

Consensus Building through Participatory Decision-Making. —Experiences and Lessons from Korea—

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Résumé

Cette étude consiste à mener une enquête pour identifier les facteurs déterminants à considérer lorsqu'une autorité publique essaie d'appliquer une prise de décision participative dans le processus d'élaboration des politiques. Notamment, le système du jury des citoyens expérimenté dans la ville métropolitaine de Ulsan constitue ici le champ empirique de l'observation qualitative. Le système de jury des citoyens, adopté pour résoudre le conflit local de longue durée émis avec le projet de traitement des déchets alimentaires et de recyclage que le District Nord d'Ulsan a établi au début des années 2000, est l'un des outils de gestion de conflits réussis. Néanmoins, ce cas de règlement des conflits avec succès s'avère également un cas d'échec de la politique, car l'usine de traitement des déchets alimentaires a été fermée seulement deux ans et quatre mois après son opérationnalisation. C'est en fait un cas illustratif qui montre que la gestion réussie des conflits n'entraîne pas nécessairement une mise en œuvre réussie des politiques. En conclusion, cette étude suggère une liste de contrôle de dix-huit variables à considérer pour une mise en œuvre réussie de la prise de décision participative et ceci, en trois étapes : étape de la communication initiale, de la conception alternative et de la construction de consensus.

Mots clés : prise de décision participative, jury des citoyens, gestion des conflits, démocratie délibérative

Abstract:

This study is to carry out an inquiry to identify determinant factors to consider when a public authority tries to apply a participatory decision-making in the policy process. Notably the citizen jury system experimented in Northern District of Ulsan metropolitan city, constitutes here the empirical field of qualitative observation. The citizen jury system, adopted to resolve the long-lasting local conflict issued with the Food Waste Treatment and Recycling Facility project that the Northern District of Ulsan has established in the early 2000s is one of the successful conflict management tools. Nevertheless, this successful conflict resolution case is also a case of policy failure, because the Facility was closed only two years and four months after its operationalization. It is in fact an illustrative case which shows that successful conflict management does not necessarily result in successful policy implementation. As a final conclusion, this study suggests a checklist of eighteen variables to consider for a successful implementation of participatory decision-making and this, in three stages: stage of initial communication, of alternatives conception and of consensus-building.

Key-words: Participatory decision-making, Citizen jury, Conflict management, Deliberative democracy

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1. Introduction

In 2001, the Northern District of Ulsan Metropolitan City in Korea set up a project to develop a facility for recycling food waste into fertilizer. The project was formally approved in December 2004 by both the public administration and local residents, but only after serious conflict and disputes in the decision-making process, making this a typical example of a “not in my back yard” (NIMBY) case.

Nevertheless, the project is also a leading example of a successful resolution of a longstanding local conflict through a participatory decision-making process based on a citizen jury system. Although the citizen jury system in the Ulsan case differs from the original system developed in the United States, it has very quickly acquired democratic justification as a new decision-making device and has resulted in a concrete achievement in resolving conflict and building social consensus in policymaking, namely in the operationalization of a food waste recycling facility in Ulsan. Therefore, it is considered to be Korea’s first prototype of a form of environmental governance – a rare combination of deliberative democracy and citizen participation (Kim, 2006). Many scholars appreciate that it was a great success in terms of efficiency (time and costs), satisfaction (outcomes, process) and appropriateness of solution (cf. Han 2004; Lee 2005; Kim 2005).

However, by December 2007, the successful conflict management did not result in successful policy implementation. It marked a total failure in terms of stability of agreement: the facility was closed only two years and five months after beginning operations.³ Basically governance aims at the

³ “Successful conflict management” refers here to the success in the formulation of a settlement between the primary stakeholders, whereas “failure” refers to the failure in reaching a settlement, or, if a settlement is reached, a settlement that is not respected and has to be subsequently dissolved.

values of participation and collaboration. Contrary to the acceptance of governance paradigm (Rhodes 1997; Pierre & Peters 2000; Jessop 2001; Kooiman, 2003), the Ulsan case shows that the participation of diverse stakeholders in the decision-making process of public administration does not guarantee by itself collaborative outcomes. The increased interaction among unattended interveners did not develop into solid networks based upon “collaboration,” a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible (Gray 1989:5).

In sum, the Ulsan case is an example of the extreme intersection of “success” and “failure,” where successful conflict management can result in a dramatic failure of policy implementation and settlement of collaborative alliances. It is with this preliminary observation that this research explores the social conditions or factors that facilitate or, on the other hand, hinder conflict resolution. That is, which factors cause diverse actors intervening in the public decision-making process to participate in some form of collaboration? Our primary objective for this study is to provide new insights into collaborative conflict management by testing, expanding on, and replacing existing theories.

