

The Pattern of the Population Distribution  
in the Kanto Districts in the Meiji Era  
and its Transformation thereafter

By  
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In the former paper, "Structure of the Agricultural Areas in the Keiyo Region, A Study on the Agricultural Areas in the Metropolitan Sphere" (Bulletin of the Faculty of Education, Chiba University, Vol. 13, 1964), the writer built up a hypothesis that the agricultural areas in the Kanto Districts were separately or chaotically arranged in times when the urbanization had not been proceeded, and that the pattern of the areas, with advance of urbanization or metropolitanization, has been so integrally or structually arranged. In order to verify this hypothesis, he drew some maps showing the distribution of farmers, fields etc., and suggested that the status of regional hierarchy dominated by the node, the Keihin (Tokyo-Yokohama and vicinities) urbanized region, in after times, could be found. But in that case, the development and the expansion processes of cities or urban areas, which influenced on the formation of agricultural areas, were briefly mentioned as somewhat self-evident. In this paper the writer intends to investigate such a process thoroughly.

For the purpose of examining the transformation of the pattern of the population distribution, the years of 1895<sup>(1)</sup>, 1920<sup>(2)</sup>, 1935<sup>(3)</sup> and 1950<sup>(4)</sup> were adopted here. At the stage of 1890's, the degree of accumulation of population in urban areas was not so high, though the modernization of light industries was partially proceeding. So it may be allowed to consider that the pattern of the population distribution in 1895, represents the status of the Pre-Industrial Revolution in a large measure. It is 1920 when the earliest Census in Japan was taken, and this data has been used as the starting point for investigating the movement of population in after years. It is presumed that the heavy industries which had started from about the end of the Meiji Era and had been developing through the period of the World War I, were exerting a considerable influence on the distribution of population. From the viewpoint of a short space of time, the year is just the turning point when the postwar boom converted the rising trend into the falling one. After that the depression days lasted for ten years or more. The year of 1935 indicates the stage when the social or economic control was not extensively enforced, though Japan had been establishing the quasi-war structure since the Manchurian Incident. The year of 1950 shows the year when the social and economic confusion after the World War II was somewhat settled, and a growing mode of Japan's economics began, taking the opportunity of the Korean War, which broke out that

year. After that, industries of the second and the third categories have promptly grown, revolving around the development of heavy and chemical industries, and in consequence the disparity in economics between industries of the second or the third category and those of the first one, enlarged remarkably. It is supposed that the great change in the population distribution has been caused by this fact. This recent process, however, was not inquired in this paper.



Fig. 1 Indicating map

Wards of Tokyo; Shinagawa (9), Meguro (10), Ōta (11), Setagaya (12), Shibuya (13), Suginami (15), Itabashi (19), Nerima (20), Adachi (21), Katsushika (22), Edogawa (23). The former wards, Kojimachi and Kanda were annexed to Chiyoda (1), Nihonbashi and Kyobashi to Chuō (2), Azabu and Akasaka to Minato (3).

The total population in the Kanto Districts including Tokyo<sup>(5)</sup>, Kanagawa, Saitama, Chiba, Ibaragi, Tochigi and Gunma Prefectures was estimated about 7,800 thousand in 1895, and the index number regarded this figure as 100, changed roughly into 145 in 1920, 195 in 1935, and 235 in 1950. The distribution of population classified by *shi-chō-son*<sup>(6)</sup> (city, town or village) in 1895, and these changing phases during the subsequent years of twenty-five, fifteen, and fifteen are shown in Fig. 2-5.

In 1895, the seven prefectures had only four cities of Tokyo, Yokohama, Maebashi and Mito. There were two hundred and fifty *chō* (towns) in the same year, and the population of Utsunomiya-*chō*, was rather larger than that of Maebashi-shi or Mito-shi, having the smallest population among the cities.

The population of Tokyo which had been numbered about one million in the feudal age of Edo, dwindled sharply into 596 thousand until 1874, in consequence of the social upheaval in the Meiji Restoration, but gained about 750 thousand during almost twenty years thereafter. Yokohama which had been numbered 65 thousand in 1874, gained 100 thousand or more during the same period. Many other cities and large towns gained a growing population more or less, too, but it was probably not due to the absorption of population from others, but mainly due to the expansion of boundary. Yet, even the larger municipality such as Utsunomiya, Maebashi or Mito had only 30 thousand mark in 1895. Exceptionally, Yokosuka which has had only the level of 2 thousand in 1874, had around 19 thousand in 1895, and the population of Ashio grew from less than one thousand to 13, during the same period. The former located at the mouth of Tokyo Bay grew as a naval port, and the latter in the northern mountains of Kanto as a mining town, which are the noticeable examples of the remarkable development in the former period of the Meiji Era. Observing in detail, there were some local centers developed as capital city of prefecture, town of textile industry, relay town, port town or market place. But in a general view, most of these were not conspicuous in the pattern of the population distribution. Fig. 2 clearly shows how small the population of cities and towns in that period was.

