A Case-Study of Cooperative Housing Communities with Special Reference to Inner-City and Suburban Projects in Osaka

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Recently, a cooperative housing movement, based on individual plans and designs, has been developed to avoid the alienation that is found in Japan's urban areas. Residents of some developments have a common goal to develop a new and mutually beneficial community. The objects of this investigation included the aims, planning processes, and present state of such development projects. Lifestyle-oriented projects in central Osaka, and suburban projects aimed chiefly at achieving owner-occupation, were taken as case-studies.

The methods used included questionnaires and interviews of residents living in 101 units of cooperative housing in 11 development projects in Osaka that were conducted in August 1986.

The results show that during the 2 years of preparation before completion of building, the residents developed a strong sense of cooperation allowing them to harmonize their opinions. However, a comparison of inner-city and suburban projects shows that the ways the management and decision-making processes had developed and improved were different, as were the ways of dealing with subsequent daily troubles.

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Keywords: cooperative housing, inner-city projects, suburban projects, mutually beneficial community, resident opinion, management.

Introduction

Recently, there has been a movement among house buyers in Japan to cooperate in groups to build homes based upon their own design and plans. These people seek to live in convenient areas in or near cities, but do not want to live in already built and standardized multiple dwelling housing. They are also seeking to avoid the alienation often found in an urban living environment by living as a group of friends with the common goal of developing a new and mutually beneficial community.

Cooperative housing in Japan has a history of only some 10 years. As of 1987, there were 212 projects containing approximately 4,500 units. The average project consists of approximately 20 residential units, and most of their floor sizes range from 90 to 100 m², which is larger than 65 m² average size of a Japanese condominium. Participants in a project get together through word of mouth and flyers, and it takes about 2 years of preparation and construction before completion.

Some of the characteristics of cooperative housing in Japan are as follows:

1. A cooperative housing group in Japan is organized as a non-incorporated, non-profit group.
2. Each unit in the cooperative housing project is individually owned.
3. Each unit in the cooperative housing project is individually designed.
4. Each member of the cooperative housing group is heavily involved with overseeing the design and building process, with the help of an architect as the coordinator.
5. The architect plays a wide variety of roles as the coordinator, for which he must carry out a considerable amount of work in the process leading the project to completion.
6. The participants in the project are not necessarily consciously thinking about developing a community based on mutual aid. They are more concerned with the physical design of their new...
Statement of the problem

As one type of urban housing, we think that cooperative housing has positive aspects to offer the home owner. In order to make recommendations concerning these positive points, the actual conditions of the cooperative housing project must be studied and the advantages determined. Much research concerning the process leading to the completion of a cooperative housing project, the participants, and the building itself has already been undertaken. The results of these studies have been useful in developing new cooperative housing projects. In order to promote cooperative housing, the participants' expectations and an evaluation of their actual experience of living in the cooperative housing project must be examined. Once this research has been completed, we hope that recommendations can be made concerning the advantages of cooperative housing.

According to the result of our investigation into residents living in 72 units of cooperative homes in Nagoya, which was conducted in August 1985, individual design, reasonable cost, easy manageability, assurance of high-quality housing, and convenient location were listed as the advantages of cooperative housing. At the point of starting to participate in the project, most of the residents attached much importance to individual design, and the residents' expectations regarding easy manageability and assurance of high-quality housing were found to be low.

After having experienced living in the units of cooperative housing, the residents still evaluated the advantage of individual design as high, but later it was also characteristic of the residents to appreciate easy manageability, which had been regarded as less important at first. It seemed that their experience of living in the cooperative homes had led them to become aware of this. The evaluation showed that assurance of high-quality housing received the lowest number of points.

Looking at the results of the Nagoya investigation, however, we detected possible differences between the inner-city area and the suburbs. In particular, we felt that inner-city residents had made living in the city center a priority, in order to be able to pursue their own preferred lifestyle through the advantages of cooperative housing. Meanwhile, among the various types of project to be found in the suburbs, we suspected that there were projects whose residents had chosen cooperative housing as a means to owner-occupation, without being concerned about the lifestyle involved in this type of housing. In the present research, in order to clarify these suspected differences, typical example of these two kinds of projects were chosen for investigation under the following divisions: (1) social background (e.g., family structure and social class); (2) expectations of cooperative housing; (3) opinions concerning procedures in the cooperative housing project and community management based on actual experience of community living and (4) neighborhood relationships.

