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Inner-group and inter-group relations in Seoul participatory planning: revisiting the concept of social capital

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the composition of social relations in Korean community-led regeneration planning. Power dynamics among participants are understood as an important factor in shaping decision-making planning processes. While the concept of social capital and the social network theory have received great attention, particularly in recent Asian planning cases, as tools to understand participatory processes, empirical studies on processes of building social capital among different social groups in participatory planning are still limited. This study examines the uneven formation of social capital and its operation to unpack participatory planning mechanisms that may unintentionally reproduce the relationships of domination/marginalisation in the decision-making consultation processes. The study focuses on a recently designated community-led regeneration project, the Garibong-dong urban regeneration project in Seoul, a neighborhood where a considerable number of Korean Chinese communities live.

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Introduction

The concept of social capital has received great attention in participatory planning literature in the 1990s and the early 2000s as a concept to help understand participatory processes. Researchers pointed out that local relationships built in neighborhoods can provide important motivation for local residents to participate in consultation processes and to build common concerns among actors (Innes and Booher 2004; Healey 1998; Innes and Booher 1999). Although the uses of the concept of social capital in planning policies and literature have tended to become less frequent in recent years (Kwon and Adler 2014), power dynamics and social networks among participants remain important aspects in understanding the participatory mechanism. Particularly in Asian cases, studies investigating social relations among stakeholders have been conducted to understand the complicated planning governance processes as rapid urban development projects, as observed in China (Zhuang et al. 2019). In this context, social capital remains one of a few heuristic tools to unpack those societal aspects between members.

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This study investigates the formation and the meaning of social relations among local participants in local decision-making planning processes and particularly focuses on the boundaries between different social groups. This is an attempt to build a link between social capital studies at the neighborhood level and studies in the planning field. On the one hand, the previous social capital studies in the planning field mainly examined the local communities as a single united group within the relations with other stakeholders, such as local government and planners. These studies rarely paid attention to the social divisions within the formation of social capital (Agger and Jensen 2015; Lee and Ahn 2007). On the other hand, there is a growing number of studies recognising the difficulties in building inter-group social capital and investigating relationships between local residents who were located in different social and economic contexts (Portes and Vickstrom 2011; Liu, Li, and Breitung 2012; Wang, Zhang, and Wu 2016). The study aims at providing a deeper understanding of micro-politics among local participants in the context of Asian cities, which began to observe conflicts between different ethnic groups.

This paper analyses the processes of building social capital during the planning consultation processes by focusing on the community-led regeneration project in Garibong-dong, where a considerable number of Korean Chinese communities live (Figure 1). The data were mainly collected during the consultation processes which had been conducted in 2016. The next section firstly explores the concept of social capital in participatory planning. After introducing the Garibong-dong urban regeneration project, the paper examines the formation of social capital among the members of the committee.

Social capital, participatory planning and diversity

The concept of social capital was developed by Loury (1977), Bourdieu (1984), and Coleman (1988). It has drawn huge interest after Putnam's work was published (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1994), which was on the role of social capital in different regional governments of Italy. With Putnam's work, the concept of social capital was redefined and has become the dominant source of the idea for community developments (Forrest and Kearns 2001). Putnam linked the previous works which dealt with the relationships between actors or individuals to the level of "civiness" in communities such as towns, cities and even nations (Portes and Landolt 2000). He defined social capital as "features of social organisations, such as networks, norms and trust, that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1994, 35).

There are criticisms that the social capital theory of Putnam, however, is often conceptualised with little attention to complicated networks between different groups (see Harriss 2002; Portes 1998). Some pointed out that Putnam's understanding of social capital, which could be interpreted as an over-reliance on the virtue of reciprocity and trust, has a danger of ignoring the disadvantages of bonded networks by reason of a close social structure being likely to hinder overall social benefits (Portes and Landolt 2000; Portes 2014). For example, regarding Asian communities, in contrast to Putnam, Fukuyama (2010) stated that trust in interpersonal networks in Asian countries was not able to expand to overall societies because it excessively relied on small-bonded groups such as families (also see Pye 1999). As migration is increasing both domestically

and internationally in Asian cities, the studies regarding inter-group relations gain greater attention (Liu, Li, and Breitung 2012; Wang, Zhang, and Wu 2016; Kim et al. 2021). For example, Wang, Zhang, and Wu (2016) shows that the current *hukou* system affected neighboring interactions between local urbanites and migrants, and Kim et al. (2021) analyses the inter-group relations between long-established Korean groups and Western immigrants.