Except Tokyo and Yokohama, the pattern of population shown in Fig. 2 is like the scattered sesame seeds. The growth of population looking like nodes of a net are found at some places, where these centres<sup>(7)</sup> were not so distinguishable from farming or fishing areas. For instance, the pattern of population at that time showed an appearance of a tableland where some isolated small hills stood sporadically, and also Tokyo and Yokohama rose above such hills and tableland. And yet these two cities were like small volcanoes bursting into a great eruption thereafter (cf. Fig. 6). Observing from the wide point of view, including *shi*, *chō* and *son*, it may be recognized that there were a pretty broad belt of the growth of population from Maebashi and its vicinity to Tokyo along Ōshū and Nakasendō highway. The growth along the west coast of Tokyo Bay and along the north one of Sagami Bay were comparatively attaining, too. So it is necessary to notice that there was the difference between the accumulation of population in the west Kanto and that in the east, but the writer cannot always affirm that the west Kanto had many *shi* and *chō*, in comparison with the east. The ratio of numbers of *shi* and *chō* to all municipalities included *son* (villages), was rather low in the prefectures of Tokoyo and Kanagawa (cf. Table 1). Strictly speaking, the notion of *shi* or *chō* is not the same as that of urban community, and so it is not adequate to say that the urban development was immature in the regions where *shi* and *chō* were few. But it is infallible that the urbanization tendency of population was not so remarkable as the later years in the prefectures of Tokyo and Kanagawa, except Tokyo.

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Table 1 Numbers of *shi*, *chō* and *son* by prefecture in 1895

	numbers of			total	ratio of <i>shi</i> and <i>chō</i> to total
	<i>shi</i>	<i>chō</i>	<i>son</i>		
Tokyo	1	16	162	179	9.5%
Kanagawa	1	22	206	229	10.0
Saitama		46	353	399	11.5
Chiba		57	301	358	15.9
Ibaragi	1	43	333	377	11.8
Tochigi		31	145	176	17.7
Gunma	1	35	172	208	17.3
total	4	250	1,672	1,926	13.2

shi and Yokohama-shi.

In Tokyo Prefecture, except such some *chō* as Shinagawa, Senjū, Minamisenjū, Naitoshinjuku, Yodobashi and Sugamo, connecting with Tokyo-shi, only ten *chō*<sup>(8)</sup> existed, and the rest was *son*. In Kanagawa Prefecture, only twelve municipalities over 5 thousand of population and ten less than 5 thousand were counted as *chō*. Kawasaki which has hundreds of thousands of population at present, was, at that time, the small *chō* having 5 thousand. Hodogaya, one of wards in Yokohama-shi at present was similar too. Honmoku, Naka, Negishi, Kusaka, Byobugaura, Kanazawa or Mutsuurasō incorporated into Yokohama-shi in the later years were regarded as *son*. Therefore, the urban area of Tokyo bordered on rural area with sharp outline, though Shinagawa, Senju and the other some old post towns stretched from that. And that of Yokohama was practically limited to a narrow space centering around the port too, though had a few offshoots such as Kanagawa and Hodogaya. In the northern and the eastern parts near Tokyo, there were around ten *chō* such as Kawaguchi, Urawa, Yono, Ōmiya, Shinjuku, Matsudo, Kogane, Ichikawa, Yawata, Funabashi etc., but all these towns were separated by *son*, and merely small towns included many farmhouses. It is considered, indeed, that some of the above mentioned towns and villages around Tokyo-shi and Yokohama-shi were functionally suburban. But from the view point of the pattern of the population distribution, the aspect of this region was not fundamentally different from that of the other parts of the Kanto Districts.

How did the distribution of population change during a quarter of a century, from 1895 to 1920? As mentioned before, it is presumed that the urbanization tendency of population intensified with the progress of industries within this period. Fig. 3 shows how the tendency has appeared areally. The population of the fifteen wards in Tokyo-shi grew from 1,340 to 2,140 thousand or more. That of Yokohama-shi increased 215 to 423 thousand, adding to that of the newly incorporated *chō* and *son*. Except these we could count twenty-three<sup>(11)</sup> as *shi* or *chō* with the population over 30 thousand people in 1920. Among these, the

municipal administrations of Yokosuka, Hachiōji, Utsunomiya and Takasaki were newly set up. The fourteen *chō* located near Tokyo-shi in Tokyo Prefecture except Hachiōji, reached a growing population of 36 thousand as average. Especially the development of Shibuya with an increasing population from around 8 to 81 thousand was remarkable. Like these near Tokyo-shi, Yokosuka, a naval port, gained the vast population through the Russo-Japanese War and the World War I. On the contrary, the average of the increasing population of the other eight *shi* or *chō* apart from Tokyo-shi was only 16 thousand.

