

Participatory Planning

In Rural Communities: Case on Jing-Liao in Taiwan

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Abstract— The paper provides an overview of Participatory Planning strategies and methods in rural areas; exploring the Jing-Liao case in Taiwan. Moreover, the case study aims to approach the increase of life quality and value of a rural community. In addition, this research offers some methods from different authors of Participatory Planning towards a sustainable development.

Keywords— Participatory Planning, rural communities, sustainable development, Jing-Liao, Taiwan.

I. Introduction (Definition)

As a hypothesis, rural communities are facing critical challenges in the urbanizing world; participatory planning is a rational approach to promote the sustainableⁱ development of rural communities in terms of economy, society (including culture), and environment (including physical environment).

The paper objects to research participatory methods for a sustainable outcome in planning of rural societies. Since, rural societies are in danger of disappearance due to modernization: high migration from the countryside to cities or rural areas are absorbed by cities. The aim is not to discontinue migration from the countryside to cities; instead is to give an alternative way of living with nature rescuing slow life culture.

John K.C. Liuⁱⁱ acknowledges that the choice of focusing on the use of participatory planning methods is because it ensures a better outcome; the end users participated in the process of making a plan. In addition, greater social equity and justice are gained when people can participate in the design process. In this sense, participatory planning is both a process as well as the end goal.

The Jing Liao Case is the last generation of farmers in Taiwan. The case brings back the culture of agriculture. The authors discuss some methods in the case of Jing Liao by observation and interviews to the National Taiwan University Research Foundation and the community. In addition, the article delivers the situation before and after the planning and the effects of the planning practice.

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II. Challenges and Significances of Rural Communities in an Urbanizing World.

This part of the article is an overview of challenges and significance of rural communities in an urbanizing world in terms of economy, society, and the environment. The authors refer to some cases around the globe to emphasize the point in each term.

The World Bank declares that 70 percent of the world's poor who live in rural areas, agriculture is the main source of income and employment. In 2010, rural population was 49% and agricultural lands 37.7%, this situation is alarming, because the rural population is decreasing each year, and agriculture is also declining. (World Bank, 2010).

In terms of economy, the leaders of the globalized market are stakeholders that can offer the best price in the market, leaving behind organic practices in agriculture for a more competitive productivity. For example, forty years ago in Taiwan, imported rice came at better prices, the local rice productivity declined; therefore, for some farmers the source of income banish.

Furthermore, the lack of investment in rural areas short the opportunities in some societies. In the last 30 years, people from the countryside migrate to Taipei, looking for opportunities that the city delivers. However, in the past twenty years, the government and foundations have been working on rural development programs; it is an example to study for its remarkable results.

In terms of society, in some societies in the southern globe, rural areasⁱⁱⁱ tend to be social excluded^{iv}. For instance, rural communities have limited voice in society. The author agrees with Putnam; participation is considered a key ingredient in building leadership and other community capacities; in addition, planners can be more precise in decision-making according to people's needs.

Nevertheless, when community participation interferes with wealth of some powerful stakeholders in society, participation becomes undervalued. The end goal is still a generation of wealth to some stakeholders; this is the reason rural areas are left behind. As a significance, the rural areas are an alternative way of slow life as a culture^v brings a healthy society and

release of stress. Since rapid urbanization, the identity of Slow Societies^{vi} is disappearance.

In terms of the environment, the natural environment is the characteristic of rural areas. Normally, the morphology of a rural area is more organic, respecting the agriculture fields and nature, using local material for construction. Rural communities should not be planned as cities, since the protection of the natural environment is a priority; rural areas can become an example way of living.

To clarify the terms of social and environment, in South America has 70% of its rainforests. The Amazon represents 40 % of South America (WWF, 2014) is the biggest forest worldwide which is threaten every year for exploitation of its natural resources. Indigenous are losing their lands and culture, due to colonization. For the past two decades, indigenous are trying to adapt to city view of the world, living their natural Cosmo vision.

TABLE I. TABLE CHALLENGES OF RURAL AREAS

| RESUME OF CHALLENGES | |
|--|--|
| Aspects | Description |
| Economy | Lack of competition in the globalized market. |
| Social | The disappearance of Slow Life Social exclusion |
| Environment (including Physical aspect). | Rural communities planned as cities. Rural areas should become an example of a different way of living harmoniously with nature. |

a. This table is to sum up part II of this article

III. Participatory Planning

A. Definition and Theoretical Arguments.

In rural areas, Participatory Planning is even more effective than in cities; they have a smaller structure of the organization. For example, in agriculture societies, the organization implies in families and neighbors. There are some descriptions and methods that englobe Participatory Planning for a sustainable development.

