現代スウェーデンにおける多世代型コレクティブハウジング居住とその生活条件
―日本での展開を考えるための予備的考察―

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Life Conditions for Living in Multi-generational Collective Housing in Contemporary Sweden: A Preliminary Study for its Development in Japan

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Abstract

近年、日本において「コレクティブハウジング（以下、「コレクティブ」と略称）」と呼ばれる暮らし方が、都市部を中心に広がりを見せている。コレクティブとは、スウェーデン語の kollektivhus（集合住宅）に由来し、個別の住戸群に共用空間が組み合わさった住居および居住様式を意味する。現代では居住者が自主的に住宅運営を担う自主運営型が一般的である。本研究では、現代スウェーデンにおいてコレクティブの居住者が実際にどのように暮らしを営んでいるのかを考察し、そこからみえてくるスウェーデンの生活条件を明らかにする。

本研究では、ウプサラ市にある公的な多世代型コレクティブ「ブレンダ」を事例に、居住者へのインタビューデータと暮らし方の観察データを用いて分析を行った。その結果、ブレンダの主要な活動となるコモンミールと呼ばれる協同の食事づくりは、居住者にとって近隣関係の構築や家事・育児の負担軽減につながっていたほか、コモンミールの持続的な運営は住居や労働や教育に関する諸制度や協同性に価値を置く文化といった生活条件があるからこそ可能になっていることを明らかにした。日本でコレクティブを展開していくことは、日本社会の生活条件を省察する契機になると同時に、世代間の相互扶助を促す新たな住まい方の提供につながると考える。

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Urban areas in Japan are witnessing a new way of living called 'collective housing'. This term originates from the Swedish word 'kollektivhus' (apartment block), referring to housing with individual apartments with common spaces and their own living style. The self-work model, where residents take responsibility for house management, is now common. This study examines the residents' perceptions about living in collective housing and illustrates how these aspects highlight the life conditions in contemporary Sweden.

This study focuses on Blenda, a public and multi-generational collective housing in Uppsala, a Swedish city. Analysis of data from the interviews and observations reveal that the cooperative cooking called common meal, which was the main activity in Blenda, led to the development of friendship between neighbours, thereby reducing the burden of housework and childcare among the residents. Additionally, life conditions such as the systems on housing, working, education, and the culture of cooperation facilitate the sustainable management of common meal. The development of collective housing could offer a chance to reflect on the life conditions, and promote an alternative model of living that fosters mutual support across generations in Japan.

キーワード：コレクティブハウジング、スウェーデン、生活条件、多世代、自主運営
Key Words: collective housing, sweden, life conditions, multi-generations, self-work

1. INTRODUCTION

Urban areas in Japan are witnessing a new way of living called 'collective housing'. The term 'collective housing' originates from the Swedish word 'kollektivhus' (apartment block), referring to housing that has individual apartments with common spaces and its own unique style of living. In Sweden, the prototype of collective housing originated in the mid-1930s and the self-work model, where residents take responsibility for house management, is now common (Vestbro, 1997; Inami, forthcoming). As of 1 December 2022, Sweden had 52 collective housing units, most based on the self-work model. After a recent re-evaluation, 11 new projects have sprung up, one after another.[1)]

The concept of Swedish collective housing was introduced in Japan in the early 1990s. 'Alternative Living and Challenge City (hereafter ALCC)', was established by professional women, including journalists and architects, who advocated collective housing as an alternative form of living in urban areas instead of the conventional nuclear family units. They actively promoted the Swedish self-work model, mainly in the Kanto region (the eastern part of Honshu, the main island of Japan) based on the theme of 'Dwelling together, living together, creating together'. As an ALCC member joined a member of the advisory body for the governor of Tokyo, collective housing became popular among architects, professionals in housing, and the local administration in Japan (Koyabe, 1997).

Japan's first collective housing was 'Hyogo Reconstruction Collective Housing', built by the local governments during the reconstruction after the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake in 1995. The aim was

to address the isolation of elderly victims of the disaster. Ten collective housing units were built mainly in Kobe city, Hyogo prefecture. In the 2000s, some local governments such as those in Osaka prefecture and Hokkaido implemented the same in public housing[2] as part of policies for older adults (Inami, 2013). In 2003, 'The Collective Housing Corporation (hereafter CHC)',[3] a non-profit organisation based on ALCC, established the first private collective housing, the 'Collective House Kankan-mori' in Arakawa-ku, Tokyo. It was the first exemplary collective housing aimed at multi-generational residents following the Swedish self-work model (Koyabe, 2004). Since then, CHC has engaged in five collective housing projects in the Kanto region.[4]

A question now arises: How can the collective housing model, which is deeply rooted in life, be developed in Japan, where the life conditions, such as systems and culture, are vastly different from those in Sweden? As a first step, this study examines the residents' perceptions about living in collective housing in contemporary Sweden, their way of life, and how these aspects highlight the life conditions in Sweden.