To develop an understanding of the differences between inner group relations and extra community networks, researchers started to pay attention to the concept of bridging social capital, which refers to the connection between heterogeneous groups. To overcome different interests which participants held before participation, researchers emphasised bridging social capital, which was newly formed in mixed groups (Rydin and Holman 2004; Agger and Jensen 2015). In the planning field, this form of social capital was understood as a means to reduce tensions between different groups (Innes and Booher 2004), to share knowledge (Innes and Booher 1999) and to reach a common concern by persuading different groups (Rydin and Holman 2004; Holman and Rydin 2013).

However, apart from the introduction of this theoretical framework, when it comes to “how” participatory planning procedures provide opportunities for different groups to participate and to form social capital, the studies are still limited. Empirical studies on these different forms of social capital are rarely found in participatory planning (Vervisch 2011; also see Colomb 2017). Although there is a growing number of studies on inter-group relations in Asian cases as mentioned, the studies on how those relations influence the participatory process is not sufficiently explored. In participatory planning, the opportunities to be represented might be uneven due to the limited quantity of ties for minority groups in local neighborhoods, and the capability to deploy social ties can also differ depending on the social positions of actors. While inclusive decision-making is considered a key important benefit of participatory planning, the inequality of social capital was rarely understood in the participatory planning literature.

Garibong urban regeneration project

In Seoul, by introducing the Special Law on Support and Vitalisation of Urban Regeneration [*Toshijaesaeng hwalsŏnghwa mit chiwŏne kwanhan t'ŷkpyŏlbŏp*] in 2015, community-led regeneration became one of the main methods of urban projects in the Korean planning system (Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport 2018). In 2015, the Seoul Metropolitan government designated 27 areas for community-led regeneration projects, including the Garibong-dong urban regeneration project (Kim 2016). Among 27 areas, Garibong-dong showed the highest number in terms of the population of immigrants with Korean Chinese groups consisting of more than 30% (Seoul Metropolitan Government 2021).

The Korean Chinese group who emigrated to China in the 1920s began to come back to Korea from the 1990s. They agglomerated in Garibong-dong from the 2000s under a stalled development, Garibong Newtown project, which was planned in 2003 and canceled in 2015. The neighborhood was planned to be demolished in the period, and due to that, relatively cheap housing prices of the old residential buildings, which rarely were rebuilt or refurbished, attracted Korean Chinese groups. The immigrant

groups were rarely included in urban policies before the urban regeneration project. The Newtown project only involved the property owners, and the Korean Chinese groups were mainly short-term tenants with limited duration of visas during that period. In planned demolition, the groups were understood as the population who will leave the neighborhood after the redevelopment (Ji 2014).

In this context, the cancelation of the Newtown project and the introduction of the Garibong urban regeneration project, which claimed to build “a village with multi-culture”, seemed to be one of the few cases in Korean planning which attempted to involve immigrant groups. The Seoul Metropolitan government aimed to include residents without differentiating the groups by stating that “any residents of [area] have the right to pursue urban regeneration projects and participate in the regeneration project” (Ministry of Land Infrastructure Transport 2017, Article 3). However, the embedded social divisions emerged through the voluntary participatory processes. Social gaps, between house owners and tenants, groups who supported the Newtown project and who did not, and long-established Korean groups and Korean Chinese groups, which were built in the neighborhood throughout history were not fully understood in the processes. The committee with around 17 people was formed voluntarily in September 2015 and expanded to 31 people by March 2016, and only one Korean Chinese member and only one Korean tenant participated in the committee.

After the Garibong Urban Regeneration planning team proposed a plan which was developed through consultation in 2016, the regeneration project was conducted between 2016 and 2020. The Garibong urban regeneration project consisted of three main themes: vitalising community, improvement of living environment, and culture and economic regeneration. The total funding of the project was 10 billion KRW(8.4 million USD) for 332,929 m² of the Garibong-dong area. In 2016, the total population was 17,575, including 6,857 foreign-born population, and 30% of the overall population were Korean Chinese (Kosis 2016).

