‘Place-keeping’ in the cultural landscape: the role of long-term maintenance and management

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• ‘Place-making’ + focus on ‘place-keeping’
  – Definitions
  – Key dimensions (with focus on partnership)
  – Case studies of ‘place-keeping’ in practice
  – Findings and discussion
MP4 Project partners

- Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh.
- South Yorkshire Forest Partnership, Local Authority, Sheffield.
- University of Sheffield.
- Vlaamse Landmaatschappij, Local Authority, Brussels.
- Göteborgs Stad, Local Authority, Sweden.
- University of Copenhagen, Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning, Denmark.
- HafenCity Universitat, Hamburg.
- Lawaetz Foundation, Charitable Foundation, Hamburg.
- Gemeente Emmen, Public Authority, Netherlands.

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MP4 Project Aims

• Project funded by EU (Interreg IVB North Sea Region programme
  – Demonstrate how positive socio-economic impacts of open space improvements can be maintained in long term;
  – Provide solutions to address maintenance and management needs;
  – To mainstream best practice in place-keeping across North Sea Region;
  – Embed place-keeping innovations into policy;
  – Develop shared agenda for long-term open space improvement.
MP4 WP1: Transnational Assessment of Practice

• Ongoing literature review
  – Establishing the gap in knowledge
  – Clarifying existing knowledge/practice

• In-depth case studies including:
  • parks/children’s playground/urban squares/waterways/waterfront development/open space in housing estates/highways/roundabouts/industrial estate
  • Based on interviews and background data
Place-making

- Creation of high-quality places that people want to visit, experience and enjoy
- Implies a people-centred approach
  - Health and wellbeing
  - Sense of belonging and attachment
  - Welcoming and inclusive places

HafenCity, Hamburg; River Don, Sheffield; Hailes Quarry Park, Edinburgh.
Place-keeping

• What happens ‘after’ high quality places have been created
  – Retaining, maintaining and enhancing the qualities and benefits through LTM

• Long-term management of places
  – to ensure that the social, environmental and economic quality and benefits can be enjoyed by future generations

• E.g. trees in park growing to maturity (increased biodiversity/ aesthetic value/ interest)

Woesten, West Flanders; Leuven, Flemish Brabant; Manor & Castle, Sheffield.
THE PROCESS
well-coordinated ‘place-keeping’

THE "PRODUCT"
a valued, sustainable and high-quality place

THE PLACE
social, economic, environmental and local context of...

user needs
user behaviour
user perceptions

place characteristics
aspirations for the place

governance/engagement
policy/regulation
evaluation/monitoring

partnership
investment/finance/resources
maintenance
Case study analysis

– Explore good place-keeping in practice
– Deprived neighbourhoods where cultural meanings may have been lost
– Interviews conducted with PK practitioners
  – Focus on different dimensions
  – Success and challenges of PK in situ
– Written into individual reports
– Analysis of all case studies
Case studies include:

- Aarhus, Denmark.
- Business Improvement District, Hamburg, Germany.
- Bürgerpark, Bremen, Germany.
- Craigmillar, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Emmerhout and Zwartemeer, Emmen, the Netherlands.
- Gårdsten, Göteborg, Sweden.
- Grassmarket, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- HafenCity, Hamburg, Germany.
- Hailes Quarry Park, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Intergovernmental Rural Dialogue, Flanders, Belgium.
- Steilshoop, Hamburg, Germany.
- Temalekplats, Malmö, Sweden.
- Woesten, West Flanders, Belgium.
Partnerships

• Definition: agreed shared responsibility for the place-keeping process

• Consensus in policy + theory that they effectively achieve place-keeping, especially:
  – A combination of public-private-third sector
  – Involvement + engagement of local community
Place-keeping partnerships

