

A Japanese Case of Human Resources Policy for Rural Development*

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Abstract

This study shows how a policy of local government got started and concluded in a case of Oita Prefecture. The policy discussed here concerns OVOP (one village one product) movement. I divided the phases of OVOP movement into OVOP activity, OVOP campaign and OVOP policy. In my model, OVOP movement begins with OVOP activity, develops through OVOP campaign, produces OVOP policy, and ends with conclusion of OVOP policy. OVOP activities were originally meant to vitalize the regional economy in Oita. As their young leaders tried to promote the activities in other areas in Oita, OVOP activities were innovated into the OVOP campaign. The Oita government, under then governor Hiramatsu, started to adopt OVOP as its policy, first without a budget, and then with a budget for Human Resources Development. When the new governor, Mr. Hirose, took office in 2003, the OVOP policy was terminated. However, its innovation has continued overseas and the new governor has adopted a part of the human resources development service in his new policy.

Keywords: OVOP movement, OVOP activity, OVOP campaign, OVOP policy, Human Resources Development

* This paper is slated to appear as the result of Case Study on the internet database in Ritsumeikan University.

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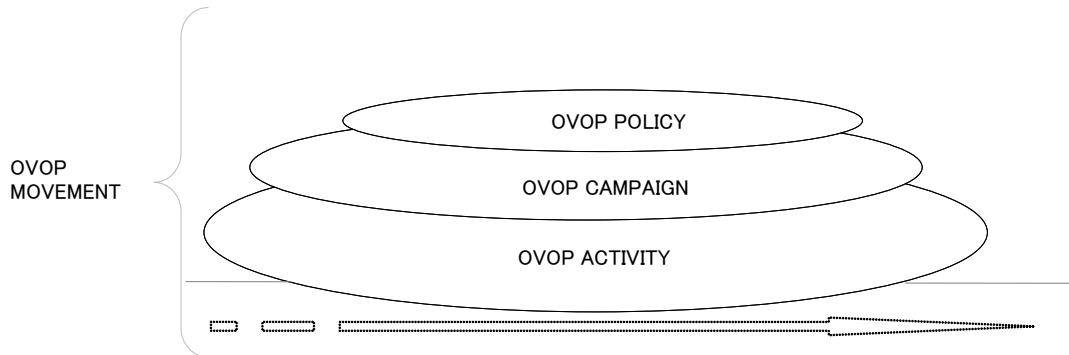
Introduction

The purpose of this study is to show how a policy was started and concluded in the case of Oita, Japan, focusing on the aspect of human resources development of OVOP (one village one product) movement. Morihiko Hiramatsu(1990;2006) explained in his book that the OVOP movement had already existed in Oita Prefecture when he started the policy. Also, according to "One Village One Product Movement: A Record of 20 Years," which gave a comprehensive summary of the movement, NPC (New Plum and Chestnut) movements of Oyama-cho and Yuhuin aiming at the economic independence of these towns were the prehistory of the OVOP movement.¹ Moreover, in a previous study of OVOP, based on an analysis of articles of Oita Godo Newspaper, Yamagami (2007) pointed out that regional development movement and human resources had already existed in Oyama-cho, which became the starting point of the OVOP movement.

However, it is not clear how the OVOP movement led by Oyama-cho became a policy of Oita Prefecture. In this paper, I will show how the policy was started and concluded, focusing on human resources development, which had an especially strong connection with the policy of Oita Prefecture. I divided the phases of OVOP movement into OVOP activity, OVOP campaign and OVOP policy. As shown in Figure 1, OVOP activity is the primitive phase of OVOP movement in the region. OVOP campaign is the development of OVOP activity led by people other than the local government, intending the extension of OVOP: for example, a young leader's appeal to the local government in the region. OVOP policy is a policy employed by the local government for the promotion of OVOP. This OVOP policy was first started as a policy without a budget but with merely a declaration by the government, and then, in due course, it developed into a policy with budgetary dispositions.

¹ Oita Prefecture OVOP 21 Promotion Council, *One village one product movement: A Record of 20 Years*, 2001.

