
‘Local Voices’: The potential for HIA in raising the bar on public participation.

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je participe
tu participes
il participe
nous participons
vous participerez
ils profitent

French student poster. In English,
"I participate, you participate, he
participates, we participate, you
participate...they profit!"

Arnstein 1969



Participation - a long story

“...a radically different approach from that employed in the past. In particular, there needs to be a move away from one-off consultation, towards on-going involvement of local people in purchasing activities”

NHS Management Executive 1992

The stated aim is to make patient and public involvement a central value underpinning the provision of health services with health organizations strategically and systematically building patient and public involvement into the way they operate.

NHS 2000

It is time to free up local government and local communities to decide how best to improve the health and wellbeing of their citizens

DH 2010

Cross-agency support...

“Communities need to be consulted and listened to, and the most effective interventions are often those where communities are actively involved in their design and delivery, and where possible in the driving seat”

Social Exclusion Unit, 2001

“The increased incorporation of community engagement and social participation in policy processes helps to ensure fair decision-making on health equity issues.”

WHO Closing the Gap Within a Generation, 2008

We need to create communities with oomph – neighbourhoods who are in charge of their own destiny, who feel if they club together and get involved they can shape the world around them.

David Cameron 2011

“the economic backdrop is opening up a real divide in progressive politics, a divide between old progressives, who emphasise the power of the central state, and new progressives, who focus on the power of citizens”.

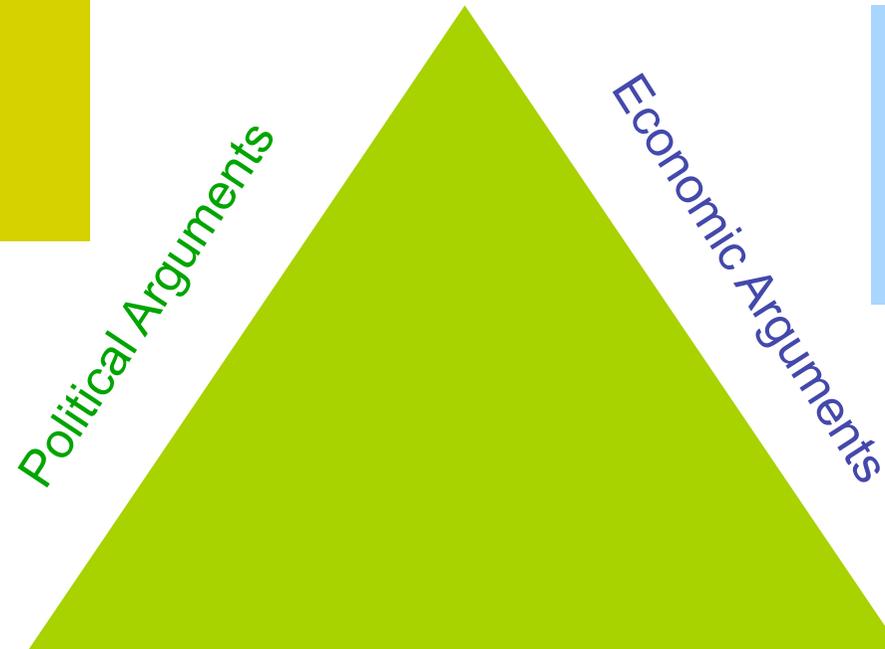
Nick Clegg 2010

What is participation

- No agreed definition... a malleable idea
- Arnstein (1969) relates to power... in health promotion, participation is often aligned with '*empowerment*'

Why public participation?

A right as a citizen to have a say in public service decision making



Service quality
And efficiency
enhanced by
Participation and
feedback

Participation is empowering, builds social capital, trust and social cohesion and challenges inequalities

Sources of failure in participation – community perspectives

- Lack of understanding of process
- Lack of support for participation from institutions/
public sector
- Experiences of working in unequal partnerships
- Past experience of initiatives to involve which
have led to nothing.

