

Shimokitazawa

— The Study of Organically Developed Shopping District in Tokyo—

Keiro Hattori

ABSTRACT: This paper takes a look in Shimokitazawa, organically developed shopping district in Tokyo, from two points of views in order to understand its characteristics. They are physical urban form and commercial activities. The study of physical urban form has found that the unique physical form of Shimokitazawa originally derived from farming village street configuration. In addition, its escape from the bombing of WWII and also readjustment project had contributed to creating Shimokitazawa's narrow and winding streets configuration with a lot of cul-de-sacs that is quite friendly to pedestrian but not to autos. The study of commercial activities has found that Shimokitazawa has a lot of small shops that do not open for long time compared to other commercial districts in Tokyo. Many of these shops are individually owned and in average, do not make so much profit. The interview surveys to these merchants found that some shops are actually losing money and are on the verge of closing down. The abundance of apparel shops and cafés as well as subcultural spots such as small theatres and live music clubs has created this place quite attractive to young people. The study suggested that Shimokitazawa is the anti-thesis of scrap and build kind of mega-block development that Japanese governments are still keen on, but because of recent economic crisis and because of recent urban planning proposal of wide road that cut through the neighborhood, these unique characteristics of Shimokitazawa is in danger.

Keywords: Shopping District in Tokyo, Organic Development, Shimokitazawa, Subculture, Pedestrian-Oriented

Introduction

Objective

Local shopping districts have been endangered species in many urban areas in Japan since 1990s. The few cities that have been able to sustain some of their local shopping districts include Sapporo, Fukuoka, Kyoto, Osaka, and Tokyo. However, the spread of auto lifestyle and the globalization of economy have weakened the vitality and the social importance of these local shopping districts recently (Mitsuhashi, 2009). Shimokitazawa is one of the few local shopping

districts that have been able to sustain its vitality. Shimokitazawa is, still today, the most vibrant shopping districts in Tokyo despite its chaotic environment.

Shimokitazawa was developed as a residential district mostly after the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1921. After World War II, the commercial businesses began to encroach the residential area. The development of both residential area and commercial area were executed without proper urban planning. As a consequence, the district became a place without any road that is wide enough for good auto access, without any traffic signal (but do have railway crossings), and with only few high-rise buildings that is a rarity in commercial districts in Tokyo. With what seems to be demerits for commercial district has been functioning as a positive factor in Shimokitazawa. It has been described by New York Times writer as “Tokyo’s answer to Greenwich Village, an epicenter of youth culture in one of Asia’s trendiest metropolises” (Fackler, 2006).

However, the planning agency of Tokyo Metropolitan Government is planning to build a 26-meter wide road that will cut through this commercial district. The object of the road is to provide a good access for automobile, however the road will likely destroy the urban fabric of this district, of which is probably its greatest asset. There is a strong residential group that is opposing this project including citizen group “Save the Shimokitazawa” (Fackler, 2006).

The objective of this study is to understand the characteristics of Shimokitazawa shopping district. The study mainly analyzes the subject from two points of view: its physical urban form and its commercial activities.

Definition of the Study Area

Shimokitazawa is a name of the railway station, but not a legal name of the neighborhood. Shimokitazawa is more like a nickname of the area, such as Greenwich Village in New York or Russian Hill in San Francisco or Myondon District in Seoul.

This study defines Shimokitazawa as an area that corresponds to Kitazawa 2 Chome District. Kitazawa 2 Chome District is the legal district designated by Setagaya Ward Government. The area is bordered by Chazawa-Dori Street in east, Ichibangai-Hon-Dori Street in north, and Kamakura-Dori Street in west. The study area is depicted in Map 1. The station of Shimokitazawa locates in the center of the study area.

Methodology

The study of the characteristics of physical urban form of Shimokitazawa has been conducted through maps and field survey of the site. The study of commercial activities of Shimokitazawa has been conducted by field survey with the help of several literatures, statistics and websites of merchant associations. The literatures that were used are listed in the reference. The interview

survey to 37 local shop owners of Shimokitazawa was conducted. Local shop, in this research, is defined as “non-chain store,” and is managed by owner him or herself. The survey tried to grasp what these shop owners feel as advantage and disadvantage of having shops in Shimokitazawa. This study was conducted in July 2011.

The Outline of Shimokitazawa

Geography

Shimokitazawa is a mixed-use shopping district in Setagaya Ward, Tokyo, Japan. It consists of the area surrounding Shimokitazawa Station, where the Odakyu Line and Keio Inokashira Line intersect. Odakyu Line connects with Shinjuku terminal station whereas Keio Inokashira Line connects with Shibuya terminal station. Shinjuku and Shibuya are one of the largest terminals in Tokyo, thus making Shimokitazawa quite convenient to access by public transportation. Shimokitazawa locates approximately four kilometers southwest of Shinjuku (Map 2).

Map 2 : Location of Shimokitazawa



The station is located at the center of the district. It is on a gradual slope, where southern side is lower and the western side is higher in terms of elevation. The two railway lines, Odakyu and Keio, cut the district into four zones, and they also function as physical barriers. Thus, the four zones have created their own characters. As Masami Kobayashi, Professor of Architecture in Meiji University has pointed out, “North is for fashion and music, East is for theatrical art, South is for restaurant and bars, and West is for residential housing and clinics” (Kobayashi, 2005).

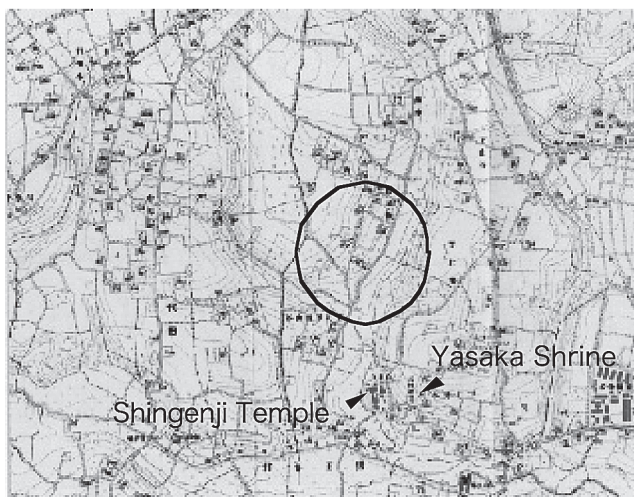
History

Shimokitazawa has long been a farming village. Map 3 shows the map of Shimokitazawa area in 1916. The map indicates that Shimokitazawa was a genuine farming village then. The map shows

that the surrounding area of the village is not only fields but also a forest. The land use of the area was quite typical of Musashino plateau, which spread in the western part of Tokyo, at that time. It also shows that the area was divided into two by Kitazawa river, a small river that is running north to south. The river joins with the Kitazawa canal, running west to east, at the southern tip of Shimokitazawa village. Both the river and the canal are now culverts. Some important landmarks shown in this map such as Shingenji temple and Yasaka shrine exist in the same location today.

Map 4 shows the map of Shimokitazawa area in 1932. Odakyu railway line that connects Shimokitazawa with Shinjuku opened in 1927. Keio Inogashira railway line that connects Shimokitazawa with Shibuya followed, by opening its station in 1933. There was the exodus from

Map 3 : Shimokitazawa area in 1916



1916

Map 4 : Shimokitazawa area in 1932



1932

the traditionally habited eastern part of Tokyo to suburban western part including Shimokitazawa due to the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. With the opening of the railway station, Shimokitazawa supplied the land for the people in search for new house in the western suburbs of Tokyo, and soon it began to see the change of land use, from farming land to residential area, thanks to its proximity to Shinjuku and Shibuya.

Setagaya Mura Village, a municipality that Shimokitazawa belonged at the time, had seen the population growth from 13,054 in 1920 to 73,310 in 1930. This rapid urban expansion exceeded the pace of road construction, which fact is also the reason for the organic street alignment of this area.

Shimokitazawa somehow escaped from the bombing of World War II, and many people came to Shimokitazawa to obtain the daily needs, since the black market had been established in the vicinity of the station. There is still a reminiscent of the black market at the same site, however, the size of market has been dramatically shrunk since 1980 (Kimura, 2005).

Photo 1 : Former black market site is still used today



Map 5 shows the map of Shimokitazawa area in 1955. 10 years after the end of World War II, the area had been totally urbanized, with very little open space left. However, by comparing Map 3 and Map 5, one can understand that main street structure has not been changed since the era of farming village. The urbanized Shimokitazawa has succeeded the DNA of the spatial configuration of farming village. Imao (2010) indicates that this organically developed street alignment of Shimokitazawa is the reason why present Shimokitazawa is still pedestrian friendly.

Shimokitazawa grew as a typical railway suburb, quite similar to what the later American planner would call it “transit oriented development” (Cervero and Michael, 1996). However, the difference was that in Japan, at that time, had no choice but to have development focused around transit station since the car ownership was quite low. The motorization of Japan took place much later than US or Europe beginning in 1960s (Miyao, 1985).

Map 5 : Shimokitazawa area in 1955



1955

Since late 1960s, the southern part of the station began to see some red-light activities catering for a businessman (Kimura, 2005). But after mid 70s, many students and younger generation who used to settle in Shinjuku moved out to surrounding neighborhoods including Shimokitazawa. This was the turning point for Shimokitazawa later becoming as a “young people’s neighborhood” (Kimura, 2005). The music festival called “Shimokitazawa Ongakusai” was held in 1979 attracting more than 4000 people. Some small live music clubs began to open in the neighborhood, and Bohemian-kind of culture began to settle. In 1982, the historic “Honda Gekijo” theater building was established. This was the first theater opened in Shimokitazawa, but before long, small theaters began to open in the vicinity of the theater as well. In the late 80s, mass media began to introduce Shimokitazawa as a town for young generation, and the image of the neighborhood, whether it reflected the reality or not was in question, has been created.

