



YOUNG URBAN MIGRANTS IN THE JAPANESE COUNTRYSIDE BETWEEN SELF-REALIZATION AND SLOW LIFE?

STEPHANIE MORENO

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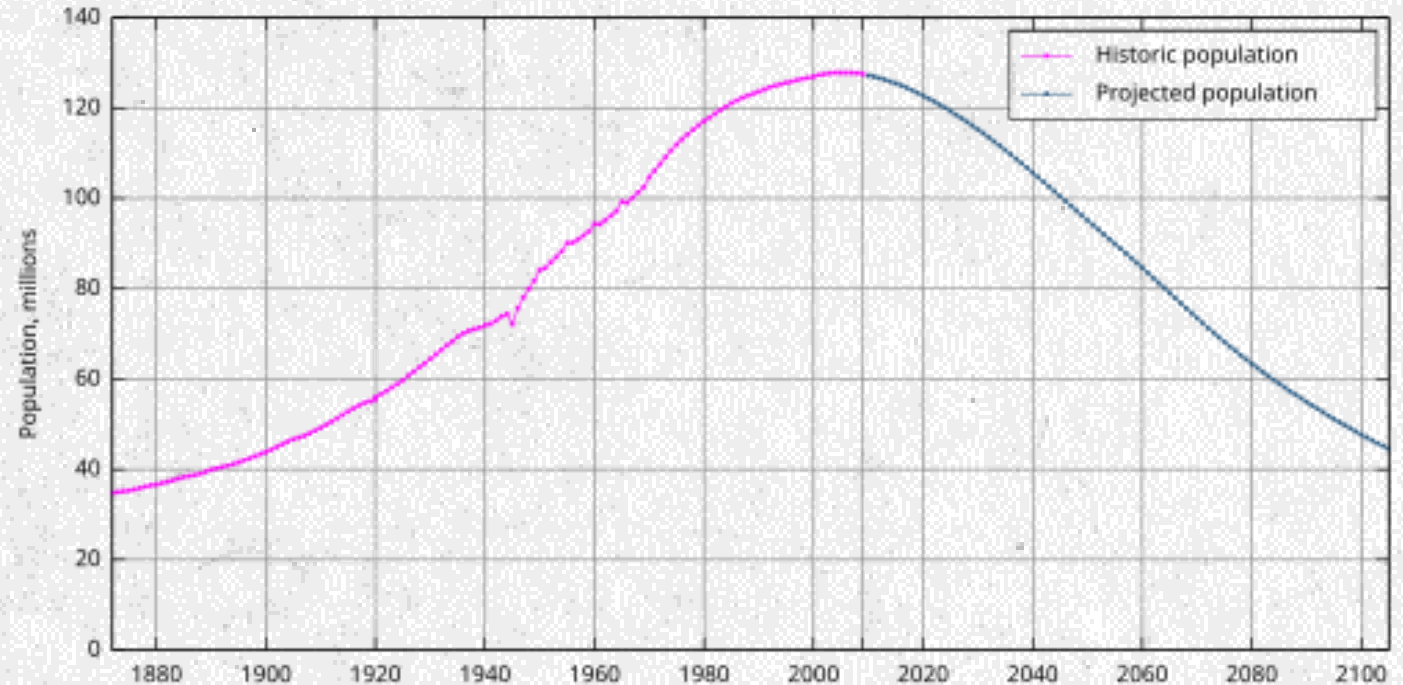
OVERVIEW

- This chapter opened with the declining population crisis in Japan and highlighted the trend of young Japanese people moving to urban cities like Tokyo.
- Considering Japan's existing depopulation issue, this trend negatively impacts the rural lands in Japan as all the youth chases this idea, I like to call the Japanese 'American Dream'.
- However, this chapter dives into the lives of outliers, Japanese people that have migrated from urban cities to rural towns.
- They opt for self-realization, enjoying the work they do, and finding this idea of 'small-scale happiness', as opposed to have a fast-paced and corporative life in urban cities.



WHAT THE DEPOPULATION CRISIS MEANS FOR JAPAN

- Japan as a 'pioneer shrinking society'
- United Nations forecasts a 26% decline in Japan's population by 2085. According to the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, Japan's population will be roughly 107.276 million. That would be a decline of 20 million after 2010s had a population of 128.057 million.
- On top of that, 25/47 prefectures that are considered 'rural' will experience this depopulation even more than big cities like Tokyo and Osaka.
- This means that 'rural' cities will have instances of schools closing, abandoned/empty houses, and an elderly society



IN-MIGRANTS AND THE QUEST FOR 'SMALL SCALE HAPPINESS'



- While the transition of young in-migrants going from rural to urban cities is predominant, there have been many people choosing to go from busy city life to easy-going rural towns.
- These people are seen as 'lifestyle migrants', people who are choosing to move to rural areas, for non-economical reasons, in hopes of finding a more meaningful life.
- People interviewed in this Chapter reported that they are seeking something more outside of an overworked society that leaves nothing for them. This pursuit of 'small scale happiness' is what drives these in-migrants to rural towns.

WHAT DOES 'RURAL LIVING' MEAN ANYWAY?

CASE 1: HARU-SAN, 45, NIIGATA PREFECTURE

- “The Guild House Tokamachi”
 - A collective house where tenants share spaces for cheaper rent
- Haru-san worked at a good company in IT for 17 years and couldn't decide if he could put up with the constant stress and work overload at the company. He would get an average of 3-4 hours asleep and worked over 16 hours.
- After travelling for 3 years and experienced shared housing, Haru-san decided to open his own collective house and make money that way.
- He now dedicates his life to “having a good time until he dies” and states that only about 10% of his time is dedicated to work.

CASE 2: MASA-SAN, AMA TOWN, SHIMANE PREFECTURE

- Relocated with his wife from Tokyo to Ama town for lifestyle reasons.
- Both him and his wife worked in marketing for a company for 8 years. He decided to relocate and pursue freelancing, opting to work on his own time and enjoy his life.
- He operates in a “work life mix” rather than embracing a work-life balance.
- This way of continuing his work, yet living in a rural city contradicts what people expect out of rural living.

JAPANESE SOCIETY AND SELF- REALIZATION

- While people continue to chase after this ideal 'I made it in life' view and move to urban cities, people will continue to find their own ways to enjoy life.
- This pursuit of happiness and need for self-fulfillment and self-realization will continue to grow as Japan heads towards the reality of a declining population.



THANK YOU

