

Town Planning in a Period of Urban Growth: A Modern Twist to Traditional Japanese Town Planning Found in Azabu District of Minato Ward, Tokyo

要旨

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This paper aims to propose a town planning model that could help conserve and revitalize communities in major cities using insights from a case study of the Azabu District, an area located in central Tokyo, Japan. By analyzing the characteristics, dynamics among stakeholders, and various activities in the Azabu District's evolving local community ecosystem, this paper will attempt to identify key problems faced by communities in terms of sustainable local governance as well as potential solutions and improvements that could be implemented in other districts of regions undergoing urbanization.

Though this paper focuses on the community of one town, the foundation of this research is based on the comparative study of urban planning systems of different countries and regions; though many governments have implemented various initiatives with hopes to ensure the continuation and preservation of local cultures and traditions, encourage community activities, and promote bottom-up democratic involvement to avoid civilian-corporate conflicts that may be triggered by development projects, rapid urban growth has oftentimes proven to be too powerful a force.

By looking into the current state and evolution of the community ecosystem of a district in a major metropolis, Tokyo, this paper aims to

highlight issues and conundrums as well as solutions that are unique to or are especially relevant to urban ecosystems. In an age of centralization, much of the bottom-up, grassroots community efforts and research in Japan tend to focus more on rural, depopulating areas or relatively suburban areas outside of the central areas of major cities like Tokyo. By taking on an unorthodox approach to Japanese community research, this paper will unveil the underlying importance of different traditional forms of community organizations and relationships that continue to exist to this day as well as how they could evolve further to better contribute to the community ecosystems in which they belong.