

The first Legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games

Contribution to the conference „State of the Legacy: interrogating a decade of ‘Olympic regeneration’ in east London“ on 12 Sep 2022

by Oliver Pohlisch (Goethe University Frankfurt)

The first Legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games

Displacement

201 businesses with about 5000 jobs



425 inhabitants of Clays Lane Estate



550 people living in a UEL students village



Manor Garden allotments



Eastway Cycle Circuit



2 Traveller sites

Pentecostal churches

artists

Raco/Tunney (2010): „Once a relocation has taken place, the focus of attention quickly moves on to what is then created on the ‚prepared‘ site. By converting the relocation process into a ‚technical‘ issue, overseen by dedicated experts working in quango agencies, the clearances were to a large extent depoliticised. They became a bureaucratic fait accompli, to be overcome as quickly and effectively as possible.“

London Development Agency

provided with statutory power by the 1998 Regional Development Agency Act

2004 Compulsory Purchase Act

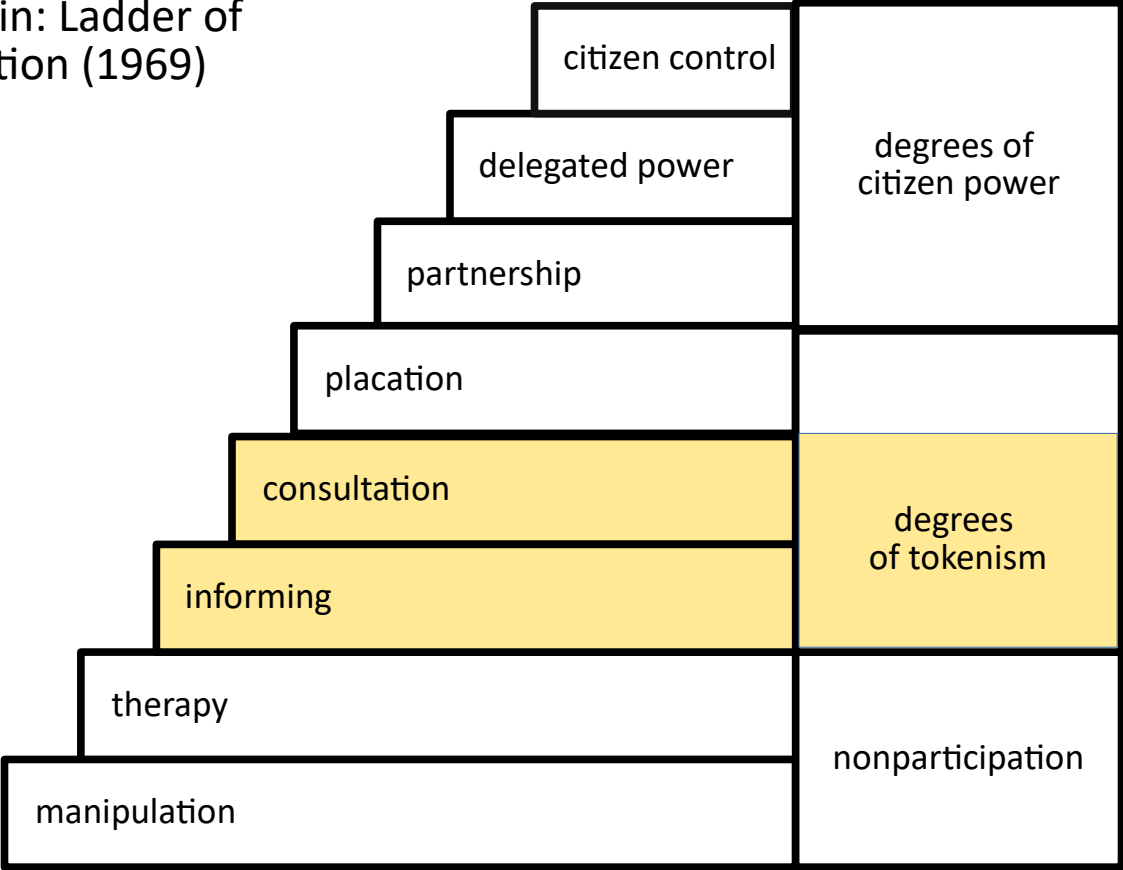
criticized as placing a far greater importance on the economic impact of a new big scheme than to its negative effects on the existing occupants of the land.

Consultation process in the context of Olympic planning

- It should reflect New Labour's urban policy
- but collided with initiating a top-down urban development with a tight time schedule

„We were not consulting over is the Olympics coming or not – it was coming. So we thought: okay what we need to try and do is find out how we soften the blow.“

Sherry R. Arnstein: Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969)



Many of my interview partners also perceived the consultation as a token event.

„There was some semblance or some notion that there was this consultation going on. In actual fact there was no consultation at all, you know. It's just this paper exercise they had to go through.“

The Olympic CPO was issued on 16 November 2005.
Even before the Olympic bid was won on 5 July 2005,
the LDA started negotiations about relocation and
compensation with the people that were likely to be
affected by the CPO

Many of my interviewees criticized how they were treated by LDA representatives. “Patronising” and “dishonest” were two adjectives that came up relatively often.

