

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

Misato Fujioka

Meiji University

1-1 Kanda Surugadai, Chiyoda, Tokyo 101-8301 Japan

mimiissaattoo31@gmail.com

Toshio Takagi

Yokohama City University

22-2 Seto, Kanazawa, Yokohama, Kanagawa 236-0027 Japan

takagi.tos.hy@yokohama-cu.ac.jp

Aki Nakanishi

Meiji University

1-1 Kanda Surugadai, Chiyoda, Tokyo 101-8301 Japan

aki.nakanishi@nifty.com

Summary

This study examined regional revitalisation in Japan from the perspective of actor-network theory (ANT), which has been discussed in cultural anthropology and other fields and has been studied extensively in organisation studies. Research on regional revitalisation includes innovation, governmental policy studies, and community formation. However, a crucial viewpoint is missing from previous studies. This is the intentionality of the main actors, that is, the existence of influencing networks and non-human factors in the created networks. Therefore, the people involved in local revitalisation in Japan were interviewed in this study. Our findings indicate that various actors are involved in the formation of towns and regions. Moreover, each actor builds translation networks to achieve its own goals and incorporates non-human actors. Consequently, the application of ANT facilitated a nuanced analysis and offered a novel perspective for the study of regional revitalisation.

Word Count: 5040

23. Organisational Transformation Change and Development

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

1. Introduction

Currently, the decline of rural areas is a problem in developed countries. For example, in the UK, there is an economic disparity between London and the rest of the country. In particular, in terms of GVA per capita, London’s score was much higher than the UK average, with the gap widening from 60% to 80%. In terms of productivity, while other cities are declining, London’s greater focus on high-value-added financial and business services, professional services, and communication technology services is boosting productivity.

This problem is the same as in Japan. For example, in Japan, the challenges include the unipolar concentration of the population in the capital, Tokyo, economic contraction resulting from population decline and ageing, and labour shortages (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2019).

These problems in rural areas are attracting worldwide attention, and studies on regional revitalisation have been conducted in various countries. For example, ‘research on innovation and entrepreneurship in regional revitalisation (Morgan, 1997; Skuras, 2005; Ximing Yin, 2019)’, ‘research on policies by governments and municipalities in regional revitalisation (Douglas, 2005; Long, 2008; Zheng, 2010)’ and “research on the formation of local communities as the core of local revitalisation (Amin, 1998; Terluin, 2003; Chigbu, 2012)’.

Research on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), especially in the area of regional revitalisation, has approached these regional issues from three main perspectives. First, studies on (1) innovation (Hayashi and Tanabe, 2010) and entrepreneurship (Torii, 2011) in regional revitalisation and (2) policies by the Central and local governments (Kawakita, 2016) have focussed and proposed solutions based on the following two issues: what is urgently required and what is significant to achieve these goals? (3) Research on regional connections and the formation of regional communities (Kishi, 2018), etc. have been conducted from the perspective of how to form networks within and outside the region, with citizens/people belonging to the region playing a central role (Sendo, 2018).

However, the research conducted from perspectives (1)–(3) has limitations. Regarding perspectives (1) and (2), there is a lack of perspective on what influences actors’ decision-making—in other words, why those actors pursue their goals (Ito and Matsuno, 2023). Regarding perspective (3), the existence and influence of non-human actors are ignored, and research has focused on humans and the knowledge possessed by each

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

human in the formation of local networks (Mitsubishi, Matsubara and Yokura, 2009).

In the context of the abovementioned limitations, this study attempts to adopt a novel approach to research regional revitalisation by applying the actor-network theory. This theory has been discussed in cultural anthropology and frequently examined in business administration. Clarifying the process of regional revitalisation in Japan as a case study will provide clues for solving problems not only in Japan but also in other regions around the world. It will also provide a new perspective on research related to regional revitalisation.

2. Research on Regional Revitalisation

Research on regional revitalisation has focused on innovation and entrepreneurship (Yins et al., 2019; Skuras et al., 2005; Morgan, 1997), studies on policies by government and municipal policies (Douglas, 2005; Zheng and Warner, 2010; Long et al., 2008), and regional community formation (Chigbu, 2012; Terluin, 2003; Amin, 1998). First, the research on regional revitalisation and innovation identifies the principal actors. It indicates the innovations, strategies, and policies necessary for regional revitalisation, showing what actors should do and what is required of them. Additionally, policy research states that local governments must formulate policies rooted in local communities, especially in rural areas. Studies on local communities have identified the formation of local communities among people as an element necessary for local revitalisation. These studies present the steps necessary for the creation of such networks. This article presents a typical study of each area.