Research methodology

In order to understand the social capital among the participants, both the quantitative aspect and qualitative aspects of social relations need to be analysed (Adler and Kwon 2002). In other words, both the existence of the social relations and the meanings of social relations are essential for us to understand the formation and utilisation of social capital in planning processes. This study used Social Network Analysis (SNA) to investigate the existence and density of social relations (Dudwick et al. 2006), and semi-structured interviews to examine the qualitative aspects of social members, for instance, the meaningful information and knowledge embedded in those social networks for the members and solidarity through the networks.

These qualitative and quantitative data sets can show the different aspects of barriers that socially marginalised groups might experience. Firstly, social ties in neighborhoods can be unevenly formed. Research showed that a relatively small number of actors possess the majority of connections (Rivera, Soderstrom, and Uzzi 2010; Golder, Wilkinson, and Huberman 2007). Secondly, not every social tie was meaningful, and the knowledge and social status of actors which can produce benefit are crucial in the role

of social ties in planning processes (Smith, Menon, and Thompson 2012). Interview data will reveal this aspect.

The Social Network Analysis reported in this paper was based on questionnaires that were collected from 31 members of the Garibong-dong¹ urban regeneration committee. The interviews involved 41 participants, including the planners and public officials who participated in the Garibong-dong urban regeneration, local committee members, and local Korean Chinese residents. The participants are mainly recruited through Garibong-dong urban regeneration meetings, and the participants in meetings sometimes recommended local members who have not participated in meetings. All the participants are anonymised. The data collection was mainly conducted three months between March and May 2016 when the urban regeneration project was started.

All data collection and analysis were undertaken in accordance with the ethical research guidelines of the British Sociological Association and Korea National Institute for Bioethics in Korea. Consent forms containing the purpose of the research were handed to the participants, and respondents were notified of the right to withdraw from the investigation at any time. Any information, which is possible to identify the respondent, is not provided for privacy and confidentiality. Ethical approval was obtained from the University College London Research Ethics Committee and also from the Public Institutional Review Board established by Korea National Institute for Bioethics Policy (UCL Ethics Project ID Number: 7901/001 and 7901/002, Korean IRB number: 2016-0004-001).

The latent social relationships in forming the committee

During the recruitment processes, the social networks of long-established Korean groups who were involved in previous planning activities, the canceled Garibong Newtown project played an important role. The majority of the members of the committee were former Emergency Measure committee (EMC) in the previous Newtown project, composed of Korean property owners against the Newtown project. 17 people among 31 committee members were former EMC members.

When it comes to building initial relations between local government and local residents in the regeneration project, the data showed that the previous experiences in planning projects became crucial. The relationships built with the former EMC and local governments was considered as a social connection to form the regeneration project committee from the local government's point of view. The local government tend to consider the urban regeneration project as an alternative to the Newtown project after the cancelation and dealing with the local dissatisfactions due to the Newtown project being assumed as an initial task of the urban regeneration project. In other words, although the regeneration project stated that Korean Chinese groups are their important participants, their opinions were not that noticeable compared to the ones of former participants in the Newtown projects, which were already recognised by the government throughout the long period of consultation or conflict.

This lack of interactions between the Garibong local government and the Korean Chinese groups in the initial period of the regeneration project tend to show the limitation in considering the immigrant groups in local policies. Local social projects for Korean Chinese groups before the regeneration project by civic society organisations

and the local government during the early 2010s were not uncommon to see, but they were led by a local welfare department rather than a planning department. The culture and social programmes for Korean Chinese groups are understood separately from the built environment issue within the local government, and this division was not well reconfigured in the regeneration projection either.

The structure of social capital among participants

The social ties which had been built in the Newtown project among Korean landlords functioned significantly after initiating the project. In this process, the shared understanding of the goal among actors was also observed as an important motivation. According to the survey, there were seven people who recruited through the government recommendation and 21 people were drawn from the members who had already participated in the meetings. There were only three people who started to participate without recommendations. The former EMC tended to consider the urban regeneration project as “an achievement of victory [through the protest against the Newtown project]” (interview with “Zoh”, governmental officer, April 2016). The responsibility, interests in the local development procedure, and “shared destiny” among them were a strong attraction to draw other members into the former EMC (Figure 2).

The social network maps based on the survey showed the dominant clusters of the committee were formed through some of the core members from the former EMC. The noteworthy part is that the social relationships among participants tend to show a mixed form of friendship and strategic collaboration to share knowledge and information. The informal networks seemed more active than formal networks such as information and advice networks. Some of the members emphasised that “we fought upon our life” (interview with “Song”, a member of the committee, April 2016). A shared destiny among the members has built strong social capital, and the relationships have been connected to local friendships even after the cancellation of the Newtown project.