Shimokitazawa’s uniqueness has been enhanced since 80s’, mostly because other commercial districts in Tokyo had been more or less bulldozed through urban redevelopment and lost their charms as pedestrian oriented urban space. With its numerous cafés, unique fashions, and music outlets, many of them owned by not corporate but individuals, Shimokitazawa provides a rare urban qualities that is human scale, liberal and somewhat bohemian.

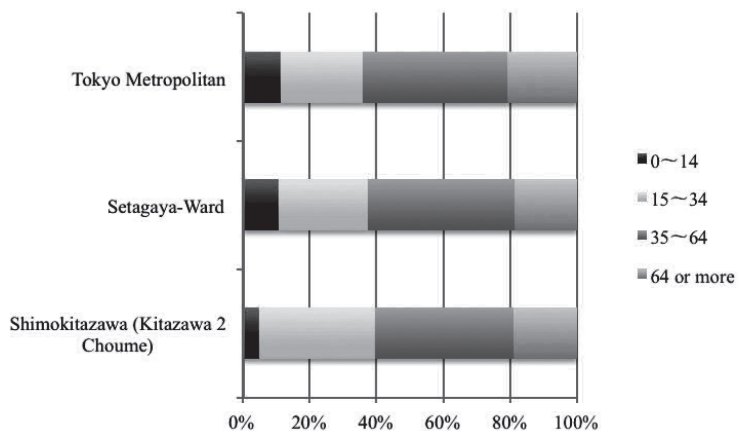
Demographics

The population of Kitazawa 2 Choume is 2709 (2006). The number of person per household is 1.61. This number is much smaller than that of 1.96 of Setagaya Ward.

Figure 1 indicates the share of number of residents by age group. As one can understand, Shimokitazawa area has a bigger share of population in between 15 and 34 years old than Setagaya-

Ward or Tokyo Metropolitan. It also has a much smaller portion of children who are under 14 years of age. This statistics along with the number of people in household suggest that the residents of Shimokitazawa are younger (but not under 14), single, and likely to be more independent. These are people who are likely to obtain a lot of benefits living in Shimokitazawa.

Figure 1 : The share of number of residents by age group



(Source : Setagaya Ward and Tokyo Metropolitan Government)

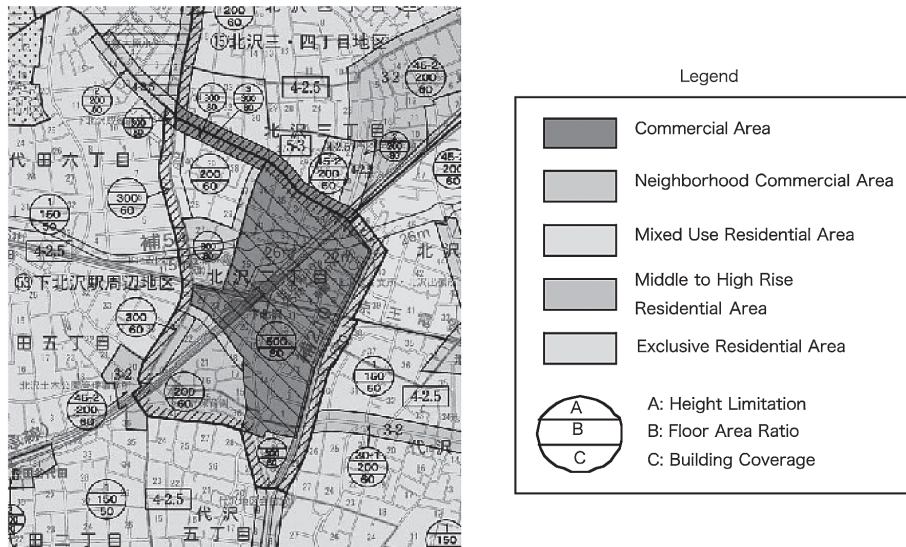
The Planning Vision of Tokyo Metropolitan Government

Map 6 shows the plan of Shimokitazawa Area by Tokyo Metropolitan Government. All the area of Shimokitazawa is designated as District Planning Area.

The plan suggests four land uses in Shimokitazawa area; Commercial area, Neighborhood Commercial Area, Mixed Use Residential Area, and Middle to High Rise Residential Area. Commercial area is designated around the station, and also in between the station and Chazawa-Dori Street. The area between Kamakura-Dori and the station, and southern tip of Kitazawa 2 Choume that encompass the Commercial Area is designated as Neighborhood Commercial Area. The northwestern part is designated as a mixed-use residential area, and the southwestern part is designated as middle to high-rise residential area. As will be shown in the present land use (Map 7), the existing situation of Shimokitazawa is far from the zoning designation. For example, it has some commercial activities in the “middle to high-rise residential” zoned area. The discrepancy between the existing situation and the zoning designation implies that land use of Shimokitazawa is too unique to put into present Japanese zoning categories ⁽¹⁾.

1 Japanese zoning system is unified through the country. The municipality cannot have their own zoning system like in United States, Brazil, or in Germany.

Map 6 : Plan of Shimokitazawa Area by Tokyo Metropolitan Government



(Source : Tokyo Metropolitan Government)

In the northern part of Shimokitazawa station exists the planned road, whose width is 22 to 26 meter wide, that is running east-west. This is the Route 54. The road, whether it should be built or not, has been under dispute for several years.

Physical Urban Form of Shimokitazawa

Physical Scale

The area of Shimokitazawa, or Kitazawa 2 chome, is 18.6 hectare. Figure 2 shows the urban form of Shimokitazawa as well as Luxemburg Old City Center, Mid-Manhattan, Koenji and Toyosu in the same scale for comparison. Shimokitazawa is about as the same size as Luxemburg Old City Center. Luxemburg Old City Center comprises palace, many municipal functions, and Notre Dame Cathedral. It is also equivalent of roughly 14 typical Manhattan blocks since Manhattan block is 1.35 hectare (75 meter by 180 meter). These facts indicate that Shimokitazawa has the size of pre-auto city center in Europe, or walkable scale of mid-town of Manhattan, which implies that its size is within walkable range.

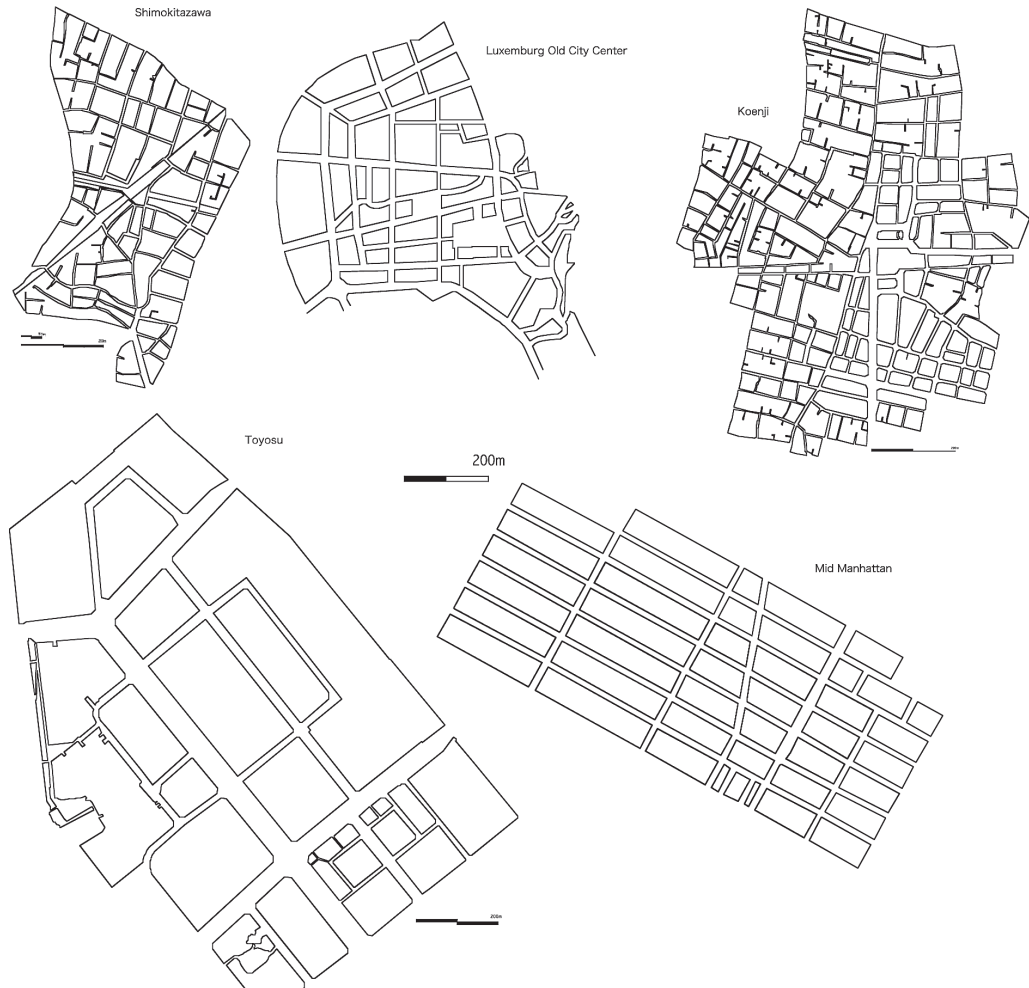
Photo 2 : Luxemburg Old City Center, Koenji, Toyosu, Manhattan (clockwise)



Koenji is one of the most bustling commercial districts in inner suburbs of Tokyo that provides a good comparison to Shimokitazawa. Koenji commercial district is larger than that of Shimokitazawa, however, it is comprised of north and south district bisected by wide Chuo railway line that runs east - west. Therefore, people using the commercial district tend to focus on one side, either north or south. The urban form in the north west of Koenji is quite similar to Shimokitazawa. It is a very maze-like form that has no wide street and with a lot of cul-de-sacs.