Taking a general view of the whole Kanto District, the pattern of distribution of increased population took the shape of wide difference between Tokyo-shi and its vicinity, Yokohama or Yokosuka, and the other areas. Furthermore, the areal differentiation was not recognized in the latter as a whole. Observing in detail, we can indicate the increase in the industrial and mineral district of Zyōban, and the loss along the middle sides of the River Tone and in the southeastern part of the Bōsō Peninsula. Besides it is noticeable that the population of Kojimachi and Kyobashi, the central wards of Tokyo-shi lost, and that of the other wards grew, and so a phase of ring-like formation in the distribution of population began to appear. It is also noteworthy that the indication of finger-like formation came out in the suburban area of Tokyo, and that the urban areas of Tokyo-shi and Yokohama-shi began to conjoin, inconsiderable as it was.

In the period from 1920 to '35, the tendency of ring-like formation and of finger-like formation came out clearer than ever. Tokyo-shi grew from fifteen wards to thirty-five and expanded its boundary to a great extent in this time. Most of the neighboring *chō* and *son* with a growing population in the former stage, were included, and the total population of Tokyo-shi grew from 2,170 to 5,870 thousand. The five center wards, such as Kōjimachi, Kanda, Nihonbashi, Asabu and Aakasaka dwindled the population of 4 thousand, and on the contrary, the ten outer wards within the former *shi*, gained 110 thousand or more. The new wards with many people were greater parts of a growing population of Tokyo-shi, though the old wards were steadily losing during the period from 1920 to '35. It is rather right to say that many wards were added because of a remarkabley growing population, and continued to gain population after the incorporation, too. Such growth may be regarded as a phenomenon of the brimming in the environs of Tokyo, from the areal point of view. Such brimming was not only formed like concentric circles, but also done along some radiating railways, such as the Chuō, the Tokaido and the Keihin, the Tohoku and the Sōbu lines. In the western part of Tokyo along the Chuō line and outside of the Yamate line, Musashino gained around 20 thousand, and Mitaka, Chitose or Fuchu 6 or 8 thousand in this stage, though a gaining population was not remarkable in the former stage. Many towns and villages in this part showed the same trend. Tachikawa, some distance away from Tokyo-shi,

gained population from 5 to 20 thousand, and Hachioji from 39 to 59 thousand. Kawasaki with only 21 thousand in 1920, gained population of around 70 thousand including several *chō* and *son*, and so the municipal administration was set up, and the city had over 150 thousand in 1935. In the southern part of Tokyo, the development of Kawasaki, together with that of Ōmori, Kamata and so on, promoted the connection of the built-up areas between Tokyo and Yokohama. It is universally known that Kawasaki made rapid progress as the city of heavy and chemical industries. Such an extension toward the south from Tokyo showed the trend to Yokosuka and Shōnan, the coastal region of Kanagawa Prefecture. In fact, Yokosuka gained the population from less than 9 to 18 thousand or more. In the northern part away from Tokyo, Kawaguchi and Urawa, including respectively some towns or villages, gained the population of around 30 thousand. As the result of it, in the two towns was set up the municipal administration, the former with 54 thousand, the latter 44. But the finger-like extension along this direction terminated at Omiya-cho, with the population of 34 thousand, with the growth in population of 15. The width of the finger was narrow and limited to a belt along the Tohoku line. The similar phase is observed along the direction of the Sōbu line in the eastern part of Tokyo. For instance, Ichikawa developed into *shi*, with the population of 47 thousand adding 29 thousand to 18, incorporating with some towns and villages. Funabashi grew into a town of 30 thousand level. Some distance away from these, Chiba, setting up the municipal administration in 1921, got the population from 33 to 57 thousand. Makuhari and Kemigawa located between Funabashi and Chiba, was forming a chain-like arrangement of small towns. But there were fields between each town, and vast rural areas behind them.

As guessed from Fig. 4, the transforming phase of the distribution of population in the region except Tokyo and outskirts as mentioned above, was very lowpitched. Although such local, fishing, or industrial cities as Chosi, Mito, Hidachi, Utsuomiya, Kiryu, Isezaki, Maebashi or Takasaki swelled the small population like Ichikawa or Chiba near Tokyo, the growth in other small towns or villages was low-toned. Figuratively speaking again, the transforming pattern of the distribution of population in the Kanto Districts at the period from 1920 to '35, may be regarded as the following; the Tokyo volcano, in the middle of which formed a caldera, poured out some streams of lava around the calm plateau.