A study by Eva Sandstedt and Sara Westin (2015) empirically clarifies the concept of living in Swedish collective housing. They explain what it means to live in collective housing, by focusing particularly on one such unit for the middle-aged and the aged (without children at home). They reveal how living in collective housing gave the residents a life independent from children or partners, a life free from the closed life between husband and wife, and a life without loneliness and isolation in their late middle age. The study also points out that such a lifestyle became possible because the residents respected each other's privacy, but simultaneously, cooperated in the house management through regular participation in common work and democratic decision-making, which is a unique aspect of collective housing.

Their research is significant in that it presented the effects of the collective living style on the inhabitants' consciousness and behaviour, and the possibility of a new form of living for the middle-aged and the aged in contemporary Sweden, instead of living in a conventional family unit or leading a solitary life.

Nevertheless, two issues remain. First, the study did not consider the life conditions under which the residents live in collective housing. Living in collective housing does not refer to merely dwelling within the house; it also reflects the various life conditions affecting their lifestyles such as living and working. For Swedish collective housing to be widely accepted in Japan, it is important to understand how such life conditions could affect living in collective housing. Second, their research focused on collective housing for the middle-aged and the aged. As mentioned earlier, the type of collective housing being developed in Japan today is mainly aimed at multi-generational residents. Therefore, if the profile of the resident is different, so are the life conditions in which they live.

Based on these arguments, this study examines the life conditions under which residents live in collective housing in contemporary Sweden and focuses on multi-generational collective housing. The following section provides an overview of the history of collective housing in Sweden. Section 3

describes the data and methods used, and focuses on Blenda, the case examined in this study. Section 4 presents an overview of Blenda. Section 5 classifies the processes involved in moving into Blenda. Section 6 explores the residents' way of living and the life conditions in Sweden that enable living in collective housing. Section 7 summarises the study by providing a conclusion, with implications for future research.

2. HISTORY OF COLLECTIVE HOUSING IN SWEDEN

Swedish collective housing is divided into two types based on the period in which they were developed. The first is where paid staff collectivise housework such as cooking and laundry for the inhabitants in common spaces. It was developed in the 1930s based on modern architecture (called 'functionalism' in Scandinavia), which valued function and rationality. The aim was to enable people to lead a more rational lifestyle by simplifying housework, thus allowing women to engage in productive work outside their homes and participate more actively in society.

A typical example was the private collective housing established in Stockholm in 1935. The concept was introduced by a family sociologist, Alva Myrdal, and designed by a functionalist architect, Sven Markelius. The common spaces included a restaurant and a day care. Internal telephones and food lifts were installed. Soon after, more than ten similar collective housing units were established by private companies. The elites welcomed this type of housing; however, the trend soon declined in the 1960s with more social support for retaining the patriarchal family model (Vestbro, 1997; Inami, forthcoming).

The second type is where residents take the initiative to manage the house. This category developed from the mid-1970s to the 1980s, emerging as both, a naturally occurring and a grassroots movement. An example of the former is the Hässelby family hotel. Originally, it had collective services, but after the restaurant closed in 1976, the tenants started cooking in the common kitchen. They realised that they could manage cooking on their own without the help of employed staff and, moreover, they found that they enjoyed cooking together. This event was significant because it showed the possibility of residents working together for house management (Vestbro, 2008; Inami, forthcoming).

The latter was led by 'Bo i Gemenskap ('Live in community' in English; hereafter BIG)', a women's group consisting of professionals such as architects and journalists. It started when they talked about 'how would we like to live if we could [be] completely free?' at a meeting in 1977. The common idea was that they 'wanted a private apartment, so possible to close your door, but in the house should also be common spaces … [and] some common facilities. There should be some common cooking, eating together, maybe [a] day care centre for the children, … whatever the group decided to have'.[5] They agreed on the idea and discussed it once every two weeks until it was realised. Soon, they came up with questions, for example, the appropriate number of apartments, building size, management system, and so on. The following year, they received a grant from the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning to investigate various apartment houses within and outside Sweden,

including the Hässelby family hotel.[6)]

These investigations were published in 1982 as a book titled *Det Lilla Kollektivhuset: En Modell för Praktisk Tillämpning*. In the book, a new prototype of collective housing was proposed with the following four characteristics. First, the housing size should be 20 to 50 households (not too many, not too few). Second, the residents should cooperatively take responsibility for the daily chores of housing management. Third, the residents would have freedom to engage and rights of decision-making. Fourth, the population should be of different generations (BIG-gruppen, 1982). Later, the BIG blueprint became the model of self-work and was gradually accepted by the Swedish society, mainly in urban areas. In the 1980s, there were more than 60 collective housing units of which 40 followed the self-work model (Vestbro, 1997).

