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# Regional (Re)vitalisation in Peripheral Japan Exploring the Impact of the Extension of the Tōhoku Shinkansen

A hybrid *u:japan* lecture by Marco Reggiani

Thursday  
2025-05-08  
18<sup>00</sup>~19<sup>30</sup>



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Japan's severe population decline is seriously threatening many of the country's municipalities, particularly those located in peripheral regions that are far from the economic core of the country. All levels of government have hurried to apply strategies aiming at stopping decay and the development of infrastructure is met with high expectations for new prosperity.

The talk focuses on the extension of the Tōhoku Shinkansen north of Morioka to explore outcomes of Japan's approach to regional (re)vitalisation through large-scale infrastructure projects, highlighting the evidence and challenges that have emerged.

The talk will first introduce the socio-economic and territorial impacts of high-speed rail, as well as planning challenges in shrinking cities and peripheral regions. It will then

discuss whether the Shinkansen had a positive effect on the shrinking trajectories of Iwate, Ninohe, Hachinohe, Shichinohe, and Aomori—five medium and small-sized cities and towns that were connected to the Shinkansen network between 2002 and 2010.

Finally, the talk will present insights from the Japan Foundation-funded project “Revitalizing Shrinking Cities in Japan: A Study on the Socio-Spatial Impact of the Shinkansen in Aomori Prefecture”, which investigated urban landscape transformation around Shinkansen stations. While focusing on the Tōhoku Shinkansen extension as a prominent example, the talk reflects on broader strategies aimed at addressing demographic and economic challenges in regional Japan, highlighting both the opportunities and limitations of such interventions.



Dr Marco Reggiani is an interdisciplinary researcher at the University of Strathclyde. His works address topics of urban and regional (re)vitalisation, peripherality, sustainability, as well as social justice, intersectionality, and inclusive education. Marco was the recipient of a Japan Foundation Fellowship for the “Revitalising Shrinking Cities in Japan” project, which focused on examining the impact of the Shinkansen on urban landscapes and shrinking trajectories of connected cities in Aomori Prefecture. His current research has focused on peripheral and depopulating regions to explore the role played by sustainable paradigms in reimagining the future of shrinking municipalities in rural Japan.

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