2. Analysis Framework

2.1 Theoretical background

Participatory decision-making refers to a policy decision-making process where the related experts and average citizens, as well as the target population or direct/indirect stakeholders, are present. There are three grounding principles necessary for its formation: the broad participation of citizens, learning and deliberation by the participants, and decision-making through consensus building.

First, participation in the decision-making process means that a diverse body of actors

directly or indirectly influences the decision-making process. However, participation does not solely include experts or stakeholders, as is presumed in traditional decision-making, but includes a wide range of participation by average citizens who do not have a direct stake in the issues concerned (cf. Lowndes *et al.*, 2001: 207).

Second, a deep and continuous provision of information to and learning by the participants is a necessary condition for participatory decision-making. Whether it is through discussing specific issues (via a *focus group interview*, *regulatory negotiation*, *a citizen jury*, or *planning cells*) or general ones (via *public polling*, *a citizen advisory committee*, or *a consensus conference*), it is commonly accepted that provision of more concrete and complete information results in a more efficient learning process. Consequently, it is more likely that conflicts will be resolved in a more consensual way.

Third, the success of participatory decision-making depends on the quality of debate based on sufficient learning; consensus building through debate is indeed the core factor of participatory decision-making. As is observable in *public polling*, *consensus conferences*, and *citizen juries*, the distinguishing feature of participatory decision-making is inducing citizens to resolve public issues through a deliberative process based on learning and debate.

Generally, the participatory decision-making tools sharing the above three attributes have been developed in diverse ways and have inherent limitations arising from those attributes. Therefore, it is necessary to apply them in a selective way considering the context of particular social conditions suitable for the attributes. The research by Wood and Gray (1991), Weeks (2000), and Irvin and Stansbury (2004) explores this point and develops the discussion on the conditions to be met for the successful implementation of participatory decision-making tools, including the factors necessary for their success.

- **Weeks's factors**

Weeks (2000) explored the successful conditions of participatory decision-making through a comparative study of four applications of a model of deliberative democracy based on the metaphor of *community dialogue* in three American cities (Eugene, Sacramento, and Fort Collins). Conceptualizing *community dialogue*, a form of multi-party consultative group, as a tool of participatory decision-making, and positioning it as a mean of deliberative democracy, he derived the minimum conditions that have to be met by any reform claiming that label. Furthermore, Weeks divided into three steps the participatory process of offering extensive information regarding specific community issues and looking for alternatives through community workshops: agenda setting, strategy development, and decision-making. Weeks's research demonstrates that the necessary conditions of participatory decision-making include 1) broad civil participation, 2) informed public judgment, 3) opportunities for deliberation, and 4) credible results (Weeks, 2000: 361–370).

- **Irvin and Stansbury's factors**

Irvin and Stansbury (2004: 56–60) analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of citizen participation in the decision-making process of government. They listed the conditions under which community participation may be costly and ineffective and those under which it can thrive and produce the greatest gains in effective citizen governance (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004: 62). They argued that the optimization of cost-effectiveness is the ideal condition to create positive results for citizen participation and proposed the following five conditions as low-cost indicators:

- Citizens readily volunteer for projects that benefit the entire community
- Key stakeholders are not too geographically dispersed; participants can easily reach meetings
- Citizens have enough income to attend meetings without their ability

to provide for their families being affected

- The community is homogenous, so the group requires fewer interest group representatives; smaller groups speed up decision-making
- The topic does not require representatives to master complex technical information quickly

Moreover, they proposed the following five circumstances as high-benefit indicators of citizen participation being highly effective:

- The issue is gridlocked and a citizen mandate is needed to break the gridlock
- Hostility toward government entities is high, and the agency seeks validation from community members to implement a policy successfully
- Community representatives who are strongly influential are willing to serve as representatives
- The group facilitator has credibility with all representatives
- The issue is of great interest to stakeholders and may even be considered at a “crisis stage” if actions are not changed
- **Wood and Gray’s factors**

Wood and Gray’s study (1991) does not specifically focus on participatory decision-making, but it allows us to visit it in a more detailed perspective: how does the participation result in collaboration? This question is essential insofar as not all forms of participation result necessarily in collaboration but very often in conflict. It is necessary to open the black box of the interactive process of participation in terms of collaboration. Wood and Gray noted that collaboration occurs over time as different actors and organizations interact: collaboration is a process achieved through a continuous formal and informal interaction between stakeholders and accomplished through a repeated feedback process of negotiation, development of commitments,

and execution of those commitments. Wood and Gray framed the discussion in terms of an “antecedent → process → outcome” model.

From this viewpoint, they divided the collaboration process according to a continuum of stages: the antecedents, the process, and the outcome. Antecedents refer to the situation in which diverse issues are enmeshed complexly, and where the stakeholders compete for resources because of the scarcity of the resources. The formative factors for these antecedents comprise:

- a scarcity of resources: the need of one participant for that resource when another participant possesses it,
- the existence of a high-level of mutual dependence between stakeholders,
- the awareness of shared resources and shared risk,
- an experience or history of collaboration,
- the existence of compounding issues.

