

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATORY PLANNING: EXPERIENCES OF A MINING TOWN IN KOREA

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Key words

planning process, participatory planning, local community, community empowerment, mining town

Abstract

This research paper examines the interactions between planning practices aiming for the developmental reconstruction of a local society and actual changes onto the society. For the purpose, the research measures four procedural characteristics in the voluntary planning practice in a declining mining town; it also analyzes three dimensions of community empowerment in the mountainous town Churam. The paper demonstrates that each characteristics of the four procedural variables in planning practices contributes to the relative dimensions of community empowerment, and that each one of the three dimensions of community empowerment exerts an influence on the constitution of actual planning practices, reversely. Based on the case study, the paper concludes that there exists a mutual causality between planning practices and social development, depending on participatory measures for local people in the planning processes. Drawing on the conclusion, the paper suggests the significance of participatory planning processes in socio-political reconstruction of local communities; by the same token, it also legitimizes the understanding of local governments' public planning not only as an economic enterprise but also as a socio-political one.

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I. Introduction

Changes in industrial structure at the national level have been catalyzing not only the industrial restructuring but also the social and political transformation in local communities. Facing the spatial process, nation-states have long tried to regulate it through established national public planning practices. Public interventions at the national level, however, have been often criticized for their lack of attention to micro-level changes through which local communities have been living. In the meantime, in parallel with recent progresses in the political institutional decentralization, the efforts of local community members to regulate social and political upheavals as well as economic ones are gaining power (Kim et al. 2003; Song et al. 2002); various planning practices at the local or community level have emerged as main media for the intentional efforts (Duffy et al. 1997; Hamdi et al. 1997).

The intentional interventions of local community members into the changes in their lives, however, have resulted in a wide variety of outcomes across communities. While a planning practice comprehensively revamps the economic conditions in a rather short period, others fail to provide a single small economic impetus over a long labored time; moreover, while some practices put a relative emphasis on the economic aspect only to fail to accomplish any desired results, others gradually regenerate the communities, concentrating on the social aspect instead of the economic one. After all, local planning practices have showed a wide variation in the outcomes regardless of a universal cause of self-regulation on ever-changing community lives in milieu of global and national forces; it is sometimes due to the variation in local social systems, or due to the differences in the procedural characteristics of planning practices.

This research paper aims to examine the relationship between planning practices and the developmental reconstruction of a local community, analyzing the case of a declining mining town in Korea. The case study will provide empirical answers to essential questions on the contribution of planning practices to local community development such as what sort of socio-economic

changes a local community goes through amid global and national industrial restructuring, what a local planning practice could set up as its relevant objectives in the ever-changing global and national circumstances, and how the planning practice should be organized in order to realize its objectives.

In order to compile the data regarding how the planning practice was organized and what changes the study case underwent before and after the planning practice, the research conducted participatory observation and in-depth interviews with relevant actors. Specifically, the researcher participated in official and unofficial town meetings, workshops, and community activities such as community festivals and residential repair projects over eight months. The researcher also interviewed fourteen local residents, four local government officials, and two architects who served as voluntary planning experts in the process. Interviews with the local residents and local government officials were focused on the characteristics of the planning practice and the changes occurring onto the local community over the years ; data from the interviews were recorded on a tape-recorder and then transcribed into documents as relevant 'community stories' (Dixon 1995). Interviews with the architects were conducted in the same way, focusing only on the characteristics of the planning practice. Document analyses were conducted as well, especially on urban plans of the local government, local media coverage, and minutes and proceedings of community organizations.

II. Relationship between Planning Practice and Community Empowerment

1. Planning Practice and Local Regeneration as Community Empowerment

Local regeneration, as the development goal of a local community experiencing overall decline amid the dismantlement of its industrial base, is discursive

in nature; as changes in the industrial base have wider impacts on socio-political aspects of the community, common understandings on the impacts and the formation of a shared development goal thereafter have to await the inter-subjective process where each community member expresses one's own problems and interests in the situation. The econo-centric approach to 'local regeneration,' focusing only on the economic aspect of community changes, often turns out helpless against the wide-ranging impacts and the variation in individual interpretations of them.

Given the multi-dimensionality of the changes instigated by industrial upheaval, local regeneration needs to be approached with rather comprehensive conceptual schemes. In this regard, recent debates on the social exclusion of a certain social group and a place provide a relevant theoretical frame. Theorists on social exclusion conceive the problems and changes in a local community - not only the overall decline of the community but also its developmental reconstruction - in socio-political as well as economic terms; local regeneration is then conceptualized as empowerment of the community in its institutional respects, while its overall decline is defined as socio-political exclusion of the community (Atkinson 2000, 1040; Roberts et al. 2000).

In detail, theorists on social exclusion comprehensively understand problems in a certain place from dynamic and relational perspectives (Atkinson 1998; Turok et al. 1999, 363); problems of unemployment are understood in terms of lack in access to labor market while problems of low income are discussed with focus on consumers' market inaccessibility. Furthermore, the concern on quality of life has more to do with access to non-market socio-political services, including access to policy process and other public decision-making processes. Accordingly, social exclusion of local people in a certain place is related to the relational attributes of the place; the degree of social networks in terms of connectivity, safety, and integrity is the internal aspect of the attributes, while the degree of functional and normative connectivity of the place to outer national and global socio-economic systems constitutes the external attributes. Therefore, local regeneration has to do with socio-political empowerment of the relational attributes within and around the

place, in addition to econo-centric redevelopment (Atkinson 2000, 1041; Murray et al. 1997).

