

Town Management in a Period of Urban Growth

The Altered Versions of Japanese Jichi-kai Models Found in Minato Ward, Tokyo

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Abstract

This paper proposes a series of town management models that could help conserve and revitalize communities in major cities undergoing urban redevelopment. It identifies three new models of jichi-kai, a type of non-government community organization, that have survived the major changes brought upon them by large real estate development projects. It examined what community roles they've played in their region's local community activities, how they've adapted, and what type of relations they have with large real estate corporations. This study found that stakeholders in the target region of this study shared the idea that town management is not a zero-sum game between "locals" and "outsiders" such as corporations, and that, for companies, supporting local town planning is not a charity case or a means of avoiding residential conflict for corporations, but is part of a long-term, financial strategy in the region. This research shows that the study of jichi-kais in the modern context can provide insight for Civil-Private Partnerships, a way of ensuring participation and involvement in urban development. The results have great implications for the future of achieving a more inclusive, sustainable democracy in that they present new ways of providing financial and human resources to local community organizations.

Keywords

Community participation, civil society, machizukuri town management, redevelopment, urbanization, civil-private partnerships

1. Introduction

1.1. Theme, Focus, and Significance of This Research

This paper highlights a recent shift toward civil-private partnerships among local *jichi-kai* organizations in central Tokyo. Whereas studies on redevelopment traditionally presented stakeholder relations as conflicts between developer corporations and locals, this study shows a series of rather optimistic, cooperative scenarios found in the case study of the machizukuri town management taking place in Azabu Region. An explanation of all terminologies is provided in section 1.2.

Azabu Region is home to some of Tokyo's largest redevelopment projects and borders the area home to the Tokyo Tower, the Shiba Region. Yet, many of its local *jichi-kai* organizations, the members of which are usually limited to residents and landowners, are still active and maintaining membership. Though jichi-kais have had a history of taking on public services, such as maintaining street safety and organizing garbage disposal, their continuation is said to be at risk; in Japan, the decline in jichi-kai membership and participation is a nationwide issue that some find to be a threat to local traditions and community development.

On the other hand, some jichi-kai organizations in Tokyo are seeing membership growth, mainly due to higher population density after the development of apartments. In addition, Japanese real estate developer companies tend to negotiate and work with surrounding landowners and *jichi-kai* organizations to address local issues and organize community activities, to which residents and businesses new to the area are encouraged to take part in. As a result, there are private real estate developer companies that now play a key role in *jichi-kai* organization activities. The organizations used as a part of the case study of Azabu Region's community ecosystem each presented a different model of partnering and cooperating with such companies in ways that benefit each local *jichi-kai* organization. This paper analyzes the community ecosystem in Azabu Region in hopes of gaining insight and providing potential solutions for other regions, towns, and/or cities, then consider key themes to explore in this future.

1.2. Terminologies and concepts

Jichi-kai can be directly translated to "self-governing organization" and is a Japanese form of civil society organization. They are not under direct rule of government and are, in essence, community groups with some form of democratic system and formalities in place. They evolved from *chou-nai-kai* organizations (directly translated "town association" but referred to as "federations" in this historical context) introduced in 1937 around the time of the Sino-Japanese War and formally implemented on a national level in 1940. After the Potsdam Declaration in 1945, all federations were prohibited and reorganized as *jichi-ka/jichi-soshiki* (self-governing organizations).

Today, there are many variances of *jichi-kai*, such as the modern non-government entity version of *chou-nai-kai*, *chou-kai* (town assembly), *shinko-kumiai* (promotion association/cooperative), and *mansion-kanri-kumiai* (residence management organizations of a condominium) most of which are synonymous and differ only due to the differences in the where or when the organizations were formed. Jichi-kai organizations are typically made up of residents within a certain area who participate and become members voluntarily based on *chi-en* (territorial relations), which is why they are also commonly referred to as a type of *chi-en-soshiki* (territorial group) defined in Japan's Local Autonomy Act as "An organization formed based on the *chi-en* among residents that share an address within a certain area of a town or other municipality." Activities are funded most commonly by membership fees from residents, donations, and subsidies from the local municipality to which it belongs.