However, these core friendship networks also have influences on a formal procedure by sharing information or planning knowledge. Although the networks were based on informal contacts, the interviewees mentioned that information about planning procedures frequently emerged as the main topic in the conversations (interview with “Koo”, April 2016). When it comes to the central members, two core members *Jongdae* and *Yongil* [anonymous name, node 3 and 7 in the maps] had played crucial roles as information sources since the Newtown project. They had extensive knowledge about the planning process and had external relationships to gain information about planning laws. In other words, the planning knowledge which had been developed from the Newtown project played roles in forming and maintaining relationships among key participants of the committee (Figure 3).

The formal networks showed a slightly different result, but the former EMC still emerged significantly. Two informal centres tended to support the formal centre, not directly leading to the formal networks. Contrary to the two core members in the informal networks, another member of the former EMC, *Ilwon* [anonymous name, node 12 in the maps], appeared as the centre in the formal networks.

The pre-existing social relationships of *Ilwon* were crucial in forming his position. He was included in the former EMC but also participated in several different local

memberships such as a church, the group of the representatives of the neighborhood and an informal friendship group. Moreover, Ilwon was supported by the bonded networks which had been formed based on the former EMC.

I said that “you do [lead] that [committee]” to Ilwon. Because he is better than me in the local neighbourhood.

(“Jongdae”, the deputy leader of the committee and the former member of the Emergency Measure Committee, interview, May 2016)

In other words, the other informal centres were aware of the wide connections of Ilwon and recommended him as the leader strategically. Those three members, two informal centres and one formal centre who were all included in the former EMC. The newly formed relationships through the committee processes and the transformation of pre-existing networks were rarely observed.

The operation of social capital in decision-making process

The core members of the committee strengthen their voices through their network. Shared planning knowledge and goals played an important role in this process, and the historical context before participation seems to affect the social capital among them considerably. The members of the committee who had been involved in the Newtown project tend to understand the urban regeneration project as an opportunity to actualise the raised property values by replacing the Newtown project, while the other local groups such as Korean Chinese groups understood the urban regeneration project as a new way to maintain the neighborhood by preserving the local environment. This understanding from the core committee members appeared as a basis for strengthening the pre-existing inner group relationships rather than expanding and developing other relationships.

The planning knowledge embedded in their social capital, which was helpful to cope with the planning procedure, was significantly shown in the interviews. This became a source for mobilising opinions for the committee members and for negotiating with the Garibong urban regeneration team. The interviewee who observed the process described that:

They are the people who have been trained a lot through the planning process. They know how to utilise the information and civil complaints. So, if the Seoul Metropolitan Government acts perversely [to them], then they would file civil complaints. They filed the complaints to a public service centre and argued that “nowadays government public officers, they are against the opinions of the residents by having an obsolete way of thinking.” Then, there is nothing the public officers can do. There is no way to deal with it. (“Gangil”, community coordinator, interview, March 2016)

The core members of the committee were also well aware of the planning regulation and policies. “Land use”, “zoning” and “floor area ratio” were the terms frequently mentioned in the committee meeting. Their knowledge and network were used strategically to shape the overall direction of the regeneration project for their interests.

Their understanding of the urban regeneration project and the power of mobilised opinions were shown clearly in the two outcomes from the consultation processes: altered objectives of the urban generation project and formalised requirements to

participate in the committee. First, the consultation processes have altered the direction of the Garibong urban regeneration project slightly, from the “community-led regeneration integrating multiculturalism” (2014) to “energetic regeneration with G-Valley” (2016) based on the understanding among the members of the committee. G-Valley referred to the surrounding areas of Garibong-dong, Guro Digital Complexes which consist of companies focusing on information technology (see [Figure 1](#)). The tensions regarding the two directions of the urban regeneration project, the building of social cohesions with Korean Chinese groups and the drawing of potential consumers and residents from the surrounding areas, called G-Valley, lasted during the consultation process. The Korean committee members tended to emphasis drawing potential consumers from G-Valley into the consultation processes for the “prosperity” of the neighborhood ([Figures 2 and 3](#)).