Figure 1 OVOP Movement



In this paper, I will show how the OVOP policy was started and concluded in the case of Oita Prefecture, by dividing OVOP movement into the three phases. The core of the OVOP policy with budget in Oita was a human resources project. First, I will clarify the change in the overall character of OVOP movement, using the description of OVOP by mass media. It shows how the main characteristic of OVOP has changed from regional economic activities through human resources development activities to international activities. Next, I will show how the OVOP activity shifted to the OVOP campaign and how the OVOP campaign as implemented in Oyama-cho became a policy of Oita Prefecture. Finally, I will show how the OVOP policy was changed and concluded

with the end of the Hiramatsu administration.

1. Changes of Characters in OVOP Movement

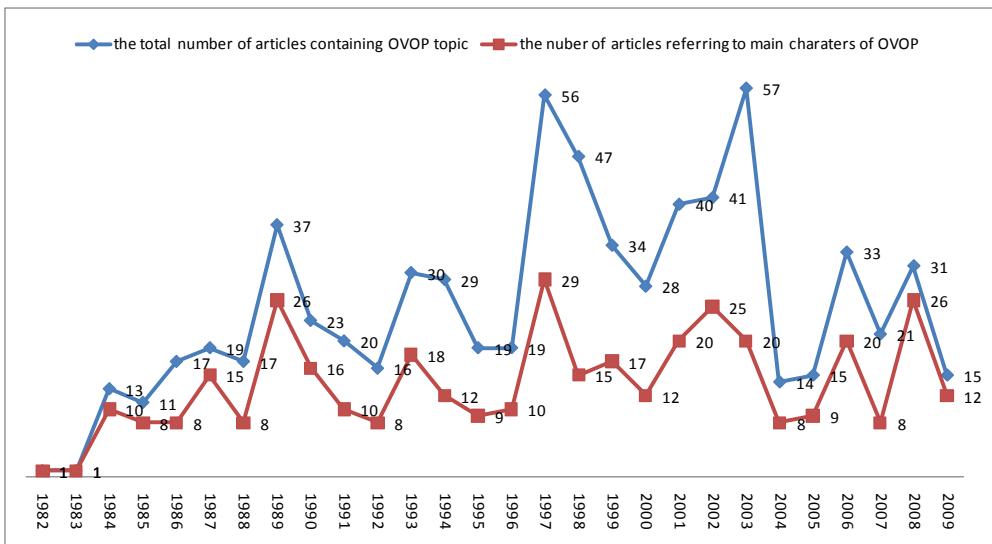
The aspects of OVOP to which the media paid attention have changed with the passage of time. Figure 2 shows the chronological change of the number of articles whose key words were OVOP, found through KIKUZO II (A retrieval service offered by Asahi Newspaper).²

² Data Coding

- Analysis object : 704 Asahi Newspaper articles which were retrieved by the keyword "OVOP", using KIKUZO II(Asahi Newspaper Retrieval Service)
- Analysis term : from January 1st 1979 to July 20th 2009 The number of articles referring to OVOP and the number of articles of which main content was OVOP were counted.

Figure 2 also shows the number of articles whose main content was OVOP.³ The chronological change from 1982 seen here, shows that the media has continuously paid attention to the promotion of OVOP policy by Oita Prefecture.

Figure 2 Number of Articles about OVOP



³ This graph was produced by the author. OVOP activities existed prior to January 1st, 1979, but became known nationally after a November 1979 declaration on OVOP by Governor Hiramatsu.

Oita Prefecture OVOP 21 Promotion Council, *One village one product movement: A Record of 20 Years*, 2001.

How has the OVOP movement changed with the changing times? Figure 3 shows the change in the character of the OVOP movement as a result of analysis on the central ideas of OVOP-related articles in each decade.⁴ The main topics of

⁴ Data came from morning and evening editions of Asahi newspaper, based on the keyword OVOP. Newspaper articles were classified into 25 categories based on the ideas related to OVOP movement.

