Three Essays on Communicative Planning: From the Perspective of East Asians

Minji Cho
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Three Essays on Communicative Planning:
From the Perspective of East Asians

by
Minji Cho

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Urban Studies

Dissertation Committee:
Matthew F. Gebhardt, Chair
Connie P. Ozawa
José W. Meléndez
Lisa K. Bates

Portland State University
2024
Abstract

Communicative planning aims to strengthen the inclusiveness of planning by shifting the paradigm from the perception that the public is considered an object affected by the planning process to an active participant. In modern society, where people’s values are more diverse, communicative planning can be an alternative way to reflect the opinions of people with diverse identities for decision-making. At the same time, however, it is criticized for its difficulty in universal application, particularly in non-Western countries. Scholars argue that since communicative planning theory is biased toward Anglo-Americans’ context, it requires a specific contextual condition.

In this background, this dissertation seeks to understand communicative planning in the East Asian context through various approaches. Specifically, the dissertation consists of three essays on communicative planning in the East Asian context from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. Considering the cultural uniqueness of non-white racial groups, this dissertation pays attention to East Asians, who have been marginalized in both communicative planning and, more broadly, the field of urban planning.

The first essay conducts a systematic literature review to look at the situated communicative planning theory and practices in three East Asian countries: China, South Korea, and Japan. The second essay provides an empirical examination of how the communicative planning process operates in East Asian countries, using South Korea as an example. This essay particularly focuses on the role of facework, which plays a crucial
role in human relationships in East Asia. Using qualitative content analysis with official reports, news articles, and video recordings of the community forum, this essay reveals that facework complicates the attainment of the ideal conditions of communicative planning, but it facilitates a cooperative attitude among participants. The final essay explores the racial disparity of neighborhood associations from the perspective of East Asians in Portland, Oregon. Using the mixed method approach, this essay shows that East Asian Portlanders are underrepresented in neighborhood associations, even though Asians are the second most populous racial group in Portland. Additionally, this essay identifies a significant barrier to initial participation: the mismatch between the characteristics of neighborhood associations and those of East Asian Portlanders.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents and biggest pillars of support in my life, Hyun Jin Cho and Soo Hee Song, and my brother and best friend, Jae Ho Cho.
Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my dissertation committee for their unwavering support throughout this process. Thanks to my dissertation chair, Dr. Matthew Gebhardt, your encouragement, and patient mentorship have been the biggest help in completing this journey. Thanks to my committee, Dr. Connie Ozawa, Dr. José Meléndez, and Dr. Lisa Bates, your insightful feedback, thoughtful suggestions, and expertise have been invaluable to my academic growth and significantly enriched my dissertation. Thanks to Dr. Barbara Tint, your dedication to my work has inspired me to strive for excellence in my research. Furthermore, I would like to thank all the professors at Portland State University, especially Urban Studies, who supported my work.

I am grateful to the community members who have contributed significantly to the third essay of this dissertation. Your openness and honesty in discussing complex issues have not only enriched this study but also deepened my understanding of the subject matter. Your contributions have brought depth to this work, making it not just a scholarly pursuit, but a reflection of real-world experiences and perspectives. I deeply appreciate your time and willingness to contribute to this academic endeavor.

To my friends, colleagues, the research team *Evicted in Oregon*, and the activist group *Tomato School*, thanks for your intellectual and emotional support, which makes me balance between academic pursuit and my life. To my academic friends in Toulan School, including Seyoung, Kyu Ri, Minju, Bongani, Christina, Daniel, Eun Jun, Gabriel,
Huijun, Jiahui, Jihye, Maryam, Mina, Nick, Sarah M., Walle, Yun Jae, and many others, Korean colleagues, Minyoung, Sohyeon, Young Joon, Taesoo, Jihye, and friends, Suhyun, Sunny, Soo Ji, Jiwon, and others, your supports have contributed to my growth. To my academic sister, Yi, this dissertation could not have been done without your invaluable assistance. Your unwavering support has been instrumental in bringing this work to fruition. To Colleen Carroll in *Evicted in Oregon* and Minah Kim in *Tomato School*, since I acknowledge that getting a new degree means gaining privilege, I always worry that I might become arrogant and misuse my power. At such times, I find solace and guidance in the trajectories of your lives as researchers, practitioners, and activists. Your journeys serve as an example for me as to what kind of researcher I should be. Thank you for being not just colleagues, but also mentors and friends.

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my parents, who have been the pillars of my academic journey. When they attended my elementary school entrance ceremony in their early 30s, little did they know that their support would extend well into my 30s as I embarked on this scholarly pursuit. Their unwavering love, steadfast support, selfless sacrifices, and enduring patience have been my guiding light, providing me with the strength to navigate the challenges of this journey. Their belief in me has been the most significant factor in the completion of this process. I am eternally grateful for their love and support. In addition, to my brother, your role as a mentor and friend has been a source of motivation and inspiration. Thank you for being there for me, for sharing in my struggles, and for being a constant source of positivity and support.
Lastly, I wish to express my gratitude to my two grandmothers, who have been the pillars of strength and inspiration in my academic journey. My paternal grandmother, despite being over 90 years old and grappling with the fragments of her memory, never once forgot that her youngest granddaughter is pursuing a doctorate in the United States. Her unwavering faith in me has been a beacon of hope in my darkest hours. My maternal grandmother, a symbol of resilience and vitality, reminds me of the power of perseverance. Her spirit in the face of social barriers serves as a reminder that I, too, can thrive as a strong woman in the face of adversity. Their wisdom and values have been instrumental in shaping my worldview and guiding my academic pursuits. I am eternally grateful for their influence and will strive to uphold the values they have instilled in me.
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Chapter 1. Introduction

After the argumentative turn (Fisher and Forester, 1993), Forester, Innes, and Healey, key proponents of communicative planning, sought to devise an alternative to rational-comprehensive planning by incorporating Habermas’ communicative action theory. They use varied terms like communicative or collaborative planning, and their suggestions on the communicative planning process are divergent; however, they commonly reject the anti-democratic form of planning grounded in instrumental rationality, aiming to make planning models that foster knowledge discovery through inclusive participation and mutual learning (Beauregard, 2020, pp. 53-60). Based on pragmatism, they also emphasize ongoing social learning within human interactions, recognizing the absence of absolute truths (Healey, 2009, p. 287 as cited by Beauregard, 2020, p. 60). Consequently, communicative planning scholars seek to design planning that transcends mere scientific analysis to become a collaborative learning endeavor, wherein planners and stakeholders exchange opinions (Beauregard, 2020, pp. 59-60).

Communicative planning is particularly oriented towards enhancing inclusivity by transitioning from viewing the public as passive objects influenced by planning processes to active participants therein. In modern society, where people’s values are becoming more diverse, communicative planning emerges as a potential avenue for gathering and reflecting the perspectives of individuals with diverse identities for decision-making. While communicative planning can offer a framework to navigate differences in values
and interests among community members and form consensus through mutual learning, some scholars criticize that the communicative planning model is neither universal nor equal for everyone (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000; Hytönen, 2016; Mannberg and Wihlborg, 2008). Notably, since communicative planning theory is biased toward Anglo-Americans’ context, it can work well only for regions where a specific contextual condition is met, or groups who are familiar with the Anglo-Americans’ cultures (Alam, 2011; Fainstein, 2000; Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000).

Young (2002) elaborates on this issue by distinguishing between 'external exclusion' and 'internal exclusion' in deliberation. External exclusion refers to the complete marginalization of certain groups from the decision-making. It can explain the situation in which since an area has low awareness of the need for, or preference for public involvement in the planning process, there is no option for community members to participate in the decision-making process. Internal exclusion occurs when the participation of certain groups lacks substantive influence in deliberations, as privileged norms and shared values within the mainstream of the deliberative democracy framework favor the voices of dominant groups over marginalized communities (Ibid, pp. 37-44). Furthermore, adherence to norms of civility and reasonableness could marginalize voices diverging from these norms, thereby justifying the exclusion of marginalized groups from deliberative processes (Ibid, pp. 47-50). As the example of in the United States, the remarks of white participants in the communicative planning process have a more significant impact on the actual outcome than those of participants of color.
Some research on communicative planning, in particular, points out that it is challenging to uptake communicative planning models in East Asian contexts. For example, Hong (2004) pointed out that a dialogue-based form of planning faces challenges in East Asians because an institutional setting emphasizes loyalty and prevents people from thinking reflectively. In the context of the United States, East Asian Americans may face external and internal exclusions in the communicative planning process due to differences in communication style, cultural values, and sense of community on meeting attendance. Looking at the case study in Atlanta, Georgia (Bernstein and Norwood, 2008), Korean Americans are not only less likely to attend community meetings but also less assertive and more likely to take accommodating or compromising strategies in conflict than African Americans; therefore, they can be excluded externally and internally from the communicative planning process.

Similar to research in the planning field, most literature on communication has been done from the Western point of view even though it is difficult to apply it to all cultural backgrounds (Chen and Starosta, 2003; Dissanayake, 2003; Kim, 2002; Shi-xu, 2009). Especially, although Asian researchers recognize that Western discourse is not suitable for explaining non-Western communicative contexts and practices, they follow it in order to be recognized in international academia. As non-Western researchers continued to criticize this issue, Asian communication studies began in the late 1980s (Shi-xu, 2009). Asian communication studies aim to examine how Asian traditional cultures such as a way of thinking, norms, and values affect communication practices and
skills. These studies are wary of overgeneralizing it because there are various cultural characteristics within Asia; at the same time, however, they explained that it is necessary to study to understand the commonalities of Asian ways of thinking and communicate behaviors to those of each culture (Chen and Starosta, 2003; Dissanayake, 2003).

In these regards, this dissertation aims to examine communicative planning theory and practices through the lens of Asian communities, with a specific emphasis on three East Asian countries: China, South Korea, and Japan. While acknowledging that these countries are frequently overrepresented in research on Asians or Asian Americans (Zhou, 2021), this dissertation narrows its scope to these three countries for two primary reasons. First, the broad classification of ‘Asians’ obscures the distinct social and cultural attributes inherent to each region, through the amalgamation of characteristics from countries within the Asian continent or immigrants from these countries into a single category (Byline, 2022; Zhou, 2021). Since Asians have been marginalized in both communicative planning and, more broadly, the field of planning theory in general (Lee et al. 2021), a broader category may be more appropriate to call attention to Asian communities in the field of planning. However, since cultural characteristics are a key factor in this research, only three countries that have similar cultural foundations due to geographical proximity and historical interconnections are included in this dissertation.

Secondly, the primary author (I)’s positionality significantly influences the selection of the specific countries for this dissertation, amidst the diverse nations within
the Asian continent. I am Korean, my parents are both Korean, and I have spent most of my time in South Korea; therefore, Korean culture has had the greatest influence on my identity, philosophy, values, and way of thinking. In spite of relocating to the United States for academic purposes, I am still more familiar with the East Asian context linguistically, historically, socially, and culturally. I acknowledge that my positionality has, to a certain extent, shaped the research interests and consequently, the research design of this dissertation. Simultaneously, my knowledge of the contexts of East Asia was instrumental in conducting the case study focused on South Korea, and also facilitated the recruitment of East Asian interviewees for the case study in Oregon.

This dissertation consists of a total of three essays. The first essay reviews academic discussions on communicative planning, centering on East Asia. This essay aims not only to raise questions about the social belief that East Asian countries may not be suitable for adopting a communicative planning model because they are less democratic or have recently introduced democracy but also to identify gaps in existing studies. Subsequently, the remaining two essays seek to fill two critical research gaps discovered through the first essay: (1) a scarcity of research on micro-practices of the communicative planning process in East Asian countries, and (2) a lack of studies that shed light on the perspectives of East Asian communities in a setting where people from diverse backgrounds can participate in the planning process. Specifically, the second essay shows how the communicative planning process works in East Asian countries using the example of South Korea. The final essay studies what elements make East
Asian Americans challenging to engage in the communicative planning process, using the example of the neighborhood associations in Portland, Oregon.

In more detailed, the first essay, entitled “Communicative Planning in East Asia: A Systematic Literature Review”, conducts a systematic literature review to look at the situated communicative planning practices in East Asian countries. This essay analyzes three points: (1) how communicative planning has been implemented in three East Asian countries, South Korea, China, and Japan, (2) what the obstacles are in this process, and (3) how it has or should be transformed into a new model to fit the political, social, and cultural context of East Asia. For the systematic literature review, this essay collects the peer-reviewed journal articles published in English among studies on communicative planning theory and practices in East Asia, published between January 1, 2000, and December 31, 2023. Using the Web of Science as a data source, this essay reviews a total of 119 papers, 68 papers targeting China, 29 papers in Japan, and 22 papers in Korea, respectively. Through the literature review, this essay escapes from the conventional wisdom that communicative planning is not well suited to non-Western countries and reveals how the communicative planning model could be developed in East Asia.

The second essay, entitled “The Impacts of Facework on Communicative Planning: A Case Study on Land-Use Conflict in Seoul, South Korea”, highlights the role of emotion, which has been undervalued in the planning field. In particular, facework, one of the emotional matters in face-to-face interaction, plays an important role in social
relationships in East Asia. Through a case study on the land-use conflict on the site of Gongjin Elementary School in Seoul, Korea, this essay examines how the communicative planning process works in the cultural context of East Asia, which values facework. The case, this study scrutinizes, is the conflict that emerged between two groups: those advocating for the establishment of a new special school for students with disabilities, and those favoring the construction of a hospital for traditional Korean medicine. Using qualitative content analysis with official reports, news articles, and video recordings of the community forum, this essay finds that facework not only complicates the attainment of the ideal conditions of communicative planning, such as rationality and sincerity; at the same time, however, it facilitates a cooperative attitude among participants.

The final essay, entitled “Racial Disparity in Neighborhood Associations: From the Perspective of East Asian Portlaners”, explores the racial disparity of neighborhood associations from the perspective of East Asians in Portland, Oregon. This study, especially, seeks to answer two research questions: (1) How many East Asian Portlaners are actively involved in neighborhood associations? (2) What factors influence their participation or non-participation? Using the mixed method approach, this study shows that East Asian Portlaners are underrepresented in neighborhood associations, even though Asians are the second most populous racial group in Portland. Additionally, this essay identifies a significant barrier to initial participation: the perceived mismatch between the characteristics of neighborhood associations and those of Asian Portlaners, such as language, culture, socioeconomic factors, and values. The initial exclusion from
neighborhood associations not only precludes individuals from achieving the positive benefits, such as self-efficacy and social bonds that can be derived from the experiences in community engagement activities, but it also fortifies neighborhood associations to be more favor to the interests and needs of the participants who currently actively engaged in, thereby perpetuating the exclusion of East Asian Portlanders.

The last chapter of this dissertation summarizes the findings, implications, and limitations of the three essays. In addition, it emphasizes the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions of this dissertation and reflects on its limitations and the issues during the research process. Finally, this chapter concludes with suggestions for further research needed to develop communicative planning theory and practices.
References


Chapter 2. Communicative Planning in East Asia: A Systematic Literature Review

Introduction

The paradigm of planning models changes under the influence of the development of philosophical and social theory and changes in social, political, and material structures of the world (Watson, 2016). Under the strong influence of enlightenment, positivism, instrumental rationality, and the quantitative turn in the 1960s, planning theorists and practitioners believed that human beings can control and improve people’s lives using objective knowledge and quantifiable analysis with rigorous theoretical and scientific foundations (Jun, 2007; Tylor, 1998, pp. 64-65, 74). Therefore, a top-down approach by professionals was preferred over planning models with public engagement. In the 1990s, some scholars criticized the centralized rational-comprehensive planning based on Simon’s ‘principle of bounded rationality (1957)’ and the value-ladenness of public planning (Brooks, 2002, pp. 62-67); therefore, communicative planning was proposed, which emphasizes the role of public participation in the planning process (see Forester, 1994; Healey, 1997; Innes and Booher, 1999).

On the one hand, communicative planning is considered an innovative way to redistribute power among stakeholders and reflect diverse values in the decision-making process. On the other hand, previous studies point out that communicative planning theory seldom addresses the role of contexts in the planning process (Beauregard, 2020, p. 58; Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000; Hytönen, 2016; Mannberg and Wihlborg, 2008;
Watson, 2008). Indeed, some evidence shows that communicative planning may work well only in the Anglo-American cultural and institutional contexts (Hytönen, 2016; Hong, 2004). For example, Hytönen (2016) claims that since Finland has a different institutional context from the Anglo-American legal culture and the public has strong trust in the public sector and institutions, they do not need to get the trust in planning legitimacy from dialogue with community members in the planning process. Similarly, Hong (2004) claims that since Hong Kong has different democratic structures from Western countries, they have difficulty in implementing communicative planning.