(sources: Pickin et al 2002, Rowe & Shepherd 2002, Chadderton et al 2009)

Sources of failure for organisations

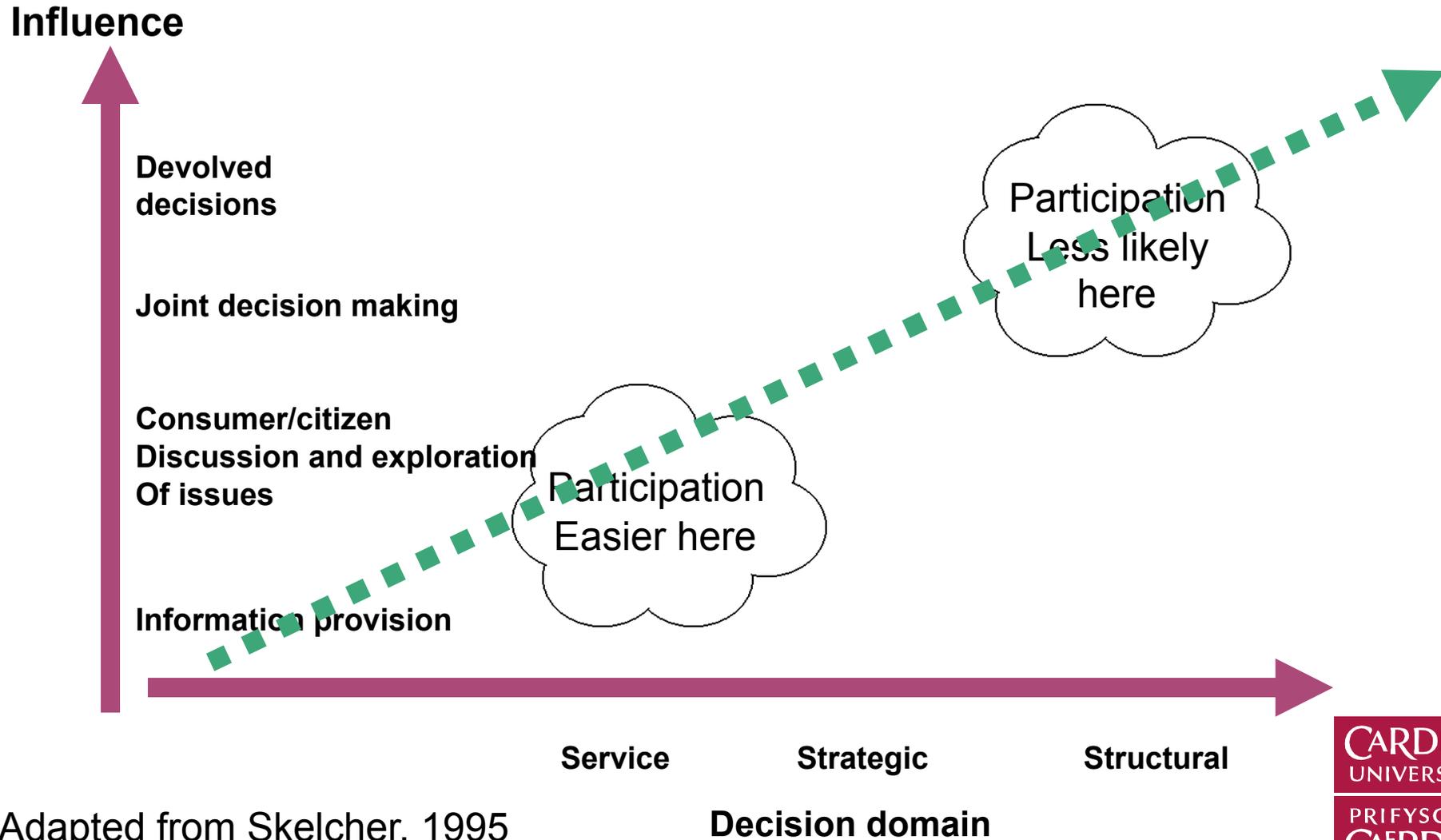
- Simplistic notions of the community and failing to understand the pressures of everyday life.
- Rigid traditional planning processes and timescales – ‘consultation is a box to tick’.
- Lack of knowledge of community history and culture.
- Queries of representation – statistical or democratic
- Lack of necessary motivations, skills, time and other resources to put in.

A challenge to power

- Reluctance of managers & professionals
- Claims of lack of legitimacy of participants
- Power issues – agenda/process control by institutions
- Manipulation/selective implementation of outputs to meet own agenda

Sources: Rowe & Shepherd 2002, Harrison & Mort 1998, Martin 2011)

Mapping participation



Adapted from Skelcher, 1995

Why HIA?

- HIA provides a structure within which participation can be located - 'outside' the process of decision-making, but connected to it.
- It is specific to decisions. Outcomes are visible and can be both owned by stakeholders and shared.
- It is independent, and the skills needed to involve are developed in HIA
- It is credible and professional. Based on structured, but flexible approach.

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