Social Capital, Innovation, and Local Resilience: Tokyo Neighbourhood in Times of Crisis

Heide IMAI*

Yao JI**

Abstract

This paper is based on research that centres on the city of Tokyo, a mature city that is experiencing various transformations, in order to show how social capital and innovation can help build up resilient communities. It presents two major topics: 1) the potential of localities and their social capital and social innovation to actively react to change, and 2) the role of localities for inclusive urban governance. By focusing on five small neighbourhoods in the south of Taito-ward in central-east Tokyo, the paper addresses the following questions: a) what kinds of social networks and interaction exist at the local level, b) how are residents contributing to neighbourhood revitalization and community identity, and c) what are specific examples of social innovative practices, emerging in periods of crisis, in the case-study area as a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic? By adopting a mixed methods approach drawing especially on in-depth interviews conducted with a range of independent business owners, the study reveals the dynamics between long-term residents and newcomers as they negotiate shared identities that continue to shape the present and future of some of Tokyo's oldest neighbourhoods. The research findings highlight the need for good urban governance to draw on an improved understanding of the potential of localities, place-based social capital building, and new social practices that are emerging in local third sectors, such as volunteer-run industry-based organizations, which are vital in maintaining informal networks as an alternative to more traditional neighbourhood groups to bond, bridge, and link diverse community members.

Keywords: Tokyo, community, social capital, social innovation, COVID-19

東京、コミュニティ、ソーシャルイノベーション、社会資本、新型コロナウイルス

* Heide IMAI, Associate Professor, Senshu University, Faculty of Intercultural Communication Research Associate, Keio University. 今井 ハイデ, 専修大学 国際コミュニケーション学部 准教授.

Email address: heide.imai@gmx.net

** Yao JI, Keio University, PhD Candidate.

Email address: yji@keio.jp

Socialni kapital, družbena inovativnost in odpornost na lokalni ravni: Tokijska soseska v času krize

Izvleček

Članek temelji na študiji Tokia, razvitega mesta v preobrazbi, in želi pokazati, kako lahko socialni kapital in družbena inovativnost pripomoreta k oblikovanju odpornosti na lokalni ravni. Obravnava dve temi: 1) potencial socialnega kapitala in družbene inovativnosti na lokalni ravni pri dejavnem odzivanju na spremembe in 2) pomen lokalne ravni za vključujoče vladovanje v mestih. Članek se osredotoča na pet manjših sosesk na jugu mestnega okrožja Taito v osrednjem delu vzhodnega Tokia, da bi odgovoril na naslednja vprašanja: a) Kakšne vrste družbenih omrežij in odnosov obstajajo na lokalni ravni? b) Kako prebivalci prispevajo k revitalizaciji soseske in skupnostne identitete? c) Kakšni specifični primeri družbeno inovativnih praks so se razvili na območju študije kot neposreden odgovor na pandemijo Covida-19? Študija z uporabo mešane raziskovalne metode, ki je temeljila predvsem na poglobljenih intervjujih z neodvisnimi podjetniki, razkriva dinamiko razmerij med staroselskimi prebivalci in prišleki v procesu nastajanja skupnih identitet, ki oblikujejo sedanost in prihodnost nekaterih najstarejših tokijskih sosesk. Izsledki raziskave izpostavljajo, da je treba za dobro vladovanje v mestih izboljšati zavedanje o razvojnih potencialih na lokalni ravni, o lokalno opredeljenem socialnem kapitalu ter o novih družbenih praksah v lokalnih terciarnih sektorjih, kot so prostovoljske organizacije, ki izhajajo iz podjetništva. Te so lahko ključnega pomena pri vzdrževanju neformalnih družbenih omrežij in alternativa tradicionalnim sosedskim skupinam pri druženju, premoščanju nasprotij in povezovanju različnih članov skupnosti.

Ključne besede: Tokio, skupnosti, socialni kapital, družbena inovativnost, Covid-19

Introduction¹

In recent years, the pace and scale of urban change have accelerated in many cities in Asia. Globalization and neoliberal reforms have driven up the flow of capital and people into cities. This has led to growing spatial, economic, and social inequalities within cities, as well as between urban and rural areas. Furthermore, changes in population flow, household structure, and living arrangements have weakened community ties and a sense of place, especially in older urban neighbourhoods that once had distinctive characters and qualities. New urban policies that promise to improve the quality of everyday life for all residents are heavily shaped by market orientation, privatization, and commodification, resulting in diverse conflicts between developers and residents, which are most

1 The paper has not been previously published and is not being considered for publication elsewhere.

visible at the neighbourhood scale (Fujii, Okata and Sorensen 2007). As such, the communities are susceptible to economic, social and cultural change caused by gentrification, social fragmentation and changing lifestyles (Pinet 2017). The central goal of this paper is thus to study the effects of these kind of changes on urban communities and the economic, social, and cultural dimensions of everyday life. We are particularly interested in how residents are securing a livelihood in rapidly altering megacities in Asia, and what role the locality, social capital, and social innovation play in their daily lives. This paper studies the city of Tokyo, whose different urban and social changes—including unbalanced growth, expansion, shrinkage, aging, and distribution of wealth—will provide insights into the challenges other Asian cities may face in the near future (Wang, Yang and Qian 2020). To understand these shifts at the local level, it is important to identify specific individual/collective practices and innovative responses to improve the daily lives of all members of the community (Moulaert et al. 2010; Ho 2019).

In this paper, we analyse socio-spatial transitions observed at the neighbourhood scale through two main themes: 1) the potential of localities to build up resilience in utilizing social capital and innovation and 2) their role for inclusive urban governance. Following a discussion of key theories applied to the case of Japan, we will introduce the research problem, research methodology, and the case of Tokyo, including its approach to urban governance. We then contextualize and approach the case-study area before exploring the urban community, embedded identities, and daily narratives that mirror the local transformations taking place. In conclusion, we will emphasize that a focus on the neighbourhood scale and a strong community identity, based on a range of social interactions and networks, can secure a good level of social capital, innovation, and local resilience, which can help to inform and implement urban policies that are more inclusive, effective, and sustainable in the long-term.

Conceptual Approach

To lay out the context for our research, we contend that urban change is caused by a range of urbanization processes (Simone and Pieterse 2017). While most developing cities in Asia are characterized by rapid urban growth, there is also a rising number of metropolitan areas, better known as post-growth or mature cities—including Tokyo—which have to deal with shrinking urban areas, an aging population, the lack of a skilled workforce, and failing security systems, among other challenges (Chiavacci and Hommerich 2017; Muramatsu and

Akiyama 2011). This shows the enormous range of urban issues governments are facing in the twenty-first century, urging stakeholders to take responsibility by developing and implementing more inclusive urban policies (Gerometta, Haussermann, and Longo 2005).