2-1. Research on Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Regional Revitalisation

As an example of innovation and entrepreneurship in regional revitalisation, we refer to Yin et al.’s (2019) study of innovation and its development in rural China. This study explored developmental imbalances and significant disparities between rural and urban areas in China. The actors in this study included the central government, local governments, and SMEs. The authors discussed the actions that they should take. Specifically, the study proposes the following actions: digital innovation such as the Internet, information and communications technology, agricultural technology innovation, institutional and management innovation, and community-based networking; maximising the use of existing human capital such as new farmers, professional farmers, and university-educated village officials; and encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship. These factors should be included in the rural innovation systems. Furthermore, the study includes the example of Alibaba, explaining how the establishment of online networks

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

and infrastructure in rural strategies and the boosting of entrepreneurship among rural farmers have led to the revitalisation of rural areas. This study identifies the challenges and opportunities faced by governments, municipalities, and SMEs in building rural innovation systems.

2-2. Research on Government and Municipal Policies in Regional Revitalisation

Douglas (2005) analysed certain public policies in rural Ontario, Canada, to explore governmental and municipal policies for community revitalisation. This study revealed that the significance of sustainable communities and the interdependencies between communities and community-based governance systems are crucial perspectives for local development in municipalities. For example, understanding the balance of operational priorities between financial considerations, the existence and level of certain services, access to political processes and decision-makers, and a sense of place and community. This indicates that local governments should focus on aspects other than economic development, social provision, and investments in the physical infrastructure.

2-3 Research on the Importance of Local Communities in Regional Revitalisation

An example of research on community formation in regional revitalisation is a study conducted by Chigbu (2012) in the city of Weyarn, a rural community in the state of Upper Bavaria, southern Germany. Weyarn's proximity to the populous city of Munich and its location in the peaceful countryside at the foot of the Alps make it a popular destination for tourists, investors, and private builders. The increasing popularity of the area as a tourist destination has resulted in a significant influx of non-residents, putting pressure on urbanisation and spiking real estate prices. The residents of Weyarn felt that they were losing their native land and culture because of regional urbanisation. They have begun to seek ways to address these problems.

Therefore, a group of village residents and participants (landowners, farmers, etc.) formed a village community and launched the village rehabilitation project. The project, which aimed to create a living space that promotes living in the countryside, was implemented with the cooperation of the residents, respecting their wishes. As part of the project, people set up working groups on various themes to facilitate brainstorming and devise a vision for the community. Many people were involved in internal and external decision-making, and regular meetings were held. The project emphasises ‘people’ in community formation and the resulting area transformation. The mayor of Weyarn stated that, regarding this initiative, ‘Politics for people requires politics with people’.

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

2-4 Limitations of Previous Studies

As discussed, studies on regional revitalisation have been conducted from three major perspectives. However, a crucial perspective is missing from the previous studies. The main actors are their intentionality, that is, the existence of influencing networks and the non-human factors in the networks created.

These perspectives have already been discussed in the social construction of technology (Bijker, Hughes, and Pinch, 1987) and socio-materiality (Leonardi, Nardi, and Kallinikos, 2012). The former uses the example of an early bicycle to explain this social construction. The bicycle was initially considered ‘something only men could ride’ because of its design and the strength required to move it. Thus, bicycles have become symbols of masculinity. This indicates that the material artefact itself, created from technology, is socially significant (Bijker and Pinch, 1987; Takagi, 2022).

In the context of community revitalisation, this perspective may provide an opportunity to consider the ‘non-human’ as imparting some meaning to humans. Therefore, we believe that the analysis of the actors and networks they build should proceed with additional perspectives that add to previous studies. Furthermore, addressing these deficiencies would provide new analytical methods and models that can be applied to revitalise any region.

3. ANT and its Effectiveness

3-1 What is ANT?

As indicated earlier, the effectiveness of the Actor-Network Theory (hereinafter referred to as ANT) is clarified against the limitations of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (2-1) and Government and Municipal Policies (2-2) of SME research in regional revitalisation.

