

The role of conflict prevention by neighborhood associations in order to protect residential environments.:A case of its role as an intermediary between residents and builders in Tamagawa-gakuen.

Takahiro Domen

In order to protect residential environments, it is necessary to control the behavior of builders that leads to their destruction. This form of control should be imposed by local administrations through regulations and negotiations. However, this form of control is not perfect. Some researches show that neighborhood associations have laid down their rules in order to regulate the behavior of builders. In contrast, in the case of Tamagawa-gakuen, the neighborhood association has set out a rule which allows the residents to negotiate with the builders before any construction of builders. Compared with the methods of negotiation adopted by Machida City, the neighborhood association in Tamagawa-gakuen seems to communicate much more effectively. There are three reasons: first, the rule is applied to a wider range of the behaviors of builders. Second, the range of the definition of “the resident” is larger. Third, the explanation from the builders to the residents is more effective. However, in the case of conflict, matters cannot be resolved by the neighborhood association. This is left to Machida City. In order for the neighborhood association to protect residential environments, it is necessary that the residents request the builders to explain their plans through the neighborhood association and that a number of residents favor protection of the residential environments. To make the role of the neighborhood association more effective, it is necessary that the rule is clearly defined in writing. If small construction companies were aware of this and knew that they could not make a quick profit, they would be deterred from entering Tamagawa-gakuen. Furthermore, if Machida City was aware of the rule which was clearly defined, Machida City would be able to implement administrative advice. Then it is expected that the administrative advice makes the builders respect the rule. However, it remains that the rule of Tamagawa-gakuen is not clarified. In order to clarify the rule, consensus is required among residents who favor the residential environments, including land owners and young families.