

UNIVERSITY OF
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U LEADERSHIP and B
PLACE

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A 'leadership and place' research agenda

- ❑ Why and how individuals and groups come together to influence the developmental trajectories of place...?
- ❑ The difference that these 'relational' processes make – where and for whom ?
- ❑ What all of this contributes more broadly to our understanding of the dynamics of place...?

Why put leadership on the RSA agenda?

- ❑ The theoretical and empirical work across 'conventional' leadership studies is significantly influencing leadership practice
- ❑ It is influencing the design and delivery of policy for neighbourhoods, cities and regions
- ❑ With some notable exceptions - we are absent from the bigger public debate around leadership across Europe

Leadership and Place(s) ?

- ❑ The placing of the leadership question at the core of the 'problematics' of place is critical to their successful resolution... (Grint, 2010)
- ❑ Place matters to the study of leadership because it provides highly differentiated settings for inquiry...
- ❑ But - Leadership studies are dominated by institutional and firm-based perspectives

Place as a ‘unique’ setting for the study of leadership? (1) (Healey, 2010)

- ❑ Many complex ‘wicked issues’ – e.g. where the ‘built environment’ meets ‘meanings and values’
- ❑ Highly differentiated (history, geography, culture, language...)
- ❑ Ever-changing: Subject to unanticipated & episodic ‘crises’
- ❑ No one is ‘in charge’ – no command and control; beyond deference

Place as a ‘unique’ setting for the study of leadership? (2) (see Healey, 2010)

- ❑ Many places in any one place...multiple identities
- ❑ Places are not isolated – but are connected to, and influenced by, ‘wider worlds’...
- ❑ Highly emotionally charged – ‘irrational’
- ❑ The differing ‘knowledgeability’ within and between place(s)...

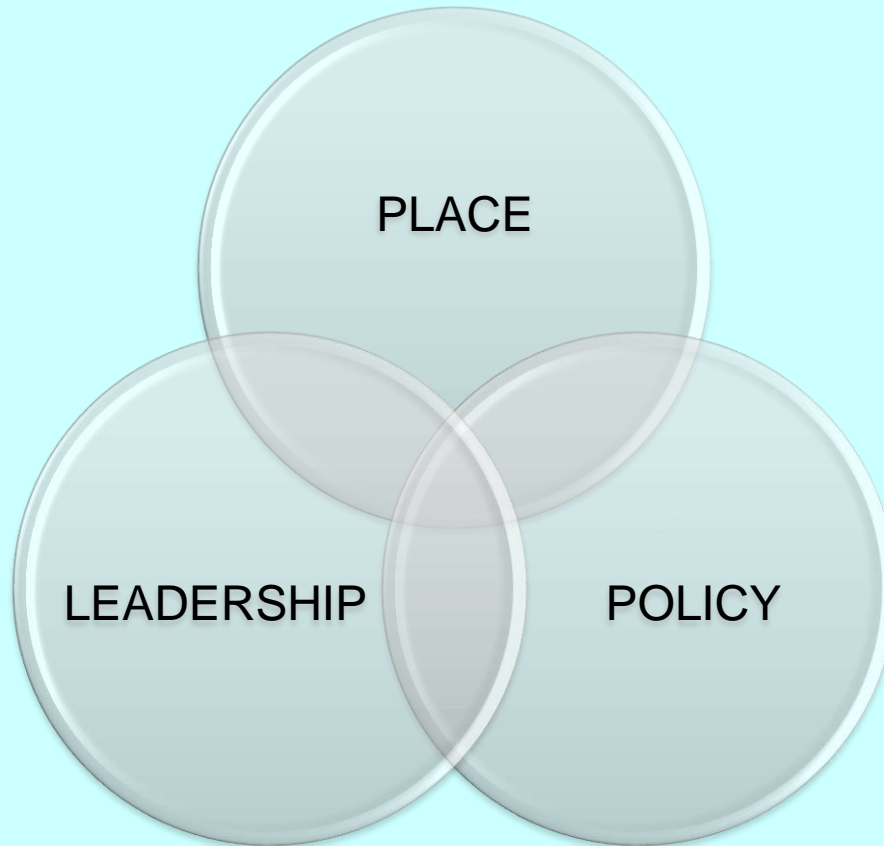
Leadership matters because..

- ❑ It is one of the factors that explains how and why some localities are able to adapt to the complex and rapidly changing social and economic circumstances of the modern world
- ❑ May also partly explain why some places are better able than others to minimise the disruption that change brings

But...

- ❑ We need a better alignment than currently exists - between leadership, place and policy discourses
- ❑ So that leadership **in the urban and regional studies context** can be theorised, explained and improved upon in the field

‘Combinatorial’ learning...



Leadership in the context of place?

- ❑ A variety of forms of leadership are occurring where individuals/or groups are influencing the developmental trajectories of place(s)...
- ❑ Leadership is everywhere... 'assigned' and 'informal' dimensions
- ❑ Leadership dynamics (as with place) are interactive and unbounded – and difficult to pin down

And many questions remain (1)...

- ❑ How, why and for whom do individuals/groups come together to influence the developmental trajectories of place(s) ?
- ❑ What is the nature of the relationship between leadership, power and resources ?
- ❑ Leadership, knowledge, innovation and learning...?
- ❑ 'Formal' and 'informal' leadership....?

And many questions remain (2)...

- ❑ 'Leaders' and 'followers'....?
- ❑ To what extent is leadership itself shaped by place ?
- ❑ What is the nature of the difference (if any) that leadership makes ?
- ❑ How can we measure the effects?

Next steps?

- RSA 'Leadership in Urban and Regional Development' research network – Birmingham, Flinders, Tampere seminars 2010/2011
- 'Leadership and Place' – Policy Studies special issue July; and RSA book launch autumn 2010
- EC 'Open Days' 2010 – RSA session 'Re-thinking Leadership for 21st Century European Cities and Regions'

Final thought: An RSA leadership 'project'...?

We need to ensure that our U&RS 'grey matter' is informing ongoing leadership theory and practice debates...

..as these are influencing the design and delivery of policy for place(s) around the world.