BIG played an important role in developing public collective housing (Vestbro, 1997). On account of the growing number of women in the workforce at that time, this type of housing came to be in social demand for supporting work-home balance for working mothers (Vestbro, 2008). In the early 1980s, Mr. Mats Hulth, a member of the Swedish Social Democratic Party and the vice mayor of Stockholm at that time, was inspired by the Hässelby family hotel incident and ordered municipal housing companies owned by Stockholm city (Famiiljebostäder, Stockholmshem, and Svenska-Bostäder) to build collective housing. In the process, Mr. Hulth sometimes sought advice from BIG.[7)] Consequently, 37 public collective housing units were built in the 1980s (Vestbro, 1997) and collective housing became one of the housing policies in Sweden (Koyabe, 1997).

The following section continues the data analysis by focusing on Blenda, the self-work model built in the 1980s. Blenda was chosen because it housed multi-generational residents, was built by a local public sector, and, as a rare case, has maintained the self-work model for nearly 40 years since its establishment.

3. DATA AND METHODS

Interview and observation data are used for analysis in this study.[8)] The participants comprised nine residents of Blenda and Ms. Gudrun Utas, an ex-resident who had been part of the group that established Blenda. The interviews were semi-structured, conducted in English, and the questions for the residents were mainly about their motives for living in Blenda and their ways of living, while for Ms.Utas, they were about the establishment process.

Interviews were conducted with those who agreed to participate in this study after they were explained the research outline at one of the regular meetings held in Blenda. Table 1 presents the demographic details of the participants. The number of men and women in the sample were almost the same (four men and five women, ‘M’ for Male and ‘F’ for Female in the table). Most were in their 30s or 40s, and all of them were employed. The households were of various types: a single person, a single-parent family, nuclear families, and people living with a partner or flatmate. All family households had infants except that of Kristina. Pseudonyms are used in order to protect the participants’ privacy.

Table 1: Details of the participants from Blenda (October 2017)

ID	Sex	Age	Occupation	Who they live with
Lars	M	30s	Office maintenance worker	Alone
Peter	M	30s	Clinical psychologist	Partner, Flatmate
Anna	F	30s	Preschool teacher	Husband, Daughter (age 2)
Lena	F	40s	Office worker	Son (age 3)
Kristina	F	N/A	Office worker	Husband, Daughter (Selma, age 16)
William	M	30s	Social worker	Wife (Nancy), Son (age 2)
Nancy	F	30s	Elementary school teacher	Husband (William), Son (age 2)
Thomas	M	30s	Nurse	Sambo[9] partner (Emma), Daughter (age 2)
Emma	F	30s	University officer	Sambo partner (Thomas), Daughter (age 2)

The observation of daily life in Blenda was conducted from May 2017 to February 2018. I mainly recorded the interactions among the residents during various collective activities. I stayed at Blenda for three weeks in September 2017 and participated in the cooking, washing of dishes, and cleaning along with the residents. In this study, the citations from my fieldnotes are described in this format (day/ month/ year).

For data analysis and interpretation, I cited the data from the interviews and fieldnotes based on my research question: What are the life conditions under which residents live in collective housing in contemporary Sweden?

4. ABOUT BLENDA

Blenda is in Uppsala kommun (municipality), in the middle eastern region of Sweden. As of 2021, the population of Uppsala kommun was 237,596 (Uppsala Kommun, 2022), and it is the fourth largest city in Sweden. It takes about an hour by local train to travel from Stockholm Central Station to Uppsala Central Station, which is the nearest station to Blenda.

Blenda was established by Uppsalahem, a municipal housing company owned by Uppsala kommun, in 1983. The five-storey building has 24 apartments (studio-5 bedroom), all of which are rental. Most of the common spaces are on the ground floor, including a common kitchen, a common dining room, a play-room for children, guest rooms, a sauna, a craft room and so on. In October 2017, Blenda had about 50 residents; their age range was from 0 to 50s. The household structures varied from single occupants to single-parent families, to couples, to nuclear families, and flatmates.