This tendency has become clearer than ever, at the next stage from 1935 to '50, interposing the World War II. Even the growing population of the other parts except Tokyo-Yokohama region was, as a whole, considerable at this stage. The growth of these parts is probably due to the augmentation of the economic powers in general as well as the dispersion and comeback of population during and after the war. In this case, most of farm villages as

well as cities and towns showed indiscriminately the growing tendency, and so the remarkable areal differentiation was not observed. On the other hand, the "caldera" in Tokyo region has become larger and larger mainly owing to the evacuation of people and war damage in the war time, and spaces of "lava flows" spread widely. The shape of extension along the Sōbu line and along the Tohoku line has come out clearer, and that along the Joban line which had not almost been able to discern in the former times, began to appear, though it was yet faint. The growth of population in the western suburbs and the south-western quarter, was most striking, and the expanse of population came to the tendency forming fan-like expansion instead of belt-like elongation, with aid of developing of the traffic networks. The expansion area in the western suburbs along the Chuo line spread widely, and the conspicuous tendency were shown in the inland region of Kanagawa Prefecture at this stage. The remarkable growth of Sagamihara-chō as a new military base, had the population of 69 thousand, and 116 thousand including the neighboring Zama, Yamato, Ebina and Ayase, during and after the war. Most of the increasing occupants preferred the urban to the farming area.

Tokyo-fu (Urban Prefecture) was administratively reorganized as Tokyo-to (Metropolis), and the thirty-five wards were unified to twenty-three within the period from 1935 to '50. The population of Tokyo-shi including wards dwindled from 5,780 thousand in 1935 to around 5,380 thousand in 1950. Areally, the population of the central wards decreased at this stage. On the contrary, that of Meguro, Ōta, Setagaya, Suginami, Nerima, Itabashi, Adachi, Katsushika or Edogawa located in the outer part of twenty-three wards, continued to grow as ever. So it may be considered that ring observed in the pattern of the distribution of population of Tokyo spread its depressed space, and copying with it, expanded its outer parts. Of course, we can indicate the striking increase of comuters shuttling between the exterior and the interior parts of Tokyo, and the phenomenon of rush-hours occurred from such an areal transition in the distribution of population. Tokyo which had a growing population like an isolated peak with narrow skirts in the middle of the Meiji Era, elevated the peak and spread widely the skirts, while that number of the people decreased or stagnated in the interior part of the urban area. The way of spreading skirts was as follows; at first, the concentric brimming over the surrounding, next, the radiating extension along the traffic lines, and lastly, the strengthening extension, and the overflowing or sprawling especially in the western and the south-western directions. The difference of population between Tokyo region and the other parts of the Kanto Districts has grown wider and wider, though the local cities and towns as well as the farming, forestry or fishing villages have got their population as a whole. It is easily presumed that this tendency will be strengthened still more in the times after 1950, though it was not mentioned in this paper. The enlargement of Tokyo region in the pattern

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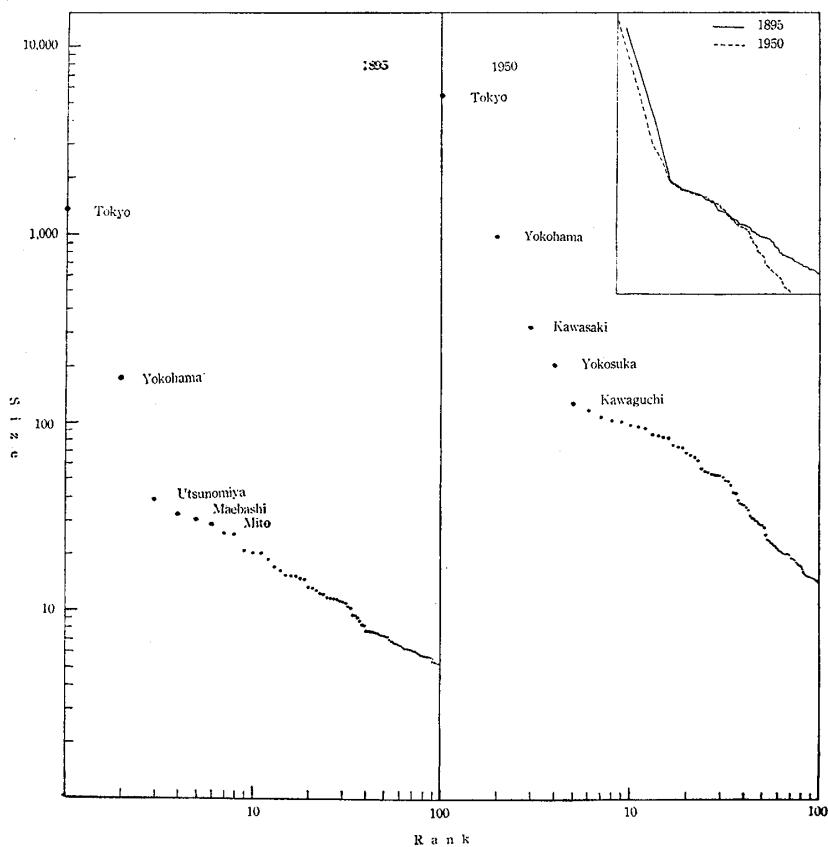


Fig. 6 Shi or Chō in the Kanto Districts, arranged by the size and rank of population in 1895 and 1950

The unit of the figure of the size reveals a thousand. The trend of two lines, by which dots are interlinked, are compared exactly in the upper right.

