



Village Design Statements (VDSs) in Ireland:

An Opportunity for Collaborative & Participative Planning

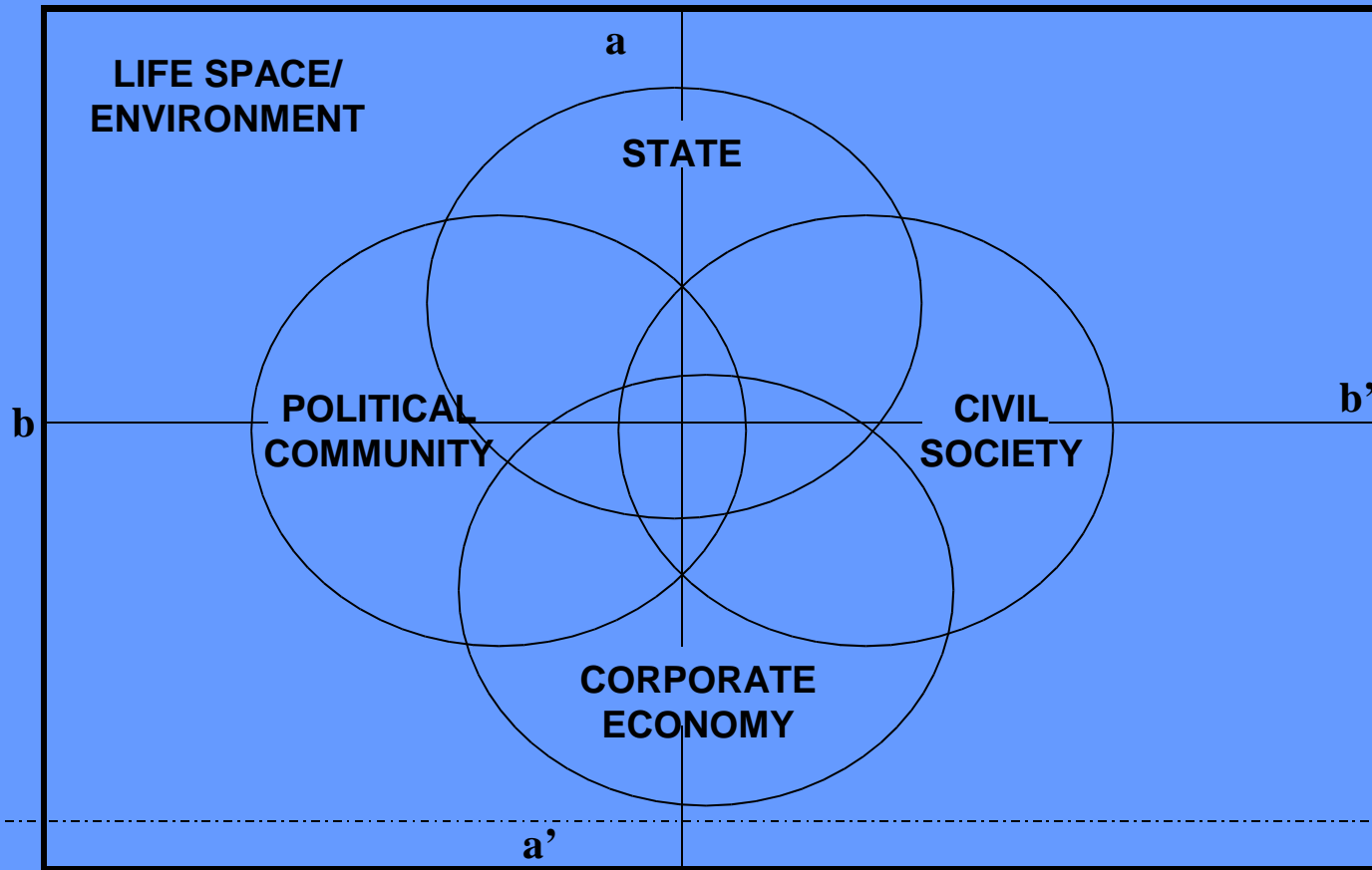
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Introduction – Four Parts

- ***The Theory*** - What is meant by Collaborative and Participative planning - 'Models'?
- ***Barriers to Participation*** – Cultural and Social
- ***Social Structures*** and Incentives
- ***Participative Planning In Practice*** – VDS Programmes I and II

But first – an Overview!



GLOBAL ECONOMIC SPACE (& EU)

'THE GLOBAL VILLAGE'

1. What is Participation?

- The corporate economy **must** be reined in – leading towards an ‘Active Society’ (Etzioni, 1968)
- Social Learning = Social Empowerment (Friedman, 1992)
- Community Spirit – need to strengthen the community as a **moral infrastructure** (Etzioni 1993)
- Empowerment **is** Participation (Wilcox, 1994).

