
Innovation, Learning and Ireland's Smart Economy: Why Culture Matters!

Finbarr Bradley

Based on Ideas in Book

CAPITALISING ON CULTURE, COMPETING ON DIFFERENCE:

Innovation, Learning and Sense of Place in a Globalising Ireland

by

Finbarr Bradley & James J. Kennelly

[Blackhall Publishing, 2008]

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25 March 2009

Paradigm Shift

Industrial Enterprise	Network Enterprise
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intangible resources exist to leverage value out of tangible resources!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tangible resources exist to leverage value out of intangible resources!
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Companies rely on own resources to work on each project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Companies focus on core competence and partner with those with other competences based on needs of each project
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rationality• Organisation as machine• Designed structures, control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emotions, feelings, empathy, identity, meaning• Living organisation• Emergent structures, learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Costs, efficiency, hierarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationships, trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short-term, growth, income, quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long-term, development, well-being, quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Codified knowledge• Linear thinking• Value chains	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tacit knowledge• Systems thinking• Value networks

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Learning Society

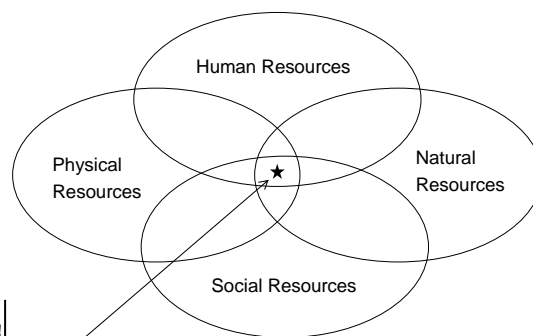
- Characteristics
 - capacity to absorb new ideas, knowledge, skills and capabilities while bringing about its own continuing transformation
 - people continually expand capacity to create the results they truly desire
 - learning to see the whole together

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Ireland's Smart Economy!



Learning Society

- Balanced!
- Interdependent!
- Emergent!
- Dynamic!
- Sustainable!
- Egalitarian!
- High Quality!
- Responsible!
- Values-Driven!
- Value Creating!

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Sustainable Competitive Advantage

- Tangible resources (money and technology) necessary but not sufficient
- Intangible (knowledge) resources that nurture innovation essential
- Tacit knowledge is most valuable knowledge resource
 - Imagination, inspiration, intuition, ingenuity
 - Sense-of-self, self-assurance, self-confidence, self-knowledge
- Driven by relationships between individual and cultural/social factors
 - Emotion, empathy, feelings,...
 - Continuity, memory, national identity, tradition,...
 - Belonging, trust,...
 - Excellence, motivation,...
- SENSE OF PLACE → MEANING → CHARACTER → CREATIVITY

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Distinctive Rooted Irish-Global Identity!

- *From the earliest times the Irish mind remained free, in a significant measure, from the linear centralising logic of the Greco-Roman culture which dominated most of Western Europe.....the Irish did not abandon order for disorder; they created a different kind of order.....not meaningless but another kind of meaning, not confusion but another kind of coherence.*
- Richard Kearney (1985)
- Ireland's cultural heritage provides ideal base for creativity
 - Different Traditions - Diversity in Cultures - Different Meanings
 - Ruptured Roots - Double Vision
 - Local - Global or Exile - Peripherality
 - Artistic - Analytic or Emotional - Rational or Disorder - Order
 - Tradition of Metaphors, Narrative, Stories
- *Could it be that the centuries-old Irish genius for creative communication, the basis of literature, provided the catalyst that has propelled Ireland into the knowledge society and made it one of today's leading software producers?*
- IDA Ireland (2006)

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Radical Policies

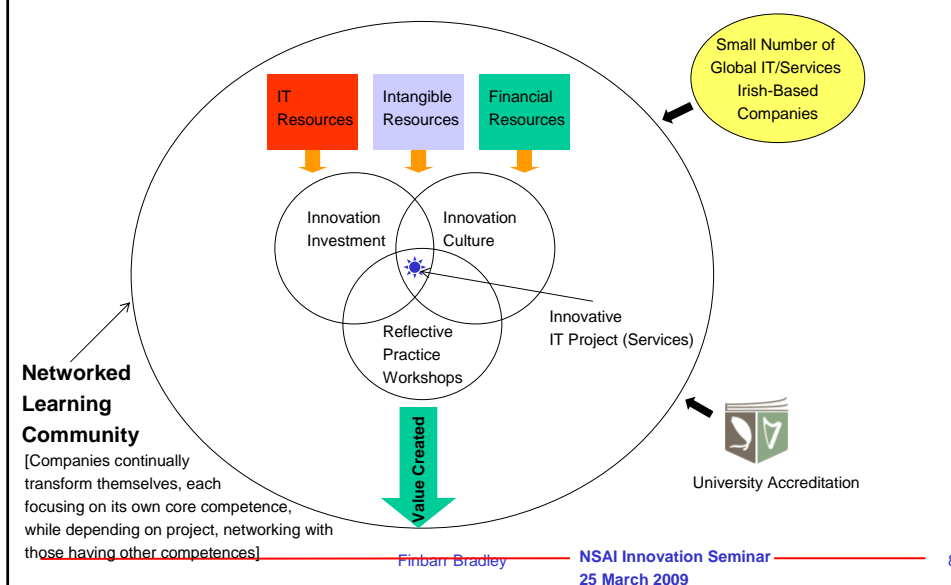
- Foster rootedness as cultural/social milieu
 - Transforming individuals, sustaining individual difference while enhancing sense of belonging
- Develop dynamic and vibrant learning communities
 - What matters is not what people learn but how they learn
 - Go from Learning-about to Learning-to-be
 - Emergence, communities of interest, networks of practice
- Integrate
 - Artistic (story-telling, conversation, inner discovery)
 - Scientific (rational, mechanistic, outer discovery)

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Example: Global Innovative Services



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Learning from Irish Revival (1890-1920)

- Lessons on Innovation
 - Self-help principles and driving vision of
 - Gaelic League
 - Co-op Movement
 - GAA
 - Irish Literary Theatre
 - Natural Science/Natural History
- Character, continuity, idealism, memory, patriotic spirit, self-reliance
- Excellence, standards, service, quality

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Conclusion

- *How much more intelligent, and more constructive, it is to come to terms creatively with the past than to amputate it like a diseased limb, or put it under interdict! We are likely to find ourselves in the position of the self-conscious moderniser who, having thrown out his ancestral furniture and paintings or sold them off for a knockdown price, finds inside a few years that these have now become valuable, respected antiques and that he himself is much the poorer, financially as well as culturally. After all, at the risk of labouring the obvious, the past has produced us, and when we deny it we deny our own immediate ancestry, and even an essential part of ourselves.*

- Brian Fallon (1998)

Go Raibh Maith Agaibh!

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