Consideration of the compatibility of basic policy and the numerical targets in city center regeneration plans

-Consideration from index target accomplishment situation-

Sae Kondo*, Fumihiko Seta* and Takashi Onishi**

The Three Urban Revitalization Acts of Japan were revised in 2006. To be specific, under the revised Central City Invigoration Law, a local government aiming towards having its own city center regeneration plan and implementation strategy needs to apply at the office of the prime minister in order to obtain certification. As of December 2012, 118 plans from 107 cities are authorized. This study aims at examining the result of achievement in municipalities’ regeneration plan with final report and the reliability of evaluation process; quantitative analysis using numerical index. From case of Kumamoto city, it is found that social movement acts as an effective factor to activate Machizukuri especially with wide participation of people. When the stage of urban regeneration is evaluate under the regeneration policy, social movement gives a suggestion of a new quantitative evaluation axis.

Keywords:
Revised Three Urban Revitalization Acts, Urban regeneration plan, Numerical index, Vision of future city, Machizukuri
1. Background

The “Large-scale retail store act”, which had been gradually assuaged from 1990 as a result of US-Japan Framework for a New Economic Partnership, was repealed in 2000 for the reason that it was against worldwide competition policy. In the other hand, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (former Ministry of International Trade and Industry) decided to form a new framework in consideration of local small and medium-sized commerce organizations to solve social problems as large scale retail stores were being constructed at such an advanced and fast pace.

At this point, a framework of laws has been changed to estimate what a city should be from judgment of opening large scale retail stores. This can be described as conflicts between “large scale stores versus small or medium sized stores” have shifted into that of “city centers versus suburbs”. Under these circumstances, its concept of policy has also shifted to social regulation from commercial regulation, while the same change occurring from the central government to the municipality; with the keyword as “Machizukuri” serving as influence behind this big policy shift.

The effort to solve those conflicts started with the enactment of the so-called “Three Urban Revitalization Acts”. These acts include the Large-Scale Retail Store Location Act, the revised City Planning Act and the Central City Invigoration Law. Large-Scale Retail Store Location Act is aimed at preserving the living environment when a large-scale store is to be opened for business. On the other hand, the City Planning Act was revised to guide large-scale shops to be opened in relevant areas by zoning and allowing local authorities to set special use districts if needed. Lastly, the Central City Invigoration Law is aiming to promote urban regeneration integrally with both of urban district development and commercial revitalization. As a result, these three acts couldn’t stop the increase of opening large-scale stores; causing not only many existing small stores to lose their vitality in local cities but also disordered suburbanization of public facilities.

Taking these results, the three urban revitalization acts mentioned above were revised in 2006. The “Machizukuri” framework of these acts was reconsidered, focusing on measures against suburbanization of urban functions and the de-centralization of cities. The central government decided to newly introduce a structure of “choice and concentration”, wherein it was meant that a concept of policy was not by shopping district promotion any more. The “Compact City” was newly declared as a vision for a future of an expected declining population and aging society.12)

Under the revised Central City Invigoration Law, a local government aiming toward the urban regeneration plan and implementation needs to apply to the office of the prime minister to obtain certification. This is because the central government changed direction at a point of view by “choice and concentration” to push a measure of urban regeneration. In the revised law, at this point of December 2012, 118 plans from 107 cities were authorized.

2. Previous studies

Many studies on urban regeneration have already been done. At the beginning, most studies were focused on changes in central city land use and the effectiveness of urban redevelopment projects. After that, comparative studies between domestic and overseas cases appeared. Later on, qualitative case studies on urban regeneration plans were reported; especially after the Three Urban revitalization Acts were enacted. Furthermore, focus on its effect to individual projects such as the TMO, as well as residences in central areas became popular afterward. From this
trend it can be said that the subject of urban regeneration is still a highly concerned issue as dejectedly influencing our daily lives.