In this context, an essential criterion by which one organizes or evaluates planning practices in a declining community is how the planning practices contribute to the developmental reconstruction of the community's relational attributes (Duffy et al. 1997; Hamdi et al. 1997; Mayo et al. 1995). Furthering the perspective, theories on planning practices have placed a relative emphasis on the participation of local lay people other than planning experts and on the robust interaction between local people themselves in planning practices (Innes et al. 1999; Healey 1997; Friedmann 1993).¹ Friedmann (1973) has also proposed the concept of 'transactive' planning in which the active interaction between planning experts and local community members is inevitable for the effectiveness of planning practices. The significance of the participation and collaboration is that such planning practices not only solve the pressing problems efficiently, but also provide the public arena for local community members and then serve as a way to foster mutual understanding and relational consolidation between them. Through the theoretical developments, prospects of participatory planning have come to have a direct bearing on the understanding of local regeneration as community empowerment (Friedmann 1996; 1992).

2. Dimensions of Community Empowerment

In social exclusion theory, the term 'community empowerment' is taken as an analytical tool for empirical studies about the developmental reconstruction of local communities. Meanwhile, theoretical traditions about 'empowerment' are categorized into three related approaches: psychological and motivational approach, organizational approach, and relational approach. Depending on rela-

¹ Refer to Song et al. (2005) if concerned about the relationship between community participation and project performance in recent Korean rural contexts. Based on survey research, it asserts a positive correlation between the two.

tive research concerns, the term empowerment has been examined at as multifarious levels from individual's psychological attitudes and behavioral characteristics to social and political organizations and institutions. Among the variations, community studies share theoretical concerns with organizational and relational approaches in sociology and politics with special reference to spatial affairs in common (Zimmerman 2000, 40; Kim 2000, 219-220).

Empowerment is initially defined as 'an intentional and repetitive process in which individuals with insufficient resources acquire resources in their local communities mainly through mutual respect, caring, collective participation, and critical reflections' (Zimmerman 2000, 43). Although this definition captures the meaning of empowerment in the context of a local community, it is still inadequate for empirical studies on spatial affairs since it limits the meaning only to individuals; one needs to take into account the fact that a local community is composed of not only individuals but also various organizational and institutional entities.

Given that a 'locale' with a specific geographical boundary contains individuals, interactions, and institutions, a local community has been generally defined as 'a geographical society based on individuals, social relations, and solidarity' (Peterman 2000, 34; Chung 2000, 10). The definition contends that fundamental components of a local community are both quantitative and qualitative characteristics in various social relations: frequency, strength, and quality of relations in individual, organizational, and institutional dimensions. On the ground of this understanding of local communities, empowerment is to be conceptualized more comprehensively as 'the process in which individuals, organizations, and the local community as a whole obtain the mastery over the decision-making on one's own lives' (Rappaport 1984, 3).

In addition to the definition of community psychologist Rappaport (1984), theorists on urban studies and planning practices have developed yet another term 'capacity'; the conceptual review on them shows that both the terms of empowerment and capacity are related with power. Healey (1998, 1541) defines capacity as 'the ability to enhance power,' while Jänicke (1996, 80-81) and Andersen et al. (2003, 81) assert that it means 'the capability to

solve problems at hand, which comprises of informational, participatory, and integrative capacities,’ and ‘the power of members in an organization or a local community to generate, observe, and manipulate their material, social, cultural, and symbolic resources.’

With reference to the above theoretical backgrounds, this research reconceptualizes community empowerment as ‘the process in which a local community obtains informational, participatory, and integrative capacities at individual, organizational, and local political levels with regard to the decision-making on their own lives.’ Based on the conceptualization, the paper will analyze the relational aspect between individual and organizational actors on the one hand and the subjective aspect of the actors on the other; analytical foci will be placed on the collective actions between the actors and on the critical understanding of oneself and one’s social and natural environments.

TABLE 1. Dimensions and Contents of Community Empowerment

Dimensions of Community Empowerment	Contents of Analysis	Levels of Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Informational Capacity Definition: process & consequence of actors’ critical understanding on oneself and one’s environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual and collective changes in recognition of oneself and one’s environments • formation and renewal of collective process of decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participatory Capacity Definition: process & consequence of actors’ participation in organizations and community activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • psychological and behavioral development of individuals into community leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local organizations • local government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integrative Capacity Definition: process & consequence of interrelations newly formed and reinforced among actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • institutionalized relations between individual and organizational actors • procedural and substantive changes in policy-making 	

3. Interactional Approach to Planning Practice

The newly emerging approach to planning practices as the process of social interaction provides valid conceptual backgrounds to this paper on the relationship between planning practices and social development (Innes 1995, 184; Healey 1998, 1543; Friedmann 1995, 159; Kwon 1986); it is essential to place a planning practice in specific social contexts and to delve into the procedural characteristics of the planning practice in order to theorize the relationship. The procedural approach to planning practices as social interaction has come amid critical reflections on the conventional understanding of planning practices as rather apolitical professional undertakings in the token of scientific policy analyses (Khakee 1998, 364).