For this reason, we consider good urban governance as both a normative and analytical concept, which aims to build better cities that are responsive to their residents (Hendriks 2014). Inclusive urban governance can develop solutions for the rising number and complexity of social problems by means of new social integration policies that are stimulated and driven by a strong (sense of) community, social capital, and innovation (Kratke 2011; Osborne, Baldwin and Thomsen 2016). Different scholars have defined a community as a social unit having many things in common, including social norms, values, and customs (Craig, Mayo and Popple 2011; Ritzer 2007). Others have argued that a functioning group shares trust, cooperation, identities, and reciprocity, often referred to as social capital, which includes tangible (e.g., public spaces) and intangible resources (e.g., different actors or networks), which together determine how well the group or community works, especially in times of crisis (Aldrich and Meyer 2015; Danieri and Luong 2012; Kim et al. 2017).

Some communities share a strong sense of place, as they are situated in a specific location, physically bound in real space, or virtually located through communication platforms. A community organizes itself in various forms and types, including local neighbourhoods, collectives, and collaborations, nested hubs, social gatherings, and new co-working spaces. In short, a community is made up of different networks, including formal and informal, public and private, physical and virtual networks, among others (Elmqvist et al. 2018, 281). In this sense, the paper aims to inquire what role the community, social capital, and emerging practices of social innovation play, recognizing social innovation mainly as a set of new social practices that aim to address urgent social needs in a better way. These practices are highly shaped by their local environment and should be studied in their specific context (Ayob, Teasdale and Fagan 2016). The paper argues that the case of Japan provides useful insights, as different communities have faced complex issues caused not only by economic, political, or social transformations, but also different types of disasters, leading to the development of several, often innovative, approaches to recover from them (Dimmer 2016; 2014; Imai 2012; Okata 2009).

Interestingly, social innovation is also (slowly) taking off in Japan, as there is a rise in new types of enterprises, cooperatives, and organizations, especially NGOs, which aim to foster awareness, education, and social solutions for

diverse issues (Fujisawa et al. 2015). Other work shows that the various types of new, innovative businesses and collaborations are becoming increasingly diverse (Toivonen 2013; 2016), and that social innovation practices are successfully utilized by local governments to revitalize public places and urban communities (Ishigaki and Sashida 2013; Martinus 2014). Therefore, this paper argues that local networks and social practices should be studied in more detail to develop better urban governance approaches, as local communities command different capabilities (including the bonding, bridging, and linking of social capital, innovation, and resilience) that they draw on to absorb the shocks and stresses caused by different changes (Aldrich 2012; Zolli and Healy 2012).

Research Questions and Methodology

The discussion raises the following research questions: (1) what kinds of social networks exist at the local neighbourhood level, (2) how are residents contributing to neighbourhood revitalization and community identity, and (3) what are specific examples of social capital and innovation emerging in periods of crisis, specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The research methodology draws on approaches by scholars such as Ho (2019), who sheds light on the importance of studying cities from the viewpoint of the neighbourhood, especially those in large cities in Asia that face pressures from rapid urban expansion, redevelopment, and uneven growth. Ethnographic research on the neighbourhood scale allows researchers to understand existing relationships between locals and newcomers, traditional and contemporary networks, local associations and the government, and their insights can help the city government to manage social interests rather than just economic or political ones (*ibid.*, 33). Moreover, Moulaert's (2010) analysis of social innovation processes in different European neighbourhoods has shown that a mixed methods approach and in-depth case study generate unique local knowledge, often overlooked by quantitative studies. Next to the analysis of policy documents and statistics, interviews with local experts and participatory research involving neighbourhood residents are revealing (intangible) facts about community ties, which allows researchers to understand the complexity of local transformations, social capital building, and innovation at the grassroots level (Moulaert et al. 2010, 65).

Wissink and Hazelzet (2012) have tried to understand local social networks in Tokyo through closed-ended questionnaires (sent in written form to residents who responded anonymously) to achieve a larger sample size (over 700)

covering several sites. However, for a more in-depth understanding of how social networks are formed, maintained, and changing, we adopted a mixed-method approach in the following phases: (1) field site observation and urban walks, (2) semi-structured interviews, and (3) analysis of secondary sources (including administrative data and social media sources). The data gathered from semi-structured interviews involved small business owners who live and work in the study area. The choice of interviews as an ethnographic method aims to provide rare insights into the everyday lives of residents living in an overlooked and lesser known area of Tokyo. Case studies of single sites are “valued for their ability to uncover the complexities on the ground and for their role in developing an understanding of the local world” (Ho 2019, 59), an argument that recent studies of neighbourhoods in Tokyo also verify (Kohama 2019; Vankova, Nakamura and Witthöft 2018).

The study’s focus on one site could be considered a limitation, as the study is bound in its locality. The authors also had difficulty finding interviewees (about one in four contacted accepted), especially during the uncertain months at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, as many businesses were closed and all interviews had to be conducted online.² To support the transition from on-site to online research, we referred to Wasson (2000, 11), who recognizes the internet “as a digital fieldsite,” providing an alternative set of data in addition to data collected “on the ground” (a physical fieldsite). Thus, the researchers studied websites, blogs, and social media accounts to track the ongoing activities of our informants and their interaction with others through these platforms.

The next section will introduce the city of Tokyo, its approach to urban governance, and local governmental projects to understand the wider context of the urban community and research participants.

Context: Contemporary Tokyo

Being twice reduced to rubble, by the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 and the World War II air raids in 1944 and 1945, Tokyo was rebuilt by its citizens and developed in many areas into unplanned settlements (Sorensen 2004, 314). This organic growth and urban setting resulted in what some scholars describe as a “city of villages” (Fukutake 1989) to explain the visual complexity and strong identity of traditional Tokyo communities. Others have argued that a “city of neighbourhoods” is a better description for understanding the current

2 A state of emergency was declared in Tokyo on April 7, 2020, which lasted until May 25, 2020.

sociocultural, political, and economic changes, which become most perceptible at the level of the smallest unit of the city, the neighbourhood (Imai 2017, 24).

Tokyo's urban landscape, however, changed dramatically from 1986 to 1991, as investment in real estate and stocks shifted into overdrive, creating what became known as the bubble economy. Following the bursting of the bubble in early 1992, Japan entered a prolonged slump from which it has yet to fully recover. The following years became known as the “lost decade,” resulting in new complex challenges, social problems, and inequalities (Sonobe and Machimura 1997; Ueki 2000). New campaigns focused on urban revitalization, and urban renewal programs were developed with the aim to start a new phase of economic stability. The prevailing mood changed from national pride and confidence to pessimism, leading to a phase of self-reflection as architects and planners started to question existing urban policies that mainly focused on a global city approach (Gottfried 2018).

The pressure to realize more prestigious projects with global appeal increased from 2013 when Tokyo won the bid to host the Olympics in 2020. Since then many—especially formerly rundown and lesser known—neighbourhoods (including the case-study area) have experienced different waves and forms of gentrification (Waley 2016, 620). In addition, many areas have been affected by gentrification caused by the tourist boom in Japan in the last few years (Kondo 2019). It is important to add that the global COVID-19 situation has resulted in the delay of the 2020 Olympics from 2020 to 2021, and the abrupt end of the tourist boom, as well as a further increase in existing inequalities and poverty levels, the full extent of which is still unknown (Imai 2020; Japan Today 2020).

The complexity of ongoing social issues, the lack of financial support and effective policies, and the failure to support existing decentralization attempts all push researchers to question whether the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's (TMG's) current urban governance approach will lead to a better quality of life in inner-city areas or to a worsening of existing problems (Chiavacci and Hommerich 2017).