According to Komatsu (2007), ANT was developed in the late 1980s by Michel Callon and Bruno Latour in France and John Law in England. According to Callon (2001), the basic concept of ANT is that ‘Society is constructed out of the activities of humans and non-humans who remain equally active and have been translated, associated, and linked to one another in configurations that remain temporary and evolving’ (2001, p.64). ANT refers to ‘the idea that things, events, and knowledge in the world are networks established by various heterogeneous actors. This means that actor-network theory does not divide events and phenomena to be studied into social and natural aspects, but rather views both natural objects and humans as heterogeneous networks and attempts to decipher them through the dynamics of these networks’ (Takagi, 2022, p.43).

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

3-2 Effectiveness of ANT

This study focuses on a region in which various actors, both human and non-human, exist. Actors constantly change, gain legitimacy in the region, and construct networks. We used ANT to describe the diverse actors involved in the region, their changes, and the construction of the network.

We use the basic concept of ANT, ‘translation’, to describe the effectiveness of ANT in this study. This refers to how people with specific interests can bring into their fold people with differing interests (Morishita, 2022, p.74). Four ‘moments’ of translation are discerned in the attempts by these researchers to impose themselves and their definition of the situation on others: (a) problematisation: the researchers sought to become indispensable to other actors in the drama by defining the nature and issues of the latter and then suggesting that these would be resolved if the actors negotiated the ‘obligatory passage point’ of the researchers’ programme of investigation; (b) intersegment: a series of processes by which the researchers sought to lock the other actors into the roles that had been proposed for them in that programme; (c) enrolment: a set of strategies in which the researchers sought to define and interrelate the various roles they had allocated to others; (d) mobilisation: a set of methods applied by the researchers to ensure that the supposed spokesmen for various relevant collectivities were able to represent those collectivities and were not betrayed by the latter (Callon, 1984, p.196). In other words, it is a strategy for translating one’s interests and incorporating various actors by connecting each actor (Morishita, 2022, p.75) and linking actors existing in diverse areas to form a cross-disciplinary and heterogeneous network (Kurihara, 2022, p.134). Therefore, this ‘translation’ can be used to supplement the perspective of networks that influence actors that should be the focus of attention in the study.

What, however, are the actors? Many previous studies have considered only human beings as actors. For example, Winner (1980) shows, in Artefact and Politics studies, that going beyond this obvious fact and arguing that certain technologies in themselves have political properties seems, at first glance, completely mistaken. We all know that people have politics and nothing. In other words, he argued that politics in technological products are created by humans.

However, Callon’s (1984) analysis of translation networks in scallop aquaculture in the Bay of Saint Brieuc, France, mentions the presence of non-human actors. Scallop fishing and aquaculture in France have increased with the increasing popularity of scallops. Unfortunately, owing to a combination of factors, including the sudden rise in the popularity of scallops, environmental changes, and income sources, the scallop catch in the Bay of Saint Brieuc has plummeted. Therefore, researchers and fishermen have

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

formed a community and have begun to consider measures to increase scallop production. By analysing this process, the researchers identified scallops, fishermen, and researchers as the main actors. Each group had a unique identity and was involved in different objectives for increasing scallop production. When actors’ interests are aligned, they incorporate other actors into their network or ‘translate’ them. Actors are dynamic and mutually influencing, and the actors whose influence they induce include non-human actors such as scallop shells. Therefore, an analysis of the identities and interests of each actor and capturing their networks demonstrates the necessity of focusing on both non-human and human actors.

Also, the ANT is a series of attempts to visualise non-humans and recompose ‘society’ in a de- and anthropocentric manner, utilising both human and non-human entities (= non-humans) as subjects (Kurihara, 2022, p.134). Hitherto, non-human entities, as beings observed or represented by humans, have been considered objects of human action (Morishita, 2022, p.84). However, it is evident that non-human actors significantly impact knowledge production and the process of human behaviour (Morishita, 2022, p.80). The actions of non-humans create an impetus, role, or meaning for humans to act. Thus, ANT emphasises the role of non-human entities as actors (Morishita, 2022, p.84). In other words, as ‘society’ is a set of heterogeneous networks (Kurihara, 2022, p.137) comprising humans and non-humans, the ANT is effective in capturing the actors that constitute society.