In the process stage, 1) the level of trust and mutual benefit, 2) reciprocity, 3) the role of administration, and 4) governance are considered to be deciding factors. In the outcome stage, 1) the experience of having achieved communal goals, 2) the suitability of business relations between the organizations, 3) the ability to allocate resources to new partners, 4) the offering of resources, and 5) the existence of voluntary collaboration in solving the problems of implementation and surveillance are all formative factors.

2.2 Analysis framework: the three-by-three matrix

Much of the previous research has centered on the conflict prevention and resolution support *process analysis framework* reconstituting the conflict process into iterative and cyclical stages from linear ones (Thompson & Perry, 2006: 21–22). Analysts have observed and analyzed in detail

the repeated exchange of interaction in each stage to determine the aggravating or alleviating mechanisms in conflicts. The *process analysis framework* has many advantages; with its diachronic approach, it clearly displays the generation and development of conflict (cf. Pondy, 1967; Rummel, 1976; Trollidalen, 1992). This approach, however, relies in many cases on the arbitrary interpretation of analysts; the periodization of phases going from the generation to the resolution phase relies mainly on the analysts' direct ("intuitive" or very often retrospective) observations failing usually to establish causality or a correlation

between one action and another. In contrast, the conditions we examined in the above literature review allow us to identify causal relationships or at least concurrence between two variables: social or institutional conditions as independent variables and the promotion of deliberative interaction as a dependent variable. Subsequently, this study proposes to combine the conditions that need to be met for the successful implementation of participatory decision-making tools and the *process analysis framework* to set up a new analysis framework as follows.

Table 1: Stages of Participatory Decision-Making

	Communication Stage	Alternative Formulation Stage	Consensus Building Stage
Wood & Gray	Antecedents (Antecedent Conditions)	Process (Negotiations and Settlement)	Outcome (Agreement and Fulfillment)
Weeks	Agenda Setting (Formation of Consultative Body)	Strategy Development (Deliberation)	Decision-Making (Proposal of Policy Alternative)

First, in a given conflict situation, the process leading to agreement and the formulation of alternatives do not proceed simultaneously. Instead, according to the *process analysis framework*, collaboration occurs over time; this process can be then divided into three stages: the *communication*, *alternative formulation*, and *consensus building* stages. This corresponds to Wood and Gray's "antecedents – process – outcome" model and Weeks's "agenda setting – strategy development – decision-making" rounds, as discussed above (cf. Table 1). Here, the *communication* stage refers to the phase in which stakeholders in conflict arrive through the dialogue to cooperate in finding a solution and forming a deliberative consultation body. The *alternative formulation* stage is devoted to the joint efforts of all participants to determine the current issues that are at the origin of a conflict and formulate alternatives to the situation through discussion and collaboration within the aforementioned deliberative

consultation body. The *consensus building* stage is the phase of joint agreement for a single or a series of alternatives as the joint solution to the issue; they agree on the solution and promise to respect it.

Second, taking the conditions we listed in the literature review for independent variables, we propose to arrange them according to the three stages of participatory decision-making: the *communication*, *alternative formulation*, and *consensus building* stages. Furthermore, to conceive an analysis model, we propose to sort these variables into three categories according to their internal characteristics: actor, institutional, and environmental factors. Here, actor factors refer to the perceptions and intentions of the individual or social groups, and the institutional factors refer to the normative or legal regulations and procedures that constrain the actors' perceptions and intentions. Finally, environmental factors are the situational conditions and attributes of the issues. It is evident here that these

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variables become the hypotheses of this study, as this is what they are: when the conditions are more fulfilled, participatory decision-making comes about more easily.

Table 2 shows the final arrangement of these independent variables classified into three subsets according to their inherent characteristics.