Urban Governance

The TMG administers 62 municipalities: 23 special wards, 26 cities, five towns, and eight villages. Tokyo's 23 special wards are, in principle, subject to the same regulations that apply to the cities, but the special ward system has been designed to meet the distinctive needs of a large metropolis in which the TMG

maintains its authority and transfers specific functions to local municipalities (Vogel 2001). Consequently, the demands of local communities or neighbourhoods are often not addressed, as the TMG follows mainly a top-down, centralized approach to communicate with the different municipalities (Sorensen 2006). There are positive examples from the last two decades, as more communities have successfully established their own way of increasing the level of citizen participation and local “community building”, or *machizukuri*, activities to improve their local environment (Ikawa 2008). However, attempts to shift more power and functions to local municipalities for a more balanced governmental approach have had limited success so far, as most municipalities still depend heavily on the TMG, especially in times of increasing economic constraints (Tanaka and Tanaka 2016).

Yet, as Ho (2019) pointed out, it is especially the creation and maintenance of a range of neighbourhood amenities (including neighbourhood groups and social networks) that will benefit the city as a whole, improving the lives of local residents as well as visitors. Such communities can share their valuable knowledge and experience with other local and city governments, which can in turn encourage citizens to participate and engage in local *machizukuri* efforts (ibid., 28).

In Japan, most members of a community traditionally belonged to a local neighbourhood association called a *chonaikai*.³ Though such groups are losing their significance (Capitanio 2018, 448), they coexist among other emerging social groups and are still considered to have an influence on the outcome of different policies (Capitanio 2018; Pekkanen, Tsujinaka, and Yamamoto 2014). Thus, it is worthwhile to study local policies and projects that have been successfully realized.

The community of Yanaka in the northern part of Taito-ward, Tokyo, is well represented in the current literature as a special historic district to be preserved, and there is a wide consensus that the area should be protected. Yet, as there were no official preservation laws that could be applied to Yanaka, it was through the efforts of the local neighbourhood planning group that the district was able to halt the kind of large-scale high-rise developments appearing in many other dense, small-scale neighbourhoods (Sand 2013, 58). In the 1980s, local initiatives began to propose ways to deal with processes of urban restructuring, which also started to occur in many inner-city neighbourhoods in Tokyo. The *machizukuri*

3 In the *chonaikai*, residents are expected to participate as volunteers in efforts such as garbage collection, fire safety, street sanitation, and disaster prevention drills (Pekkanen, Tsujinaka and Yamamoto 2014). Another important group is the *shotengai* (local shopping street) association, where local shopkeepers are the core members.

approach has become a popular method as local communities can suggest ideas to the local government and other stakeholders to find the best possible solution to address local needs (Teh and Sasaki 2014). In 1989, an NGO called Yanaka Gakkō (Yanaka School) was founded to share their knowledge and ideas to preserve the historic townscape. Since then, the group started to collaborate with other neighbourhood groups to preserve the traditional features of the district and spread the word to other areas and cities (Shiihara 2010).

In comparison, Nerima-ward in Tokyo is following a specific approach using its unique position and identity as the birthplace of Japanese anime. Nerima is home to around 80 anime production companies and several educational institutes that helped to establish many people in the anime industry. The ward has different campaigns to raise the public recognition of anime, boost the number of visitors to the area, and drive urban revitalization attempts to spread anime culture. Other goals include constructing anime character monuments in prominent, public spaces and organize anime competitions in which young animators and talents can connect with and learn from each other. These projects aim to help strengthen the district's anime businesses as a main industry, with the hope that other industries can also be revitalized. Turning the anime culture into a local and collective community identity of which all residents are proud is the ultimate goal of the ward office, even though regular surveys show that not all locals are satisfied with this approach (Condry 2013, 33).

Governmental Efforts in Taito-ward

Our target study area is the southern part of Taito-ward, which is a lesser known area in the ward and deserves further study as it has initiated a diverse range of local projects in the past twenty years.⁴ The ward has experienced different forms of decline, but the local government has succeeded in promoting local industries to revitalize the area (Waley 2012, 156). Taito-ward is considered a traditional industrial area with a history of manufacturing and craftsmanship. As these industries declined, so did the neighbourhood population, which led to the closure of schools and other facilities. Several ward initiatives are thus specifically aimed at reviving traditional industries, including the establishment of Taito Designers Village in 2004. Converted from a vacant elementary school, the facility supports promising new creators by providing a heavily subsidized studio space for three years. Though not a requirement, many designers

⁴ See Taito-ward's website <https://www.city.taito.lg.jp/> for various plans, statistics and industry information, including details on the promotion of industry within Taito-ward

have stayed to work in the area after “graduation”, and have established independent stores and studios (as in the case of two of our interviewees). In 2011, the ward supported another initiative, the founding of the membership-based Monomachi Association, which aims to support and connect local businesses within a clearly defined boundary (membership is only for those who operate within the area it defines), including our target neighbourhoods. It is run by volunteers, who organize the main three-day Monomachi event to introduce local creative businesses to the public.⁵

The ward offers several other programs to support new businesses in the form of one-off grants and low interest loans.⁶ As a result, the area has experienced a renewed interest in recent years, with the influx of young creatives in addition to the families moving into newly built apartment blocks. The latter represents the national and local government promotion of development as a way to stimulate the economy, while the former aligns with our interest in the culture-led regeneration process shaping urban communities in contemporary Tokyo. By using the south of Taito-ward as a case study, we aim to gain insight into how the local government, civil organizations, neighbourhood and new social networks are working together in response to different social needs, especially during the COVID-19 crisis. Though the challenging times are far from over, it is already clear that many vulnerable members of society are being adversely affected in both the short and long term, reinforcing the need for more in-depth study of urban communities (Béland, Brodeur and Wright 2020).

Case-Study Area

The case-study area is located in the southern part of Tokyo’s Taito-ward, in five neighbourhoods that cover approximately one square kilometre: Misuji, Kojima, Kuramae, Asakusabashi, and Torigoe (Figure 1). In the Edo period (1606–1868), the area was a centre of commerce and industry, with many warehouses, shops, and manufacturing facilities. It was known to have a concentration of small- to medium-size wholesalers that produced and distributed products such as toys, small leather goods, hats, stationery, and jewellery/accessories. The area is also home to many businesses that provide materials to the makers and craftspeople who produce the necessary parts or tools for the end product.

5 The event started in 2011 with 16 stores participating; there were about 190 stores in 2019, and 70 stores confirmed their participation for the online event scheduled for October 2020.

6 All of the six newcomers we interviewed (Interviews 8–14) had received some form of financial support from Taito- ward when they started their business.

Figure 1: Mapping the local neighbourhood (Source: Authors 2020)

Economic activities declined from the 1970s due to major shifts in industry, including the outsourcing of labour to elsewhere in Japan and overseas and the increasing dominance of larger-scale manufacturers that embraced mass production. Many small businesses thus found it difficult to compete or pass their family business onto their children, who preferred more stable office jobs. This had spatial and social impacts, with the rise of vacant spaces and a weakening of longstanding social ties. The neighbourhood experienced a concurrent decrease in population, leading to the closure of schools and other facilities.

