

Groping in the Dark of the Depopulation

How is Japanese government struggling for rural revitalization?

日本における地方消滅と行政的対応



北村 亘

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Declining Birthrate, Growing Aging Rate,
Disappearing Municipalities

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complicated and sophisticated public services, overload to the staff

3. Government Responses to the Problem

Current Failure, Positive/offensive revitalizing response, Negative/defensive withdrawing response, Importance of horizontal and vertical cooperation and the role of the second-tier local government

1. “Depopulation” Problems in Japan

総合誌『中央公論』

2013年12月号「特集：壊死する地方都市」

2014年06月号「緊急特集：消滅する市町村523」

2014年07月号「特集：すべての町は救えない」

日本創生会議・人口減少問題検討分科会座長：増田寛也・元総務大臣)

URL : <http://www.policycouncil.jp/>

増田寛也(編)(2014)『地方消滅：東京一極集中が招く人口急減』
(中公新書)。

増田寛也・富山和彦(2015)『地方消滅：創生戦略編』(中公新書)。

増田寛也(編)(2015)『東京消滅：介護破綻と地方移住』(中公新書)。

文献リスト Book Lists

論争 Controversy

矢作弘(2014)『縮小都市の挑戦』(岩波新書)。

小田切徳美(2014)『農山村は消滅しない』(岩波新書)。

山下祐介(2014)『地方消滅の罨』(ちくま新書)。

他、多数あり。

飯田泰之・木下斉・川崎一泰・入山章栄・林直樹・熊谷俊人

(2016)『地域再生の失敗学』(光文社新書)。

久繁哲之介(2010)『地域再生の罨』(ちくま新書)。

---(2013)『商店街再生の罨』(ちくま新書)。

“Disappearing municipalities” problem

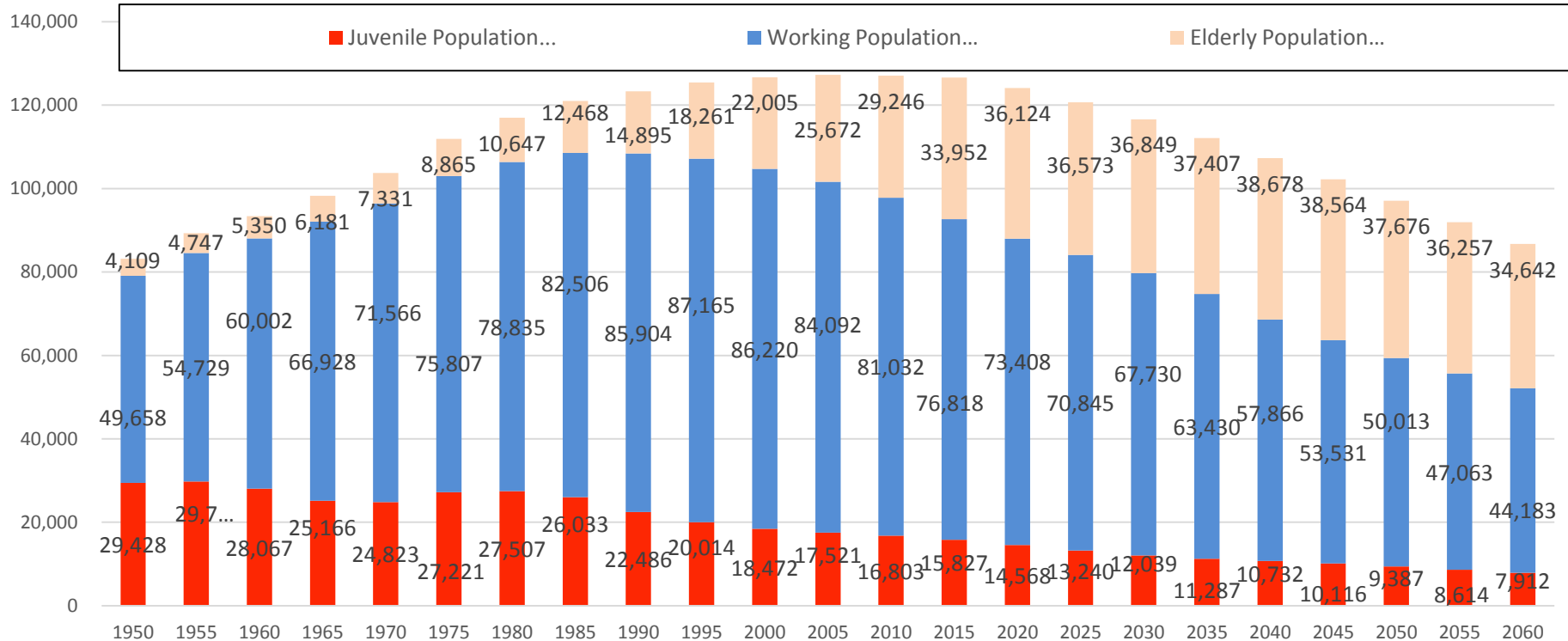
How to estimate the magnitude of depopulation on local communities?