**Table 2: Conditions of Participatory Decision-Making
Matrix of Conflict Stage and Variables**

Category Stage	Environmental Factors	Institutional Factors	Actor Factors
	Situation and Issue Contents	Regulations and Procedures	Perceptions and Intentions
Communication Stage	(1) Gridlock issue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of community members necessary for successful policy implementation • Shared consciousness of crisis (2) Level of availability of core stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic proximity • Definite income 	(3) Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust and norm of mutual benefit • Reciprocity • Role of public administration • Publicity and education • Citizen participation 	(4) Experience of collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdependence • Level of interaction (frequency, strength) • Recognition of the possibility of conflict resolution through discussion (5) Voluntariness of participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sincerity of participation (6) Inclusivity of participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precise mapping of stakeholders (7) Representativeness of participation
Alternative Formulation Stage	(8) Simplicity of issue and of alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of division among concerned parties (number and homogeneity) • Clarity • Level of interaction (frequency, strength) 	(9) Confirmation of facts and continuous disclosure of information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of ample learning opportunities • Diversity and adequacy of information • Clarity and accuracy of information (10) Sufficiency of discussion	
Consensus Building Stage		(11) Fairness of resolution (12) Credibility and feasibility of resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the feasibility of resolution and feed-back process for follow-up issues • Establishment of a sustainable network for solutions and prevention of future conflict • Appropriate reward • Oversight and supervision of citizen participatory organizations 	(13) Fair mediation and trust <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource allocation capacity • Trust in mediators • Trust in consultative board • Trust in government (14) Establishment of trust between concerned parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary collaboration • Reliability of resolution • Management of public opinion through community monitoring

We conducted semi-structured, face-to-face interviews for a total of 62 hours with 38 principal stakeholders who chose one of the definite action patterns, namely agreement or non-agreement. We used the interview data to confirm the facts and contextualize the varying perceptions of the different actors. In addition to this qualitative data, we used seven primary sources of empirical data to reconstruct major points of contention in the conflict. These included the citizens' jury meeting logs of December 16, 23, and 28 of 2004 (respectively, 102, 97, and 53 pages),⁴ the jury's public hearing on the food waste recycling facility (94 pages), the recordings of the interview survey on the issue conducted by *Ulsan Research Center* (95 pages), and press reports (9 files).

3. Analysis

3.1 Communication stage

1/ Gridlock issue⁵

In 2001, the Northern District Office of Ulsan enacted a plan to construct a new food waste recycling facility. When the final site for this facility in the administrative division of Jungsan-Dong was announced, neighboring residents immediately opposed the decision and held large-scale opposition rallies, including candlelight protests and the flying of flags, to voice their opposition to the project. At the construction site, physical conflict between residents and construction company employees occurred; when construction companies accused residents of obstructing the construction site, they responded by refusing to send their children to school. This was to gain national attention. According to testimony, the head of the Northern District Office announced in this context that

⁴ However, as of 2009, these logs were categorized as confidential, and as the interviewees did not wish to have their identities revealed, this paper does not include the exact sources of the interviews.

⁵ The section number of each factor is identical to the number listed in Table 4.

“without the agreement of the citizens, the construction of the facility should not proceed and, even if it was constructed, there would be no real benefit in practice” (interview).

Subsequently, a *six-person subcommittee* proposed a citizen jury to find a means of establishing communication with citizens, and both sides of the conflict accepted this proposal.⁶ *This observation validates the first hypothesis of this study, suggesting that joint efforts towards establishing communication become more active when there is a perception that the specific problem cannot be resolved without the agreement of community members and when there is an awareness that a crisis will develop if the problem is not resolved through cooperation.*

2/ Availability of core stakeholders

The members of the *six-person committee* that initiated the citizen jury and worked to facilitate the communication were either career politicians or political party members. When the citizen jury was introduced, the major participants were clergymen or NGO practitioners, who had the social calling that “without contribution to the resolution of such a local conflict, we would have no *raison d'être*” (interview). *The observation suggests that when the social and financial conditions of the core stakeholders are amicable enough for intervention to take place in the problem-solving process, their efforts at establishing communication are more proactive.*

However, it appears that the second hypothesis regarding the level of availability of the core stakeholders as a facilitating factor of communication requires further analysis because, contrary to the suggestion of Irvin

⁶ The *six-person subcommittee* is a mediation body mainly composed of *Democratic Labor Party* members, political peers of the head of Northern District Office.

and Stansbury, it can result in further conflict than promote active communication. Community leaders or *homeowner association* members, as the civil representatives leading the movement against the municipal project, have the will or sufficient means to cope with the time and physical costs. *Thus, while the availability of the core stakeholders may enhance communication, it is also regarded as a variable that can incite and aggravate conflict.*

3/ Governance

The food waste recycling project was formulated initially by the head of the Northern District, who was elected in the first local vote for decentralization (in 1995). It was implemented by another head elected in the second local vote (in 1999). Both of them were *Democratic Labor Party* members, and were relatively young, preferring deliberative means of governance based on citizen participation.⁷ Long-term experience in grass-rooted community democracy and professional careers built up in local politics led them to prefer public management based on participation and deliberation. However, regardless of their personal pursuits and preferences, the fundamentals of governance do not appear to have been deeply institutionalized in public management in the case of Ulsan's Northern District. This observation appears more persuasive when one considers that the establishment of the project was conducted according to the *DAD* (Decide-Announce-Defend) process, thereby excluding citizen participation. *Regardless of the heads' individual beliefs, the district administration had not yet gained the trust of*

⁷ The first elections for decentralization in Korea were held in 1960; however, they were halted in 1961 and not revived again until 1995. Food waste recycling facilities were first planned by the first leader of the Northern District (first election) following the reinstatement of the election, and the second leader (second election) began the project's implementation.

the population nor accumulated collaborative experiences of mutual benefit; this is easily observable in the fact that the local administration's efforts to gain the agreement of target groups in Jungsan-dong was not active, and nor had it been effective in the past.