4. Case Study in Katori City, Japan

This section applies ANT to examine the steps toward regional revitalisation in the Sawara area of Katori City, Chiba Prefecture (hereafter Sawara), which is a rural area in Japan. The central part of Sawara has traditional Japanese landscapes. To preserve this trascape, Sawara was designated as the first ‘Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings’ in the Kanto region¹. Various stores and lodging facilities line the Ono River, which runs through the centre of the town and is now a tourist attraction. Taking advantage of this townscape, the government, private companies, and local financial institutions are making efforts to promote tourism and develop local economies. We analyse why a merchant town is attempting to re-establish itself as a tourist destination from the perspective of ANT.

4-1 Archival Research

¹ The region includes the capital, Tokyo, and is the political and economic centre of Japan.

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

Sawara is located in the riverside district of the lower reaches of the Tone River² in northeastern Chiba Prefecture, Japan. The centre of Sawara has a historical townscape with clusters of townhouses and storehouses. Sawara was a major commercial city that prospered from the Edo period (1603-1868) to the Early Showa period (1926-1989) (Kobori, 1999). In the mid-Edo period, the city flourished as a transit point for rice, sake, mirin (a type of sake with low alcohol and high sugar content), and other brewed products to Edo (present-day Tokyo), taking advantage of transportation by the Tone River. Later, when the Narita Railway Company opened a line between Narita and Sawara in 1898, the area prospered because of the transportation of cargo by railroad (Kobori, 1999). However, in 1936, with the extension of the Narita Line to the Matsukishi area of Choshi³ in 1933, with the opening of the Suigo Bridge (Connecting Katori City, Chiba Prefecture and Inashiki City, Ibaraki Prefecture, located across the Tone River), the transportation system changed drastically, and the boat transportation industry gradually declined (Kobori, 1999). Thus, Sawara, which had flourished as a commercial centre, gradually lost its glory. However, little change occurred in the townscape; traditional buildings such as Japanese-style townhouses and Western-style architecture remained. From the Mid-Showa period onwards, rapid economic growth, modernisation, and overdevelopment began to affect buildings. During the 1970s, the loss of the historical landscape was recognised as a national issue.

Against this backdrop, the movement began to preserve traditional architecture. In 1974, the government surveyed to determine the measures required to preserve groups of traditional buildings. In 1982, the Foundation for the Protection of Tourist Resources conducted a townscape survey⁴. However, these surveys did not lead to a preservation movement, owing to a lack of knowledge about preservation and residents' interest in modernisation. Later, in 1988, while soliciting ideas on how to use the 'Hometown Creation' fund, efforts to preserve the townscape began to be discussed. Additionally, 'the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and JC took the lead, and tourism and other projects throughout Sawara became more active' (Okazaki et al., 2001, p.315). According to Okazaki et al., the modernisation of Sawara was not progressing as expected, and the 'townscape resources began to be re-evaluated amid the need to establish a town identity' (2001, pp.315–31).

Gradually, the attitudes toward the preservation of the townscape changed, and in

² The main waterway for transporting goods to Edo during the Edo period.

³ Located in the easternmost part of Chiba Prefecture. It is downstream of the Tone River, which flows into the Pacific Ocean.

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

1991, the ‘Society to Think about the Townscape of Sawara (now the Society to Think about the Townscape of Ono River and Sawara)’ was formed. It collaborated with the local government to hold explanatory meetings with residents and conduct educational activities for the community. Furthermore, considering Sawara as a valuable tourist resource, in 1994, the Society devised the ‘Sawara City Tourism Promotion Vision’ to promote unique and attractive tourism based on regional characteristics.

4-2 Interview Research and Method

At this point, we notice the decline in Sawara, which was once a flourishing commercial town, the creation of value in its historical buildings, and its transition to a tourist destination. Various actors are involved in Sawara’s transformation into a tourist destination, including the aforementioned ‘Association for the Townscape of Ono River and Sawara’, ‘Okamisan-kai’ that is a group of women residents who run stores in Sawara or have married into Sawara, — a local non-profit organisation, the government, private companies, and local financial institutions. Each actor pursues their interests in the context of ‘preserving the townscape = making it a tourist attraction = revitalising the community’. Therefore, it is necessary to promote the preservation of townscapes. The key was to persuade residents, the occupants of many traditional buildings in Sawara, whose support was necessary for the preservation of the townscape. For them, it was more important to live comfortably than preserve the old townscape and make Sawara a tourist destination. Therefore, it was natural for them to renovate their old buildings, mainly to avoid damage from river flooding. Here, conflict arose between the groups that wanted to preserve the townscape and the residents.