⇒ Focusing on “reproductive power” at the municipal level (=easy and simple way to estimate the trend)

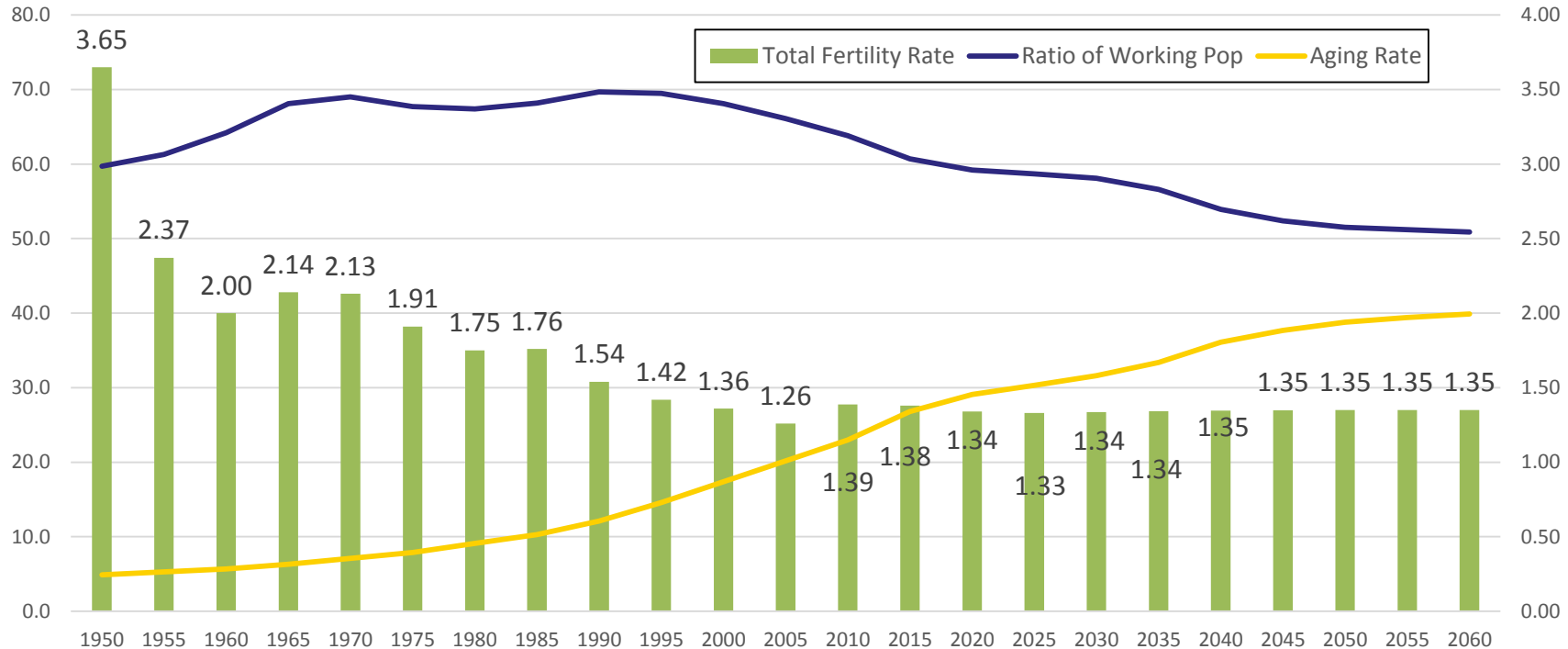
⇒ “Young women” population aged 20-39

If municipal government in the rural area failed to maintain the population of 20-39 year-old women, it would encounter the rapid decrease in the total population and would disappear...