AAR: Aarhus, Denmark.
BID: Business Improvement District, Hamburg, Germany.
BUR: Bürgerpark, Bremen, Germany.
CRM: Craigmillar, Edinburgh, Scotland.
EMM: Emmerhout, Emmen, the Netherlands.
GAR: Gårdsten, Göteborg, Sweden.
GRA Grassmarket, Edinburgh, Scotland.
HFC: HafenCity, Hamburg, Germany.
HQP: Hailes Quarry Park, Edinburgh, Scotland.
IPO: Intergovernmental Rural Dialogue, Flanders, Belgium.
STE: Steilshoop, Hamburg, Germany.
TEM: Temalekplats, Malmö, Sweden.
WOE: Woesten, West Flanders, Belgium.
Features of successful partnerships

• ‘A partnership with an identity of its own’ (ER)

• The staff/personnel
  – ‘A strong and committed, skilled and motivated team’ (Grassmarket/HQP)
  – ‘Outside-the-box thinking and effective leadership’ (Gårdsten)
  – Involving residents as ‘equals...from the beginning’ (ER)
Features of successful partnerships

• **Multiple partners**
  – ‘Can make projects possible that would otherwise not have happened’ (HQP)

• A ‘trusted mediator’ or *link between the community and stakeholders* (Emmen Revisited/ Bürgerpark)
  – Ideally ‘apolitical’
  – Helps create ‘a closer fit between user preferences and maintenance efforts’ (Aarhus)
Features of successful partnerships

• **Improving the relationship** between stakeholders
  – ‘Improved dialogue’ (GMarket)
  – Moves away from ‘the usual focus on complaints to broader issues about future visions...and priorities’ (Aarhus)

• **How information is communicated** and shared with residents (Aarhus)
  – Need to ensure that, for example, design quality ‘is defined and understood by all involved, not just experts’ (C.Millar)
Features of successful partnerships

• The desire to create a *legacy* (Craigmillar)
  – not just the physical place, but a ‘long-term community presence’ (HQP)

• Place-keeping is organized on basis of ‘common ownership’ with *consensus* in decision-making (ER)

• *Social cohesion* (ER) and a *sense of community* (Aarhus) can come from engaging communities
  – although does the social cohesion/sense of community lead to community engagement?
Challenges for partnerships

• **Staff/personnel**
  – What happens when people move on without successors to take over?

• **Formality and informality of agreements** in place
  – Informal, voluntary agreements can be complex to manage, particularly with large numbers of partners

• **Good communication**
  – Getting the right information to the right people (Emmen Revisited)
  – Users may not be fully aware of what they can(not) do in the open space (Aarhus)
Challenges for partnerships

• Engaging communities is *time-consuming and costly*
  – May be alternative resource allocations, e.g. investment/ maintenance budgets (Aarhus)

• Achieving effective engagement can be *complex and difficult*
  – Grassmarket: Community engagement via consultation ‘did not achieve consensus in decision-making’: some residents felt their voice was not heard

• *Limits of residents’ willingness* to be engaged
  – Particularly marginalized residents living in areas of social housing areas
  – A lack of tradition of involvement with authorities can increase the ‘engagement challenge’ further (Aarhus)
Challenges for partnerships

• **A negative attitude towards the open space**
  – Can cause difficulty in engaging residents and requires continued work (Green Estate)

• **Land-ownership responsibilities**
  – Lack of clarity can make engaging private sector stakeholders difficult (River Stewardship Company)

• **Funding** challenges
  – ‘Having multiple partners can create funding problems: ‘funding cycles’ + policies can change’ (Hailes Quarry Park)
Concluding thoughts

• Importance of committed group of stakeholders participating in a formal partnership with place-keeping in mind from outset
• Community engagement may not always result in consensus in decision-making
• Different approaches may still achieve place-keeping (i.e. a high-quality open space), but with varying degrees of success of engaging the community
• Good quality place-keeping may be achieved without local ‘community’ involvement (BID)
• Calls into question assumption that community engagement is fundamental and always successful
Concluding thoughts

• Need to evaluate community engagement: does it work in practice?
• Evaluation is not happening in practice
  – A considerable expense
  – Data need to be useful in practice
• A need for clarity in defining + understanding the aim of place-making/ keeping:
  – to simply create a clean and tidy place or to (re-)connect people with the place and its cultural meaning?
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