

# Conceptualising risk in public involvement Health and the Environment





Radioactive and chemical contamination on nuclear and defence sites  
3-4 June Manchester

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Warwick Business School and the National Centre for Involvement  
University of Warwick

# What is risk?

Risk is contextual and based on experience

-  Water purity
-  Swine flu
-  Contamination
-  Cancer

# What is risk?

We manage our own risk differently than we manage risk on behalf of others

- 🌍 Our children
- 🌍 Our parents
- 🌍 Our community
- 🌍 Our country

# What is risk?

There are different forms of risk

- 🌍 Environmental risk of contaminated land
- 🌍 Health risk of contaminated land

And these overlap

But do we think of these risks in the same way?




# Citizen Power



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## What do we do about our risk?

### **Choice**

-  People select their residential area
-  People select particular services
-  Consumerism




### **Voice**

-  Users/citizens express opinions in the planning and organisation of their community and delivery of services
-  Voting

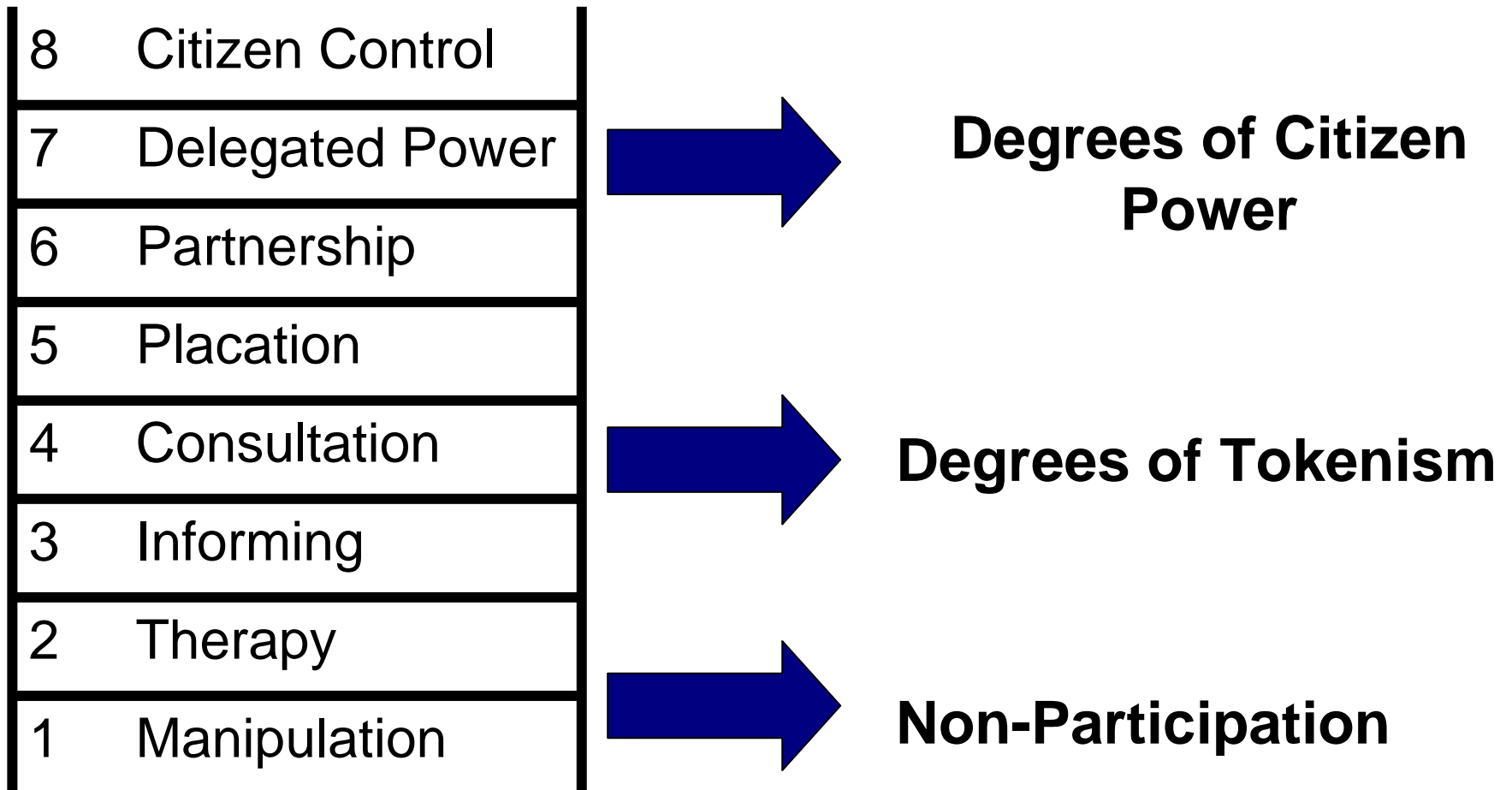
### **Involvement**

# What is Involvement?

Ways in which residents can draw on their experience and members of the public can apply their priorities to the evaluation, development and organisation of communities

-  Residents as individuals
-  Community organisations on behalf of others
-  Members of communities, localities and the public

