

**Building Community Places—*Machizukuri*—Neoliberalism,
Suburbanisation and ‘Americanisation’**

Author:

Dr. Caryl Bosman

Affiliation:

Urban Research Program
Griffith School of Environment
Griffith University

Address:

Dr. Caryl Bosman
Griffith School of Environment
Griffith University
Gold Coast campus, 4222
Queensland
Australia

Tel.: +61 7 555 27721

Email: c.bosman@griffith.edu.au

Abstract

This research maps some of the debates on community building in the planning of suburban developments. Particular reference is made to Kokoku New Town in Yokohama, Japan and the Golden Grove Development in Adelaide, Australia. These two developments emerged in the early 1980s and the histories related suggest significant similarities, although they grew out of different regimes of power. Drawing upon Foucault and other governmentality thinkers, the focus of this study is on the relationships between neoliberalism and suburbanisation. My primary concern is with the exercise of government (the conduct of conduct) and how this exercise is carried out and maintained.

Introduction

In recent years, in Australia and Japan (and indeed, in many other countries around the globe) the planning and development of many suburban areas has been linked to particular global (Americanised?) ideals of community. These ideals are frequently taken up by different agencies to argue for different and often competing outcomes. In Japan, the word *machizukuri* is used to describe, among other things, the processes of public consultation and public involvement in urban planning practices. 'Machi' is a noun meaning community or neighbourhood and 'tsukuru' is a verb meaning to build. *Machizukuri* is thus sometimes defined as processes of community building. Watanabe (2006, p. 128) argues that *machizukuri* is practiced in

some shape or form throughout the country; including projects that range from ‘Government-sponsored road construction, citizen-led monitoring of municipal governance, the erection of apartment buildings by private developers, and even karaoke parties... .’

Concepts of community building have been linked to urban planning theories and practices throughout history. Most current community building, planning processes suggest a meshing of historical governmental protocol and current ideology. For example, many 21st century New Urbanist and Eco-village community building discourses draw heavily on the works of the post-industrial social reformers, who in turn looked to the Middle Ages for their inspiration. At the same time these not-so-new building community models reflect contemporary global and neoliberal trends. Likewise, *machizukuri* as used in the context of this study, in many ways, draws upon the government structures of the Japanese decentralised Shogunal reign 400 years ago. Simultaneously, many planning based definitions of *machizukuri* embrace concepts of civil society; concepts which are relatively new in the urban histories of Japan. The historically founded ‘truths’ that underpin many community building rationales utilised in contemporary planning discourses, are frequently re-produced with little understanding of their historical contexts.

Historically founded ‘truths’ that are manifest in the built environment—and the planning practices that inform them—are mostly ‘naturalised’ and seldom scrutinised or questioned. The use of a governmentality framework, however, problematises these discourses. An analysis of government (the conduct of conduct) is essentially a problematising activity that seeks to address practical questions relating to how specific discourses, effectively, contrive to regulate the conduct of individuals, groups and the population. Ideals of community and practices of community building, as taken up by planners, become both techniques for planning built landscapes and also the means to govern the subjects thereof.

In this study I am interested in how—through what techniques and practices—ideals of the community have been produced and how these ideals act as mechanisms of polarisation and alienation. I am also interested in how ideals of community penetrate and regulate everyday life. The histories related, are thus, not unitary, formal and scientific; they are rhizomic rather than hierarchical. In effect, this research aims to disclose the array of techniques and practices by which ideals of community are produced and thereby, open up new ways to think about contemporary practices of suburban governance. To this end my research questions include: How are ideals of building community manifest within neoliberal regimes? Drawing on this, how have these ideals influenced suburbanisation and to what effect? An underlying assumption of this research is that an

analysis of neoliberal forms of government, as a technique, is valuable and applicable. My aim is to gain an understanding of the relations between community building and suburbanisation in Japan and Australia. As demonstrated in this study, the resultant suburban landscapes depict global processes of 'Americanisation'.

In this context of this research, 'Americanisation' is understood as recent processes of suburbanisation and urbanisation, processes that have influenced planning techniques and practices in Japan and Australia. 'Americanisation' relates, on the one hand, to suburban planning practices and the 'American dream': homeownership, detached dwellings on a single block of land and ideals of 'hometown community'. On the other hand, 'Americanisation' depicts corporate, global, fully planned, composite developments; manifestations of neoliberalism. An important aspect of 'Americanisation' as a concept, is that it draws upon largely imaginary images of English village life. 'Americanised' landscapes are characterised then, by the contrast/tension that is manifest between local cultural and place specific identities and the identities produced by the new development; through physical, social, financial and temporal mechanisms.