Declining Population / Depopulation



Declining birthrate and Growing aging rate



Inflow of youngers into the urban areas

“More youngers, less children” in the urban areas

- few opportunities to meet a partner (boyfriend/girlfriend)
- bad housing environment (small house/ high land price)
- no child-care support by family members and neighbors
- variety of jobs, entertainment, amusement
(cinemas, theater plays, live, concert, restaurants···)

“Black hole” phenomenon

- Younger people attracted by the urban areas are unlikely to have children there. (TFR: Tokyo 1.09; Kyoto 1.23)

Medical and Nursing Care as a Population Dam

Long-term care facilities:

- =The largest employers remained in the rural areas
- =providing young women with jobs in the private sector in the rural areas.
- =preventing young women from going to the urban areas. *LTC facilities are like "population dams."*

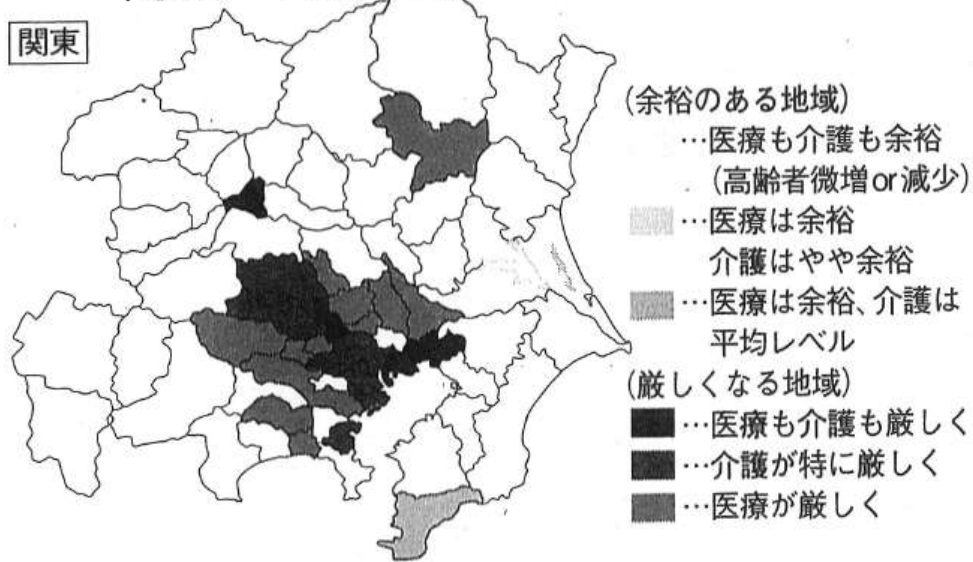
The Dam collapsed...

The more old men and women die, the fewer youngers are employed by long-term care facilities.

Acceleration of Young women's mobility in the Tokyo Region

図8 2040年における医療・介護サービスの「余剰・不足」推計

関東



(出典) 第9回社会保障制度改革国民会議 (平成25年4月19日) 提出資料

-Tokyo 23 districts:

Desperate needs for Medical and Nursing Cares (Black-colored)

-Peripheral Areas :

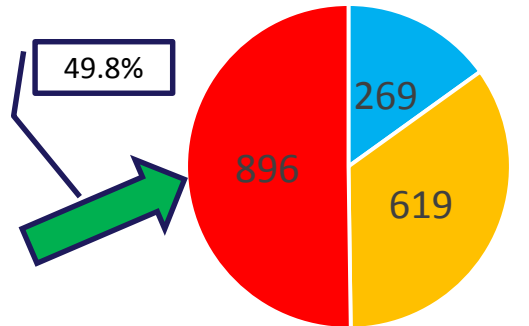
Oversupply of Medical and Nursing Cares (White-colored)