Recently, a quantitative analysis study to evaluate the numerical index achievement was reported (Ito, 2012)\(^3\). It has appeared in the background that many political plans started to digitize an aim and were going to grasp the achievement situation quantitatively. But Ito’s study has a problem; to be made from the follow-up report of the stage are not yet the aspired final results. He also says that the clear tendency on the relationship of target achievement and population scale has not been seen in the study’s results; adding a problem to be solved which still remains in the way of setting the numerical targets.

It is believed that sorting the results of numerical indexes evaluation in regeneration plans, beginning from the first regeneration plan period accomplished from last year, are important in this stage.

On the other hand, the urban regeneration evaluation committee organized by the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, reported their end of 2012 findings saying that the regeneration plan has a problem in the way of setting and verifying the benefits of its numerical targets\(^4\).

From those points of view, a study focusing on not only the numerical index achievement but also the Machizukuri process is needed, while the policy concept has been shifted into Machizukuri under many stakeholders’ own common view of the future city.

3. Objective

With an authorized regeneration plan, it is required to set 2-3 the numerical targets. It is important to evaluate the measure of the act with a collection analysis of achievement on those targets. The purposes of this study are to arrange achievement of index and classification of 14 cities which had accomplished their first-5-year period of regeneration plan by March 2012, and also to get a suggestion on process of setting and accomplishment of target evaluation in the revised Central City Invigoration Law.

4. Evaluation of the numerical target achievement in the first regeneration period

4.1 Classification of numerical target and population

Each city has chosen numerical targets to its regeneration policy. Cities with 2 to 3 targets in their plans occupy 76% of the whole of 118 plans. The targets have seven contents which are 1. Footfall, 2. City center population, 3. Public building visitors, 4. Retail sale, 5. Vacant store, 6. Public transportation users and 7. Others. The ratios of each target of the whole 118 plans are shown in figure 1. “Footfall” and “City center population” could be popular indicators to evaluate regeneration among local governments. Also, 110 first period plans by city population

![Figure 1: Ratio of each target](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Breakdown by population scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000~300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
size were classified, shown in figure 2. It may be noticed that big cities with prefectural capital or with over 3 million population tend to tackle regeneration positively. However, it is not a big difference so it can be said that there are not largely significant trends in population scale\(^{(1)}\).

### 4.2 14 cities completed first period plan

We see the accomplishment situation of the 14 cities which had completed their first period\(^{(2)}\) in figure 3. Figure 4 shows the classification breakdown by chosen population scale and numerical indexes. These 14 cities have been tackling their regeneration plans positively before three urban regeneration acts were revised. 8 cities are of prefectural capital or its equivalent; while others are historical cities or having tourist attractions.

From the figures cited, we found an index of “3. Public building visitors” that have reached target in 60% of cities. We also can see achievement in original index which is the “number and quality of shops”, “tourist spending hours”, “working population” or “number of NPO”.

On the other hand, few cities have accomplished targets of “1. Footfall” and “2. City center population”, however many cities had been aiming at that targets in their regeneration plan. In addition, Commercial indexes, “4. Retail sale” and “5. Vacant store”, have low achievement ratios.

However, when we assessed the cities which improved their reference value, it was apparent that all cities improved their reference value in commercial indexes; although they can’t reach target, almost half of cities improved results in “1. Footfall” and “2. City center population”.

We could neither find nor see emerging regeneration trends by their city population scale.

Regarding from breakdown in figure 4, core cities with a population of more than 300,000 tend to choose a wide range indexes per each city, due to play a role of multifunction city. However, there is no clear trend of relevancy between index target achievement and population scale.