As a result of this analysis, we would like to suggest some improvements to the process of building cooperative housing projects and also a strategy to enhance community management relations. Especially in Japan, coordinators play an important role in the planning stages and the final realization of a cooperative housing project. For that reason, we would like to offer useful information arising from this analysis not only to residents but also to coordinators. We hope that such information will help future planning for better dwellings and environment.

Research procedures

This investigation was conducted in August 1986 in order to address those differences between inner-city and suburban residents. The sample consisted of residents living in 101 units in 11 projects of inner-city and suburban cooperative homes in Osaka. We restricted our sample to those having the following three characteristics: (1) cooperative housing projects that permitted resident participation in such early stages as land selection; (2) projects where at least 2 years have elapsed since the residents have all moved in and where the community is relatively stable and (3) projects which were built by coordinator groups that had limited the area of their projects to either the inner-city or the suburbs, and had been expanding their projects for at least 10 years in their given area. Abstracts of the sample characteristics and the final response rate are given in Table 1.
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Table 1. Resident attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of residential units</th>
<th>Actual sample size</th>
<th>Average number of household members</th>
<th>Average annual income (10,000 yen)</th>
<th>Average age of household head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>906.7</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>676.4</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation of household head (%)</th>
<th>Longest residence's tenure (%)</th>
<th>Dual worker households (%)</th>
<th>Households with children (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed (with employees)</td>
<td>24(37.5)</td>
<td>26(40.6)</td>
<td>28 (43.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>14(21.8)</td>
<td>Parent's owned</td>
<td>10(15.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical, teaching</td>
<td>14(21.8)</td>
<td>Rental house</td>
<td>12(18.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical, teaching</td>
<td>16(43.2)</td>
<td>Public rental house</td>
<td>21(56.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>8(21.6)</td>
<td>Owned house</td>
<td>6(16.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>6(16.2)</td>
<td>Parent's owned house</td>
<td>4(11.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A: 10 projects, each containing an average of 11 housing units, were built by the same coordinator in Higashi-ku, Osaka, 1977–1984. B: 3 apartment blocks, together comprising one project, were built in 1979 in Harayama-dai, Senpoku-New-Town, Sakai.

* Dual worker households = (part and full time female employees/No. of couples) × 100.

Fig. 1. Resident expectations

Respondents were asked to mark up to 3 answers which had formed important expectations for them.
Results
Sample attributes

Table 1 is a compilation of residents’ sample attributes found among inner-city families, labeled A, and suburban families labeled B. In A, the average number of household members is only 3.3 persons, and households without children comprise 20/64 of all the households in group A. The average annual income of group A is one-third higher than that of group B. 26/64 of A are self-employed (with employees) whereas none of the B members are self-employed. 36/64 of A have moved in from either their own houses or their parents’ houses, while 21/37 of group B have moved in from public rental houses.

Initial expectation (when they decided to participate in cooperative housing)

Looking at Fig. 1, we can find that although both group A and B’s greatest expectation of co-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Since those with differing opinions have left, and only those who understand cooperative housing remain, it was easy to unify the group.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Since residents openly discuss their opinions, the group bonds are strengthened.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leaders emerged to coordinate and brought good results.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Since residents have many occasions to gather besides official meetings, the bonds grew stronger.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. During gathering, families came to know each other.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. During meetings, many residents recognized the benefits of community life.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Publication of many books and articles on cooperative housing encouraged us.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Long, gruelling discussions concerning basic planning led to a decreased consensus of opinion.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Dissenting opinions often resulted in disharmony.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. As people got to know one another better, some people simply cannot get along with each other. This produced some coordination problems.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Coordinating the individual plans produced problems and lingering bad feelings. *</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Unsatisfied persons at times had no choice but to comply with the opinions of a leader or a leading group.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Most of the responsibility was given to the coordinator with strong opinions, and this resulted in dissent among residents.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Basic planning of units was settled through negotiations, but there was wide dissent concerning the overall planning of the cooperative housing.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The Japanese have a great desire for a house with southern sunlight exposure (the most light), and if they can not get one, they at least want the living room to face the south.

Fig. 2. Resident opinion during the completion of housing
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operative housing was for individual design of the housing units, group A's next two highest expectations were for a convenient location, followed by having a chance to escape standardized multiple-dwelling housing. Group B's next two highest, on the other hand, were for assurance of high-quality housing, followed by a chance to build a close neighborhood community.

