

Morphology, Accessibility and Community-Making in Tokyo's High-Density Neighborhoods: A Comparative Study of Densification in Azabu-Juban and Kachidoki

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Abstract:

Tokyo's rapidly densifying urban landscape reveals a dynamic connection between redevelopment, social and commercial behavior, and the evolution of everyday life. This study compares two high-density neighborhoods, Azabu-Juban 2-chome and 3-chome and Kachidoki 1-chome, to examine how contrasting urban morphologies shape the spatial distribution of daily life facilities and influence patterns of social interaction, community building, and gentrification.

Both areas have similar size and exceed 40,000 people/km², allowing for a comparison under high demographic pressures. However, they differ significantly in urban fabric: Azabu-Juban 2-chome and 3-chome are fine-grained districts shaped by slow-paced, bottom-up development and traditional shopping streets that foster informal interaction and community ties. Kachidoki 1-chome, by contrast, demonstrates a top-down, large-scale redevelopment typology, characterized by high-rise residential towers and vertically stacked shopping centers, often limiting spontaneous social engagement.

The study identifies clear contrasts in land coverage, floor-area ratios, and behavior patterns. While Kachidoki's high density results in fewer per-capita daily life facilities due to vertical concentration, Azabu-Juban supports a more walkable and diverse amenity network. These spatial and social patterns are especially important for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, who depend on accessible, interaction-rich environments. By integrating behavioral observations, such as proximity to services and patterns of social and commercial activity clustering, the research demonstrates that high population density can be achieved without sacrificing vibrant street life. These findings highlight the

value of gradual urban growth in sustaining inclusive, resilient neighborhoods and ensuring equitable access to social infrastructure in high-density environments.

Keywords:

Urban Morphology, Densification, Social Interaction, Tokyo.