# Arnstein's ladder of Citizen Participation



“The underlying issues are essentially the same – ‘nobodies’ in several arenas are trying to become ‘somebodies’ with enough power to make the target institutions responsive to their views, aspirations, and needs.”

(Arnstein 1969: 216)

# What's wrong with Arnstein's Ladder?

- Power as zero sum and the sole dimension of importance
- Missing rungs
  - Factors not taken into account
- The snakes on Arnstein's Ladder
  - Adverse effects of the approach
- The need for scaffolding
  - Multiple dimensions of involvement

(Tritter and McCallum 2006)

# Conceptualising Involvement



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- Involvement in **decisions about** personal services
- Involvement in **service development**
  - Planning, prioritising and Commissioning services
- Involvement in the **evaluation of service** provision or development
  - Regulation and public accountability not satisfaction surveys
- Involvement in **teaching**
- Involvement in **research**
  - At all stages of the research cycle

# Forms of Public Involvement

## **Direct** Public Involvement

-  People play a role in making decisions

## **Indirect** Public Involvement

-  People as a source of information which influences decisions

## The vast majority of Public Involvement is Indirect

-  Ways of gathering the views of 'stakeholders'

# Forms of Public Involvement

## **Individual and Collective** Involvement

-  Submitting a written protest against development
-  Organising a protest march