The Blenda project started around 1977. Ms. Utas, who grew up with four siblings, dreamt about living together with families and friends in the future. When she joined a study circle after her job, she put an ad in the organisation's paper to recruit people who agreed with her idea to make a study circle

on collective housing. Approximately 10 people responded. Around the same time, Ms. Utas came to know about BIG and learned how to proceed with a collective housing project from them. Her group proposed the collective housing project and negotiated with the administrators of Uppsala kommun and Uppsalahem many times. Eventually, Uppsalahem agreed to the proposal, and the Blenda project was launched.[10)]

Blenda opened with all apartments being occupied. Various types of people, including singles, couples, nuclear families, and single-parent families, moved in. Common activities involved cooking in rotation for the common meal (details are provided later) and cleaning the common spaces.[11)] Later, the parents worked together to provide a nursery service in the common space. As the number of neighbouring children being sent to the nursery increased, it became difficult to take care of the children. Eventually, the nursery had to be shut down in July 1991. Subsequently, a time came when tenants started leaving, and it became hard to keep conducting activities like the common meal and meetings (Lundahl and Sangregorio, 1992). However, with the turnaround of tenants, these activities have re-started, and Blenda maintains almost the same living style even today.

5. MOVING IN

5.1. How did the residents move into Blenda?

There were three ways in which one could move into Blenda. The first was when the municipal housing company allocated vacant apartments to the people registered with them. Emma and Thomas moved in via this route. They had previously lived together in a student apartment. Close to graduating from university, they began looking for a flat in Uppsala. When Emma, who had already been on the waiting list in Uppsalahem for nearly 10 years, requested an apartment, she was introduced to the one available in Blenda within a month.

Another way to move into Blenda was through a sublet. In Sweden, one can rent out an apartment to someone for one or two years at an appropriate price, with the permission of the landlord. As Swedish urban areas suffer from a chronic housing shortage, sometimes it takes more than 10 years to move into public housing. Therefore, subletting through Social Networking Service or friends is widely popular among young people (Sato, 2008).

Subletting is also common in Blenda. About a year after living through sublet in Blenda and participating in the house management, tenants can get priority as the first contractor when an apartment in Blenda becomes available. William chose this route. While looking for a flat in Uppsala through Blocket, which is a Swedish online second-hand market, he found a sublet in Blenda and applied for it. He initially lived with Nancy (from the United States, who later became his wife) and a male friend in a three-bed-room apartment. As the one-year contract expired, a studio became available, and he moved in there with Nancy, as the first contractor.

The third way was to move in as a partner or flatmate. For example, Nancy moved into Blenda by agreeing to become William’s flatmate. Peter first began to live there as a flatmate of his friend after the

friend's younger brother moved to Stockholm for work. After a while, as in the case of William, Peter moved to an available flat as the first contractor.

5.2. Did they feel uncomfortable living with others?

While moving into Blenda, some people knew nothing about collective housing, while others were familiar with the rules. For instance, the couple Emma and Thomas came to know about it when the format of collective housing was explained to them during a visit to Blenda. The latter case applies to Anna who used to visit occasionally because her friend lived there. Lars and Peter, too, knew of it through friends. When they heard about the idea, they thought 'it was interesting' and it made a good impression on them. When Emma visited Blenda, she thought, '[it was] something that we thought would be interesting to try for a while'.

When asked whether they felt uncomfortable living with others, William said:

> *I had lived in other collective forms of living before, …, I was used to [a] sort of living with other people and sharing household duties and things like that.*

William had shared a house before moving into Blenda; so, he was used to living with others. Likewise, Lars had lived in a house he shared with a man in his 70s for four years. In Sweden, living in a shared house is common among the younger generation. For example, many young people rent and share an apartment or house. Many college students live with 5 to 10 people in a student corridor, which is an apartment block with individual rooms and a shared kitchen and bathrooms. Yoshihiro Sato points out that it is a social norm in Sweden for young adults to live separately and remain economically and mentally independent from their parents (Sato, 2008).

As in the case of Emma and Thomas, many people live with their partners. Living with a partner can be legally protected as Sambo, which is practiced either as a trial for legal marriage or as an alternative. According to *the International Awareness Research on Declining Fertility Society*, 75.8 % of Swedish male and female respondents aged between 20 and 49 have experienced living together (Cabinet Office Director-general for Policies on Cohesive Society, 2006).

Thus, living with others is woven into the life course in Sweden in the transition process to adulthood. In fact, some people lived with flatmates or partners in Blenda. Therefore, living in collective housing may not be very difficult for most people in Sweden.