It is important to acknowledge that the genealogies constructed here are confined primarily to planning discourses and are not considered as good or bad, rather as potentially problematic. In addition, no discourse is totally

unbiased, or neutral, research will always be informed by the authors' backgrounds, prejudices and intents. Leonie Sandercock (1998, p. 6) argues that the purpose of writing histories:

is not simply a matter of holding a mirror up to the past and reporting on what is reflected back. It is always a representation, a textual reconstruction of the past, rather than a direct reflection of it. What we see is shaped by the questions we ask, which in turn are shaped by the (sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit) theories that we bring to our subject.

My Tokyo research has been largely qualitative, with data collection based on personal photographic records, a selection of texts, some informal interviews and personal observation. Observation is essential to gain first hand experience of the urban environment. However, as a vegetarian, non-Japanese speaking, 'alien' resident of Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo, my observations do not reflect the everyday life experience of many local people. On the other hand my research is not biased towards or tainted by an existing identity or emotional attachment. Also, as an 'outsider' the arguments I suggest may not be ones a local resident would acknowledge. Instead, I can only offer my interpretation of some of the lifestyles afforded to some of the residents of Tokyo. My observations are not neutral; my gender and life histories mean I observe, notice and interpret things according to certain criteria. The theoretical framework used for this research has also influenced data selection, collection and interpretation.

This research is not comprehensive and does not offer a detailed analysis of current urban residential planning practices in Tokyo or Australia. It is not a literature review of *machizukuri* (instead see Watanabe 2006 and Sorensen 2006), nor is it a review of community texts. The histories I relate do not comprise a social history nor a study of ‘community development’. Nor is this a thesis on ‘community planning’. I am not overly concerned with statistical and demographic characteristics; that is, the profile of ‘community’ subjects. This story is not about the lived experience of ‘community’. I have not been concerned with outcomes—whether or not ideals of community or *machizukuri* practices produce close-knit residential collectives. Following Colin Gordon (1991, p. 46) this research is:

not liable or designed to inspire and guide new [planning] movements, transform the current agendas of [planning] debate, or generate new plans for the organization of societies. [My] claim would be, at the most, to help [planners’] thought to grasp certain present realities, thus perhaps providing a more informed basis for practical choice and imagination.

Situating ‘Community’

Ideals of community, according to R.A. Wild (1981, p. 18), have a ‘long sociological pedigree’ of representing ‘the good life’; defined primarily by *gemeinschaft* relationships, country location, employment, good health and associations of happiness. Similarly, Watanabe (2006, p. 128) suggests that

the expression *machizukuri* emerged from social science discourses of 1960s, as a vague term that was aligned with democracy and referred back to medieval imagery of northern Europe. In addition, most discourses of community, including many discourses of *machizukuri*, are reliant upon a given and bounded locality—a neighbourhood or village site—for the ‘building’ of ‘community’. André Sorensen (2006a, p. 110) suggests that ‘prominent Japanese sociologists have argued that the village community has been a crucial generative factor in the formation of Japanese society.’ Similarly, Nigel Taylor (2000, p. 23) suggests that history illustrates ‘how the ideal of the village, as a physical place and a social community, has exercised something of an hypnotic attraction for town planning theorists ever since the industrial revolution.’ It is important to note however, that the intention of planners to ‘build community’ through physical design is problematic. While the built landscape may induce—or otherwise—relations of community, these relations are far more complex and involve factors which are unaffected by the physical landscape.

For example, community relationships may be formed through oral histories, the shared experience of buying land and building a new house or through the physical attachment to a particular place. Relationships may also be established between people with similar interests and values, or they may be influenced by economic perceptions rather than social interests. Relationships may be founded on the use of local shops, neighbourly

interaction or when people band together in response to the threat of change. They may also result through a feeling of belonging and safety within a particular area or they may be initiated by those people who would benefit most from a neighbourly relationship: the elderly, single parents, people with specific travel requirements or children. Relationships may also be imagined, assumed or perceived. The perception that others in the locality share similar values, beliefs and cultural practices often means these credentials are not sought. Also, sometimes fleeting and anonymous relationships—such as ‘cyber communities’—are produced through the use of mobile phones and the internet. Ideals of community are, thus, not necessarily related to specific geographical locations, built forms or to individuals who are known to each other.

Many 21st century planning discourses continue to venerate ideals of community. In contrast, many contemporary social scientists have largely discarded the concept as utopian and socially unhealthy. Some authors have rejected the ideal as being out of touch with lifestyle trends of the 21st century. Others dismiss it because, they argue, it suggests homogeneity, repression and the denial of difference. Yet others embrace the concept as ‘warm and fuzzy’ and suggest it is universally valued. Ideals of community are often presented as offering ‘stability’, ‘the good life’ and a means to make sense of the self and the world at large. Many supporters argue that ideals of community are about both face-to-face relationships and

relationships between people and place. 'Community' is thus understood as local and place-based rather than global. Many in their canvass for ecologically sustainable planning practices for the 21st century have adopted this concept.