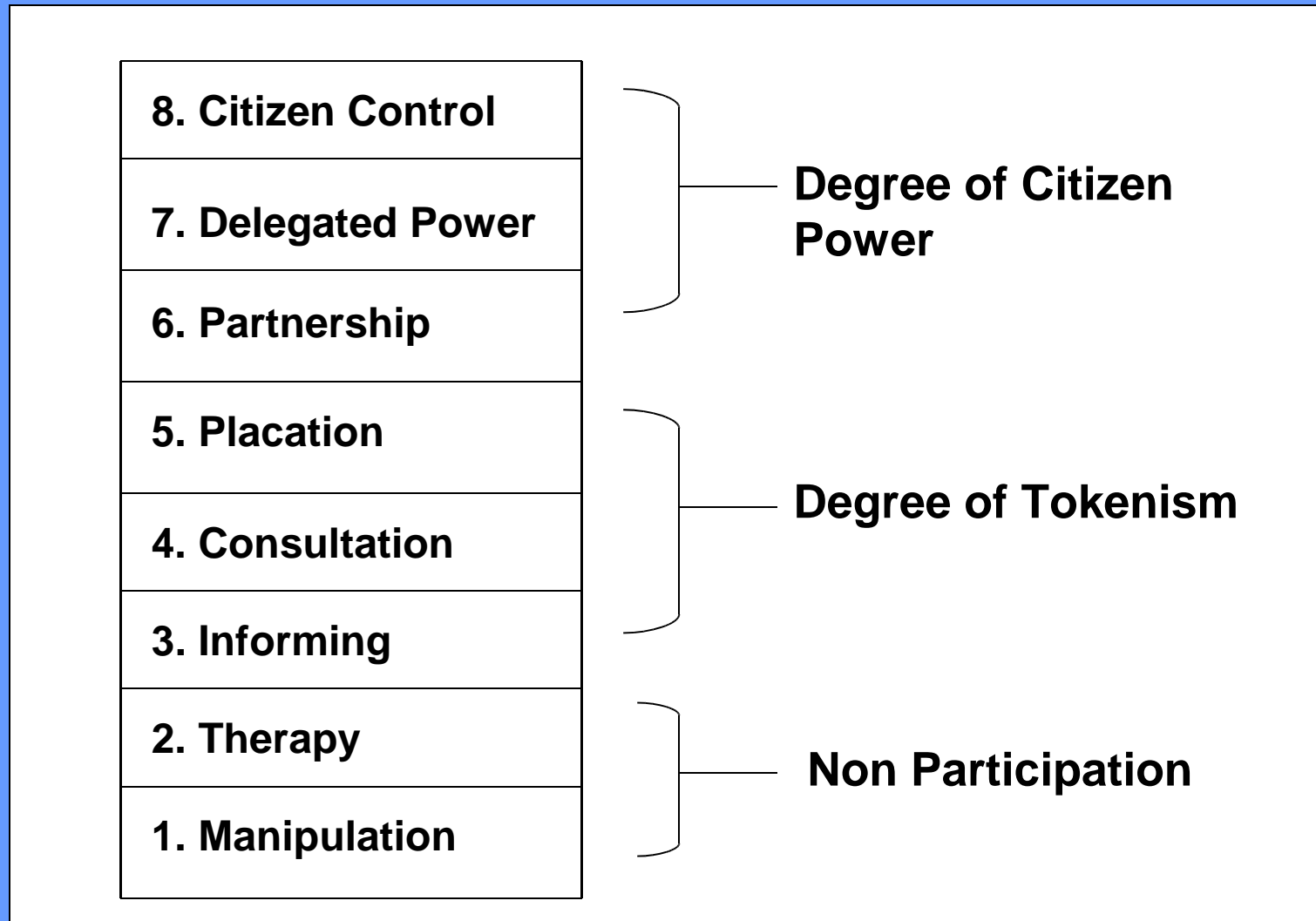
Why Participation?

- Working together allows everyone to achieve more than they could do on their own – ‘**Synergy**’ and ‘**Power To**’ rather than ‘**Power Over**’
- **Concept of *Social Capital and Capacity Building***
- **Striving for a fair, open and collaborative planning system!**

10 Key Ideas (Wilcox 1994)

- **Level of Participation**
- **Initiation and Process – participation does not just happen!**
- **Control - who is the Initiator?**
- **Power and Purpose – information and money**
- **Role of Practitioner**
- **Stakeholders and Community**
- **Partnership – Trust/Commitment**
- **Commitment v Apathy**
- **Ownership of Ideas – “*We thought of that!*”**
- **Confidence and Capacity**

Ladder of Participation



(Source: Sherry Arnstein, 1969)

Participation – Skills Required from Communities?