Resident opinion during completion of housing

Figure 2 shows the resident opinion of the process of cooperative housing projects. During the 2 years before completion, the residents developed a strong sense of cooperation, allowing them to harmonize their opinions. This improved management and neighborhood relationships. However, most group A families agreed with the architectural technicians, who recommended strongly the inner city as a convenient and good place to live. Compared to group B, group A had much less confusion, because those with different opinions had left and only those whose perceptions of cooperative housing were similar remained. They formed a much stronger sense of unity when they built their cooperative homes. Members of group B, while brought together by a desire for reasonable cost and assurance of high-quality housing, held a diversity of opinions. It was very difficult for them to coordinate their activities during the planning phase. During this time, a strong leader emerged who worked hard and eventually unified the group, and they came to a deeper understanding of cooperative housing.

Resident evaluation of their present management

A look at how residents evaluated the management after they moved in is available in Fig. 3. Group B evaluated the benefits of community living and group management lower than group A.

In your opinion, what are the conditions for a successful cooperative life? For example, good leadership as well as common values and ways of thinking are thought to have a strong influence on cooperative life. What other conditions would you consider to be important? From the following conditions, please circle three of your choice.

Fig. 4. Essential conditions for a successful cooperative life

Two responses per household (husband and wife) were solicited, and the results combined.
Essential conditions for a successful cooperative life as perceived by the residents

We have compared each group’s opinion of what aspects are important for a successful cooperative housing project in Fig. 4. Group A and B both felt that helping one another in their daily lives and having the purpose of improving the living environment were very important. But group A felt strongly that privacy for each family was a necessity, while group B insisted that opportunities for interaction between families were very important.

Dealing with daily troubles

Figure 5 shows how each group deals with daily troubles. Group A tended to confront the source of a problem, or in the opposite extreme, to ignore it, while group B most often would discuss the trouble with neighbors to solicit their reactions before finally deciding what to do.

Conclusion

On the basis of our analysis of cooperative housing projects in the inner-city (A) and the suburbs (B), we have reached the following conclusions:

Residents of group A have three characteristics:

1. Appreciating the benefits of inner-city life, and desiring an innovative and conveniently located residence in whose design they can participate, there is a strong tendency for them to participate in cooperative housing projects. With a clear view of the kind of lifestyle they wish to lead, they see cooperative housing as a way through which this lifestyle may become possible;

2. they cherish and maintain their household privacy and

3. they know the etiquette of urban community life.

For the residents from group B, 60% of whom are ordinary salaried workers, the reasonable cost and high-quality of the owner-occupied house that was their aim are important advantages of cooperative housing, in addition to the benefits of individual design. Location and innovative housing design processes are of low concern to them. There are few residents who had a clear image of the lifestyle they wanted to lead, and the wide diversity of their values is hard to reconcile. However, in their actual lives they often make opportunities to communicate with one another, and understand one another’s point of view, stressing interaction with others over individual privacy to create a harmonious community.

An appreciation of the differences between in-
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ner-city and suburban participants helps us to improve the physical planning, management, neighborhood relationships, and decision-making processes in cooperative housing projects.

References

コーポラティブ住宅のコミュニティについて
「市街地立地型」と「都市近郊立地型」の事例比較—大阪の場合—

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平成元年３月１日受理

近年、大都市の碳外感に疑問をもつ人々の問で、自由な間取りとデザインが可能なコーポラティブ住宅づくりが推進されている。それらの中には、新しい住みの相互扶助関係をめざしたコミュニティも多い。本研究では、とくに、都心での個性的生活を重視する「市街地立地型」と持家獲得を志向する「都市近郊立地型」コーポラティブ住宅に焦点をあて、住宅づくりの目標や発展経過と建設計画の進め方、および入居後の生活の現状について両者を比較検討し、そのコミュニティの質のちがいを明らかにすることを目的としている。

方法は、大阪におけるコーポラティブ住宅居住世帯 101 件（11 プロジェクト）を対象とした事例研究で、留置アンケート調査と面接調査結果の分析による。

調査の結果、コーポラティブ住宅の竣工までに約 2 年の年月が費やされているが、その間に、居住者は互いに意見を調整しながら協力体制を作り、強化している。しかしながら、「市街地立地型」と「都市近郊立地型」コーポラティブ住宅では、管理や意志決定の手順とその改善に対する考え方の相違がみられ、また日常のトラブルの対処のしかたにも違いが認められた。

キーワード：コーポラティブ住宅, 「市街地立地型」プロジェクト, 「都市近郊立地型」プロジェクト, 相互扶助共同体, 居住者の価値、管理。