

MALLS AND BAY AREA

Sociological Reflections on Contemporary Urban Fabric from the Tokyo Metropolitan Area

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【1】 INTRODUCTION

- Whoever is planning to draw the semiotics of the city must be a geographer, historian, urban planner, architect, and possibly psychoanalyst, as a specialist of semiology... (Roland Barthes)

【1】 INTRODUCTION

My Research Interest

- Socio-spatial and socio-temporal construction of city and society
- Describing and analyzing the relationship between the physical urban environment and the sphere of electronic and digital information and images as the social *milieu* and its transformation.

【1】 INTRODUCTION

Contents of This Keynote Speech

- To examine the concept of "urban fabric", comparing it with the concept of "city".
- To introduce one of my recent research projects on shopping-malls in order to provide some examples that will help us better understand some aspects of urban space in the urban fabric of today.
- To introduce another of my research projects, the study of the Tokyo-Bay area in order to try to make further considerations about the Tokyo metropolitan area as urban fabric.



【2】 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION: **"CITY" AND "URBAN FABRIC" AS METAPHORS FOR THE REFLECTIONS ON SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE**

- What is “Urban Fabric”?
- What is the difference between “city” and “urban fabric”? What is the distinction between “city” and “urban”?
- Background: The morphological and structural change of cities after the 20th century.

【2】 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION: **"CITY" AND "URBAN FABRIC" AS METAPHORS FOR THE REFLECTIONS ON SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE**

- European Traditional City: "**Stadtgemeinde**" = **Community of Citizens**.
Constructed spatial objects and at the same time they were political communities of people living in that spatial constructions.
- "City" as a metaphor of socio-spatial governance.
- "Citizen": the residents of the autonomous city
 - >>> The people with the autonomous right of the nation state
 - >>> The people actively involved in the public domain beyond national borders in the sense of "global citizens".

【2】 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION: **"CITY" AND "URBAN FABRIC" AS METAPHORS FOR THE REFLECTIONS ON SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE**

- Lefebvre's distinction between "**city**" and "**urban**"
- "**Urban**": a social principle that goes beyond an attribution to a specific place or group, allowing people, things and information to be transported, encountered and exchanged.
- "**City**": social forms that have linked "urban" social principles with other principles such as "agricultural" and "industrial".
- Within cities, urban social principles enable coexistence and communication of various different communities and social groups.



【2】 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION: **"CITY" AND "URBAN FABRIC" AS METAPHORS FOR THE REFLECTIONS ON SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE**

- What is “**Urban Fabric**”?
- Traditional City >>>Great City>>>Megalopolis
- In cities after the 20th century, the urban social principle expanded and penetrated into larger society beyond the city borders.

【2】 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION: **"CITY" AND "URBAN FABRIC" AS METAPHORS FOR THE REFLECTIONS ON SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE**

- Fabric: "cloth produced by weaving and knitting textile fibers"
- Fibers of Urban Fabric: transportation of people, goods, vehicles, information, roads, railways, waterworks, gas pipes, electric wires and so on and the "urban" activities of people who live in the area are weaving and knitting the urban fabric.
- Urban fabric today is **a hybrid of the real and the virtual, the physical and the informational** >>> Is an intelligent urban fabric emerging?



【2】 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION:
**"CITY" AND "URBAN FABRIC" AS METAPHORS FOR THE REFLECTIONS ON SOCIETY
AND GOVERNANCE**

- If we use "urban fabric" instead of "city" as a metaphor for governance, what kind of new understandings about society and cities can be obtained?