The first definition is Participatory Rural Appraisal; the second definition or argument is from Amazonica NGO. The third one is from National Taiwan University Research Foundation. The last two are Foundations that have been working in rural communities for approximately twenty years.

Chambers acknowledges Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA since 1990) is an approach and methods for learning about rural life and conditions from, with and by rural people. More precise definition PRA is “a family of approaches and methods to enable rural people to share, enhance, and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act.”

Furthermore, John K.C. Liu acknowledges that the choice of focusing on the use of participatory planning methods is because it warrants a better result; the end users participated in the process of making a plan.

For Mascha Kauka^{vii}, the starting point is recovering the culture, it gives them confidence, strength and sense of possession. The model of community development is to respect the culture, promote education, income generation, with a long-term project, well thought out; not enforcing much less thought like for a city.

In the following the authors mention methods from Participatory Rural Appraisal. In addition, the authors explained some other participatory methods and strategies from two organizations Amazonica NGO and National Taiwan University Research Foundation. The authors made interviews and classify some methods and strategies in a table. In addition, the article focusses on the Jing-Liao case study from NTU Research Foundation.

B. Technical Methods and Strategies

1) Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA); the beginning of Participatory Planning.

To be more precise, there are a list of methods of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) that can be use is Participatory Planning methods:

TABLE II. TABLE METHODS FROM PRA

| Methods from PRA that can be use in Participatory Planning | |
|---|--|
| Methods | Description |
| Key informants | Experts and with them the secondary sources can be review. |
| Interviews to locals | Do it yourself: performing village task, asking to be taught. Learning form community. |
| Participatory analysis of secondary sources ^{viii} . | Participatory mapping and modeling; in where people draw maps on social, demographic, natural resource, farm maps, infrastructure, their habits (circulation on the villages). In addition, construction of real models. |
| Transect walks | Walking with locals, observing, asking, listening, discussing, and trying to identify problems and solutions (Mascarenhas, 1990). |
| Time lines and changes | Events in a village with approximate dates. Change in the land use, customs and practices. |
| Oral histories and ethnic biographies | Local History, main characters in the village, knowing what can bring value to the community (Slim and Thompson, 1993). |
| Seasonal Calendars | According to locals, rain seasons, best time of the year, activities. |
| Participatory linkage diagramming, | Linkages, flows, connections and causality. Ven diagramming- identifying individuals and institutions important to the community and their relationship. |
| Analysis of differences | Gender, social group, occupation, age. Identifying differences, problems and preferences. |
| Estimating and quantification | Local measurements with community, such as stones and sticks. (Chambers Robert, 1994). |

b. Table describe some methods from PRA from Chambers' article (there are other authors)

2) **Amazonica; Planning a Self-sustain Community.**

The process of Participatory Planning enhance people and give them a sense of ownership of the project. Outsider comes as facilitators. For instance, one strategy is training and bringing new technology and improving technical aspects of basic services. For example, in the Amazon of Ecuador, Sharamentsa, is a fourteen years Non-Governmental Organization project involvement with the Achuar community.

During the self-construction process, the labor and material of the area were by the natives. The organization introduced new technology, renewable energy; technicians trained indigenous on how to use and maintain the technology; additionally, the organization with the community improved the quality of housing and basic services in the community.

As a result of fourteen years of working in Sharamentsa with community participation approach, is a self-sustain community in the jungle of Ecuador. For illustration, every Monday, the leader of the community plans events during the week; they have assemblies, work meetings, and minga^{ix}. During the minga, everyone has a task to accomplish; for example, the maintenance of the water tank (9000 liters), the solar panel and the landing strip.

The community is the owner of the village. "We worked here, and we live here, outside there is not chance for us to prosper, we are nobody; here in the jungle we have opportunities" leader of the community Agustin. The authors will discuss further the Sharamentsa case in another article.

TABLE III. TABLE OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIES AND METHODS

| Strategies and Methods from Amazonica | |
|---|--|
| Strategies | Methods and descriptions |
| Physical: Training from technicians to community | Meetings between the technician and community; so they can know the benefits and uses. For example, the insertion of renewable energy, improvement of housing and basic services. |
| Economy: generation of income. | Community labors project. For example, Eco-Tourism. Bring value to the community through their culture. For instance, the Amazonica paid elders to give classes to young people "We paid grandparents to give culture classes to youth, this was an encouragement and recognition for wisdom" Mascha Kauka. Training in the use of internet. |
| Social:improve facilities for community and rescue identity | School was concrete and zinc. After, the hard work of recovering the value of the Achuar culture. The community replaced the school for a sustainable approach using local material and their oval architecture. The community participated in the planning and design process and construction of the school, health care, community center and cabins. |

a. Some strategies and methods from the interview to Mascha Kauka, Founder.