In particular, in East Asian countries including China, Japan, and South Korea (hereafter Korea), the interest in public participation and deliberative democracy has increased; however, the applicability of communicative planning is controversial because the political, social, cultural, and institutional structures are different from those in the Western countries (ANSA-EAP, 2021; He and Breen, 2021; Yang, 2009). Additionally, many research on communication, a key element of communicative planning, have demonstrated that Asian traditional cultures such as ways of thinking, norms, and values, which are different from those in the West, have a significant impact on their communication practices and skills (Chen and Starosta, 2003; Dissanayake, 2003; Kim, 2002; Shi-Xu, 2009). But, does this necessarily mean a theoretical limitation of communicative planning? Or, does this imply a new development in communicative planning theory suitable for the context of East Asian countries? To answer these
questions, a systematic review of how communicative planning has been implemented and developed in East Asian countries is needed.

Using a systematic literature review, this study looks at the situated communicative planning practices in East Asian countries. Since Asian countries consist of more than twenty countries with a wide geographical area (Chen and Philip, 2008; Lee et al., 2021), this review only focuses on three East Asia countries, China, Japan, and Korea, which have similar social and cultural foundations such as Confucianism. Unlike previous discussions, this study does not assume that communicative planning is not suitable for East Asia countries; rather, this review synthesizes how the communicative planning models are developed and work in East Asian countries and suggests directions for developing communicative planning theory for new contexts.

**Method and Data**

This study uses a systematic literature review to examine how communicative planning theory is studied in East Asian communities and how their situated planning processes differ from those in the Western context. A systematic literature review is a process of evaluating and synthesizing existing related studies on a specific research question and identifying areas of uncertainty that have not been studied, with a scientific approach (Petticrew and Roberts, 2006). This approach aims to minimize selection bias issues that may arise during the review process and to conduct a review with high validity, reliability, and transparency. Therefore, it requires clearly stated inclusion and
exclusion criteria for selecting studies to be included in the review (Booth et al., 2016). A systematic literature review not only helps develop theoretical discussions but also provides scientific evidence and rigorous information to support policymakers’ decision-making and practices (Petticrew, 2006). Xiao and Watson (2017), particularly, pointed out that there are few rigorous literature reviews in the planning field and suggested that the Journal of Planning Literature recommend that an author who submits a paper to the journal document their review protocols. To conduct a reliable and repeatable review, this study follows the guidance on systematic literature review in the planning field that Xiao and Watson (2017) proposed.

This study focuses solely on peer-reviewed journal articles published in English among studies on communicative planning theory and practices in the context of the East Asian community. Additionally, considering that communicative planning began to attract attention in the early 2000s, only studies published between January 1, 2000, and June 30, 2023 are included in this review. Many systematic literature reviews included the rank of academic journals (Hartt et al., 2023), or citations (Bruijin and Gerrits, 2018) as inclusion criteria to evaluate the quality of the research. Among various methods, this study uses the 2022 Scimago Journal Rank (SJR) as a proxy to assess the quality of journal articles. Since Asians have not historically received attention in mainstream planning academia (Lee et al. 2021), too many studies may be excluded if the proxy for assessment of the quality of each paper is used as screening criteria. The SJR, which this review uses, is one of the quantitative methods to evaluate the ranking of journals by the
field of study. The ranking is determined using an indicator that represents the ratio of the average annual number of weighted citations to the total number of papers published over the past three years based on the Scopus database. In particular, it uses a weighted citation that takes into account not only how many a publication has been cited, but also the reputation of the journal from which the publication was cited (Scimago Lab, 2013).

For the first round of searching the relevant studies, this review targets papers published in academic journals ranked Q1 in the category of the Social Sciences - Urban Studies at Scimago Journal Rank (SJR) in 2022. Due to significant differences in the size of international scholars\(^1\), however, there was a severe imbalance in the number of publications by country. As a result of the first round of study search, out of a total of 87 related studies, 69 papers focused on China, 10 papers on Korea, and 8 papers on Japan, respectively. These numbers show the current state of research on communicative planning in East Asia; however, the disproportionate distribution of the number of publications across three countries may result in overrepresentation of the institutional, social, and cultural characteristics of a certain country in the literature review. To mitigate this bias, an additional round of literature searches was conducted, specifically focusing on papers on Korea or Japan. This study, particularly, used the same search

\(^{1}\) Looking at the number of international students studying in the United States as a proxy variable, Chinese students accounted for the largest portion of international students with 289,526, while Korean students numbered 43,847 and Japanese students numbered 16,054, in the 2022-2023 academic year (Korhonen, 2023).
terms employed for the first round but searched the papers published in academic journals that ranked Q1 in the category of the Social Sciences - Geography, Planning, and Development at SJR in 2022.

This study used three main data sources: (1) published literature from the Web of Science, (2) literature located from the reference list of relevant publications, and (3) papers citing reviewed literature using Google Scholar. Searching terms, this study applies consists of two parts: communicative planning and East Asian community. This study used the search query “communicative planning” AND “East Asian community”, considering various terms representing communicative planning and each country’s name that makes up East Asia. Table 1.1 shows search terms this study employed for collecting the literature. This study began with selecting studies that include a combination of search terms in the title and meet the inclusion criteria, reviewing the searched papers to create a list of literature, and then making a complete list of literature through backward and forward searching.
Table 1.1 Search Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Synonym (OR)</th>
<th>Search Terms</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicative planning</td>
<td>public participation</td>
<td>TS=(public participation) OR TS=(community participation) OR TS=(citizen participation) OR TS=(local participation) OR</td>
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<td>stakeholder engagement</td>
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<td>communicative planning</td>
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<td>collaborative governance</td>
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<td>argumentative planning</td>
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<td>deliberative planning</td>
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<td>planning through debate</td>
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<td>neighborhood association</td>
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<td>machizukuri</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Asian</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>TS=(Asia) OR TS=(Asian) OR TS=(China) OR TS=(Chinese) OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Korea</td>
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In the first round of searches, this study collected 395 articles from the Web of Science without duplicates. Then, the author scanned the titles of each of the papers for relevance to the research question, which led to the exclusion of 198 studies for non-relevance. And, the abstracts of the 197 relevant publications are scanned to determine further relevance, then excluding 79 studies for non-relevance. After excluding 31 studies as a result of reviewing the full text of the papers, a total of 87 articles were selected for the final review. In the second round of literature searches, a total of 247 non-duplicated papers were gathered from the Web of Science. As in the first round, the author scanned the titles, abstracts, and full texts of potentially relevant papers; as a result, a total of 32 papers were included in the review. In addition to the papers retrieved in these two rounds, a total of 119 papers were employed for the systematic literature review (see Figure 1.1). And then, this study extracted data from the reviewed papers using the standard protocol. Specifically, this study gathered the variables including the purpose of the study, location, participants in the communicative planning process, level of participation, impacts of participation on actual planning outcomes, and contextual factors that make discrepancies between communicative planning theory and practices.
Figure 1.1 Flowchart of the Systematic Literature Search and Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Round</th>
<th>Removal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Records identified through database searching</td>
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Synthesis of the results
n = 110
Findings

General Trend

Table 1.2 shows the number of publications by year and country. Interestingly, even though this review searched for papers published after January 1, 2000, there were no publications on communicative planning in the context of East Asia before 2007. The first two papers were published in 2007, and a few papers were published each year for the next several years, but the number was not large. However, it is noteworthy that the volume of publications has gradually increased with less than 3 papers being published annually in the late 2000s, more than 5 papers being published per year in the 2010s, and more than 15 papers per year within the first three years of the current decade. It shows that communicative planning theory was proposed in the 1990s and early 2000s in Western countries, but it took a relatively long time to take into account the discussion on community participation. due to the institutional, cultural, political, and social contexts (Jang et al., 2022; Yingjie et al., 2013; Yoshida, 2007).

Despite including “Asian,” “Chinese,” “Korean,” and “Japanese” as search terms, there were few studies targeting Asian immigrants. Only Hou and Kinoshita (2007), who studied participatory planning in districts where diverse individuals and groups coexist, focused on cases not only in Japan but also in Seattle, USA. Regardless of the author’s intention, this review was limited to papers that studied the cases of China, Korea, and Japan. Among the three countries targeted in this review, Japan was the first to begin
Table 1.2 The Number of Publications by Year, Country

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research on communicative planning, and studies targeting Japan have been published steadily until recently. Meanwhile, research on communicative planning in the context of China began in the 2010s. Notably, however, the volume of research is increasing faster than in the other two countries, with more than 10 studies being published per year in the 2020s. Considering that studies targeting China were included only in the first round of
searches, the actual number of publications may be higher than this. Lastly, the number of publications targeting Korea was the lowest among the three countries. The first study was published in 2015, and only 10 papers were published until 2020. However, since more than 5 papers were published per year in the 2020s, it is expected that there will be more research on communicative planning targeting Korea in the near future.

The selected papers were published in a total of 34 academic journals (see Table 1.3). The journal *Cities* was the most frequented platform for publication (26), followed by *Habitat International* (16), *Sustainability* (11), *Urban Studies* (9), *Journal of Urban Affairs* (8), *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (5), and *Urban Affairs Review* (5). It shows that non-western scholars in the planning field who have conducted research on non-western regions tend to choose academic journals that are more friendly to global research rather than topics when publishing the papers. Indeed, the aims and scope of the journals stated the receptiveness to research targeting diverse regions across the globe. For instance, “The primary aims of the journal *Cities* are to analyze and assess past and present urban development and management [...] in both the developed and the developing world”, “Its *Habitat International* main focus is on urbanization in its broadest sense in the developing world”, “We *Urban Studies* welcome all original submissions that further our understanding of the urban condition and the rapid changes taking place in cities and regions across the globe”, and “the journal *Journal of Urban Affairs* provides a multidisciplinary perspective on issues of relevance to both scholars and practitioners, including [...] Global and comparative urban research.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
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<td>Journal of Urban Technology</td>
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<td>Progress in Disaster Science</td>
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<td>Urban Geography</td>
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Most studies argue that since communicative planning was proposed by Western scholars, this model may not be ideally applicable in the targeted areas, which are non-Western countries. As the further responses from this claim, 61 papers introduce alternative models of communicative planning that align better with the specific context of a particular country or project. Meanwhile, 28 papers look at how to motivate the public to engage in the communicative planning process. Similarly, 17 studies explore institutional, cultural, and social contexts in which communicative planning challenges to implement and suggest directions to take at the national and societal levels. In addition, 8 studies address the outcomes that can be obtained by applying a communicative planning process, such as an increase in public satisfaction with the city or a project (Baek et al., 2021; Cheng et al., 2021; Xu and Zhu, 2021), neighborhood trust (Baek et al., 2021), subjective well-being (Tiefenbach and Holdgruen, 2015), environmental awareness (Noda et al., 2020), and cultural sustainability (Li et al., 2021).
**History of Communicative Planning in East Asia**

Several papers prove that, traditionally, public participation in the planning processes existed in East Asian countries. Park and Lee (2016) introduced Songgye, which is one of the Korean traditional community organizations. Songgye is an organization established about 300 years ago for forest management, and its activities were mainly carried out by residents. Afterward, Songgye was transformed into an organization called Sanlimyges; however, it is an activity of landowners and residents under the government’s support and supervision. Japan also traditionally had strong and effective local initiatives and voluntary groups, such as Jichikai and Chonaikai (Kusakabe, 2013; Okubo, 2016; Taniguchi and Marshall, 2016). In collaboration with the government, they are responsible for cleaning up neighborhoods and operating activities to cultivate social relationships in the community. Li et al. (2012) stated that the principle of mass participation, the principle of the Chinese government and the Chinese Communist Party, is oriented toward public participation. They explained that it requires people to assist with the government’s tasks, while the international concept of public participation focuses on an individual’s right to engage in decision-making; nonetheless, the conceptual differences rarely lead to practical differences because the Chinese government seeks to represent the opinions and needs of the people (Li et al., 2012).

As modern society pursued industrialization and economic growth, however, East Asia countries’ attention to public engagement decreased in general. There are differences in details by country and specific region in a country; however, many studies
commonly noted that the government-led decision-making process made public participation not receive attention in the planning field. For example, Korea adopted a centralized and government-led political system for rapid industrialization and economic development until the 1980s (Kim, 2016; Kim, 2017; Kim, 2021). Since urban planning during this period solely focused on building infrastructure for economic growth by the government, a top-down strategy was employed, wherein the national government, or planners appointed by the government had substantial authority in the planning process (Kim, 2017; Shin and Yang, 2022). Similarly, Shan and Yai (2011) stated that China’s state-planned economy led to a decrease in the attention to public participation and the ability of the public to express their opinions with a strong belief in the power of centralized government. This is because, under the planned economic system, public interests tend to be unilaterally defined or manipulated by the state rather than individuals’ actual interests (Hu et al., 2013). In addition to the political context, since it is more important for individuals to fulfill their role as members of the household or nation in a collectivist society, collective interests take priority over individual interests in China, which leads to little opportunity for individuals to be involved in the decision-making process (Hu et al., 2013; Shan and Yai, 2011).

Recently, the importance of public engagement in the planning process has been emphasized in all three countries due to democratization (Jang and Gim, 2022; Kim, 2017; Kim, 2021), diversification (Deng et al., 2015; Morrison and Xian, 2016; Wang and Wang, 2020; Yuan et al., 2021), and neoliberalization (Cai and He, 2022; Kochan,
2021; Wang and Clarke, 2021; Xu and Lin, 2019; Yip, 2019). It is noteworthy that the interest in community engagement in Japan has increased during the response to and recovery from disasters such as the Kobe Earthquake of 1995 and the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami of 2011 (Aoki, 2018; de Oliveira et al., 2016; Ngar-yin et al., 2020; Okada, 2018; Otsuyama and Shaw, 2021; Tanaka et al., 2009; Taniguchi and Marshall, 2016; Yoshida, 2007; Zhang et al., 2015). These studies not only conducted a content analysis with news and reports (Ngar-yin et al., 2020; Yoshida, 2007), interviewed key informants (Aoki, 2018; de Oliveira et al., 2016; Otsuyama and Shaw, 2021), but also organized or directly participated in a communicative planning process themselves in the site areas (Okada, 2018; Tanaka et al., 2009; Zhang et al., 2015).

Despite an increase in awareness of community participation in the planning process, communicative planning is still difficult to realize in East Asia due to the legacy of centralized government economic development and top-down planning approach (Li et al., 2021; Okubo, 2016; Tanaka et al., 2009), and an increase in social inequity (Hommerich, 2015). For instance, Okubo (2016) states that “Abenomics”, which was an economic policy implemented by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2012, made public participation undervalued, while state-led urban development projects were prioritized. Li et al. (2021), studying the communicative planning process in China’s urban heritage management, showed that the power of community members is limited because the government-led top-down decision-making structure is still strong. Cao (2022) further explained that community participation is a strategy for the government to
get the public to support and cooperate with their urban redevelopment. In addition to the political aspect, Hommerich (2015) proved that Japanese people have increased interest in community engagement, but social bonds have decreased due to economic polarization in society, which discourages people from participating in community activities.

To sum up, contrary to the existing belief that a communicative planning model may not be suitable for East Asian countries due to their relatively short history of democratization, the reviewed papers showed several channels for community engagement in planning practices that each country has had. Rather, in modern society, the adoption of a centralized political system, aimed at facilitating rapid industrialization and efficient economic growth, has resulted in the diminished significance of community participation. Consequently, several obstacles persist in the implementation of the communicative planning model. Nonetheless, numerous studies showed that in East Asian countries, the communicative planning model is not only being developed but also adapted in accordance with the unique context of each region.

*Communicative Planning Models in East Asia*

Contrary to concerns about communicative planning, studies targeting East Asian countries demonstrate that communicative planning is being implemented to some extent well even in non-western countries. Previous studies explain that public participation in the planning process is an increasingly emphasized element in all three countries. There
is a growing demand for democracy in the decision-making process, and at the same time, legal and institutional efforts are being made to require community participation in the planning process. This section reviewed the situated communicative planning practices in East Asian countries.

Similar to the Western countries, most of the participants of the cases in East Asian countries consist of the state (public), market (private), and society (citizens/community). However, some studies explained that new modes of governance should be proposed because of the uniqueness of their contexts (Haddad, 2010; Lin et al., 2015; Wang and Clarke, 2021). For example, Lin et al. (2015) introduced two additional modes of governance to explain the relationships among the state, market, and society in urban regeneration projects in China: centralized governance, decentralized governance, public-private governance, self-governance by market or civil society, public-collective-private governance, collective-private governance. These are an addition of two of the five modes of governance proposed in the West: the last two modes take into account the unique context of urban regeneration projects in China. Specifically, in the context of urban redevelopment in China, there is a unique actor in the third realm: a collective company, which is managed by residents’ representatives, but under the supervision of the Chinese Communist Party. Wang and Clarke (2021), similarly, proposed a new framework of governance, explaining that the existing framework (state-market-society) does not accurately capture the characteristics of actors and their relationships in China,
where private neighborhoods associations have begun to develop but the power of the
national state is still dominated.