Unsettled cases ended up in a **public inquiry** under the auspices of from the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

- 450 objections

On the basis of the report of the inspector in charge, the Secretary of State decided all objections in favour of the LDA with minor corrections.

„The Games represented a unique opportunity to secure benefits on an unimaginable scale which could not realised in a less damaging way.“

„Forgone conclusion.“

„Who’s gonna give permission for the CPO? The minister. He’s gonna award it to himself. That’s the democratic process.“

„The Secretary of State had more power, even if we had a decent excuse. It’s just a formality. You’re hitting your head against the brick wall.“

In the end, no CPO was actually enforced.

Even court cases brought by some against their eviction were decided negatively.

From Summer 2007, CPOed land was fenced.

But court cases brought by some businesses due to insufficient compensation still lasted until 2016

The result of the relocation process

1. **dispersal** (businesses)
2. **disappearance** (informal businesses, coop run estate)
3. **squeezing** (Traveller sites)

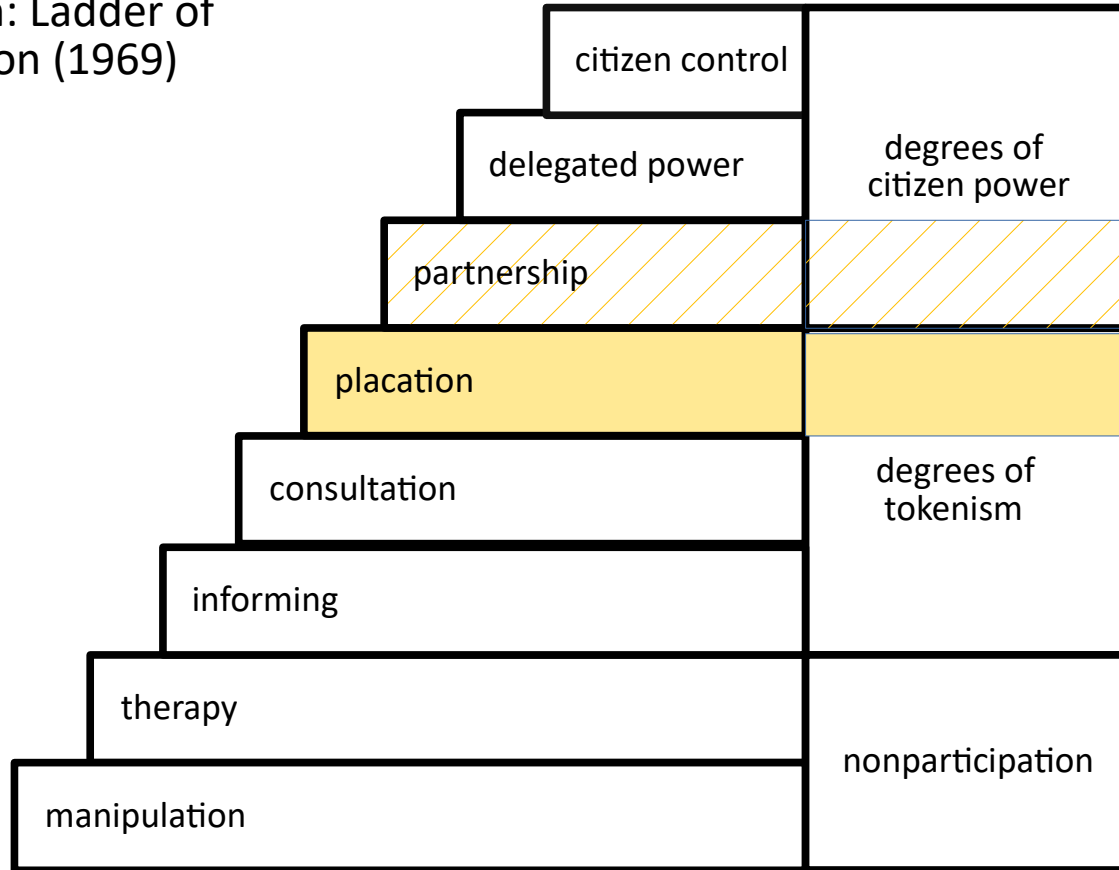
4. Incorporation

Few users made it back into the Olympic Park (cyclists, allotment holders)

They negotiated with the **Olympic Delivery Authority** about the design of their future location.

The interviewed cyclists and gardeners emphasise the difference between LDA and ODA in dealing with them.

Sherry R. Arnstein: Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969)



Conclusion

The designated Olympic site in the Lower Lea Valley was considered non-negotiable before the beginning of the consultation process.

Although no CPO was actually exerted, its threat hung over the Lower Lea Valley occupants to be relocated. The democratic deficits of the proceedings were all too obvious. Instead of talking about governance, I would call this simple governmental ruling.

Conclusion

All this created shortcomings in the early stages of East London's Olympic-led regeneration, becoming a painful experience for more than just a handful people.

There were, at best, attempts to correct the flaws in the post-Olympic period.