6. LIFE IN BLENDA

6.1. Private and communal life

As Sandstedt and Westin (2015) clarify in their work, life in collective housing is a careful balance between private and communal life. The residents follow various lifestyles. They cherish their family lives, work lives, and their leisure; they also join the communal life based on their needs.

The main common activity in Blenda was cooking dinner called the common meal on rotation.[12] It was an everyday practice from Monday through Friday (except from the middle of June to the end of August and from the middle of December to early January). A common meal was prepared for 30 people (10 of them were for vegans) every day. The residents were free to have it in the communal dining room. The meal cost 25 SEK[13] for one adult (On Friday, the price was 30 SEK). For children aged 6 to 15, it cost half, and for infants, it was free (27/4/2017).

The common meal started at 18:00 (18:30 on Fridays). Three tables for 8 to 10 people each were set in the common dining space. Depending on the day and the menu, at least 10 to 25 people usually ate together. The residents portioned out servings of food from the table onto their plates and chose to sit at any open seat, playing it by ear and talking to those who shared the table (6/10/2017, 21/11/2017). Their conversations revolved around a wide range of topics from family and job matters to matters in Blenda and current Swedish news (5/5/2017, 19/5/2017, 19/9/2017).

6.2. Knowing your neighbours

The common meal was an opportunity to get to know one's neighbours. It was the response most frequently given by the respondents as one of the good features of Blenda. For example, Kristina mentioned this aspect as the reason to join a common meal:

> *[I]t's … really good to eat dinner together with your neighbours because they become your friends otherwise [it's] just Selma and me.*

Kristina lived with her husband and her 16-year-old daughter, Selma. As her husband's workplace was quite far from Uppsala, he lived away from his family during the week and came home only on weekends. Kristina lived with Selma most days, and hence, the common meal was a good opportunity for her to make friends. Emma also described a similar feeling:

> *I could meet adult people every day, from Monday to Friday. I could always go to the collective to eat and because Thomas works as a nurse, he usually works nights and evenings, so it did get quite lonely, but then I knew I could always go and meet [people] in the dining hall.*

In Thomas's absence, Emma took care of her 2-year-old daughter. Life alone with an infant could easily lead to a sense of isolation, but a common meal, available on weekdays, brought a sense of relief for Emma in that she could meet others whenever she went to the communal dining room. Lars also often felt lonely before moving into Blenda as he could not meet his friends who were busy with their work and family. However, after living in Blenda, he said, 'you get close to your neighbours [and] I never feel alone here'.

Their comments made it seem that there was hardly any socialisation among neighbours in Sweden. Kristina said:

> *It's [a] normal thing in Sweden I think that you [don't] know your neighbours. You say hi if you meet in the elevator or in the stairs. But you don't talk to each other or you probably don't know the names or anything.*

Lars and Nancy echoed similar thoughts. According to *the 8th International Comparative Research on Life and Attitude of the Elderly*, regarding 'the relationship among neighbours in Sweden', most respondents (89.7%) stated that it involved 'having a little chat outside', while in Germany, people (50.1%) responded that it included 'having tea or a meal together'[14] (Cabinet Office Director-general for Policies on Cohesive Society, 2015). Although the survey aimed older adults, based on the answers, it appears as if the same situation of poor relationships among neighbours applies to those of other ages in the Swedish society.[15]

6.3. Reducing the burden of housework and childcare

Another advantage of the common meal was that it reduced the burden of housework and childcare. Anna mentioned:

> *You don't need to cook. Think[ing] about what to cook, what to buy takes a lot of time to think about dinner, especially when I have the baby*.

Sweden has a high rate of working mothers. As of 2021, 71.5% of employed mothers with a child aged 1 to 5 had a full-time job (SCB, 2022).[16] Since the 1970s, preschools and paternity leave have been arranged to help both fathers and mothers share housework and childcare.

However, the ground reality is far from ideal; equal division of roles is still a distant dream. According to the survey by the Cabinet Office Gender Equality Bureau, among Swedish couples with children under the age of six, the wife spent 5 hours and 29 minutes on housework and childcare while the husband spent only 3 hours and 21 minutes per day (average of 1 week total)[17] (Cabinet Office Gender Equality Bureau, 2021). Clearly, women probably do the housework and take care of children more than men do.

Among the participants, all the mothers had full-time jobs, did the housework and looked after their children. Anna cared for her infant daughter and worked during the day, so she found it more exhausting to ponder on what to make for supper and what ingredients she needed to buy than the actual cooking. The common meal was a 'bonus' for mothers according to Emma.

