

Post-disaster resilience of peripheral areas: The importance of amenities and social capital

Hans Westlund, KTH
Kakuya Matsushima, Kyoto University

For obvious reasons, disaster research's main focus is on forecasting and preventing disasters. However, when the most necessary functions in a disaster-stricken area are restored, are we then back in "business as usual"? The answer is of course no. An external shock like a disaster often means substantial material and economic losses, as well as psychological stress for entrepreneurs and households. For many, the question "should I stay or should I go?" arises. Which factors influence such decisions?

This presentation is based on the assumption that there is a fundamental difference between city-regions' and rural areas' resilience capacity after a disaster. City-regions have such a concentration of human and material resources that they, even after a disaster, have the ability to survive and "bounce back" (Borsekova & Nijkamp 2019, World Disaster Report 2010). Rural areas lack this concentration of resources, which means that their resilience capacity is much lower.

Can rural areas strengthen their resilience capacity? In this presentation we focus on two interrelated and partly overlapping factors that have received little attention in earlier research: amenities and local social capital. Starting from a taxonomy of various types of amenities and natural resources, we discuss how they separately or in combinations might strengthen the attractiveness of a rural area for a) residents and visitors, and b) from a producer and consumer perspective, respectively.