One of main features in the conventional understanding is that planning practices have little to do with the socio-political development of values and preferences in individual and collective social actors; following the understanding, actual planning practices have often dismissed their formation and change to the socio-political struggles which are deemed to exist disparately out of planning practices. Accordingly, legitimate tasks of planning practices have been restrictively defined as quantifying into operational objectives the predetermined values and preferences in the real, outer socio-political arena, and as providing practical means to reach the objectives in effective and efficient manners. Therefore, subjects of planning practices are restricted to planning experts while objects of planning practices are confined to practical means for obtaining the quantified objectives. What one encounters in such understanding is the lack of consideration on the possible socio-political interactions among various social actors while in the planning practices.

This deficiency in the conventional view and actual practices has become more critical now that the mutual dependency and inter-connectedness between social actors have increased in 'open societies' and 'complex adaptive systems' (Kwon 1983; Innes et al. 1999; Innes 1998). Furthermore, it has been the case that planning experts as social actors do not stand aloof from relevant institutional contexts but are deeply embedded in a variety of social relations

(Healey 1992, 9). Unless one denies the social embeddedness of planning practices, the practices are inevitably to be reconceptualized and actually reorganized as the process of social interaction; it is through the interventions and cooperations of subjective recognitions, individual knowledge, and collective actions that a specific planning practice leads to a social consequence or another. What is implied in this conceptualization is that the procedural characteristics in planning practices impose a significant influence on the outcomes of each practice; namely, the way how a planning practice is actually organized bears a direct relation with how a certain society is reconstructed along the planning practice.

In this interactional approach, the three components of a planning practice, i.e. the planning subjects, the planning objects, and the structural characteristics of interaction, are comprehended differently from the ones in the conventional understanding. First, the planning subjects are redefined as ‘potential social actors who participate in the process of solving the problems of a certain society’; individual local residents and community organizations as well as planning experts become the planning subjects. Second, as a planning practice includes problem-identifying and value-setting processes as well as means- and solution-identifying process, the planning objects expand beyond the means over to values, goals, problems, and even strategies for implementing the means against counter-actions (Friedmann 1995, 159). Lastly, the structural characteristics of interaction between planning subjects are newly taken into consideration in three aspects: distribution of planning subjects in a specific planning process, distribution of relations between planning subjects, and distribution of roles.² Based on this interactional conceptualization, this paper will analyze four variables in the actual organization of planning practice in the study case: the distribution of planning subjects, the distribution of

² Some of recent sociological theorists on social network provide insights for understanding the formal patterns of social interactions as structural characteristics (Emirbayer 1997; Emirbayer et al. 1994; Kim 1996; 2003; Yee 1996). Also, this study adopted one of three different definitions of social structure in sociological literature: social structure as the distribution of social parameters (Blau 1975).

relations, the distribution of roles, and the substantive scope of planning objects. The empirical analysis in the remainder of the research paper sets out from the following theoretical assumptions on the interaction between those four variables and social development.

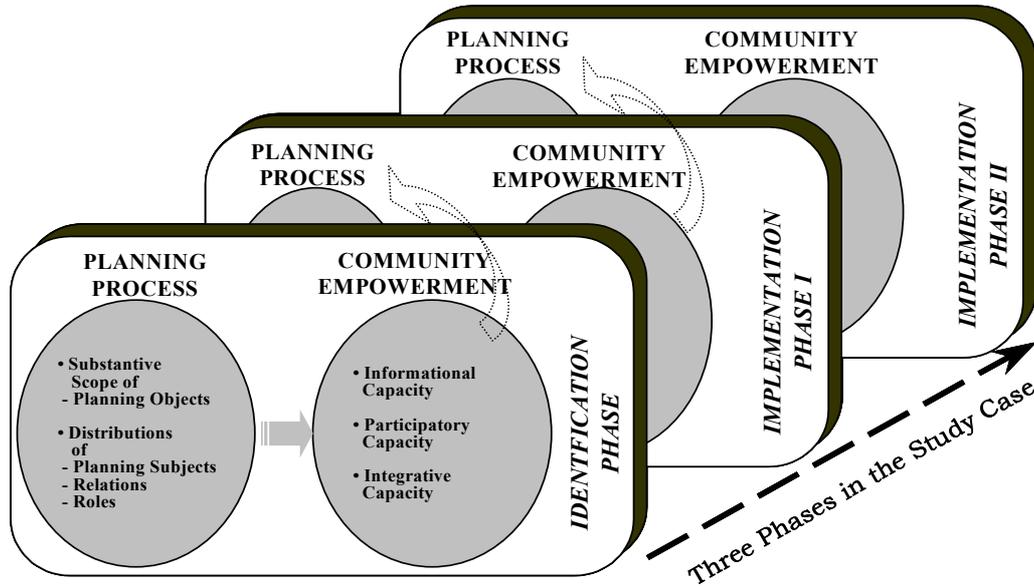
First, the substantive scope of planning objects will be examined in terms of their comprehensiveness against wide-ranging problems in a local community: from economic, social, cultural to environmental problems. The concreteness of planning objects - especially problems and solutions - will be also examined. Those two aspects of the substantive scope are significant in that the degree in each will affect local community members' participation in various community activities in a positive or negative way. They will also influence the degree of community members' understanding of one another and of social and natural environments.

Second, through the analysis on the distribution of planning subjects, the inclusiveness of the distribution is to be examined with special attention to the size of local community members in contrast with planning experts. An inclusive structure enables various local members to co-exist in a planning process, which will later contribute to mutual understanding and the development of interrelations between them.

