

EXAMINING COMMUNICATIVE RATIONALITY IN COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING IN TERMS OF THE TEAM LINGUISTIC THEORY

コミュニカティブ・プランニング論の中核概念としてのコミュニカティブ・ラショナル리티の検討 —TEAM 言語理論を基準として—

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1980年代後半、ハーバマスの社会理論をベースにしたコミュニカティブ・プランニング論が提唱され、その後、その関心が急速に高まったが、1990年代後半以降、特に、その中核概念であるコミュニカティブ・ラショナル리티に対する批判が高まってきた。本論文においては、このような潮流を踏まえ、言語論をベースとしたTEAM理論を新たな分析枠組みとして用いて、コミュニカティブ・ラショナル리티という概念の有効性を再検討した。また、近年のコミュニカティブ・プランニング理論への批判もTEAM理論のなかに位置づけた。その結果、コミュニカティブ・ラショナル리티はTEAM理論の4つの言語の意味機能（および4つの社会言語）のうちの1機能のみに依存しており、中核概念として狭隘であることが明確化となった。

Keywords: communicative planning, communicative rationality, TEAM theory

コミュニカティブ・プランニング、コミュニカティブ・ラショナル리티、TEAM理論

1. Introduction

Interest in Communicative Planning has dramatically increased and has attracted considerable popularity from both theorists and researchers in the field of urban planning from the 1990s onwards. Habermas's theory of communicative action and his concept of *communicative rationality* have proved highly influential to proponents of Communicative Planning and it has frequently been applied to the urban planning context. However, Communicative Planning has received considerable criticism from the late 1990s onwards, as witnessed by the book entitled 'Planning Futures: New directions for planning theory' (Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones (eds.), 2002) which assembles various critiques of Communicative Planning. Given such an ongoing amount of attention and criticism, this paper critically examines Communicative Planning and its fundamental concept of communicative rationality in particular, in terms of the TEAM linguistic theory, for the progress of studies in urban planning.

2. Definition and the central concepts of Communicative Planning and its criticisms

Communicative Planning is a broad term for a collection of positions and attitudes that are often quite diverse. By the notion of Communicative Planning, we refer particularly to works by Forester (1989), Healey (1992, 1997), Sager (1994) and Innes (1996), which are based on the theoretical and philosophical work of Jürgen Habermas (1979, 1984). Healey in her early work described 'Communicative Planning' as 'a respectful argumentative form of planning through debate' (1992, p253), which has the potential to 'make a difference' while 'living differently' (Healey, 1992, 1997). Innes (1995, p183) also defines planning as an 'interactive, communicative activity and depicts planners as deeply embedded in the fabric of community, politics, and public decision-making'. The definitions and perspectives offered by the theorists suggest that Communicative Planning is a new *democratic enterprise* (Healey, 1992) of urban planning based on communicative action among citizens, namely stakeholders who often have very different perspectives, priorities and interests, which can address public issues arising from the problems of co-existence in shared spaces in a more effective and justified way.

Communicative Planning has generated considerable debate and drawn much criticism from the late 1990s onwards. For example, academics such as Flyvbjerg & Richardson (2002) and Hillier (2000) argue that Communicative Planning fails to capture the role of power in planning. Theorists who take a regime theory approach such as Lauria and Whelan (1995) also criticize it for the lack of economic perspective. Moreover, Hoch (1996) and Harrison (2002), who take a pragmatist position in the field of urban planning, criticize it by emphasizing the significance of shared social experience and feelings. Some researchers concerned with planning practice such as Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger (1998) criticize it in terms of a lack of an educational aspect and the role of the individual such as the professional planner. Although all these critiques of Communicative Planning are crucial, what is needed is to constructively relate these critiques to each other and to offer a comprehensive framework for urban planning theory into which these critiques are incorporated. In other words, the paper attempts to not only critically examine Communicative Planning but also comprehensively integrate the perspective of Communicative Planning and its critiques into a theoretical framework.