Contemporary ideals of community have not undergone any fundamental change since the 19th century. Rather, different people with different purposes have expressed the same definitions in different ways, for different reasons. Sandercock (1998, pp. 190-1) suggests history has defined ideals of community 'uncritically as the sole repository of virtue—of meaningful social relationships, of human scale, of wholesome (non-market) values—vis-a-vis the (oppressive) state or the (rapacious) market.' The often simplistic interpretation of 'community' has meant social and cultural difference has not always been recognised and everyday life patterns have been largely regulated by the 'master' plan. In addition the defining of 'community' in relation to historical discourse suggests it is linked with 'truths' rather than politics and regulation—hence it becomes an effective means of harnessing the population and normalising conduct.

Many planners frequently, albeit often unwittingly, manipulate relations of power to achieve predetermined goals. The practices put in place to achieve these goals are generally in response to 'problems' of the day, frequently with the aim to 'improve' everyday life experiences. Some 19th century

planners and social reformers—such as Robert Owen and George Cadbury—sought to achieve this through mostly overt disciplinary technologies. The mechanisms at work within neoliberalism are far more subtle. In this instance the ‘community’ subject is written into policies and programs which rely upon self-regulating and self-disciplining subjects. This self-government is in relation to specific and specified ‘truths’ of largely imagined residential subjectivities. These ‘truths’ are often arrived at through the appropriation of uncontested historical discourses and targeted, primarily economic, market research.

(G)government, Building Community And *Machizukuri*

Planning practices, whether acknowledged or not, are contextualised within a complex and broad range of political factors; including concerns for the health and well-being of individuals, communities and populations. Linked to these concerns is generally an ardour for the health and well-being of the economy. As such, ideals of community are political and operate as governmental rationalities. The important point here is not simply about Government power (the institution), rather, it is about the diffusion of ways of thinking about the ‘truth’ of individuals and communities by a range of expert authorities.

During the course of the 20th century ideals of community became particular planning techniques that focused largely on the heterosexual family as a unit of government (conduct of conduct). The family thus becomes the instrument through which knowledge is gathered in order to govern the population. Towards the end of the 20th century the focus of government mutated from that of the family (characterised by welfarism) to that of ‘the community’ (characterised by neoliberalism). Within neoliberalism, the ‘community’ is a site situated between the ‘free’ market, the Government and individualism. That is, communities become both the target of politics and the substance of politics and yet they remain outside of politics. Neoliberal communities are constituted as governmental bodies that operate through techniques of individual, autonomous self-government. Within these communities the mores and ethics of the collective have the propensity to shape and regulate subject behaviour—through discourses relating to shame, honor, duty and responsibility. These disciplinary codes are largely self-regulating techniques that aim at conformity and normalisation. They are also forms of power that enhance, constrain and are often resisted.

Neoliberal constructs of community are concerned with subjects doing things for each other and for themselves rather than the Government doing it for them. In this instance, the Government is no longer required to take care of the needs of the family and thereby ensure the health of the population.

Rather, private enterprise agencies, volunteers and non-profit-organisations are appointed to be partners of the Government. Local networks, agencies and individuals are conferred with the responsibility for local issues, thereby, extending the scope of government into the micro spaces of the everyday. The emergence of this political strategy is perhaps a result of lack of confidence in the ability of large Governments to effectively govern increasingly diverse and multiple ways of living.

Ultimately, under the auspices of neoliberalism, techniques of government emerge that draw upon communities as political instruments in the government of populations. From a focus on a quantifiable standard of living, happiness and identity of the family, 'the good life' becomes largely associated with the quality of life of the collective, determined through processes of consensus and normalisation.

So what has the discussion so far, on neoliberalism, government and community got to do with Japan and planning processes and practices of *machizukuri*? A number of similarities arise as demonstrated in the following examples. In this instance it is a construct of 'civil society'—rather than community—that becomes the instrument by which and through which government is realised.

‘Neoliberal’ planning techniques and practices of *machizukuri*, as promulgated by the Japanese National Government, can be demonstrated by the instigation of the River Park Scheme. The Japanese Government set aside money for community projects—projects incorporating local resident consultation and participation—on land owned by the Government. The Government established the necessary funding and political framework to manage the project; including the appointment of local Government officials, local residents and the rallying of support from local, non-government organizations. The Government, thus, legitimised its role of acting in the public interest, as local communities and private enterprise were organised—by the Government—to participate and maintain the Government initiative. Responsibility for safety and operational maintenance was placed upon the individual, local communities and private enterprise in an attempt to produce self-responsible subjects and communities, a ‘civil society’.

Civil society (like ‘community’) is understood as a construct that is situated outside of the realms of the Government and at the same time it forms the antithesis of the Government. That is, civil society demarcates individuals and groups acting independently from the Government; it is also a construct (again like ‘community’) that is regulated and nurtured by the Government. The Government relies upon the existence of a healthy prosperous civil society (or ‘community’) in order to retain and maintain governmental

authority. The questions this raises include: what are the implications of private enterprise and local communities taking on the responsibility for sites that are assumed to be 'public'? Who determines what is in the 'public interest'? and how 'public' is it conceivable for private enterprise to be?

