



POLITECNICO  
DI TORINO

# Honors thesis

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Architecture Construction City

*Abstract*

**Opunsupesu Kudasai! | Open Space Please!**  
***Itinerary in Komagome, a neighborhood in Tokyo***

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It is a journey inside a small neighborhood in Tokyo, discovering Komagome's open public spaces and the Japanese way of perceive them. The experience in the Japanese Ariga Laboratory allows to penetrate in the nowadays conditions of a district and its main issues by means of participatory processes, trying to outline a planning for its urban regeneration, with a particular regard to the public space.

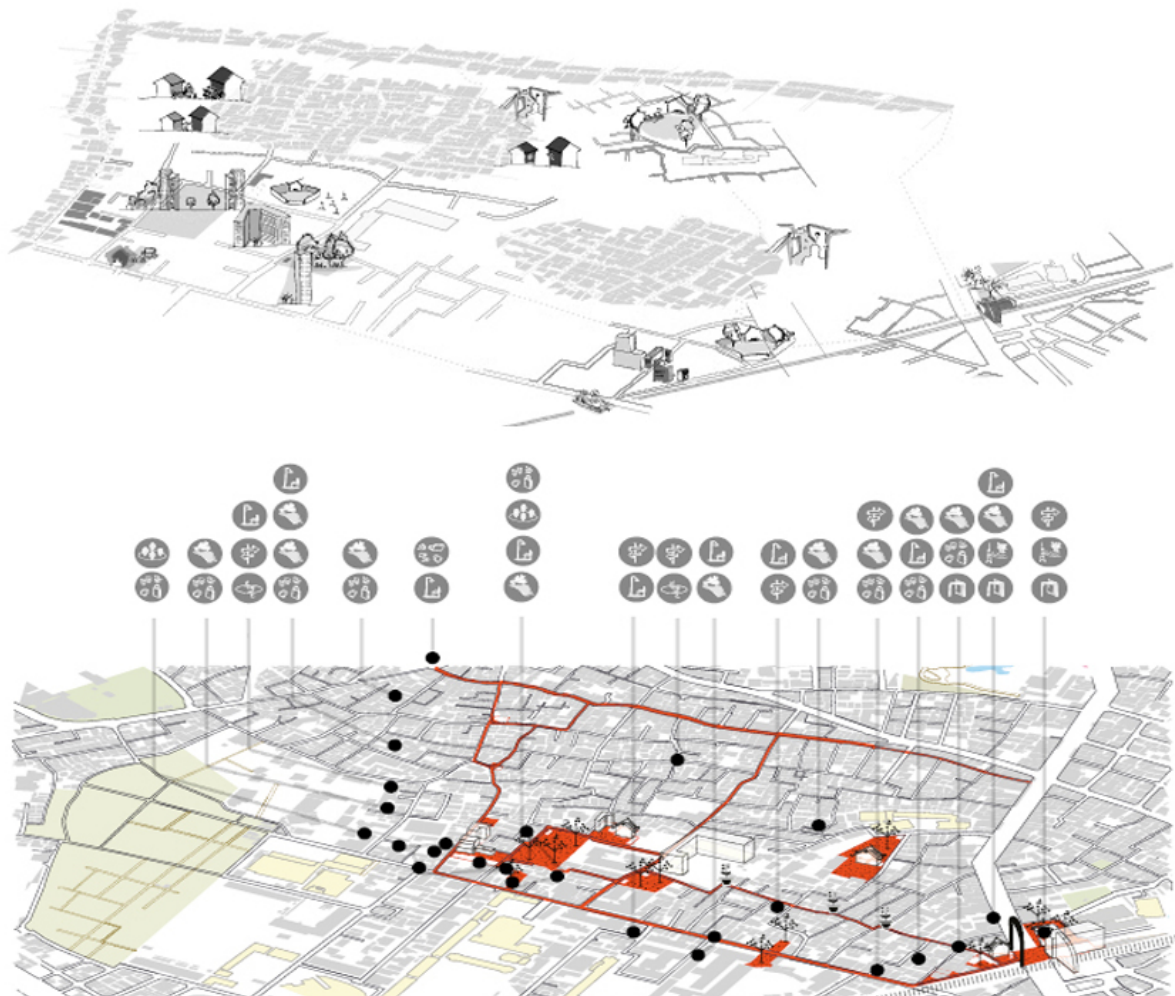


Komagome is a neighborhood placed in northwest part of Tokyo. The study is based on my experience in Tokyo, in Waseda University and on my work at the Prof. Ariga's laboratory that is in charge of the urban regeneration of Komagome. The neighborhood still conserves the ancient urban tissue's structure, even after the strong redevelopment of the metropolis. The district is witness of the Japanese city unpredictability, in terms of spaces, functions, typologies and people. However, it has many issues to solve through urban regeneration: natural catastrophes' prevention, public spaces, aging population, fragmentation of properties and the risk of urban speculation with loss of its traditional urban scale.

The thesis moves from the approach of Machizukuri (community-building) as a type of community participation-based urban design. This approach needs a long relationship with the neighborhood community, in order to acquire the complexity of people's needs and to build a reciprocal trust for planning a participatory renovation. My task in this planning was to design the first draft guidelines for the reorganization

of public spaces of the neighborhood. The research is a journey inside the small neighborhood of Komagome and during this journey I discovered Komagome's open public space and its community space where the needs of the Komagome's community emerge. Being expression of the community needs and their evolution, the community spaces are not static, but they constantly change.

The experience in the Ariga Laboratory and the Machizukuri has allowed me to penetrate in the nowadays conditions of a district and its main issues. Rooted in the real emerging needs of Komagome people, the suggestions are draft outlines for a future development of public space in Komagome. The suggestions are based on small actions, defined *acupuncture* point of action, with the aim of respecting the community and valorizing its habits and the neighborhood itself. In particular, the guidelines would like to strive towards a regeneration of the district, enhancing three main aspects: increase the quality of the current conditions, push younger generation to live in the neighborhood; and valorize the heritage framework of Komagome.



The importance of taking part of Ariga Lab has been crucial for the consecutive planning of the project: without the active participation in the team, explaining the current situation and the real needs of Komagome, combined with a personal in-depth analysis of Japanese public space, it would be impossible to understand the Japanese framework and to beget the project. Specifically, the most likely risk would

transplant a European model in a completely different urban and cultural dimension, which would surely reject it.

The research is organized in four main chapters. (I) a general overview of Komagome contextualized in Tokyo. (II) Komagome's public space and its regeneration, explaining also my role in the Ariga Lab. The part of my investigation shows not only the neighborhood environment, but also the Japanese way of thinking about public space in the small district I examined. (III) the research tries to sound out many aspects of the complex participatory processes, the Machizukuri, from an historical and theoretical perspective and the practical experience of Machizukuri realized by Ariga Lab. (IV) resumes all the issues with concrete suggestions on public space planning that move from the personal analysis, the surveys, the study of the Ariga Lab materials and the direct participation to the participatory process of the Lab.



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