Third, the analysis on the distribution of relations between planning subjects examines the stability of relations in a quantitative aspect of frequency. A stable structure of interactions in a planning practice functions as the social arena where recurrent communications will reinforce the awareness of reciprocity between community members and expand the understanding on current situations.

Fourth, the analysis on the distribution of roles between planning subjects examines the symmetricalness of the distribution especially between planning experts on the one hand and local community members on the other. The distribution of roles such as a researcher, a problem-identifier, a goal-setter, and a problem-solver forms a main condition in which community members come to turn a planning process into their own 'institutional assets' in the community (Healey 1998; Kim 2002).

FIGURE 1. Analytical Framework



III. Interactions Between Planning Practice and Community Empowerment in ‘Churam’

1. Overview of the Local Community Churam

From a Remote Mountainous Area to a Boom Town of Coal Mining: from late 1930s to late 1980s

The local community Churam is located in the municipality of Tae-Baek city which was once a South Korea’s national center for domestic supply of energy through coal production. Regardless of the disadvantageous location holding few plane areas in a mountainous region 700 meters above sea level, the abundant coal deposit was the only but enough ground for the city to develop into a me-

dium-sized settlement with the population of more than 120,000 in 1987; the population of Churam also reached its peak of some 20,000 in the same year.

The change of the place into such a boom town of coal mining was initiated in the 1930s under Japanese colonial rule for the purpose of war-time energy supply. The town had been only a remote small settlement of some 300 slash-and-burn farmers before the coal deposit had been exploited under Japanese rule. Following the initial development of the area, the newly established Korean government furthered the development as the northern part of the peninsula fell into a separate communist regime, which had constituted a dominant portion of coal supply all across the peninsula. The two world oil crises in the 1970s and the national energy shortage thereafter were further propellants for the government to put more emphasis on self-sufficiency in energy focused on the coal production.

All in all, it was through the central government's national energy policy that a small slash-and-burn farming town changed dramatically into a boom town with the population growth of more than 60 times over less than 50 years. The metamorphosis, however, contained social and cultural under-development disproportionate to the city's enhanced role as a major supplier of energy for national demands.

- a. Singular economic base: Despite the booming economy based on coal mining, the nature of mining industry and the geographical restriction of the mountainous area hindered the diversification of the area's economic base.
- b. Over-population and stagnation in collective consumption: In spite of the dramatic population expansion, measures for residents' collective consumption in such aspects as education, housing, cultural activities, and the like were given undue heeds by national policy-makers.
- c. Extreme social heterogeneity: Urgent needs of energy exploitation for the industrialization of Korean economy drove the government to set high wages for potential miners from urban and rural unemployed population. Mercenary workers of different regional origins gathered with little cultural heritage in common.

- d. Small organizations and weak social ties: Heterogeneous workers tried to establish social relations in the unfamiliar and rather isolated living place, but the efforts were to be confined to small social groups mainly of the same regional origin. Meanwhile, community-wide communal relations were nascent at best by the time the community began to lose its economic power.

Steep Decline of a Boom Town in the Aftermath of Industrial Restructuring: from the late 1980s to the late 1990s

Seeing that the industrial burgeoning of the local community had largely depended upon national energy policy, it was a corollary that the abandonment of the policy principle championing self-sufficient energy supply engendered abrupt disappearance of the community's economic base, putting it into violent socio-political turbulence. Following the national legislation for downsizing the coal production in 1988, the government implemented a variety of measures to encourage established mining corporations to shut down within years. The reaction of small and medium-sized mine companies employing hundreds of workers was immediate and dismissed workers emigrated to other major cities in search of new jobs. In 1995, the population of Churam decreased to a third of that in 1987, while the population of Tae-baek city decreased to a half. Furthermore, major companies employing some 1,000 workers started to close down from the middle of 1990s, furthering the decline in the community. The influence of national industrial restructuring policy was much more than the central government had expected.

Facing the steep decline and popular demands for governmental intervention, the central government established a special legislation promising government's direct investment to slow down the changes in communities of the city; the legislation was to change the city into a tourist resort exploiting natural beauty in high lands for the coming 10 years from 1995. However, almost all the top-down plans failed to attract private enterprises into the isolated mountainous area. Around 2000 when the governmental plans had been

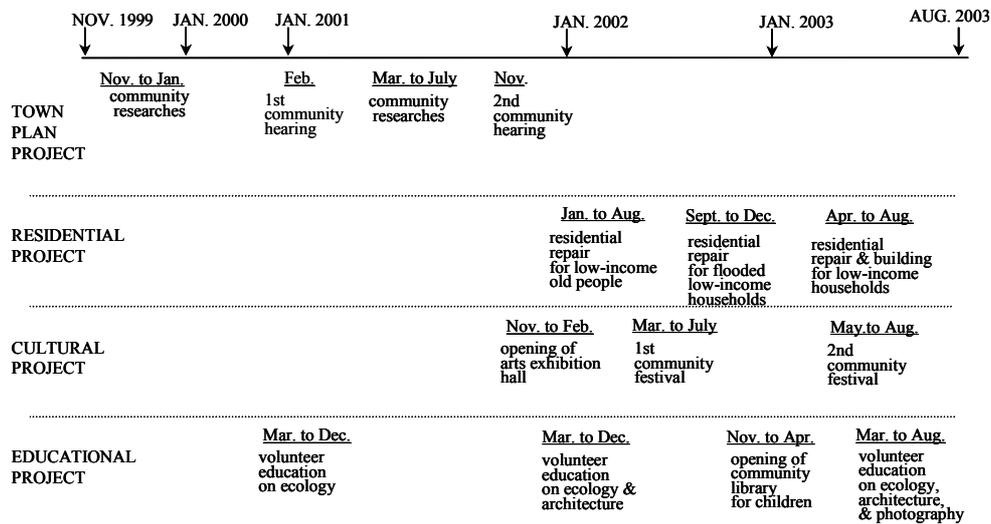
implemented for 5 years, the population and the economic base still continued to deplete although the decrease rate became milder; local people finally began to cast doubts on the effectiveness of the national policy.