Toyosu is one of the latest redevelopment sites in Tokyo. It is located adjacent to Tokyo Bay. The urban form is totally different from inner suburbs of Tokyo such as Shimokitazawa and Koenji. The block is much larger than Luxemburg or Manhattan as well. This making of such mega-block as one sees in Toyosu, is a current policy of Japanese urban planning despite having many backlashes from citizen groups and some academics.

By comparing the urban forms between Toyosu and Shimokitazawa, one can understand that the present Japanese urban planners prefer mega-block Le Corbusier-like urban development to organic urban form like Shimokitazawa or Koenji. However, the preference of ordinary people seems to be different from the urban planners. This can be assumed by the strong protests taking place against these kinds of Le Courbusier-like urban developments including the one against Route 54 of Shimokitazawa, and also from the cognitive study of Shimokitazawa by young people whose result will be presented in later part of this paper.

Figure 2 : Physical scale and configuration of Shimokitazawa and other urban areas

Land Use

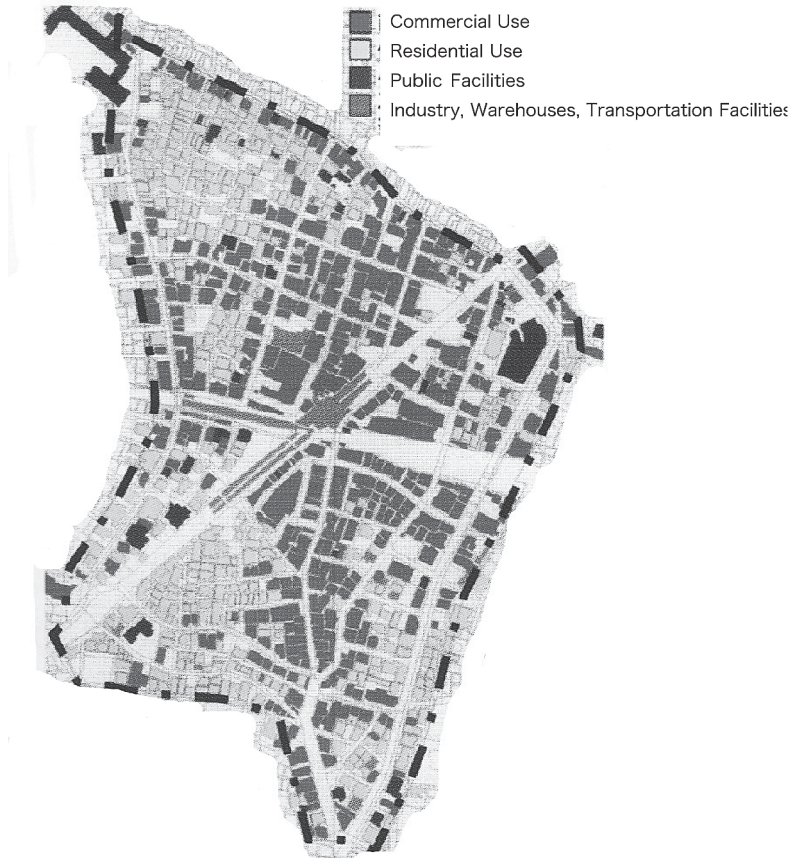
Out of 277 statistical neighborhood of Setagaya Ward, Kitazawa 2 Choume, which is equivalent to the study area of Shimokitazawa, has the highest building coverage with 58.5% (the average of Setagaya Ward is 45.4%).

The reason for this high building coverage can be explained with the narrowness of the street, and also its lack of open space. The ratio of narrow street is 44.9% whereas the average of Setagaya Ward is 37.6%. There is also no designated public park in the district, and has only 56 trees within 18.6 hectare. This is equivalent to 3 trees per hectare, which figure is much lower than the average of Setagaya Ward's 17.2.

Map 7 indicates the present situation of land use of the study area (Ground Floor). From this figure, one can understand that the land use of the site is mostly mixed-use of commercial

and residential. Commercial activities are centered around the train station but also along the border streets of Chazawa-Dori, Kamakura-Dori, and Ichibangai-Dori. The areas in Northwest and Southwest are mostly residential, but some sporadic commercial activities can be observed in these areas as well.

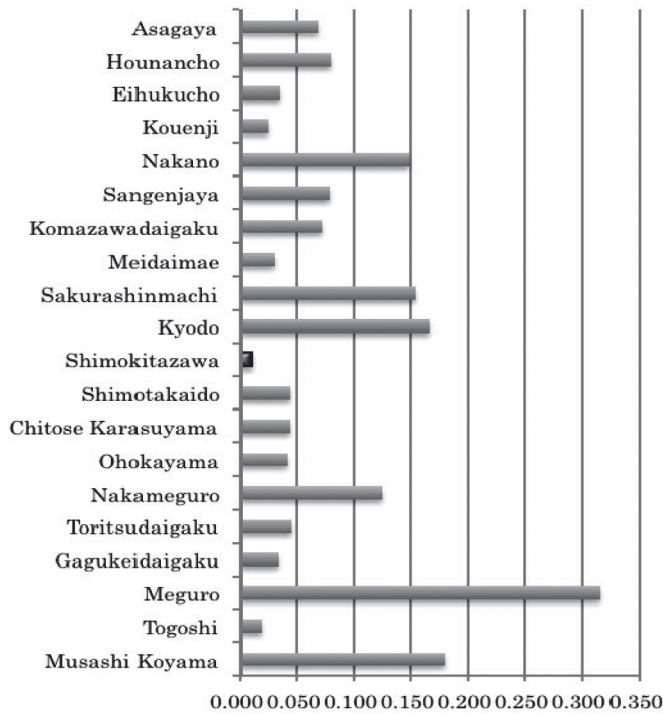
Map 7 : Present Land Use of the Study Area



(Source : Setagaya Ward)

Figure 3 shows the parking space per shops, of 20 shopping districts in the proximity of Shimokitazawa, in the southwest of Tokyo (Setagaya Ward, Sugunami Ward, Meguro Ward, Nakano Ward and Shinagawa Ward). Shimokitazawa has only 0.01 parking space per shops, that is one for every 100 shops. This figure is by far the lowest among 20 compared shopping districts (Highest being 0.32 of Meguro). This lack of parking space in Shimokitazawa contributed in using land more efficiently for business activities. As a result, Shimokitazawa has more shops than these 20 shopping districts (refer Figure 6).

Figure 3 : Parking space per shops for 20 Shopping Districts in Southwest Tokyo



(Source : Census of Commerce, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2007)

Street Alignment

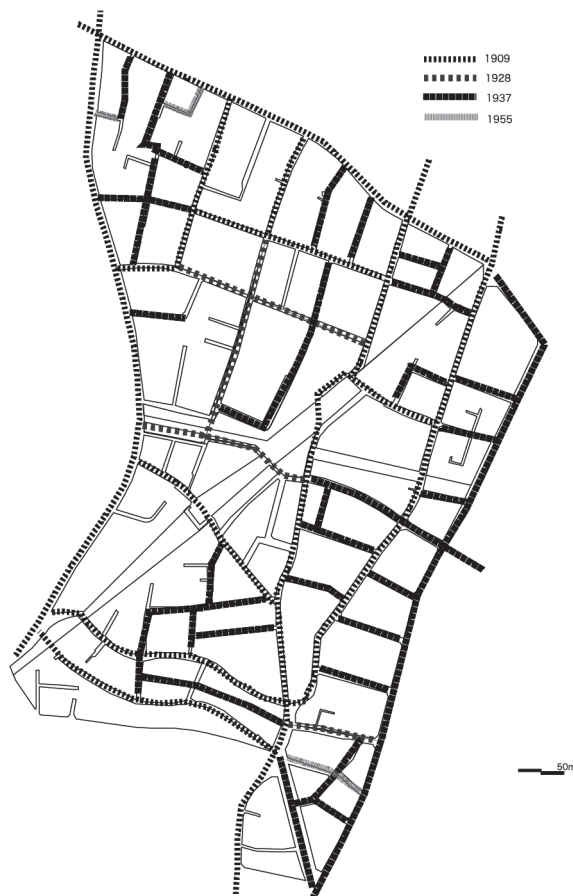
Figure 4 shows the development of streets in Shimokitazawa in time series. It indicates the street alignment in 1909, 1928 (after the Great Kanto Earthquake), 1937 (after the opening of both Odakyu and Keio line), and 1955 (after World War II).

In 1928, the form of the block was more grid-like in northern area, and southern area being very organic following the old farming village trails (Kobayashi, 2005). There was a development of Chazawa-Dori Street after the earthquake. The street, which is 11 meter wide, is still today, the only bus accessible road in the area. With the opening of Chazawa-Dori Street, several roads that connect old area and Chazawa-Dori Street were built. These new roads have laid the foundation for the commercial area to expand to the east. However since the new urban form that was created had wider roads, and was laid out in more grid-like fashion, the spatial atmosphere is somewhat different from already developed neighboring area.

The street alignment of majority of the inner suburban area of Tokyo that includes Setagaya Ward has been formed by the Land Readjustment Projects. The Land Readjustment Project is an urban renewal method that has been used quite frequently in Japanese cities for urban

development or urban redevelopment. However, Shimokitazawa area happened to escape from the introduction of this method until now. These historical contingencies, the escape of bombing in World War II and also the escape from the land readjustment project, are assumed to be one of the reasons for Shimokitazawa to have its unique character.

Figure 4 : The development of streets in Shimokitazawa



(Source : Nihei, 2010)

Figure 5 indicates cul-de-sacs of Shimokitazawa. There are 24 cul-de-sacs in this area. This is 1.3 cul-de-sacs per hectare. The fact that Shimokitazawa has such a lot of cul-de-sacs contributes to the extension of storefronts, thus having enabled Shimokitazawa to have many small stores despite the lack of high story buildings.