* Balance between Demand and Supply

-accelerating young women's outflow from rural areas

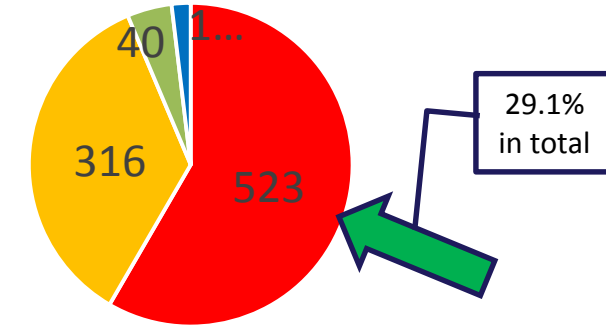
Disappearing Municipalities

Decrease in young women 2010-40



- Less than 30% decrease
- 30-50 % decrease
- More than 50% decrease

896 Municipalities by Population



- Less than 10 thousands
- 10-50 thousands
- 50-100 thousands
- More than 100 thousands

What would happen if 60~80 thousands of youngers inflow the urban areas every year?

⇒ 896 municipalities would encounter the disappearing crisis. Among 896, 523 municipalities whose population is less than 10 thousands are most likely to disappear.

2. Changing administrative capacity of Japanese local government since 1993

Depopulation problems

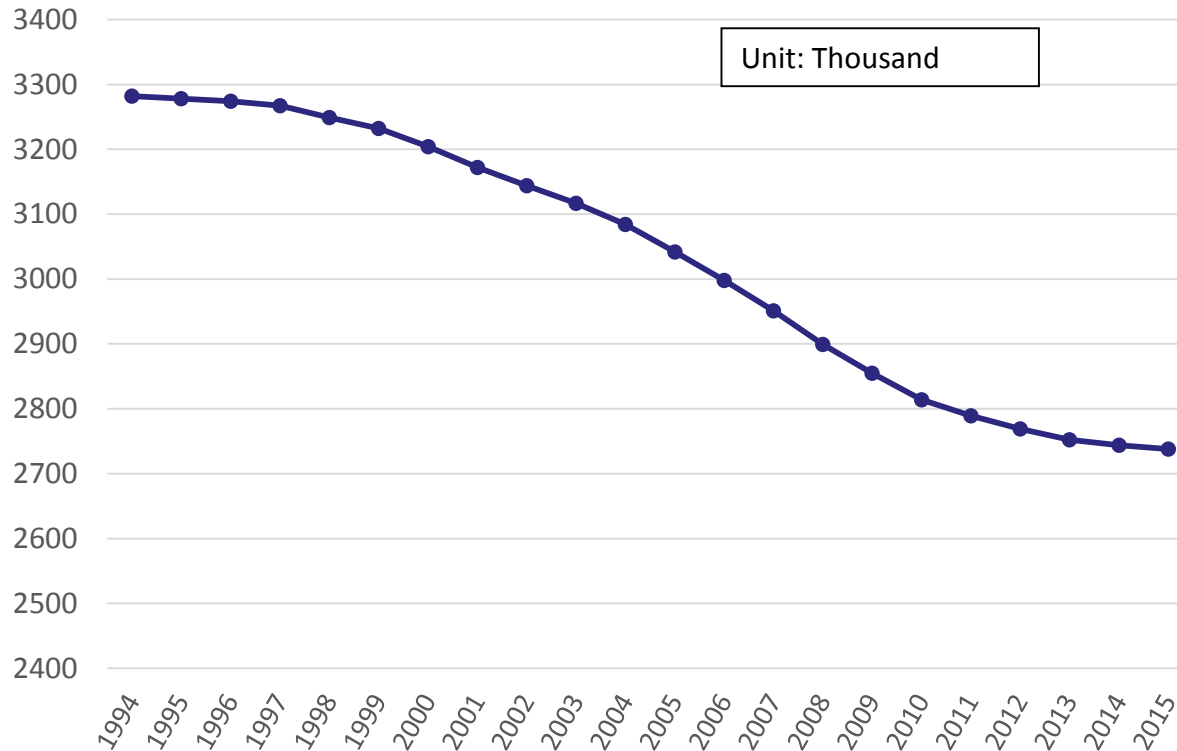
- few children, more elderlies
- more youngers in the urban areas, more elderlies in the rural areas

