巻頭のことば

人口減少時代の計画行政
～名誉ある撤退のために～

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交通経済学で「混雑課金」という施策が提案されている。混雑時に道路や鉄道の料金を高くすることにより、利用者に他の時間帯へ移ってもらったり、他の交通手段へ変更してもらうことを目指している。この施策は人口が増加し、施設、サービスが不足する時代には役に立つ施策である。課金額を調節することによって、供給能力に応じて適切に需要を管理することができる。さらに、課金額収入を用いて、その時間帯にその施設、サービスを使えなかった利用者（課金を負担できなかった利用者）に、代替的な施設、サービスを供給することができる。

例えば、シンガポール、ロンドン、ストックホルムなどの都心部では道路混雑課金が導入されているが、それらの都市では、同課金収入で鉄道、バスサービスの充実が図られている。道路混雑課金を支払う利用者は負担額以上の時間短縮便益を享受でき、交通手段を変えざるを得なかった利用者も、以前より快適な公共交通サービスを利用できるため、大きな不満は生じない。

人口が減少する時代には、課金施策はうまく機能しない。施設の利用者が少なければ、施設の維持管理程度の最低限の料金に設定し、需要を喚起したい。しかし、同施策は短期的には有効だが、施設が老朽化しても更新できない。かといって更新費（減価償却費）を含めた総費用を少ない利用者で負担することになれば、料金が高すぎて利用できなくなる。

そこで需要の空間的な発生パターンを管理する必要が生じ、コンパクトシティ施策などが提案されている。例えば、中山間地に限界集落が増えているが、都市への移住を促し高密度に居住してもらえば施設、サービスは効率的に供給できる。もちろん、人口減少前と同程度の人口密度に高めたとしても、投資に回せる収入が生まれるわけではない。支出が節約できるに過ぎない。移住する人々がより快適に暮らせる保証もない。

しかし、見方を変えてみたい。移住はそうしなかった場合と比較すれば、移住者が地方公共団体に寄付をしたのと同じ効果を持つと言える。将来に渡って支出が節約されるわけだから、その仮想的な寄付額は大きなものとなる。我々はこの社会的貢献に感謝しなければならない。

さらに、これまで守ってもらった里山を社会全体で管理していくことが重要であろう。限界集落と背景事情は異なるが、参考にしたい事例がある。アメリカで最大の入園者を誇るグレートスモーキー・マウンテンズ国立公園内のケーズ・コープ地区は、19世紀に開拓が進んだ入植地だが、20世紀になり連邦、州政府が自然公園にすべく用地買収を試みた。入植者の反対運動など紆余曲折を経て土地は収用できたが、政府は完全な自然林に戻す当初の方針を転換し、既存の家屋などを保存するとともに、里山としての風景を文化遺産として自然の中に残すことにした。人々は去ったが、その貢献は記されたのである。

人口減少時代には、名誉ある撤退のための工夫が必要かもしれない。

Introductory Remark

Public Planning and Management during Depopulation ～A Well-managed Suitable Resettlement～

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'Congestion Pricing' has been proposed in the field of Transportation Economics. The introduction of higher road or railway prices during congested time is expected to shift the commuters to uncongested time, resulting in more social welfare. This scheme is beneficial particularly when the population increases and transportation infrastructures cannot meet the demand. Transportation demand can be managed not only by adjusting the prices at the social marginal cost in order to utilize the existing infrastructure capacity, but also by improving the infrastructure and/or alternative infrastructure. For this purpose, the revenue of congestion prices can be used to accommodate commuters who discontinue traveling during congested time.

For example, road pricing has successfully been introduced in the central areas of Singapore, London and Stockholm, where the governments improve the public transportation systems, including railways and bus services. Road users who still continue to travel during congestion time have to bear the additional cost; however, they save more time on less congested roads. Those commuters who shift to travel by railway and bus can enjoy more comfortable public transportation services. Thus, the pricing scheme seems to bring a win-win solution.

However, such a sollution is not always applicable in the case of depopulation. If there are few people, we could increase demand by introducing low prices only to maintain the existing infrastructure or marginal-cost prices. This pricing strategy is effective in the short-run, but in the long-run we cannot renew infrastructure with limited revenue. On the other hand, average-cost prices seem to be too expensive and impractical when the number of commuters is small, since the average-cost prices are obtained by dividing total cost including initial infrastructure cost or infrastructure depreciation expenses, by the number of commuters.

This is why we have to spatially manage transportation demand, proposing a 'compact city' where we can expect an adequate numbers of users per unit capacity of infrastructures. Currently, there are many marginal hamlets in the rural areas where 50 % of the population is aged over 50 years. If we can persuade people living in these areas to move to urban areas, public services, including transportation services will be provided more efficiently. Unfortunately, however, this strategy cannot generate additional revenue, as is the case with congestion pricing. Such a strategy can maintain the same level of service quality within the same budget amount. Then, there is no guarantee that those who move to urban areas will be satisfied with the new situation.

I would like to evaluate these efforts from a different perspective. The imigration of population from rural to urban areas reduces public expenditure and generates revenue as compared to a 'do nothing' case. With regard to this point, people's efforts seem to have the same result as people donating to the government. Furthermore, it is not a single donation but continuing contributions, of which virtual accumulated amount is sufficient enough to improve the public services.

Another important issue is the preservation of the abandoned hamlets in a good shape and environment in order to respect the efforts of the previous residents. In order to further illustrate this point, we will consider a suitable example concerning the district of Cades Cove in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in the United States. This district was developed by new settlers in the 19th century. The federal and state governments decided to buy the farmland and restore its natural environment by establishing a national park at the beginning of the 20th century. Although the settlers protested against the plan, the goverment finally succeeded in buying the farmland because they changed the original plan and preserved the cultural property (for instance, farmhouses and a church) as well as the natural environment. The inhabitants of that region moved to other areas; however, their efforts and contributions were etched on the land itself.

In the era of depopulation, we should be smart to prepare conditions for people in the marginal hamlets to make a suitable resettlement.