Today, the neighbourhood has a peaceful feel, characterized by quiet and walkable streets that are still lined with old buildings (Figure 2), some of which have survived from the pre-war period. It contrasts with nearby bustling tourist destinations such as Akihabara Electric Town, Ueno, and Asakusa. The area is now home to numerous craft workshops, artist studios, and small businesses, which form a strong *monozukuri* (local production and manufacturing) culture. New shops and products are often featured on blogs and online guides, which portray the area as a cool, up-and-coming neighbourhood, dubbed the “Brooklyn of Tokyo” (Live Japan 2019), where you can find “quirky cafes, design boutiques and specialty stores housed in trendy converted warehouses” (Hoy 2019).

Figure 2: Visitors at a 1920s shophouse that has been converted into an art gallery and artist residence in Kojima, Taito-ward (Source: Authors 2020)

Approaching the Site and Interview Process

Following a first phase of site observation using several visual and ethnographic methods (including locally made walking maps) to analyse the case-study area, potential interviewees were identified. Interviewees were selected from small independent business owners in the target neighbourhoods (Figure 3). An effort was made to include a range of business types and ages, from long-established family businesses to newer ones (Table 1). Between March 2019 and August 2020, businesses owners were interviewed following a snowball principle (von der Fehr, Sølberg and Bruun 2018). From a total of 46 business owners contacted, 14 respondents agreed to participate in the research (including three in neighbouring areas outside the target study area). Two interviews were conducted via email; the remaining interviews were conducted via a phone or video call between April and August 2020. After obtaining consent from the interviewees, the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Four of the interviewees agreed to a follow-up interview to discuss the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1. Information on Interviewees

No.	Age	Gender	Type of Business	Year established	Business location	Date of Interview
1	40s	Male	Butcher reopened as specialty pork store	1929/2017	Torigoe	a) May 4, 2020 b) Aug 11, 2020
2	40s	Male	Paper and stationary	1938	Honjo	May 14, 2020
3	40s	Male	Miso specialty store	1957	Torigoe	Aug 15, 2020
4	70s	Male	Second-hand bookstore	1958	Kuramae	Aug 1, 2020
5	70s	Male	Glassware	1959	Yushima	May 15, 2020
6	50s	Male	Silverware	1964	Misuji	a) May 1, 2020 b) Aug 6, 2020
7	60s	Female	Towels and blankets	1997	Asakusabashi	Aug 18, 2020
8	30s	Female	Illustrator	2014	Asakusabashi	a) May 7, 2020 b) Aug 4, 2020
9	30s	Male	Wine bar	2015	Kuramae	a) April 30, 2020 b) Aug 12, 2020
10	30s	Male	Café	2016	Misuji	April 29, 2020
11	30s	Female	Fashion designer	2017	Matsugaya	July 29, 2020
12	30s	Couple	Gallery and art residency	2018	Kojima	April 30, 2020
13	50s	Male	Café and woodwork	2019	Kojima	May 21, 2020
14	30s	Female	Textile designer	2019	Kojima	Aug 12, 2020

The interview questions were split into three parts. The first part gathered general data on the informants' background, including age, hometown, place of work, and residence, and why they chose to live and/or work in the area. The second part sought to clarify their social networks (or lack of), both formal and informal to understand their ties to the community and local organizations. Emphasis was placed on how they viewed their relationship with others in the community, who they went to for help, and how they interacted with others from the perspective of either being a newcomer or a long-term resident. The last part contained

questions in relation to the current COVID-19 situation to understand the impact and reflect on the importance of existing social networks.

Figure 3: Visual analysis of storefronts and workspaces of small businesses in the target study area (Source: Authors 2020)

Urban Identities in Transition

The Young Creative Newcomer

One of the newcomers and young business owners is Miki-san,⁷ a freelance illustrator in her mid-30s, who moved into the Kuramae neighbourhood five years ago with her partner (Figure 3). Her studio is located in Asakusabashi,

7 San is an honourific suffix for Japanese names; the closest translation in English is “Mr.” or “Ms.”

within walking distance from her home. In our interview, she noted how the area still has the compactness and character of an old *shitamachi* (downtown) area, which she finds attractive, but was not sure if this will still be the case in 10 years:

There are many new people moving into new, taller apartment buildings, especially young couples and those with young children, who often frequent new galleries or coffee shops. At the same time, I noticed about five old toy wholesalers have shut down in the past two years. I am worried that the local character will be lost.

She also talked about the visible decline of the local, old-fashioned shopping street called *Okazu-yokocho*,⁸ which used to cater to the craftspeople and local workers who worked in the area. Miki-san is drawn to the small and dense neighbourhood in eastern central Tokyo because it still retains a traditional character. Yet, she also commented that the area has lost some of its character in recent years, “We have too many fancy cafes now and I feel I cannot leave the house underdressed anymore, even if it is to go to the convenience store”. When asked how she feels about tourist guides describing Kuramae as “the Brooklyn of Tokyo”, Miki-san acknowledges, “the area was almost forgotten ten years ago, as much as I don’t like the comparison the branding shows there is some success in revitalizing the area in recent years” (Interview 8a, May 7, 2020).

One example of a popular shop she brought up in our interview is Kakimori, a paper and stationary store that specializes in handmade notebooks. (Figure 4). Though the store opened in 2010, the owner has managed to gain the respect of locals by supporting smaller businesses, engaging them to help make its products, while also attracting visitors to the area.

8 *Okazu* means side dishes, usually consisting of vegetables, fish, and pickles, which are eaten with rice to complete a *teishoku* (a typical Japanese set meal). *Yokocho* means alley or side street.

Figure 4: The Kakimori stationery store in Misuji, Taito-ward (Source: Authors, 2020)

Miki-san chose to live in the area because she wanted to be closely connected to other creatives. She graduated from the Taito Designers Village in 2012 and set up her own studio in the area soon after. Nowadays, she mainly supplies design and illustration services to public institutions like museums and the local council, as well as cafes and other local businesses. Miki-san does not know her neighbours and is not a member of the local *chonaikai*, which she views as irrelevant to her already busy everyday life. However, she is an active member of Monomachi, through which she has made many valuable work and personal connections, including long-term residents such as her current landlady who occupies the ground-floor retail space below her studio.

Miki-san noted Monomachi's flat hierarchy, which makes her feel that she can voice her opinions freely despite being one of the youngest members. However, she questions the organization's inclusiveness, as many other local but non-Japanese business owners do not seem to be involved, including the Indian and

Pakistani craftspeople who have been working in local jewellery stores for many years. Nevertheless, she volunteers considerable time to help with its activities, which she admits has been demanding at times. She values the people she meets in Monomachi, some of whom have become her clients (she regularly provides her illustration and branding services to local businesses). Along with those associated with the Taito Designers Village, they are her main social networks in the area:

This is the first time in the eight or so times that I have moved that I have been able to know like-minded people in my local neighbourhood, and I really enjoy being able to say hi to people I know when I pop into shops or meet people on the streets.

During the early stages of COVID-19, when she worked more from home, she still felt connected to the community and has advised other creatives, including older business owners on how to use online platforms (Interview 8b, August 4, 2020).