According to Yoshida (1999, p. 13), notions of public interest, public good and civil society are recent debates in Japanese politics. The understanding of 'public', he argues has become associated with 'official' over many years and through numerous political discourses. This has largely produced, what Yoshida terms a 'public-equals-official society' as highlighted, in part, by the Japanese word 'ko'. 'Ko' means both 'public' and 'ruling authority'; for example the word 'koban'—police station—encapsulates the public : official relationship. Yoshida goes on to suggest that the relationship between 'public' and 'official' has become so entwined and ingrained in the thinking of many Japanese that the concept has become a largely unquestioned 'truth'. As a consequence, the conduct of many Japanese subjects suggests obedient and docile acceptance of the many Government proposals and their manifestations. Yoshida (1999, p. 20) argues that it 'is because of the people's deeply ingrained submissiveness and excessive deference to authority that officials can do as they please, imposing plans on the local community at their own discretion.'

In an article entitled ‘Doing the Groundwork?’ by Gavin Parker and Meiko Murayama (2005) they discuss two River Park Scheme projects that exemplify this neoliberal governmental project. The authors are primarily concerned with a UK form of *machizukuri* called the Groundwork model. As with *machizukuri* (meaning community building), Groundwork involves local community groups working in partnership with other agencies—public and private—to achieve a range of environmentally sustainable goals. Groundwork is about relations between people and between people and places (Parker and Meiko, 2005). Groundwork emerged in the UK as a neoliberal agenda under Margaret Thatcher. It was primarily concerned (as is *machizukuri* as discussed within this context) with people taking care of themselves, at their own expense, rather than at the expense of the Government. That is, community interests are left to the care of individuals and private enterprise, as legislated by the Government; the Government sets up the framework for community participation and also leverages control over the outcomes. Drawing on Faranak Miraftab (2004) this form of (hyper)neoliberal government co-opts the processes of inclusion (community participation) to produce exclusion (outcomes that are determined by the Government).

Hyper-neoliberal is a term I have coined to suggest a mode of government that is more than just *neoliberal*. Hyper-neoliberalism is indicated by the (apparent) further withdrawal of the Government and the reliance of the

Government on private enterprise and not for profit organizations to deliver for ‘the public good’, be it affordable housing, quality open space or infrastructure. At the same time hyper-neoliberalism, in Australia particularly, is characterised by a tightening and expansion of central control by the Government, to align governmental technologies, and thus local outcomes, with global perspectives. Under this governmental regime the local is subordinate, social polarisation and spatial inequality result and everyday life experiences are marginalised. The meta narratives produced by hyper-neoliberal governmental technologies render forms of resistance invisible, as in many instances resistance is taken up and by the neoliberal machine to reinforce the agenda of the Government.

Suburbanisation, Planning Practice And Communities

For almost as long as cities have existed, there have been a number of aspiring planners, architects, artists and/or social reformers who have demonstrated their concern for the design and construction of the ideal/utopian—physical, natural and social—urban environment. In most cases, ideals of building community formed and informed the planning techniques and practices of these landscapes. From about the 1980s, the term ‘fully planned community’ has been ascribed to the planning of these, ostensibly, ‘perfect’ environs. Recent (1990s-2000s) developments often draw from similar planning techniques: comprehensively planned, defined

boundaries, a town centre, attention to landscaping, restricted traffic in residential areas, hike and bike paths, open recreation spaces, and a variety of housing types. These features were fundamental to the planning techniques and practices that comprise the Golden Grove Development on the outskirts of Adelaide, South Australia and Kohoku New Town on the outskirts of metropolitan Tokyo; both recent fully planned community developments.

The perceived need for community relationships within many recent residential developments is often the outcome of intensive and selective market research which suggests that many home buyers are looking for ‘a way to put small-town neighbourliness back into their lives’ (Martin, 1996, p. 56). Indeed, many fully planned community developments have proved to be popular commodities for those who can afford to buy into them. The preference for a pseudo heritage architectural style and the nostalgia for a lifestyle of yester-year are perhaps a response to some people’s need to ‘reconcile contradictions between stability and change’ (Dovey, 1999, p. 150). While these developments largely re-produce the village idyll—formularised, perhaps unintentionally, by Ebenezer Howard—they differ from the earlier Garden City/Suburb versions. The rationalities of government underpinning these new fully planned communities are no longer fuelled by aspirations of social reform for the poor. Rather, they are influenced by market forces, where ideals of community are commercialised

and sold as a commodity for profit. Any remnant of social reform embedded in these rationalities applies only to those who can afford it. Richard Sennett (1997, p. 62) suggests that the development of recent fully planned communities has the tendency to ‘provide symbols of self-worth and belonging through the practices of exclusion and intolerance.’