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It is apparent that the fundamental concept of Communicative Planning is *communicative rationality* developed by Habermas in his theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1984). According to Habermas (1984), *communicative action* is characterized as a kind of *objectivity* based on unforced and reasoned agreement between individuals reached through free and open debates. Habermas assumes communicative action should be *rational* when reaching intersubjective mutuality of reciprocal understanding among free and equal participants. Communicative Planning has also a strong practical orientation to its efforts (see e.g. Innes, 1995) and therefore the concept of communicative rationality is often transferred to the concept of *consensus building* (on public issues among stakeholders) in planning practices. In this sense, it can be argued that consensus building as a practical concept of communicative rationality is the goal of communicative action in Communicative Planning.

In reality, it is, as Habermas (1979) himself admits, difficult to reach communicative rationality (or consensus) based on mutual understanding through communicative action. He therefore provides normative criteria (universal validity claims) for reaching communicative rationality, called an *ideal speech situation* under which the utterance of the speaker can be rationally checked, assessed and judged. These criteria are *comprehensiveness*, *propositional truth*, *subjective truthfulness (sincerity)* and *normative rightness*.¹ In other words, communicative action is legitimate when the ideal speech situation is met between participants. This suggests that Habermas's theory is by its very nature a *critical*, rather than constructive, theory, in which a certain opinion is rationally checked and judged, rather than created and developed.

However, there are, as will be argued later, still many criticisms of the application of communicative rationality (and consensus building) based on Habermas's ideal speech situation as criteria to the urban planning context. Given an ongoing amount of attention and criticism, it is crucial to critically examine Communicative Planning and its fundamental concept of communicative rationality from different and integrative perspectives in order for the study of urban planning theory to make any real progress.

3. Criteria of theoretical analysis

In this paper, Nishibe's TEAM linguistic theory is utilized as research criteria for examining the notion of communicative rationality in Communicative Planning. Nishibe's theory incorporates all main aspects of the social sciences (such as economics, political science, sociology and cultural studies) into a framework which is developed by paying attention to the ability of human beings to use languages. There are a number of reasons to utilize Nishibe's TEAM theory for critically examining Communicative Planning and its fundamental concept of communicative rationality. First of all, urban planning processes are, by its very nature, linguistic activities and communicative action in Communicative Planning is based on the human's linguistic ability. Therefore, by paying attention to linguistic theory, the limitation of Communicative Planning should be revealed. Secondly, because urban planning, an interdisciplinary subject, should inevitably include various aspects of social sciences, the TEAM linguistic theory, which incorporates all the main aspects of the social sciences, could potentially offer a common ground for urban planning theory, including Communicative Planning.

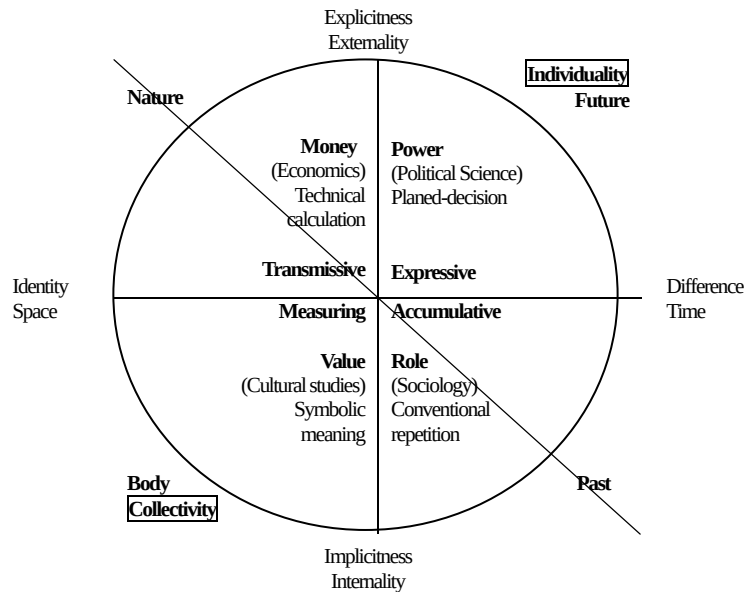
A number of notions of TEAM linguistic approach developed by Nishibe (1996) are introduced. In paying attention to the meaning of language and at the same time acknowledging the multiplicity of that meaning, Nishibe divides the meaning function of language into four; namely, functions of (T) *transmitting* meaning, (E) *expressing* meaning, (A) *accumulating* meaning, and (M) *measuring* meaning.² Figure 1 shows the TEAM linguistic structure, which puts the four meaning functions of language into a four-fold matrix framework. This matrix is coordinated by axes, one regarding *explicitness / implicitness* and the other regarding *difference / identity*.³ According to Nishibe, language is mainly composed of these four meaning functions and sustained when the four functions are maintained in a balanced way.

