



Telling... Stories of Wellbeing

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Stories are Embedded

More and more, the narrative impulse is being understood to be embedded deep in the developmental history of our species, a universal “category of human endeavour and experience”.

Borins, S. (2011:1) Governing Fables: Learning from Public Sector Narratives, Charlotte NC, Information Age Publishing.

Troubling Local Stories

- Northern Ireland as a “social laboratory” in EU
- Measure to enable communities to contribute to local policy formation (DHSS, 1999:3)
- Community Infrastructure in NI



Northern Ireland 1999-2000

Poverty in Plenty

- Violence & public expenditure went from £566m to £3276m (1971- 1981)
- Peripheral part of the EU 14,623km², population of 1,688,600 (2000).
- Greater proportion of NI household income derived from social security benefits and lower % from wages and salaries than any part of UK (NISRA, 2000).
- NI was a poor region of EU- GDP £15,486 m (1997) 80.4% of UK GDP per capita.



Community Infrastructure...

– 65 projects

– **Criteria of the Programme**

- Group Support and Networking
- Community resources and facilities
- Social Exclusion
- Promoting integrated area partnerships
- Independent advice giving
- Contribution to policy formation
- Capacity building

Why were stories gathered?

- What was Gathered?
 - 1000 word stories.
 - Questionnaire to gather detail:
 - Rationale
 - Inputs
 - Telling their story
 - Project achievements/difficulties
 - Future ideas

Policy Experiments

Community Development and Health Network

- Identified the enabling and constraining factors of CD in regard to health and social services.
 - Developed alliances
 - Improved tools of practice, confidence, capacity, skills
 - Community Education
 - Tools for Change
 - Improved capability set for groups
 - Policy making process

How my stories spread...

- The value of stories to place, interpretivist and historicist approaches.
- The development of new theory in Interpretivist Approaches, Area Studies & interdisciplinary working.
- How stories can be used in government policy interventions and in policy evaluation.

AHRC Blurring Genres Research Network

Developing Theory

- Contributing to narrative theory internationally.
- Recovering the research methods of the Arts and Humanities for Political Science and Area Studies.
- Academics, Political Science, Area Studies and policymakers.
- Universities of Ulster, Berkeley (California), Manchester, Southampton, SOAS, Cabinet/Home Office, UK Civil Service Learning.
- Research applications, book on blurring genres from the series, innovation in methods.
 - Continuity of network (about 100) & international learning.

Narrative- a fashionable buzzword

Rationale, explanation, justification

A story with intent

– At its fullest conception

- A distinctive means of ordering experience
- A particular mode of perceiving
- Representing and communicating events
- A way of structuring meaning in time (xi)

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Currency

Storytelling is now widely regarded as a currency (maybe, the only currency) in which *communities of practice* trade, the means through which they exchange experiences and learn from ...others foils.

– Brown, Gabriel and Gherardi (2013:326) (italics added)