Serious problems

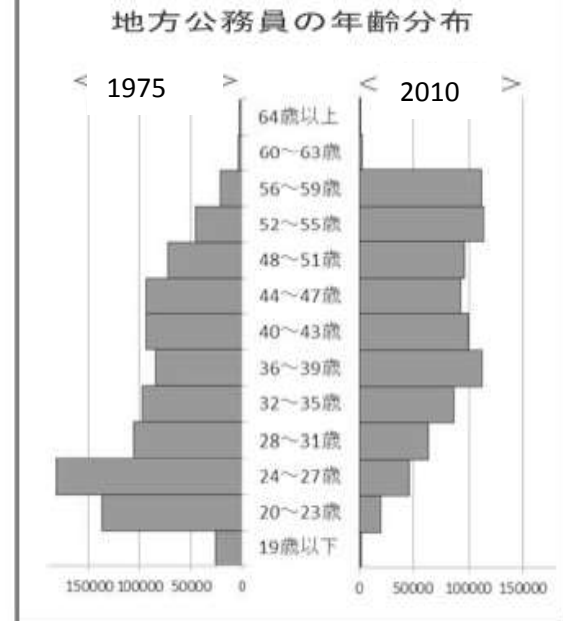
- abilities of local government to respond to depopulation problems
- curtailment of staff and budget
- distorted age structure of staff

Failure in solving local revitalization problems

Decreasing number of total local public servants



Malproportional Age Structure (Local Govt Officials in Total)



Declines in administrative capacity

○Environment where local government works

- Expanding role of local government in providing public services
- Highly technical functions added

○Administrative capacity decreased

- Cut-back management: curtailment of staff and budget
- Few incentives for promotion: Big Responsibilities and Small salary increase
- Few chances to learn leadership via the On-the-job training
- Arbitrary use of short-term performance evaluation methods

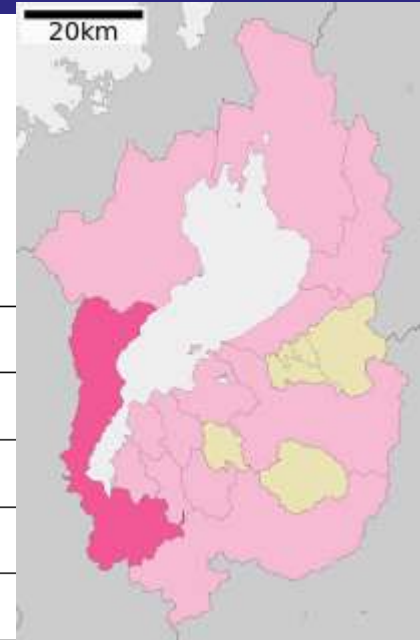
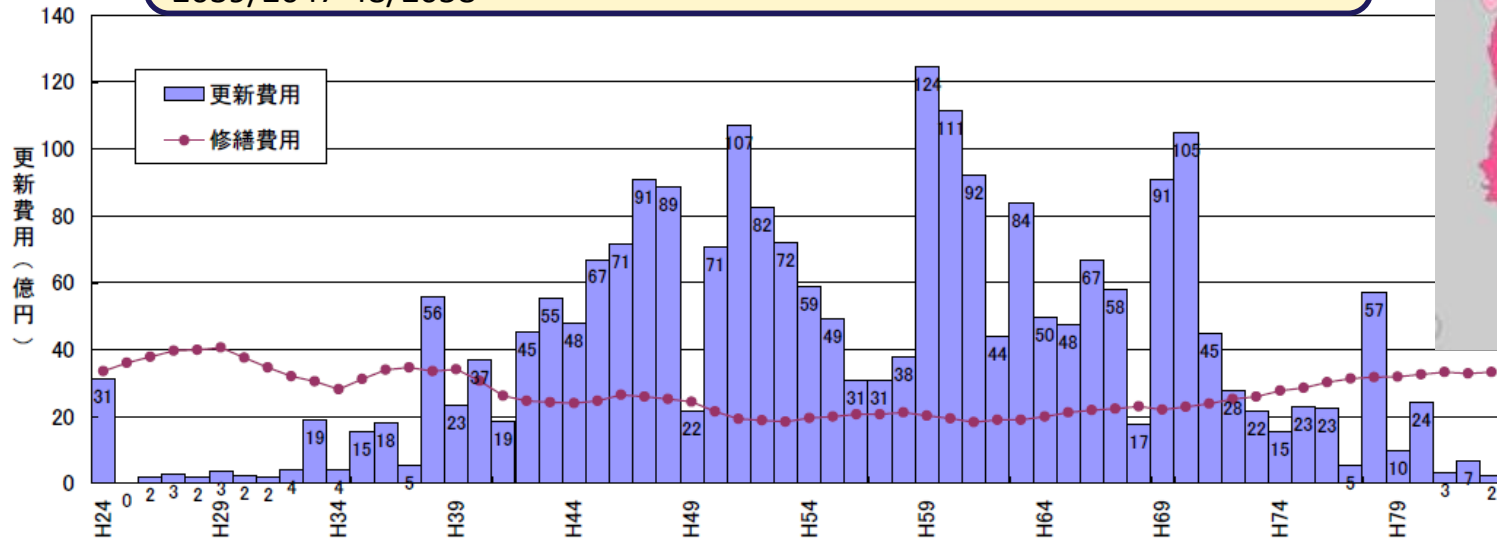
⇔ Japanese traditional late selection system based on long-term performance evaluation