【3】 SHOPPING MALLS: NODE OF THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN FABRIC AND THEIR SOCIO-SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Unlike markets or downtown shopping areas which originate spontaneously, a shopping center is a commercial aggregate developed and planned according to a clear concept and managed as an integrated entity by a single managerial body.
- SC consist of large stores such as, department stores, GMS (General Merchandise Stores), SM (Supermarkets), home centers and discount stores in addition to specialty stores (apparel and variety stores), restaurants and cafes, clinics, hotels, public and other service facilities.
- The main types of SC encountered show a great degree of variety such as large-scale retail facilities centered around department stores or GMS, integrated complexes combining theaters, hotels, public service facilities and the like but also fashion malls, station buildings, underground shopping arcades, outlet malls and power centers.
- (http://www.jcsc.or.jp/sc_english/about-jcsc/what-is-a-sc)

【3】 SHOPPING MALLS: NODE OF THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN FABRIC AND THEIR SOCIO-SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Mikio Wakabayashi, Daisuke Tanaka,
Yoshikazu Nango & Emi Kusuda
- *Shopping-mallization of City and
Society, 2013*



【3】 SHOPPING MALLS: NODE OF THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN FABRIC AND THEIR SOCIO-SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS



【3】 SHOPPING MALLS: NODE OF THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN FABRIC AND THEIR SOCIO-SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

- "(The shopping mall) is the 'Tokyo' of this town, it's the Disneyland of this town, it's the airport and the foreign country of this town, it's the recreational facility and the employment office".

Mitsuyo Kakuta, *Aerial Garden*

角田光代、

『空中庭園』

【3】 SHOPPING MALLS:

NODE OF THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN FABRIC AND THEIR SOCIO-SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The function and topological position of shopping mall in the contemporary urban fabric

- Viewed from the inside..... Shopping malls are a simulation of traditional urban spaces in its internal form of architecture, and at the same time, serve as an alternative to the city center.
- Viewed from the outside..... Many shopping malls look like big warehouses or factory buildings with huge almost windowless outer walls.
- **Shopping malls: The outside and inside of urban space are reversed.**

【3】 SHOPPING MALLS: NODE OF THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN FABRIC AND THEIR SOCIO-SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The function and topological position of shopping mall in the contemporary urban fabric

- Shopping malls as nodes within the contemporary urban fabric.
- Traditional city center..... "**Center**" of regional society
- Shopping mall..... "**Hole**" that connects the local society with representations of spaces such as 'Tokyo', Disneyland or a foreign country.

【3】 SHOPPING MALLS: NODE OF THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN FABRIC AND THEIR SOCIO-SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The function and topological position of shopping mall in the contemporary urban fabric

- **“Homogeneity-heterogeneity”** (George Ritzer)
- It is heterogeneous because it contains a variety of shops, restaurants, cafes and other retail and service facilities.
- It is homogeneous because every shopping mall is very similar in its appearance and contents.

【3】 SHOPPING MALLS: **NODE OF THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN FABRIC AND THEIR SOCIO-SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The function and topological position of shopping mall in the contemporary urban fabric

- While shopping malls are located in specific areas of the suburbia or local towns, they are socially open to the space of flow, space of production, consumption and distribution by global capital.
- We can call such a space "**the global common space**". But is the global common space, at the same time a **global public space**?

【3】 SHOPPING MALLS: NODE OF THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN FABRIC AND THEIR SOCIO-SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Another important difference between shopping malls and the old city centers is the way in which they function as common spaces or public spaces.
- Plazas, squares, parks, boulevards and streets: **Common and public space managed and controlled by public or semi-public agents.**
- Shopping malls: **Private spaces managed and controlled by private entities for their profit.**



【3】 SHOPPING MALLS: NODE OF THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN FABRIC AND THEIR SOCIO-SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Is the shopping mall a “new public space”?
- >>> **Privatization of public and common space.**

【3】 SHOPPING MALLS: NODE OF THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN FABRIC AND THEIR SOCIO-SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Many methods of architectural and human engineering are adopted in order to control the traffic access to the shopping malls, human traffic inside the malls and other human behaviors and consciousness in the mall.
- The control of the socio-spatial environment by “**engineeringism**” (Yoshikazu Nango & Ryuji Fujimura)
- “**Power operating through the environmental management**” (Hiroki Azuma)

【3】 SHOPPING MALLS: NODE OF THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN FABRIC AND THEIR SOCIO-SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

- **The comfort and safety** of today's shopping malls are based on the use of several engineering technologies.
- **"Big data"** collected by these systems is used for product development, store design, tenant management and space design, and to enhance the comfort and safety, efficiency and profitability of shopping malls.
- **The space managed in this way links people's actions with the interests of the capital by collecting data of people's behavior and desires, and creating an environment corresponding to them.**

