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AKIHABARA as an Asyl¹

政策創造研究科 政策創造専攻

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ABSTRACT: Akihabara (Tokyo, JAPAN) is a distinctive city. Although the city is built based on urban planning to some extent, it does not necessarily translate that buildings are aligned in an orderly manner. Shops established within amazingly limited spaces around the Akihabara Station are handling numerous types and a large quantity of goods. In a unique atmosphere that is dissimilar to ones found in its peripheral cities, regional communities are functioning with a high degree of market-oriented elements. The residents also consider it to be appropriate. The entrepreneur's background in enterprises originated from Akihabara is different from the ones in Japanese corporations which are often viewed as bureaucratic.

This paper studied the entrepreneur and the history of Akihabara shaped by a market-oriented economy and “individual” abilities. Then, it shed light on the fact that elements such as hungry spirits cultivated by non-elites, vitality, and flexible ideas which are not confined by common sense are essential for the entrepreneur rather than career development which is considered to be superior from Japan's standpoint.

Akihabara is based on diverse entrepreneurial types. The accumulation of such entrepreneur's career development has functioned as a regional platform and formed the “milieu” in Akihabara as an Asyl (sanctuary). The birth of the entrepreneur generates competitive advantages in Akihabara.

KEYWORDS: Akihabara, diversity, entrepreneurial type, learning region, milieu, regional platform

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines theories regarding mechanisms of the Akihabara's entrepreneur appearance based on entrepreneur case examples.

Akihabara was formerly known as Kanda Radio Kadoya Town and in its current incarnation as Akihabara Electric Town, in the 65+ years since the end of WWII the area has become famous around the world for the concentration of retailers and wholesalers involved in industrial electronic devices such as computers, telecommunications, as well as popular electronic devices such as televisions and radios, etc. Analyzing case examples in the area to examine mechanisms of the Akihabara industrial district illustrates a clear demand for revitalization to counter falling demand.

II. METHODOLOGY and PRIOR STUDIES

Research focused on the entrepreneur interview and observations (Ethnography).

Most research documents focus on one aspect of the Akihabara Industrial districts. However, no studies which focus on the relation between the entrepreneur and region discussed in this research are available (although there is a study which views Tokyo as a city in an Asyl (sanctuary) space in the field of sociology) (Tomoyuki Okui, 1996).

III. THE FORMATION of ASYL (SANCTUARY) SPACE OBSERVED in AKIHABARA

1. What is an Asyl (sanctuary) space?

While it is needless to mention twice, the Akihabara region maintains a distinctive space in the Tokyo metropolitan area. Akihabara is undoubtedly different from Shinjuku, Shinagawa, and Marunouchi. It is a region formed by the accumulation of chaotic entrepreneur's egos originated from burnt-out ruins after the war. Akihabara evolved to an Asyl (sanctuary)-type city due to a mixture of various factors including its geographical predominance brought by the origin of the city, its role as a diverse transportation node, and its element as the industrial district. Although "Asyl (sanctuary)" can be interpreted in several ways as in "sanctuary" and "shelter", "free space" is probably the most appropriate definition in this context.

All of these definitions share a common aspect since they signify a place where "a governing authority cannot reach."

In many cases, an Asyl (sanctuary) is considered to exist in an area with strong religious elements where Buddhist temples attract support from local communities or in a space where a market-oriented economy is formed. Akihabara conforms to the latter pattern. In Japanese history, it was once possible to observe the presence of various cities and spaces which were established based upon a market economy. However, many of them disappeared along with the rise and fall of those in power. The "Rakuichi-Rakuza" (Free markets, open guilds) policy represents a typical example of such circumstances.

The origin of the Rakuichi-Rakuza policy can be traced back to when Rokkaku Sadayori of Omi Province in the Warring States Period enacted free markets policies in castle towns. Subsequently, it was enhanced by Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. The policy aimed to create a castle town which promotes free competition by dissolving guilds and wholesale distributors who enjoyed exclusive sales rights and prevented new entrants to the market. Although the trade guilds (za), wholesale merchants, and merchant guilds encompassed the markets as their vested interests in those days; the policy intended to encourage new players to enter markets and promote economic activities based on the concentration of absolute power toward feudal lords and the exemption of additional taxes and expenses. Establishing only a minimum level of rules necessary and practicing free market transactions permitted the stabilization of domestic economy and prices, preventing military expenditures from rising which eventually led to an increase in competitiveness for a country.