For indicating community, the studies used a variety of words including
(ordinary) citizen (18), (local) community (26), (general, lay) public (16), (local)
residents (53), society (3), and villagers (4), and these terms were used interchangeably
within one study². Looking at the remark by Lin et al. (2015) that “‘society’ is a more
suitable term to indicate the collective companies, formal and informal organizations,
experts and individual households involved in the regeneration of [deprived
neighborhoods] (p. 1777)”, all these terms refer to actors as distinct from the state and
market in general. Some studies focused only on subcategories of communities, such as
homeowners’ associations (13), neighborhood associations (8), landowners (4), disaster
victims (1), or residents in the apartment complex (1). In the case of China, research
interest in homeowners’ associations was high. This is because, as the market-oriented
reform that changed state-oriented collectivism to private housing occurred in the 1990s,
community participation among homeowners who became conscious of property rights
increased (Cai et al., 2021; Fu and Lin, 2014; Guan and Liu, 2021; Yip, 2020; Wang,
2014; Zhang et al., 2019; Zhou, 2014; Zhu and Yushu, 2015, 2022). Meanwhile, since

² It might result from the fact that all three countries follow Jus sanguinis, in which the
nationality of a person is determined by that of one or both of parents and the share of
foreigners is relatively low. In other words, sensitivity to using these terms is lower than
in Western countries, especially the United States.
high-rise apartment complexes are the main residential types in Korea, Kim and Jang (2017) operationalized residents living in the same apartment as a neighborhood and examined their community engagement.

Notably, many papers emphasize the role of the government or experts in the communicative planning process. For example, Liu et al. (2021) and Liu and Xu (2018) highlighted that China’s neighborhood governance requires the hierarchical role of public authorities to initiate and enhance horizontal collaboration. In the same vein, Zhou (2014) introduced a unique form of collaboration in an urban redevelopment project in Guangzhou, China, in which the local government’s leadership played a crucial role in progressing the project rather than equal and contractual relationships among participants. Zhou (2014), particularly, noted that the project would not have been started without the government’s pivotal role in the collaborative process. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2019) explain that a new framework beyond the concept of state-society dichotomy is necessary to understand the state’s role in community engagement. They took the example of the Community Supervisory Committee (CSCs), a group of residents elected with government sponsorship to supervise communities’ self-governance organizations in Hangzhou, China. In particular, they concluded that CSCs could intervene on agendas that are not politically sensitive to promote organizations’ accountability (Zhang et al., 2019). Shin and Lee (2021), who focus on community participation in energy policy deliberation in Korea, also proved that the results of the deliberation can vary depending on the signals of the highest-level government. Specifically, they claimed that
government leaders need to build trust with participants through official and direct signals that the recommendations from the deliberation will be reflected in real policy, to achieve good results from deliberative activities (Shin and Lee, 2021).

Few studies show that experts’ use of comprehensible language increases the effectiveness of the communicative planning process (Lee et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2022); however, many studies emphasize the importance of experts or specialized knowledge (de Oliveria and Paleo, 2016; Nakamura, 2008; Park and Lee, 2016; Takao, 2016; Uwasu et al., 2020; Xiao and Lu, 2022; Zheng and Liu, 2018). Takao (2016) notes the importance of ‘expert citizens’ who play a role as a bridge between expertise and lay people in environmental governance in Japan. Takao (2016) added that since lay people do not have enough time and capacity to acquire professional knowledge, mediation and facilitation of expert citizens are necessary to balance the power of experts and lay people in the public-engaged decision-making process. The tendency to overly value professional knowledge, in particular, is one major factor that hindered the implementation of communicative planning in East Asia countries. For example, despite Japan's emphasis on the value of communicative planning, there is still a tendency to emphasize the opinions of experts rather than local knowledge in decision-making, preventing effective public engagement (Nakamura, 2008; Oliberia and Paleo, 2016).

Similarly, Park and Lee (2016), who focus on public participation in decision-making for forest management in Korea, found that half of the participants are university professors with relevant expertise, and only 8% of them are residents.
Due to the tendency to emphasize the role of experts or authorities in the communicative planning process, previous studies have also presented the professional roles of planners (Kim and Kang, 2020; Wang and Wang, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). For example, a community-based adaptation planning model in Korea (Kim and Kang, 2020) places great value on local knowledge and consensus of residents and planners; however, the key role of planners in the proposed model is to investigate, discover, and understand local conditions as a professional researcher, not to facilitator or moderate deliberation between various stakeholders. Similarly, Wang and Wang (2020) argue that planners in planning projects in rural China should strive to produce planning outcomes that reflect the dynamics of the local community, but still emphasize their professional knowledge and role as a bridge who can reflect local knowledge into the decision-making process rather than facilitating or moderating the communication itself. Lastly, Zhang et al. (2020), which looks at the communicative planning process in China, show that planners have difficulty performing their roles as facilitators, moderators, and mediators. Rather, planners intervene in communicative planning either as advocates who educate people with specific viewpoints or as activists who directly claim their own opinions (Zhang et al., 2020). Wang (2014) also claimed that community participation through homeowners' associations is effective in resolving issues involving property management, but that resolving developer-related issues still requires legal and political resources.

In the cases reviewed in the papers, community participation was mainly about contributing to the decision-making process (53), followed by activism/collective actions.
(14) and organizing community activities in neighborhood associations (13). In addition, some studies have focused on various activities such as informing (7), public hearings (6), online discussion (4), and conflict resolution (2). Specifically, in the case of activities of neighborhood associations, Van Houwelingen (2012) explained that the neighborhood associations in Hiroshima have organized neighborhood people’s clubs, children’s groups, neighborhood beautification groups, sports clubs, crime prevention groups, disaster prevention groups, traffic safety groups, public health and sanitation groups, culture clubs, welfare groups, and women’s groups. More than half of the papers focused on the decision-making process based on two-way conversations, but studies focused on one-way communication led by the government or planners (e.g. public hearing, informing) or by the public (e.g. activism, collective actions, online discussion) were searched. There are no clear criteria for which activities can be considered the spectrum of communicative planning; nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the studies on activism, collective actions, or NIMBY were included in the review despite not including them as search terms. This will not be discussed in detail in this paper because it is beyond the scope of this study; however, further research is needed on how to conceptualize communicative planning according to cultural contexts.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This paper conducted a systematic literature review on communicative planning in the context of three East Asian countries: China, South Korea, and Japan. This review
found that all three countries have historically applied community engagement in the planning process. Moreover, communicative planning models have been developed that fit the political, social, and cultural context of each country. It contributes to providing a partial answer to the studies that questioned the applicability of the communicative planning models in non-western countries. Lastly, this section suggests future research on communicative planning in the context of East Asia.

First of all, it is worth paying attention to the development of ICT in East Asia countries. This is because new technology and platforms can provide an opportunity for the public, who are concerned about the power of the state, to more comfortably participate in decision-making. Indeed, recent research on communicative planning models in East Asian countries has begun to draw attention to a new topic: smart cities and new media. Some researchers expect smart cities to be a new venue for experiments with communicative planning models (Jang and Gim, 2022; Park and Fujii, 2022; Xu and Zhu, 2021), and others claim social media and digital technologies allow East Asian countries to implement communicative planning models (Deng et al., 2015; Hijikata et al., 2010; Li et al., 2020; Lin, 2013; Lin, 2022; Wang et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2018). For example, Jang and Gim (2022) use the case of Korea, a country with significantly advanced ICT infrastructure, to highlight a key point in the field of smart cities. They argue that it is crucial to strengthen an urban governance model that encourages community members to participate as collaborators in decision-making processes. In the same vein, Park and Fujii (2022) present an example of living labs in Korea and
introduce that smart cities are a place where the goals of living labs can be realized, and
conversely, living labs are a platform that can reduce the digital divide and make smart
cities more inclusive. Similarly, through a case study of Qingdao City, China's first
national smart city, Xu and Zhu (2021) verify that, unlike traditional urban development
models in China, smart cities can promote public participation in decision-making, which
further increases residents' satisfaction with the city.

In addition, some studies note that new media helps develop new types of
communicative planning models by breaking down restrictions on physical participation
and making it easier to obtain information. (Deng et al, 2015; Li et al., 2020; Lin, 2022;
Wang et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2018). Li (2022) explains that in authoritarian contexts,
there was no channel for the public to effectively participate in the planning process
because the relationship between government, planners, and society was hierarchical;
however, the Internet and social media contribute to reorganizing power relations
between the parties so that communicative planning could be implemented in this
context. Deng et al. (2015) also point out that social media has made it possible for
various parties, including experts, citizens, and civic organizations, to engage in the
planning process in China, where the channels for public participation are very limited.
This is because online platforms allow people not only to overcome time and space
boundaries, unlike traditional on-site communicative planning processes but also to
access information in real-time.
Second, while East Asian countries have been considered relatively homogeneous, the diversity of the population has increased; therefore, further research on the inclusiveness of the communicative planning process is needed. Indeed, among the reviewed papers, a few studies focus on the inclusiveness of public participation, such as ethnic minorities/foreigners (Cho, 2021; Hou and Kinoshita, 2007; Maruyama et al., 2016; Nakamura, 2008; Umemoto and Igarashi, 2009), information-disadvantaged groups (Jang and Gim, 2022; Park and Fujii, 2022), and historically marginalized low-income households (Burakumin, Mizuuchi and Jeon, 2010). It is noteworthy that there is some research on the level of participation in the planning process according to ethnic groups in Korea and Japan, where the two countries have been considered ethnically homogeneous (Umemoto and Igarashi, 2009). Nonetheless, not only are there few studies on the under-engaged groups, but the problem of exclusion from public participation tends to worsen due to strong beliefs of “ethnic/racial nationalism.” Therefore, in addition to the research on the power imbalance between authoritarian governments and the public, further studies on power dynamics within the community are needed.
References


Chapter 3. The Impacts of Facework on Communicative Planning:
A Case Study on Land-Use Conflict in Seoul, South Korea

Introduction

The role of emotion has been underestimated in the field of planning even though it has an important influence on the planning processes (Baum, 2015; Ferreira, 2013; Hoch, 2006; Schwarz, 2000) because the Western Enlightenment culture, which many planners are based on, not controlling emotions are considered irrational and unruly (Baum, 2015). Nevertheless, some scholars demonstrate that emotion has a significant influence on the planning process. For example, Schwarz (2000) claims that individual emotional states affect decision-making by influencing cognitive processes and evaluative judgments. Even planners who are educated to exclude their emotions from decision-making and maintain instrumental rationality cannot completely control the influence of emotions in planning practices (Ferreira, 2013).

Emotion matters should be paid more attention to in the planning field because the opportunities for diverse people to intervene in the planning processes have increased. Specifically, communicative planning was proposed as a strategy to promote public engagement and redistribute power between public officials and communities. Furthermore, communicative planning emphasizes the role of communication for effective planning instead of instrumental rationality (Zhang et al., 2020) to achieve a process of discovering useful knowledge through the participation of people with diverse
backgrounds and mutual learning (Beauregard, 2020, pp. 53-60). Namely, in the planning process, not only scientific approaches but also human interaction, which is easily influenced by emotions, began to be used.

Unlike planning theory, studies on the relationship between emotion and deliberation have been conducted for a long time in political science. These studies conclude that emotions are not irrational and dangerous forces that must be controlled in deliberation, but a subject that should be considered to design a better public forum (Dowding, 2018; Neblo, 2020; Thompson and Hoggett, 2001). Scholars in conflict resolution also pay attention to the impacts of psychological factors on communication. Ting-Toomey especially highlights the effect of facework on conflict resolution (Ting-Toomey, 1997, 2005) considering Erving Goffman’s work on face theory (1967).

This study aims to examine how facework affects the communicative planning process, expanding on Ting-Toomey’s research on facework in conflict resolution. This study, especially, echoes Watson’s (2008) argument that planning theory has limitations in illuminating the ‘real world’ of planning practice, and draws attention to the discrepancy between communicative planning theory and practice in the real world. This study takes the land-use conflict at the site of Gongjin Elementary School, which is located in South Korea, for a case study. As facework highly affects all kinds of public relations practices in Korea (Kim and Yang, 2011; Lim and Choi, 1996), the land-use
conflict in South Korea, where face concerns play a significant role in all human interactions, can contribute to the expansion of communicative planning theory.

Literature Review

Assumption of Communicative Planning

Communicative planning theory has been developed by various scholars (e.g. Forester, 1994; Healey, 1997; Innes and Booher, 1999), but they are commonly based on the communicative action theory which Jürgen Habermas introduces. Their theoretical foundation is an ‘ideal speech situation’ that satisfies the conditions to test the validity of claims and achieve communicative rationality through communicative action. An ideal speech situation can occur when all participants in argumentation are under the following rules (Habermas, 1995):

1. Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse;
2. Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatever;
3. Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatever into the discourse;
4. Everyone is allowed to express their attitudes, desires, and needs without any hesitation;
5. No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising his rights.

Habermas' communicative action theory provided important insight into communicative planning theory; however, some planning scholars criticize the unrealistic assumption. Since Habermas came up with the communicative action theory by
developing the public sphere of the bourgeois, he believes that communication actions could take place in everyday life outside the system, the formal economy, and the lifeworld. In reality, however, the situatedness and embeddedness of human life in history, customs, and tradition make it difficult to achieve the ideal speech situation (Huxley, 2000). Even, Forester started from Habermas’ theory, but suggests a practical approach that more reflects the lived experiences of planners rather than its theoretical foundation (Forester, 1999, p.8 as cited in Wagenaar, 2002).

In particular, some studies point out Habermas’ assumption that emotions should be suppressed through reason through norms and rules for reasonable deliberations as a condition for reaching a rational agreement (Hoggett and Thompson, 2002). From his perspective, emotional dynamics can make communication distorted, which is harmful to deliberation (Thompson and Hoggett, 2001). In face-to-face interaction, in reality, people cannot be free from emotion (Dryzek, 2000; Lee and Kim, 2014) as well as emotions do not only harm deliberation (Lee and Kim, 2014; Neblo, 2020). Indeed, Kulözü (2016) demonstrated that various socio-psychological dimensions, including emotional dynamics, have an impact on communicative planning practices. Similarly, Neblo (2020) explains the roles of emotion in deliberation. Emotions function as the background for deliberation and motivation to participate. Emotions also can be inputs and outputs of deliberation, or conditions that help produce planning outcomes and implement them (Neblo, 2020). In addition, people sometimes give temporary lip service even if they have different opinions, rather than expressing theirs candidly to save their own or the other
parties’ faces (Goffman, 1967, p.11). Therefore, it is necessary to research the impacts of emotions on communicative planning practices.

**Facework in Communication**

The concept of face has a significant role in emotional dynamics in face-to-face interactions (Goffman, 1967, p.5). The term ‘face’ indicates a self-image in which an individual presents oneself as a being with positive social value to be recognized by others. People do facework to maintain their face or to give a face to others. For example, we try to use language carefully and respond appropriately to the other party’s actions when we want to make a good impression on the others (Samovar et al., 2009, pp. 217-218). Not only are people concerned about their faces, but also the faces of others, and they choose social strategies in the context of each social encounter (Goffman, 1967, p.6). It means that a person may temporarily and strategically agree with other parties’ opinions to save their face, even if it contradicts their candid feelings, or even try to avoid this situation itself (Ibid, p.11, 15-18). Since people tend to maintain face in all types of human interactions, people may not express their honest attitudes, desires, and needs.

Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998) argue that facework exists universally in all countries, but how to enact facework or the meaning of face differs depending on the culture. People in individualistic societies tend to enact self-oriented facework, while people in collectivist societies tend to do other-oriented facework. For instance, in the
United States, which is an individualistic society, people try to increase the credibility of their self-image through direct communication because it is important to keep their face (Gudykunst and Nishida, 1994). Japanese, however, tend to think that they lose face if they negatively affect members of an in-group or are negatively evaluated by them (Ibid).

Similarly, Lim and Choi (1996) pointed out that there are differences between the concept of face in Korean and Western society. The concept of face in Korea is more related to social position, rather than self-image. And, since society unilaterally imposes one’s face in the context of Korea, people try to save their face by behaving following social desirability. Lastly, the concept of face in Korea is often evaluated based on dichotomous criteria, consisting of saving or losing (Ibid).

In terms of the approaches to conflicts, people in collectivist cultures tend to maintain a mutual face and the other’s face by avoiding conflicts. In an individualistic society, on the other hand, they want to protect the self-face by resolving conflicts from a solution-oriented perspective (Ting-Toomey and Kurogi, 1998). It implies that the cultural differences in the concept of the face may influence the strategies the participants use in communicative planning practices. Indeed, Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) introduce the Face-Negotiation Model developing the dual concern model by replacing the two axes with self-face concern and other-face concern and adding three conflict management styles to the existing approaches. Based on the eight conflict management styles, Ting-Toomey (2005) compares the preferences for the approaches between individualistic and collectivistic cultures. She claims that individualist societies favor dominating,
competing, emotional expression, and passive-aggressive styles because they view the self as an independent individual and are more concerned with protecting the self-face. In the collectivist culture, however, people mainly use compromising, integrating, third-party help, and avoiding styles to deal with conflicts because they construct the self through the relationships with other people and place value on the maintenance of both mutual face and other-face (Ting-Toomey, 2005 as cited by Eko and Putranto, 2021).