In both Japan and Australia (and in many other countries) the development of suburbia flourished as a result of the post World War Two housing crisis. During this period, the Governments of Japan and Australia instigated housing policies which advocated home ownership in greenfield sites on the outskirts of urban areas. In Australia, these policies focused on home financing arrangements for predominantly Anglo Saxon, nuclear families and as such, re-inscribed particular mores accorded to ‘the Australian Dream’. As in the American context, the ‘Australian Dream’ equated to suburbia, characterised by low density, family residency and homeownership. It was a place that promoted healthy living, clean air and caring family values. The development of suburbia became a means through which the Australian Federal Government could regulate and instigate codes of conduct which the Government deemed appropriate and acceptable: heterosexual family values, ideals of ‘the good life’ and *gemeinschaft* relationships.

In Australia, the relative physical and social homogenisation of the suburban landscape that occurred following the post-war housing boom was partly in response to the home financing schemes, the rapid construction timeframe, fashions and building regulations. These regulations stipulated setbacks and determined window proportions, ceiling heights and roof pitches. Generally allotment subdivisions were of the same shape and size. Such determining factors came to represent particular social statuses and subject identities; income, taste and lifestyle indicators. Consequently, many Australian suburbs became differentiated by class and ethnicity and characterised by perceived homogeneity, discourses which are both reinforced and resisted by many suburban subjects.

The urban form of the post-war housing boom in Tokyo was very different to the Australian context. In Japan chaotic, unplanned and uncontrolled sprawl conditions proliferated on the urban fringe. The National Government placed the onus on private enterprise to plan, fund and provide basic infrastructure: roads, parks, sewers, water, electricity. However, no means was put in place to police and enforce these provisions and consequently the risks attached to slum conditions proliferated.

The Japanese and Australian post-war suburban context was characterised by escalating land and house prices. Partly as a result of this and partly in response to planning (or lack thereof) and development practices, the

National Government of Japan and Federal Government of Australia sought and achieved policies that allowed them to intervene and regulate the land and housing markets. The Japanese Government introduced the National Land Planning System and the Australian Government introduced Land Commissions. The aim of the Australian Land Commissions was primarily that of a land bank; to control the release of land to the market and thereby regulate land and housing prices and the economy (see Troy, 1978). This initiative was not entirely successful due, in part, to lack of support from the Development Industry. However, recent (2007) calls for the establishment of State Land Banks, by the Australian Development Industry, suggest some interesting research opportunities. The significant difference between the Japanese National Land Planning System and the Australian Land Commission initiative was the political and governmental framework in which they were conceived and implemented.

The following two case studies, the Golden Grove Development and Kohoku New Town, emerged out the intervention by the Government in the land and housing markets. Theses two suburban developments exemplify neoliberal suburban planning, community discourses, in both theory and practice. As the case studies demonstrated, the resultant suburban landscapes depict global processes of 'Americanisation'. It is important at this point to reiterate that an underlying assumption of this research is that an analysis of neoliberal forms of government (the conduct of conduct), as a

technique, is valuable and applicable to gain an understanding of the relations between community building—*machizukuri*—and suburbanisation.

Case Studies

From the outset, proponents argued for the planning of the Golden Grove site to differ from other Australian suburbs. The Golden Grove Development was perceived as an opportunity to set new standards in urban development that would establish benchmarks for suburban planning practices. A ‘total community’ was to be marketed through uniqueness of planning and built form. This was to be achieved through known technologies of physical planning and development. The development was, thus, not shaped by radical or progressive ideals, rather it was planned as an attempt to conform to existing norms of what constituted appropriate suburban conduct.

The statistics of the Golden Grove Development are as follows. The site covers approximately 1,230 hectares, 980 of which are allocated for building, 190 hectares for natural reserves and 60 hectares for green space (parks, playgrounds and ovals). The development is located about 16 kilometres north east of Adelaide, South Australia and by 2001 it comprised approximately 15,000 allotments and was home to approximately 30,000 residents.

At about the same time the Golden Grove Development was emerging in South Australia, a fully planned community project was being undertaken in a hilly area to the north of Yokohama, on the outskirts of metropolitan Tokyo. Kohoku New Town differs from the Australian model in one significant respect. Instead of 30,000 residents housed on 1,230 hectares, Kohoku New Town accommodates a population of around 300,000 on 2,530 hectares. Nevertheless, there are a number of fully planned community concepts that are common to both projects. Both developments comprise some office and employment opportunities, while the major employment areas remain outside of the town. To this end, both developments were planned and developed in conjunction with efficient travel networks into the major city centre (Adelaide and Tokyo respectively). A significant community building technique common to the planning processes of both developments was 'social mix'. Both Golden Grove and Kohoku have provision for a range of residents within a range of income brackets. In addition, as part of the community building process, both developments were the subject of a regular community newsletter. These characteristics, while critical in suburban community building discourse, are not the focus of this study. In this instance, the focus is on the production of particular suburban identities as a means to build community. This includes analyses of the planning practices and resultant built form that supports these identities. The following histories then, focus on the

production of country lifestyle identities that were to be realised through landuse planning, building regulations, marketing and community consultation.