In order to examine human behavior in the urban planning context, it is also important to link the TEAM linguistic structure with the *individual-collective relationship (ontology)*. Figure 1 also provides this linkage. An assumption is made by Nishibe that 'individuality' is characterized not only as *differentiated* from others, but also as *explicit* while 'collectivity' is characterized not only as *identified* with others, but also as *implicit*. This meaning is that individual agents play a crucial role, for example in decision making processes of urban planning mainly by 'expressing' their own ideas, which are collectively 'measured' based on existing latent value.

Moreover, Nishibe expands the TEAM linguistic structure toward establishing an inclusive framework for social science, into which all main aspects of social sciences are incorporated and related to each other. Assuming that a human society can be well-explained using linguistic structure and the meaning functions, Nishibe's premise is that human beings try to understand the 'world', including society and humans themselves, by means of language and develops another two-by-two matrix, which is combined within the TEAM structure. This matrix is coordinated by axes, one regarding *externality / internality* and the other regarding *space / time*. These axes correspond to *explicitness / implicitness* and *difference / identity*, respectively (see also Figure 1).⁴

Figure 1 also suggests that human beings try to establish *order* by means of using four social languages, namely, *Money*, *Power*, *Role* and *Value*, and their derivatives (technical calculation, planned decision, conventional reiteration and symbolic meaning).⁵ The

matrix also suggests that Money, Power, Role, and Value as social languages correspond to the main fields of social science: *Economics*, *Political science*, *Sociology* and *Cultural studies (Education)*, respectively. Strictly speaking, although political science, for example, pays some attention to other social languages such as Money, Role and Value, it is primarily concerned with Power as a tool for decision-making. In other words, it should be important to understand that although each academic field potentially includes all elements of four social languages, there is the media mostly concerned. According to Nishibe, in order to grasp a complicated human society, representing reality, attention to all four social languages (and their derivatives) should be paid in a balanced manner.