Reinventing the Traditional Business Model

In comparison, Sato-san, a third-generation meat-shop owner, was born and raised in the Torigoe neighbourhood. The shop was opened in 1929 along the *Okazu-yokocho* by his grandparents and continued by his parents until they retired (Figure 5). Sato-san wanted to carry on the business but knew it was not feasible due to the increasing competition and change of lifestyles among his generation. In our interview, he said:

The main reason for small traditional shops closing is that people aren't buying from them anymore as they prefer big supermarkets and convenience stores. Another problem is the children (of the owners) do not want to run the shop, myself included. Living in Tokyo is expensive, and it is difficult to make a living as a butcher.

The store was closed for several years until 2017, when Sato-san reopened it to offer an original product not available in supermarkets.

I thought hard about how I could continue the business in a feasible way and came up with the idea to reopen as a specialty store. I only sell one product, grilled pork using my own original recipe, and open only one day of the week. I was surprised at how popular the idea became with locals and was able to attract both old and new customers.

Sato-san offers limited stock and closes as soon as he has sold everything. While keeping his office job as an editor during the week, he currently manages all aspects of the shop himself, including the production, packaging, selling, and promotion, which are skills his parents passed on to him. Importantly, he maintains a positive attitude without high levels of stress compared to others, as the size of his business is manageable. Sato-san has successfully reinvented the traditional business model and has not been as affected by the current pandemic situation. In our follow up interview, he said he has increased the opening times to three days a week (selling out straight away) to meet demand, as many locals working from home have discovered his shop and more people prefer to buy locally since the pandemic started (Interview 1b, August 11, 2020).

Sato-san's personal networks include people he has known since childhood, including his classmates and their parents, many of whom are also shop owners. As the older shops shut down, however, such personal connections are also decreasing. On a neighbourhood level, he is a member of the local *chonaikai* and *shotengai* associations, and regularly participates in local activities including the Torigoe festival, *shotengai*, and Monomachi events. Still, he has noticed the distance between the old and new shop owners:

I wish for more collaboration between the older and new generation, but it is hard as older residents are more conservative. But I also think newcomers need more respect for older residents and not just impose new ideas without much consideration for the older owners. We need more conversation and exchange, which is happening in places like Monomachi, but such opportunities are rare.

Despite being active in organizations and enthusiastic to contribute, he reveals that it has been challenging to make any real changes in the current situation, as everyone is busy focusing on their own business (Interview 1b, August 11, 2020).

Figure 5: Entrance to the traditional shopping strip, Okazu-yokocho, in Torigoe, Taito-ward (Source: © David Stormer Chigusa, JapanVisitor.com, reproduced with permission)

Small and Sustainable

Riku-san is a newcomer who has owned a small wine bar in Kuramae since 2015 (Figure 3). He was drawn to the neighbourhood for its quiet downtown vibe, and now lives nearby with his partner and young child:

I liked the quiet and peaceful feel of Kuramae and would often cycle through the area on my way to Asakusa nearby. There were not many shops then as the area is a wholesale town. I would say I am one of the first waves of new restaurants and eateries opening in Kuramae, many others followed about one year after me.

He also noted that the neighbourhood has attracted an increasing number of domestic and foreign tourists, as it is close to such popular sightseeing spots as Asakusa. However, he does not actively seek to attract new customers: “My bar only has seven seats, so I think it is better to only serve people who want to come”. Riku-san, similar to Sato-san, does not employ any staff as he prefers to cook and serve his customers himself.

He has no interest in expanding or marketing his business, and prefers to be more exclusive, away from the main street. When asked about local neighbourhood networks, he replied that he is not actively participating in any community groups or events, as the area is very compact, and he does not need organized occasions to gather or share specific information. He has, however, participated in the local annual neighbourhood festival and sometimes meets and drinks with shop owners. He also joined some Monomachi events but cannot think of any similar groups for his industry:

The number of restaurants is small compared to the craft sector [...] We already know each other and are quite close with other shops who have opened within the last five years, but I would say there is some distance from restaurants that have opened say 30 years ago. (Interview 9a, April 30, 2020)

Looking at his comments, we can argue that Riku-san values personal connections over growth, and is content with the small scale of his business, which has proved to be sustainable, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. This seemed to be an advantage, as even though he had to close his shop for two months he was positive about the situation and thinks that small businesses like his are more resilient (a similar view to Sato-san's), as they do not have to worry about paying staff and are eligible for financial support from the government. During our follow up interview, Riku-san stated that he is now serving customers again one group at a time, offering three slots a day, which has been popular with families who prefer to dine privately. He does not have a website or phone number, but is active on Facebook, Instagram, and Line (messaging platform) to communicate with his customers. He also stated he is back to 90 percent of his regular earnings. This is surprisingly high considering reservations were not needed before the pandemic (Interview 9b, August 12 2020).

Preserving Tradition through Crafts

An example of a longstanding business is a third-generation, family-owned hand-crafted silverware business established in 1964. The lead craftsman and his four adult children operate the business from a rented building in the Misuji neighbourhood. While the rent is not cheap for them, they value the local community connections:

The Taito-ward area is compact and has a concentration of small businesses where we can all share wisdom and work hard together. Sure, the

rent may be cheaper in the suburbs, but we would be disadvantaged to be so far away as we are a small company working in a traditional craft, where access to information and personal relationships are very important.

They are active in several groups aimed at promoting traditional crafts both at the ward and Tokyo city levels and belong to the *chonaikai*, participating in the local festival. One of the sons, Tanaka-san, said during our interview that he notices a difference between younger designers and traditional businesses like theirs:

Monomachi mainly supports designers and creators, my younger brother shows some of his new designs in their events. I think our goals are different, as the younger designers are interested in creating new things while traditional businesses like ours are trying to preserve our craft for as long as possible. But I think the coexistence of these different groups is what makes us (Taito-ward) strong and attractive to customers. (Interview 6a, May 1 2020)

One of Tanaka-san's biggest concerns during the pandemic was their factory rent, as their greatly reduced working hours heavily affected the output of new products. It is also difficult to attract new customers who may not be willing to invest in a high-quality product without seeing it in person first. However, he said in our interview that he is even more worried about the aging population, including customers and skilled craftspeople:

We have an aging community, where the average age is over 60. There is a lack of motivation amongst the older craftspeople as they struggle to find apprentices and successors. I worry about them, as they are not as connected as younger people and have a hard time using online platforms. I try to help by keeping them up to date with the latest news and communication as they have no online presence, but they need more help and assistance. Older residents value personal connections more, especially in stressful times like now. (Interview 6b, August 6, 2020)