4/ Experience of collaboration

The citizens, the District leader, and the community NGOs are all support bases for the *Labor Party*, and they have a good deal of interdependency, with the frequency and strength of their interactions tending to be significant. Jungsan-dong, the future site of the recycling facilities, is occupied by the *Hyundai Motors* plant, and because the area was traditionally friendly towards the *Labor Party*, it is relatively homogenous in terms of its political leanings. It is not so strange in this context that the first and the second head of the Northern District were *Labor Party* candidates; the second one in particular has immense support among the local NGOs and the *Hyundai Motors* labor union. Due to this exceptional support, the routine exchanges between local citizens and the District Office regarding pending issues appear to be particularly lively, and this was the case for the issue of the recycling facility.

The head of the Northern District office attempted to resolve the conflict through negotiation rather than confrontation. This choice would appear to be the product of his personal experience of collaboration both in the labor union and in the *Solidarity for Environment* organization in Ulsan. However, this collaborative experience may not have been an important motive for inducing a new collaboration in the case of the conflict surrounding the food waste recycling facility. Instead, the conflict further intensified because of the reciprocal accusations and incessant condemnations, which culminated in judicial actions against the head of the District as well as the leaders of the movement opposed to the facility. *This observation is contrary to the fourth hypothesis of this study: the more the frequency and strength of an interaction*

increases, the more the communication becomes intensified. Even if there are amicable relations present and a high level of interdependence coming from experiences of collaboration, as well as awareness of the possibility of conflict resolution through consensus building, conflict can still escalate.

5/ Voluntary participation

In March 2004, when there was conflict with the citizens opposed to the project, the Northern District Office announced a temporary suspension of its construction. A three-party meeting began in late October 2004 between the District Office, citizens who were against the facility, and mediators to discuss the jury's formation. The mediators offered facilitation plans to both sides just to arrive at a basic agreement for the constitution of a citizens' jury, but differed in the detailed conditions of mediation. The citizens' jury was to announce its decision with a "Yes" or "No" for the question: "is it desirable or not to construct in the Jungsan-dong area a food waste recycling facility?"

During the discussion, the District Office proposed that if the jury was accepted as a mediation tool by the community, all lawsuits against activists who were against the project would be withdrawn, while the opposition was severely criticized as being typical of the NIMBY phenomenon by some local newspapers. It is in this context that the citizen jury in Ulsan was born – a result of bargaining, not of voluntary participation. *This observation invalidates the fifth hypothesis that "communication will be facilitated more when the participation is more voluntary" and "when the participants aim for the resolution of the conflict itself rather than any other goal." What matters here is not the voluntariness of the participation, but the need for communication.*

6/ Inclusiveness of participation

Despite the complications involved in forming a citizen jury, it was composed of diverse people capable of sufficiently representing the divergent opinions of the concerned parties. Once adopted, a detailed agreement proposal recommended NGO representatives or those of impartial associations who were sought by both sides for a jury, excluding locally based NGOs, GOs, political parties, and opinion leaders who were both for and against the facility. In addition, while the jury was to be comprised of 45 to 55 members, if either side questioned the fairness of the candidates, they were excluded from the jury. As a result, 43 people, who were representatives of 13 organizations, were selected for the final jury. *This observation supports the sixth hypothesis of this paper that the more the participants become inclusive, the more likely will consensus building occur.*

7/ Representativeness of participation

In December 2004, the final list of the citizen jury was confirmed. In terms of professions, the jurors' leaned heavily towards education, religion, and experience in NGOs. Considering their careers and positions, it seems likely that the upper class's perspective was over-represented. The jury had more than twice the number of men on it than women, the majority (67%) were aged over 30, and it was primarily made up of white-collar workers. While these observations may present enough evidence to question the representativeness of the citizen jury in terms of sampling, the general population believed that their opinions could "realistically" be represented: "the citizens' jury would be against the construction of the recycling facilities" (interview). *This suggests that communication will increase when the representativeness of a delegation are more recognized and socially accepted.*

3.2 Alternative formulation stage

8/ Simplicity of the issues and the alternatives

The operational methods of the citizens' jury were entrusted to the jury members themselves, according to the consensus agreed between the two sides. The jury first met on December 13, 2004, and held its fifth and final meeting on December 28. As the jury was not an arbitration committee, it focused solely on examining the relevance of the recycling facility project on the basis of the data and testimonies submitted by the concerned parties and experts. They reached consensus on this single issue at the end of five general meetings, which was earlier than scheduled. *This observation confirms the validity of the eighth hypothesis of this study that the formulation of alternatives can be more easily facilitated when issues and solutions are more clearly expressed.*