As part of a plan to build community in both the Gold Grove Development and Kohoku New Town, a country lifestyle identity was advocated and outdoor activities were facilitated. Both development sites were previously used as agricultural land and in both cases remnants of these activities are retained to enhance sense of place, establish identity and ultimately build community. In both developments (as in many other fully planned community developments) provision is made for extensive walking trails, parks, sports grounds, outdoor auditoriums, agricultural plots and, in the case of Kohoku, the green spaces also act as evacuation areas and safe places in the event of a major earthquake.

In the Golden Grove Development in particular, a country lifestyle identity was to be achieved primarily through the marketing of the performing arts, equestrian activities and horticulture (activities also linked to Kohoku New Town). These practices encapsulate particular ideals of country life, ones the developers believed would establish local pride and a positive image of a modern, healthy and environmentally aware suburban development. This county life identity encompassed both the physical landscape and individual residential subjectivities. In addition, the country lifestyle identity

promulgated by the developers was one that would appeal to many potential residents. Golden Grove Development residents were sold images of 'the perfect world' and ideals of the 'good community', with the expectation that these marketed lifestyles and identity frameworks would be provided for and maintained.

The values and rationales encapsulated in the country lifestyle identity—mainly the production of a healthy, good, moral and 'true' suburban subject—were not ones commonly associated with suburban living in Australia in the 1970s and 1980s. One of the principal aims of the establishment of Land Commissions (and indeed the National Land Planning System) was to address the perception that many suburban areas suffered from a lack of amenities. The ills of suburbia were to be avoided through innovative planning and design and through the provision of adequate, appropriate and economic infrastructure—open space, community facilities, landscaping, house siting and choice, transport routes and public services.

To ensure the country lifestyle identity and planning principles of both Kohoku New Town and the Golden Grove Development will be adhered to and maintained, all development was subject to stringent planning and building regulations. In the case of Golden Grove, building regulations were stipulated in accordance with encumbrances. In the case of Kohoku, urban

design guidelines informed building controls. In both developments future subdivision of residential building lots is prohibited and areas are zoned exclusively for residential activities.

In the Golden Grove Development, allotment and design encumbrances were set and controlled by the developer, to ensure that all houses were designed to meet the same minimum standards. Residents, would thereby be given surety that all the houses in their area would fit the same criteria as their own. Restrictions were placed on choice of building materials, colour schemes, house style, outbuildings, fences, landscaping and set back dimensions. This practice, in part, determined the layout, floor plan and architectural style of the house and ensured streetscape uniformity (see figure 1). The developers marketed this sameness as a means to secure investment security and quality control, as encumbrances prevented residents from changing the image of 'acceptability' imposed by the developers.

The encumbrances were also a means of self and collective government. In this sense, the developers spread the responsibility for implementing, maintaining and governing standards of built form and subject behaviour. Compliance and conformity to the encumbrance guidelines—illustrated by neat and tidy homes—is aligned with acceptance and belonging. This compliance is not enforced from above, from institutions or the developer.

Rather, disciplinary codes are written into encumbrances, guidelines and policies which rely upon self-regulating and self-disciplining subjects. Discipline, thus, works as a power of coercion; as residents knowingly and willingly conformed and embodied the normalising codes as ones that were in their best interest.

The encumbrances and urban design guidelines of both the Golden Grove Development and Kohoku New Town were put in place to ensure a planned and regulated suburban development. As already mentioned, at the time both developments were conceived, both the Federal Australian Government and Japanese National Government were concerned with the quality of lifestyle in suburban areas. As part of the 'cure' for the suburban 'problem' both Governments called for public participation in the planning process. The principle objective in the planning of Kohoku was to respond to urban growth in a 'controlled' fashion and at the same time incorporate the views and requirements of local landowners (i.e. a form of *machizukuri*). Kohoku New Town (see figure 2) was promoted as being (Urban Development Policy, 1998):

geared towards the 21st century and four basic policies have been adopted to develop the [town]. ... the maximum preservation of a green environment, a hometown atmosphere, the creation of a town safe to live in and the provision of advanced social services.

The planning objectives for the Golden Grove Development were not dissimilar. The site was also to be planned in accordance with policies on urban growth, the development was to maximise open green landscapes and community involvement in the planning process was included. Two of the objectives for the planning of the Golden Grove Development were (Golden Grove (Indenture Ratification) Act 1984):

6. To provide for and effect a safe pleasant and convenient environment for people living or working in the Development Area and in particular to provide ready access to those community facilities and services required to satisfy their needs.
7. Consistent with the accomplishment of objective (6) to include an effective Community Development Programme in planning for the Development Area.