The Warring States Period came to an end when Tokugawa Ieyasu established the Tokugawa Shogunate. It marked the beginning of the Edo period which signified approximately 300 years of peace and order. Edo was an artificially-created city by developing empty fields and barren lands with only canals. The city had no adequate infrastructures for economic functions although political capacities were concentrated. Consequently, Osaka served as an economic Mecca throughout the Edo period.

Starting from the Warring States Period, the merchants who undertook the accumulation, trading, and realization of rice and agricultural products were conducting activities in free markets using its geographical advantages facing the Seto Inland Sea. Osaka had the country's first rice futures trading market at that time. This is a "speculative purchasing of rice" by setting a volume of transactions prior to a harvesting period, creating a certain type of insurance system which further accelerated the accumulation of rice to Osaka. The futures trading market was closed when the Tokugawa Shogunate subsequently desired to control rice prices. Yet, such merchant's wisdom has been inherited as a gene in which the market-oriented philosophy can still be observed in current Osaka.

The aforementioned observations can be found in Akihabara since it is home to many entrepreneurs, support systems to help industrialists succeed and a network of entrepreneurs.

Marshall's non-commercial production factors do exist, but Prof. G. Benko's (Université de Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne) theory of "collective regional assets for the purpose of competition" gives a more multi-faceted analysis. Regional communities need identity and governance. With a variety of collective regional assets for competition, combined with increased specialization, it should be possible to develop a region like Akihabara. Benko's approach tallies with Jacob's theories of urban development.

2. Asyl (sanctuary) space 『AKIBA』

After experiencing several calamities and downfalls, Akihabara became an internationally renowned industrial district city as a place for electronic goods, Otaku-experts, and tourism. Even if considered to be obsolete now, trends and aspects which enjoyed popularity in the past are still preserved as a gene of the city. The essence of this is built on its Asyl (sanctuary)-type identity as a free city. Akihabara is one of the few places which permits people to establish an enterprise using their strong determinations and innovative ideas, and consequently, is not a gathering site for people who became an entrepreneur after enjoying a steady elite career track. Akihabara is rather an Asyl (sanctuary) space where non-elites congregate in search of a place which provides them with the opportunity to act

freely, as if functioning as an air pocket within the bureaucratic and socialistic elements of Japan.

First, the origin of Akihabara will be examined. Akihabara started when it became a transportation hub after air raids, which subsequently attracted people one after another. Amid chaotic situations after the war in that time, it was apparent that the government had no capacity in the handling of Akihabara as the black market began to thrive. From the beginning, Akihabara began to re-launch itself as a place liberated from the authority. Markets were created for survival, and people used their intellect to figure out how to secure their livelihood in the markets. Akihabara continued to grow while it was drifting at the mercy of markets influenced by each individual's expectations. Akihabara opposed the plan to improve street stalls proposed by the GHQ. This is how Akihabara was born as a market-oriented city. From the beginning, accommodating governing authorities was not a logical choice for them.

Akihabara also has four commercial districts, consisting of Akihabara Central Avenue Shopping District Promotion Cooperative, Akihabara Shopping Promotion Cooperative, Akihabara West-Gate Shopping Cooperative, and Akihabara Showa Avenue Shopping Promotion Cooperative. These four cooperatives are divided by regions and contain various types of businesses, including electronics shops, restaurants, and general stores. Possibly caused by a difference of opinions among themselves, they did not have the best relationship with one another. In addition to these cooperatives, Akihabara has "Akihabara Station Front Electrical Association" and "Akihabara Electrics Specialty Stores Association." The former still operates to date based on a strong bond, especially formed by the shops gathered under girder-bridges. However, the latter dissolved in 1979 as Akihabara Electrical Town Organization was established.

As described previously, the residents have spontaneously determined the state of Akihabara. This functioned as a driving force to move Akihabara to the current status. Akihabara escaped from governing authorities, a necessary condition to secure an Asyl (sanctuary) space, formed a city with their own decisions, and established a position as a free city where merchants can spontaneously and

magnanimously participate in activities.

3. ENTREPRENEURSHIP TYPE IN AKIHABARA

Interviews with entrepreneurs, participant observations, and data analyses revealed that the Akihabara region consists of various types of business formation.

Different types of entrepreneurial activities take place in the Akihabara region as described below.

Fig 1: ① - ② represents the business formation patterns in the Akihabara region and can be explained as entrepreneurial activities in the area. The entrepreneurial activity in this context includes intra-company entrepreneurial pursuits (strategic transitions by strategists and company presidents and intrapreneurs' activities) in addition to founders' action to start up a business.