9/ Fact-finding and continuous offering of information

Overall, in the Ulsan case, the citizen jury system is an effective model for confirming facts and sharing information. Thanks to the citizens of Jungsan-dong and the Northern District Office, which offered diverse information and materials, and to the testimonies of a variety of witnesses, the concerned parties were able to present their perspectives clearly. While the district office explained local development plans and the incentive programs in relation to the facility's siting, the citizens based their arguments on their opposition to the project. *This is to say that the rapid formulation of alternatives is possible when new information is quickly offered, shared, and confirmed with joint fact-finding. What is important at this stage of the joint efforts being made to find a solution is to express any doubts and satisfy demands for additional information.*

10/ Sufficiency of debate

The deliberation of the citizens' jury relies heavily on the testimony and information offered by the lawyers appointed by the primary parties in the conflict: the Northern District Office and the *Residents' Representative Council*. As a result, a minority of participants would have occasionally monopolized the meeting and, subsequently, there were some observations that "sufficient debate did not take place" (interview). However, NGO participants testified that "the process of convening the meetings produced ample debate" (interview). As a result, it is difficult to determine whether this was due to the individual personalities of the participants who pointed out the insufficiency of the debate, or to any unfairness of the meetings' process. *These conflicting observations suggest a difficulty in establishing a direct correlation between the alternatives formulation and an independent variable proposed by this research at the beginning: as the participants are increasingly satisfied with the level of debate, the ease of creating alternatives also will increase more. However, it is possible to surmise that sufficient debate did take place in this case, as the majority did not feel that there was a lack of debate during the process, allowing us to say that this is one of the probable conditions for the successful operation of a citizens' jury system in Ulsan.*

3.3 Consensus building stage

11/ Fairness of the resolution

In the Ulsan case, the resolution was not to come up with an alternative policy, but to make a decision on whether to construct the recycling facility in the area of Jungsan-dong. Subsequently, it would be more appropriate to analyze the fairness of the resolution and of the arbitration as an important variable in the formulation of a resolution, rather than the fairness of the resolution itself. As a result, the fairness of the resolution is a variable that does not apply to the Ulsan case.

12/ Credibility and feasibility of the resolution

The discussion of the jury centered on the relevance of the project – whether or not to construct the facility – resulting in a final decision in favor of construction. However, not only did the citizens' jury ultimately decide to resolve the issue, it also proposed the formation of a *Residents Support Council* to supervise its operation and to prevent any new conflicts arising following the construction of the facility. The Northern District Office accepted this recommendation and pledged to form the *Council* to promote local development strategies through civil participation.⁸ In other words, recognizing the relevance of the facilities' construction, the jury not only ended the long-running debate, but it designed subsequent steps to carry out the policy, thereby increasing the resolution's credibility. *This observation confirms the twelfth hypothesis of this paper that consensus building will be facilitated when the resolution defines clearly responsible subjects (or organizations) to carry it out, the time limits, and the methods required, as well as the eventual sanctions to be imposed on occasion. Moreover, consensus formation will be further facilitated when reasonable rewards and procedures for resolving conflicts that can arise following a resolution or during its implementation are clearly defined and when the prerequisites for a satisfactory outcome are present, such as ensuring citizens' right to supervise and manage through citizens' participatory bodies.*

13/ Fairness of mediation

The jury primarily sought to maintain a balanced and neutral perspective while agreeing on the ground rules for the decision-making process, including how meetings

would operate. They attempted to understand the perspectives of both parties throughout the five sessions and strived to maintain fairness by hearing the opinions of both sides in a balanced manner. In order to ensure this process, the jury did not use the District Office's meeting room or accept its support. Nor did the jury receive additional funding, but instead conducted its work out of pocket. As a result, even when the construction of the food waste recycling facility was approved, most of the parties evaluated the resolution and the resolution process as fair, and citizens did not have many objections regarding the decision. *This suggests that consensus formation can be more easily facilitated when the impartiality or fairness of the mediators is more widely recognized.*

14/ Establishment of trust between concerned parties

The local residents accepted the jury's decision after it was made and immediately suspended all forms of opposition. The Northern District Office withdrew all civil and criminal lawsuits that had been filed against residents and released those who had been imprisoned. The Northern District Office also promised to provide a "clean" and "harmless" food waste recycling facility and to faithfully adhere to the jury's resolution. In addition, it promised to suspend immediately the facility's operation if any environment issue, such as noxious odors, arose. In 2005, the Northern District Office proved its sincerity, constructing the *Miracle Library*, along with bicycle paths, mountain trails, bridges, and ecological parks for those people living near the facility. It made additional investments in cultural and welfare facilities, parking lots, streets, and other amenities. *In this way, thanks to concrete action, the local administration was able to ease the conflict in relation to the recycling facility and build a relationship of mutual trust.*