2. Participatory Local Regeneration Previewed: from Doubts on Top-down National Planning to Collective Actions

Before the special legislation in 1995, the central government had focused only on the relocation of mining companies into other sectors out of the area and the emigration of miners into other labor markets; there had been no concern for the self-employed people left behind in the area. In this sense, the legislation in 1995 somehow marked an improvement in government policies, finally paying due attentions to local regeneration for those with no alternatives but to stay and find different ways of living than the past's.

The government plans which were to change the area into a tourist resort, however, encountered external and internal difficulties. First of all, most of the plans were to be implemented only if there was enough private investment; while large-scale development projects in the plans were beyond the financial capacity of the government, private investors in the market didn't show enough attention to this remote area for tourist development. As a result, the actual benefits of top-down plans were quite limited. Second, even the limited benefits didn't flow into all the disparate local communities in the city. In this context, there emerged critical reflections on the legitimacy of government-driven top-down development which had promised for balanced development between the local communities within the city; Churam was the locus of such reflections and voluntary collective actions thereafter. Located in the remotest place in the city, the community was the least accessible from the city center and from other contiguous cities. The geographical feature along with the least governmental investment made the residents feel excluded from the city-wide redevelopment. This collective resentment toward the government plans and the city government was eventually to be converted into voluntary self-help actions when stimulated by a group of initiators.

FIGURE 2. Main Accomplishments of Local Regeneration in Churam



Initial actions of bottom-up local regeneration in the community were actually triggered by the cooperation of a voluntary group of architects from Seoul and a few leading local residents. At the end of 1999, those initiators coalesced to start up autonomous regeneration of the local community with little attention from the city government. They shared the idea that social resources as well as physical ones need to be mobilized for them to accomplish the objective on the declining community's own. The efforts to establish social resources focused on the reconstruction of social relations between local people, especially the under-developed and even weakening local organizations. Meanwhile, the efforts to enrich physical resources concentrated on the re-interpretation of the peculiar natural and built environment such as upright high mountains, black and huge coal production buildings, and old tattered houses of miners; those were considered not only as impediments from the past but as valuable industrial heritage for future community-controlled small-scale tourist development.

The participatory planning practice for local regeneration had persisted for 4 years when this research was finished in October 2003; the community's

efforts are still on their way to further the development. This research paper is going to analyze the relationship between the planning practice and community empowerment in Churam, based on the 4 years experiences from 1999 to 2003. Figure 2 briefly overviews what the community accomplished in 4 main projects over the period: the town plan project, the residential project, the cultural project, and the educational project.

The process of local regeneration is divided into three different phases according to the characteristics in planning practice and community empowerment: identification phase, implementation phase 1, and implementation phase 2. The identification phase corresponds to the period from 1999 to April 2001, when the initiators tried to identify the needs for and the basic directions of local regeneration. The implementation phase 1 corresponds to the period from May 2001 to August 2002. Results of the activities in the previous phase were proclaimed at community hearings; specific problems were identified and relevant solutions were constructed and implemented concomitantly. Lastly, the implementation phase 2 from September 2002 to August 2003 is composed of the processes of reconstructing community problems and solutions; peculiar in the phase is the fact that the local community revised the collective procedures of problem-solving as well.

TABLE 2. Three Phases in Local Regeneration

Phases	Characteristics	Period
Identification Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the needs • Establishment of basic directions 	from 1999 to April 2001
Implementation Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specification of problems and solutions • First round of problem-solving 	from May 2001 to August 2002
Implementation Phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstruction of problems and solutions • Revision of the problem-solving process • Second round of problem-solving 	from September 2002 to August 2003

3. Analysis of Planning Process and Community Empowerment at Phases

Planning Process and Community Empowerment at Identification Phase

The planning practice for local regeneration started from a congregation of local residents and a voluntary group of planning experts. Residents Ha W., Won W., Won K., and Hong J. organized the Citizens' Coalition for Ecological Village in 1999 and had been seeking an alternative way for local development; the pro-activity of the 4 residents was from the past experience of civic engagement in the Citizens' Corporation movement to the cause of community-controlled development in the mid 1990s. Around the time, a group of planning experts from New Horizon in Architecture established the Project Team for Architectural Community on a voluntary basis and prepared themselves for the community planning in Churam; the relatively young generation of architects based on Seoul Metropolitan City had been pursuing alternative architectures for years in under-developed regions. Critical in the declining community was the confluence of the two different groups of activism: local residents' movement and professionals' movement.