Maintenance Costs Boosted

Otsu City's White Paper on Public Facilities(June 2012)

URL:<http://www.city.otsu.lg.jp/shisei/zaisei/shisetsu/1395727759329.html>

Almost 10% of total annual city budget is estimated to be spent only for maintaining existing public facilities under the depopulation period; 2039/2047-48/2058



3. Government Responses to the Depopulation Problem

(1) Failure to revitalize the declining city center 1

How to Revitalize the Shopping Mall?

1) tax reduction(property tax, inheritance tax etc.):

- Elderly shop-owners living in the shopping mall would stay there, without doing business, and renting a vacant shop to the chain-stores (pubs, bars, and so on).
- Pachinko parlors and houses of ill fame are wealthy tenants that keep ordinary citizens away from the Mall.

Failure to revitalize the declining city center 2

2) Parking lots and large roadway prepared

- Keeping pedestrians and elderly users away from the shopping mall.
- Changing the crowded Mall to the Bypass for cars

3) Big events financially sponsored by local government

- Tourists and festival-enthusiasts in the street only at the events
- Few people in the weekday afternoon

4) Fast Foods: fried chicken, hot dogs, noodles, etc.

- No competitiveness with big companies outside the city
- Bare possibility for rural economy to recover from stagnation

(2) Positive/offensive revitalizing response

○Rediscovering the hidden advantages or communal resources

--Adding “extra value” to existing artifacts, local products or specialties

=Labeling original brands on local products, based on folklore rediscovered

e.g. Producing Japanese sake and wine (rice/grapes)

Adding high value to an agrarian community's products

→Kagoshima, Yamanashi, Nagano

Importance of a “Young outsiders” perspective

“Young outsiders” perspective

=Young outsiders, who spent most of their time in other places,
stand away from old communal business network,
free from any vested interests at a local community.

They often know advantages and appealing points of the community
better than native members.

The Key is whether local community leaders can make
use of what young outsiders rediscover or point out.

What policy can only local government implement for local revitalization??

Positive revitalizing policy is not made and implemented only by local government.

=NPOs and Private companies can propose and implement revitalizing plans, sometimes cooperating with local government to do so.

What is a response to the depopulation problem that only local government can do and must do?

(3) Negative/defensive withdrawing response

Disappearing municipalities

- containing not a few “marginal communities” within their jurisdiction.
- any possibilities for local government to provide public services eternally to marginal communities...

What is a “marginal community”?