Therefore, we conducted the following interviews to reveal how these groups persuaded residents and which actors were employed in their persuasion. The interview was conducted on 15 February 2024 with parties involved in the vacant house issue. The 1-hour 53-minute interview involved two subjects: Ms A of the Sawara Credit Union and his father, Mr B, who was working in the city’s urban development department at the time. In particular, this study needs to describe in detail the actors’ intentions and actions, as well as the surrounding actors who were changed by these actions, so we will focus on the interview with Mr B to explain.

In studies using ANT, ethnomethodology, in which people’s actions and statements are described in detail, has mainly been employed. However, we used an interview-style method to describe Mr B’s narrative. This is due to the fact that Mr B has been involved with the residents of Sawara in various fields, and by interviewing him, it is possible to describe not only his actions and intentions but also those of the other actors with whom

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

he has been involved. He worked for a long time in city hall and managed the safety of the town's buildings as part of the urban development department. As a City Hall employee, he communicated daily with residents living in houses in need of repair, residents involved in repairing problematic roads and lights and even initiating problems with vacant houses as part of his building maintenance work. In this regard, Mr B was selected for this study because he has sufficient contacts with the residents and can be said to be knowledgeable about the transition of the townscape and the actors other than Mr B himself. Semi-structured interviews were conducted. In the semi-structured interview method, broad questions are decided in advance, and further detailed questions are asked based on respondents' answers (Frick, 2011). The questions shared with Mr B in advance were as follows:

- a) What was the status of the town of Sawara, and what was the vacant house problem at that time?*
- b) What kind of efforts were being made by the Urban Development Division to address the problem of vacant houses in Sawara?*
- c) What kind of residents, companies, organisations, etc., were involved in these efforts?*
- d) Were there any barriers to solving the vacant house problem?*
- e) How did you deal with the conflicting parties?*

After the interview on 18 February 2024, we emailed the following questions to conduct additional research.

- f) We know that Mr B has tried to persuade residents to preserve the landscape of their buildings in order to preserve the townscape. Did your method of persuasion change over time?*
- g) If your methods of persuasion changed over time, were there people or things that you relied on or took sides with at each step?*

The next section will derive the results of these studies.

4-3 Residents Opposed to Townscape Preservation

In April 1993, Mr B joined the City Building Division (now the Urban Development Division). He worked on the repair and maintenance of buildings in Sawara and responded to residents' concerns. Additionally, he was involved in the repair of bridges and the replacement of utility poles with underground wiring to create a townscape in Sawara. In 1996, Sawara was selected as an Important Preservation District

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

for Groups of Traditional Buildings, which prompted Mr B to focus on preserving the townscape of Sawara, that is, to protect its traditional buildings. As mentioned previously, the unchanged appearance of traditional buildings in Sawara since the Edo period has transformed them into tourist attractions. However, many of these buildings were used as residences, and it was unlikely that residents would compromise their quality of life by retaining their traditional style. Thus, a conflict arose between Mr B, who intended to preserve traditional architecture as a tourist attraction, and the residents, who intended to renovate buildings for a more comfortable lifestyle.

4-4 Mr B’s Changing Representation

The government and the ‘Association for the Townscape of Ono River and Sawara’ intended to preserve the townscape. However, only a few residents opposed it. According to Mr B, there is a hierarchical structure within the local Sawara community. Therefore, residents in a significant position among the residents and belonging to the community did not listen to people like Mr B, who was not part of that community. Nonetheless, Mr B worked diligently to preserve the townscape. When he visited residents’ homes to talk to them, he was met with comments such as, ‘I don’t like the people at city hall’ or ‘I followed the instructions of the government during World War II, and it hurt me’. These experiences convinced Mr B that it was necessary to win the trust of the residents, and he began to appeal to them as residents. Specifically, he walked the streets of Sawara with his children on his days off, showing residents who typically visited him.