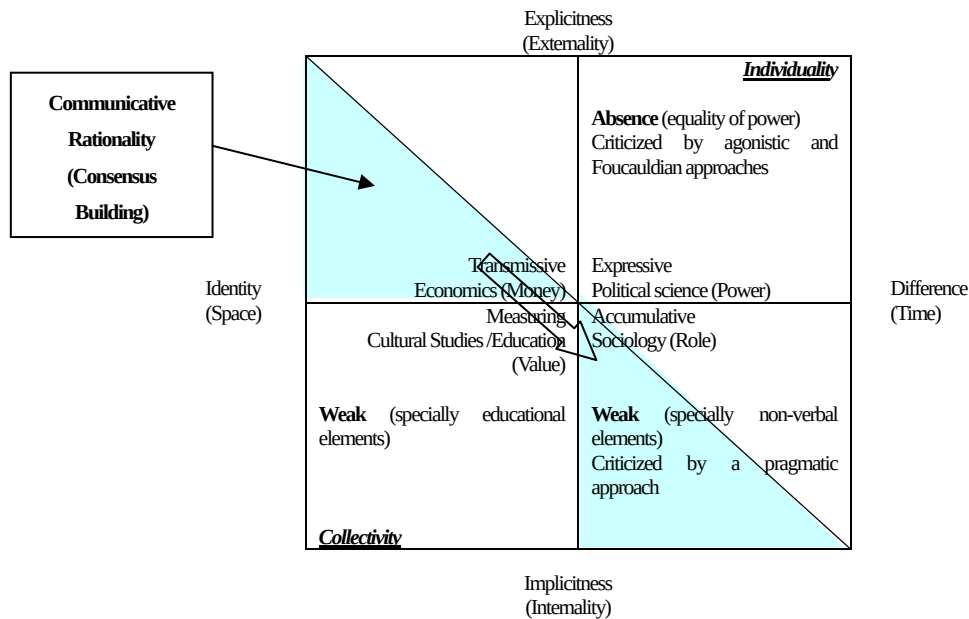


Figure—1: TEAM linguistic framework (Source: Nishibe, 1996)

4. Analysis of communicative rationality in terms of the TEAM linguistic framework

Here, the theoretical preference and limitations of communicative rationality in Communicative Planning are examined in terms of Nishibe's TEAM linguistic framework. Communicative rationality (and consensus building) may fall into the *collective* dimension of the quadrant of *explicitness-identity (externality-space)* in the TEAM linguistic framework (see Figure 2). This is so because communicative rationality requires *explicitly collective* forms of arguments or debates and seeks a horizon of *identification* (consensus) with others.

Figure 2 in turn shows some critical limitations of the concept of communicative rationality. Firstly and overall, the heavy reliance on communicative rationality is problematic because this is a far too narrow supposition, which corresponds mainly to the half of one (the *transmissive* function) of four linguistic meaning functions in the TEAM linguistic framework. In other words, seen from the stand point of the TEAM linguistic framework, communicative rationality ignores other crucial aspects of linguistic meaning functions (the *expressive*, *accumulative*, *measuring* functions) or social languages (such as Political Science/Power, Sociology/Role, Cultural Studies/Value), which the human being inevitably relies on in their activities. As a result, it becomes as many critics of Communicative Planning (see e.g. Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 1998; Mäntysalo, 2002) point out, unrealistic and utopian to function as a model for real life planning practices. Moreover, the heavy reliance on communicative rationality is not only unrealistic, but also oppressive. According to Nishibe (1996), too much emphasis on rationality (or the function of *transmitting* the meaning of language) tends to become stereotyped, confined and deadlocked forms of communication. It can be argued that by paying too much attention to rationality, linguistic expressions of rhetoric such as metaphor and metonymy, which are often utilized in concept-making or brain-storming in urban planning practice, becomes confined, thus making communication oppressive. Although Communicative Planning, as based on the notion of communicative rationality, gives little attention to the perspective of *accumulation*, Nishibe also points out that communicative activity that does not make reference to this perspective will be disconcerted. In order to facilitate 'alive' communication in planning practices, the four linguistic meaning functions should be equally weighed.



Figure—2: Communicative rationality within the TEAM linguistic framework (Source: Author)

Secondly, the concept of communicative rationality is problematic because its pursuit fails to adequately acknowledge the *political* nature of urban planning (in the externality-time quadrant) (see Figure 2). Academics who take agonistic or foucauldian approaches to urban planning point out it (see e.g. Hillier, 2000; McGuirk, 2001, Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002; Mäntysalo, 2002, also see again Figure 2). McGuirk (2001) claims that in spite of the fact that the inevitability of uneven power infuses planning practice and even bottom-up participatory practice, there is no possibility that communicative rationality based on transparently reflexive reasoning processes in Communicative Planning is compatible with the irreducible and constitutive nature of power, difference, inequality, domination and inherent conflict (antagonisms). In addition, although Communicative Planning theorists seem to regard power as a negative factor, it is significant to suggest the importance of positive and productive use of power (see e.g. Harrison, 2002; Mäntysalo, 2002). Mäntysalo (2002), for example, argues that Communicative Planning overlooks a creative, positive, and constructive aspect of power in planning decision-making. That is, by assuming that communicative rationality is reached based on a *leveling of power* to free citizens from bureaucracy, Communicative Planning theorists tend to overlook ‘irrational’ *power (Political)* elements of human beings, which are inevitably utilized in the form of value judgment in actual situations of difference and the inherent conflict of opinions among citizens, as well as of limited time, costs, resources and abilities (knowledge) to make a decision. In reality, some legitimate people (such as planners or politicians in local government) inevitably play crucial leadership roles (using one of the linguistic functions of *expressing* meaning) in actual situations. In this context, it is difficult to distinguish from ‘persuading someone’ to ‘exercising power’. This means that the pursuit of communicative rationality is incompatible with the acknowledgement of the existence of *Power* as an inevitable media.