Figure 5 : Cul-de-sacs of Shimokitazawa

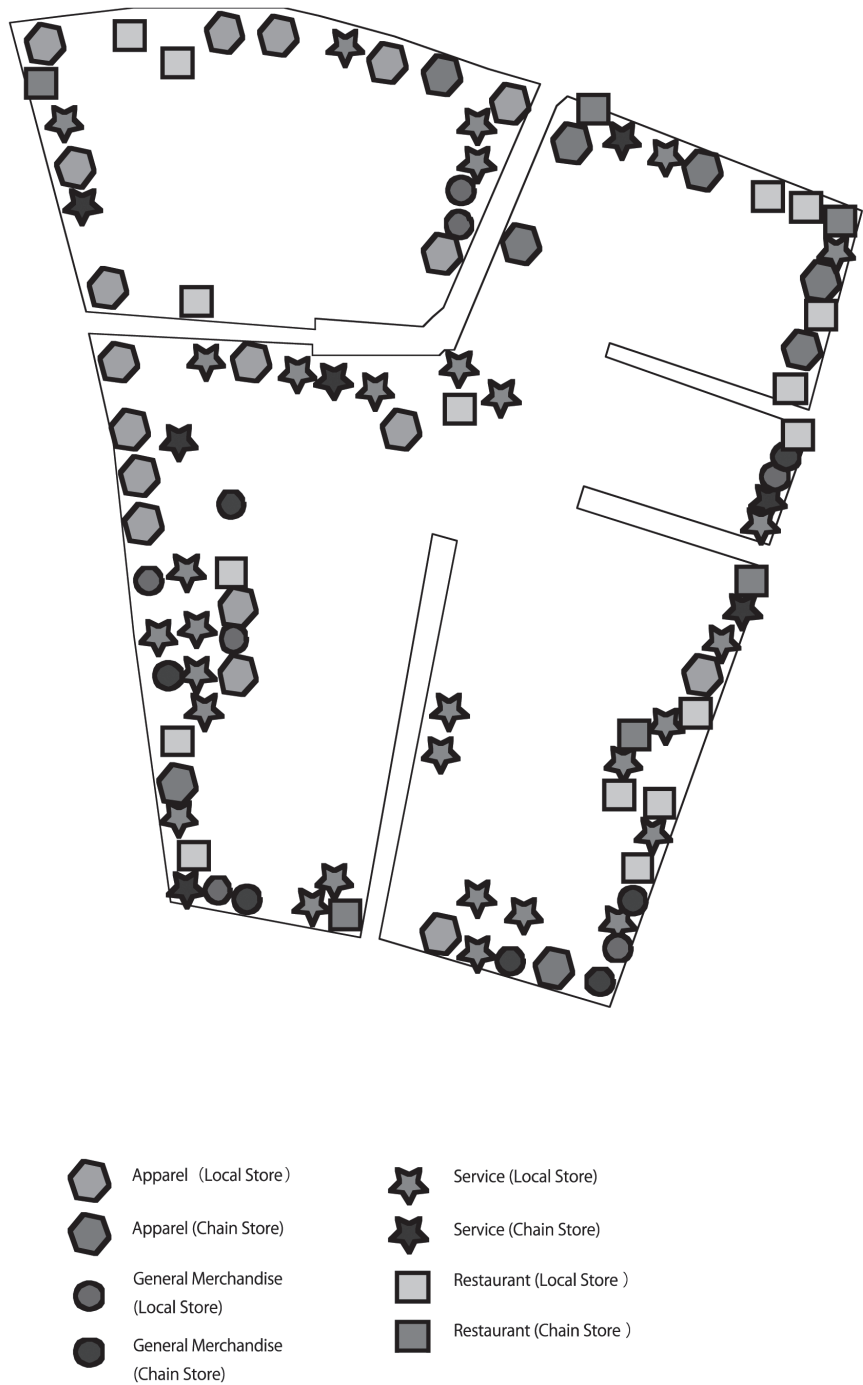
Case Study of 26 District and 27 District

To further understand the characteristics of urban form of the neighborhood, in-depth survey of 26 District and 27 District of Kitazawa 2 chome (Henceforth described as 26 & 27 District) has been conducted. 26 & 27 District lies in the north of Shimokitazawa Station. However, since it is not easily accessible from the main entrance of the station, the commercial activities of the area is not as intense as other district such as 24 District (which is right in front of north entrance of the station) or 12 District (which is in front of south entrance of the station). The land use of the district has been slowly gentrified from residential to commercial, but still it remains as mixed use of residential and commercial unlike above districts that are mostly commercial use.

Figure 6 illustrates the commercial stores of the district. There are 98 stores in June, 2012. There are 25 Apparel Stores, 14 General Merchandise Stores, 37 Service Stores, and 22 Restaurants. Of these 98 stores, 29 % (28 stores) are chain stores. Figure 7 depicts actual size of

the districts. The districts are approximately 1.46 hectares. Thus, the density of shops is 67 shops per hectare.

Figure 6 : Commercial Activities by type in District 26 and 27.



(Source : Field Study by Author)

Figure 7 : Urban Scale of District 26 and 27.

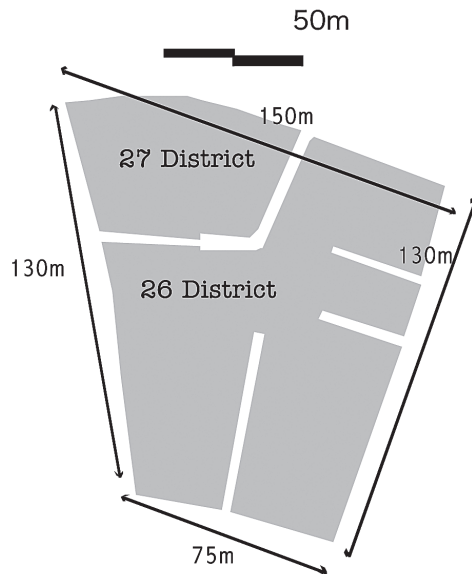


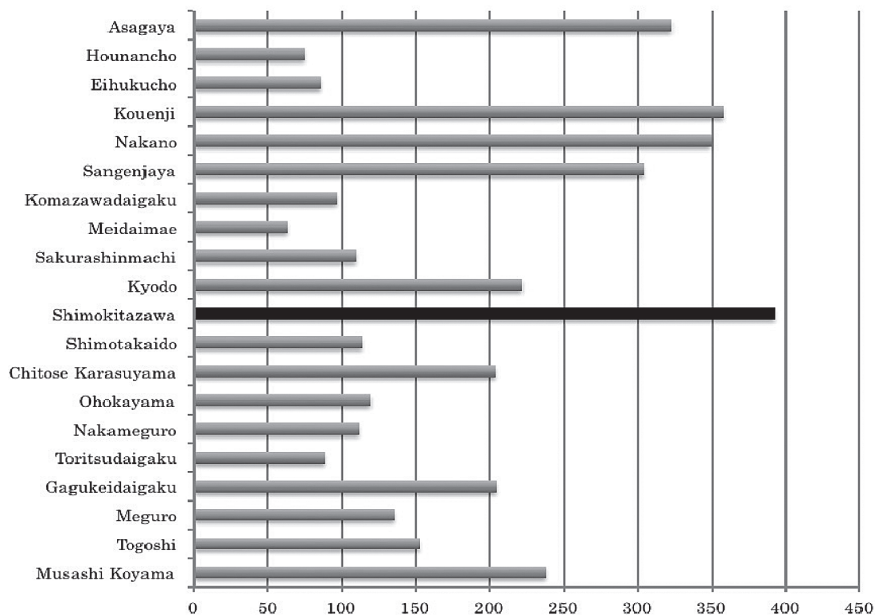
Figure 7 also explains why the district can have such a high density of shops. Generally, this two blocks will not be divided into two and remain as one piece of a block. In that case, the block will only have $130+75+150+130=485$ meter of its circumference. However, as this block is divided into two, 26 districts and 27 districts, it has created additional 100 meter times 2 circumferences. Even more, these districts have three cul-de-sacs that will also add some additional circumferences. Consequently, these small alleyways have created additional 460 meter of circumference to the original 485 meter. As a result, the districts have succeeded in adding 19 more shops. So, despite its low-rise buildings, the districts are able to have quite a lot of shops.

The Commercial Activity

Comparative Study with other Shopping Districts of Tokyo

Figure 8 shows a number of shops of 20 shopping districts in the southwest of Tokyo. These districts are either in the proximity of Shimokitazawa, or have an accumulation of commercial activities comparable to Shimokitazawa. Shimokitazawa has more shops than any compared shopping districts. In terms of number of shops, Shimokitazawa stands out from the rest.