No participation of any *jichi-kai* is obligated to Japanese citizens by law: Japanese "Judgements of the Supreme Court" reports describes such organizations as having no legal grounds to enforce any resident to join or pay for membership and activities, based on Civil Code Article 33 (Court in Japan, 2004). Their activities include, but are not limited to, ensuring the safety of its area, maintaining a clean environment, organizing events, providing local information to members and residents, supporting government activities, and providence of other public services that differ depending on the region and organization. In Japan, *Jichi-kais* are the most common form of volunteer organizations in Japan and have proved to play a crucial role in emergency evacuation and preparation, disaster relief, and post-disaster revitalization in many of the natural disasters that have occurred in recent decades.

The term "area" used in this paper refers to parts of a region in which there are shared cultural or demographic characteristics or image. Typically, different areas would have different traditions, purpose of visit, and ambiance. In this paper, "*machizukuri* town management" will refer to any form of grassroot governance and/or community activity

done within a single area or amongst multiple areas but at a smaller scale than the municipal boundary. In Japan, such activities are often led by or involves *jichi-kai* organizations. The Japanese term “*machizukuri*” can broadly be defined this way, but its English translation is often questioned and debated, yet to be settled. In this paper, the term will be rephrased as “*machizukuri* town management” to make the writing easier to follow.

The term “community ecosystems” used in this paper is different from *chi-ku* (regions), the borders of which are the remains of what used to each be separate government entities until merging in 1947. Community ecosystems refer to the dynamics among the different areas and stakeholder groups. They are affected by publicly announced activities that require formalities, such as local government policy and national laws, but mainly consists of non-government entities and activities, largely defined by familial or other personal relations, and strongly affected by organic changes that result from the decisions and motivations of individuals. Moreover, there are usually multiple *jichi-kais* and “areas” in a single community ecosystem. Also, *machizukuri* town management can be described as the process of building, maintaining, or strengthening community ecosystems. Regardless of regional or national differences in public funding, robust community ecosystems can create a strong foundation for local cooperation and coordination required for good governance beyond the local level.

1.3. Paper Structure

The paper will first begin with a background including a brief explanation about the pertinent literature on *jichi-kais*, *machizukuri* town management, and community ecosystems. This is followed by the details of the methodology and the target of study, the Azabu Region. The paper will conclude with the research findings, discussion, and insights for future investigation.

2. Background

2.1. Review of Pertinent Literature and Research

Existing studies on *jichi-kais* focus on historical analysis and influence of such organizations on the decline thereof. According to a study on all 1,805 municipalities about *jichi-kais* from 2008, over 81% of all Japanese families are members of one and over 80% of the 300,000 *jichi-kais* in Japan, which exist in virtually all municipalities, are active in terms of membership and communications with their municipal governments (Tsujioka, 2009). To compare, there are a little over 50,000 nonprofit organizations recognized by the Cabinet Office of Japan as of 2019 and over 120,000 volunteer organizations recorded by the National Council of Social Welfare.

Similar organizations exist throughout Asia, the formation of which has been traced back to the occupation and annexations by the Empire of Japan from 1886-1945. For example, the 居民委員会 (Jūmín wěiyuánhui “Residents Committee”) in China, the 街坊会 (Jiēfāng huì “Neighborhood Association”) in Hong Kong, and the RT/RW (“neighborhood unit”/“community unit”) in Indonesia. However, the Japanese *chou-nai-kai* system is rare in that every household, by household unit, joins a *chou-nai-kai* as well as other *jichi-kais* regardless of having no obligation to do so (Yoshihara, 2000). Though there has been a declining trend in the membership rates of civil society organizations, the majority of people still join a *chou-nai-kai* when moving to a new neighborhood.

The evolution of the original *chou-nai-kai* to the modern day *jichi-kais* that exist today was due to the mass municipal mergers occurred throughout the Showa and Heisei eras. Former municipalities that disappeared after the mergers became the *jichi-kais* that exist today. This is the reason why some public services, such as separating and managing household waste before it's collected, are done, and organized on a *jichi-kai* basis. Moreover, *jichi-kais* are not a formal branch of the government but continue to voluntarily take part in public services for the good of society.