![Figure 2: Ratio of accomplished targets](image)

**Table 2: Breakdown of index and population scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥300,000</td>
<td>8 Toyama, Kanazawa, Kumamoto, Nagano, Chiba, Hamamatsu</td>
<td>10 2 6 1 3 3 3 0 1 0 4 2 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000～300,000</td>
<td>4 Yashiro, Obihiro, Takaoka, Takarazuka</td>
<td>3 0 3 0 3 2 2 1 2 1 0 0 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤100,000</td>
<td>2 Futyu, Bungotakata</td>
<td>1 1 1 0 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 3 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14 3 10 1 8 5 5 1 3 1 4 2 5 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Chapter consideration

The indexes of “Footfall” and “Public building visitors” are hardly reliable indexes because they are easily influenced by season and existing of events or redevelopment project. Figure 5 shows footfall transition of Toyama city\(^3\), wherein it is noticed that the last reference value counted climbed steeply in exact timing when redevelopment project completed. We could find similar comments in another final regeneration reports. Due to these emerging patterns, an appropriate evaluation axis is needed to evaluate sustainable Machizukuri instead.

Also there are no clear consequences from index target achievement and urban structure. In that meaning, current numerical index target achievement is not sufficient to evaluate real regeneration stage.

5. Development of the consideration with evaluation axis focusing on Machizukuri process

5.1 Classification Keywords from basic policy

It is already described above that the concept of urban regeneration policy has also shifted into social regulation, which is “Machizukuri”, from commercial regulation. From the point of view of “Machizukuri”, it is referred that a common principle and share of vision of future city can activate revitalization action in the role\(^4\).

In this regard, keywords from visions of future city (include basic principles and concepts) which are held up in 110 first regeneration plans were extracted. Affected factors to construct “Compact city” were examined, factors which are aimed as an ideal city center in Central City Invigoration Law\(^1\).

Figure 6 shows a table of keywords. Each keyword can be classified into 6 categories, “Residence”, “Environment”, “Urban Functions”, “Economy • Consumption”, “regional Resource” and “Community”. The number of times of the appearance is on the side of each keyword. The number on the side of category name shows the total keyword usage in the same category.

As a result, the number of appearance of categories “Residence” and “Economy • Consumption” are the largest, meaning that many municipalities are aiming toward the residential commercial city. Especially notable is the high interest on “Economy • Consumption” which seems to depend on the former Three Urban Revitalization Acts. On the other hand, we can find many municipalities which have shifted into creation of new urban residential space; which we are able to appreciate from the concept of multifunctional urban management under the revised three acts.

But to continued dependence in creating urban residential space may bring an unbalanced and
unsuitable future, while the urban regeneration plan has been aiming to form a well-balanced city as “Compact City”.

In this regard, we arrange a vision of the future city and the functions of urban structure based on the concept of “Compact City” as illustrated in Figure 7.

The axis of urban structure are arranged into 4 categories which are “Residence”, “Environment”, “Urban Functions” and “Economy • Consumption”. The number of keyword appearance in those categories was put on the axis as a linear function. In this point, a required element which makes apparent a conceptual vision of the future city coming close to the vision of compact city can be found from “community” in figure 6. Subsequently, the elements of “gathering”, “prosper” and “contact” included in categories “Residence” and “Economy • Consumption” are able to directly connect to the Social Activities among stakeholders. If these elements become brisk, many stakeholders are able to get a chance to share future vision.

![Figure 4: Appearance of keyword in the vision of future city](image)

5.2 Social Movement in the process of Machizukuri—the case from Kumamoto city—

I introduce Kumamoto city as an example of this kind of Social Activities which makes Machizukuri process activate. Kumamoto city is a core city with the third largest population in Kyushu Island. But the central city district form has a rather compact urban area compared to its population scale. The city is full of nature and historic environments such as the Kumamoto castle and castle town.

An interview with a municipal officer conveyed a deep concern at first that the Kyushu bullet Train which was opened to traffic in 2011 may absorb shoppers to Fukuoka city; the largest city in the Kyushu island, because it connects to Fukuoka in a minimum of 33 minutes. As a result,
there is no big damage on commercial industry especially on retail sail within the central shopping district. They consider that it is because of citizens’ recognition toward Kumamoto city as a highly attractive city for shopping and visiting.

When we look at its first regeneration plan, three indexes are set as “Footfall”, “Public building (Kumamoto castle) visitors” and “public transformation users”. This plan seemed to accomplish its target with 2 numerical indexes, as “Footfall” improved its reference value.