Furthermore, he strolled around the town of Sawara in plain clothes after working hours and visited restaurants and pubs in the district as a local citizen. This induced other residents to remark, ‘You were walking around drink the other day’ or ‘Is your house around here’? To persuade people, it is necessary to have a conversation; for that, it is necessary to have a trust-based relationship. Therefore, Mr B attempted to establish a connection with the people rather than persuade them to preserve the townscape. He changed his approach to building a relationship of trust with the residents to make them feel inclined toward repair and the need for townscape preservation.

4-5 ‘Festival’ as an Actor

Additionally, Mr B raised the representation of a ‘festival’ with the residents to determine the direction of house preservation, forging a further connection with the residents. The Sawara Grand Festival has existed since ancient times. Each district pulls a float along the Ono River that runs through the centre of the town, and people dance as the float moves. When pulling floats, people must pass through narrow passages and turn

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

at almost 90-degree corners. Traditional buildings are designed to allow floats to pass through, and floats are designed according to the design of the buildings facing the passageways.

Thus, the festival constitutes a crucial part of the Sawara culture. Because the festival is held only once a year, preparation is done in unison by district residents. The people of the district communicate with each other by practising how to pull the floats and dancing. The festival is a game of physical strength, and men and women must do their utmost to make it a success. According to Mr B, the sense of accomplishment at the end of the festival, created by everyone in the district as one, was exceptional. For the people of Sawara, ‘festivals’ are not just a matter of personal enjoyment but something that forms the community and is cherished as a culture to be passed on. Mr B appealed to the residents that if the traditional buildings in Sawara were remodelled, the floats would not pass through, implying the definitive end of the festival. Consequently, the residents agreed not to make significant changes to the buildings but to maintain the traditional structure. Thus, the ‘festival’ became more than just an event; it influenced the residents and became a source of decision-making.

5. Discussion

The circumstances in Sawara have been constantly changing: the decline of a once-prosperous town, the preservation of the townscape in response to national policies and movements, and a movement to make the town a tourist destination based on the townscape. Currently, the town’s focus has shifted from ‘town preservation’ to tourist attractions. However, because many traditional buildings in Sawara were residents’ houses, a conflict arose between the city administration and civic groups on one side and the residents on the other. Mr B, a city official, visited each resident to persuade him to cooperate with the town preservation plan. The method of persuasion applied by Mr B changed constantly depending on the influencing actor—from ‘preservation of the townscape’ to ‘building a relationship of trust with the residents’ to ‘passing on the festival culture’.

This is consistent with the ANT network proposed by Callon (1984). For example, in Callon’s analytical study of ANT with scallops, researchers ‘translated’ scallops and fishermen into a network with the common goal of addressing the challenge of scallop decline. Researchers ‘translated’ scallops’ intentions on behalf of scallops that do not speak. Additionally, they ‘translated’ because of the alignment of interests between the fishermen, who lacked expertise, and the researchers, whose goal was knowledge acquisition. In other words, the researchers incorporated the scallops and fishermen via

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

‘translation’. This ‘translation’ and networking is evident in this case as well: to fulfil the goal of ‘preserving the townscape’, Mr B developed a ‘translation network’ with the representation of ‘building trust with the residents’. Later, he incorporated a non-human actor, ‘festivals’, with a new representation of ‘inheriting festival culture’ to promote the sentiment of ‘preserving the townscape’ and ‘making it a tourist destination’ by aligning the city administration’s interests with those of the residents. Evidently, a process of ‘translation’ exists in the context of the development of local networks for the revitalisation of a community. Furthermore, the analysis of this case study shows that the actors incorporated into the network are not necessarily human; there are non-human actors as well, such as ‘festivals’ that significantly impact the development of the network.

Studying regional revitalisation from the ANT perspective can provide a new perspective that differs from that of previous studies. Many previous studies were linear, from objective setting to goal setting. For example, Yin (2019), who discusses regional revitalisation from the perspective of innovation, discusses China’s rural revitalisation strategy and global sustainable development goals (SDGs) and how to achieve them. However, various actors exist in a region, each with a different objective. These actors are connected in various ways, and ‘regional revitalisation’ occurs. This complex activity can be clarified by analysing it from the perspective of the ANT. In recent years, there has been a discussion of ‘institutional logic’, in which phenomena are viewed from multiple perspectives. The ANT perspective can be said to be the origin of this discussion. This perspective is new and has not been used in previous studies on regional revitalisation. Therefore, the ANT perspective, which captures diverse actors and describes ‘regional revitalisation’ from the perspective of building a network through ‘translation’, is important.

