

Forschung und Lehre

Exploring Rural Well-Being through an Interdisciplinary Lens — The “Shrinking, but Happy” Research Team at the University of Vienna

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Summary

Japan’s rural areas are facing substantial demographic and structural change. While the negative impact of this development can be traced by objective social indicators, subjective well-being in these communities does not show a clear trend. This interdisciplinary project aims at assessing the interrelations between different dimensions of social relationships and locally salient conceptions of well-being, such as relational well-being, in the structurally average rural Aso region. Applying a mixed-methods approach, we combine quantitative and qualitative research, which enables an integration of both statistically robust associations and case study material with its focus on contextual aspects of well-being. In so doing we demonstrate how a broad interdisciplinary analysis is a promising approach when tackling complex issues such as well-being and social relationships as well as their interplay.

Keywords: relational well-being, rural Japan, interdisciplinary research, demographic change, mixed-method approach, community life

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