(1) ① Representing a Spin-off Type Enterprise: Kakuta Radio & Electric Co., Ltd.

The origin of Kakuta Radio & Electric Co., Ltd. lies in a Spin-off from the oldest company in the Akihabara region called Hirose Radio & Electric Co., Ltd. Interviews with Kakuta Radio & Electric Co., Ltd. unearthed the presence of the "Fukuei Report" (a company newsletter) which serves as a unique correspondence education system. This discovery confirmed that the newsletter has been used as a medium to share information and know-how as well as to provide personnel training for business offices located in remote areas. Interview results also revealed that Kakuta Radio & Electric Co., Ltd. has a corporate culture which encourages an education opportunity (talent development), sending employees to a night school (university) to obtain a degree.

(2) ② Representing "Parting of the Ways" Type Enterprise: Kaga Electronics Co., Ltd.

Mr. Tsukamoto, a founder of Kaga Electronics Co., Ltd. was envisioning a strategic talent development system (intrapreneurs/management development). The most important task for President Tsukamoto is "to develop young, motivated employees and provide an environment where they discover business opportunities and take on the challenge of new business ventures." Kaga Electronics Co., Ltd. adopts an internal sectionalization policy which permits newly formed businesses to be operated as

independent entities. Management of such subsidiaries is also transferred to employees who are willing to tackle the challenge. The corporation contains a large number of domestic and international consolidated companies where entrepreneurs and management executives are being developed. During job interviews, interviewers always ask applicants, "Do you have what it takes to become a leader for a new business venture?" As it is already apparent, Kaga Electronics Co., Ltd. has established a system which inherits Mr. Tsukamoto's entrepreneurial spirit. Kaga Electronics Co., Ltd. itself functions as a school to develop business managers. Management of the company also incorporates values and organizations which strongly reflect Mr. Tsukamoto's devotion. In particular, it consists of a principle that emphasizes respect for human dignity with a unique talent educational system (and the presence of its corporate culture) based on the equation which focuses on "prohibiting occupation changes while welcoming a pursuit to become independent" = "a talent system which cultivates business managers."

(3) ③ Representing an Innovation Type Enterprise: Toranoana, Inc., Mai:lish, and Sofmap Co., Ltd.

Toranoana, Inc. (publishing comic books, etc), Mai:lish (previously T-Zone, a maid café), and Sofmap Co., Ltd. (personal computer sales, etc) are enterprises which have expanded their businesses incorporating culture and values necessary for the times. This type of enterprises is particularly indebted to the presence of entrepreneurs. It is also imperative to note that they effectively utilize universities (Digital Hollywood University, Yoyogi Animation Gakuin, Tokyo Denki University, the University of Tokyo, Meiji University, Nihon University, Hosei University, etc) which serve as regional platforms. These universities provide students' ideas and supply a demand that contribute to corporations in areas of recruitment and clients.

This regional platform can be described as what Professor Georges Benko calls "collective regional assets for the purpose of competition."¹⁾

(4) ④ Representing an Enterprise Type with Exclusive Community Consciousness (Social Capital Type): Yodobashi-Akiba and the Computer Hall (the PC Hall) at Laox

According to a prior study (Hiroko Yamashita [1998a], 231), starting a store in Akihabara from other regions was extremely difficult and this is a testimony to the reason why Akihabara is called an exclusive community. The reason for this exclusiveness may lie in a sense of common destiny which has bound the community together since the era of street stall business. Manufacturers have given Akihabara special treatment and such environments have been fostered over the years. This indicates that distinguishing whether or not other parties are trustworthy individuals (or enterprises) plays a significant role in an environment where it is impossible to control their behaviors. This appears to reflect the epitome of the Japanese social structure which emphasizes the “milieu” and is strongly conscious about a sense of “in-groups” and “out-groups.”

Moreover, Laox faced the following events upon pursuing the opening of the Computer Hall (the PC Hall).