of distribution of population emblematises the process of the strengthening or the controlling power of Tokyo to the whole Kanto, from the view point of the urban function. Tokyo played certainly a role as a nodal city of the Kanto Districts even in the Meiji Era. But it was not so strong as today. This city which had grown a huge population through the process of strengthening the position as the capital of Japan, commanded the surrounding areas in the form of spreading a rapid growing space of population, and showed the tendency of including the whole Kanto in the Tokyo area. As a result of it, the regional character of Kanto was compelled to be reorganized. This phenomenon, from the standpoint of regional theory, may be considered as the forming process of a integral region or nodal region. The transition, from 1895 to 1950, of the arrangement of dots or shape of lines shown in Fig. 6 may prove the previous explanation to some extent. The problem of reorganization of the Tokyo Metropolitan Sphere lays a geographical foundation on such an areal formation. But it is to be criticized that the emphasis of reorganization is chiefly placed only on the solution of the urban area, Tokyo, but not almost on the farming, forestry or fishing areas. Such a posture aiming only at the

reorganization of the "urban" area of the Metropolis, and disregarding the reorganization of the Metropolitan "Sphere" is to be correctel hereafter. From the standpoint of an area as a synthetic entity, the study on the farming, forestry or fishing areas should be volitionally made in paralled with that on the urban areas. The writer's investigation of it will be made in after days.

note

- (1) A research by the Ministry of Home Affairs, 1896. It is to be noticed that this data comprises of the error of five percent or under.
- (2) (3) (4) The Census each year.
- (5) The Bonins and Izu Islands are excluded here, and so forth.
- (6) Yose-eki and Yoshino-eki of Kanagawa Prefecture are included in *chō*. The lower municipalities in Japan are classified into *shi* (city), *chō* or *machi* (town), and *son* or *mura* (village) by the population and the degree of urbanization and so on. Besides these *eki* which means the post town was admitted in the Meiji Era.
- (7) These were such cities or towns as Mito, Utsunomiya, Tochigi, Ashikaga, Kiryu, Maebashi, Takasaki, Chōshi, Chiba, Hachiōji, Yokosuka etc.
- (8) These were Hachiōji, Itabashi, Ōme, Chōfu, Tanashi, Hino and Shinjuku. The population of the former five was over 5 thousand, and that of the rest was under 5 thousand respectively.
- (9) The following places contiguous to Tokyo-shi were administratively *mura*: Suna, Ōshima, Kameido, Terashima, Sumida, Azuma, Hirai, Kanamachi, Komatsugawa, Koiwa, Mikawajima, Oku, Nippori, Takinogawa, Ōji, Sugamo, Takada, Tozuka, Ōkubo, Sendagaya, Shibuya, Meguro, Ōsaki, Ōi, Ōmori, or Kamata,
- (10) These were as follows; Yokosuka (19 thousand), Kanagawa (17), Odawara (15), Toda (14), Uraga (13), Misaki, Ōiso, Kamakura, Hatano, Fujisawaosaka, Kawasaki, Hodogaya, Hiratsuka, Atsugi, Tozuka, Isehara, Ōyama, Fujisawaōtomi, Yoshino, Yose, Ohara, Hakone. Misaki~Hodogaya had respectively 9-5, the latter ten under 5 thousand.
- (11) The *shi* or *chō* and their population in 1895 and in 1920 were as follows; Yokosuka (35 in 1895-90 in1920. Unit reveals a thousand), Utsunomiya (36-64), Maebashi (33-62), Mito (30-39), Kiryu (20-38), Takasaki (29-37), Chiba (26-34), Ashikaga (16-34), Shibuya (8-81). The following belongs to Tokyo Prefecture. Nishisugamo (3-51), Minamisenju (12-51), Nippori (3-42), Shinagawa (15-41), Takinogawa (5-41), Yodohashi (14-41), Hachiōji (26-40), Kameido (5-39), Ōji (9-38), Ōi (6-37), Sendagaya (6-36), Ōsaki (4-35), Senju (15-31), Azuma (1-31). The population of Yokosuka and Yodohashi in 1895 includes that of *chō* or *son* which was incorporated during the period from 1895 to 1920.