Figure 8 : Number of shops of 20 shopping districts

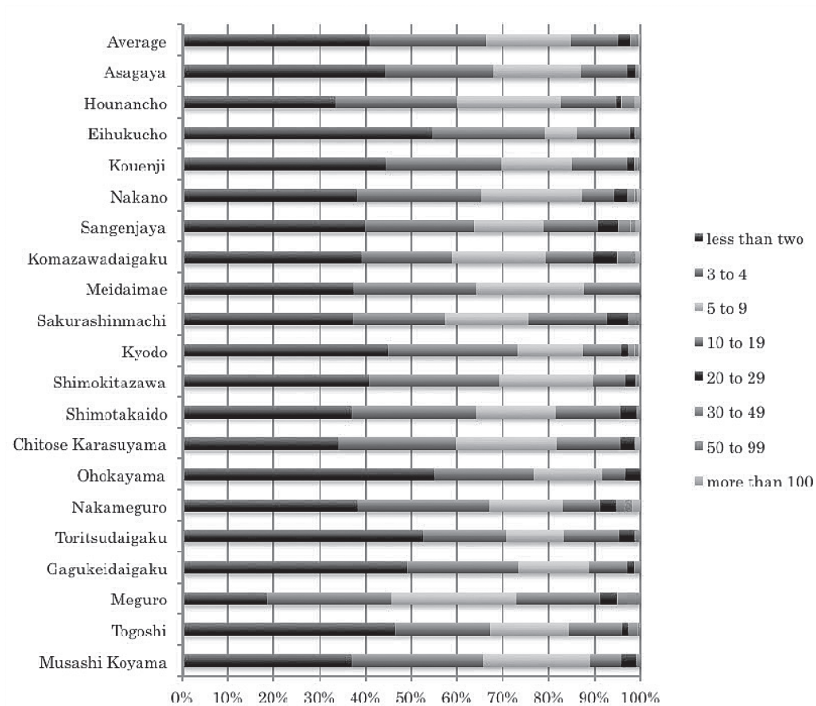


(Source : Census of Commerce, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2007)

Figure 9 shows the ratio of the shops by the number of employees. 90 % of shops in Shimokitazawa have less than 9 employees, and it does not have big shops like in Meguro or Sangenjaya. This statistics implies that Shimokitazawa does have a lot of shops, but they are small in terms of the number of employees.

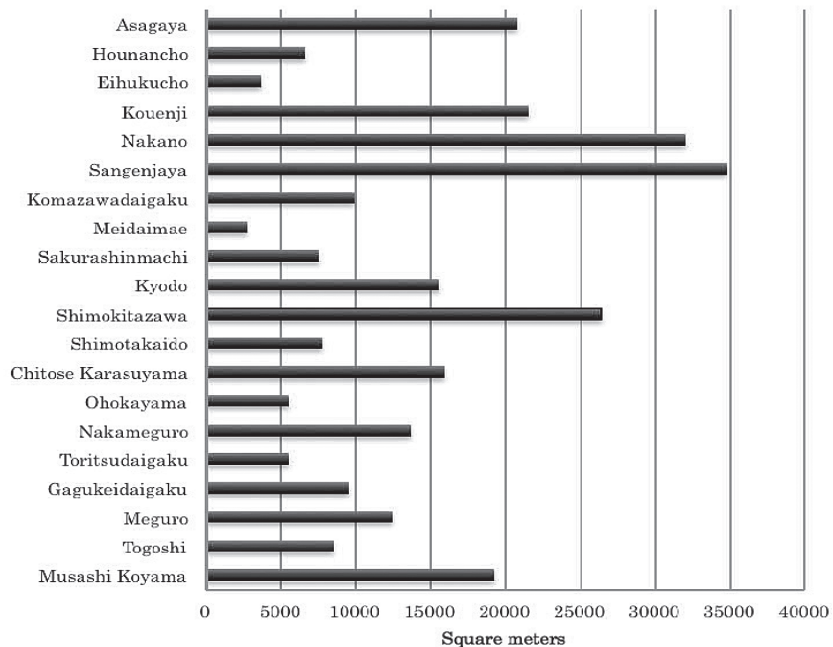
Figure 10 shows the floor area for sales. Despite Shimokitazawa having more shops than any other shopping districts, the floor area for sales is smaller than that of Sangenjaya and Nakano.

Figure 9 : Ratio of the shops by the number of employees



(Source : Census of Commerce, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2007)

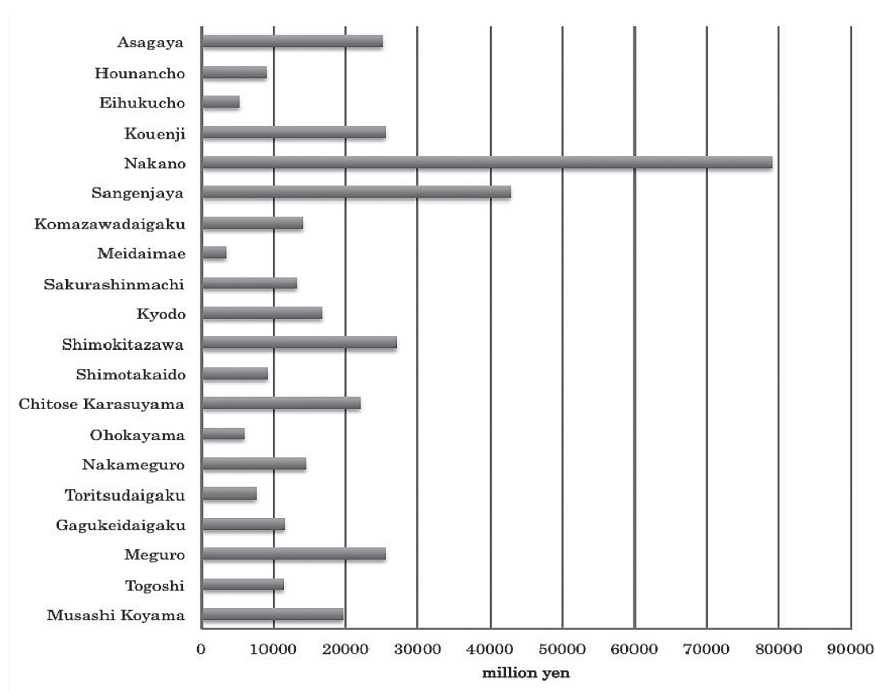
Figure 10 : Floor area for sales of 20 shopping districts



(Source : Census of Commerce, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2007)

Figure 11 shows the annual sales. Shimokitazawa is far beyond Nakano, which has lesser number of shops than Shimokitazawa, and also lags behind Sangenjaya as well. This fact implies that Shimokitazawa shopping district is not so competitive when it comes to making money.

Figure 11 : Annual sales of the 20 shopping districts

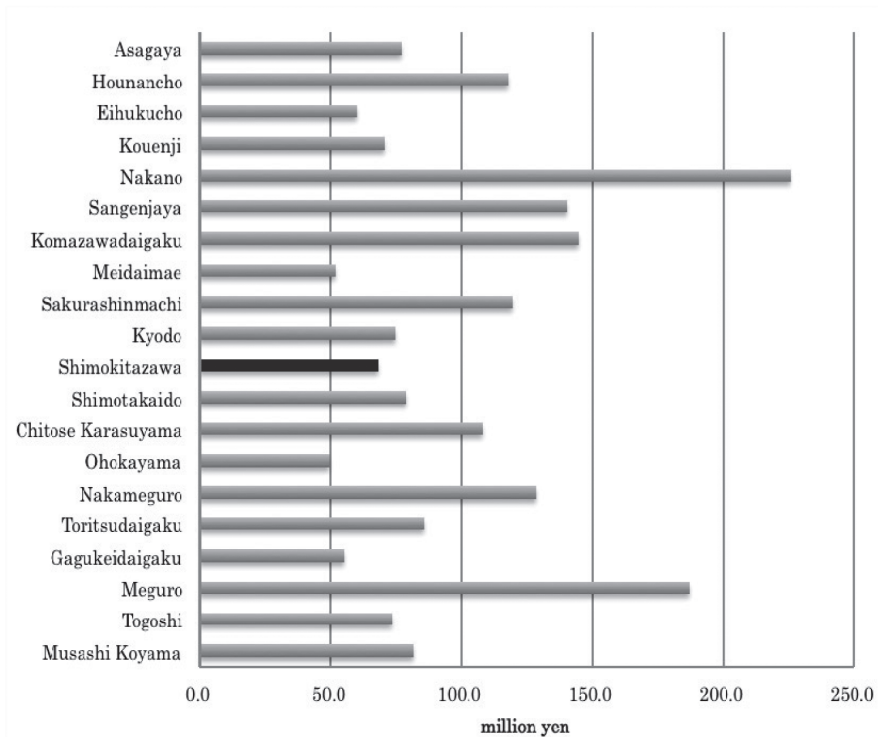


(Source : Census of Commerce, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2007)

Figure 12 shows the annual sales per shop of 20 shopping districts. This indicates that shops in Shimokitazawa are not doing well relatively. It is better than other shopping districts in Keio Inokashira-line (Eifukucho and Shimotakaido), but worse than many others including Komazawadaigaku or Sakurashinmachi, whose train passengers are much smaller than that of Shimokitazawa (Shimokitazawa has 48 million passengers annually, whereas Komazawadaigaku and Sakurashinmachi have 13 and 12 million respectively (Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 2011)).