Jichi-kais have been in decline largely due to 3 factors: the providence of great financial support by the central government and employers to the public during the late 1900s, the unsustainable business model and nature of *jichi-kais*, and the increased fluidity of residency in modern society that has been pushed further due to the centralization to major cities. The dependency on *jichi-kais* shifted when the national government and large employers began to provide more financial support and communities to belong to citizens. In addition, more people moved away from their local regions for better schooling and work opportunities. At the same time, depopulation led to fewer donations to *jichi-kais* and lower dependency on them made the role of such organizations unclear. Interestingly, this trend of weakening self-governing bodies and community ecosystems is not limited to rural, depopulating regions: in Tokyo, *Jichi-kai* membership rates have also declined since the late 1990s (Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 2015).

The literature on *machizukuri* in Japan are focused on its significance as a local development measure especially regarding post-disaster recovery, comparison to *toshi-keikaku* (urban planning), and case studies of specific regions. In recent years, there have been a rise in studies on new real estate or financing schemes of *machizukuri* taking place in relatively rural regions in Japan often involving funding from REVIC (Regional Economy Vitalization Corporation of Japan) and leadership by local nonprofits, regional vitalization funds, and/or local businesses. Though a shift toward less centralized, more *jumin-sanka*

(participatory governance) and toward limited government has already been a major trend in Japan since the 1990s, municipalities in Japan struggle to find an effective way of strengthening community ecosystems and activate communities; due to the decline of *jichi-kais*, the community ecosystems they make up are weakening in terms of leadership, financial power, and presence.

As for studies on issues faced by local communities in international cities, the negative consequences of urbanization and centralization have been a common theme. Concerns regarding urbanization include effects on family unity, smaller family size, postponed marriage, lower reproduction rates, a greater proportion of single individuals, and, as a result, less social interaction and greater isolation among citizens (Wirth, 1938). Urbanization has also been linked to a rise in crime rates (Malik, 2016), and urban sprawl is known to create more traffic congestion, increase travel times, increase the loss of valuable farmland, and a lead to inequitable allocation of resources (Longman 1998, Chen 2000). According to Wirth (1938) and much of the research done in sociology regarding community development, community connections and relationships among neighbors tend to weaken as residents of a community shift toward more urban lifestyles. Moreover, The draining of people and capital from less populated, rural regions and centralization is not the only problem that Japan, as a society, and its government faces. Community ecosystems, which have been the backbone of society and social infrastructure, are weakening in all forms of regions even those in central areas of economic activity. Additionally, an overwhelming number of studies have proved the importance of having a psychological sense of community for curing the mentally ill and improving overall health and wellbeing (Sarason, 1974).

The importance of civil society and community ecosystems were also brought to attention in Japan after natural disasters such as the 1995 Great Hanshin earthquake and the 2011 Tohoku earthquake, during and after which national government agencies, municipal governments, self-defense forces, and non-government organizations struggled with rescue and relief interventions. According to the *Kensetsu-gyoushin-kikin* (construction industry promotion fund), local partnerships and management at times of disaster relief are crucial in redeveloping effectively and efficiently, for sudden involvement of

outsider construction and waste management companies or government authorities can misguide, confuse, and create conflict among local stakeholders and citizens (Kensetsu-gyoushin-kikin, 2012). The lessons from post-disaster revitalization efforts have led to the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, both of which put emphasis on the need of community building (Reconstruction Agency, 2017).

Learning from such cases, this study emphasizes the use of the term “civil-private partnership.” The involvement of civil societies in private company activities have mostly been analyzed in the context of PPPs (public private partnerships) in which government and private company(s) are the key stakeholders of the relations, but this study focuses on the relationship between jichi-kais, civil society organizations, and private real estate companies with virtually no government involvement. In an urban society, according to Wirth (1938), the pecuniary nexus tends to displace personal relations, but institutions tend to cater to mass rather than to individual requirements. However, the individual thus becomes effective only as he or she acts through organized groups. Moreover, the revival and/or improvement of civil society organizations may be what allows for more power and agency to individual citizens.

2.2. Methodology

This study followed the ground theory approach by first selecting the target region and initial *jichi-kai* to examine, which in this case are the Azabu Region and *Azabu Juban Shoutengai Shinko-Kumiai*, then interviewing key stakeholders. After the analyses of the qualitative data obtained from the interviews of 3 business owners and the *jichi-kai* leader, additional stakeholders to the list of interviewees. In addition to the initial stakeholders, stakeholders from other *jichi-kais* such as real estate company employees, residents, and city officials from Minato Ward were interviewed (a total of 10 intensive interviews). In addition to the primary data collected from interviews, secondary data on the history and changes of the Azabu Region and each *jichi-kai* were analyzed. In addition, geographical and physical design aspects of each area in the region were examined through observations of people flow and random surveys to a total of 50 residents walking in the area during November 19th to 30th in 2019.