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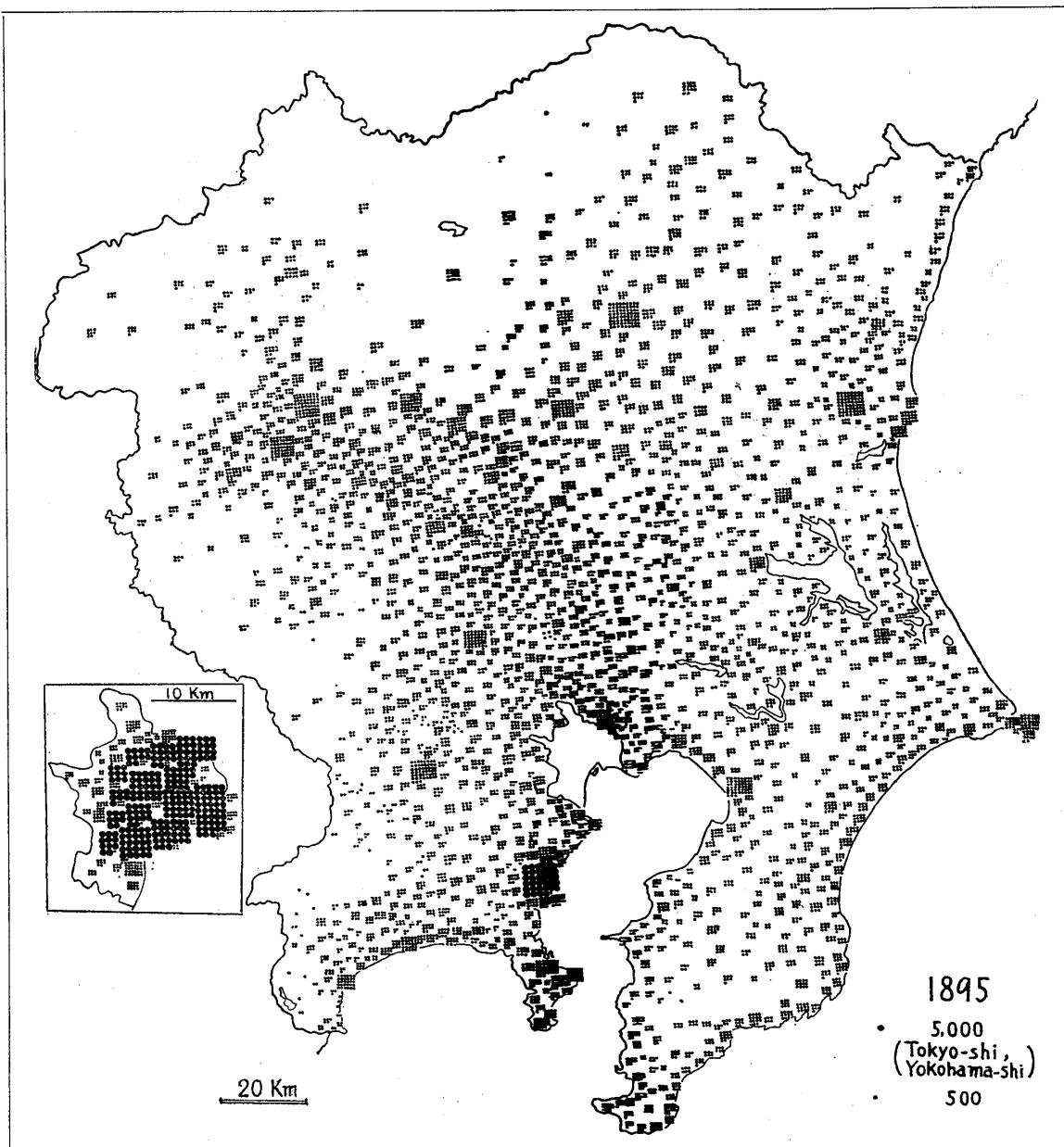