⁸ To ensure systematic participation in the operation of facilities, the Northern District Office promised to enact a residents' support ordinance: *Ordinance regarding citizen support for food waste recycling facility' siting areas.*

4. Implications and Lessons

4.1 Success factors

The participatory decision-making process overseen by the Northern District Office of Ulsan put an end to the long-term and serious local conflict to its decision to construct a recycling facility. The process involved the positive application of a number of variables for the successful resolution of the conflict. In particular, among the independent variables in each stage, the following nine variables had a significant effect as factors in promoting each stage of communication, alternative formulation, and consensus building:

- Gridlock issue (Variable 1)
- Level of availability of the core stakeholders (Variable 2)
- Inclusiveness of participation (Variable 6)
- Representativeness of participation (Variable 7)
- Simplicity of issues and alternatives (Variable 8)
- Fact-finding and continuous sharing of information (Variable 9)
- Credibility and feasibility of the resolution (Variable 12)
- Fairness of mediation (Variable 13)
- Establishment of trust between concerned parties (Variable 14)

However, as in most hypothetic-deductive studies, there are a number of variables that this study could not have predicted, which arose from the inherent characteristics of this case.

First, there was risk-taking leadership skills displayed for the formulation of alternatives. The second head of the Northern District Office actively accepted the citizens' jury system proposed as a solution by the *Labor Party* when conflict with citizens occurred repeatedly in relation to the food waste recycling project. He accepted the jury system despite repeated advice and warnings

from his cabinet and public servants that "such a participatory decision-making would jeopardize the district's position" (interview). However, this decision by the head of the district to accept the possibility that the project could potentially end in failure was a turning point in the conflict's resolution.

Second, the constant presence of the public following the citizens' jury decision-making process and tightly monitoring its implementation is an unexpected variable that facilitated the consensus building. The question of a recycling facility project received much attention from both local and national media, provoking the additional attention of indirect stakeholders. In this situation, the citizens' jury came to have very high public recognition. When the jury gave the go-ahead for the project, civilian representatives accepted the decision out of fear of social ostracism if they opposed it. In this regard, public opinion is revealed as an evident social pressure that led people to respect the resolution and facilitate its implementation.

4.2 Failure factors

Despite the success factors listed above, the third variable identified as a necessary condition of participatory decision-making – governance – did not function at the communication stage of the recycling facility project. Furthermore, the inability to ensure the fifth variable – voluntariness of participation – was a fatal flaw in the Ulsan case, where the Head of Northern district had strived to realize participatory decision-making through the citizens' jury system. In particular, this ignorance of voluntary participation was a direct factor in creating new conflicts following the construction of the facility; this is also the biggest factor for the Ulsan case ultimately ending in failure. In other words, it was a case where the local residents (the "cons") had no choice but to accept the citizens' jury system; it became another reason later for the "cons" not to participate ultimately in the *Residents Support Council* (Kim, 2006: 194–195). *This observation boosts the hypothesis that a failure in the systematic operation of*

governance (Variable 3) and a lack of voluntary participation (Variable 5) were two factors leading to failure in the participatory decision-making.

First, at the beginning of the communication stage, no sincere effort was made to understand the origins of the conflict and the key points of contention, and the conflict quickly escalated. It is widely known that the two primary parties in this case were the Northern District Office and the residents of Jungsan-dong. However, when the first conflict began, rather than attempt to understand the primary points of contention, the Northern District Office publicized and asserted the technical rationality of its project, thereby blocking dialogue. Moreover, the District Office's technical explanation and reactions to the citizens' emotive and subjective concerns only exacerbated the conflict.

Second, the *Residents Support Council* was formed as a supervisory body to ensure implementation of the resolution. However, the formation and operational procedures of the monitoring body attracted serious criticisms from the beginning. First, the *Residents Support Council* was criticized as a board that did not include "all" citizens, as the "hard-liner" residents who were still and always would be against the project did not join the "soft-liners" in the *Council*. Moreover, the *Council* representatives were also compromised, as the main delegates were no longer local residents but NGO members of Ulsan, having participated in the jury and being supported by the residents who were in favor of the facility. Contrary to the hypothesis of this paper that communication can be facilitated with greater representativeness and inclusiveness of participation on a board, the *Residents Support Council* did not satisfy these criteria: this is one of the ultimate reasons for the breakdown of the *Council*.