The opening of the Computer Hall (the PC Hall) faced protest movements from local residents in Akihabara since they did not feel that “adding a large electronics store to Akihabara which was already saturated by other shops would be appropriate.” A council on countermeasures toward the new business opening was organized in Akihabara and the protests spread throughout the area. Meanwhile, President Son of SoftBank held a lecture at a Laox’s store manager meeting to explain the growth potential of computer markets, educating branch managers and officers. Subsequently, Laox opened the store at the current location based on President Son’s advice. Interviews regarding this matter revealed that Laox decided to open the Computer Hall (the PC Hall) at the location because other electronics stores would consider the place President Son selected to be “outside of the exclusive electronics shop community and therefore it would not be inappropriate to open a store.” This event also exemplifies the sense of exclusiveness within Akihabara. Currently, the Computer Hall (the PC Hall) is not under Laox’s umbrella since it was sold in August, 2008.

In actuality, residents were also said to express similar opposition toward the opening of Yodobashi-Akiba. Interview findings show that “the opening of Yodobashi-

Akiba should not be inappropriate since the place (where Yodobashi-Akiba is currently located) is not part of Akihabara.” As suggested by this incident, the Akihabara area is clearly a regional community which shares the “sense of exclusiveness.”

These examples indicate the presence of social capital which is unique to the Akihabara region.

(5) ⑤ Representing a Spontaneous Origin Type Enterprise: Ishimaru Denki Co., Ltd., Onoden, and Tsukumo

This type of enterprise includes many long-established companies created by founders while conforming to the existing business industry environment in the Akihabara region. This means that these companies have adapted their business practices to what the times require in the Akihabara region. They have the history of developing their businesses to date utilizing a regional platform such as the Akihabara Consumer Electronics Promotion Cooperative.

Fig 1 : Entrepreneurship in Akihabara

① Spin-off Type
“Hirose Radio & Electronics Co., Ltd. ⇒ Kakuta Radio & Electronics Co., Ltd”
“Tomihisa Electronics, Co., Ltd. ⇒ Sakae Electronics Corporation, Iida Electronics Co., Ltd.,” and many other enterprises
“Shimura Musen ⇒ Okamoto Electronics Corporation”
“Wawa Electronics Instrument ⇒ Sun Parts,” and many other enterprises
“Furutaka Electronics Co., Ltd. ⇒ ELNA Co. Ltd.,” and many other enterprises
“Yamagiwa Corporation ⇒ Ishimaru Denki Co., Ltd., Mansei Co., Ltd.,” and other enterprises
“Torii Dengyo, Inc. ⇒ Sansui Electric Co., Ltd.”
② Parting of the Ways Type: “Kaga Electronics Co., Ltd. (←“Biolet Electronics Co., Ltd.”← (Spin-off) “Sanko Electronics Co., Ltd.”) and many other enterprises many other enterprises
③ Innovation Type: “Toranoana, Inc., Mailish (previously T-Zone), Sofmap Co., Ltd.”
④ Exclusive Community Consciousness Type (Social Capital Type): “Laox PC Hall” and “Yodobashi-Akiba”
⑤ Spontaneous Origin Type: “Onoden” and Tsukumo”

Source : Compiled by the author based on Nikkei Sangyo Shimbun (1982) “*The Akihabara*” Nihon Keizai Shimbun Co. pp.75-77 and interviews of entrepreneurs.

The following section shows examples of other talent development systems in the Akihabara region. Sakae Electronics Corporation, Iida Electronics Co., and many other influential enterprises (entrepreneurs) are products of a spin-off from a talent development institution (the Tomihisa School) at Tomihisa Electronics Co., Ltd. The same pattern applies to Furutaka Electronics Co., Ltd.

Similar to this spin-off example, interview results and company histories indicate that founders of trading companies which triggered the accumulation of electronic parts wholesale industry organized Akihabara radio stores, used them as learning institutions for product knowledge and industries, took advantage of network functions, and then promoted additional strategies and entrepreneurial activities.

The aforementioned example suggests that it is serving as a learning region which also works as a learning system for the Akihabara area. This indicates that regional regulatory mechanisms are functioning²⁾.

Fig 2: Entrepreneurship type

Client Team	Yes	No
Yes	<Virtual Enterprise Type> (Informal, Hierarchical Type)	<Collective Development Type>
No	<Independent Maturity Type>	<Independent Development Type>

Source: Shinkin Chuokinko (2007)

This section analyzes **Fig 2: Entrepreneurship type** and apply it to **Fig 1: Entrepreneurship in Akihabara**.

(1) ① Spin-off Type Enterprise: “Kakuta Radio & Electronics Co., Ltd.”

Kakuta Radio & Electronics Co., Ltd. can be classified into “Independent Maturity Type” based on Fig.2. This is an entrepreneurial type which acquires clients from an umbrella organization and principally becomes independent on its own rather than as a team.