In an attempt to fulfil the planning objectives of both the Golden Grove Development and Kohoku New Town—and thereby build community—the planning processes for both developments included some local community consultation with new residents. In both cases this consultation was primarily undertaken to obtain knowledge about the needs, requirements and aspirations of new residents. These knowledges could then be assimilated and ‘normalised’ and used to target potential residents. The production of knowledge is central to the activities of government. That is, knowledge of the individual is necessary to know the collective and thereby govern the collective. The information collected from some new residents produces knowledges which can then be used to assess, evaluate and

regulate planning and development practices and also the conduct of residential subjects.

As part of the Golden Grove developers' plan to assemble information about the needs and requirements of new residents—and also in an attempt to produce a country lifestyle identity—all new residents were presented with a questionnaire. The questionnaire related to family demographics, education requirements, community needs, sporting and recreational preferences, housing details, personal perceptions of the development and comments on the services provided by the developer. The questionnaire served two functions. It gave residents a chance to have a voice, or otherwise, in the planning of the Golden Grove Development. Secondly, the questionnaire was a technique for re-producing particular knowledges about individual residents and communities.

Through the questionnaire, the developers produced a comprehensive knowledge, about the needs, desires, wants, personal feelings and characteristics of some new residents (age, marital status, household number and configuration, income, occupation, previous residential address and preferences for schooling, sport and other activities). This knowledge was then processed to formulate policies and directions that informed future marketing strategies and planning and development practices. A procedure that could be honed and moulded to be more economic and more specific.

In the planning processes for Kohoku New Town, the community building technique undertaken was similar to that of a focus group. In this case, some resident landowners are consulted on landuse proposals to ensure planning practices were reflective of some local concerns. To facilitate this consultation, a New Town Project Promotion Liaison Committee was established. The committee was the authority that relays landowners' concerns and views to the Yokohama Municipal Government. The information passed on by the liaison committee was, ostensibly, reflected in the subsequent planning policies and strategies for the town.

The reliance on focus groups as a form of community building is problematic. In the case of the Golden Grove Development, the focus groups included specifically selected, established residents—men, women, teenagers, and children—to provide feedback on existing planning outcomes, based upon personal experiences. In the careful selection of participants and in the structure and facilitation of the focus groups, the convenors (who were also the developers) ensured the legitimisation of pre-determined outcomes. Focus group participants were chosen primarily because they represented 'good community' subjects; because they had largely taken-up the marketed Golden Grove Development identities and imbibed them as their own. As such, participants could mostly be relied upon to uphold these identities and the planning techniques and practices

that underpinned them. In this way, the developers could reinforce and re-inscribe particular planning practices that would maximise economic returns and propagate specific identities and residential subjectivities.

The manifestations of focus groups—as a process of community building—are often only reflective of the concerns raised by those subjects who participated in the process; and the economic agenda of the developer. Subjects that are included in community building processes are frequently those who have economic incentives: property owners, business enterprises etc. Many local individuals, for whom the proposed development may manifest substantial consequences—noise, lifestyle changes, shadows, traffic flows, accessibility—remain on the margins and their concerns remain unvoiced in the formal forum of community building. There is, as far as this research was able to ascertain, little or no provision made to reach and include those voices that remain marginalised and silent in the formal community building processes; voices that, arguably, constitute the majority of affected residential subjects. In the case of Kohoku New Town, drawing on Watanabe (2006, p. 135), many subjects would not have the skills and/or knowledge required to participate in community building projects. Nor do Japanese citizens have legal rights to participate in Local Government decision making procedures.

Hyper-neoliberalism, ‘Americanisation’ And Community Building Imaginings

The role of private enterprise in shaping the urban environment and in regulating and governing the conduct of urban subjects, affects urban and suburban landscapes. In Japan and Australia, recent urban and suburban developments have largely been the milieu of private enterprise. Throughout the later parts of the 20th century the major concerns of both the Australian Federal Government and the Japanese National Government were economic growth and with factors that would stimulate and maintain this growth: the construction of bridges, expressways and transport systems, financial support and incentives for private enterprise. Within this hyper-neoliberal framework, private enterprise has been conferred with the authority to provide for the ‘public good’. The interests and focus of private enterprise practices are, generally, economically driven. In this respect, private enterprise interests are in line with the objectives of the Government—economic growth—and as such neither the Australian Federal nor the Japanese National Governments are likely to intervene in support of quality of life for individuals.

