only to urban areas. It is a right to liberty and freedom in the place where you live (Whitzman *et al*, 2013).

⁵ I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Joanna Howard to the development of these concepts. The framework was first created in work carried out for the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance (Hambleton, 2009b), further developed in a scoping report for the Local Authority Research Council Initiative (LARCI) (Hambleton *et al*, 2009) and then tested out more thoroughly in an Anglo-Dutch research project. Thanks are due to Bas Denters, Pieter-Jan Klok and Mirjan Oude Vrielink for their major contribution to this Anglo-Dutch study which applied these ideas in specific localities – they participated in our international workshops, helped to develop the model and also wrote Chapter 4 of the research report (Hambleton and Howard, 2012).

⁶ I am grateful to Katherine Rossiter, then Managing Director of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE), for this insight, provided at our Anglo-Dutch Workshop on Place-based

Leadership (9 November 2011). SOLACE would like to acknowledge the source of this concept as The Cranfield School of Management. For further information and to read Dr Catherine Bailey's discussion of the 'ZOUJ', go to: <http://www.som.cranfield.ac.uk/som/dinamic-content/media/knowledgeinterchange/topics/20110404/Article.pdf>

⁷ NESTA stands for National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts. Originally set up by central government, it is now an independent charity providing grants to promote innovation in the UK public and private sectors. More: <http://www.nesta.org.uk>

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