In selecting the target region of analysis, this study first targeted wards and regions in Tokyo with the most multiple new redevelopment projects appointed by the prefectural and/or national government during the last 30 years. Then, the number of members of each local *shotengai-kumiais* (*jichi-kais* dedicated to the promotion of local shopping streets) those regions were examined. This was how the *Azabu Juban Shoutengai Shinko-Kumiai*, located in Azabu Region was selected. It was the organization with the most members at 363 members in Minato Ward reported in 2016 as shown in Figure 1.

図表2-2-4 港区商店街連合会加盟商店街及び会員数（平成28年（2016年）3月31日現在）

芝地区総合支所管内			赤坂地区総合支所管内			高輪地区総合支所管内			芝浦(南地区)総合支所管内		
	商店街名	会員数		商店街名	会員数		商店街名	会員数		商店街名	会員数
1	ニュー新橋ビル地下商店会	43	32	赤坂通り商店会	60	44	ブラチナヒルズ商栄会	48	51	高輪泉店寺前商店会	26
2	ニュー新橋ビル一階商店会	55	33	赤坂第一商店会	26	45	魚らん銀座商店会協同組合	52	52	芝浦商店会	147
3	ニュー新橋ビル二階商店会	43	34	赤坂一ツ木通り商店街振興組合	100	46	白金商店会	59	53	アクアシティお台場テナント会	100
4	ニュー新橋ビル三階三栄会	36	35	赤坂みずじ通り会	40	47	白金北里通り商店会	71	54	芝浦一丁目商店会	12
5	ニュー新橋ビル四階商店会	18	36	エスプラナード赤坂商店街振興組合	90	48	メリーロード高輪	55	55	芝浦二丁目商店会	27
6	新橋駅前ビル商店会	63	37	赤坂福徳商店会	25	49	高輪台商店会	21	56	デックス東京ビーチテナント会	96
7	新橋西口通り共栄会	31	38	青山南一商振会	35	50	白金プラザ会	34	57	品川駅港南商店会	51
8	鳥森商店会	21	39	青山表参道商店会	98						
9	新橋柳通商店会	30	40	青山三丁目商店会	66						
10	新橋鳥森通商店会	24	41	青山長者丸商店会	24						
11	新橋二丁目鳥森通り商店会	26	42	青山一・二丁目商栄会	30						
12	新橋駅表口通り愛栄会	12	43	青山外苑前商店街振興組合	50						
13	新橋赤レンガ通り発展会	77									
14	新橋仲通り会	40									
15	芝神明商店会	32									
16	大門振興会	42									
17	芝商店会	55									
18	三田商店街振興組合	78									
19	森永エンゼル街	18									
20	慶応仲通り商店会	85									
21	田町センタービルピアタ会	32									
22	三田地蔵通り商店会	17									
23	六本木三栄商店会	14									
24	麻布十番商店街振興組合	363									
25	東麻布商店会	38									
26	初音商店会	23									
27	仙台坂商店会(休会中)	—									
28	日赤通り商栄会	45									
29	六本木商店街振興組合	188									
30	六本木材木町商店会	11									
31	新一の橋商店会	17									
			合計 3,020								

Figure 1. The number of members in Shoutengai Shinko-Kumiai organizations in Minato City with Azabu Juban Shoutengai Shinko-Kumiai highlighted in blue. Source: Minato City.

The number of events held by individual *jichi-kais*, the existence of multiple *jichi-kais*, and the existence of civil-private partnership of some kind among the *jichi-kais* within the same region was also examined as indicators that showed whether a community ecosystem was facing changes due to urban growth but also successfully adapting. According to a study on a report on all 1156 *shoutengais* in Tokyo in 2008, only 11.2% of *shoutengais* hold over 5 events per year and the rest, 81.8% of *shoutengais* in Tokyo, hold less than 4 events per year (Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 2015). In contrast, 15 events were held in Azabu-Juban Shoutengai during the year 2010.