- a community whose members aged 65 and more are more than 50%. It will be soon disappearing within 30 years. Its sustainable development can not be expected.

“No Public Service Districts” designated?

--Decreasing tax revenues and increasing public spending under the depopulation period...

= Inevitably abandoning the universal service system

= Withdrawing the expanded roles of local government

○ What local government must do is...

- 1) Zoning: Dividing a line between “Public Service Districts” and “No Public Service Districts.”
- 2) Consolidation: moving several “marginal communities” into a 100-household community in a more convenient location.

What local government should not do is...

- Most municipal government in rural Japan
=distributing its financial resources to each marginal communities in the beautiful name of “preserving small communities.”
- Members of each marginal community are around 65 years old, so they are very fine just after retiring from work.
→But, how old will they be in 15 years??
- Stop distributing small money to marginal communities to preserve the Status Quo.

Survey Research on Moving Communities

(Ministry of Internal Affairs, March 2001)

Interviewees: elderlies who experienced moving

Q: How do you feel about relocation of your community?

Happy with relocation 72% / Unhappy with relocation 2%

SQ: Good points concerning relocation (multi-answered)

- More comfortable in daily life (shopping, going out etc.) 78.4%
- Closer to hospitals and easier to get medical and other health services 72.7%
- Less anxious about natural disasters and snow shoveling 53.4%

Horizontal and Vertical Cooperation among local authorities

○Local Government Act Amended in 2014

Introduction of the Agreement for Cooperation

- Simplifying overlapping functions among local authorities
e.g. Constructing a library, hospital
- Promoting complementarity among neighboring localities
e.g. Prefectural assistance to providing public services
at the small towns and villages level

Effective management of the big river among central,
prefectural, and municipal government

Importance of the second-tier local government (47 Prefectures in Japan)

Think-tank for municipal authorities

Hiring specialists, Providing expertise and knowledge

Drawing a line between public service districts and others

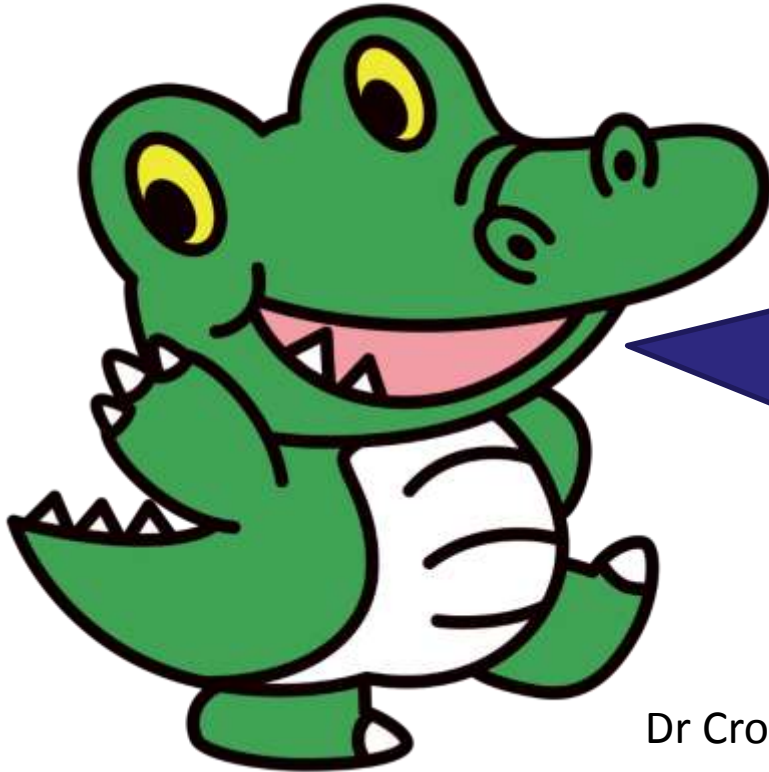
Local authorities neither too far from nor too close to marginal communities

Coordinating municipalities

Road-construction, water and sewage management,
Infectious diseases / pandemics prevention

Financial Burden-sharing in Social Security Provision

Thank you very much



If there are any
questions, I will
do my best to
answer them

Dr Crocodile, Osaka University's official character