- **Leadership**
- **Mediation**
- **Teamwork**
- **Understanding**
- **‘Shared’ Vision: 5-10 yrs or longer**

(Walzer 1991)

Participation - Core Elements

- **Trust and Understanding**
- **Access and Information**
- **Voice and Values**
- **Negotiation and Mediation**
- **Resources – time and technical**

‘3 Cs’ - Co-operation, Co-ordination & Collaboration

2. Barriers to Participation

<i>Cultural:</i>	<i>Social:</i>
- Lack of education	- Social segregation
- Lack of appropriate skills	- Alienation from government
- Lack of confidence	- low social capital
- Lack of structural ties with existing organisations	- marginalisation
- Lack of interest	- Lack of time and money
- Lack of trust	- Lack of access to the web
- Lack of experience in negotiating	

3. Social Structures – Existing and New?

Existing:

- Tidy Towns, LEADER, Irish Rural Link, GAA
- Individual Civic Trusts – e.g. Limerick Civic Trust
- Heritage in Schools Programme
- Irish Planning Institute (IPI)

New?:

- Irish Civic Trust – umbrella group?
- Local Planning Forums?
- Planning and Design Courses in Schools/Colleges?
- **National Planning Aid?**

Incentives for Participation?

- Establish '*Irish Village Design Network*'
- VDS and Planning/Design Training
- Contracts – Formal and Informal – '*Project Charters*'
- Trained Intermediaries – *Planning Liaison Officers??*
- Budget for implementation/delivery
- 'VDS Champions' Programme
- National Planning Aid???

4. VDS Programmes I & II

- Heritage Council introduced VDSs in 2000 – enhancing and managing ‘local character/distinctiveness’ - USP
- Approx 40 VDSs undertaken during 2000-2008
- New VDS process introduced in 2006 - Lucan VDS, IPI Participatory Planning Cert of Merit
- ***Ext Evaluation*** of VDS Programme I undertaken in 2008
- Heritage Council est'd a National Steering Group – including DoEHLG (2008) to guide Evaluation
- VDS Conference at Slane Castle, October 2008
- Launch of VDS Booklet, published January 2009

A Good VDS can:

- **Raise community awareness** of surrounding landscape, environment and heritage assets
- **Provide a useful 'tool'** to ensure that future developments and changes ADD to local distinctiveness and character
- **Link into the planning system** so that planners can use it to raise the local distinctiveness of design proposals
- **Assist developers**, local authority planners and others by giving them local guidance up front
- Generate and **develop overall community confidence and capacity-building – 'social capital'**

Evaluation (2008) – Key Recommendations for VDS II

- Multi-agency, partnership-oriented approach needed
- Clearer guidance needed about how a VDS might link into the evolving planning system but also to the many programmes of wider social and economic development
- A training programme is needed for professionals, communities and elected representatives **focusing on design, character and local distinctiveness, community engagement and the preparation, use and wide-ranging benefits of VDSs**

DoEHLG's *Sustainable Residential Guidelines* – VDSs:

- **describing what is distinctive** about the character of the small town or village in terms of its shape and buildings and its setting in the surrounding countryside;
- **drawing up design principles** based on conserving distinctive local character and adapting it to, and integrating it within, new development;
- **ensuring that new development is effectively managed not prevented**, including innovative building and design solutions; and
- **acting as a focus for local communities** to research and analyse their town or village and input into statutory development plans and local area plans.

VDS Programme II - The Future?

- VDS Programme II launched in early 2009 with Two '*National Pilots*' underway in Julianstown, Co. Meath and Sandymount, Dublin
- *External Process Evaluation* of 'Pilots' underway
- 'Pilots' due for completion in June 2010
- Launch of *VDS II Pilots - Process Evaluation Report* – summer 2010
- Implementation/delivery of 'Pilot VDSs'
- Establish Village Design Network – launch of '*Village Design Toolkit*' – Sept 2010
- Village Design Training – Sept 2010 onwards
- Village Design Training – Irish Planning Institute, Sept 2010
- P& D Bill 2009 and New LAP Guidelines ??

Summary

- **What is Participation? – Theory & Models**
- **Ladder of Participation – 8 rungs**
- **Core elements – Trust and Understanding**
- **Barriers to Participation - Cultural and Social**
- **Social Structures – Tidy Towns, LEADER, Irish Rural Link, GAA, etc.**
- **Incentives – Network, Training, etc.**
- **VDS Programmes I and II – the Future?**

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