Thirdly, the concept of communicative rationality is problematic because (although it includes *rational* elements of human activities) it cannot adequately include *economic* elements. This point echoes the criticism of Communicative Planning by theorists of urban political economy such as Lauria and Whelan (1995) and others (see e.g. Fischler, 2000; Landry, 2000) who argue that Communicative Planning gives insufficient emphasis to the driving forces of the globalizing capital economy. That is, communicative rationality fails to acknowledge the significance of adapting to the changing world in an *economic* (technical) way and does not have a circumstantial enough perspective. That is to say, it fails to adequately convey that public policy should contribute to the urban *economic development* that enables a city to survive in a changing society. Failure to do so may result in economically negative consequences.

Fourthly, the concept of communicative rationality does not seem to sufficiently incorporate a *social* (sociological) aspect into the theory of urban planning, which falls into the quadrant of internality-time (implicitness-difference) in the TEAM linguistic framework (see Figure 2). This point is also made by theorists who take a position of pragmatism in the field of philosophy (Rorty, 1989) and of urban planning (see, e.g. Hoch, 1996, Harrison, 2002). Hoch (1996) argues that there isn’t a need for an idealistic conception of universal conditions to reach (communicative) rationality and instead he emphasizes the significance of *solidarity*, which is, according to Harrison (2002), to be gradually constructed from fragments of empathy, sentiment and common experience. This is so due to too

much attention to formal (explicit) and teleological meetings under which rationality based on debates or argumentations is reached. In other words, Communicative Planning fails to adequately understand the role of *conventional repetition* (experience) and the significance of *implicit* practice, which might lay at the unconscious (*internal*) level and remain context-specific (*differentiated* from universality) and therefore might not be captured only through debates or argumentation. This may to some extent function to mediate different views among participants.

Communicative rationality is also problematic in terms of lack of attention to cultural/educational aspects, which falls into the quadrant of internality-space (implicitness-identity) (see Figure 2). The lack of educational aspects in Communicative Planning is also alluded to by academics such as Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger (1998). For example, it is difficult to maintain, conserve and restore cultural values in a city (such as the aesthetic integrity of cities) through communicatively rational actions among citizens. This is due to the fact that many local cultures may be historically constructed and citizens may not adequately appreciate (local) cultural values, objects or processes generated, or they just may not articulate them with language. If such information failures cannot be addressed through communicatively rational action among citizens, cultural values would be assessed and judged, for example, by experts trained in the appropriate field (such as archaeologists, art historians and conservators) (see Throsby, 2001) rather than through a consensus building approach.

However, it is neither fair nor sufficient to criticize Communicative Planning only in terms of inadequacy and limitations of the concept of communicative rationality (and consensus building). Communicative Planning theorists themselves have also identified limitations to Habermas's communicative rationality in their empirical studies and found inspiration from other interrelated but contradictory strands of (non-positivist) philosophy and social theories, such as Anthony Giddens (see e.g. Healey, 1997). This has generated a number of interpretations, further investigations and a wider scope of understanding (see e.g. Healey 1997; Innes, 1998; Harris, 2002).⁶ As Fischler (2000) points out, Innes (1998) shifts her focus in Communicative Planning from universality of communicative rationality to the context-specific nature of planning shown in the shared interests of local players. Healey (1997) also suggests the importance of *local knowledge* in planning activities, rather than communicatively universal knowledge. Although these attempts to shift in focus made by Communicative Planning theorists decrease theoretical coherence, they increase practical applicability. In using the TEAM framework, their shifts of focus should be described from the quadrant of *Economics* to one of *Sociology* in the collective dimension (see Figure 2).⁷

This chapter analyzed the limitations of communicative rationality in Communicative Planning in terms of the TEAM linguistic framework and incorporated the criticisms of Communicative Planning into the framework and related them to each other.