Those residents and architects conducted various researches on the community such as walk-through observations, interviews with residents, and a questionnaire survey. Based on the researches, the first community hearing was held in February 2001. At the hearing, main problems and possible solutions were initially prepared as local opinion leaders and a remaining national mining company took part. The architects mostly took care of community researches, while the task of identifying local problems and resources was carried out jointly by the citizens' coalition and the architects.

After the closure of major mining companies, the community faced various social, economic, and environmental problems; the voluntary efforts as well took a comprehensive approach to local regeneration early from the identification phase. Major problems identified at the community hearing were as follows:

- a. Economic problems: lack of manufacturing companies, low-income households and decreased purchasing power, and contraction of the local retailer market,
- b. Social problems: disproportionate increase of the old and the poor in the community, increase in single-parented families, and increasing emigration to the city center for educational and cultural reasons,
- c. Environmental problems: a huge coal depot and a muck, deserted old houses, and the lack of usable lands.

Recognizing the multi-dimensionality of community problems, the early congregation of local residents and architects set the basic direction of regeneration as ‘reinforcing territorial assets while exploiting existent social and physical resources in the community’; once proposed and shared between local residents, it served as a guiding principle over the following implementation phases.

Through the above planning process, changes occurred onto the local community; especially, it deserves mentioning that the community attained the informational and integrative capacities around the citizens’ coalition and the integrative capacity in the city policy-making. The leading 4 members of the Citizens’ Coalition for Ecological Village had been roughly aware of the peculiarity of the local circumstances in Churam. However, they had not fully realized the resourcefulness inherent in the peculiarity; instead, they had been concerned with the negative aspects of the social and natural environments. Repetitive meetings within the early congregation of the four residents and architects, however, played a pivotal role in the change in their recognition of the environments; the following interviews are telling examples.

“After the coal mines closed, this place gradually turned into a slum. However, after strolling around the area with professor Joo D. while listening to his understandings, I came to think that these blackened and lopsided buildings may have a certain value.” (Transcribed from the interview with Won K.)

“Before the meetings, I didn’t have a clear answer to what we will work with at Churam. But by constantly talking to and meeting with professor Joo D., I developed an interest in the industrial heritage of Churam substantiated in buildings.”
(Transcribed from the interview with Hong J.)

A year long repetitive meetings of the congregation also contributed to the reinforcement of trust and interrelations between the four residents. Hong J. evaluated the function of the meetings, saying that the meetings meant a foundation for cooperation between the four people who had been previously conducting community activities on rather individual bases. In addition, the congregation helped them expand individual social networks to private and public organizations outside the community; they organized several irregular meetings with Morning Forum, an association of civic activists based on the city center, and also with the city government. It was after the meeting of the congregation and the city government that government officials took part in the ensuing community hearings; that was a significant progress in the city government’s attitude from its earlier inattention to the voluntary regeneration projects. Meanwhile, there was no significant change onto the participatory capacity at this phase.

Planning Process and Community Empowerment at Implementation Phase I

The two community hearings in February and November 2001 propelled the expansion of the voluntary planning process as representatives from 17 community civic organizations participated in the hearings; the newly established community conferences thereafter became the main public arena for the organizational participants. The engagement of civic organizations came with the participation of more public organizations: Churam railway station, Churam elementary school, and a remaining national mining company. The participation of individual residents such as Lee C., Kim D., Choi Y., and Yang also contributed to the expansion.

As the participation of individual and organizational local actors in-

creased in its size and degree, the planning process developed into the implementation of solutions for residential, cultural, and educational regenerations; each participant provided individual and organizational resources needed for the implementation, while sharing the roles such as a solution-identifier and a problem-solver. The early congregation of the leading four residents continued to play a nucleating role over the development; it mediated the interaction and role-sharing between the planning experts and the newly participating local actors. It also took over the role of community researcher from the planning experts.

As implied in the above, the substantive scope of planning objects expanded into specific solutions. Planning objects were also more concretized than they had been in the previous phase, giving rise to detailed projects such as volunteer educational programs on ecology and architecture at the elementary school, the arts exhibition hall project at the railway station, the residential repair project for low-income old people, and the community festival project. With the concrete projects at hand, the local community gradually accomplished residential, cultural, and educational improvements over a year and a half.

The characteristics of the planning process can be summarized as the increased presence of community members, the symmetrical role-sharing between planning experts and the community members, and the concreteness of the planning objects. Finally, such planning process led to the participatory capacity of individual residents and the integrative capacities at various levels.

The participatory capacity of individual residents is identified in the individuals' behavioral developments into community leadership such as Hong A. and Kim A. The two residents bought two dormitory buildings from a closed mining company and donated them to the community for communal use; without their donation, the buildings would have been destroyed according to the city government's plan to develop a new industrial site in their place, which was contradictory to the community's plan to preserve and remodel them for the preservation of industrial heritage.

In the aspect of integrative capacity, the interrelations between local

actors were consolidated and newly institutionalized through the implementation of the various projects. An interview shows the micro process of such community empowerment.

“The residential repair project enabled a high degree of contact among the community members; much more than I initially thought, since it was a job to be done while staying at the site for over a month. Also, it was a good chance to broaden our relations with the local women’s organization members who came to volunteer. After a year’s experience, I came to think that this should continue. After all, I did obtain much from it.” (Transcribed from the interview with Won K.)