(2) ② Parting of the Ways Type Enterprise: “Kaga Electronics Co., Ltd.”

Kaga Electronics Co., Ltd. can be categorized into “Virtual Enterprise Type (Informal, Hierarchical Type)” in Fig 2. This is a type of enterprise which implements new management methods with strategies (financial and inventory strategies). This type of entrepreneurship indirectly obtains clients from an umbrella organization or affiliated companies and then becomes independent with more than two individuals (or by an organization/team).

(3) ③ Innovation Type Enterprise: Toranoana, Inc., Sofmap Co., Ltd.”

These enterprises can be classified into “Independent Development Type” in Fig 2. This is an innovation-type (innovations: technological innovations) entrepreneurship which starts with no teams, organizations, or client bases. However, Mai:lish (a maid café) is an exception since it conforms to a type of enterprise which spins off from an umbrella organization and is strongly influenced by the path dependence from specific industries in the region (Figure and Anime industries for Mai:lish’s case). Therefore, Mai:lish can rather be categorized into “Collective Development Type.”

(4) ④ Enterprise Type with Exclusive Community Consciousness (Social Capital Type): “The Computer Hall (PC Hall) at Laox and Yodobashi-Akiba”

“Virtual Enterprise Type (Informal, Hierarchical Type)” in Fig 2 is an appropriate classification for these enterprises. This is a type of entrepreneurship which pursues new management methods with strategies (regional strategies). This type of enterprises also indirectly acquires clients from an umbrella organization and adopts strategies to open stores using organizations and teams.

(5) ⑤ Spontaneous Origin Type Enterprise: “Ishimaru Denki Co., Ltd., Onoden, and Other”

“Independent Development Type” is a suitable categorization for these corporations. This is an entrepreneurial type which starts up a business with no teams, organizations, or client bases.

The analysis result mentioned above suggests that all types

described by the prior study (Shinkin Chuokinko, 2007) in **Fig 2: Entrepreneurship Type** take place in the Akihabara region. This means the region has a rich human resource basis. Therefore, utilizing this advantage is essential in promoting regional innovations.

The Akihabara region is an extremely small area, a size equivalent to 600 square meters. Yet, the region contains all types of business establishments, about 60 publicly traded companies (including branches), and learning institutions which consist of approximately 20 universities. Using geographical proximity and regional platforms effectively (including a rich human resource basis.), the area promotes entrepreneurial activities and regional innovations.

SUMMARY ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AKIHABARA

- i) It is highly likely that the business establishment type in the Akihabara region can be classified into five patterns and that enterprises which represent each type possesses unique talent development functions (including corporate culture).
- ii) Akihabara has the presence of business establishment types which have been influenced by the unique culture fostered in the region. It is based upon “the culture with no fear of failure.” This is derived from the fact that career development process for entrepreneurs in the Akihabara region has Asyl (sanctuary)-like elements. Still, entrepreneurs with high entrepreneurial spirit were born due to Akihabara’s function as an Asyl (sanctuary) space.
- iii) Based upon i) and ii), the Akihabara region has a climate and framework (regional platform) which promotes entrepreneurial activities.

“Regional platform” in this context also includes the presence of talent development institutions owned by enterprises located in industrial regions (schools, training institutes, communication education systems, talent development systems unique to the enterprises). It also encompassed the existence of universities and vocational schools in the regions, unions for each particular industry, and NPOs. As for the Akihabara region, “regional platform” also covers the presence of entities such as the

Public Corporation of Chiyoda Community Planning Promotion and the Akihabara Consumer Electronics Promotion Cooperative.

Therefore, these entities can be described as what Professor G. Benko calls “collective regional assets for the purpose of competition,”¹⁾

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

As the aforementioned analyses suggest, the Akihabara region has all types of entrepreneurship.

In addition, the Akihabara region functions as an Asyl (sanctuary) space, producing unique entrepreneurs and continuously providing competitive superiority in the area.

With these aspects in mind, redevelopment plans with strong public works elements poses a question that they could be a trigger to the destruction of the Asyl (sanctuary) space, although the Tokyo metropolitan government and the residents jointly devised such projects. The number of visitors has increased due to the Tsukuba Express currently in operation and the implementation of more conducive atmospheres created by the establishment of the Daibiru, UDX, and Yodobashi-Akiba in front of the Akihabara Station where general consumers felt less comfortable to visit since it was once considered to be a space for Otaku experts. However, many people are also concerned that the market-oriented space provided by the good old Akihabara may fade away. Changes signified by a shutdown of T-ZONE, a reduction in business operations by Laox, and an acquisition of Sofmap by Suning Appliance are probably an outcome of market activities. Yet, transitions are also continuing in Akihabara. Various atmospheres observed in back allies and under girder bridges still exist. However, it is possible that they may disappear in the future.