5. Conclusions

This paper has examined Communicative Planning and its fundamental concept of communicative rationality in particular in terms of the TEAM linguistic framework. The analysis revealed that from that perspective, Communicative Planning is fundamentally narrow in its theoretical supposition and it makes the theoretical work inherently problematic as it fails to comprehensively and adequately incorporate the four crucial aspects of the linguistic meaning functions into its theoretical foundation. Moreover, the findings also indicated that the main criticisms of communicative rationality in Communicative Planning, nearly fitted into the TEAM linguistic framework. In other words, the analysis suggests that the TEAM linguistic theory could offer a comprehensive framework into which Communicative Planning and its criticisms are incorporated and related to each other.

Notes

(¹) Forester (1989) applies Habermas's ideal speech situation to the urban planning context and claims that mutual understanding among participants in policy-making depends on the satisfaction of the four criteria; namely, *comprehensibility*, *sincerity*, *legitimacy* and *accuracy (truthness)*.

(²) It may be easy to understand a function of 'measuring meaning' as of 'sharing and providing latent value'.

(³) The *expressive* function of language is a characteristic which is *explicit* and *differentiated* from others because the human being *explicitly* 'expresses' his feeling (meaning) to others, which is *differentiated* from others. It therefore falls into the quadrant of explicitness-difference in Figure 1. The *transmissive* function of language is a characteristic which is *explicit* and *identified* with others because when he 'transmits' his feeling to others, an *identified* horizon between them and an *explicit* form of (spoken) language are needed. It therefore falls into the quadrant of explicitness-identity. The *accumulative* function of language is a characteristic which is *implicit* and *differentiated* from others because the use of language depends on his *implicitly* 'accumulated' experience, which is *differentiated* from others. It therefore falls into the quadrant of implicitness-difference. The *measuring* function of language is a characteristic which is *implicit* and *identified* with others because language can be 'measured' by a receiver based on an *implicit* value system, which can be *identified* (or shared) with others who can use the language. It therefore falls into the quadrant of implicitness-identity.

(⁴) The main difference between the axes of explicitness/implicitness & difference/identity and the axes of externality/internality & space/time is that the subject of the former is 'language' itself while the latter concerns human 'consciousness' when using language.

(⁵) *Money*, in the externality-space quadrant, is a derivative form of language with which human beings try to create order from chaos in the name of 'nature' (material world) using *technical calculation* in an effective matter, which economics is concerned primarily with. *Power*, in the externality-time quadrant, is a derivative form of language, with which human beings try to create order from chaos in the name of 'future' based on *planned-decision* and

imagination, something which politics chiefly deals with by focusing on policy decision-making. *Role*, in the internality-time quadrant, is a derivative form of language with which human beings try to create order from chaos in the name of 'past' (sociology). Here, *Role* as a social language is referred to as the role model-formation, which is acquired through *conventional, interactive, repetitive activities* in society. *Value*, in the internality-space quadrant, is a derivative form of language, with which a human being tries to create order from chaos in the name of 'body', which is what cultural studies or education mainly deal with. Here, *value* is referred to as a set of attitudes or latent consciousness (that is, *symbolic meaning*) which can be shared by any group (in terms of politics, geography, religion, ethnicity, organization and the like), and are *internalized* in individual 'bodies'. The main difference between *Value* and *Role* as social languages is that while *Role* highlights the (historically) *embedded* dimension in a society, but is *differentiated* in each individual, *Value* stresses the *embodied* dimension within each individual in a society, which can be *identified* with others.

(⁶) For example, building on recent developments in regional economics and sociology, Healey (1997, 1999b) developed her theory of *collaborative planning* by combining Communicative Planning and an institutional approach, assuming that institutional approaches to planning better deal with the dynamics of urban and regional change.

(⁷) In other words, the shift of emphasis in Communicative Planning can be said to be from a modernist to a pragmatist or post-modernist approach.

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