2.3. The Case Studies: Azabu Region in Minato Ward (City), Tokyo

Though the insights and conclusions derived from this research have relevance to community ecosystems of various types of towns, both urban and rural, it's important to note the presumptions and desired conditions when implementing any of the proposals presented in this section, considering the history, location, and residents of Azabu Region.

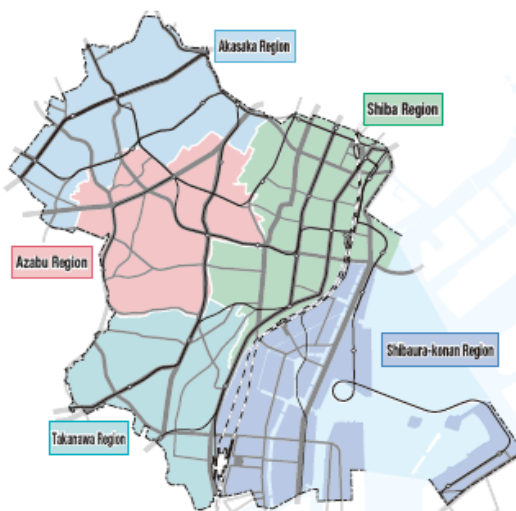


Figure 2. Regions of Minato Ward, Tokyo. Source: Minato City Masterplan 2017

In Azabu Region, and in many towns in central Tokyo and the rest of Japan, the standard of living is relatively high compared to its counterparts of other nation-states. Though the average household net adjusted disposable income per capita in Japan is USD 29798 a year, lower than the OECD average of USD 33604 a year (OECD, 2017), Japanese living standards were “undoubtedly impressive by the 1980s” (Beasley, 2000) and “people are better housed, better educated, healthier, live longer and are, by virtually any yardstick, better off than their predecessors and most other people in the world. They have enjoyed political stability, economic security, low crime, good health care, decent schools, adequate housing and an extraordinary level of public politesse (Kingston, 2010). The Azabu Region is also known to be “international,” one reason being it is home to many embassies: out of the 155 embassies in Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019), 45 are in Azabu district alone (Masai, 2012) and a total of 82 in Minato Ward.

A survey on shoutengai and *chou-kais* in Minato ward (Minato City, 2017) showed that out of all business owners with membership to a *shoutengai shinko-kumiai* and residents living within a 5-minute range of one in Minato Ward surveyed, those of Azabu-Juban Shoutengai were the most optimistic about the future of their local businesses. For example, 58.9% of the business owners in Azabu-Juban Shoutengai that were surveyed thought that they would not be negatively impacted by the rise of online shopping and delivery services, the highest of all other districts in Minato ward. From the answers of the interviewees, it can be understood that this optimism comes from the fact that the customers and visitors of the shops in Azabu-Juban Shoutengai value the history and people of the *shoutengai*.

The participants of this study all were members of at least one type of *jichi-kai*, selected based on affiliations with one of the 3 *jichi-kais* chosen as target organizations of analysis. The 3 organizations are: 1) Azabu Juban Shoutengai Shinko-Kumiai; 2) Roppongi Hills Jichi-Kai; 3) M-Mansion Kumiai (a *jichi-kai* centered around a condominium in area M of Azabu Region, the name of which shall not be disclosed for privacy purposes).

1), translated by Sharon Zukin, Philip Kasinitz, Xiangming Chen (2015) as “Azabu-Juban Shopping Street Promoting Association,” began as a *fukkou-kai* (revitalization group) formed by seven local businesses to rebuild the town after the series of firebombing air raids by the United States Army Air Forces called “Tokyo-daikushu (Bombing of Tokyo)” during the Pacific campaigns of WWII. The bombings left over a million citizens in Tokyo homeless after 1945. The *Jounan-Keihin Daikushu*, which alone killed over 4004 people and burned down an estimated 220,000 houses in Tokyo, had destroyed all of the Azabu-Juban area (Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Citizens and Cultural Affairs, 2013).

