

# Objective Interpretation of Regional Population Indices - Focusing on the Relationship Between Population Migration and Household Formation -

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With a declining birthrate and an ageing population, Japan will be facing a shrinking population this century, and it has been recognized that such kind of population-related phenomena will occur with regional differences. Local governments are using various regional population indices in an attempt to locate the characteristics of each region so that they can develop effective regional policies. The purpose of this paper is to raise the concern that there could be a risk that policy is being misdirected, because alternative interpretations of regional differences based on these indices are not taken into consideration, creating fictitious narratives that deviate from the actual regional realities. In any given region, the lower the never-married rate and the higher the rate of adults living with their parents, the more likely it tends to be regarded as a positive sign. However, taking into account the effects of past population migration that have caused fluctuations in population distribution, this can also be interpreted as a negative sign. This shows that even if objective statistical data is used as a rational basis for policy formation, it does not necessarily mean that the interpretation of these indices will be objective, in which case it would be no different from formulating policies based on personal beliefs or individual desires.