Fig. 2

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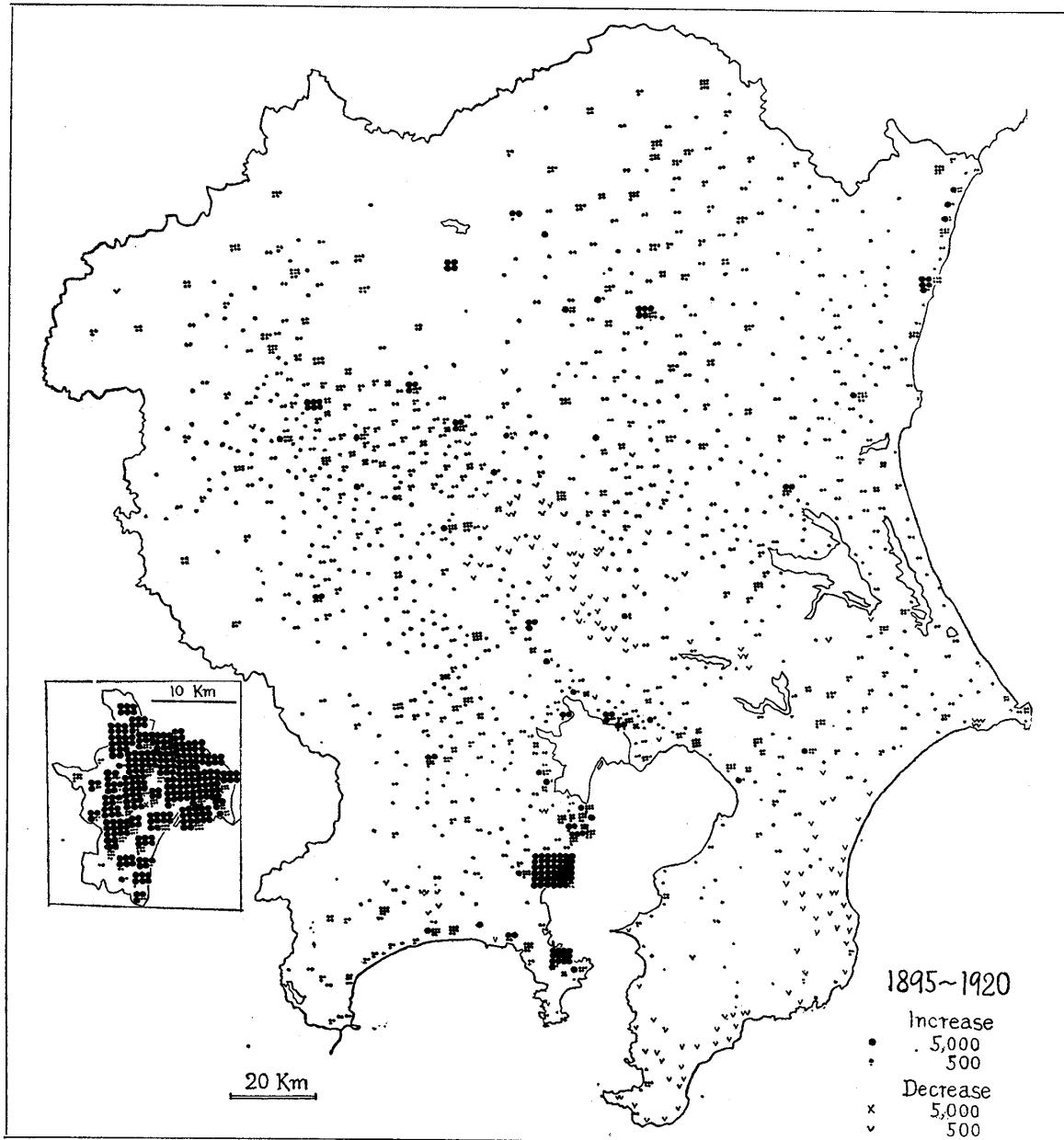


Fig. 3

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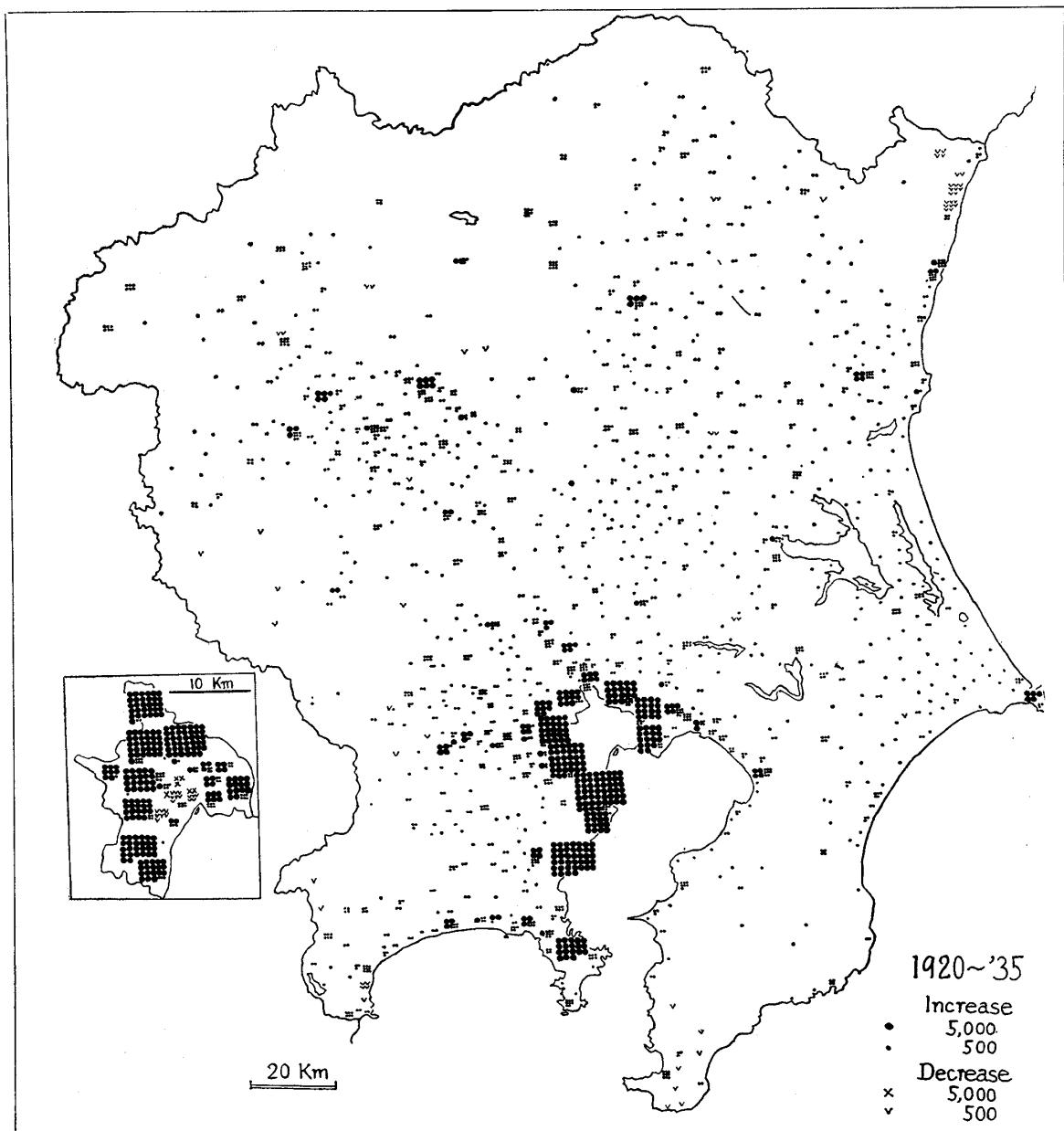