2) is a *jichi-kai* that was founded for the *machizukuri* town management of new development Roppongi Hills. It is a merger of preexisting *chou-nai-kai* organizations and has the president of Mori Building Corporation as one of its board members. The Roppongi Hills development was designated by the government as a “district plan that stipulates redevelopment promotion areas” as part of a series of deregulations by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in 1988. According to City Planning Act Article 13, they are “district plans, aiming to promote reasonable and sound high-level use of land and the renewal of urban functions, shall be stipulated in order to implement the uniform and comprehensive redevelopment or development improvement of urban areas...plans shall be stipulated to ensure that the protection of the favorable dwelling environment pertaining to low-rise housing around redevelopment promotion areas is not hindered.” This is what ensured the preservation and new formation of public spaces in and around the Roppongi Hills development, and its *jichi-kai*’s activities often take place in such places.

Lastly, 3) is a *jichi-kai* that can be categorized as a type of homeowner’s association that is run by real estate Developer M that built the condominium in area M in Azabu Region. This study analyzed its relationship with existing *jichi-kais* and the relationships within the organization between developer M and the homeowners.

3. Research Results

3.1. Not a zero-sum game: attitude toward machizukuri town management

This study revealed that new developments are not necessarily a threat to local *shoutengai* shopping streets or community nearby and can be used by the local community to their advantage; new developments can help attract new community members and shoppers to the area. If local businesses can identify their uniqueness, differentiate themselves from new stores introduced by new developments, and actively evolve while communicating with customers, new developments can provide business opportunities. For a *jichi-kai* organization, physical design and marketing measures can be made so that people flow from one area, the new development, to the other, the local street. One way that the *Azabu Juban Shoutengai Shinko-Kumiai* did this was coordinate its event schedule with the Roppongi Hills event organizers so that they can collectively attract more people to the region, gaining more customers for both events.

According to local stakeholders interviewed in the study, the greatest threat to maintaining the local characteristics of a town is, fundamentally, not nearby real estate developments or developer companies, but rather the behavior of landowners who are tempted by the higher profitability of high rise developments. They expressed that the more high-rise apartment with no store on the first floor is built on the *shoutengai* street, the less appealing the street may become for shoppers. This also is a loss for the street aesthetically, because, with new modern buildings developing nearby, the street needs a different ambiance to maintain an identity of its own.

In the long term, *jichi-kais* and large real estate companies can coordinate and cooperate to attract customers, enhance each area's image and identity, and maintain the safety and clean environment of the region. Moreover, the objective of machizukuri town management can be but is not limited to conflict-avoidance among stakeholders in a region. Through engagement and transparent processes, machizukuri town management methods raised in this paper can help create partnerships that develop the region as a whole; *machizukuri* town management is not a zero-sum game. It is sometimes treated as merely charity projects by corporations, but this paper's results proved otherwise.

What proved to be the most important part of civil-private partnerships is that relevant stakeholders are all able to do the following: 1) define and protect what their "non-negotiables" are; 2) creating a regional brand with each having their own niche; and 3) manage public goods and services.

3.2. Examples of civil-private partnerships: *jichi-kai* models found in Azabu Region

After the analysis of multiple *jichi-kais* in the Azabu Region, this study identified 3 forms of *jichi-kais*: the Shopping Street Model, Facilitated Town Merger Model, and Community Assistance Model. Each was run by different stakeholders in different ways and presented variations of civil-private partnerships.

1. The Shopping Street Model (led and run by local business owners)

The leadership and decision making system in the Azabu-Juban Shoutengai has not changed, but the way that its *kumiai* operates and recruits members has changed over time. The *kumiai* collects membership fees from the business owners on or around the main street of the shopping street, and a *kumiai* leader is elected democratically out of over 40 board members, all of whom are business owners on the street. The *kumiai* has full time paid staff, who are often hired from outside of the community, and they are the requests that they follow a document that explain the shared values and rules of the

street referred to as the “Requests to Those Opening a New Shop in *Azabu-Juban Shoutengai* (麻布十番商店街新規出店の方へのお願い)” given out to every business owner that joins their *kumiai*.

The document includes a message from the *kumiai* leader on the significance of the community brand and the importance of respecting the neighboring facilities, such as embassies and schools, and residents, the 10 “Juban rules,” and a list of potential benefits for *kumiai* members. 8 out of 10 Juban rules are related to *machizukuri* town management aimed to maintain and promote a clean, friendly community environment, and the other 2 rules are on agreeing to join and contribute to the events that the *kumiai* holds. As for the benefits, they include waste management, waste cleaning, maintenance of public goods such as streetlights, and providing a website that collectively promotes the street and its businesses. Though these are not legally binding rules and duties, members agree because all the activities benefit their individual businesses.