【4】 TOKYO BAY AREA: URBAN SPACE WITHOUT "THE URBAN"

- Tokyo Bay area
- From the tip of the Boso Peninsula to the tip of the Miura Peninsula



【4】 TOKYO BAY AREA: URBAN SPACE WITHOUT "THE URBAN"

- Tokyo Bay area (more limited sense)
- **The coastal area from Chiba city to Yokohama city through Tokyo and Kawasaki city.**
- Chiba Port, Tokyo Port, Kawasaki Port and Yokohama Port.
- Keiyo Industrial Zone from Chiba to Tokyo and the Keihin Industrial Zone from Tokyo to Yokohama.



【4】 TOKYO BAY AREA: URBAN SPACE WITHOUT "THE URBAN"

- “fuku-toshin 副都心”, “shin-toshin 新都心” = “**subcenter of the city**” or “**new city center**”
- “Makuhari Shin-Toshin 幕張新都心” in Chiba, “
- “Rinkai Fuku-Toshin 臨海副都心” in Tokyo
- “Yokohama Minato Mirai 21 横浜みなとみらい21” in Yokohama.



【4】 TOKYO BAY AREA: URBAN SPACE WITHOUT "THE URBAN"

- Rinkai Fuku-Toshin“
= "Tokyo Waterfront City“(TWC)



【4】 TOKYO BAY AREA: URBAN SPACE WITHOUT "THE URBAN"

- "Walking in Odaiba is not fun at all for me. I feel frustrated to stay in such an urban space where blocks were completely separated by the road".

Kengo Kuma

隈研吾



【4】 TOKYO BAY AREA: URBAN SPACE WITHOUT "THE URBAN"

- "Yume-no-Ohashi 夢の大橋"
= "The Great Bridge of Dreams".



[4] TOKYO BAY AREA: URBAN SPACE WITHOUT "THE URBAN"



【4】 TOKYO BAY AREA: URBAN SPACE WITHOUT "THE URBAN"

- The spaces between and around buildings and facilities only serve the purpose of a margin or background.
- **“Urban space without the urban”**



【4】 TOKYO BAY AREA: URBAN SPACE WITHOUT "THE URBAN"

- Kevin Lynch, *Image of City*.
- "node", "pass", "district", "edge" and "landmark" >> Image of City
- A city with high imageability and legibility >>> "good city"

【4】 TOKYO BAY AREA: URBAN SPACE WITHOUT "THE URBAN"

- Image of Tokyo <<< **the Yamanote line** (which functions as a line of demarcation), **the Imperial Palace** (which functions as a landmark), **the Ginza Avenue** (which functions as a passage-way), downtown areas like **Shinjuku**, **Shibuya** and **Ikebukuro** (which divide the city into districts).
- Image of TWC <<< It is hard to have a complete image of the TWC.
- “Urban space without the image of the city“
- “Invisible urban space”

【4】 TOKYO BAY AREA: URBAN SPACE WITHOUT "THE URBAN"

- In the contemporary urban fabric, is it necessary to have an image of the city and share it? >>> "No!"
- By using traffic systems and information technology such as navigation systems installed in mobile phones and automobiles, we can find our ways in the urban environment and can orient ourselves in it without the image of the city.
- **The TWC is like a reversed huge shopping mall of outside and inside.**

[5] CONCLUSION

- Roland Barthes argued that a city is a text like a textile of signs, and that its meaning effect is produced in particular at the center of the city where people concentrate and meet others.
- In the contemporary urban fabric, unlike classical cities, **"the urban" is dispersed widely, mediated by transport and information networks.**
- **The basis of contemporary urban fabric are the systems of transportation and information, and land that was the basis of the classical city is still essential but its role has become smaller than ever.**
- **People's daily life is still being operated on the land, but also in the "global common space" which does not occupy the place on the land space.**

【5】 CONCLUSION

- We have to consider the governance for common today on the premise of such socio-spatial conditions of our city and society.



Thank you for listening!