

Characteristics of New Suburban Developments and their Residents:A case study of Makuhari Bay Town in Tokyo Metropolitan

Tomoko KUBO^{1*}

¹Graduate student, University of Tsukuba, ²JSPS Research Fellow

1 Introduction

Condominium supply increased rapidly since the late 1990s in Japan. This phenomenon caused residential transformation in Japanese cities. In Tokyo metropolitan area, population recovery in inner Tokyo and shrinkage of commuting areas are indicated. Characteristics of the residents in inner Tokyo were often discussed, but little attention was paid on new suburban condominium developments.

After Japan Housing Corporation introduced the lives in condominiums in 1950s, condominiums spread as temporary residential forms. However, as the residential preferences and the characteristics of home-owners changed gradually after the 1990s, suburban housing development sifted the residential forms from detached houses to condominiums, and the location is becoming closer to metropolitan centers. It is important to clarify the characteristics of the new suburban development, and describe the residential preferences and the lives of the residents for discussing new residential structure of Japanese cities. This study aims to clarify the characteristics of the new suburban developments since the late 1990s, the residential choices and the community activities of the residents in the districts.

2 Study Area

Study area is Makuhari Bay town, which was built on reclaimed land of Chiba Bay, in Mihama ward (1~3), Chiba City. Makuhari Bay Town and surrounding areas were developed as Makuhari New City by Chiba prefecture, which includes business and residential districts. There are 18,427 residents in Makuhari Bay Town (Statistic Bureau, Population Census of Japan, 2005).

It is a representative new suburban development since the late 1990s in Tokyo metropolitan area. The sales were started in 1994, and the first residents moved into the town in 1995.

3 Methodology

Interview surveys with questionnaires were conducted to collect data from April to July in 2009. A total of 130 households cooperated interview. There were 18 households who lived in rented apartments in the town, and I excluded them. In the interview surveys, characteristics of the residents, details of their residential choices, the lives in the town were main contents.

4 Results

The residents were classified into three types by the life stages and household structures. Nuclear family with children (74 households), Married couple (32 households) and Single male and female (6 households). Nuclear family is dominant among the residents, and there were differences among the periods they moved into the town. Those who moved into the town from 1995 to 2000 included those who have lived in Tokyo, Kanagawa and other areas in Japan. On the other hand, those who moved into the town after 2001 have lived in neighboring areas.

From the analysis of the residential choices of the residents, Makuhari Bay Town was evaluated in the following points.

1) No history as residential area because of the reclaimed land of Chiba Bay

2) Luxurious residential area.

The case of Makuhari Bay Town explains the shrinkage of commuting areas, and the changing residential preferences of home-owners in Tokyo.

Keywords: suburban developments, residential choices, community activities, Makuhari Bay Town, Tokyo Metropolitan Area