This altered objective affected the further involvement of the Korean Chinese groups. Throughout the committee meetings, the Korean Chinese groups were mainly considered as a possible source to attract visitors by focusing on the Korean Chinese shops, and this viewpoint was strengthened in the new objective. For example, the Korean committee member emphasised the value of Korean Chinese Street by mentioning “nowadays the popularity of authentic Chinese foods among young people” (field note in Committee meeting, 25th March 2016). Given this view, the Korean Chinese shop owners tended to be encouraged to participate through a separate committee in the sub-project for revitalising a commercial street. However, it separated the Korean Chinese groups only as economic actors, and the participation of Korean Chinese local residents was not encouraged. Attracting the workers in G-valley as a new

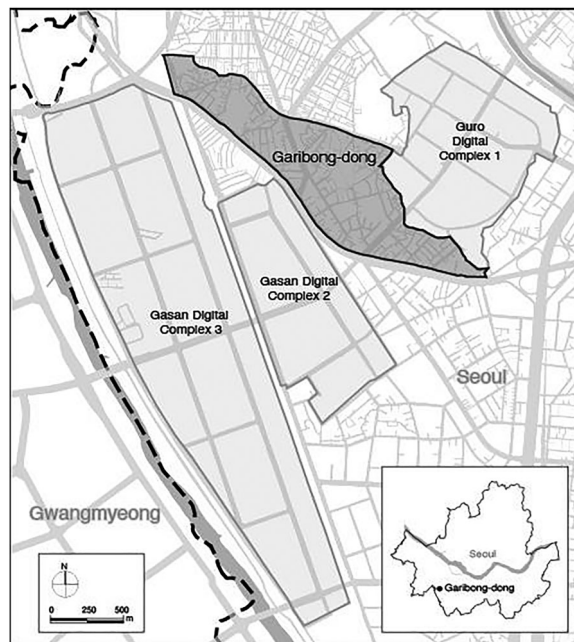


Figure 1. The locations of Garibong-dong. Source: Author based on Seoul Metropolitan Government 2022.

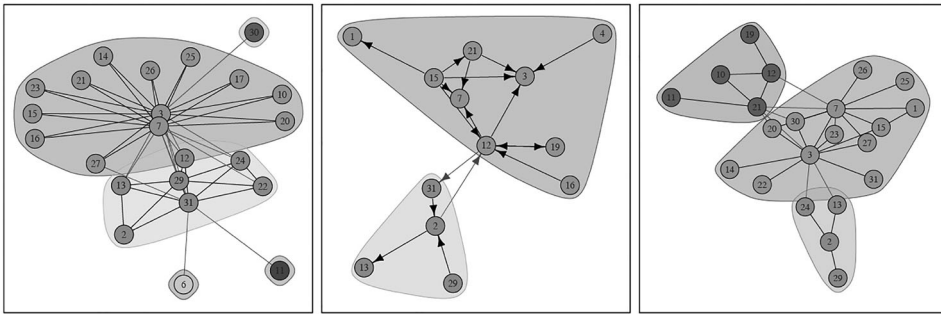


Figure 2. The friendship clustering, the advice clustering, and the meeting frequency clustering (from left).

residential group in Garibong-dong was asserted as a blueprint for the future of the neighborhood while the Korean Chinese residents were absent from the meetings.

Second, the intention of the committee members to exclude other participants was explicitly observed in the regulations which the committee drew up and submitted to the government. They seemed to try to build a stronger barrier to participate in the committee by the regulations.

There was a section about the “requirement of the regeneration committee”. [...] when the committee makes the regulations, they can include all the people regardless of the duration of living or citizenships, but the Garibong-dong regeneration committee was not a case like that. They wanted to form the committee around themselves as much as possible. They made very strict regulations.

(“Gangil”, community coordinator, interview, March 2016)

Based on the purpose of the regeneration projects, the official public policy of the Seoul Metropolitan Government, the Regeneration Strategic Plan, clearly states that the regeneration project aims to include diverse local members by pointing out the limitation of the previous Newtown projects, which focused on only landlords (Seoul Metropolitan Government 2015). The Regeneration Strategic Plan mentions that the regeneration projects need to include tenants and can include even commuters when the committee considers it is necessary. However, the Garibong regeneration committee