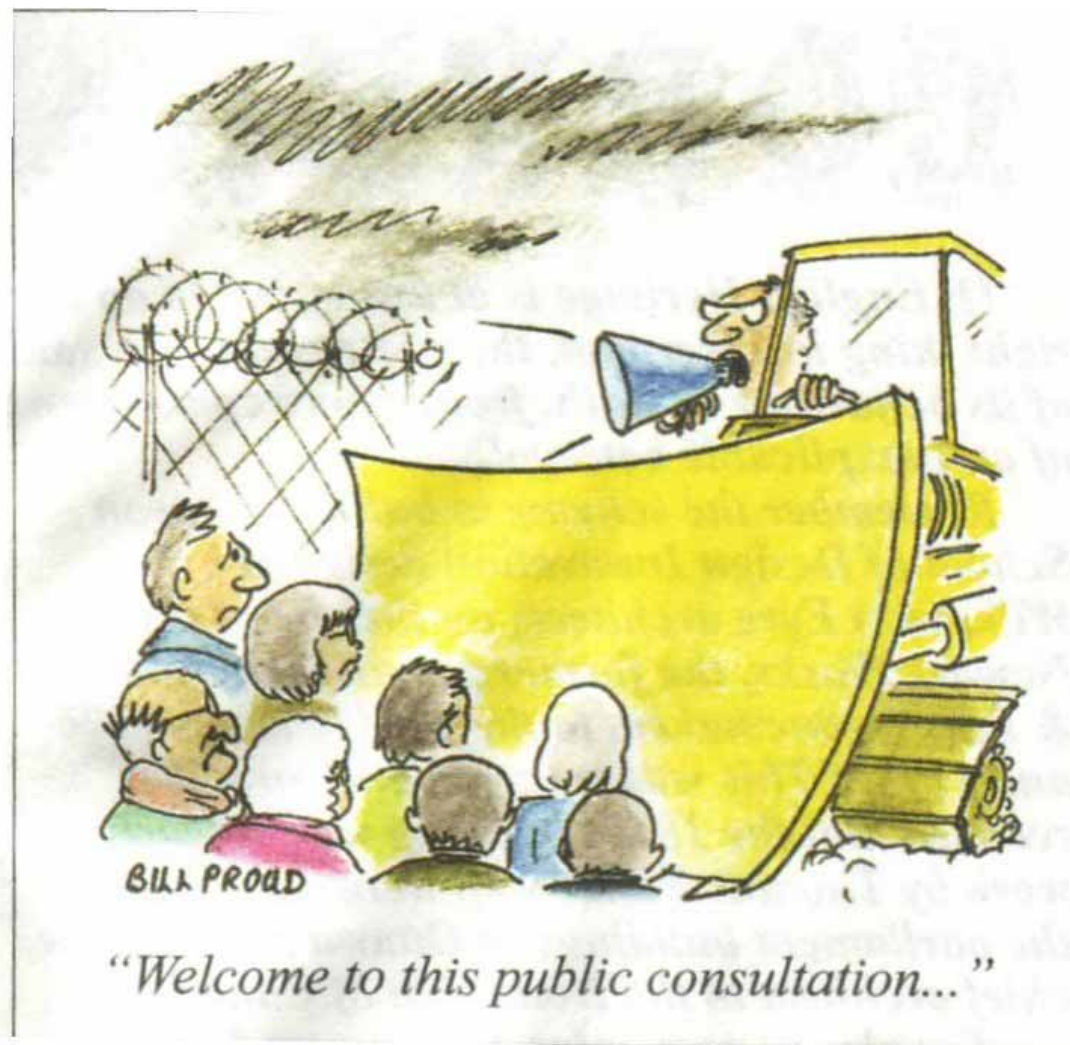
## **Proactive and Reactive** Involvement

-  Participating in a local development plan
-  Seeking a protection order

## **One-off or Continuous** Involvement

-  Particular involvement activity
-  Building relationships within a system of involvement

# Typical Involvement



# Why involve members of the public?




## Legitimacy

-  Of decision
-  Lessens conflict and resistance to change

## Relevance

-  Different kinds of questions
-  Focus on process and experience not just outcomes

## Impact

-  Efficiency and effectiveness of decision
-  More acceptable process for public and public manager
-  Support, Co-production and Compliance

# Why involve members of the public?


- Involvement is about creating accountability
  - Promoting the transparency of decision-making
- Distinction between democratic accountability and other forms of accountability
  - Democratic accountability not the *highest* form
- Both challenged by apathy
- Both challenged by lack of representativeness

# The effectiveness of public participation





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## **Direct effects of public participation**

-  An alteration in the terms planning
-  An alteration to the level of pollution permitted

## **Underlying trust in the state**

-  Legitimacy of environmental management authorities
-  Low levels of trust more likely to lead to conflict, complaint and the generation of Super-activists

For some state authorities:

-  Lay expertise is considered unreliable





# The effectiveness of public participation




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## Indirect Effects of public participation

### **Social goals (Beierle 1999)**

-  Increasing the expertise of participants
-  Incorporating public values into decision making
-  Increasing trust in a decision
-  Improving substantive quality of decision because of 'local' knowledge

### **Expertise of environmental management authorities**

-  Greater care taken with procedures and underlying argument in cases that generate greater public participation

'Without concern for both the viability and quality of participation, it is better to forgo the effort'  
(Fischer, 2006)