3) **NTU Building & Planning Research Foundation; Participatory Planning ensures a better outcome.**

This article introduces Professor John K.C. Liu' conference at Tsinghua University, China. After the conference, the author visited The National Taiwan University Building & Planning Research Foundation; which have been working with communities for about twenty years.

The Foundation aims to collaborate with communities, being bridge from public and government. Letting the community performs as main actors of their own project. The NTU Building & Planning Research Foundation, have been dedicate in rural development projects such as; the Yilan County, Er-Kan, Rinari Tribes, and the **Jing Liao Case**.

TABLE IV. TABLE OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIES AND METHODS

| Strategies and Methods from NTU Research Foundation | |
|---|---|
| Strategies | Methods and descriptions |
| Discussions for planning and decision making | Meetings between researches and community. "Big Table" was developed to encourage equality among the staff and to ensure bottom - up contributions. Decision by consensus rather than by voting was instituted based on reason and persuasion. The big table was used during the discussion process with colleagues and also with community. (John K.C. Liu, 2014). |
| Economy: generation of income. | After analysing culture, seasonal calendars, events on the community, festivals and icons. The outsiders facilitated in the promotion of it. For example, the Rice Wedding Festival in the Jing Liao case. |
| Social: improve community facilities, improve organization. | The community participates in the planning and decision-making of community facilities. An organize community facilities the application of Participatory Planning. However, there is a reason or event that can bring a community together (in the Jing-Liao Case the release of a documentary). |

a. Table describe methods and strategies from the conference of John K.C Liu and interviews to researches in the NTU Building & Planning Research Foundation.

IV. Jing-Liao, Taiwan

A. "The Last Generation of Farmers"



Figure 1. Ten percent of sales in the Information Center of the village goes to improve the Community Center.

Jing-Liao located in Chiayi County in Taiwan is in the agriculture area of around 400 years old. The improvement of this community started from three years ago since the release of a documentary called "the last generation of farmers", which is about the nostalgia of the last rice farmers in Taiwan. After the documentary, three peasants became movie stars; this was the beginning of the rebirth of the community of Jing Liao.

In the recent years, new generations prefer city life and of course, the opportunities that the city provide. Another reason of reducing agriculture life is the high demand of imported rice in Taiwan. Before, Jing-Liao, was almost abandoned by young generations and the town was left only with elderlies and children without strong income, the housing was damaging and the culture of agriculture unvalued.

B. Strategies and Methods

TABLE V. Table Jing-Liao Case Study

| Participatory Planning | |
|--|---|
| Strategies | Methods and Description |
| Physical: discussions for planning and auto-construction | Improvement of housing, recovering local identity. Re-using the same wood structure and local materials such as the rice cover as part of the eco-concrete for walls. |
| Economy: labor community projects | Community manage the information and community center. In addition, the high local tourism flow during the Marriage Rice Festival is an annual activity of Jiang-Liao community, since marriage cakes are typical in the area. Also, the appreciation of organic agricultural production and bring icons, such as Little Cow. |
| Social: improve community facilities, improve organization | Re-use of abandoned houses for community use. For example, the information and community center. Monthly meal plans. |

a. Table describe some methods by observation of the authors and interview NTU researches.

To improve the rural community, the government together with the foundation of Building & Planning of the National Taiwan University, focused on the traditions of the community. For example, the Marriage Rice Festival is an annual activity of Jiang-Liao community, because marriage cakes are typical in the area. The foundation worked in bringing value to the event and promoting it.

Today, many tourists during the festival go to town to celebrate their wedding; moreover, the event has become a symbol for the community. Additionally, another activity is farming organic rice, farmers share the experience with tourists. This activity promotes the value of culture of agriculture.

In addition, ten percent of sales in the information center of the village goes to improve the community center. The community center is in an old house donated by a resident, adapted for kitchen and communal dining in the space. Wood structure and brick walls were reused; the outside and inside of the house were improved.

Currently, locals work for the community center. The daily menu is based on the agriculture products of the village. Each member of the community pays 900 TWD Taiwanese per month equivalent to \$ 30 USD dollars. Each inhabitant has its share of food; they can either take it home or eat lunch in the dining room. It is a place of community interaction.

Likewise, the icon of the town is a buffalo called "Little Cow," seniors take Little Cow and walk to the park; certainly, are moments of distraction for locals and also for tourist. The buffalo was from one community member. To bring icons give a sense of representation of the village.

C. Effects of Planning Practice

As a result of the Planning Practice is a self-sustain community, locals get business opportunities due to the high tourist flow. Since, the income is good the locals take care of their homes and community buildings. Since the rice events every year, icon and organic agriculture, community has representation of their culture.