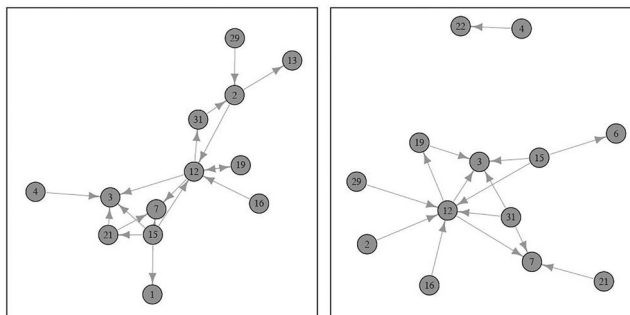


Figure 3. The map of an advice network and the map of an information network (from left).

formulated the regulation, particularly some clauses that can be barriers for Korean Chinese groups, such as duration of residence and citizenships. The regulation of the Garibong regeneration committee did not have any legal force but was sufficient to send out a non-welcoming signal for other local members.

In the process of making the regulations, the networks of the former EMC played an important role. The regulations were passed through the vote of the committee members who shared a similar understanding. In an attempt to exclude the other members except for the core members, the regulations became a controversial part of the Garibong-dong regeneration process.

Social capital facilitating and impeding the contributions of community participation

The decision-making process of the Garibong regeneration committee showed the drawbacks of social capital that are limited to a certain group. As highlighted in the literature review, the researchers pointed out the contributions of social capital: knowledge sharing, defusing tensions, and persuading other members to see the missions of the organisation as a high priority. On the one hand, when it comes to the shared goal of the committee members, we can possibly say that the social capital among them has functioned very efficiently in such contributions. They were able to draw participation, share knowledge, and mobilise members for the main aim of the group through their network. On the other hand, regarding the broader aim of the regeneration project, such as enhancing the local cultural, social and physical environment and building cohesion, those expected positive contributions of social capital were damaged by the inner-group social capital or bonding social capital, in the Garibong-dong case. It sheds light on the importance of understanding the group boundaries and the specific meaning of shared concern within the locally sensitive context.

In terms of its contribution to participatory planning, the social capital between groups seemed to be essential. In other words, not only the existence of social capital but also its structure regarding who has the social capital among the participants could be important. The enhancement of the neighborhood environment seemed to be understood as the broad mission to embrace the participants based on the geographical boundary, but the Garibong regeneration committee failed to attract the wider community from the beginning, and the mission of the regeneration project became restricted based on the small number of participants' interest.

When it comes to each assumption of social capital's contribution, the knowledge sharing in the participatory process also tended to be restricted without inter-group social capital. In terms of sharing knowledge, it did not seem to be strategically helpful from the viewpoint of the core members of the committee. As has been seen in the Social Network Analysis of this paper, the knowledge flow was concentrated on the core members. They played an active role in the formation of common knowledge among the members. The core members collectively acted in producing the common goal of the regeneration project in order to create their benefit. Not only in the practical ways to deliver their opinions, but they also produced the symbolic meaning of their group as decent participants by emphasising their sense of place attachment within their understanding of the urban regeneration project. The planning knowledge

became a tool to exert power, and it worked based on the instrumental motivation for the EMC.

This limited formation of social capital was not helpful for defusing the tensions between groups. The process of the Garibong committee became the reason why other social members lost motivation. In the interviews, a significant number of the members who were not included in the cluster with the core members mentioned the bonded networks among the core group as the reason for losing motivation. Particularly for the Korean Chinese members who were not included in the previous planning activities, the strong bonded relationships among the members of the committee became a barrier.

[In the New town project] The government did not ask us anything. There was not any contact from the government or New Town committee. They proceeded with the Newtown only focusing on the landlords. [...] These landlords are still controlling the [urban regeneration] committee. They know each other, but I do not know anyone. It makes it difficult to talk smoothly.

(“Hae”, Korean Chinese organisation, interview, April 2016)

As can be seen in the interview, the local members were aware of the formation of power in the meetings occupied by certain members. Apart from the formalised regulation, the involvement of other social members naturally reduced. The concentration of social relationships became the reason why other social members did not participate except for the former EMC members as time went by. This antagonism towards being involved is observed not only among Korean Chinese groups but also among other Korean local residents who do not agree with the opinions of former EMC members. However, the barriers toward Korean Chinese groups were particularly notable since the attempt to exclude them, such as changing the main agenda of the urban regeneration project and forming regulations stating the citizenships, have been observed explicitly.