Discussion

Hybrid Identities, Social Networks and Community Identity in Times of Crisis

The interviews showed how different people perceive, react to, and adjust to diverse changes in the neighbourhood, such as rising rents, traditional shops closing,

and wealthier new residents. Although the area has experienced varying degrees of gentrification, our group of old and new shop owners is trying to form their own local networks to coexist alongside each other. At the time of this research, the global pandemic caused by COVID-19 had changed the way people live and work, especially for small business owners. Good levels of social capital and innovation are crucial to strengthening local resilience and the community's ability to provide its members with social support and a strong sense of belonging, especially during times of crisis. The interviews show that long-established local networks such as the *chonaikai* and *shotengai* associations are no longer serving the wider community as effectively as before. Based on our interviews, we found out that only one of the six newcomers have joined the local *chonaikai*, unlike most older residents, which confirms citywide trends (TMG 2015, 24). The *shotengai* association is also dwindling, with about ten core members (Interview 1b, August 11, 2020). Older shop owners are struggling to stay in touch with the community once they (have to) shut down their shops and lose their main form of communication, whereas younger residents can more easily make use of tools such as smartphones or the internet. This also shows that traditional neighbourhood groups have not been able to welcome newcomers in recent decades (Brasor and Tsubuku 2015) and struggle to gain the support of younger residents, who will be crucial to help during the pandemic and recovery (Kreitman 2020). This leads us to believe that the *chonaikai* and *shotengai* associations are limited in their response to the current COVID-19 situation. To confirm this, the authors analysed the websites of several local *chonaikai*, whose activities currently seem to be limited to the distribution of masks, informing people of the latest news, and warnings about scammers who might approach older residents.⁹

In contrast, we heard from one of our interviews about an innovative online initiative of the ward to gather information about local restaurants who offered a takeout service during the state of emergency. The online app was set up by a ward assembly member through Google forms in April 2020, which was turned into an app by the local tourism department; it features 63 restaurants and has over 21,000 views to date.¹⁰ This example shows that some groups have been able to swiftly adjust by shifting their businesses operations online and connecting with the ward and potential customers in new ways, using the available resources (Interview with Taito-ward member, August 12, 2020).

The interviews highlighted the increasing importance of new emerging social networks, based on mutual interests, especially work, as they help newcomers and

9 At the time of writing, the Yamabushi town association had distributed 7,000 masks to its members (10 per member), see <https://kitaueno.exblog.jp/>.

10 For information on the app, see <https://t-navi.city.taito.lg.jp/news/?itemid=215&dispmid=459>. The app can be accessed here: <https://taitotakeout.glideapp.io/>.

young creatives to take part in community life. This study argues that existing and new emerging social networks could better communicate and work together to develop a range of local projects to improve the daily lives of different members, as seen in the neighbouring Adachi-ward, which has implemented new projects with younger residents who provide regular support to elderly, disabled and others in need (Waterson 2014).

In the target study area of Taito-ward, two key organizations were identified as important groups connecting a range of small businesses: 1) Taito Designers Village and 2) Monomachi Association. Taito Designers Village has been especially active during the COVID-19 crisis, regularly posting updates about events and increasing their online activity. For example, one of our interviewees had the idea to showcase the designers over the organization's Instagram live feed to inform people about the work in progress and activities planned in the near future (Interview 14, August 12, 2020). This shows that local organizations are open to new ideas proposed by different members.

Another good example mirroring active engagement in social networks is Miki-san, who belongs to Monomachi's organizing committee. In our follow up interview, she stated that volunteering can be time consuming but will benefit independent businesses, including her own, in the long run. This is already proving true, as her private work has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic began, as cafes and other local businesses have requested her expertise to produce flyers, illustrations, and related branding material (Interview 8b, August 4, 2020). Monomachi has also strived to teach online skills (e.g., how to set up SNS accounts or organize Zoom meetings) to older business owners, which is promising to hear as this addresses the concerns of Tanaka-san, a silverware craftsman, helping to connect older and younger, long-standing and new residents (Interview 6b, August 6, 2020).

The above statements confirm our argument that a range of formal and informal networks is crucial in challenging times, as webs of informal relations and interaction function like small social innovative bubbles. Different members exchange new ideas on social media channels, despite their physical isolation. This shows how closely social media and social capital are intertwined, inspiring new innovative practices that help the community to recover (Jung and Moro 2014; Kaigo 2012). In Taito-ward, this inspired others to continue to drive forward their ideas, and it was surprising that even during the pandemic new shops such as Ome Kitchen (2020), an environmental conscious farm and restaurant, have opened in the neighbourhood and are helping to improve the community.

In contrast, a shop owner like Riku-san is not seeking more ways to engage with others in the community. He has so far been spared the negative effects of the

pandemic. He does not feel the need to overly use social media to promote his business, and has not signed up to the ward's takeout service app. The compact local area is sufficient for Riku-san to feel connected, and he has sufficient resources and support from the ward and his personal networks to carry on his business. The pork-shop owner Sato-san is also doing well, as he is increasingly selling his products online, thanks to existing relationships with department stores and an increased number of local customers. In comparison, older businesses like Tanaka-san's are struggling with challenges such as rising rent prices, a shrinking number of regular customers, and aging craftspeople like his father, who cannot operate modern communication tools to promote the business. This shows that while social networks are important, financial assistance from the government and local ward office is crucial to keep businesses afloat during times of crisis. Specific and targeted assistance to those in need, in particular the elderly, is most important and should be addressed immediately.

Conclusion

The aims of this research were twofold: to analyse the potential of localities to build up resilience in utilizing social capital and innovation, and highlight the role of localities for inclusive urban governance. The research has shown that the area tries to actively use existing social capabilities to include newcomers who do not always blend in with the community. It is especially the aim and effort of the independent shop owners to bond, bridge, and link old and new customers and residents with each other. Most newer residents interviewed stated that one of the most attractive aspects of the area is the identity of the community, shaped by the diverse social networks and relationships among residents. They felt that such networks, which are normally very closed off to newcomers, are in fact open and welcoming, allowing space for change and adaption. Yet, some feel these networks are still limited to those who are "Japanese", even though more non-Japanese people are living and working in this area permanently.

This shows that views are divided, and due to our chosen research methodology we were limited in the views we could represent. Even though we tried to approach a variety of community members, the pandemic prevented us from conducting more on-site observations and interacting with the interviewees in their own environments to verify the results. Instead, the current situation required us to triangulate our initial results with additional data collected online, and follow-up and additional interviews (with e.g. local ward officers), organized in

a much shorter time span than preferred. However, this demonstrates that an adjustment of the research methodology is a crucial part of the research process, and can also help other researchers to transition to remote research. Moreover, urban communities worldwide are affected by the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, and it will be necessary to compare these cases to learn how different communities are responding and recovering to gather examples of best practice in the future.

Furthermore, we learned through this research that the focal urban community displays a high degree of social capital and innovation, especially during times of crisis where informal networks and relationships have been cultivated in third places and transition zones, including the internet. These places are important as they secure the necessary level of social interaction and mobilize social capital, which functions as a kind of glue holding the community together. In particular, the personal narratives showed that the community was and is able to absorb and respond to different stresses in its own way, though some people living in the neighbourhood are challenged by different economic/technological issues and need more support than others. If a community finds ways to include all of its members, then these processes can actively contribute to increase local resilience and the ability to respond to shocks (Aldrich and Meyer 2015). This ability is highly influenced by the level of social capital and social innovation, which can be best maintained by securing the existence of diverse social networks while also including new emerging social activities, social practices, and hybrid identities.