In summary, because facework can affect all social encounters, it can also play a significant role in the communicative planning process, which is based on face-to-face communication. In a country with a Confucian and collectivist culture like South Korea, one of the main goals of conflict resolution or negotiation is to build long-term social relationships and keep harmony (Earley, 1997). Namely, they may be very concerned not only with maintaining their face but also with saving the face of the other parties in the communicative planning process. Furthermore, in the context of Korea, personal feelings (ki-bun) and face reading (nun-chi) play a crucial role in social interaction, which sometimes leads to irrational, illogical, and unpredictable arguments (Tong, 1991 as cited by Kim and Yang, 2011). Therefore, the micro-practices of the communicative planning process in the context of South Korea allow us to look at how various types of emotional dynamics have an impact on participants’ argumentation, behaviors, strategies, or the process of reaching consensus in the end.
Case Study: Land-Use Conflict in Gangseo District, Seoul, South Korea

Study Area

This study focuses on the land-use conflict on the site of Gongjin Elementary School, which is located in Gangseo District, Seoul, South Korea (Figure 2.1). As of 2017, when this land-use conflict occurred, Gangseo District was one of the districts where the number of special schools was insufficient compared to that of students who needed special education. Even adding up the number of public schools offering special education (but, non-special schools), the opportunities for special education were not enough to meet the needs of students with disabilities. There was only one special school for students with developmental disabilities in Gangseo District with a capacity of around 100; since, however, there were a total of 645 people with disabilities who needed schools in Gangseo District, many of them needed to attend to special schools far from their homes or to gave up the special education and went to schools which have not provided special education. As a result, only 12.7% of students with disabilities in Gangseo District were able to attend special schools close to their houses, even though Korea legally guarantees public education as a basic right (Jung and Park, 2017).

In this background, the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (Office of Education) planned to establish a new special school for students with developmental disabilities (special school) in Gangseo District. Specifically, they proposed to construct a new special school on the site of the Gongjin Elementary School because the school was moved to a different area because of the lack of students. After announcing their plan to
the public in November 2013, however, a land-use conflict occurred between the residents of an adjacent area (residents) and those who wanted to establish a special school because of a negative perception of a special school and people with disabilities (Kim and Park, 2018). Therefore, the Office of Education decided to stop proceeding with the implementation of the original plan and tried to find an alternative site for two years. This is because they wanted to minimize the conflicts over the establishment of a special school and the project to go on time (Office of Education, 2019).

Figure 2.1 Location of Gangseo District, Seoul, South Korea
While the Office of Education was looking for an alternative site, the South Korean Legislative Election\(^3\) was held on 13 April 2016. In this election, Sung-Tae Kim, who was a candidate for a regional representative in Gangseo District, used this land-use conflict as his election strategy. Specifically, he pledged to establish a hospital of traditional Korean medicine (hospital) on the site of Gongjin Elementary School, which had been selected as a site for a special school. Since this pledge attracted many residents of Gangseo District, especially those who opposed the establishment of a special school, he was elected as a regional representative. Simultaneously, however, since the Office of Education failed to find alternative sites for a special school, they took administrative notice again proposing that the Office of Education will establish a special school on the site of Gongjin Elementary School. However, as the pledge of the regional representative gave the residents a reason to oppose the establishment of a special school, the land-use conflict intensified more than before.

As the project for a new special school continued to be delayed due to the land-use conflict, the Office of Education decided to hold a public forum in which all residents could express their opinions. Simultaneously, since the Office of Education failed to find alternative sites for a special school, the project was temporarily halted.

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\(^3\) In the South Korean Legislative Election, a total of 300 members of the National Assembly are elected to serve four-year terms. Among them, 253 are regional representatives elected by a first-past-the-post electoral system, and 47 are proportional representatives elected by proportional party lists. For proportional representatives, it is important to keep the recognition from the party they belong to because they are nominated by a political party. On the other hand, the main concern of regional representatives is to get the support of the residents through representation of the interests of them because they are elected by the electorate in the region.
stakeholders could participate in the decision-making process for a land-use plan on the site of Gongjin Elementary School. On 16 July 2017, the first community forum was held, attended by the primary parties including the parents of students with disabilities, residents in Gangseo District, the regional representative, and the superintendent of the Office of Education (superintendent). Since, however, some of the residents argued that it is unfair for the parents of students with disabilities who do not live in Gangseo District to participate in determining a land-use plan for Gangseo District, the first public forum failed to be held in the end. Afterward, an agreement was reached among the stakeholders on who are eligible to participate in the public forum, so the second public forum was successfully held on 5 September 2017.

Even though the primary parties failed to reach an agreement at the public forum, the land-use conflict was ostensibly resolved by making an agreement that the site of Gongjin Elementary School would be used for the establishment of a special school after several meetings between the representatives. This study focuses more on the causes of the land-use conflict, the second public forum, and how to make a final decision.

**Data and Method**

In terms of the datasets, this study gathered as many materials as possible related to this land-use conflict. Specifically, the datasets this study used consist of full video recordings of the second public forum provided by the YouTube Channel, official
materials published by the Office of Education, Seoul City Council, Korea Health Industry Development Institute, and the National Development Institution of Korean Medicine, news articles related to this land-use conflict published between 2017 and 2018, and a documentary film and book “A Long Way to School (Kim, 2021, 2022)”, which focused on the entire process of this land-use conflict.

For research methods, this study employed discourse analysis to identify the impacts of face concerns on the communicative planning process and its outcome. Discourse analysis is a method of analyzing linguistic units larger than a sentence, such as conversations or written texts (Stubbs, 1983, p.1). This is a research method to understand human interactional practices, such as self-expression, social networking, persuasion, organizing, and so on (Tracy, 2005, p.734). Unlike content analysis which focuses on the inherent meaning of texts, discourse analysis pays particular attention to what meaning a discourse produces in the social and historical context in which it is embedded (Hardy et al. 2004). Using discourse analysis, this study interprets the meanings and intentions of the speeches and actions of stakeholders in the land-use conflict in the social and cultural context of South Korea.

Findings

Causes of land-use conflict: Face concerns that conceal technical expertise

The site for Gongjin Elementary School is owned by the Office of Education and is designated as a school site under the National Land Planning and Utilization Act.
Namely, it was difficult to establish a hospital without consultation with the Office of Education. Furthermore, since the Office of Education had planned to establish a new special school on this site, it was even harder to use it for other purposes. Indeed, this point was recognized by both the Office of Education and the regional representative who were responsible for explaining the technical expertise in this land-use conflict. For example, in the public forum, the superintendent said:

“Imagine if you heard that someone is trying to build a hotel on your land without consulting you. What position will you take? (...) To be honest, the opposition of the residents here, that is, why the Office of Education plans to establish a special school instead of a hospital of traditional Korean medicine, is a ‘fictitious hope’ created by Kim, Seong-Tae, the regional representative in Gangseo District.”

In addition, in the feasibility study of a hospital of traditional Korean medicine that the regional representative employed as the key evidence to support his claim, the researchers mentioned that consultation with the Office of Education is required, even though the site of Gongjin Elementary School is most suitable for establishing a hospital. This is because the Office of Education is the owner of this site and has planned to establish a school (Korea Health Industry Development Institute and National Development Institution of Korean Medicine, 2016).

Nonetheless, stakeholders’ face concerns took precedence over technical expertise in land-use planning, which further complicated the land-use conflict. For example, the superintendent took the equivocation strategy, which is a way to save the other person’s
face by intentionally revealing their thoughts ambiguously even if they disagree with the 
other person’s opinion (Adler and Rodman, 2006; Edwards and Bello, 2001).
Specifically, while admitting that this land-use conflict was initiated by the regional 
representative’s promise to establish a hospital, the superintendent said that he did not 
want to publicly criticize the regional representative (or the pledge) to save the face of the 
regional representative:

“[Even though I heard indirectly that he pledged to establish a hospital of traditional 
Korean medicine on the site of Gongjin Elementary School without consulting the 
Office of Education.] I do not want to blame the regional representative, Kim, 
Seong-Tae. Indeed, the Office of Education did not want to say anything in such a 
discussion during the general election campaign period to respect the residents.”

Meanwhile, the regional representative tried to keep his face by ignoring the 
technical expertise, attributing the cause of the conflict, and not listening to others’ 
voices. As a regional representative who has expertise (or the right to access information) 
about the region, he must have been aware that his pledge made no sense. Nevertheless, 
as a politician, admitting that he cannot realize his promise indicates a lack of power, 
competence, and authority, which could greatly damage his face (Choi and Yu, 1992). At 
the same time, however, he was worried that the opposition to the establishment of a 
special school would be seen as unethical, which may lead to losing his face. Therefore, 

despite being one of the primary parties in this conflict, he pretended to maintain 
ambivalence on the issue and did not participate in face-to-face discussions. Specifically, 
at the beginning of the public forum, he said the following and left the forum:
“A hospital of traditional Korean medicine is important for the development of our region. Simultaneously, as a person involved in the labor movement and social worker, I know the difficulties that students with disabilities face. For this reason, I made as much effort as possible to establish both a hospital and a special school, but it was very disappointing for me at the Office of Education’s uncooperative attitude. Anyway, I will do my best to resolve this issue if both parties agree today.”

Their “working acceptance (Goffman, 1967, p. 11)”, which is a surface agreement to maintain oneself and the other person’s face, not mutual agreement from a candid evaluation, concealed the importance of technical expertise in land-use planning. Rather, it turned the situation into a conflict over face-saving among non-professional participants. Since the parties, who did not have expertise in land-use planning, believed that their argument followed the land-use planning procedure, they thought that sticking to their opinions would prove their power in the community. Goffman (1967) explained that people with less power than other participants are much more sensitive to the evaluations of others about them, while people with strong power tend to be free from the reputation of others (p. 26-27). In this conflict, face concerns functioned more importantly because people with disabilities and their parents, and the community where households with relatively low incomes live were involved. Indeed, some of the residents expressed that the Office of Education is trying to establish a special school in their community because they are poor and powerless. One resident who participated in the public forum said:
“Since we are powerless and poor, they [the Office of Education] try to establish all facilities perceived as unwanted in our community. They [Office of Education] said that if they make a plan to build a special school in the other eight districts [which do not have a special school], they will be beaten to death [by the opponents]. The Office of Education thinks that we are such a pushover. We have to get our heads together and fight against them. We must not give in to them now and here.”

In addition, some of the residents suspected that the Office of Education held a public forum to use as a symbol of democracy and justice, while they had already decided to build a special school on this site. In other words, some people pointed out that the public forum may be nothing more than a window to maintain the superintendent’s face, not for authentic communication to make an agreement for land use. This reaction shows not only the distrust of the Office of Education but also a fear of publicly losing face by being ignored in a public forum, which is a place for collaboration. Indeed, one participant, who is a resident, said:

“I want to hear directly from the superintendent what the purpose of this event is. First of all, do you hold this event just to pursue rationale and promote this issue to the media, even though the Office of Education will proceed with the project no matter what the residents say? Or, do you hold this forum because you want to discuss the land use on this site to achieve a win-win situation since the residents want a hospital of traditional Korean medicine and students with disabilities and their parents want a special school?”

This conflict, which started over how to use the site of Gongjin Elementary School, became more complicated to solve due to facework before starting joint fact-finding.
Communicative planning process: Face concerns that prevent candid conversations

Unlike the ideals of the Harmermasian model of rational communication, face concerns made it difficult for the participants to have a candid conversation in a public forum, which was held in a face-to-face fashion. When people interact with others, they decide how to conduct themselves by comparing the symbolic meaning of their words and behaviors with the self-image they want to maintain (Goffman, 1967, p.38-39). Furthermore, people do not bring up words and actions that are inconsistent with the line they keep (Goffman, 1967, p. 16). Especially, Koreans tend to feel that they become more socially desirable by saving their face (Kim and Yang, 2011). Therefore, they pay more attention to managing the impression by doing socially and normatively required behaviors (Kim and Yang, 2011; Lee and Choi, 2001).

Indeed, both the regional representative and the residents were worried that the opposition to the establishment of a special school would be evaluated as regional self-centeredness and selfishness. In Korea, many people believe that house prices go down when special schools are built, even though many people demonstrate that there is no relationship between special schools and the property values of surrounding areas (Cho, 2017; Kim, 2017; Lee, 2017). On the other hand, attracting hospitals is perceived as giving a positive image to the region, which can have a positive impact on not only the improvement of the local economy but also an increase in one’ property values. In the case of this conflict, similarly, around the site of Gongjin Elementary School, the
residents put up placards with the phrases, “We want to live well by establishing a hospital of traditional Korean medicine”, and “A new special school for the students with disabilities? Not in front of our house”. These messages imply that the residents not only have negative perceptions of a special school but also think that a new hospital can lead to a revitalization of the local economy, which positively affects their property values.

Similarly, the residents’ words at the meetings of the opponents of a special school and backstage at the public forum show their aversion to the facilities for people with disabilities and their desire for house prices. A resident who participated in a community meeting of opponents of the establishment of a special school testified that people said “Myeongji-dong [our community] should be a luxury neighborhood and luxury apartment complex. If a special school is established, however, the house prices will drop.” (Cho, 2017). A resident, who attended the same meeting and expressed that he wanted to support the establishment of a special school, mentioned that he was eventually forcibly taken out of the meeting, and even after the meeting, tons of posts criticizing him were posted in the community bulletin board (Kim, 2022, p.169-70). One parent of students with disabilities testified that she heard from some residents “Why do these children [with disabilities] need a school? Why do not we just build facilities for people with disabilities on a mountain and put them there together?”, in backstage.

Contrary to the places that did not reveal individual identity, the residents were reluctant to say the term “house price” in face-to-face talk. They also emphasized that
they do not oppose a special school itself, but suggest that it would be better to build a hospital than a special school in order to use this site more efficiently and appropriately. A resident explained in a public forum that all residents also value the rights of people with disabilities, so this issue should not be perceived as a conflict between people with disabilities and non-people with disabilities.

“We do not come here to create conflict between people with disabilities and non-people with disabilities. We do not want to deprive the rights of people with disabilities. We are not against special schools. We just insist on building a hospital because the feasibility study demonstrated that this site would be the most appropriate to build a hospital of traditional Korean medicine, considering the regional characteristics and history.”

Similarly, the regional representative and some residents tried to save their faces while opposing the establishment of a special school by proving that they do not have any negative perception of people with disabilities. For example, one resident who participated in the public forum said that she has been volunteering for more than 40,000 hours for marginalized people, even though she opposes a new special school on this site. Similarly, the regional representative highlighted that he was a social worker and involved in the labor movement, so he highly values social inclusion.

The residents’ face concerns were revealed by their contradictory statements, while the politicians involved in this land-use conflict employed the strategy of conflict avoidance to save their faces. Kim and Yang (2011) explain that those who are concerned
about social face want to resolve conflicts through indirect communication rather than face-to-face fashion, to avoid losing their face in these situations. Consistent with the findings of this study, indeed, the regional representative left with only an opening message in the public forum, even though he played a key role in inducing this land-use conflict. In the same vein, other politicians who were responsible for providing technical expertise and mediating the conflict also took avoidance strategies to maintain their face (Son, 2017). For instance, the mayor of Gangseo District and the members of the district council were reluctant to express their opinions, saying “There is nothing I can say. We must be neutral.” or “There was no one who talked to me about this issue.”

Conflict resolution: Face concerns as a key role in making an agreement

After the public forum, the Office of Education, the regional representative, and the representatives of the residents agreed to establish a special school on the site of Gongjin Elementary School. At the same time, the Office of Education promised to provide their land for the establishment of a hospital, if a school in Gangseo District is closed because of a lack of students shortly. Unlike the ideals of communicative planning theory, however, this land-use conflict failed to achieve an agreement through face-to-face discussion in the public forum. Rather, each party’s face concerns played a crucial role in reaching an agreement.
First, an action by a parent of a student with disabilities in a public forum not only stopped all their conversations but also served as a decisive opportunity for some opponents of a special school to change their minds. Specifically, when the participants started thinking that cooperation was impossible, one of the parents of students with disabilities knelt and said:

“What can we [the parents of students with disabilities] do for you [the opponents of building a new special school]? If you curse at us, we will listen to it. Even if you insult us, we can endure it. Even if you want to hit us, we will be willing to be beaten by you. But, we cannot give up establishing a special school (...) Please help. We will try our best to be closer to the residents and make the school benefit the community.”