6. Conclusion

Previous studies (Ximing Yin, 2019; Douglas, 2005; Chigbu, 2012) on regional revitalisation have not discussed the networks established by actors or those surrounding them. Additionally, the actors influencing their surroundings regarding regional transformations remain vague. The application of ANT to examine actors’ translation networks and regional transitions facilitated a nuanced analysis and offered a novel perspective in the study of regional revitalisation.

However, this survey only describes one actor. There are multiple actors in a region, and each actor changes as it builds or restructures its network. Therefore, in future research, we would like to survey actors other than Mr B and eventually analyse the sequence of changes from the preservation of the townscape of Sawara to its

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

transformation into a tourist destination from the viewpoints of various actors using ANT.

References

- Amin, A. (1998). An Institutional Perspective on Regional Economic Development. *Economy*, 1, 1-22.
- Bijker, W., Hughes, T. P. and Pinch, T. (Eds.) (1987). The social construction of technological systems. *Cambridge, MA: MIT Press*.
- Callon, M. (1984). Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of St Brieuc Bay. *The Sociological Review*, 32(1), 196-233.
- Callon, M. (2001). Actor Network Theory. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 62-66.
- Chigbu, U. E. (2012). Village renewal as an instrument of rural development: evidence from Weyarn, Germany. *Community Development*, 43(2), 209-224.
- Douglas, D. J. A. (2005). The restructuring of local government in rural regions: A rural development perspective. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 21(2), 231-246.
- Flick, U. (2011). Planning Social Research: Steps on the Research Process. *Introducing Research Methodology: A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project*. United States of America: SAGE Publications Ltd, 77.
- Hayashi, S., Tanabe, K. (2010). Chiiki Chushou Kigyō no Inoveshon Sōshutsu wo Sokushin Suru Sendai Hokkaidō no Kōan. [Regional functions of the Sendai Hokkaidō Model for promoting SMEs innovation]. *Japan Society for Intellectual Production*, 7(1), 31-41.
- Ito, S., Matsuno, N. (2023). NPO shudō no Kurossusekuta Korabōreshon niokeru Akuta no Kashika to Hikyouryokutekina Akuta no Makikomi: Akutanetowaku Riron niokeru Honyakugainen wo Motiite [Visualizing Actors and Involving Uncooperative Actors in NPO-led Cross-Sector Collaboration: Using the Translation Concept in Actor-Network Theory]. *Soshiki Kagaku*, 57(2), 34-49.
- Kawakita, Y. (2016). Chihō Sousei niokeru Jishitai no Genjō yo Seisaku Jisshi [What is a situation of the local government in a regional revitalisation and the policy implementation of a regional revitalisation?]. *Doshisha Seisaku Kagaku Kenkyū*, Special Number, 27-43.
- Kishi, M. (2018). Chihō Sousei no Naihatuteki Hatten Apurōshi. [An Endogenous Development Approach for Regional Revitalisation]. *Shōgaku Ronshū*, 59(5-6), 193-222.