In sum, the results of this research support the argument that strong communities can share their experience and knowledge with other local and urban governmental bodies, which can then ensure that new policies and projects have a better chance to be effective and successful. Thus, it is only if the micro, meso, and macro levels of urban governance communicate and work closely together that we can secure the local support, participation, and resilience needed to create more inclusive urban communities and public places. In other words, inclusive urban governance should aim to empower all residents socially, politically, and economically to increase the capabilities of local communities and the city as a whole.

Finally, we suggest that similar studies could analyse other localities within central Tokyo, the wider periphery, and other areas in Japan over a longer time period to further understand the impact of policies at the local level. These cases can then be compared with international ones, especially urban neighbourhoods in Asian mega cities, to gain more insights into the future challenges of these areas.

Acknowledgments:

The authors thank all the individuals interviewed for generously offering their time to cooperate with the research, as well as Hanae Soma and Yusuke Nakagawa, students at Keio University, for their valuable assistance with the translation and transcription of interviews.

References

- Aldrich, Daniel P. 2012. *Building Resilience: Social Capital in Post-disaster Recovery*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Aldrich, Daniel P, and Michelle A. Meyer. 2015. "Social Capital and Community Resilience." *American Behavioral Scientist* 59 (2): 254–69.
- Ayob, Noorseha, Simon Teasdale, and Kylie Fagan. 2016. "How Social Innovation 'Came to Be': Tracing the Evolution of a Contested Concept." *Journal of Social Policy* 45 (4): 635–53.
- Béland, Louis-Philippe, Abel Brodeur, and Taylor Wright. 2020. "The Short-Term Economic Consequences of Covid-19: Exposure to Disease, Remote Work and Government Response." IZA Discussion Paper Series 13159. Bonn: IZA – Institute of Labor Economics. <http://ftp.iza.org/dp13159.pdf>.
- Brasor, Philip, and Masako Tsubuku. 2015. "Not-So-Friendly Neighborhood Associations." *Japan Times*, October 31, 2015. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2015/10/31/how-tos/not-friendly-neighborhood-associations/#.X0WqCcgbIU>.
- Capitiano, Marco. 2018. "Participatory Place Management in the Age of Shrinkage." *Journal of Place Management and Development* 11 (3). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325727672_Participatory_place_management_in_the_age_of_shrinkage_The_case_of_Kunitachi_within_Tokyo%27s_peripheral_areas.
- Chiavacci, David, and Carola Hommerich. 2017. "Reassembling the Pieces: The Big Picture of Inequality in Japan." In *Social Inequality in Post-Growth Japan*, edited by David Chiavacci and Carola Hommerich, 287–300. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Condry, Ian. 2013. *The Soul of Anime: Collaborative Creativity and Japan's Media Success Story*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Craig, Gary, Marjorie Mayo, and Keith Popple. 2011. *The Community Development Reader: History, Themes and Issues*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Daniere, Amrita, and Hy Van Luong. 2012. *The Dynamics of Social Capital and Civic Engagement in Asia*. Abingdon: Routledge.

- Dimmer, Christian. 2014. "Evolving Place Governance Innovations and Pluralising Reconstruction Practices in Post-disaster Japan." *Planning Theory & Practice* 15 (2): 260–65.
- . 2016. "Place-Making Before and After 3.11: The Emergence of Social Design in Post-Disaster, Post-Growth Japan." *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 28: 198–226.
- Elmqvist, Thomas, Xuemei Bai, Niki Frantzeskaki, Corrie Griffith, David Maddox, Timon McPhearson, Susan Parnell, Susan Parnell, David Simon, and Mark Watkins, eds. 2018. *The Urban Planet: Knowledge towards Sustainable Cities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- von der Fehr, Ane, Jan Sølberg, and Jesper Bruun. 2018. "Validation of Networks Derived from Snowball Sampling of Municipal Science Education Actors." *International Journal of Research & Method in Education* 41 (1): 38–52.
- Fujii, Sayaka, Junichiro Okata, and André Sorensen. 2007. "Inner-City Redevelopment in Tokyo: Conflicts over Urban Places, Planning Governance and Neighborhoods." In *Living Cities in Japan: Citizens' Movements, Machizukuri and Local Environments*, edited by Andre Sorensen, and Carolin Funck, 247–66. Abingdon: Routledge/Nissan Institute.
- Fujisawa, Yoshikazu, Yu Ishida, Satoshi Nagatomi, and Kunihiro Iwasaki. 2015. "A Study of Social Innovation Concepts: A Japanese Perspective." *Japan Social Innovation Journal* 5 (1): 1–13.
- Fukutake, Tadashi. 1989. *The Japanese Social Structure: Its Evolution in the Modern Century*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press.
- Gerometta, Julia, Hartmut Haussermann, and Giulia Longo. 2005. "Social Innovation and Civil Society in Urban Governance: Strategies for an Inclusive City." *Urban Studies* 42 (11): 2007–21.
- Gottfried, Heidi. 2018. "The Phoenix Rises: Tokyo's Origins as a Global City." *Critical Sociology* 44 (3): 421–35.
- Hendriks, Frank. 2014. "Understanding Good Urban Governance: Essentials, Shifts, and Values." *Urban Affairs Review* 50 (4): 553–76.
- Ho, Kong Chong. 2019. *Neighbourhoods for the City in Pacific Asia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Hoy, Selena. 2019. "Kuramae is the Hot New Tokyo District You Need to Visit: The Former Industrial Neighbourhood in Tokyo's Taito Ward is Now a Hip Haven for Creatives." *Jetstar*, August 2019. <https://www.jetstar.com/au/en/inspiration/articles/japan-tokyo-kuramae-district>.
- Ikawa, Hiroshi. 2008. "15 Years of Decentralization Reform in Japan." *Up-to-date-Documents on Local Autonomy in Japan* No. 4. Tokyo: Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR).

- Imai, Heide. 2012. "Balancing Urban Revitalization, Tourism and Development Issues in Times of Crisis: Kawagoe's Historical District as Self-Sustaining and Resilient Community." *Journal Contemporary Japan* 24 (2): 149–78.
- . 2017. *Tokyo Roji: The Diversity and Versatility of Alleys in a City in Transition*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- . 2020. "Poverty in a Wealthy Megacity: Stories from Tokyo's Alleys after the Bubble Burst." In *Handbook of Megacities and Megacity-Regions*, edited by Danielle Labbé, and André Sorensen, 244–60. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Ishigaki, Kazushi, and Naoki Sashida. 2013. "Use of Social Innovation to Solve Problems at the Community Level and Create New Business in the Social Domain." *Fujitsu Science and Technological Journal* 49 (4): 430–39.
- Japan Today. 2020. "Corona Poverty' Spreading and Getting Worse." *Japan Today*, May 2, 2020. <https://japantoday.com/category/features/kuchikomi/corona-poverty-spreading-and-getting-worse>.
- Jung, Joo-Young, and Munehito Moro. 2014. "Multi-Level Functionality of Social Media in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake." *Disasters* 38 (2): 123–43.
- Kaigo, Muneo. 2012. "Social Media Usage during Disasters and Social Capital: Twitter and the Great East Japan Earthquake." *Keio Communication Review* 34 (1):19–35.
- Kim, Christopher, Hitomi Nakanishi, Deborah Blackman, Ben Freyens, and Angela M Benson. 2017. "The Effect of Social Capital on Community Co-production: Towards Community-Oriented Development in Post-Disaster Recovery." *Procedia Engineering* 180: 901–11.
- Kohama, Fumiko. 2019. "Gentrification and Spatial Polarization in Eastern Inner-City Tokyo: *The Restructuring of the Kyojima Area in Sumida Ward*." *The Risho International Journal of Academic Research in Culture and Society* 2: 119–49.
- Kondo, Keisuke. 2019. *The Costs of Urban Agglomeration: Evidence from the Inbound Tourism Boom in Japan*. RIETI Discussion Paper Series 19-E-106. Tokyo: Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry.
- Kratke, Stefan. 2011. *The Creative Capital of Cities: Interactive Knowledge Creation and the Urbanization Economies of Innovation*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Kreitman, Paul. 2020. "In the Fight against COVID-19, Neighborhood Associations Could Be Japan's Ace in the Hole." *Japan Times*, April 24, 2020 <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/04/26/national-japan-neighborhood-associations-coronavirus/>.
- Live Japan. 2019. "A Day in Kuramae: 5 Unique Shops in Tokyo's 'Brooklyn'." *Live Japan*, December 3, 2019. <https://livejapan.com/en/in-tokyo/in-pref-tokyo/in-akihabara/article-a0001891/>.