After seeing her actions, all the other parents of a student with disabilities also bowed and knelt beside her. In the context of Korean society, kneeling and bowing to the other party indicates apology, humiliation, or surrender, which makes them lose their self-face. Indeed, the parent who knelt for the first time said that her actions were driven by a sense of urgency to do something to achieve an agreement, the sadness of living as a parent of a child with developmental disabilities, the frustration over whether it would be so difficult to claim legitimate rights, and the fear of opponents’ hatred of disability (Kim, 2022, p.55). It implies that since face-to-face discussion made her lose all her face, she decided to choose to plead with the other parties, even using a humiliating way.
In fact, in the public forum, the actions of the parents of students with disabilities did not change the minds of the opponents of a special school. Rather, some residents criticized their behavior, saying that they try to appeal to emotions, not rational conversations. After the public forum, however, this scene was released to the media and public opinion strongly criticized the opponents of the special school. As the residents were worried before the public forum, the public denounced the conflict as regional self-centeredness. Many people also got angry at the attitude of the residents who insisted on establishing a hospital on the site, even though the parents of students with disabilities, who are socially underprivileged, knelt. These negative evaluations made some of the residents change their minds from opposition to the establishment of a special school to supporting it because people tend to try to change their behaviors as a defensive strategy when others’ evaluation of their image seems to be negative (Lee and Choi, 2001). In addition, it also provided an opportunity for the residents who had supported the establishment of a special school to speak out their candid opinions.

Continued criticism from public opinions and the negative image of the community eventually led the residents to approve the construction of a new special school on the site of Gongjin Elementary School. The representatives of the residents, the regional representative, and the superintendent had additional meetings and achieved a final agreement. This agreement shows that the superintendent was highly concerned about the loss of face of the residents and the regional representative after the public
forum, contrary to his intention. For example, the agreement began with sentences of gratitude and apology from the Office of Education:

“The Office of Education feels regret that we failed to collect the residents’ opinions more carefully in the process of promoting the establishment of a special school. In addition, we are sorry that the Office of Education and the residents of Gangseo District were perceived as having a confrontational relationship. We, especially, would like to express our apologies and gratitude to the regional representative, Kim Seong-Tae, for his efforts in mediation for this land-use conflict. We are deeply grateful to the representatives of the residents and all community members who opened their minds to the establishment of a special school.”

In addition to “temporary lip service (Goffman, 1967, p.11)” to save the opponents’ faces, the Office of Education promised that they would provide the land owned by the Office of Education in Gangseo District for the establishment of a hospital when their land becomes vacant soon. Consistent with the explanation by Goffman (1967, p.12), this incentive was used as a strategy for the superintendent to avoid hostility when his opponent lost their face. Indeed, one of the staff of the Office of Education mentioned that “For the project to proceed smoothly, it is necessary to give an incentive that publicly declares the establishment of a special school without losing face to those who oppose it (Park, 2018).” Namely, by formally specifying the incentives for the community in the official agreement, all parties wanted the representatives of the residents and regional representatives to be seen as reaching an agreement with authorities and power, rather than losing in the negotiations.
This official agreement, however, was criticized by many people, especially parents of students with disabilities. They argued that the Office of Education was too concerned with face-savings, even though they understood the feelings of the parties who wanted to resolve the land-use conflict as quickly as possible (Kim, 2022, p.335-36). Since the superintendent wanted to save the face of opponents of the establishment of a special school, especially the regional representative, he included a one-way message of gratitude and apology in the agreement. Kim (2022), for instance, criticized the superintendent’s low attitude, even though all parties followed the official procedures for the establishment of a school. Even though it is important to save face for those who opposed the establishment of a special school, this agreement can be seen as a signal that the Office of Education acknowledged that a facility for people with disabilities harms the communities. Furthermore, the parents of the students with disabilities insisted that this agreement may justify hatred of disabilities, which degrades people with disabilities and their families in the long run (Kim, 2018; Lee, 2018; Park, 2018).

**Conclusion**

This land-use conflict shows the roles of facework in the communicative planning process, especially using face-to-face fashion. In the context of South Korea where facework plays a key role in social interactions (Kim et al. 2014; Kim and Yang, 2011; Lim, 1994), face concern affects the whole process of communicative planning from causes of conflicts to consensus-building. Face concerns helped elicit a cooperative
attitude from the participants to reach an agreement, even though it made it difficult to achieve the ideal speech situation based on rationality and sincerity. These findings are consistent with the previous studies that demonstrated emotional dynamics affect social interactions such as deliberation, communication, and even planning practices in general (Dryzek, 2000; Goffman, 1967; Kulözü, 2016; Lee and Kim, 2014; Schwarz, 2000).

The fact that face concerns have a strong influence on communicative planning processes has implications for both communicative planning theory and practices. From the theoretical perspective, this finding highlights that communicative planning theory needs to pay more attention to the real world in which planning practices take place as Watson (2008) claimed. While the traditional Western theoretical framework considered emotion and rationality as a dichotomous concept and saw emotions as something that must be controlled to act rationally, it might be difficult to exclude individual psychological factors from communicative planning as a situated process. In particular, the public sphere Habermas introduced presupposes only the participation of people with the knowledge and expertise to make rational arguments without personal emotions; however, communicative planning theory aims to involve a variety of people from experts to community members in the planning process. It implies that if communicative planning theory only focuses on Habermas’ theory as a theoretical framework, not only can it limit groups eligible to engage in the planning process but also participants can be suppressed from expressing their opinions freely (Lee and Kim, 2014).
From the practical view, this study allows policymakers to reflect on how communicative planning can be implemented in a social and cultural context where emotional matters play a more significant role. This study especially resonates with the previous studies emphasizing the impacts of context in communicative planning theory and practices (Calderon and Westin, 2021; Forester, 2016). Many studies argue that since communicative planning theory is based on the Anglo-Americans’ context such as civil society and liberal democracy, it can only be employed for regions where a specific contextual condition is met (Fainstein, 2000; Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000; Watson, 2008). Nevertheless, in planning practices, many people often evaluate that the communicative planning process was not implemented as ideally as explained in planning theory because there were problems with participants or procedural conditions such as participants’ lack of knowledge of democracy or the low ability of argumentations. This study, however, emphasizes that it is necessary to find a model of communicative planning that is suitable for each country where communicative planning will be implemented, rather than accept the ideal of communicative planning theory that has been developed in Western society.
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Chapter 4. Racial Disparity in Community Engagement:
The Case of East Asian Participation in Neighborhood Associations in Portland

Introduction

Research on community engagement in planning field has actively grown after Arnstein (1969) published the paper “A Ladder of Citizen Participation” (Slotterback and Lauria 2019). In addition, many sociological and philosophical perspectives contributed to the development of community participation in the planning field, including the theory of structuration (Giddens 1984), participatory democracy (Dewey 1916), the theory of political liberal (Rawls 1971), and communicative rationality (Habermas 1991). Based on these theoretical foundations, communicative planning was proposed as a strategy to promote community engagement and redistribute power between public officials and communities. In the same vein, various planning theories were suggested to make communication in the planning process effective and inclusive such as deliberative practitioner (Forester 1994), collaborative planning (Healey 1997), and diversity, interdependence, and authentic dialogue theory (Innes and Booher 2010).

In the practices of planning, however, as the United States becomes more culturally diverse due to globalization and an increase in immigration, the strategies of community engagement based on deliberation face the challenges to inclusion for people with diverse cultural backgrounds (Bernstein and Norwood 2008; Melendez and Martinez-Cosio 2019). Therefore, many scholars and practitioners have made an effort to
mitigate exclusion by including people with marginalized identities in decision-making. For example, Community Connect (2008) suggested “an increase in the number and diversity of people involved in their communities” as the first goal of a “comprehensive road map for strengthening Portland’s civic life”. Then, the Office of Community & Civic Life in the City of Portland has contributed to organizing and capacity building of historically under-engaged groups, and training for the staff and leaders who are working with people of color, immigrants, and refugees (De Morris and Leistner 2009).

Despite these efforts, community engagement in the United States is still dominated by white middle-class males (Melendez and Hoff 2022). This is because people focus more on quantifying how many under-engaged groups participate in community engagement, but less pay attention to giving them substantial power (Goetz et al. 2020). Meléndez and Martinez-Cosio (2019) observed a participatory budgeting process, which mainly used English, and claimed that a translator is not enough to give Spanish-speaking Latino immigrants power in decision-making. Since translation takes time, Spanish-speaking participants should speak shorter than English-language participants, and the flow of communication puts them in a position to passively respond to English-speaking participants rather than lead the conversation (Ibid.).
East Asians in the United States\(^4\), especially, could encounter barriers to community engagement due to the stereotypes against them, their cultural characteristics, and their identity as a marginalized group. In terms of stereotypes against Asian Americans, for example, the perpetual foreigner stereotype can make Asian Americans appear ineligible to participate in the “American” decision-making process (Lee et al. 2009; Lee et al. 2021). In addition, the model minority stereotype can lead Asian Americans to be excluded from discussions about the inclusiveness of community engagement by presupposing that they are already well engaged (LAAUC 2021; Lee et al. 2009). Furthermore, since the deliberative democracy discipline is Western-centric (Dissanayake 2003), the studies on community engagement tend to lack consideration of the cultural characteristics of non-Western countries.

This study aims to explore the racial disparity of community engagement from the perspective of East Asians. This study especially focuses on neighborhood associations and East Asians who live or work in Portland, Oregon to answer two research questions: (1) How many East Asian Portlanders are actively involved in neighborhood associations? (2) What factors influence their participation or non-participation? This study begins with a literature review on culture and racial disparities in community engagement to understand the basic assumptions, principles, and challenges that the

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\(^4\) This study mostly uses the term ‘East Asian’ instead of East Asian American. Community engagement, which is the core focus of this study, does not require citizenship, and anyone related to the area can be involved in.
communicative planning process may have in terms of cultural differences. Then, this paper introduces the research design and its limitations and shows the findings of the analysis. Finally, it concludes with the implications and limitations of the study.

Culture and Communicative Planning

After “A Ladder of Public Participation (Arnstein 1969)” and “Communicative Action Theory (Habermas 1991)” were introduced, communicative planning was proposed as a strategy approach to foster community engagement and redistribute power between diverse parties. It aims to achieve a process of discovering useful knowledge through the participation of people with diverse backgrounds and mutual learning (Beauregard 2020, pp. 53-60). Then, planning theorists suggested how to enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of the communicative planning process (see deliberative practitioner (Forester 1994), collaborative planning (Healey 1997; Innes and Booher 1999)). Some evidence, however, shows that communicative planning theory seldom addresses the role of culture (Beauregard 2020, p. 58; Huxley and Yiftachel 2000; Hytönen 2016; Mannberg and Wihlborg 2008). Communicative planning can only be employed for regions where a specific contextual condition is met because its approach is biased toward Anglo-Americans’ context (Fainstein 2000; Huxley and Yiftachel 2000).

For example, Hytönen (2016) claims that since Finland has a different institutional context from the Anglo-American legal culture and the public has strong trust in the public sector and institutions, they do not need to get the trust in planning
legitimacy from dialogue with community members in the planning process. Similarly, Hong (2004) claims that since Hong Kong has different democratic structures from Western countries, they have difficulty in implementing planning practices. Specifically, in the case of Hong Kong, the politicians and public officials had strong power in the decision-making process, while the public had very limited opportunities to express their opinions on policies. The government tried to include the public consultation period in the land policy-making process; since, however, the public officials still think that active community engagement may lead to social disputes, they do not share the information about land uses with the public and employ public participation process at the level of tokenism to prevent active participation of the public, which makes the public less interested in expressing their opinions during the public consultation period (Ibid.).

In addition to countries with cultures different from the Anglo-Americans’ contexts, it is challenging to implement communicative planning processes in countries where people from diverse cultural backgrounds live together like the United States (De Montesquieu 1989). This is because the language, behavior, and meanings (i.e. code) among heterogeneous groups are largely different (Briggs 1998). Ideally, the participation of people from diverse cultural backgrounds in decision-making can alleviate ethnocentric perception because intercultural communication is a process in which participants with different cultural frames exchange and negotiate their symbolic systems (Bennett 1998; Nishishiba 2017; Samovar et al. 2010). In other words,
communicative planning can allow us to gather information about personal and cultural identities and learn about how to behave toward the other party (Samovar et al. 2010).

Simultaneously, however, it can exacerbate intercultural conflicts in that it may be a field in which ethnocentric perception leads to explicit behaviors. Put differently, when people from diverse cultural backgrounds participate in communicative planning, the outcome can be different depending on how this process is facilitated or moderated. Indeed, many studies indicate that cultural diversity can be an obstacle to achieving Habermas' ideal speech situation which is a foundation of communicative planning (Bernstein and Norwood 2008; Briggs 1998; Forester 2009; Motion 2005; Pestieau and Wallace 2003; Sandercock 2000). For example, Sandercock (2000) focuses on ‘coexisting in cities of difference’ and demonstrates that the values, culture, and norms of the dominant group are embedded in planning such as legislative frameworks, by-laws, and regulations. Since planning legislative frameworks in the West are based on a majority rule which is one of the conceptions of democracy, the norms of the dominant group tend to be considered invaluable things, but the right to difference is ignored.

Besides, some studies describe the challenges that ethnic groups having different cultural characteristics can experience in communicative planning. Bernstein and Norwood (2008) demonstrate the ethical differences in public participation by comparing African Americans and Korean Americans in Atlanta, Georgia. Focusing on the impacts of differences in conflict communication style, cultural values, and sense of community
on meeting attendance, Bernstein and Norwood (2008) explain that there are differences in the techniques for communication such as norms regarding assertive communication, and motivations for attending community meetings of African Americans and Korean American, and argue that public meetings need to be sensitive to cultural diversity to create an environment where everyone is comfortable.

**Racial Disparities in Community Engagement**

Findings from studies on racial disparities in community engagement are inconsistent. For instance, Fung (2004) showed that there were no ethnic or racial disparities among participants in community policing in Chicago. Rather, in some programs, non-white populations such as African Americans and Hispanics participated more actively. Beyond the local level, in addition, Hoang (2021) found no statistically significant evidence of racial and ethnic differences in public meeting attendance at the national level. Williamson and Scicchitano (2015) also claimed that there were no racial disparities in attendance at public meetings at the United States national level in general. Rather, African Americans tend to participate more actively than whites and feel a higher sense of political efficacy through public meetings. Holbrook et al. (2016), who investigated racial discrepancies in political participation among Chicago residents, demonstrated that participation rates by race and ethnicity vary depending on what issues are covered in the activity. In other words, rather than interpreting racial disparities in participation as a general tendency, issue-specific factors should be paid attention to.
Nevertheless, much evidence still shows that privileged groups tend to have easier access to opportunities for community engagement (Bartels 2016; Burns et al. 2001; Conway 2000; Ryfe 2005). Notably, communities of color are more likely to face challenges in participating in long-term community engagement (Merrick et al. 2015). For instance, despite the rapidly increasing proportion of the non-white population living in the City of Portland and its surrounding areas, neighborhood associations are still dominated by white, male, well-educated, homeowners (Merrick et al. 2015; De Morris and Leisner 2009). Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center (2021) also presents that white residents are overrepresented by the neighborhood association compared to the population composition of New Orleans. Specifically, of the 852 neighborhood association board members, sixty percent are white, thirty-five percent are black, and less than one percent are Latinx and Asian each, whereas the actual population is thirty-one percent white, fifty-eight percent black, and others are Latinx and Asian. In the case of the Los Angeles Neighborhood Council, sixty-five percent of the board members are white, which could not represent the racial diversity of the community (Li et al. 2019).

Young (2002) argues that not only do under-engaged groups experience challenges in participating in the deliberative decision-making process, but even when they do participate, they still experience many structural barriers. Since there are preferred norms of communicative actions and shared values among privileged unity in the deliberative democracy model, the voices and issues of privileged people can be valued over those of the less privileged group (p. 37-44). Moreover, since a discussion-
Based democracy assumes a norm of order such as being reasonable, expressing persuasively, and debating with politeness, anyone who does not follow this norm is labeled as an 'extreme' other and it can be justified excluding their opinions (p. 47-50).

Similarly, some studies point out that codes and communication scripts in planning meetings are not only derived from individual ethnic cultures but also reproduced in power relations with other groups (Briggs 1998; Fung 2004). That is to say, participants with marginalized identities tend not to be able to express their opinions openly in the decision-making process. Rather, they adjust their communication scripts according to whether they feel safe in the circumstances of the meeting (Briggs 1998).

In addition, Meléndez and Martinez-Cosio (2019) show language barriers in meeting-based community engagement by illustrating the experience of Spanish-speaking Latino immigrants in the participatory budgeting process. They found that even though there was a translator for Spanish-speaking participants, they were still excluded from the decision-making processes dominated by English speakers. This is because there were not enough numbers to cover all participants, noise often interfered with communication, and all meeting materials and conversations had to be translated quickly within a limited time. Furthermore, this design environment made Spanish-speaking Latino immigrant participants feel unwelcome, which prevented their ongoing participation. A more serious thing is that their low attendance led them to be ineligible to get leadership positions. However, as a Spanish Language Committee was formed and the process was redesigned for diversified engagement, Spanish-speaking Latin immigrants became more engaged in
the decision-making process and the alderman's office was able to better understand the community's needs (Ibid.).