The common meal also meant play-time for children. From 2016 to 2017, about ten babies were born in Blenda. As Lena said, 'I really, really want him [her son] to grow up here. It's like having little

siblings'. About an hour before starting to eat, children played together in a play-room adjacent to the communal dining room. During this time, their parents had tea and talked about parenting and their respective jobs, free for a while from the responsibility of childcare (2/2/2018).

6.4. Issues in and solutions to the common meal

From what was observed so far, the common meal played an important role in the communal life in Blenda. This fact leads to a critical question: How did they manage the common meal? Further, what issues arose in the making of the common meal? How did they resolve them?

One of the issues was about the time when cooking had to start. Common meal duties in Blenda were either cooking or doing the dishes. The residents were supposed to take either duty five times for six weeks (27/4/2017). Both duties involved working in pairs, but cooking was more popular than washing dishes because they could get acquainted with other residents while cooking cooperatively.

However, cooking had to start at 4 pm latest for dinner to be served at 6 pm. Though most people in Blenda were usually at work at 4 pm, they managed the time by reducing their working hours, working flexitime, using paid holidays, or paternity leave. People such as Lars and Emma could finish work early as their bosses understood their circumstances. Further, many residents had workplaces close to Blenda, so they could reach home soon after work. Sweden's working environment has for a long time provided not only paternity leaves for parents, but also flexible working time and paid leave for all workers (Recruit Works Institute, 2018; Takahashi, 2018). Such working conditions made it possible to manage a common meal every day during the week.[18)]

Another was the commitment to take responsibility for their duties for the common meal. Although a few people did not participate in the common meal in Blenda, the one-year study revealed that there were only a few days when the common meal could not be conducted because cooking could not happen. This shows that the residents took their responsibility seriously.

Regarding this, Jim Kemeny points out an interesting thing that Swedish housing format is based on "deep collectivism", which is derived from the society's inherent attitude and values, compared to other industrialised countries (Kemeny, 2001, p.128). In fact, Sweden has a long history of residents cooperating in the construction and management of houses such as housing cooperatives[19)] and tenant associations (Ota, 2018). As Lars said, 'people that want to take part in the community, it is very important', it is thought that they shared the value of participation and cooperation in the house management.

Apart from these aspects, managing the common meal led to various issues, for example, what type of food should be made, and how much it should cost. When such issues cropped up, they discussed them during the regular meetings. The meeting took place once every six weeks in Blenda, requiring all adult residents to participate as a general rule (Those absent had to submit a power of attorney letter for the vote). The meeting usually lasted about an hour, with discussions dealing with a wide range of topics from necessary amenities to maintaining the accounts for the common meal, to

negotiating with Uppsalahem, and to conducting events (4/6/2017). One of the issues that came up regularly was the starting time of dinner. Peter said:

> *[T]here's one ongoing conflict which is the time of the dinners, because like, all the families with small kids, they want it earlier, and the rest of us want it later, so that's a recurring thing for 2 or 3 years, so it's been moved around and it basically depends on how many kids are [here] living right now*.

In Blenda, the household structure was diverse, and the lifestyle of each household varied. People differed on what time they wanted to have dinner, depending on whether they were students, workers, or those who had children. While those with children preferred 5 pm, students and workers wanted it served at 7 pm. Eventually, the discussion was settled at 6 pm from Monday to Thursday, and 6:30 pm on Friday.

The interesting thing here is that they already possessed the necessary skill to discuss every issue and arrive at a solution amicably by themselves. On this point, a comment by Nancy, who is from the US, is very insightful.

> *[T]he people in Sweden really learn how to participate in meetings from a young age and it's like the same when like in this age too. So, it's very important that everybody can talk and that you raise your hand, and there's somebody who you decide is going to be in charge of the meeting and all the little positions have to be filled, somebody has to take notes. So, it's a routine that they've learned from when they were little, and they still use it*.

Nancy worked at an elementary school, and hence, she had observed the Swedish school environment from close quarters. As she stated, children have many opportunities for discussions in Swedish schools. The typical one is a 'klassråd' (class meeting). During a meeting, a chairman chosen by voting serves as a host while the person in charge of the minutes takes notes. All classmates discuss general issues of the school, for example, improving school facilities and curriculums, and they can influence the school management in decision-making (Morozumi, 2021).

At a meeting in Blenda, both the people responsible for conducting the meeting and writing the minutes of the proceedings were elected. While the host led the meeting according to the agenda, those who had opinions raised their hands and spoke when their turn came. If decision-making was necessary, they came to a consensus (14/1/2018). As Nancy said, '[I]t's a routine'; the reason they could hold discussions smoothly was that they were merely practicing the skills they had already acquired through school education.