- Martinus, Kirsten. 2014. "Can Public Space Be a Platform for Social Innovation? A Study of Sannomiya, Kobe, Japan." *Japan Social Innovation Journal* 4 (1): 44–54.
- Moulaert, Frank, Erik Swyngedouw, Flavia Martinelli, and Sara Gonzalez. 2010. *Can Neighbourhoods Save the City?: Community Development and Social Innovation*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Muramatsu, Naoko, and Hiroko Akiyama. 2011. "Japan: Super-Aging Society Preparing for the Future." *The Gerontologist* 51 (4): 425–32.
- Okata, Junichiro. 2009. *Innovations in Collaborative Urban Regeneration*, vol. 6. Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Ome Kitchen. 202. "Tonights Farmers Tapas." Instagram photo, August 9, 2020. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CDqUS7JIZ3f/>.
- Osborne, Caroline, Claudia Baldwin, and Dana Thomsen. 2016. "Contributions of Social Capital to Best Practice Urban Planning Outcomes." *Urban Policy and Research* 34 (3): 212–24.
- Pekkanen, Robert J, Yutaka Tsujinaka, and Hidehiro Yamamoto. 2014. *Neighborhood Associations and Local Governance in Japan*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Pinet, Nicolas. 2017. "Facing Commodification: Subaltern Tactics in a Working-Class Tokyo Neighbourhood." In *Identity, Justice and Resistance in the Neoliberal City*, edited by Gülçin Erdi, and Yıldırım Şentürk, 13–35. Berlin: Springer.
- Ritzer, George. 2007. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. Vol. 1479. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sand, Jordan. 2013. *Tokyo Vernacular: Common Spaces, Local Histories, Found Objects*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Shiihara, Akiko. 2010. "A 10-Year Pathway to Machizukuri in Yanaka." *Machizukuri Monthly Magazine* May 4, 2010: 94–103.
- Simone, Abdoumalig, and Edgar Pieterse. 2017. *New Urban Worlds: Inhabiting Dissonant Times*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Sonobe, Masahisa, and Takashi Machimura. 1997. "Globalization Effect or Bubble Effect?: Social Polarization in Tokyo." Paper presented at Workshop on Global Cities, City University of New York' Graduate Center, March 1997.
- Sorensen, André. 2004. *The Making of Urban Japan: Cities and Planning from Edo to the Twenty First Century*. Abingdon: Routledge/Nissan Institute.
- . 2006. "Centralization, Urban Planning Governance, and Citizen Participation in Japan." In *Cities, Autonomy, and Decentralization in Japan*, edited by Carola Hein, and Philippe Pelletier, 101–27. Abingdon: Taylor & Francis.

- Tanaka, Hiroshige, and Chiharu Tanaka. 2016. "Urban Reform and Shrinking City Hypotheses on the Global City Tokyo." *Long Finance and London Accord Web Papers*, 1–18. https://www.longfinance.net/media/documents/Tanaka_Tanaka_2016_-_Urban_Reform_and_Shrinking_City_Hypotheses.pdf.
- Teh, Yee Sing, and Yoh Sasaki. 2014. "Rehabilitation Methods and Revitalization Strategies in the Old Inner-City Areas of Rapid Growth Cities in Asia: A Comparison of Four Cities: Penang, Hanoi, Shanghai, and Tokyo." In *Proceedings of International Symposium on City Planning 2014*. <http://www.cpij.or.jp/com/iac/sympo/Proceedings2014/35-fullpaper.pdf>.
- TMG (Tokyo Metropolitan Government). 2015. "Tōkyō no jichi no ari-kata kenkyūkai saishū hōkoku (Tokyo Autonomous Government Study Group Final Report)." <https://www.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/INET/CHOUSA/2015/04/60p4u101.htm>.
- Toivonen, Tuukka. 2013. *The Emergence of the Social Innovation Community: Towards Collaborative Changemaking?* Working paper. SSRN 2369540.
- . 2016. "What is the Social Innovation Community? Conceptualizing an Emergent Collaborative Organization." *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship* 7 (1): 49–73.
- Ueki, Yutaka. 2000. "A Global City Strategy: The Rise and Fall of Tokyo." PhD diss., University of Lancaster.
- Vankova, Kalina, Hitoshi Nakamura, and Gesa Witthöft. 2018. "Synergistic Urban Improvement: Case Study of Hikifune Neighbourhood in Tokyo." *Environmental Science Sustainable Development* 3 (2): 75–88.
- Vogel, Ronald K. 2001. "Decentralization and Urban Governance: Reforming Tokyo Metropolitan Government." *Urban Governance Around the World*: 114–48.
- Waley, Paul. 2012. "Who Cares about the Past in Today's Tokyo?" In *Urban Spaces in Japan: Social and Cultural Perspectives*, edited by Christoph Brumann, and Evelyn Schulz, 148–66. Abingdon: Routledge.
- . 2016. "Speaking Gentrification in the Languages of the Global East." *Urban Studies* 53 (3): 615–25.
- Wang, Jian, Zhuqing Yang, and Xuepeng Qian. 2020. "Driving Factors of Urban Shrinkage: Examining the Role of Local Industrial Diversity." *Cities* 99: Article 102646.
- Wasson, Christina. 2000. "Ethnography in the Field of Design." *Human Organization* 59 (4): 377–88.
- Waterson, Hannah. 2014. "No More Lonely Deaths: Our Promise to the Older People of Adachi in Japan." *Guardian*, April 29, 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/local-government-network/2014/apr/29/no-more-lonely-deaths-older-people-adachi-japan>.

- Wissink, Bart, and Arjan Hazelzet. 2012. "Social Networks in 'Neighbourhood Tokyo'." *Urban Studies* 49 (7): 1527–48.
- Zolli, Andrew, and Ann Marie Healy. 2012. *Resilience: Why Things Bounce Back*. New York: Simon and Schuster.