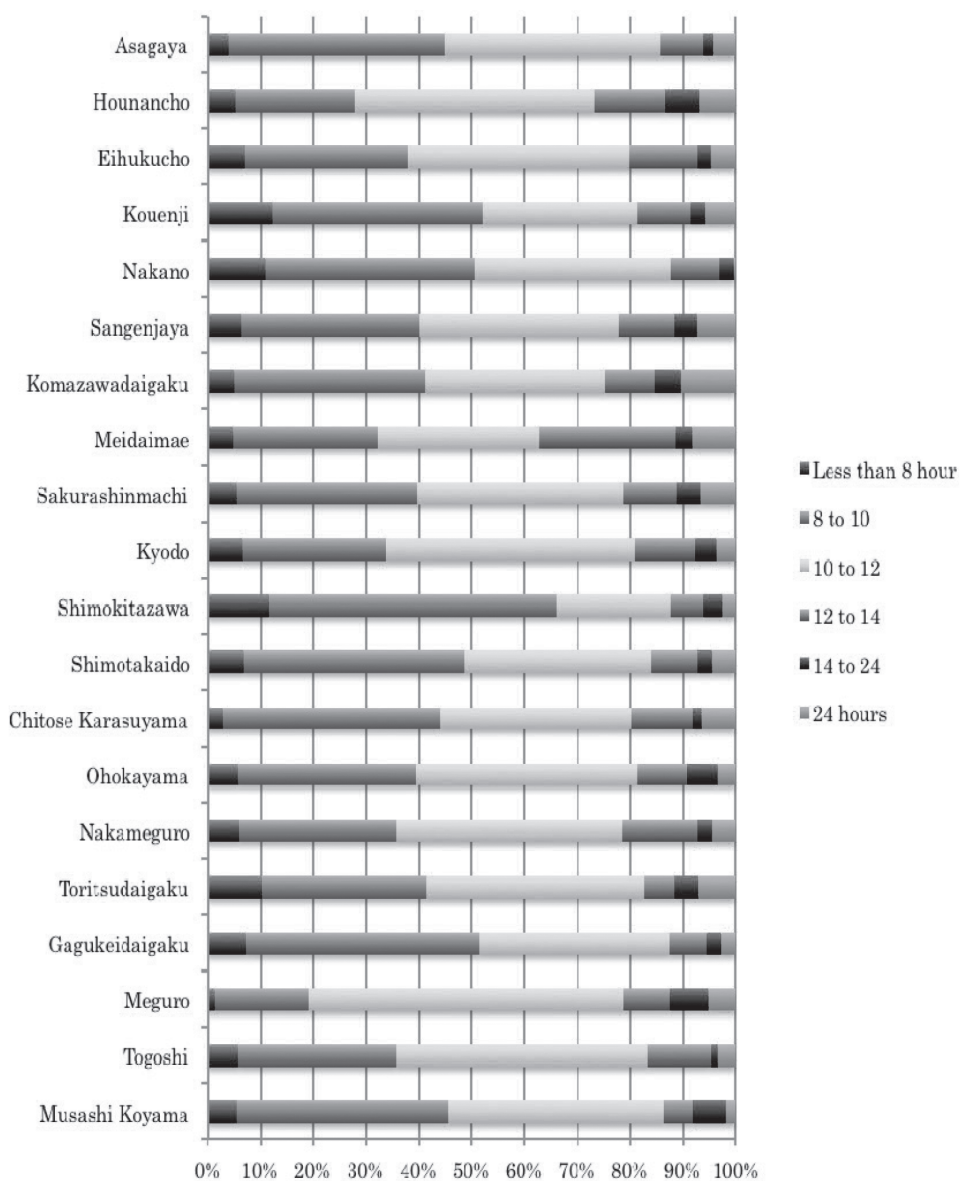
Figure 13 shows the ratio of number of shops by operating hours. 66% of the shops in Shimokitazawa only operate less than 10 hours. This is the shortest of all 20 shopping districts. This fact implies that even though there are many shops in Shimokitazawa, shop owners are more or less relatively lazy, and do not operate as much as other shopping districts. This may explain the reason why Shimokitazawa has lesser sales than others.

Figure 12 : Annual sales per shop of the 20 shopping districts



(Source : Census of Commerce, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2007)

Figure 13 : Ratio of number of shops by operating hours

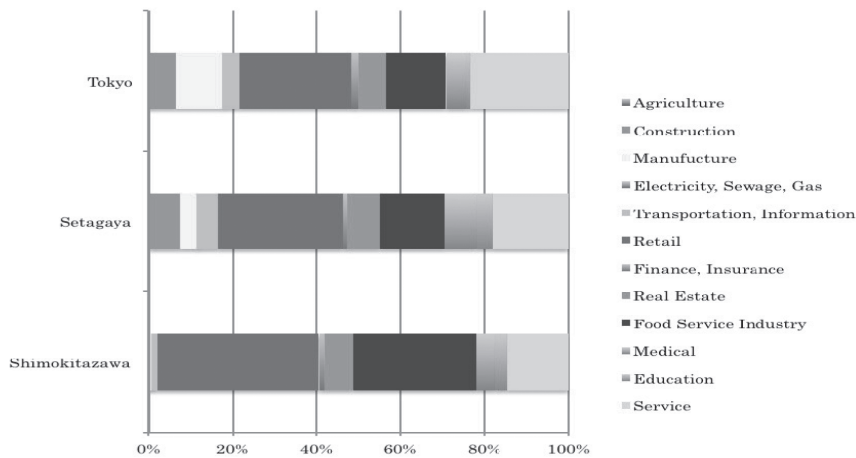


(Source : Census of Commerce, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2007)

Type of Business

Figure 14 shows the rate of number of business in Shimokitazawa, Setagaya, and Tokyo, according to the type of industry. Compared with Setagaya and Tokyo, one can understand that Shimokitazawa has much higher rate of Retail and Food Service Industry.

Figure 14 : Rate of number of business in Shimokitazawa, Setagaya, and Tokyo



(Source : Industrial Statistics, 2006)

In addition to the statistical comparison, the field study has been conducted in order to further understand the commercial activity of Shimokitazawa. The commercial activities were recorded for three distinct businesses in Shimokitazawa; apparel, subculture, and café.

Apparel Stores

Map 8 illustrates the shops in Shimokitazawa area. As this indicates, there are 135 apparel shops in Shimokitazawa area, of which 45% is second hand apparel. Apparel shops are more concentrated in the zone North. 92 out of 135 apparel shops or 68% of total locates in the zone North. However, in terms of second hand apparel, they are also located in zone South, and only 49% is located in zone North. Many apparel shops in Shimokitazawa tends to be small, and owned by individuals. This has enabled Shimokitazawa to create a new mode, or new fashion like Harajuku. It functions not only as a consumer place but also a place where new value is added.

Map 8 : Apparel shops in Shimokitazawa



(Source : Shimokitazawa Catalogue, Site Survey by the author)

Music Clubs

Shimokitazawa is known for subculture capital of Tokyo, especially in the field of music and theatrical art. As Map 9 indicates, there are 21 music clubs, 8 theaters, and 18 record shops (the place where they not only sells CDs but also vinyl record). There are 24 music clubs in Setagaya-Ward and 243 in Tokyo Metropolitan District. This indicates that 8 % of all the music clubs in Tokyo Metropolitan District is located in Shimokitazawa, of which area consists only 0.01% of Tokyo Metropolitan District.

Table 1 lists the live music club and its capacity in Shimokitazawa. In total, there is a capacity for 3685 people. Even though total number of capacity is not large, the abundance of small music clubs in the district contributes to the diversity of type of music that is performed. In addition, the band that cannot fill up big clubs still can have an opportunity to play gigs in Shimokitazawa. Thus,

Shimokitazawa functions as an incubator for young musicians. Since 1980s, numerous bands have begun their careers here in Shimokitazawa, notably Bump of Chicken, Acidman, Asian Kung-Fu Generation, Thee Michelle Gun Elephant, and so on. For example, Bump of Chicken, an alternative rock band from Sakura City in Chiba Prefecture, played their first gigs in Tokyo at Shimokitazawa Club 251 in January 1997. They mostly played in Chiba, but on August of the same year, they played again in different music club in Shimokitazawa (Club Que). The first demonstration tapes were sold by local record shop of Shimokitazawa, Shimokitazawa Highline Record, in October 1997. This record shop also produced first two albums of the band. Bump of Chicken later became a super rock band selling 7.64 million CD by May, 2012. Thee Michelle Gun Elephant, one of the most charismatic bands in Japan in 90s, also had their first gig in Shimokitazawa “Yaneura” music club in April of 1991. Many bands that were organized not in Tokyo, also came to Tokyo and played in the music clubs in Shimokitazawa in order to grasp an opportunity, notably Qruli, Number girls, and so on.

Shimokitazawa has a several indi-label records company such as Koga Label, UK project, Highline Record, hmc Record, and so on. These small records company provided an opportunity for amateur rock band to become famous and possibly professional. The fact that having a great density of music club per area and also having these indi-label records has attracted many bands to come and play in Shimokitazawa, thus making this place as a “gateway” for an amateur band to become “big”.

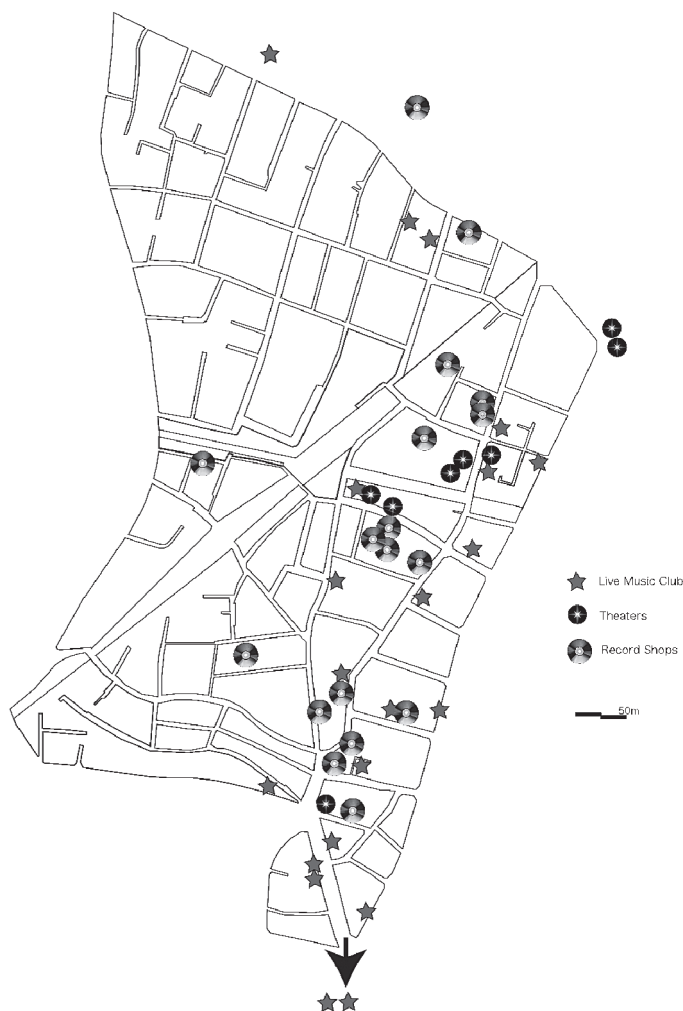
The same can be said with a theater as well, and also for small entrepreneurs as mentioned by Japanese architect Yasuyoshi Hayashi (Hayashi, 2010).