2. Facilitated Town Merger Model (led by a private company)

The *Roppongi Hills Jichi-Kai* presented a new model in which the preexisting jichi-kais are merged into a new organization and is run by residents with the support of employees from the real estate developer company. The *Roppongi Hills Jichi-Kai*'s board members include executive-level employees from Mori Building, the developer of Roppongi Hills, a way of showing locals and residents that *machizukuri* town management is a priority for the company. The organizers and supporters of the jichi-kai are young employees from the company, who support the residents who participate as members. Note, the company offered a room of their new condominium to landowners once the development was complete, ensuring a place for the original community post-development.

Interestingly, it was revealed that former landowners and residents became employees of Mori Building, some of whom personally know members of the *Azabu Juban Shoutengai Shinko-Kumiai*. The leader of the *kumiai* revealed that this may have made communications and trusting each other easier, allowing for effective cooperation. By involving both residents and young employees as well as other *jichi-kais*, the Roppongi Hills Jichi-kai is able to stay active and try different ways of attracting people both in and outside of the area as a cultural center.

3. Community Assistance Model (led by residents with support from a private company)

The *M-Condominium Kumiai* presented a new model of civil-private partnership, with decision making and ideation done by the homeowners within condominium M and the paperwork and other tedious work taken on by employees of the company that built the condominium, Developer M employees, but led by selected residents. Owners are strongly requested to pay membership fees to the *M-Condominium Kumiai* before purchasing the property and include membership fees when renting, and the money is used for the management of common facilities and community events. The company merely serves as an assistant to the residents and, though encouraged, only holds events and other community activities if the board of directors of a specific year chooses to. This model is effective primarily in handling resident conflicts and managing the public property of the residents, but the community activity activation aspect is passive.

4. Discussion and concluding remarks

4.1. Common strategies and values found in the Azabu Region

A common strategy found among the *jichi-kais* in the Azabu Region was using non-locals, or those who are paid to participate, to ensure community leaders and members did

not have to take on tedious work when participating in group activities. Especially considering that most people have an extent to which they can commit the time needed to plan, manage, and run activities or organizations voluntarily, it's important that residents only must provide their ideas and input. The key is ensuring the sustainability and organic activity of the community without imposing too many responsibilities and tasks on members. This can also help improve the efficiency and management of civil society organizations, a major concern for modern-day business owners and residents when considering whether to trust such groups. By implementing measures to make the most use of donated funds and increase the transparency of civil society organizations, building a stronger foundation for trust in a community hence increasing the likelihood of participation, contribution, and loyalty of residents to the region. Additionally, higher efficiency and the division of labor between representation and office work can allow for more residents to focus on ideation, community engagement, and decision making.

A shared value among stakeholders was that change in a community or town is inevitable. The Azabu Region ecosystem overall has had a long history of constant challenges as well as trial and error, helping the area continuously evolve and develop. Furthermore, it is important to understand that the purpose of community ecosystems and *machizukuri* town management is not about the continuation of specific traditions but about the strengthening of relationships by having individual residents understand the core values and non-negotiables of the community, participate, and welcome new stakeholders. Rather than avoiding everything that is new, trying anything that aligns with the vision of the community and does not go against the core values and non-negotiables may help the community ecosystem evolve.

A common mistake of *jichi-kais*, according to interviewees, is that they become overly exclusive to those who have lived in the area for a long time, not actively welcoming new and younger residents, businesses, or culture. According to a final report of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government *Tokyo-no-jichi-no-arikata-kenkyukai* (research unit on self-governance in Tokyo), many citizens viewed civil society organizations as self-serving for the elderly population and that they aren't open to change. Instead of only relying on the *seinen-kai* for younger volunteers, the ecosystem has evolved and grown in order to survive and become stronger. The 2nd and 3rd models of *jichi-kais* presented in this paper have put in measures to ensure youth participation, such as including young employees in the operations of the *jichi-kais*.