Moreover, Peter explained the premise for such discussions:

[I]t's also a social responsibility, you know, we have to manage together somehow, so if somebody is really having some problem and it's affecting the group, then it's something that needs to be handled as well.

As Peter stated, it involved 'social responsibility'; the residents agreed that any problem faced by one of them should not be resolved as a private matter but be addressed as a community issue for life at Blenda.

An activity similar to the common meal—called fika, which means a coffee break—is also practiced in Sweden. Almost all workplaces have fika time in the morning and afternoon. The important aspect of fika is that coffee is not had individually, but together and with conversation, by people sitting around a table. On many occasions, fika is managed by rotation, where the fika person prepares light meals for the participants, regardless of their job position.[20] The fika culture has deep roots in Swedish society, and taking turns to do things is embedded in Sweden's daily life. As Lars says, 'it's holy time'.

7. CONCLUSION

This study examined the life conditions of residents who live in collective housing in contemporary Sweden, considering the case of Blenda, a public, multi-generational and self-work collective housing. Analysis of data from the interviews and observations reveal that living arrangements in collective housing are not confined to merely living within the house, but it also consists of aspects based on the wider contexts of human lives. This point is significant in that it has been overlooked by previous research. Moreover, it is essential to consider these aspects of Swedish life when discussing the development of collective housing for Japan.

Based on my observation, the life conditions in Sweden may be summarised as follows. First, Sweden offers many opportunities for people to live with others, mainly for the youth who share housing or live with partners. Such opportunities have formed a general notion that people who live together are not necessarily family members with blood relations, and have provided the experience of cooperating with others in households. This notion has formed the foundation for acceptance of communal living. Second, working conditions are also important. Sweden's work hours and holidays are highly organised for not only parents but also almost all workers. Though life in collective housing requires commitment towards house management, the residents take up common household duties by taking advantage of these working conditions; hence, it becomes possible to manage the house sustainably. Third, education also plays an important role. School offers opportunities for children to discuss and decide on class and school management issues. Thus, they are given the opportunity to understand the significance of discussion and obtain the required skills. Democratic decision-making in collective housing becomes possible with such a background. Finally, the culture of cooperation is another important aspect. As in fika, taking turns in daily life is similar to the common meal in collective housing; as well as the cooperative practices on Swedish housing have also fostered a culture

of cooperative living with others for a long time.

Meanwhile, the Japanese way of life is completely different. First, the opportunity and culture to live with others have hardly been cultivated in contemporary Japan. Post-war Japan has promoted the policy of home ownership for nuclear families (Hirayama, 2016). Hence, housing choices have been either living with families or living alone. In addition, the aspiration of independence among young people is weak, because not only do their parents not demand their independence but also the costs of education and housing are high, with little public support. Therefore, young people tend to live with their parents until they marry (Miyamoto et al., 1998).[21] Second, regarding work style, Japan is still far behind in terms of organization of working conditions. It is a fact that people hardly take any paternity or paid leave,[22] work longer hours,[23] and commute for more than an hour. Third, Japanese education still focuses on exams, and children merely listen and take notes passively in classrooms[24] (National Institution for Youth Education, 2017).

Accordingly, does Japan have to wait until such life conditions develop for collective housing to become acceptable? It does not have to. Rather, working on collective housing could become a chance to reflect on these conditions in Japan and improve them.

Finally, it is necessary to mention how collective housing can significantly impact Japanese society. Over the last few decades, the family situation in Japanese society has dramatically changed. With the long-term recession caused by the collapse of Japan's economic bubble in the early 1990s, employment has become unstable for both men and women, thereby increasing non-regular workers and lowering incomes. This situation has augmented the number of poor and unmarried young people (Yamada, 2019). In parenting households, the number of dual-income families has been far in excess than single-income families (in this case, men work and women stay home) since the middle-1990s. Thus, working mothers find it difficult to maintain a balance between parenting and job (Cabinet Office Gender Equality Bureau, 2021). The rise in longevity has also led to growing numbers of single and poor older adults (Abe, 2021). Thus, in contemporary Japanese society, each generation has its own set of problems, "losing the power to support each other and having trouble cohabitating together" (Miyamoto, 2017, p.iv).

The increase in the number of single and impoverished people among both the working and elderly generations has caused a generational split and led to social isolation. Taro Miyamoto (2017) points out the importance of communal living where people of different generations can derive mutual support. By understanding the significance of collective housing, Japan should become more open to its possibilities. In other words, multi-generational collective housing, the topic of this study, can be a means to communal living, wherein mutual support across generations can be derived by sharing a living space and leading their lives in cooperation.