If community building outcomes are to be socially and economically inclusive, then the input by community subjects needs to be reflected in all stages of the planning process and in all outcomes. Importantly, community building is a continual process of becoming. It is not a product that is

produced and abandoned. If we understand community building as processes of becoming, then we are concerned with many different and often complex and contradictory discourses: social networks, public art, architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, consultation, legislation, co-operation of public, private and local enterprises. Community building in this ideal (utopian?) context, involves practices and techniques that reflect the everyday life of local subjects. Community building, as a process, acknowledges difference and diversity, alienation and exclusion, and subjugated (local, marginalised, non-scientific) knowledges. It also acknowledges the role of the planner in regulating and moulding behaviour patterns to certain ends: social cohesion, interaction, sharing, supportive networks, membership, personal investment, etc.

Such an understanding of community building requires different modes of government from those that predominate in the Japanese and Australian landscapes. Drawing upon the work of J.K. Gibson Graham (2006), I argue that a 'postcapitalist politics' is required to govern the processes of community building. This governmental mode is a grassroots pedagogy (see for example Houston forthcoming) that aims at re/configuring and re/presenting ways of participating in the world. By contrast, a hyper-neoliberal induced community building comes fully marketed and packaged, complete with a team of experts whose aims are to re/inscribe the status quo and thus preserve the capitalist market.

Following Miraftab (2004, p. 242) the aim of postcapitalist community building processes are ‘to transform not only oneself but also the very structures of subordination.’ In particular, this process then addresses issues of gender and equity. Women have historically been—and still are—linked to and given responsibility for building neighbourly/community relations. It is not within the scope of this article to explore the possibilities of gender/equity community building pathways; pathways which suggest some interesting research opportunities. In the case of Japan, suffice to refer to the work of Yasuo Takao (2007) in his article ‘Japanese women in grassroots politics’. Takao (2007, p. 148) states ‘the potential of increased women’s political voices in Japan, ... can be seen as an alternative way to solving the problems of political disengagement in the male-dominated representative democracy.’

The current development trends in and around Tokyo specifically, reflect a global, hyper-neoliberal, hegemonic urban future, rather than local, pluralist, postcapitalist inspired landscapes. These new urban settings are composite, ‘liveable’ and global urban forms: rail/subway stations in conjunction with highrise residential apartments, semi-private spaces and structures for use by local residents; coupled with office towers that include retail outlets, restaurants, banks, a post office and education facilities. These developments, in particular Roppongi Hills and Makuhari City (see figure

3), include traditional Japanese gardens, landscaped areas and public artworks. This form of intensive development is a means to maximise land use—given the cost of land—and to enable the provision of pleasant outdoor public spaces. The lifestyle that is marketed suggests ‘new ways’ of living for the 21st century. These ‘new ways’ of living have little in common with traditional Japanese lifestyles and customs (apart from the token inclusion of a Japanese garden) and suggest a high degree of international, in particular American, influences. The values, meanings and purposes of community building planning processes in this context suggest important insights into the urban (social and built) futures of Japan.

This research has mapped some of the debates on community building in the planning of suburban developments. Particular reference has been made to Kokoku New Town in Japan and the Golden Grove Development in Australia. These two developments emerged in the early 1980s and the histories related suggest significant similarities, although they grew out of different regimes of power. My primary concern has been with the exercise of government and how this exercise is carried out and maintained. My intention has not been to instigate changes to current suburban planning techniques and practices or argue for new forms of community development programmes. At most, my aim has been to highlight some of the urban planning mechanisms used in planning for community in two different, and at the same time similar, suburban contexts. By doing so, this research

offers insights and opportunities to think about and reflect upon current hyper-neoliberal 'Americanised' techniques and practices of suburban planning; and in particular, in relation to community building, and thus provide a way for more informed planning practices.

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Figure 1: In the Golden Grove Development, a country lifestyle identity was partly regulated through encumbrances. Verge and streetscape planting and maintenance standards were stipulated to ensure streetscape conformity. The provision of street furniture (or not), street names and the size and type of housing product on a specific street were designed to established a particular place identity; which the developers marketed as a means to build community. Source: C.Bosman, 2003.

Figure 2: Kohoku New Town, as a fully planned community development, differs from the Australian model in its population density. The similarities are in some of the housing stock, the provision of pocket parks, hike and bike paths and playgrounds, planning and marketing of 'community' and the reliance on external sites of employment. An identifiable Americanised 'hometown community' ideal is encapsulated in some of the housing stock. Source: C.Bosman, 2003.

Figure 3: Makuhari City (mid 1990s-current) demonstrates 'new' global ways of living for the 21st century, lifestyles that are available to those have the means and aspirations to take them up. The city is zoned and segmented with residential areas separated from the business centre by landscaped public space, replated with fountains, public art, gazeboes and a traditional Japanese garden. The residential area is divided into separate courtyard apartment blocks, some with playgrounds at the core, a community centre or sculptural elements. In some blocks the ground floor level is occupied by up-market retail outlets. Note the Christmas trees in the corner windows on the right. Source: C.Bosman, 2003.