Fig. 4

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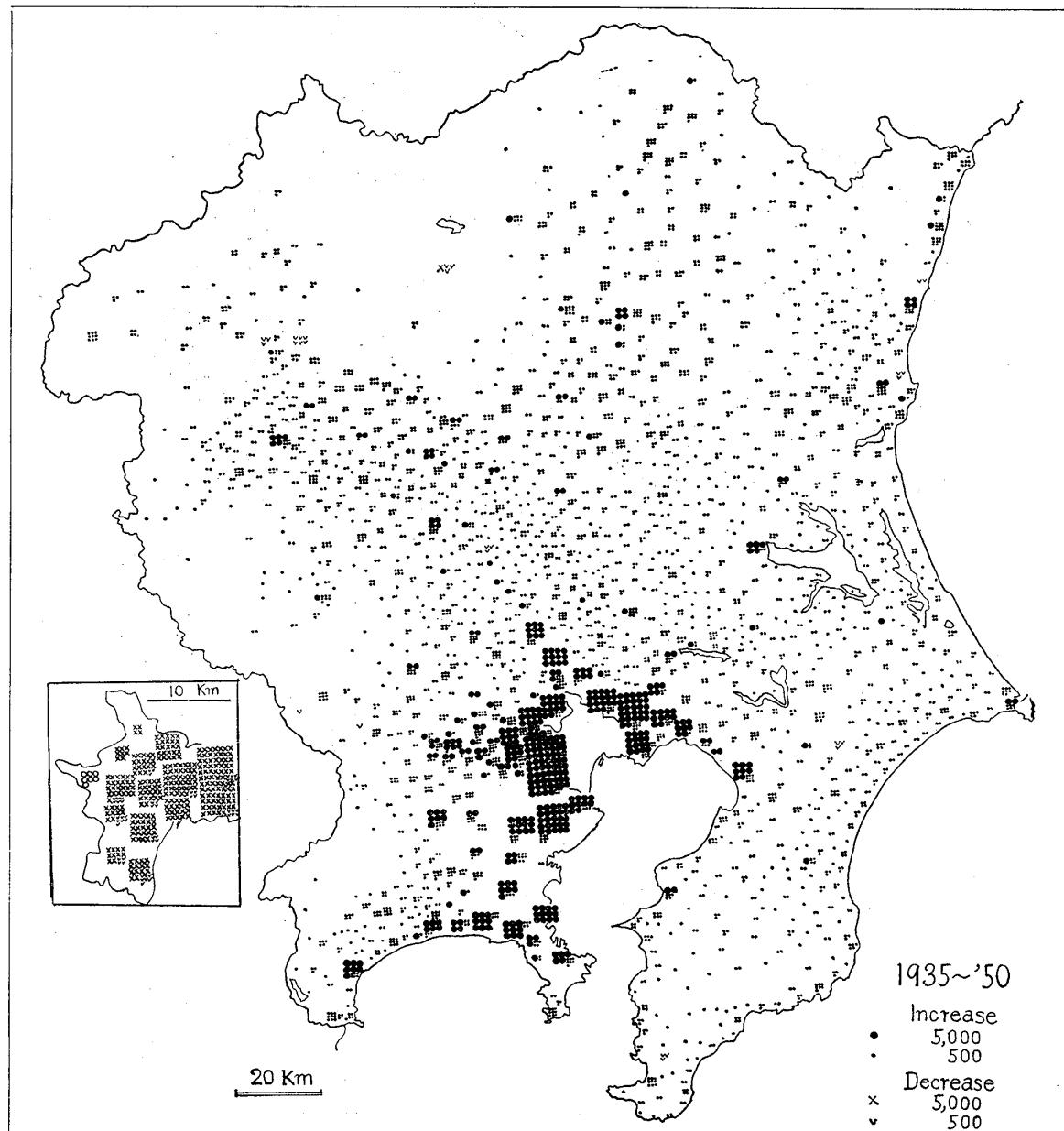


Fig. 5