Table 1. The list of live music clubs in Shimokitazawa

Name of Live Music Club	Capacity	Name of Live Music Club	Capacity
Shimokita Garden	500	Shimokitazawa Daisy Bar	140
Shimokitazawa Club 251	400	Shimokitazawa 440	120
Shimokitazawa Era	300	Shimokitazawa Loft	80
Shimokitazawa Mosaic	300	Shimokitazawa THREE	80
Shimokitazawa Club Que	280	Shimokitazawa la Cana	80
Shimokitazawa Shelter	250	Shimokitazawa Colored Jam	45
Shimokitazawa Basement Bar	250	Shimokitazawa mona records	40
Shimokitazawa ReG	250	Shimokitazawa BIG MOUTH	30
Shimokitazawa Garage	200	Shimokitazawa lete	20
Shimokitazawa Yaneura	150	Shimokitazawa offbeat	20
Shimokitazawa Cave BE	150		

(Source : various website of the club)

Map 9 : Subcultural spots in Shimokitazawa



(Source : Shimokitazawa Catalogue, Site Survey by the author)

Cafés

As Map 10 indicates, there are 51 cafés in Shimokitazawa district. Café is an important factor in Shimokitazawa since it functions as a media for young generations and also people involving in subculture activities (Hattori, 2007). Café also creates an urban environment that is welcoming and attractive. It also supplies the place and time that virtually anybody with a few hundred yen can share. The abundance and the variety of café in Shimokitazawa is one of the reasons that make Shimokitazawa attractive. Definition of Café for this survey limits to local chains owned by individual owner since the chains do not contribute in creating the unique character of Shimokitazawa. Therefore, this map does not indicate national or international chains such as Starback's Coffee, Doutour Coffee, or Segafredo ZANETTI.

Map 10 : Café in Shimokitazawa



(Source : Shimokitazawa Catalogue, Shimokitazawa-Sangenjaya Café, and Site Survey by the author)

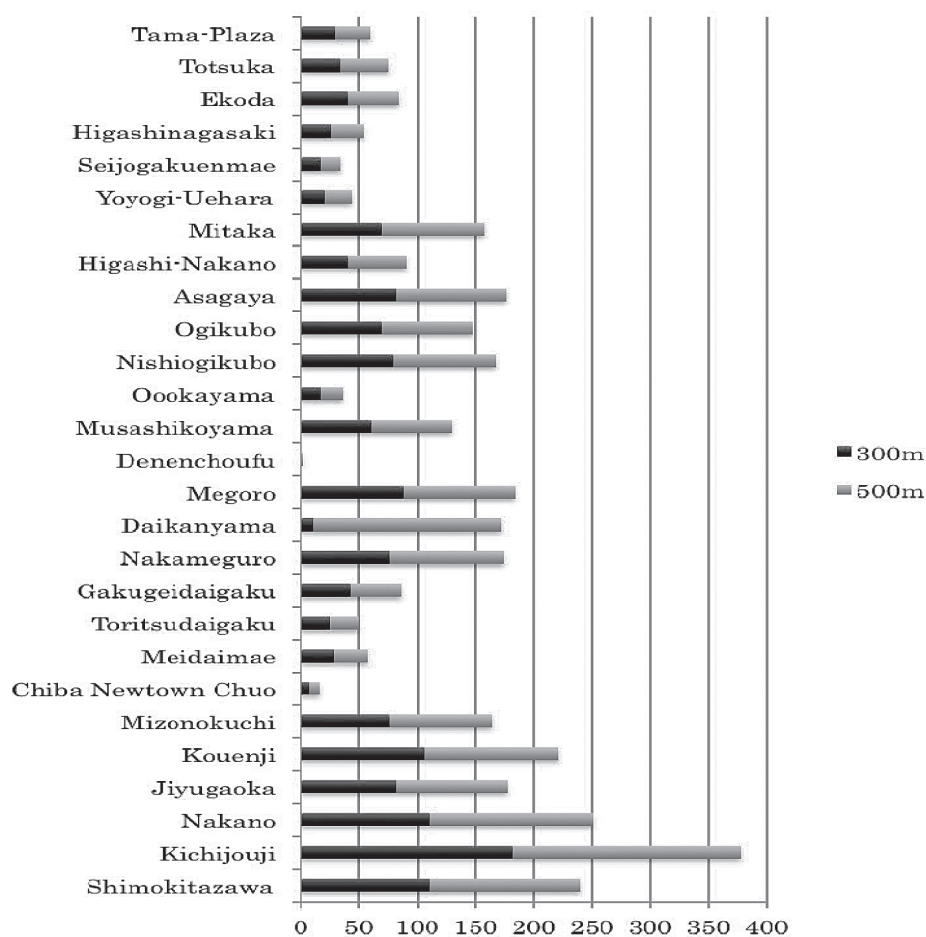
Izakaya (Japanese Style Drinking Establishment)

Izakaya is a type of Japanese drinking establishment that serves food to accompany the drinks. They are casual places for after-work drinking and create livable environment at evening. In certain sense, the density of Izakayas can function as an indicator to measure commercial area's night-life prosperity. In order to understand how intense izakayas are located in Shimokitazawa, 27 commercial districts in Tokyo (including Shimokitazawa) were selected, and the number of Izakayas within 300 meter and also within 500 meter from the station were counted. The Izakayas that were counted had been referred from TABELOG database, the largest Japanese restaurant and drinking establishment website.

Figure 15 indicates the number of Izakayas within 300 and 500 meters from station of above commercial areas. From this figure, one can understand that Shimokitazawa has 111 Izakaya within

300 meter, that is 3.93 Izakayas per hectare, from the station. This number is the second highest of 27 commercial districts, following only Kichijoji. Within 500 meters from the station, Shimokitazawa has 240 Izakayas, which is the third highest tailing only Kichijoji and Nakano. The density of Izakaya is higher than Shimokizawa, however, considering that Nakano Station has 1.6 times more passengers than Shimokitazawa Station, Shimokitazawa does have a lot of Izakayas.

Figure 15 : The number of Izakayas in 27 commercial districts



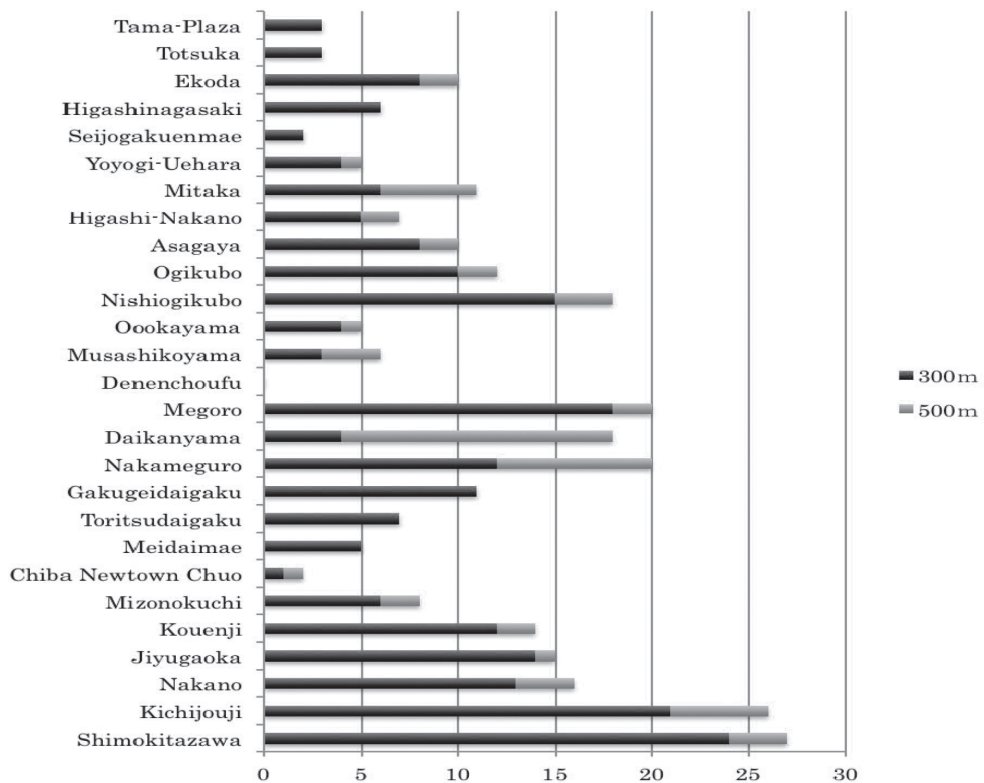
(Source : Tabelog Website)

Curry restaurants

In addition to Izakaya survey, similar survey of counting the number of Ramen and Curry restaurants has also been conducted in the same 27 commercial districts. The survey found out that there was not significant number of Ramen restaurants, but quite a huge number of Curry restaurants in Shimokitazawa.

Figure 16 indicates the number of Curry Restaurant within 300 and 500 meters from station of above commercial areas. From this figure, one can understand that Shimokitazawa has 24 Curry Restaurant within 300 meter, that is 0.85 Curry Restaurant per hectare, from the station. This number is the highest of 27 commercial districts. Within 500 meters from the station, Shimokitazawa has 27 Curry Restaurants, which number is also the highest among 27 commercial districts. Curry has been a popular Japanese diet for 100 years or so, however, it still has some exotic feature which probably match the character of sub-cultural, hippy friendly environment of Shimokitazawa.