The retirement of the Entrepreneur who exerted leadership during the dawning of Akihabara has also contributed to this phenomenon. As displayed by Chozo Yamamoto who dealt with the GHQ or Masaji Taniguchi of Laox, the survival of the Asyl (sanctuary) space in the future depends on the emergence of such charismatic talents who

can bring the residents in Akihabara together. Moreover, this will play a significant role in the revitalization of Akihabara in the coming years.

V. CONCLUSIONS

1. Policy Implications

This section discusses policy implications drawn from the analyses and examinations performed in this study.

In principal, the Akihabara area is an industrial region that can be described as “an Asyl (sanctuary) space” where non-elite entrepreneurs were born and formed their own careers. Subsequently, continuous spin-offs occurred while flexible specialization among businesses emerged for other reasons. Consequently, a learning region was promoted utilizing the spillover from affiliated and supporting industries’ information and the accumulation of highly skilled talents due to the geographical proximity derived from the industrial region as an Asyl (sanctuary) space. This eventually brought about flexible specialization of industries in the region— “social innovation of industries (social specialization of industries).”

(Policy Implications from the Akihabara Region)

i) It is essential to have a process (talent development system, entrepreneur development system, or management ability improving system for entrepreneurs) which helps transform management information (especially the information on market demand) into business (corporate) strategies within enterprises or in a regional platform created within the area.

ii) Diversity (all types) within the region is necessary for enterprises and talents. This will lead to the application of “human resources exactly speaking, they are only materials to exist in base.”

As a result, diversity as a source of creation will play an important role in transforming industries as fashion trends.

iii) Enterprises consider the direction of their management strategies (corporate strategies and regional strategies). In addition to corporate diversity, the application of an organization (regional platform) which can help solve issues that need to be resolved cooperatively in the region

(e.g. a loss of business opportunities due to the exclusive community consciousness: as in the incident which involved the opening of Yodobashi-Akiba) is necessary. This will likely accelerate the information spillover and promote regional innovations with an external economy. Moreover, a self-sufficient region incorporates new industries while leaving old industries behind. This will be called “regional fashion trends.” Fashion never stops evolving. “Regional fashion trends” mean that a region expands and continues toward the future.

The formation of an area for regional community (milieu) in a region (the formation of learning regions, organizations, and atmospheres) is essential for the application of i)-iii) described previously. This will form collective regional assets for the purpose of competition as a regional platform and is equivalent to “Creating Shared Value” originated from the learning region. This development can be described as a “strategy of shared value” in a region. Improving this “strategy of shared value” leads to regional self-sufficiency, regional revitalization, and an increase in added values for the region spontaneously.

2. ISSUES GOING FORWARD

This research does not discuss the relation between regional communities and milieu. In fact, the process which includes the formation of independent milieu upon regional communities, the establishment of rules and norms, and the condition which regions continue to learn (self-organization of industries in a region) is in fact essential. Future studies will aim at further investigating this aspect using the Akihabara region as a source. Additionally, such researches will intend to elucidate the function of the external economy argued by Alfred Marshall.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1) According to Prof. Georges Benko (2009) [Université de Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne. Please refer to pp.13-15, Georges Benko (2009)], the theory of “collective regional assets for the purpose of competition” can be defined as follows.

(Definitions)

“An element to strengthen the entire regional

competitiveness while incorporating enterprises within an industrial region and unifying them together.”

The following is a list of specific examples to explain “collective regional assets for the purpose of competition” in the Akihabara region.

- Professional/vocational education for employees
- Recruitment know-how by skilled employees and executives
- Information concerning markets
- Specialized knowledge in contracts, bidding, and standards
- Obtainment of knowledge concerning new technologies and their applications as well as advice on technical and service aspects
- Implementation of test marketing
- Network establishment
- Advice on management transfer of enterprises upon founders’ retirement

2) Please refer to p5, M. J. Piore and C. F. Sabel (1984)

3) Please refer to Yoshiyuki Okamoto (2012)

4) Please refer to Yoshiyuki Okamoto (2012)

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