**Gaps Among Existing Studies**

Despite previous studies, research on racial disparity in community engagement remains lacking. While there are some studies that focus on racial disparity in other forms of political participation such as voting, supporting political campaigns, or contacting elected officials, there are few studies that focus on public meetings at the community-level (Hoang 2019). Hoang (2019) examines racial disparity in public meeting participation; however, he reflects that his study only looks at the national level and further research at a micro level still needs to be conducted. Bernstein and Norwood (2008) study ethnic differences in community meeting participation at a more micro level. Since, however, this is a comparative study between two ethnic minority groups in Atlanta, it is difficult to account for the structural difficulties that under-engaged groups could particularly face in attending the meetings. Furthermore, they focus on Korean Americans living in Atlanta, which has a large Koreatown; however, it is more challenging for people with marginalized identities to have power unless they are with people with the same identity (Fung 2004). While it is important to support people with marginalized identities to form their identity-based communities and participate in community engagement opportunities for marginalized groups, what is important in the planning field is to create an environment where they can freely express their opinions.
even in the geographic spaces they belong to, especially which is not densely populated with marginalized groups. In this regard, it is necessary to study how community engagement is achieved in neighborhoods where people with diverse identities coexist, and what efforts are being made for its inclusiveness.

In the same vein, an identity-based community may not be an alternative to the representation problems of place-based organizations. Despite an increasing tendency among individuals to define the term “community” based on social relations rather than geographical boundaries (Bhattacharyya 2004; Bradshaw 2008; Webber 1963), territory-based and identity-based communities have their unique scope of influence and roles (Crumbaugh 2018). Specifically, the identity-based community tends to homogenize the diverse characteristics within underprivileged groups, thereby perpetuating stereotypes and delineating the boundaries between privileged and underprivileged groups (Fisher 2017). This implies that reinforcement of in-group/out-group divides may provide more comfortable and safe spaces for under-engaged groups but may hinder social integration within shared spaces where populations of different identities live together (Fisher 2017). In light of these considerations, it is crucial to promote identity-based community engagement as a means to enhance the representation of under-engaged groups. Simultaneously, continued research into the inclusivity of place-based organizations remains imperative.
Second, Asians have been excluded from the mainstream of communicative planning and, more broadly, the field of planning theory (Lee et al. 2021). Indeed, many studies on racial disparities in community engagement use the black or Hispanic populations as a proxy for racially disadvantaged groups or aggregated the entire non-white population for their analysis. In addition, much research on communicative engagement was conducted from the perspective of Anglo-Americans and discussed how to include people with cultural identities different from theirs in the mainstream system. Not only does this approach prevent a fundamental understanding of the barriers that Asians have experienced in communicative planning, but it can also discourage them from participating in the planning process by applying alternatives that do not suit them. Considering the cultural uniqueness among non-white racial groups, research on racial disparity in community engagement focusing on East Asians is needed.

In these regards, this study aims to explore the experiences of community engagement from the perspective of East Asians living in the United States. This study pays particular attention to two research topics: East Asians who reside, work, or live in Portland, Oregon, and Portland’s neighborhood associations. As an exploratory study, this study seeks to answer two research questions: (1) How many East Asian Portlanders are actively involved in neighborhood associations? (2) What factors influence their participation or non-participation?
Data and Method

Case Selection

East Asian Population in Portland, Oregon

The target population of this study is East Asians who reside, work, or live in Portland, Oregon (henceforth, Asian Portlanders). The Asian demographic is experiencing rapid growth in the United States, with Portland witnessing a particularly significant increase. Asians represent the largest non-white racial group in Portland, both in terms of proportion and numerical growth. According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates, the Asian population in Portland has seen a steady increase, rising from 40,280 in 2010 to 54,516 in 2022. Notably, between 2019 and 2020, the growth rate of the Asian population was seven percent, compared to less than one percent for the total population in Portland and a decrease of two percent for the white population. Furthermore, nearly half of Portland’s population born outside the United States were born in Asian countries. Of these, thirty-two percent are from East Asian countries: twenty percent from China, three percent from Hong Kong, two percent from Taiwan, and four percent each from Japan and Korea.

5 Between 2020 and 2022, the number of Asians decreased (one point nine percent, one point two percent, respectively). However, this may have been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, at the same period, the City of Portland’s population also declined, with the white population declining more significantly than the Asian (two point five percent, two point four percent, respectively).
In Oregon, however, communities of color and immigrants have historically been marginalized due to discriminatory practices as well as systemic barriers within the state’s governmental systems (Stoudamire-Wesley et al. 2021). A mere twelve percent of decision-making bodies in Oregon include one or more immigrants as board members, signifying that immigrants constitute only three percent of all jurisdiction board members (Melendez et al. 2020). Given that the 2019 ACS one-year estimates indicate that ten percent of Oregon’s total population are foreign-born individuals (U.S. Census Bureau 2021), it is evident that immigrants are underrepresented in public participation processes for decision-making. Beyond formal decision-making channels, there is evidence of low participation rates among people of color, immigrants, and refugees in neighborhood associations, although all individuals, regardless of citizenship status, are eligible to participate (League of Women Voters of Portland 2005; Leistner 2013).

Particularly, Asian Portlanders may face structural barriers to community engagement for a variety of reasons. First, the combination of language, culture, and identity can pose challenges to community engagement for East Asians. Given that East Asia is predominantly non-English-speaking, the English proficiency of Asian Portlanders could potentially deter them from participating in neighborhood associations where English is the primary language of communication. In addition to language proficiency, the unique communication styles of Asians may lead to misinterpretations of East Asians’ comments and reactions by other participants. Consequently, these immigrants may feel that their viewpoints are not adequately represented in decision-
making processes. In essence, the barriers that Asian Portlanders may encounter in neighborhood associations are not necessarily attributable to their language ability or understanding of democracy, but rather to institutional biases.

Secondly, Asian Portlanders’ community engagement is impeded by two prevalent stereotypes against Asian Americans: the perpetual foreigner and model minority stereotypes. The former perpetuates the notion that Asian Americans are not “real” Americans and will eventually return to their “home country” (Lee et al. 2009). Despite the long-standing presence of Asian Americans in the United States, this stereotype persists. A survey conducted by Leading Asian Americans to Unite for Change (LAAUC 2021) revealed that eleven percent of American respondents agreed, and nine percent completely agreed, with the statement, “In general, Asian Americans as a group are more loyal to their country of origin than to the United States.” This stereotype implicitly curtails the rights of Asian Americans to participate in or express their opinions in community engagement opportunities, even in contexts where issues impacting their daily lives are discussed (Lee et al. 2009; Lee et al. 2021). Furthermore, the model minority stereotype makes Asian Americans invisible in discussions of the inclusiveness of community engagement (LAAUC 2021; Lee et al. 2009). The underlying rationale of the model minority stereotype not only leads people to think that Asian Americans are fairly or overly represented in socio-economic leadership positions (LAAUC 2021) but also compels Asian Americans to conceal their challenges and even self-censor (Lee et al. 2009).
This research focuses on Asian Portlanders who self-identify as originating from an East Asian country, including China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Mongolia, or their descendants (Coalition of Communities of Color 2018; U.S. Census Bureau 2022). This study specifically targets East Asian Portlanders, acknowledging the heterogeneity of Asians, which encompasses people from over twenty countries spanning a vast geographical area (Chen and Philip 2008; Lee et al. 2021). East Asian countries have not only geographical proximity and historical interconnections of East Asian countries but also share cultural foundations such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Prior studies predominantly focused on American immigrants, particularly their immigrant generation, to exclude groups that had assimilated into the (white-centered) American culture through the socialization process (Duncan and Trejo 2018; Gordon 1964). However, considering the practical reason that few Asian Portlanders are participating in community engagement activities and the fact that anyone can participate in neighborhood associations regardless of citizenship status, this study aims to include all Asians residing in or interested in Portland.

Neighborhood Associations in Portland, Oregon

Among various community engagements, this study focuses on neighborhood associations. A neighborhood association is one of the long-term community engagements, which not only plays a role as a channel through which the community’s voices can be reflected in the decision-making that affects their neighborhoods but also
promotes a sense of belonging (City of Portland 2022; Merrick et al. 2015; De Morris and Leistner 2009). Especially, the neighborhood associations in Portland are considered one of the best tools for community engagement in urban planning in the United States (Adler and Blake 1990; Berry et al. 1993; De Morris and Leisner 2009). Since public involvement is the first of Oregon's statewide planning goals, the local government provides an opportunity to ensure that the community has the opportunity to participate in all the phases of the planning process (State of Oregon 1974).

Neighborhood associations were active informally in Portland before; however, they were officialized by an ordinance in 1974 under the Portland City Council and Mayor Neil Goldschmidt due to the growing demands of neighborhoods and the federal government for community participation in public policies (Abbott 1983; League of Women Voters of Portland 2005; Leistner 2013). Unlike other cities, in particular, Portland does not have elected politicians who represent each neighborhood, but volunteer-led neighborhood associations directly participate in the city’s decision-making process and advocate the interests and needs of each neighborhood (City of Portland 2022). As of 2023, the City of Portland has ninety-four neighborhood associations that are demarcated by geographic boundaries, seven neighborhood district coalitions, and forty-nine neighborhood business districts (City of Portland 2022).

As a direct channel between the city government and the community, the issue of inclusiveness of neighborhood associations is even more crucial in Portland. This is
because groups who are excluded from neighborhood associations can be disproportionately negatively affected by planning outcomes that affect their daily lives.

According to the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI) Standards for Neighborhood System, anyone who resides, owns real property, or has a business license within the neighborhood boundary is entitled to membership in that neighborhood association. Also, neighborhood associations cannot discriminate against individuals or groups based on their identities such as race, legal citizenship, national origin, or gender, and seek mutual interest to improve the livability and quality of their neighborhood based on open communication (Office of Neighborhood Involvement 2005).

In reality, some scholars criticize the inclusiveness of neighborhood associations. De Morris and Leistner (2009), for instance, claim that neighborhood associations tend to be overrepresented by white middle-class, homeowners, while newcomers, people of color, immigrants, and refugees tend to be excluded from participation. Or, even if the under-engaged group participates in the neighborhood association meetings, the topics, interests, needs, and perspectives they have are easily ignored (De Morris and Leistner 2009). Similarly, the League of Women Voters of Portland (2005) attended thirty neighborhood associations’ meetings and found that more than half of the meetings (sixty percent, eighteen meetings) were attended only by Caucasians. It means that neighborhood associations face issues of exclusion of marginalized groups in the neighborhoods in practice, even though they have non-discrimination provisions.
Meanwhile, some scholars claim that not everyone perceives a community as a geographical boundary, but as a group based on a common identity (Bradshaw 2008; Brennan and Brown 2008). In the same vein, Community Connect (2008) suggests that it is necessary to consider a broader range of neighborhood associations beyond the geographic community. Their suggestion, however, does not think about the reasons why some people are reluctant to define their communities as geographic boundaries. This approach may hide the problems of the inclusiveness of geographically demarcated neighborhood associations and reinforce the phenomenon in which specific groups are overrepresented in the neighborhood. Furthermore, this hinders equitable engagement in various activities in the planning field, which presupposes interaction between people from diverse backgrounds. In these respects, it is necessary to evaluate neighborhood associations from the perspective of marginalized groups.

Data Collection and Analysis

This study consists of two parts: neighborhood association profile and examination of the structural barriers to the inclusion of Asian Portlanders in neighborhood associations. The first part of the study conducts an exploratory analysis to identify who actively participates in neighborhood associations. Then, the second part examines the structural barriers to Asian Portlanders’ participation in neighborhood associations through semi-structured interviews.
Neighborhood Association Profile

In the first phase, this study estimated the racial composition of board members within neighborhood associations (hereafter, board members). Board members are elected by neighbors, generally consisting of the president, secretary, treasurer, and committee chairs. They actively lead the overall activities, such as operating and recording board/general meetings, planning community events, and facilitating community organizing activities. According to the preliminary informal conversations with some of the board members, a majority of active participants occupy leadership roles. In addition, the practice of maintaining records of meeting attendees varies across neighborhood associations, depending on their size and history. Some neighborhood associations consistently document a list of meeting participants, while others do not even maintain meeting minutes, leading to disparities in the data available. Considering both practical reason and data availability issue, this study operationalizes active participants as board members and investigates their racial composition.

Currently, there is neither official nor unofficial data available that lists the board members or includes information about their demographics. Therefore, this study began with establishing the list of board members by reaching out to each neighborhood association and searching on their websites. The contact email addresses utilized for this purpose were provided by the Office of Community and Civic Life in the City of Portland, which is in charge of maintaining a database of neighborhood association presidents’ contact information (City of Portland 2022). Of the ninety-four city-
recognized neighborhood associations as of 2023, this study obtained eighty-five neighborhood associations’ complete lists of board members. Additionally, two neighborhood associations’ partial lists of board members were gathered through the City of Portland's website; however, a complete list could not be obtained because they do not have a website and did not respond to requests for information. This study failed to get responses from five neighborhood associations, which are currently inactive, or there was no way to collect information.

After establishing the lists of board members, this study estimated their racial groups utilizing the names of the participants. For the prediction of the race of the participants, this study employed the predictrace package in R software, which predicts a person’s race using a name and the “Frequently Occurring Names” dataset published by the U.S. Census (Kaplan 2021). The process involved separating each individual’s first and last name and estimating the race using each part of the name. Of the 754 board members, 702 persons’ first and last names were matched to the same race (ninety-three percent). For fifty-two members, however, the first and last names were matched to different races. Among these, the author gathered additional information from the neighborhood association's website or direct contact with them to confirm the racial group of the seven people with at least one part of their name matching Asian.
Semi-Structured Interview

In the second phase, this study conducted semi-structured interviews to explore the structural barriers that can cause Asian Portlanders to experience exclusion from neighborhood associations. A semi-structured interview is an intermediate form between informal open-ended interviews and purposive focused interviews, which allows researchers to understand how key parties perceive the phenomenon (Silverman and Patterson 2022, pp. 60-61). Using the output of the first phase as a pool of interviewees, this study interviewed five board members who self-identified as East Asian. The author of this research also contacted two board members estimated to be East Asians but did not receive a response. To collect the thoughts of Asian Portlanders who do not participate in neighborhood associations, this study additionally interviewed two staff members working at a non-profit organization for community organizing and advocacy of Asian and Pacific Islanders in Portland, Oregon. Each semi-structured interview lasted one and a half hours; two interviews were conducted in person at the interviewees’ offices, and others were conducted through online conferencing using Zoom software.

Among the five board members interviewed, one is first-generation, three are second-generation, and one is third-generation Asian American immigrants. They are self-identified as Korean American, Japanese American, Chinese American, and
Taiwanese American. Irrespective of their generational immigrant status, however, all interviewees reported that they are more influenced by white American culture than East Asian culture. Most of them reported that they have been influenced by East Asian culture through their family; however, their residence in predominantly white neighborhoods or their integration into families that are either white or heavily influenced by white society, led them to greater exposure to white culture. All interviewees are very fluent in English; four interviewees communicate with their family members in a language other than English, while one only uses English in their daily lives. All interviewees participated in the neighborhood association for more than two years and served as board members for more than one year. Their roles in the neighborhood associations are diverse, including president, secretary, treasurer, and committee chair.

For data analysis, this study started with inductive coding, followed by the utilization of deductive coding. Inductive coding is an open coding method, which facilitates the generation of new themes from interview transcripts. Conversely, deductive coding is an approach that predetermines themes based on existing theories, subsequently

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6 Because they are such a small number, it would be easier to identify the interviewees if this study combined generation and ethnicity to describe their characteristics. Therefore, each variable was aggregated and displayed.

7 All interviewees except one reported that they are currently more familiar with White culture than with East Asian culture. However, they all responded that one or more family members still have more East Asian cultural characteristics so that they can refer to East Asian characteristics and experiences through their family members.
assigning relevant texts to these themes (Barbour, 2013). As mentioned in the literature review section, there is a paucity of studies addressing racial disparity in participation in the communicative planning process in the United States, particularly with respect to East Asian communities. Since this research assumes that the cultural uniqueness of East Asian communities has a significant influence on their experiences and thoughts, an initial application of inductive coding was deemed appropriate. Nonetheless, it is important to note that inductive coding may be biased toward the researcher’s own perspective and less structured compared to the deductive approach. To mitigate these limitations, this study conducted a second round of coding using a deductive approach. The final results of the analysis represent a synthesis of the findings derived from these two iterative processes, providing a comprehensive understanding of the East Asian Portlanders’ experiences.

