

Challenges and Opportunities for Consensus Building for Sustainability in Korea

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Contexts

- ✿ Four major rivers restoration project (5-year Green New Deal policy since 2009 with 17.3 billion USD)
- ✿ Land reclamation projects
- ✿ Artificial lake and regional development
- ✿ Construction of golf courses
- ✿ Tidal power plant project
- ✿ Canal construction
- ✿ High-voltage transmission tower construction
- ✿ ...

General observation

- ✿ Lack of joint and neutralized forums
- ✿ Lots of strategic forums organized by specific stakeholding groups
- ✿ More power-based or rights-based approach
- ✿ Few joint fact-finding efforts

Challenges I

* Politicized battle on top of environmental conflict

- * Failure of the Party A's project is Party B's political gain
- * Involvement of high-level politicians (national and/or local)
- * Lack of neutral convenors (assessors) or organizations who are powerful enough to persuade politicized stakeholders into neutral venue

Challenges II

* Powerful legacy of '(false) efficiency' in Korea

- * No time to waste! + within my term
- * Very hierarchical decision-making structure (Just do it!)
- * No information sharing at earlier stage to avoid conflict (e.g., 57% of the conflicts of high-voltage transmission owners at construction phase (2006-2009))

Challenges III

* Institutionalized power imbalance

- * Existence of legislations or regulations, established for rapid development paradigm

- * Inappropriate compensation
- * Expropriation
- * No mandatory public hearing
- * Perfunctory public notification

- * (False) legitimacy to rely on such regulations

Challenges IV

* Stakeholder experts in Joint Fact-Finding

- * Experts who have symbiotic relationships with their own stakeholding groups
- * Securing identity, Saving face, and maintaining long-term professional relationships are more important

Challenges V

* Ossification of 'institutionalized' procedure

- * Tendency to believe that certain institutionalized procedure can be a silver bullet.
 - * Mandatory conflict impact assessment
 - * Specify how many people can participate and how they should be selected
 - * Specify what kinds of compensation packages can be made
 - * Specify the range of affected area (not based on scientific but based on political judgment)
 - * Specify the name of the committee for conflict resolution
- * Reducing uncertainty and complexity? Or reducing flexibility and creativity?

Surprises (overcome challenges?)

- ✿ Successful multi-party conflict resolution which was not assisted
 - ✿ Shi-Hwa Lake Sustainability committee (2004-)
- ✿ New role for politicians as convenors rather than stakeholders
 - ✿ Seoul National Mental Hospital renovation case (2009)
- ✿ Organizational-level, voluntary innovation for more participatory governance
 - ✿ KEPCO high-voltage transmission tower siting committees (2008)



Thank you.