These gaps between social groups in the decision-making process tended to be partly mediated in the formalising process of the plan. While the planning team reduced the mention of the Korean Chinese group in the plan, which differs from the original proposal, they aimed to enhance public spaces and key amenities to provide benefits for the general public in the neighborhood. Because the Regeneration Act originally aimed to revitalise local areas without large scale redevelopments, the negative influence of the regeneration project for Korean Chinese such as the displacement of the groups was not yet notable. However, further observation is needed since voices of local groups argue that demolition and redevelopments still exist, and private redevelopments have accelerated after the urban regeneration project. A certain negative outcome of the Garibong urban regeneration project is that the local participatory planning process, in this case, was not an opportunity for minority groups to build capacity as expected but rather made them experience barriers and build antagonism.

Conclusions

The analysis of this paper shed light on the social gaps between groups in the formation of social capital. The previous participatory planning literature mainly understood the social capital among local participants as one single form by assuming the local

community as a united group (Agger and Jensen 2015; Rydin and Holman 2004; Legacy 2010). However, understanding the differences in local groups was essential regarding not only equal participation but also the other purposes of community participation, such as social learning, defusing tensions, and pursuing broad goals to be beneficial for diverse local members. This study shows both benefits and limitations of the existing understanding of the concept of social capital in unpacking participatory planning processes. On the one hand, social capital is significantly influential in forming a common goal, but on the other hand, it does not necessarily lead to inclusive participation.

The analysis of social capital in the Garibong-dong case provided implications for the aspects of social capital relating to its transformative power. The social capital which has been built through the consultation processes was assumed to transform the pre-existing structure, including pre-fixed ideas about planning and other social members. However, the participatory processes did not always form inter-group social capital, so-called bridging social capital, or expanding networks. When the consultation processes were limited in building social relationships focusing on certain groups, the expected contributions of participatory processes were seriously hindered.

These findings are important when we consider that many Asian cities now have more diverse inhabitants unprecedentedly, and there are growing attempts in planning to apply participatory methods. Deeply rooted mechanism shaping boundaries between “us” and “them” in Asian countries has been discussed through the ethnic-nationalism of Korea or family-oriented tradition (Pye 1999; Shin, Freda, and Yi 1999). Whilst those contextual particularities in understanding differences and inter-group relations in the Asian context are not fully considered, the participatory processes tended to be uncritically assumed as a means to provide inclusive planning. The participatory planning cases in Asian cities need further investigation to understand how planning processes can provide better means to include diverse members, and the lens of social capital, particularly inter-group social capital, can be an important tool to unpack dynamics between participants.

This study points out several aspects which can contribute to improving the participatory procedure. Firstly, the exclusiveness of inner-group social capital, as has been seen in this case, was sometimes based on the understanding of the overall missions of the project. In other words, the mere emphasis on spontaneous participation and building relationships without shaping a broader goal of inclusive planning can result in strengthening exclusive forms of social capital. In this context, the planners’ role in setting a broad mission and mediating the processes can be significantly important.

Secondly, the social relations in the neighborhood and their dynamics need to be considered carefully within the context of the local history. In other words, quantifying the network structure without fully understanding the local context can be insufficient to understand the decision-making planning mechanism. The historical context of community is important to understand the complexity of social capital embedded in the groups. The built social relations before participation shaped a certain understanding of community and shared norms. The understanding of interdependent relationships between the shared goal, instrumental motivations, and solidarity in the Garibong case was difficult to observe without looking into its context.

Thirdly, with all the considerations of the potential downsides of the exclusive form of social capital, the representation of diverse groups in the early stage is inevitably an

essential part of building a just community participatory process. This is because, even though participation is expanded after initiating core groups, the early formation of the group can be influential for further participation. The critical factor is that the regeneration project, unintentionally, magnified the group divisions through the process. The biased participants based on the strong shared interests from the beginning became a condition forming an exclusive group. A more active remedy to redress this unbalanced representation needs to be considered from the early stage.

This paper has shown the limitations of planning consultation exercises which exclude marginalised social members and sheds light on the role and potential of the concept of social capital as an analytical tool to investigate such a mechanism. The differences within local groups need to be considered in more depth to prevent reproducing inequality in planning processes. As the case study showed, the participants are strongly influenced by their wider social contexts, such as ethnicity from the representative processes to the deliberative processes, and it seriously influenced their power to be involved in the decision-making processes. The participatory planning processes need to take into account more influences of the power relationships between social members in the operation of social capital.

Note

1. *dong* is a unit for the smallest administrative district, similar to the ward in the British system.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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