In addition, when the jury provided an amicable resolution in favor of the construction of the recycling facility, the head of the Northern District Office promised to suspend operations at the request of the

Residents Support Council whenever noxious smells occurred at the facility; in doing this, it greatly improved the likelihood that the resolution would be accepted. However, in reality, when noxious odors did arise, the *Council* interpreted this promise as "the right to suspend operations," while the Northern District Office claimed that they only had the "right to request a suspension of operations." The promise, made by word of mouth, was later interpreted by the District Office as "a mutual misunderstanding as the follow-up measures had not been provided for" (interview), and this became a factor that aggravated mistrust between both sides. *The monitoring body created to ensure the implementation of an agreement can operate as an effective tool for resolving existing conflicts and prevent the outbreak of new ones. However, when a decision-making process surrounding the formation and operation of such a body fails to create ground rules in detail, it can create new conflicts rather than prevent future ones.*

5. Conclusion

The issues surrounding the food waste recycling facility in Ulsan's Northern District were resolved consensually using a participatory decision-making tool known as the citizens' jury. However, with the suspension of the recycling facility's operations, this case became a failure in conflict management and policy implementation. Through the Ulsan case, which contains successes and failures in conflict management and policy implementation, we tested 14 variables identified in the literature review and found four new variables that were salient for the specifics of this case. We arranged them into a three-by-three (three stages and three categories of factors) matrix outlined in Table 4, which is a revision of Table 2 presented in the analysis framework.

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Table 3: Conditions of Participatory Decision-making (revised)

Category Stage	Environmental Factors	Institutional Factors	Actor Factors
	Situation and Issue Contents	Regulations and Procedures	Perceptions and Intentions
Communication Stage	(1) Gridlock issue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of community members necessary for successful policy enactment • Shared consciousness of crisis (2) Level of availability of core stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic proximity • Definite Income (3) Effect of understanding the origins of the conflict and the points of contention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a definite relationship of understanding 	(4) Rationality in the formation process of consultation group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time, method, participants of formation, and rules of operation (5) Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust and scope of mutual benefits • Reciprocity • Role of administration • Publicity and education • Citizen participation 	(6) Experience of collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutual dependence • Level of interaction (frequency, strength) • Recognition of the possibility of conflict resolution through discussion instead of opposition (7) Voluntariness of participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sincerity of participation (8) Inclusivity of participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precise understanding of stakeholders (9) Representativeness of participation
Alternative Formulation Stage	(10) Simplicity of issue and alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of division among concerned parties (number and homogeneity) • Clarity • Level of interaction (frequency, strength) 	(11) Confirmation of facts and continuous disclosure of information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of ample learning opportunities • Diversity and adequacy of information • Clarity and accuracy of information (12) Sufficiency of discussion	(13) Ability to propose alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persuasive capability for the creation of alternatives and the establishment of risk-receptive leadership
Consensus Building Stage	(14) Presence of attentive public opinion	(15) Fairness of resolution (16) Credibility and feasibility of resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the feasibility of resolution and provision of a feedback process for follow-up issues • Establishment of a network for future solution and prevention of future conflict • Appropriate award • Oversight and supervision of citizen participatory organizations 	(17) Fair mediation and trust <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity for resource allocation • Trust in mediators • Trust in consultation organizations • Securing the reliability of the government (18) Establishment of trust between concerned parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary collaboration • Management of public opinion through monitoring

Among the above 18 variables, the sufficiency of the debate (10th variable) – the formulation of alternatives can be facilitated more as a greater number of participants perceive that there has been satisfactory and sufficient debate in the deliberating process – proposed by Weeks (2000) is difficult to verify directly in the Ulsan case. This is because there are opposing testimonies, where some participants believed the level of debate was ample, whereas others did not. Similarly, the fairness of the proposal (15th variable) was

impossible to verify through observational experience, as the citizens' jury was not seeking policy alternatives, but judging the relevance of a project.

Conversely, the two following variables reflect the peculiarities of the Ulsan case and invalidate the two proposed hypotheses. First, the level of availability of core stakeholders (Variable 2 in Table 2) is revealed clearly as a factor facilitating dialogue. However, it also needs to be treated with caution because it

can increase communication not only between concerned parties for conflict resolution but also within a specific party, which can exacerbate a conflict. Second, the collaborative experience (Variable 4 in Table 2) does not have any function as a positive factor in promoting the collaboration necessary for conflict resolution. In the Ulsan case, past collaborative experiences appear to have had no effect on the development of the conflict, and it is clear that there was far more influence from other variables.

Based on this, the four variables in Table 3 – namely “effort in understanding the origins of the conflict and the points of contention” (Variable 3), “the rationality of the formation process of the consultation group” (Variable 4), “the ability to propose alternatives” (Variable 13), and “the presence of attentive public opinion” (Variable 14) – are new variables derived from this case study. These four variables have not been previously mentioned, but, as with the remaining variables, have significant relationships with the success or failure of participatory decision-making, similarly to citizens’ juries, and on the success or failure of conflict resolution.

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