**Limitations in Research Design**

This study conducted the interviews until the author thought that the criteria for data saturation, in which new information or themes are no longer yielded even when additional interviews are conducted (Vasileiou et al. 2018), was satisfied. Additionally, for snowball sampling, the author asked the interviewees if they could introduce people who participate in neighborhood associations among Asian Portlanders; however, all of them responded that they were the only East Asian participants they knew. Nevertheless, this study acknowledges limitations due to a relatively small sample size of the
interviewees. There is no clear guidance for optimal sample size in interview-based qualitative research; however, sample size insufficiency can affect the validity and generalizability of the results of the analysis (Vasileiou et al. 2018). This study succeeded in interviewing five out of seven board members who were presumed to be East Asian; however, this does not mean that this study can be generalized for any context. Despite this limitation, this study decided to adopt this approach to ensure a more precise research design in answering the research questions. This study considered several options to increase the sample size, but, ultimately, did not select for the following reasons.

In terms of study area, if this study looks at neighborhood associations in an area where Asians are concentrated, the size of the target population could potentially be larger. However, this research identified neighborhood associations in Portland as an optimal case study due to its recognition as a best practice model for community engagement in the United States, coupled with the fact that Asians constitute the second largest ethnic group in the city. This study, specifically, aims to explore the experiences of Asians in the context of territory-based community engagement. Neighborhood associations in areas with a high concentration of Asians, on the other hand, can serve both geographically-bound and identity-based communities, which could introduce confounding variables that may complicate the interpretation of findings. Therefore, the decision to focus on Portland was made to mitigate these potential complexities.
Second, if this study examines racial disparity in neighborhood associations based on all non-white populations rather than East Asians, a larger sample size could be secured. Or, if this research broadened the scope of the target population to Asian instead of East Asian, a few more interviews could be conducted. Nonetheless, grouping all non-white racial groups into a single group for analysis overlooks the distinct cultural attributes of each subgroup. Even, many studies underscore that the category ‘Asian’ encompasses a broad array of heterogeneous groups (Drouhot and Garip 2021; Holland and Palaniappan 2012, Lowe 1991). Since this study assumes that cultural backgrounds can influence participation in community engagement, it is necessary to narrow down the target population to a relatively homogenous group.

Lastly, this study reviewed the possibility of using secondary datasets conducted at the national level, to supplement the research. However, some studies investigating racial disparity in community engagement using secondary datasets reveal that it is difficult to confirm statistically significant results because Asians have a limited sample compared to other racial groups (Hoang 2021). In particular, the subject of Asian Americans has been excluded from the mainstream of communicative planning and, more broadly, the field of planning theory (Lee et al. 2021). It means that the invisibility of Asian Americans extends beyond practices and permeates academia as well. This study contributes to offering in-depth and comprehensive insights into an Asian that has been largely overlooked in research on community engagement in the United States, notwithstanding the constraints imposed by the small sample size.
Findings

*Racial Disparities of Active Participants*

To estimate the racial composition of board members, this study included eighty-five neighborhood associations out of ninety-four city-recognized neighborhood associations. Seven neighborhood associations were excluded from the analysis because they were inactive or a complete version of the list of board members was not available\(^8\).

Figure 3.1 shows the general tendency of the non-white population. The higher the proportion of the non-white population in a neighborhood, the more the non-white population tends to hold leadership positions in its neighborhood association. This does not mean that neighborhood associations are well representative of the racial composition of their neighborhood. Most of the neighborhoods underrepresent the non-white population in their neighborhood associations, except for three neighborhoods: Foster-Powell, West Portland Park, and Mt. Scott-Arleta neighborhoods. Furthermore, more than half of the neighborhood associations have no non-white board members. There was

\(^8\) This study obtained full lists of board members which neighborhood associations belonging in North Portland Neighborhood Services, Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, Southeast Uplift, and Southwest Community Services. The lists of board members of two neighborhood associations affiliated with the East Portland Community Office could not be gathered due to communication issue. One from Central Northeast Neighbors, the East Portland Community Office, and two each from Neighbors West-Northwest were inactive as of 2023.
no substantial relationship between neighborhood associations with East Asian board members and the proportion of the non-white population in those areas.

Specifically, of the 754 board members, 702 were identified as white (ninety-three percent), thirteen were identified as Asian (two percent), and seven were, particularly, identified as East Asian (one percent). At the neighborhood district level, there were four Asian board members in the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods neighborhood association, three in the East Portland Community Office neighborhood and Southeast Uplift, respectively, and one Asian board member each in Central Northeast Neighbors, North Portland Neighborhood Services, and Southwest Community Services. There was no Asian board member in Neighbors West-Northwest. East Asian board members belong to neighborhood associations in the East Portland Community Office, Southeast Uplift, and Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods. Figure 3.2 presents the percentage of Asian residents by neighborhood and neighborhood districts with one or more East Asian board members. These findings imply that the match between one's own race and the racial composition of the neighborhood may not have a significant impact on an Asian's decision to actively participate in a neighborhood association.

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9 This list was used as a sampling frame for a semi-structure interview. Since the number of East Asian board members was very small, the author judged that the interviewees could be identified by disclosing information on a neighborhood level. Therefore, all information was aggregated and presented at the neighborhood district level.
To figure out the reasons why Asian Portlanders are excluded from neighborhood associations, seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with board members who self-identified as East Asian and staff at a nonprofit organization that does community development and advocacy work targeting Asian Portlanders. The interviewees’ responses were largely divided into two parts: (1) what factors influence the initial decision to participate in the neighborhood association, and (2) how their participation impacts change at the personal or neighborhood association levels and how these changes motivate their continued participation.
Factors Affecting Initial Participation

Interviewees emphasized the importance of matching personal factors with the characteristics and conditions of neighborhood associations as an important factor in initially deciding to engage in neighborhood associations, such as language, socioeconomic status, cultural backgrounds, values, and interests. Because neighborhood associations are voluntary activities, mismatching these conditions places significant
burdens on potential participants, which acts as a major obstacle to their decision to contribute to neighborhood associations.

First, all interviewees said that they were able to decide to participate in a neighborhood association relatively easily, attributing this to their proficiency in English. On the other hand, since neighborhood associations predominantly conduct their activities in English, this could potentially pose a barrier to participation for Asian Portlaners who may not be as comfortable with the English language. All interviewees stated that they currently had no experience providing translation services to Asian Portlaners in their neighborhood associations.

Nonetheless, more than half of the interviewees were optimistic that language barriers could be overcome with the aid of technology. Conversely, the staff members directing community engagement for Asian Portlaners shared their experiences that even if translated materials are provided and interpreters are introduced for activities, it is difficult to have smooth discussions due to the inevitable delays between conversations. Furthermore, the languages used by Asians vary depending on their sub-ethnicity, which further complicates the provision of language services, even in Asian-targeting community engagement. Additionally, an interviewee who lives in a neighborhood where more than ten percent of the population is Asian noted a pervasive lack of awareness of providing language services for Asians due to a lack of understanding:
“When most people think of a multi-ethnic population in Portland, I think people are always thinking about the Hispanic or the black population (...) but, they do not really understand that [Portland] has a very large Asian population. So like this, it is kind of lost (...) It is like, if you want to translate our [neighborhood association’s] website, we should be translated to Spanish (...) If you are talking about a specific neighborhood, [it is] right. [But,] Spanish is not the second most spoken language in our neighborhood. And there is always an assumption that it is always going to be Spanish. Whereas you can actually look and say, okay, there are other languages that will probably be better if you want to reach out to more people.”

Second, most of the interviewees acknowledged that they had enough time to invest in neighborhood associations. They commonly explained that they could spend more time in their neighborhoods than others because some of them were already retired, could control their own work schedules, or were free from parenting. Meanwhile, most of the interviewees explained that Asian Portlanders are more likely to be in dual-income households due to economic hardship, parenting difficulties, and renters, which makes them spend a lot of time and energy on “surviving” rather than on neighborhood associations. In the same vein, one interviewee pointed out that since many neighborhood associations currently do not provide childcare support and food, low-income Asians with children need to bear more burdens of attending meetings.

In relation to the socioeconomic factors, furthermore, the interviewees claim that Asian Portlanders’ housing tenure may lead them to self-censor as to whether they are eligible to participate in neighborhood associations. Specifically, one interviewee explained that a neighborhood association can be joined by anyone who has an interest in
the neighborhood can participate in the neighborhood associations, such as homeowners, renters, non-resident property owners, business owners, or those who work in that area; however, many people tend to think it is the same as a homeowners association. Namely, neighborhood associations have failed at “branding”, making Asian Portlanders, who are mainly renters, hesitate to be involved in:

“I think there is always an understanding that like, in our neighborhood association, we want more people to join, or be aware and attend. But, kind of like, a lot of people either fall out after one or two meetings, [because] I think the branding is not great [enough to attract more people]. (...) When people think they are in a neighborhood association, they associate it with a homeowner association which is like a silly separate thing. And, there is an assumption sometimes that like, “Oh, you have to be a landowner or whatever”, which is not necessarily the case.”

The third point, the interviewees mentioned, is that a lack of cultural competency in neighborhood associations might make Asians feel insecure. They explained that although neighborhood associations are not exclusive to a particular identity, having a mainstream culture can nevertheless be a “shortcut” to determining participation. In modern society, especially, because social gatherings with like-minded people have become easier through social media or physical mobility, people are increasingly reluctant to interact with people with identities different from their own, ultimately reducing the perceived size of their comfort zone. That is, people prefer to engage in activities with groups with whom they can converse without code-switching, and thus marginalized groups are less likely to join a neighborhood association:
“Connect with people as much as we want diversity. People will be attracted to people who kind of just understand them. So, that's where the cultural similarity and background are helpful (...) Connection with people. Takes that two people. And so like, that is where the identity-based community is helpful because you could just show up and speak Korean, and they can understand. (...) Even if they do not fully understand, or only know a little bit, they can understand different memes or tropes.”

One of the cultural barriers that East Portlanders could encounter is the hierarchical structure based on age. One interviewee explained that given that the active participants in the neighborhood association are older, retired people, it might be difficult for Asian Portlanders, especially newcomers, to feel that the neighborhood association is a comfortable and safe space for them. Additionally, one interviewee noted that East Asian participants who are currently active in community engagement are older and it is very difficult to address age-related issues:

“Part of it is age (...) Most of our Asian members and our one more vocal agent member have been on the committee for a long time and have a trusted community member in the area (...) So I think it is an interesting dynamic, [but,] I have not fully figured out how to navigate as a facilitator in this context especially (...) [But,] I do think sometimes like in our committee, it is like an age-hierarchical thing with, you know, respecting elders' situation. So there is a mixture of culture that they are born into and that, it is hard to just brush off right, so also part of [their culture].”

Furthermore, some interviewees explained that Asian Portlanders often internalize the model minority myth. While a neighborhood association is a space where participants present issues about the neighborhood and discuss ways to resolve them, Asian Portlaners
are more likely to be hesitant to file complaints about the neighborhood. They believe that these problems may have been caused by themselves or that they can solve the issues through their efforts:

“It [neighborhood association] was just people complaining about stuff and how to fix things that they are complaining about (...) But I have definitely seen BIPOC folks not speaking up because they do not want to be perceived a certain way and they do not want to be perceived as causing trouble (...) That is really sad. They like, to self-blame themselves when they have some opinions.”

Some interviewees guessed that Asian Portlanders value other activities more than participating in neighborhood associations. For example, their Asian family members tend to place more value on belonging to ethnic-based communities or having time with their families and friends, rather than cultivating relationships in the territory-based communities. Specifically, one interviewee thought that neighborhood associations may be unattractive because they are not “social clubs”, and another interviewee said that since most activities in neighborhood associations are discussion-based, they may have difficulty deciding to participate:

“One of the things is that the neighborhood association is not [for] social [gathering] (...) It does not feel like a social club (...) It is like, you are there, you have a job to do, you are trying to do whatever (...) The majority of the people in there [neighborhood associations] are trying to make their neighborhood a better place.”

“I imagine that something [barriers], this is a kind of meeting-based. (...) This format might be harder in general for people who maybe do not identify as like American
culture first, or people who prefer volunteering for something more specific event rather than talking about any set of problems and trying to figure them out in that kind of a committee way. Maybe, that format is just hard for some people.”

Meanwhile, a strong awareness of the importance of community engagement served as motivation for engaging in neighborhood associations for all interviewees. For instance, one interviewee pointed out that neighborhood associations are a channel not only for “connecting with neighbors” but also for better understanding “how decisions are made at the local level.” Additionally, he mentioned that neighborhood associations allow us to learn what is happening in the neighborhood and what politics and power dynamics are at play as they interface with the city government. Similarly, another interviewee shared their neighborhood association’s experiences to explain that neighborhood associations give community members the power to change their neighborhoods. People can bring various issues, such as code violations or potential impacts of the new bike lane project on the traffic, to the neighborhood association, and then the board members could pass these agenda on to city commissioners. It implies that congruence between an individual's values and the goals of a neighborhood association could have an influence on the decision to participate in the neighborhood association.

Lastly, some interviewees had the motivation to participate in their neighborhood associations because they had a specific agenda they wanted to address at the neighborhood level. Specifically, one interviewee decided to attend the neighborhood association’s meeting after seeing the poster saying the meeting would cover a specific
topic in which he was interested. Others, on the other hand, claimed that their neighborhood associations did not address the issues they had an interest in, so they decided to attend the meetings to mention the importance of those specific topics, such as climate change, safety, and park preservation:

“When it comes to the climate crisis, most people think a response at the national or supranational level, but I believe not only such a wider, broader response but also a response at the community level is important. [Before I attended the neighborhood association meetings,] my neighborhood association lightly covered environmental issues only related to other issues like transportation or land use (...) So, I decided to speak out by myself about the climate crisis in my neighborhood association.”

“Looking back is (...) maybe related to, the [park in my neighborhood]. There was a proposal to have a site, the off-leash area [for dogs] in the park. And, the neighborhood association was hosting the meeting [to discuss this]. And, that was my first meeting (...) It is a multi-use park but has lots of nature in there. And, I am a bird watcher, so I was interested in how it would affect the (bird) habitat.”

Synthesizing it with the previous study that neighborhood associations do not sufficiently cover the interests and needs of various groups on their agendas (De Morris and Leistner 2009), agenda setting is a crucial part of motivating Asian Portlanders to participate. A staff member who has designed and directed community organizing programs targeting Asian Portlanders also pointed out that the number of Asian participants varies depending on the contents of the programs. Participants in the various programs they offer, such as yoga classes, small business development, childcare, food
pantry, and public health education, are all different, and most people are only involved in programs that fit their needs. Even, in some of the place-based community-building programs, more residents of racial groups, other than Asians participate. These experiences imply that the connection between Asian Portlanders' interests and the agendas of neighborhood associations may be a key factor in their participation.

These elements are key to people’s initial participation in the neighborhood associations. Active participation in neighborhood associations can lead to change in individuals and the neighborhood association itself, leading them to keep engaged. Conversely, the low participation rate of Asian Portlanders resulting from structural barriers could form a vicious cycle that further reinforces the obstacles that make it difficult for them to engage in neighborhood associations.

**Changes Through Participation**

At the individual level, participation in neighborhood associations increases awareness of community engagement, promotes feelings of self-efficacy, and contributes to cultivating social bonds with other neighbors. For example, the interviewees mentioned that the self-efficacy and sense of belonging they felt in neighborhood associations played a crucial role in why they did not participate in neighborhood association meetings as a one-off, but continued participation and took on leadership positions. Some participants felt a sense of self-efficacy as they changed the structure of
their neighborhood associations so that they could function better and allow more people to hear their opinions, while others felt it in the process of realizing the topics covered at the meeting at the actual neighborhood level:

“I joined the neighborhood association at the same time as several other neighbors. And, before we joined, the meetings were … the meetings were very (...) contentious and like, argumentative for off-topic. So, a lot of people that I had talked to before joining the neighborhood association who had been to [neighborhood association] meetings before said like that is not a place that can help you because … it was like, it was not functioning well. So, I joined with several neighbors at the same time to try like, an effort to sort of make … stay more on topic, you know, and try to make sure everybody gets a chance to speak. And, if things are starting to get difficult, everybody together is trying to de-escalate stuff like that. So, I think I stay engaged to … kind of support for to keep it a place that can get stuff done better.”

“When I first came here [neighborhood association meeting], I thought … it was not a good use of my time because they deal with topics that are less important to me, such as planning for social gathering things (...) As I began to speak out, ultimately address the agenda I wanted, and plan and implement activities that fit it, I felt that … it was effective and had many benefits for me.”

Social bonds with other participants in the neighborhood association also played an important role in their sustained participation. One interviewee shared that she joined a neighborhood association with other neighbors she already had a relationship with from the beginning, and is still active with them. Similarly, other participants also pointed out that as they participated in neighborhood associations for a long time, they met like-
minded people and cultivated human relationships, which made them find the activities more enjoyable.