The integrative capacity culminated into the formation of the Association for Community Festival, which was composed of 17 established community civic organizations. What enabled this kind of social network were the repeated collective meetings between the representatives from each organization: the meetings within the town council and the community conferences right after the two town hearings.

Those aspects of community empowerment were dependent upon how the planning process was organized at this phase; at the same time, the changes onto the community were to exert causal impacts on the reconstitution of the scope of planning objects and of the distribution of roles between planning subjects in the next planning process, reversely.

Planning Process and Community Empowerment at Implementation Phase II

By the time specific projects were completed at the implementation phase 1, the community had accomplished physical changes in its environment as well as the socio-political community empowerment. Five houses of the low-income lonely old were repaired and volunteer professionals and civic activists institutionalized arts and ecology curriculums at the community elementary school on a regular basis. Furthermore, a part of the waiting room in the railway station was remodeled into a community arts exhibition hall and the first

community festival was staged. Those achievements meant the initial physical assets for the regeneration of the community into a small-scale tourist resort; the resort was expected to sustain the peculiar landscape of the mining town and the lived experience of the miners embodied in the stark built environment: clusters of compact houses, overwhelmingly black and huge production facilities, and meandering narrow alleys to the miners' homes in the slope. Eventually, all the aspirations of the community were conveyed into an alternative town plan 'Proposals for Villageum³' and submitted to the city government; the city government, however, was still seeking to sweep away blackened vestiges of the past and to rebuild new communities of clean buildings and straight, wide roads in place.

On the way to the accumulation of physical assets, the natural disaster of flooding by a typhoon in the late August 2002 posed yet another adversary to the community; the flood was the biggest one ever since the community had been established and wiped out most residential settlements encroaching on the gully. The disappearance of the old houses was detrimental to the efforts to conserve them to conjure up the Villageum on the one hand; however, the flood provided an unexpected impetus to the further development of the participatory planning process on the other. First of all, it revealed one of the unseen community problems so far: that is to say, the houses close to the gully and exposed to natural disasters. Furthermore, the flood functioned as an exogenous mediator in bringing back together the local actors and expanding the planning process. Right after the disaster, the community carried out a residential repair project for 25 flooded low-income households and broadened the scope of planning objects to natural environmental plans and a resettlement

³ The term 'Villageum' is a coined word by the community members, epitomizing their aspirations for the way in which the community is to be regenerated after the closure of mining companies. Combining the two words of 'village' and 'museum', the community members desired to turn the whole town (or village) into a museum substantiating the past experience in coal mining, which was expected to serve as a tourist attraction and a novel economic base in the coming post-mining era.

plan for the houses in the gully; besides, following the increased participation of community members, the distribution of roles was reorganized between the planning experts and the local actors. According to the following interview, the community empowerment at the previous phase influenced this reconstitution of planning process.

“We already shared the experience and were prepared with equipments from the previous repair projects, so we were able to provide help in such an emergency. In the process, Kim D. and Lee C. were able to take initiatives on various operations such as investigations of damages and mobilization of needed resources.”
(Transcribed from the interview with Hong J.)

As the restoration projects were completed in the early 2003, the community implemented another round of educational, cultural, and residential projects. From March to August 2003, those projects built up the community's physical assets; two more houses were reconstructed for low-income households and the second community festival ‘Churam Arts Festival’ was held. Curriculums at the elementary school continued with voluntary photographers further participating in the project. Besides, a children's community library, the only extra-curricular educational facility in the community, was opened.

Along the implementation of the projects, the planning objects continued to be concrete in the face of the community's needs while the scope of planning objects expanded more; the children's community library project was a telling example. As the local community recognized educational problems beyond school curriculums and classrooms, the new solution of building a community library was progressively constituted in the process.

In the distribution of planning subjects, the overall size of local participants increased more as some local actors exited out and others newly engaged themselves. In the distribution of relations, the interrelations between planning subjects stabilized more than ever; let alone the early congregation of the leading residents, repeated meetings within the Executive Committee of Churam for All provided a mechanism for the stability. In addition, various

roles, such as a researcher, a problem-identifier, a solution-identifier and a problem-solver, were shared between the planning subjects.

Through the planning process, changes onto the community led to the enhanced informational capacity at the organizational and local political levels and the participatory capacities at the individual level: the establishment of the Executive Committee of children's library and the renewal of the Association for Community Festival with regard to the former, and individual residents' participation in community activities with regard to the latter. The Executive Committee of the library was composed of nine members from individual residents, representatives of community organizations, to the elementary school board. The members of the committee had carried out various roles previously in the opening of the library, and they were the mediators in consolidating the relation between the library and the public elementary school; under the guidance of the committee, the two organizations have cooperated in many educational projects. In addition, the introduction of an audit system to the Association for Community Festival marked a qualitative development in the collective process of decision-making in the community; the association institutionalized reporting meetings on the financial records after each festival since the system was introduced. Besides, the tenure of the chairperson and executives was prolonged into two years in order to strengthen the responsibility of the association as an umbrella organization over each member organization. Lastly, the community finally obtained the city government's financial supports for the community activities, although the government did not fully accept the community plans as an alternative strategy to its own large-scale development plan.