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

- Kobori, T. (1999). Sawara niokeru Rekishiteki Machinami no Keisei to Hozon no Genjyou. [Current status of formation and preservation of historical townscape in Sawara]. *The Historical Geography*, 42(4), 21-34.
- Komatsu, H. (2007). Akuta Netowaku Riron to Jissen Komyunithi Riron no Saikou. [Reconsideration of the Theory of Actor-Network and Theory of Community of Practice]. *Kobe College Studies*, 54(2), 153-164.
- Kurihara, W. (2022). “Seiji” wo Datsu Ningen Chushinteki ni Kuminaosu Tame no Shikouhou. [A way of thinking to reconfigure “politics” in a de-anthropocentric way]. *Acuta Netowaku Ron Nyumon “Mono” de Afureru Sekai no Kijyutu Hou. [Introduction to Actor-Network Theory: How to Describe a World Full of “Things”]*. Japan: Nakanishiya Shuppan, 133-149.
- Leonardi, P.M., Nardi, B.A. and Kallinikos, J. (eds.) (2012). Materiality and Organising: Social Interaction in a Technological World. *Oxford University Press*.
- Long, H., Wu, X., Wang, W. and Dong, G. (2008). Analysis of Urban-Rural Land-Use Change during 1995-2006 and Its Policy Dimensional Driving Forces in Chongqing, China. *Sensors*, 8(2), 681-699.
- Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. (2019). Chiiki Chihou no Genjyou to Kadai. [Current regional and local conditions and issues]. *Fujitsu Research Institution*. https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/000629037.pdf
- Mitsubishi, H., Matsubara, H. and Yokura, Y. (2009). Nihon ni okeru Chiiki Inoveshon Shisutemu no Genjyou to Kadai. [Study on issues of regional innovation system in Japan]. *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology*, Discussion Paper, 52, 1-162.
- Morgan, K. (1997). The Learning Region: Institutions, Innovation and Regional Renewal. *Regional Studies*, 31(5), 491-503.
- Morishita, S. (2022). Shiryō Bunseki to Sankō Kansatsu ni Motodoku Kagaku Kan Kagakusha Kan no Kōshin. [Updating views of science and scientists based on historical analysis and reference observations]. *Acuta Netowaku Ron Nyumon “Mono” de Afureru Sekai no Kijyutu Hou. [Introduction to Actor-Network Theory: How to Describe a World Full of “Things”]*. Japan.: Nakanishiya Shuppan, 67-83.
- Okazaki, A., Izawa, S., Takamizawa, K., and Watanabe, K. (2001). Sawara niokeru Rekishiteki Machinami Hozon no Purosesu to Jyumin Ishiki [The Proses of Historic Preservation and Residents’ Opinions in Sawara]. *Architectural Institute of Japan*, 14, 315-318.
- Sendo, A. (2018). Sosharu Enta Puraisu ni yoru Sosharu Inoveshon no Soshutsu to “Komyunithi Kapitaru”: Chihou Sousei no Jirei wo Chushin to shite. [Creation of

The Change of Representation from ‘Town Preservation’ to ‘Tourist Attraction’ in Japanese Tourist Attractions: An Analysis Using Actor-Network Theory

- Social Innovation by Social Enterprise and “Community Capital”: Focusing on a Case of Regional Revitalisation]. *Takushoku Daigaku Keiei Keiri Kenkyu*, 111, 317-336.
- Skuras, D., Meccheri, N., Moreira Manuel Belo., Rosell, J. and Stathopoulou, S. (2005). Entrepreneurial human capital accumulation and the growth of rural businesses: a four-country survey in mountainous and lagging areas of the European Union. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 21(1), 67-79.
- Takagi, T. (2022). *Hyousho to shiten no Soshiki. [Organisations as Representation]*. Doctoral Dissertation of Meiji University.
- Terluin, I. J. (2003). Differences in economic development in rural regions of advanced countries: an overview and critical analysis of theories. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 19(3), 327-344.
- Tori, S. (2011). Kigyoka Seishin to Chushou Kigyou Netowaku niyoru Inoveshon Soushutu no Kanousei. [Entrepreneurship and SME Network: The possibility of Innovation creation by SME Network]. *ITE Technical Report*, 35(18), 5-8.
- Watanabe, T. (2020). Igrisu ni okeru Shigaichi Saisei Seisaku to Koumin Renkei no Torikumi: 2-Toishi deno TCM kara BID heno Tenkai Jirei wo Chushin ni. [Urban Revitalis].
- Policy and Public Private Partnerships in the UK: From TCM to BID in Winchester and Nottingham]. *Commercial review of Senshu University*, 111, 109-140.
- Winner, L. (1980). Do Artifacts Have Politics. *Daedalus*, 109(1), 121-136.
- Yamagata, H. (2022). “Bunkyokuka” Suru Chiiki no Seichou Kiban to Keiro: Washinton Shu Shiatoru to Mishigan Shu Detoroito no Hikakukkenkyu. [Growth Foundations and Pathways in “Polarising” Regions: A Comparative Study of Seattle, Washington and Detroit, Michigan]. *Rikkyo Economic Review*, 75(3), 47-73.
- Yin, X., Chen, J. and Li, J. (2019), Rural innovation system: Revitalise the countryside for a sustainable development. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 93, 471–478.
- Zheng, L. and Warner, M. (2010). Business Incentive Use Among U.S. Local Governments: A Story of Accountability and Policy Learning. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 24(4), 325 –336.