This study has a limitation in that it took up only one collective housing case, hence, the results cannot be generalised. Therefore, further studies are required to overcome this constraint.

In Japan, CHC and the residents in collective housing continue to coexist, displaying originality

and ingenuity despite dissimilar conditions. What kinds of issues do they face? How do they resolve them? As a subject to explore in future, I shall examine how they approach different life conditions and create their own living styles of collective housing.

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ENDNOTES

1) Kollektivhus Nu (Retrieved 1 December 2022, http://kollektivhus.se/).
2) In Japan, "[p]ublic housing, which is subsidi[s]ed by national government, and constructed, owned and managed by local governments, is provided for low-income households at subsidised rents" according to the Public Housing Act implemented in 1951 (Hirayama, 2017, p.104), in comparison with Swedish public housing, which is constructed, owned, and managed by the municipal housing sector, and is open to all people, regardless of family type, socio-economic, and ethnic characteristics (Magnusson and Turner, 2008).
3) CHC is a non-profit organisation. It was established in 2000 for promoting, projecting and supporting the self-work collective housing originated in Sweden (Retrieved 10 August 2022, https://chc.or.jp/outline.html).
4) CHC (Retrieved 7 August 2022, https://chc.or.jp/chcproject/index.html).
5) Interview with Ms. Ingela Blomberg (7/12/2017). She was a member of BIG.
6) Interview with Ms. Ingela Blomberg (7/12/2017).
7) Interview with Ms. Ingela Blomberg (7/12/2017).
8) This research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee, Departments of Sociology and Anthropology, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University.
9) Sambo refers to a non-married couple who continues to live together at the same registered address and have a sexual relationship. Lagen om sambors gemensamma hem (effective in 1988) determines the rules for the division of property (e.g. house and household goods) between a couple (Cabinet Office Economic and Social Research Institute Ed., 2004).
10) Interview with Ms. Gudrun Utas (12/10/2017).
11) Interview with Ms. Gudrun Utas (12/10/2017).
12) A few years after Blenda opened in 1983, Uppsalahem began to take the responsibility of cleaning the stairs and the inner court.

13) 1SEK=13.49JPY (Retrieved 1 December 2022, http://www.murc-kawasesouba.jp/fx/past/index.php?id=221201).
14) The survey in Sweden and Germany both had multiple responses. In Japan, 'having a little chat outside' was 67.3 %, a response by the majority of respondents. Next in order was 'exchanging stuff', around 41.9 %. 'Having a tea or meal together' was the response of 24.2 % of the respondents (Cabinet Office Director-general for Policies on Cohesive Society, 2015).
15) It is important to acknowledge that this trend may apply to only to urban areas.
16) Employed mothers included those who were absent (e.g. on parental leave).
17) The same survey shows that a wife spent 7 hours and 34 minutes on household and childcare while a husband spent only 1 hour and 23 minutes on the same in Japan (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2021).
18) If it was still difficult to take on the cooking duty because one could not adjust the time, one could take the duty of washing dishes instead.
19) The typical example is HSB (Retrieved 26 November 2022, https://www.hsb.se/).
20) I too experienced taking my turn to be a fika person at my workplace (25/10/2017).
21) According to *the Sixteenth Japanese National Fertility Survey, 2022*, 65.9% of the unmarried male respondents aged 18 to 54 lived with their parents (or a parent) while 72.1% of the unmarried female respondents aged 18 to 54 lived with their parents (or a parent) in 2021 (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, 2021). In addition, in Japan, 'experience of living with a partner' is 13.2 % (Cabinet Office Director-general for Policies on Cohesive Society, 2006). Shared housing is becoming popular in Japan in recent times, particularly among young people in urban areas (Kubota, 2009), although it is still marginalised.
22) With regard to the rate of paternity leave in Japan, 6.16% of men took it while 82.2 % of women availed it in 2018 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2020). However, it is important to acknowledge that women had such a high percent because they worked in companies that had the system. In fact, during 2010-2014, 46.9 % of working female respondents quit their jobs after their first babies were born (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2017). Regarding the rate of paid days off, 56.3% of employees (men 53.7%; women 60.7%) took it (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2021).
23) Regarding the proportion of workers working 49 hours or more per week, in Japan, it was 15% (only men was 21.5%), compared to 5.7% in Sweden (only men was 7.8%) (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, 2022).
24) According to the *Survey on Study Habit of High School Students in Several Countries, Including the United States, Japan, China and Korea*, to the question on 'classes that have students memorize contents of text books', 41.7 % of respondents answered, 'most of the classes' and 49.5 % of respondents answered 'more than half of the classes' (The National Institution for Youth Education, 2017).

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