4. Summary and Comparison of Three Phases

The characteristics in the planning practice at each phase can be summarized as follows. At the identification phase, the interrelations between planning subjects were stable over time and the roles of a researcher and a prob-

lem-identifier were symmetrically distributed between the subjects. Second, the implementation phase 1 showed the increase in the size of local participants, which simultaneously led to the symmetrical distribution of the role of a problem-solver between the planning experts and the local participants. In addition, the planning objects covered such social demands as residential, educational, and cultural improvements with concrete solutions. Lastly, at the implementation phase 2, the scope of planning objects further expanded to environmental demands. With regard to the distribution of roles, local actors took over even more roles from the planning experts, especially the community research itself.

Combining the characteristics of the planning practice and the community empowerment at each phase, the paper can summarize the relationship of the two as follows. First, it was the stability of the interrelations and the symmetrical distribution of roles between the planning subjects that contributed to the enhanced understanding of the community members on the problems and their own resources for solving them. Through those characteristics in the planning practice, the community obtained the informational capacity and the integrative capacity. Second, the increase in the size of local participants was essential to the development of the integrative capacity at individual, organizational, and local political levels. Especially, the increase was a prerequisite for the development of the integrative capacity at the organizational level. Lastly, role-sharing, especially the community research of the local residents' own was the most conducive to the development of the participatory capacity at the individual level. Meanwhile, the informational capacity at the organizational level could be obtained along with the changes in the composition of local participants; what required the transparency and responsibility in the collective process of decision-making was the increased presence of the new local community members in the process.

In addition to the contribution of the planning practice to the community empowerment, it was the changes in community empowerment at the previous phase that had an influence on how the planning process at the next phase was organized. The informational capacity and integrative capacity in

the identification phase contributed to the renewal of the planning process in the implementation phase 1: the increase in the size of local participants. Furthermore, the integrative capacity at various levels at the implementation phase 1 enabled the expansion of the scope of planning objects and the redistribution of roles at the implementation phase 2.

TABLE 3. Summary and Comparison

Phases	Characteristics of Planning Process	Dimensions of Community Empowerment Attained
Identification Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Distribution of Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stable relations in the early congregation ○ Distribution of Roles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shared role of a problem-identifier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Informational Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - changes in individual & collective recognition in the early congregation ○ Integrative Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reinforcement of interrelation between leading residents
Implementation Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Distribution of Roles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shared role of a problem-solver ○ Distribution of Planning Subjects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increase of local actors ○ Scope of Planning Objects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comprehensiveness covering social needs - concreteness of solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integrative Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expansion of interrelation between residents in a new organization - formation of interrelation between civic organizations - reinforcement of interrelation between the community and the city government
Implementation Phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Distribution of Roles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shared role of a researcher ○ Scope of Planning Objects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comprehensiveness covering environmental needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Informational Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - renewal of the association for local festivals ○ Participatory Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - behavioral developments into leadership ○ Integrative Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formation of interrelation between individuals and organizations

IV. Conclusions

This research paper intended to examine the relationship between planning practices aiming for the developmental reconstruction of a local society and the actual changes onto the society. In order to reach the objective, the paper delved into the multidimensional changes in a declining mining town; the paper also examined what characteristics the local planning practice had and what it accomplished.

Theoretical backgrounds for the empirical analysis were composed of two parts. One was the theories on community empowerment; the paper conceptualized the social development in a local community as community empowerment, three main dimensions of which were the informational, participatory, and integrative capacities at the individual, organizational, and local political levels. The other was the theories on planning practices; the paper operationalized a conceptual frame in order to identify the procedural characteristics of the planning practice in the case. In so doing, the planning practice was reconceptualized as a social interaction rather than an apolitical professional policy analysis. Applying this analytical framework to the local regeneration process in Churam, the paper now comes to provide empirical answers to the three specific research questions mentioned at the beginning of the paper.

First, the community changes amid industrial restructuring need to be looked upon not only in the economic aspect but also in the social and political aspects. In this regard, the paper puts more emphasis on the latter. That is because development projects in local communities are political in nature; the projects are not only about the financial investment plans but also about intentional efforts to change the ways how townspeople have convened and how they have identified and solved their problems. Second, related with the first answer, relevant objectives of a local planning practice are social and environmental regenerations as well as economic redevelopment. Moreover, when it comes to voluntary efforts on a declining local community's own, the

reconstruction of socio-political relations becomes one of the most accessible and needed works. Lastly, participation and collaboration of various planning subjects are main factors to be secured in a planning practice in order to attain the multi-faceted objectives and further to directly affect the socio-political systems in a society.

Based on the empirical answers, the paper finally concludes that there exists a significant mutual causality between planning practices and social development; each characteristics of the four procedural variables in planning practices contributes to the relative dimensions of community empowerment, and each one of the three dimensions of community empowerment exerts an influence on the constitution of actual planning practices. Drawing on the conclusion, one can develop the following implications regarding further policy studies and theoretical approaches to 'civic associationalism' in places (Kaufman 1999). First, the efforts to intervene into social changes through planning practices need to pay more attention to the socio-political process before and after the intervention. Second, when one aims to design a relevant planning practice in a certain society, the analysis of the social relations in the society is essential not only to objectify social changes around the planning practice but also to enhance the relevancy of the planning practice to the given social reality. Furthermore, further political and sociological approaches to civic engagement and participation need to consider the possibility that local governments' public interventions, which are major forms of planning practice in contemporary societies, can also significantly affect the civic empowerment in parallel with the self-sufficient or self-started development of civic society (Bloemraad 2005).

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