Figure 16 : The number of Curry Shops in 27 commercial districts.



(Source : Tabelog Website)

Chain stores

Map 11 shows the location of national chain stores of bars (including Izakaya), fast food restaurants, restaurants, and convenience stores. Chain stores deprive the uniqueness and local identity of the place (Kunstler, 1993). The shopping district with a strong character like Shimokitazawa seems to be far from the influence of chain stores. Interestingly Map 11 indicates

that Shimokitazawa do have a chain stores. However, since the most conspicuous fast food chain stores such as MacDonald, Kentucky Fried Chicken tend to locate within the proximity from southern entrance of Shimokitazawa station, the effect of these fast food chain stores to make place more ubiquitous seem to be small. Especially, the North zone, where a lot of apparel shops and café locate, has few chain stores.

Map 11 : Chain stores in Shimokitazawa



Interview Survey to Local Shop Owners

The interview survey to 37 local shop owners of Shimokitazawa has been conducted. This survey was added since the previous questionnaire survey to young people regarding Shimokitazawa conducted by the author revealed that local shops were the key factors that make Shimokitazawa authentic. The survey tried to grasp what these shop owners feel as advantage and

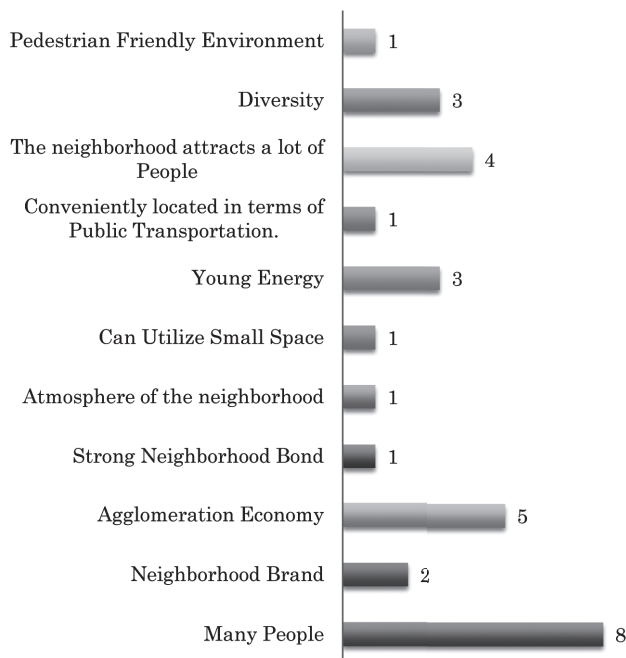
disadvantage of having shops in Shimokitazawa. The survey tried to understand why the source of origin of experience wants to open shops here and also potential problems that are associated with Shimokitazawa in terms of operating business here.

Advantage

Figure 17 shows the result of what local shop owners considered as advantage of opening shops in Shimokitazawa. Since the survey was conducted in open-end fashion, various opinions were collected.

Many local shop owners mentioned that “existence of many people” was the advantage. These people were also diverse in terms of population, gender, and in their income; however, they have a common taste, “a taste that is lured to Shimokitazawa.” This concentration of certain kind of clients in Shimokitazawa also helps to attract “type of shops that only exist in Shimokitazawa”, and the concentration of these shops attracts more clients that were lured to Shimokitazawa, thus making positive cycle.

Figure 17 : What local shop owners considered as advantage of Shimokitazawa



Five owners mentioned “agglomeration economy due to the high concentration of similar shops” as an advantage. As mentioned previously, certain categories of shops agglomerate in Shimokitazawa; Café, vinyl record shop, second hand apparel shop, music club, small theater, miscellaneous goods store, and so on. “Shimokitazawa has an image of being music neighborhood.

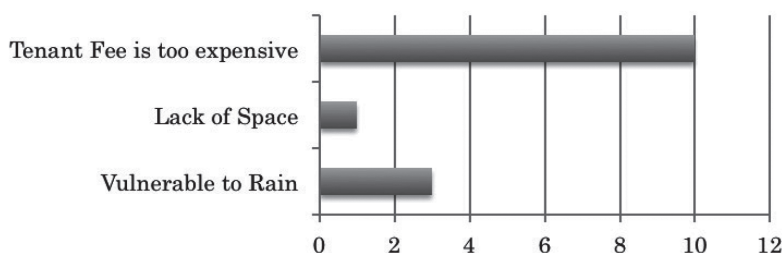
Therefore, people who are interested in music are attracted to this neighborhood. It helps many shops related to music, such as music clubs, record or CD shops easier to do business” (Owner of music club). “The fact that there are so many similar record shops, clients would come to shop around. Shimokitazawa is a peculiar neighborhood that these vinyl record shops can survive” (Owner of record shop).

Four owners mentioned “the power of the neighborhood that attract a lot of people” as an advantage. This is similar to previous two reasons. Some owners pointed out that “diversity” and “existence of young people with a lot of energy” was also advantage, but interestingly only one shop owner pointed out “pedestrian friendly environment” as an advantage. This gives stark contrast to the result of previous questionnaire survey.

Disadvantage

Figure 18 shows the result of what local shop owners considered as disadvantage of opening shops Shimokitazawa.

Figure 18 : What local shop owners considered as disadvantage of Shimokitazawa



Disadvantages of having shops in Shimokitazawa were not as diverse as its advantages. There were only three disadvantages that local shop owners pointed out. The biggest disadvantage that local shop owners recognize is the high cost of tenant fee. “Even though Shimokitazawa caters clients that seek for cheap, interesting, and odd goods, it is quite difficult to lower the price of goods due to the expensive tenant fee” (Owner of miscellaneous goods store). Many shop owners pointed out that there lies a big gap in terms of appropriate tenant fee between landowner and the tenant. It is actually so expensive that some owners even said that they are considering moving out from Shimokitazawa. The survey also found out that more than half of shops actually had no profit at the time when the survey was conducted.

Conclusion

The study tried to understand the characteristics of Shimokitazawa, an organically developed local shopping district in Tokyo, by analyzing it from two perspectives: physical urban form, commercial activities. It also conducted the interview survey to local merchants of the neighborhood. The study has found that the unique physical form of Shimokitazawa derived from farming village street configuration. In addition, Shimokitazawa escaped the bombing of WWII and readjustment project, which as a result, contributed to creating narrow and winding streets configuration with a lot of cul-de-sacs that is quite friendly to pedestrian but not to autos. The land use of the area is a mixed use of commercial and residential. These physical characteristics has contributed in creating unique commercial district that has so many small shops that do not open for long time compared to other commercial districts in Tokyo. Many of these shops are individually owned and in average, do not make so much profit. The abundance of apparel shops and cafés as well as subcultural spots such as small theaters and live music clubs has created this place quite unique.

Kobayashi (2007) pointed that many of the ingredients that Jane Jacobs valued in the city have been included in Shimokitazawa. This research helped, to certain extent, that his assumption is valid in that Shimokitazawa has a very good human scale pedestrian environment, and also its activities are quite diverse, and density of commercial activities being quite high. These are some of the ingredients that Jacobs valued in the urban environment (Jacobs, 1961).

It also articulated that Shimokitazawa has some special uniqueness deriving from its history and its commercial activities. The study suggested that Shimokitazawa is the anti-thesis of scrap and build kind of mega-block development that Japanese governments are still keen on.

Reference

Books/Edited Books/Book Chapters:

- Cervero, R. and Michael, B. (1996) *Transit Villages in the 21st Century*, New York : McGraw Hill Companies.
 Hattori, K. (2009) *Douro Seibi Jigyo no Taizai*, Tokyo : Yosensha.
 Jacobs, J. (1961) *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York : Random House.
 Kunstler, J. (1993) *The Geography of Nowhere*, New York : Simon & Schuster
 Mitsuhashi, S. (2009) *Yomigaeru Shoutengai*, Kyoto : Gakugei-Shuppansha.
 Miura, A. (2004) *Fast Fudo (Fast Food) ka suru Nihon*, Tokyo : Yosensha
 Miyao, T. (1985) *Urban Economics Ver.2* Tokyo : Nihon Hyoronsha.
 Zukin, S. (2009) *Naked City*, Oxford Press

Journal Articles:

- Hattori, K. (2007) 'Neighborhood Commercial Street as Human City in Jane Jacob's sense' *City & Life*, no.83, 34-39

- Hattori, K. (2010) 'Analysis of Charms of Shimokitazawa as a Shopping District' *City & Life*, no.98, 14-16
- Hayashi, Y. (2010) 'Community Business and Shimokitazawa' *City & Life*, no.98, 36-38
- Imao, K. (2010) 'Observing Shimokitazawa from Geography' *City & Life*, no.98, 10-12
- Kobayashi, M. (2007) 'Pedestrian Friendly Shimokitazawa' *City & Life*, no.83, 18-22
- Nihei, M. (2010) 'Analyzing the charm of Shimokitazawa through road development' *City & Life*, no.98, 20-22

Government/NGO/Other Publications

- Fackler, M. (2006) 'Splitting a Hip Neighborhood, in More Ways Than One', *The New York Times Asia*, available from - <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/02/world/asia/02tokyo.html?ex=1317441600&en=514522cbd3566978&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss>
- Kimura, K. (2005) 'The Birth of Shimokitazawa' in *Discovering Shimokitazawa*, Shimokitazawa Symposium Report, Tokyo.
- Kobayashi, M. (2005) 'Site Analysis and Site Planning of Shimokitazawa' in *Discovering Shimokitazawa*, Shimokitazawa Symposium Report, Tokyo.
- Tokyo Metropolitan Government (2011) 'Tokyo Statistical Yearbook', available from -<http://www.toukei.metro.tokyo.jp/tnenkan/tn-index.htm>