Community has a conscience way of living, treasuring the peaceful agriculture life respecting nature. Locals recycled almost every waste and reused for craft to sell in the information center. Therefore, for rural development project requires annual and weekly events, reuse of abandoned houses for community use, organizational improvement of the community, recycle, and encourage the appreciation of more environmental friendly systems of production.

Indeed, community-Jing Liao is a case study to follow. In general, the rural-urban migration is high due to lack of opportunities for farmers, and low self-esteem to be a farmer. The key is to potentiate rural farming areas for a more sustainable development in terms of economy, social and environment.

v. Conclusion

In conclusion, this article confirms the initial hypothesis that participatory planning is a rational methodology to promote the sustainable development of rural communities in terms of economy, society, and the environment (including physical aspect). People are capable of doing their planning; outsiders facilitate the process. A project based on Participatory Planning will be durable in time; since it brings to people sense of ownership.

Rural communities are facing serious challenges in the urbanizing world; from the high migration from farmers to cities due to opportunities or cities absorb the rural areas and the slow life culture. In rural areas, community participation is even more effective than in cities; since they have a smaller structure of the organization, more referring to agricultural societies.

In the Jing Liao Case, community organizes and work together generating income from tourism. Furthermore, the Jing- Liao community value the culture of agriculture, from their Rice Wedding event and organic agriculture application. Moreover, the community respects the environment; they recycle almost all waste from farming converting them into crafts.

How planners can bring value to the town or village without knowing and understanding villagers' traditions and culture. How planners can propose a solution without knowing the problems. How planners can design for villagers without knowing their necessities. For better results, locals have to become planners. For successful outcomes, the community has to develop as self-sustain in terms of economy, social and environment.

Acknowledgment

Thanks to John K.C. Liu, Ph.D. and the members of Building and Planning Research Foundation of Taiwan University, for their wonderful welcoming, and the information they provide during visit in Taiwan. To the Jing-Liao Community, for the wonderful experience during the visit. Appreciation to Mascha Kauka founder of Amazonica for provide information that improve the development of this article.

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"People are capable of doing their investigation, analysis and planning, the outsiders facilitate the process. A project based on community participation approach will be durable in time; since it brings to people sense of ownership".



"Rural communities are facing critical challenges in the urbanizing world; participatory planning is a rational approach to promote the sustainable development of rural communities in terms of economy, social and environment".

ⁱ "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Environment and Development Committee, 1987).

ⁱⁱ Professor, Architect Chair and Executive Director Building and Planning Research Foundation, Taiwan University.

ⁱⁱⁱ Academics have argued that how we define rural is shaped the social and symbolic construction of rural areas (Halfacree 1993; Shucksmith 2000; Wood 2005). Whether we see rural areas as primarily areas of production (primary industries, particular agriculture), consumption (a public good, leisure activities, commuter housing, etc.), or conservation (protecting the environment, protecting the existing rural infrastructure against change) will affect how we define rural. In particular will have an enormous impact in rural policy. (Hoggart and Paniagua, 2001; Hoggart 1990; Shucksmith 2000).

^{iv} The concept of social exclusion focuses primarily on relational and historically embedded patterns of labor market detachment, low political and civic participation, social isolation and especially the distribution and exercise of power, and how these phenomena intersect with gendered, ethnic, racial and other social identities. (Chambers, 1994. The Origins and Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal).

^v Kunzmann in his presentation in Asian lectures at Tsinghua University approaches the concept of Slow Societies

^{vi} An example of fast life is fast food, which is a globalized way of eating. Fast food has become a culture for metropolitan cities, but the obesity and nutritional concerns about fast food in the West have forced people to rethink their way of eating and the way of living. (Article Turkish fast food: real food fast, 2007).

^{vii} Mascha Kauka is the founder of AMAZONICA "We paid grandparents to give culture classes to youth, this was an encouragement and recognition for wisdom" Mascha Kauka response regarding how work started in Sharamentsa, which is an Achuar community in the Amazon of Ecuador. The Foundation began working with communities in the jungle of Ecuador (meanwhile have been many). "As a result, everyone keeps their long hair, their traditional costume, are painted, have recovered the traditional dances and legends / beliefs, we rescued their crafts and finally the identity".

^{viii} The most common form is the analysis of aerial photographs (often best at 1:SOOO) to identify soil types, land conditions, land tenure etc (Deweese 1989; Meams 1989; Sandford, 1989); satellite imagery has also been used (personal communication Sam Joseph);

^{ix} (Del quechua mink'a). Free collective farm work for social utility. Royal Spanish Academy.