

## A SPONTANEOUS OR GOVERNMENT-LED PROCESS OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF A HOME AREA FOR THE OUTCASTE

A case study of the transformations of San'ya, Tokyo

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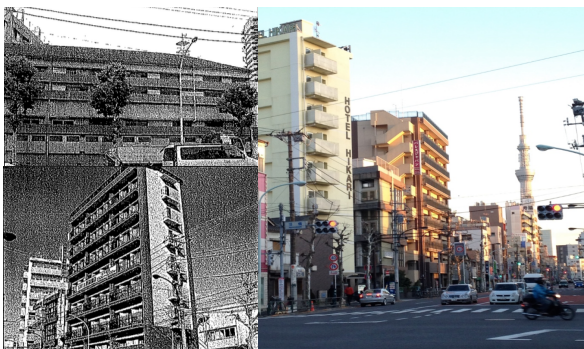
## San'ya

- Historically, San'ya was the area assigned to outcaste Japanese – convicts, prostitutes, homeless, etc. -- in Tokyo. Industrialization during Meiji and Taisho periods transformed San'ya into an area where day labour concentrate



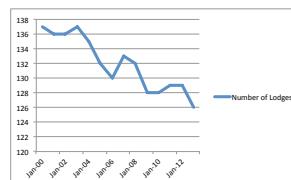
- 1960s, population reached peak, and economy prospered
- 1991, Japan's economic bubble led San'ya to deep and long depression. Since then, the homeless camps in San'ya in large scale. Kan'yi Shukusho's main guests are jobless social assistance recipients. It concentrated the urban poor in Tokyo

In the last 10 years, new investment is moving in the San'ya area and its neighborhood. Transformation has been taking place



The number of Kanyi shokusho decreases while the number of condominium increases

Number change in the Kanyi Shokusho



Middle-income condominium



## The driving forces of urban transformation

- Market spontaneous force:** response by individual and small developers to demographic and social changes (Kadi, 2009). It work through ground rent system which internalizes the geographical differences in land price over time (Smith, 1996)
- Government force:** strategically plan and develop certain areas for social/economic/ environmental goal
- Mixed and coordinated force:** urban managerialism and urban entrepreneurship
  - urban entrepreneurship:** public-private partnership in which a traditional local boosterism is integrated with the use of local governmental powers to try and attract external sources of funding, new direct investments, or new employment sources' (Harvey, 1989a:7)
  - Urban managerialism:** within cities, there were forces like managers or gatekeepers occupying key positions both in the public and the private sectors, affecting the access to scarce resources in cities, which conditions the everyday life of the residents. The managers, as gatekeeping occupations, can be estate agents, local authorities, building society managers, and planners, and so on. Pahl (1970)

## How about San'ya?

- In the case of San'ya, the new development has the typology of spontaneous development, which is not the typology developed with coordinated forces with the involvement of government. However, the Tokyo 2000 city master plan and the redevelopment of facilities offering public services (ex. transport) also indicate the features of entrepreneurship where government forces mingle with market forces.
- Comparing to the approaches analyzing the driving forces of urban transformation with dualism, urban managerialism and entrepreneurship propose new ways of defining the role of government in urban development and transformation. It proposes that as a driving force of the transformation of a city, government does not have to be in the frontier, but can be in the backstage leading the process and paving the way. Market force can be introduced by the government to fulfill its vision.
- > Opens the window for us to define government force in the transformation of San'ya, rather than frame it in the traditional understanding of government force. Basing on it, we then will be able to define the process of San'ya whether is a spontaneous process or a planned one.

## Research question and argument

- RA: What is the driving force of transformation in San'ya? It is caused by market spontaneous force following the dynamic of demographic and ground rent change, or a planned process? Why the driving force is not 'apparent'?
- Argument: The transformation of San'ya is driven by market force from the surface, however, a more comprehensive examination indicates that the transformation of San'ya is a strategic and systematic 'clean-out' process led by the government.

Events in the historical timeline indicates the process is led by the government

Systematic clean-out

## Strategies grouped by the effects

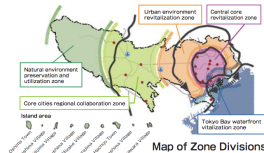
- ERASURE OF MEMORY (1960s)
  - Renaming of San'ya during the reconfiguration of Tokyo administrative districts in the 1960s: San'ya -> Kiyokawa, Nihonsuzumi, Higashi Akawaka
- POPULATION DISPLACEMENT (2000)
  - Policy change in the Johoku Labor and Welfare Centre – only assists registered social assistance recipients in 2000
  - Construction of temporary settlements for the homeless in late 2000
- ENCOURAGEMENT OF NEW INVESTMENT (2010)
  - The renovation of Minami-senju station

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## Why the driving force is not 'apparent'

Strong enforcement of population displacement were not taken place

- Between 1960s and 1980s, economic significance
- In 2000, global city strategy is proposed by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (2002 strategy plan). More intensive measures are needed to speed up the normalisation.



- However, a) high economic and political cost; b) population aging allows a 'soft approach' to work out.

## Conclusion

- The transformation of San'ya as a traditional area for outcast people and day labourers is a process guided by government
- The intensiveness of intervention in San'ya area is relevant to the periodic strategic goal of city development

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## Implication

- It is difficult to conclude whether the adoption of 'benign' approach can justify the redevelopment or renewal of an 'undesirable' place in the city core like San'ya. The good side of the story is that the existing population does not have to be relocated and cut off from their original social connection, while redevelopment can still proceed and add land value to the area, as well as improve the general image of the city. But on the other hand, the transformation has to be on the expense of excluding the newly deprived population, taking away a possible way of surviving in place where is close to various resources, and also increasing the living cost of the present poor population.
- At the center of the issue probably should be the attitude of the elites, the city governors and planners, as well as the ordinary residents, toward the deprived population and deprived areas. Whose city? What does a good image mean? Whether a city should be more tolerable to its flaws to accommodate everyone and open its resources and opportunities to everyone? Whether a less 'desirable' place is a bad place that must be converted to feed the taste of middle class? Whether they really have to be incompatible with the rest of the city and rest of the population? These are questions that this research raises for more discussion in the future.

Thank you! :D