One way that *Azabu-Juban Shoutengai Shinko-kumiai* has been able to attract people to its events despite its membership being mostly male business owners over 50 years old is hosting new types of events that would attract more young, diverse groups of people and reaching out to local organizations. This includes schools, universities, members of each *chou-nai-kai* or condominium homeowner associations of new apartments, and developer company employees of nearby commercial buildings. For example, interviewees recalled that the Nouryou Matsuri had begun first as a more religious event after the war, but then changed to the "International Bazaar," an event that was the combination of an international food festival and the traditional Japanese *bon-odori* where everyone at the festival dance together, that first began through collaborations with the foreign embassies in the area. Later, festivals were passed down and changed throughout generations little by little every year to adjust to changes in the town or people. At the time of the International Bazaar, the main event venue was the *Ichinohashi-kouen*, a local park, but it became unavailable due to construction for the Tokyo Olympics 1964. The *kumiai* members dealt with this by deciding to use the shopping street itself as a venue, later requesting the local government and police to work to block cars and create a *hokousha-tengoku* (pedestrian paradise or pedestrian heaven) during the festivals.

4.2. Understanding civil-private partnerships

Though this study focused on the civil-private partnership aspects of the case studies, it includes interviews to the Minato Ward local government to understand how officials view their role in such relations. It can be concluded that any intervention by local governments aimed to improve or support community ecosystems should be done carefully in a way that it doesn't hinder organic growth or activation, and simple, financial interventions are not recommended for they may make *jichi-kais* reliant on the government and unsustainable. Rather than provide financial incentives such as subsidies, providing support by facilitating the stakeholders of a community ecosystem and providing tools that can help residents understand how grassroots organizations can be formed and activate the community may be the first step in revitalizing community ecosystems already undergoing debilitation.

The specific type of support needed will differ among regions and communities: hold public hearings and ideation sessions with a diverse range of residents and think together about what grassroots activities may be most effective. For community ecosystems undergoing major change due to, for example, major development projects, help coordinate stakeholder discussions before, after planning as well as continuous meetings following the development. In the case of the *shoutengai* street, the government aids in coordinating policing and road blocking for local events.

4.3. Concluding Remarks

What differentiates urban planning and activities of civil society groups such as *machizukuri* town management is that the former is incentivized or decided by government and the latter is based on organic, self-motivated intentions. The former focuses more on what an entity "should do" whereas the latter focuses on what "we want to do," which can also include responsibilities and sense of duty included in a plan's "should do." In the case of the Minato Ward and Azabu Region, as well as most Japanese local governments, there are no legal ties to *jichi-kai* organizations, hence the revitalization or activation of grassroots activities cannot be imposed as responsibilities of such organizations. However, individuals that form such organizations, run local businesses, and/or reside in the community ecosystem are incentivized to do so willingly if they are aware that local activities will directly or indirectly have a positive impact on their business or assets.

Machizukuri town management requires leadership and facilitation both among a community's internal members along with other stakeholders within or near the town in question. The different forms of civil society organizations presented in this paper can be used as a reference for forming effective community organizations in various types of areas. This was intended to be preliminary research for future studies on effective local governance. By engaging with municipal government officers, residents, and various town management stakeholders of different regions and countries, future studies will aim to find more insight on better local governance in a world going through a continuous period of urban growth.

This paper covered the *machizukuri* town management activities of a region surrounded by redevelopment projects, but did not cover the conundrum of the debate on the justification of allowing or prioritizing redevelopment to the perseverance of preexisting towns and communities. Such debate is one of economics, policy, and political philosophy regarding development itself. Also, this paper focuses on the functions and dynamics of community ecosystems in Japan; the presumptions for and

explanation of town management and community development stakeholders are to be applied only to those in Japan. However, insights obtained from the analysis are still valid for application in alternative settings. Moreover, the proposals and conclusions of this paper aim to help cultivate stronger, more sustainable community ecosystems of various forms. This paper does not necessarily advise for the replication of any specific town management model, for there will always be region-specific differences and more than one means to an end.

It can be concluded from the results of this study that *machizukuri* town management, which focuses on the local and micro level of urban activities, can be described as a way of localization and a flexible form of democratic governance; there are certain government functions and social services best handled locally. The *jichi-kai* models presented in this paper provide insight into how facilitating civil-private partnerships may be a solution to achieving localization from a bottom-up approach, cutting down on municipal government budgets and effectively vitalize a community ecosystem.

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