In this regard, the government and people collaboration program is considered to be a primary factor to this success. 2 examples are shown below.

The institution of the lord of Kumamoto castle

The project of reconstruction of the Kumamoto castle was started under 3 concepts of reconstruction and preservation of the historic building itself, alongside the city environment maintenance and the services created therein. Much of the institutional framework of Kumamoto castle was introduced to facilitate a kind of crowd financial sourcing; meant to collect funds from people who assent or agree with the concepts. This institution may grant privileges to persons who donate 10,000 Yen the right to be recognized as a “lord of the castle”. This institution started in 1997 and has collected 1,260 million Yen from 27,000 people in the last 10 years, and is continuing to this day. Collected funds were used to reconstruct many historical facilities within the Kumamoto castle site.

This program enables the citizenry to be proud of their city by personally helping finance the conservation of this regional historic heritage site. It also gives them the opportunity to visit the Kumamoto castle which they collectively own as a community; one of the reasons as to why a number of visitors regularly gather at the Kumamoto castle. In addition, surrounding areas became conscious of the conservationist town atmosphere initiated at the castle, and have since created many support services and augmentative spaces wherein people can get to experience historic culture.

Nowadays this institution is introduced in other cities as one of the prime examples of the Machizukuri method.

The institution of Green carpet Tram

The second example is the institution of a green carpet tram which supports a project to create eco-friendly environment. This is also a source of crowd financial sourcing which grants citizens ownership privileges; a practice that started since 2009. The success of the Kumamoto castle reconstruction project gave pride to local citizens and the city center became the prime representative of this new found civic pride. This green carpet project, which is a part of the city master plan and environment master plan, has been introduced to make the city more appealing both in the city center, as well as its outer fringes.

At this stage, 935m of 11.9km total have already been done with this funding. And it has been reported that this green carpet strategy is reducing heat in the central city area during summer,
as well as diminish noise along the tram line. The municipality says that about 80% of their citizenry highly regarded this project in a questionnaire administered to them.

### 5.3 Chapter consideration

The activities mentioned above are examples of social movements where people are able to participate widely and freely. The participation makes them to be protagonists in the Machizukuri process. Future researches may perhaps focus on examining the consequences of this case in terms of urban revitalization and regeneration.

In other words, sharing a common vision of the future city among a wide range of stakeholders may lead to significant positive results; leading our cities towards more positive social involvements and well-balanced spatial management integration strategy.

### 6. Conclusion

I examined the result of the first period regeneration plan with 14 cities which have completed their period by March 2012. Numerical indexes of “Footfall” and “City center population” showed low accomplished ratio and the achievement ratio of other commercial indexes could not reach their target of 50%. This trend shows circumstances among central commercial areas that have still been severed since the former Three Urban Revitalization Acts introduced. This quantitative evaluation system could be useful for the central government to adopt “choose and support” approach into appropriate municipalities. But accordingly, it is hard to find clear relationships between achievement and urban typology; at this point this evaluation system may not be sufficient to assess each regeneration state.

On the other hand, I clarified that there are eccentricities in each municipality’s view of the future city, and thus are presented with a conceptual factor which is efficient to balance urban structure as well as social movement. We also examined Kumamoto city cases and found suggestion that social movement with wide participation of people is efficient to build ideal urban structures.

It will be important to set qualitative evaluation axis focusing on relationships between future view and social movement, aside from quantitative evaluations in future urban regeneration policy. In the next step, it would be of interest to pursue further verification on this proposal with other cities which will by then finish their first period of evaluation.
Notes:
(1) Each municipality’s first urban regeneration plans are referred.
(2) Final report or the second urban regeneration plans are referred.
(3) The second urban regeneration plan of Toyama city is referred.
(4) Interview to the urban activate promotion section of Kumamoto city was conducted on August 16th, 2012.

Reference:
5) Pictures are quoted from homepage of Kumamoto city.