From the perspective of neighborhood associations, since agenda settings, meeting times, and modes of meetings are determined by active participants, who participates and who is excluded has a significant impact on the operation of neighborhood associations. The interviewees commonly claim that many people, including themselves, tend to participate more actively when there is an agenda that they want or when they expect that a particular agenda will have a significant impact on their lives. One interviewee said that since neighborhood association is a type of “activism”, most decision-making tends to be made solely based on people who actively participate, although the neighborhood association always has a way of presenting new agendas:

“I think (...) people only show up when it kind of benefits them. So like, there is a question like, for example, what we had the hold the shelter move in, that was when more people showed up because they had strong opinions about that (...) What is the neighbor association doing and how is it supporting the people but that is dictated by people who show up. So you have got this kind of, chicken and egg thing. We could certainly say like, “Yeah, we could be supporting Asian interests”, but the interest can only happen if they show up to the meetings and make it [their interests] as an agenda item. We will support any project so long as someone is going to commit to that (...) And that is ultimately what activism is really about, right?”

One interviewee introduced the experience in a neighborhood association as a way to discover topics of interest to people who are not currently active participants.
Specifically, the interviewee suggested having a yearly visioning session where everyone can present their interests to set a potential agenda for future meetings. This can help with not only showing up new neighbors in the meeting but also their sustained participation because it enables them to engage in agenda-setting, which is the beginning step of decision-making in a neighborhood association. Furthermore, even if they cannot participate consistently for personal reasons, it allows room for their agenda to continue to be addressed in the neighborhood association.

However, some interviewees who have long experience working with the Asian community highlighted that, ultimately, high cultural competency, relationship building, and willingness to embrace change are the most important. They claimed that a consensus has already been formed that efforts to diversify community participation are needed considering Portland's neighborhood demographic change; moreover, many suggestions have already been proposed accordingly. Many people, however, do not want to change because it may affect the power relations:

“It felt like, all of it comes down to who has power, right? I think there was an effort to add more voices, but when you add more voices, that is not their intent necessarily but then some people feel like they are losing power. I mean, you actually see that a lot in kind of civic life [Office of Civic Life in the City of Portland], like the westside of neighborhood association groups, felt like (...) they are losing money [because] they [City of Portland] are starting to even spend more money in East Portland where there are other neighbor associations, right? So, those are all very controversial. I think it is just like everyone’s kind of battling to keep their own little
piece of the pie and it is really hard. You can not really just like do one little bit of outreach to the Asian community and expect that to change.”

Furthermore, one participant expressed skepticism that neighborhood associations can be improved to include more diverse voices because this can only be realized if they are willing to spend their scarce resources on outreach to the under-engaged:

“People want to go where the community is to bring them in. So if you do not have that critical mass, you cannot expect that just to happen. But if you want that to happen, you have to be really intentional about it and spend time and money over time, but no one wants to do that. So it is easy to say I want to do more of this [making neighborhood association more diverse] because that is what you are supposed to say. But, when it actually comes down to it, they do not support it (...) If you are asking a neighborhood president like, “Do you want to include more Asians?” They were going to say “Yes”, but then “How much money do you want to spend on it?” and said “None.” (...) How do you hear from other voices that are underrepresented? I think the process kind of got botched because it is about resources and all this stuff. So yeah, it is just tricky. I do not have a lot of hope for revamping the neighborhood association system.”

The interviewee added that at a time when neighborhood associations are suffering from budget cuts, the most realistic alternative is to establish “multiple pathways to decision-making and civic leadership”, rather than to expect spontaneous change in neighborhood associations.
Conclusion

Asians in the United States have been excluded from mainstream planning academia, despite their long and unique history (Lee et al. 2021). Even though many pieces of research in various fields such as deliberative democracy, communication, and conflict resolution emphasize the importance of understanding diverse cultures, planning theory, especially communicative planning theory, is still dominated by the white-centered perspective (Beauregard 2020, p. 58; Mannberg and Wihlborg 2008). In this background, this study takes a qualitative approach to look at the experiences of actual participants as well as a quantitative approach to gather how many East Asians participate in community engagement in the United States.

This study verified that Asian Portlanders are less likely to actively participate in neighborhood associations regardless of the racial and ethnic composition of each neighborhood. In terms of initial motivation to participate, Asian Portlanders may be hesitant to engage in neighborhood associations because they do not fit the current characteristics of neighborhood associations, such as language, culture, socioeconomic factors, and values. Initial exclusion from neighborhood associations, moreover, not only prevents individuals from experiencing the positive effects such as self-efficacy and social bonds that can be gained by participating in community engagement but also neighborhood associations are strengthened to be more considerate of the preferences and needs of current active participants, perpetuating Asian Portlanders’ exclusion.
One noteworthy point is that, although this study began with an inductive coding approach, many of the themes were similar to those derived from studies of racial disparity in community engagement. However, this does not mean that a single approach can be used to group under-engaged groups because they all share the same characteristics. For example, regarding issues related to language barriers, interviewees noted that Asians may face greater difficulties due to a greater lack of language services and a lack of awareness of the need for them. Additionally, the model minority myth reinforces the tendency that East Asians not only become invisible in theoretical discourse but also think that they must solve problems through their own individual efforts instead of speaking up in neighborhood associations. In other words, although most of the barriers that under-engaged groups could face may be coded under the same themes, such as 'linguistic barriers' and 'prejudice and stereotypes', how they are situated and how significant their influence is at the micro-practices level may differ.

This study contributes to expanding the horizons of existing studies on the barriers to community engagement by evaluating it from the perspective of East Asians, who have not received much theoretical and practical attention. In particular, this study is unique in that it focuses on racial disparity in the activities of neighborhood associations, which specify that “anyone” can participate based on geographic boundaries, rather than in the activities in which under-engaged groups attend as representatives of their own identity groups. In addition to theoretical implications, this study enables practitioners to design neighborhood associations more inclusively. Indeed, many practitioners claim that
it is difficult to recognize the white supremacy and disproportional harmfulness prevalent in community activities. Even if they could recognize them, existing members tend to have difficulty knowing what efforts should be made to transform the systems (Tulshyan 2022). This study, thus, provides advice on developing a system in which the voices of diverse members can be represented through community engagements in the context of Portland, which becomes racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse.

This study calls for the city government’s support in addition to neighborhood associations’ efforts for change. Because neighborhood associations are voluntary activities and independent organizations from the government, accountability for their diversification is unclear. The City of Portland does not even have a list of current board members as well as their racial compositions. And, when the author contacted neighborhood associations to get a list of the board members, many representatives were very defensive about the lack of diversification of their neighborhood associations. Most of the interviewees also reported that even though they are the only active Asian participants in their neighborhood association while most participants are white, this is a “sufficient” number considering the racial compositions of their neighborhoods. Additionally, they stated that racial discrimination may not be able to occur in their neighborhood associations because they do not address race-related issues. Even if they felt unwelcome in the neighborhood association, they thought that it was not because of their race but because of the contents of their argument. Therefore, for the neighborhood association to transform into a channel for more equitable community engagement,
abundant resources and support at the city level and joint responsibility between the neighborhood association and the city government are required.

Despite the implication, this study has a limitation because of the feasibility of the research. This study cannot figure out the thoughts and experiences of East Asians who have not participated in both neighborhood associations and the identity-based community at all. Many Asian Portlanders are likely not participating in community engagement in the United States. Furthermore, it is important to examine the perspectives of those who do not engage in any form of community engagement to alleviate the exclusion of community engagement. Nevertheless, this analysis requires a list of eligible East Asians in neighborhood associations in Portland and a more sophisticated sampling technique. However, this is beyond the scope and feasibility of this study. Therefore, as an exploratory study, the author only directly and indirectly gathered the thoughts of Asian Portlanders through the people currently actively participating in neighborhood associations, or those who work on Asian community development projects in Portland. In further research, it is necessary to delve deeper into the interplay between the cultural distinctiveness of East Asians and the structural characteristics of neighborhood associations. For the research on micro-practices, especially, a collaborative approach with planning practices is imperative to implement policies that can stimulate the community engagement of East Asians and scrutinize the direction to take for the diversification of neighborhood associations.
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Chapter 5. Conclusion

This dissertation examines communicative planning in the East Asian context from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. Each essay particularly looks at (1) previous studies on communicative planning in the three East Asian countries, (2) the case study on the deliberative decision-making process for the land-use conflict in Seoul, South Korea, and (3) empirical study on the racial disparity of neighborhood associations from the perspective of East Asians in Portland, Oregon. These studies provide a comprehensive understanding of communicative planning in the context of East Asians by presenting theoretical and practical findings. Moreover, the three essays commonly show that in the context of East Asian communities, the communicative planning model may not work exactly as intended in their theoretical foundations, but has been developing as a new model tailored to their unique circumstances.

The first essay conducted a systematic literature review on communicative planning within the framework of three East Asian nations: China, South Korea, and Japan. The review revealed that all three countries not only experienced community engagement in their planning processes historically, but also formulated communicative planning models that align with the unique political, social, and cultural contexts of each country. Specifically, historically, East Asian countries had channels for community participation in the planning process (Kusakabe, 2013; Park and Lee, 2016), but as the government structure was reorganized to accommodate rapid economic growth and
industrialization during the modernization process, the importance of public participation decreased (Hu et al., 2013; Kim, 2017; Shan and Yai, 2011). The implementation of the communicative planning model is still challenging due to the legacy of centralized government and top-down planning approaches and the increase in social inequality (Hommerich, 2015; Li et al., 2021); however, recently, communicative planning is coming into the spotlight again due to democratization (Kim, 2017; Kim, 2021), diversification (Deng et al., 2015; Morrison and Xian, 2016), and neoliberalization (Cai and He, 2022; Kochan, 2021) and continues to be improved in the context of each country. This essay offers a partial response to research questioning the universality of communicative planning in non-western contexts.

The second essay scrutinized the micro-practices in the communicative planning process in the context of Seoul, Korea, one of the East Asian countries. This research presented the influence of emotional dynamics on the communicative planning process, with a particular emphasis on facework, one of the important elements in human relationships in Korea. Since Korea is a collectivist and high-context culture, people are concerned with one’s own face as well as the other person’s face, which significantly appears as direct and indirect communication (Lim and Choi, 1996). This essay found that facework not only leads not to meeting truth and sincerity but also makes it difficult to comply with land-use laws and regulations which are the foundation of the joint-fact findings. However, it fosters a cooperative attitude among participants, facilitating consensus, which makes resolving the land-use conflict. This research emphasized that
failure to control emotions does not mean that Koreans are less democratic or less rational because facework is a universal phenomenon (Ting-Toomey and Kurogi, 1998). Rather, this essay echoes that scholars on planning should more carefully consider the contexts where planning practices take place, such as the roles of emotional matters in situated communicative planning (Calderon and Westin, 2021; Forester, 2016).

The last essay explored the experiences of community engagement from the view of East Asians in the United States using Portland’s neighborhood associations as an example. The findings of this research verified that East Asian residents of Portland are less inclined to actively engage in neighborhood associations, irrespective of the racial and ethnic makeup of each neighborhood. When considering the initial motivation to participate, East Asian residents of Portland may exhibit reluctance to become involved in neighborhood associations due to a perceived mismatch with the existing characteristics of these associations, such as language, culture, socioeconomic factors, and values. Furthermore, initial exclusion from neighborhood associations not only deprives individuals of the potential positive outcomes that can be derived from community engagement but also reinforces the associations’ focus on the preferences and needs of the currently active participants, thereby perpetuating the exclusion of Asian residents of Portland. This study calls for the city government’s support to supplement the endeavors of neighborhood associations for transformation. Given that neighborhood associations operate as voluntary entities and independent organizations from the government, it is unclear who is responsible for diversification; therefore, it is imperative
to establish shared accountability between the neighborhood association and the city government, which drives change and ensures progress.

From the theoretical perspective, this dissertation proposes a new direction for the discussion on the applicability of communicative planning theory. Looking at the foundation of communicative planning theory, most communicative planning theorists have a pragmatic perspective, thereby, they tend to believe that theory should be helpful to planning practitioners as well as academia, rather than researchers separate from the planning practices (Machler and Milz, 2015). Indeed, not only the abstract and philosophical theory of Habermas but also the more practical theories, such as negotiation theories (Fisher and Ury, 1981; Susskind and Ozawa, 1984; Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987), has an influence on the formation of the communicative planning theory. In other words, whereas Habermas provided the basis for the need to adopt communicative planning in decision-making, negotiation theories provided guidance on how to implement this idea in planning practices. This point echoes that communicative planning theory should continue to be developed through constant interaction between theoretical discussions and planning practices. In other words, the crisis in the applicability of communicative planning theory means that planning scholars need to design a new communicative planning model suited to each context as a situated planning theory, rather than evaluate it as a failure of the theory itself or limitations of the real world that are different from the theoretical ideal.
In particular, this dissertation centers on the perspective of East Asian communities, which have not received attention in communicative planning theory, and planning theory more broadly (Lee et al. 2021). The findings of the three essays in this dissertation go beyond the common belief that East Asians have a low awareness of democracy and that their culture makes them unsuitable for communicative planning models based on deliberation; rather, this dissertation explains how communicative planning models have developed in their unique context and how they should be improved. This dissertation not only examines the application of communicative planning within East Asian countries but also expands the discussions into identifying the challenges in the communicative planning process that East Asian immigrants may encounter when coexisting with people from diverse backgrounds in the context of Western countries. Previous research primarily concentrates on how to educate potential participants to be assimilated to the Western norms of order in order for the communicative planning process to be ideally implemented; however, the first and second essays in this dissertation imply that it is necessary for planning theorists and practitioners to think about how to transform communicative planning model structurally, to diversify communicative planning process in Western society.

While this dissertation makes significant theoretical and practical contributions, it acknowledges certain limitations in providing detailed recommendations on how communicative planning should adapt to the unique characteristics of East Asian communities. This dissertation is the starting point of a research effort that offers a
comprehensive analysis of communicative planning from the perspective of East Asian communities, thereby introducing fresh insights into the field of urban planning. However, the novelty of this research area posed challenges in data collection and reviewing theoretical discourse. The research process encountered three primary obstacles related to this topic. Firstly, as highlighted in the first essay, there is a scarcity of archived records that document the micro-practices of the communicative planning process in East Asian countries, resulting in limited related research. In the United States, which serves as a representative example for examining the experiences of East Asian immigrants, in addition, Asian Americans are broadly categorized as ‘Asian and Pacific Islanders’ and the sample size of the detailed groups reflecting each ethnicity is too small to conduct quantitative analysis. These constraints represent the most substantial structural difficulties impeding further research focusing on the characteristics of East Asian Americans. Therefore, this dissertation calls for the creation of more detailed groupings and the collection of reliable datasets to honor the unique experiences and characteristics of specific ethnicities within Asian communities.

Second, since East Asian communities are marginalized in the planning practices in the United States, where East Asians coexist with individuals from diverse backgrounds, it is challenging to anticipate the collection of reliable datasets or further research in the near future. Not all under-engaged populations in the United States are a single group with the same characteristics; nonetheless, the research process for the last essay in this dissertation made the primary author realize that many planning practitioners
still seek to find the most efficient and effective approach that can bring the achievement in a short-term. For example, a planner engaged in the development of equitable public engagement strategies in Oregon, encountered during the research process for the third essay, reported that various programs and policies to create an equitable communicative planning process have been launched at various levels of government and organizations. However, the quantification of their achievements presents a significant challenge, particularly given the difficulty of demonstrating progress within a short timeframe. This complexity poses a substantial hurdle to the sustained execution of these initiatives. However, the findings of this dissertation commonly conclude that the disparity issue in communicative planning is not a simple problem and can not be solved with a one-size-fits approach due to the uniqueness of each under-engaged group. Therefore, from the planning academia, more research must be conducted for detailed policy design. For further research, various attempts needed to be implemented in planning practices as well as it should be systematically recorded to be used as meaningful research data.

Lastly, there is a potential bias in planning academia towards Western contexts. As demonstrated in the first essay of this dissertation, non-Western scholars tend to publish their work in academic journals that are known to be receptive to global studies. However, they often encounter difficulties when attempting to introduce their unique situated planning processes into the mainstream planning field. This issue may become more intensified within the realm of communicative planning theory. Similar to research in the planning field, the majority of literature on communication has been developed
from a Western. This makes it challenging to apply universally across all cultural backgrounds (Chen and Starosta, 2003; Dissanayake, 2003; Kim, 2002; Shi-Xu, 2009). Asian communication researchers acknowledge that Western discourse is not the most suitable framework for explaining non-Western communicative practices. Despite this, they often adhere to it in order to gain recognition within the international academic community (Shi-Xu, 2009). Consequently, this dissertation highlights the urgent need for a more inclusive and diverse approach that acknowledges and respects the unique contexts and practices of non-Western societies in the field of communicative planning.
References