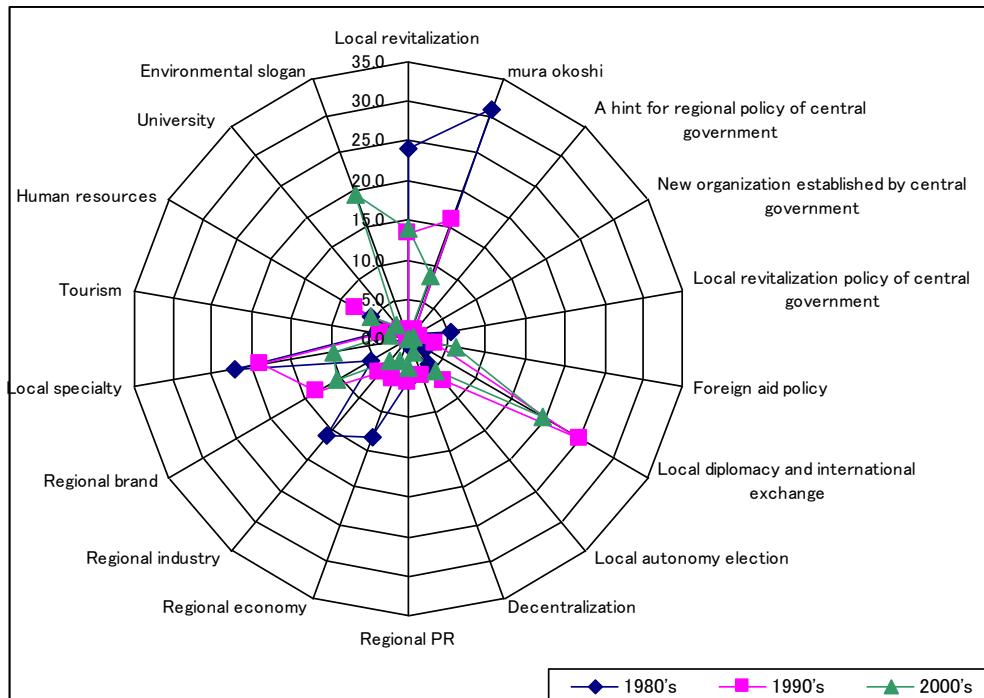
Each code represents an idea related to OVOP.

Check List of the Contents of OVOP movement for Character

Category	Definition of OVOP
Main part of the article	OVOP is the central topic of the article.
Local revitalization	OVOP is described in connection with the local revitalization.
Mura ekoushi	Muraekoushi is described in connection with the local revitalization.
Model of local revitalization	OVOP is described as a model of the local revitalization.
Innovation	The spread of OVOP into other regions is described.
A hint for regional policy of central government	OVOP is described as a hint for central government's regional policy.
New organization established by central government	The central government's establishment of a new organization for the local revitalization is influenced by OVOP.
Local revitalization policy of central government	A central government's policy for the local revitalization is influenced by OVOP.
Foreign aid policy	OVOP is described in reference to the foreign aid (ODA, JICA, etc.).
Local diplomacy and international exchange	OVOP is described as a means of local diplomacy.
Local autonomy election	OVOP is described as an influence on a local autonomy election.
Decentralization	OVOP is described as an influence on decentralization.
Regional PR	OVOP is described as a regional PR.
Regional economy	OVOP is described as an influence on the regional economy.
Regional industry	OVOP is described as a means to promote industry in the region.
Regional brand	OVOP is related to a regional brand.
Local specialty	OVOP is related to a local specialty.
Tourism	OVOP is related to the tourism industry in the region.
Human resources	OVOP is related to the personnel training in the region.
University	OVOP is related to an educational institution associated with a university.
Environmental slogan	OVOP is described as a slogan of the policy for environmental problems.
Budget	The budget of OVOP is described.
Plan	A plan of OVOP is described.
New value	OVOP is described as a means to plant a new value in the area.
Transformation of regional condition	OVOP is described in relation to the local government's improvement of the condition of the area.

OVOP-related articles in the 1980's were improvement of regional economy through local revitalization, local redevelopment movement, and production of regional specialties. In the 1990's the main topic changed to local diplomacy (international exchange), regional PR, regional brand, and human resources. In the 2000s media's main angles on OVOP became foreign aid programs, relations with universities, and environmental problems. That is to say, the OVOP movement changed from activities directed at the regional economy to activities for the development of human resources, and then to various kinds of new activities.

Figure 3 Changes in the character of OVOP.



Note: This graph was produced by the author. The following calculating formulae were used.

The center of OVOP ideals in each period = Average of each value in each period * 100

2. The development of OVOP activity into OVOP campaign and the beginning of OVOP policy

2.1 The beginning of OVOP campaign in the case of Oyama-cho

This section shows how young leaders of Oyama-cho who were trying to activate their region developed

their activities into a campaign. As a result of this movement, the OVOP activity developed into the OVOP campaign.

Yawata Harumi, then head of the Oyama Agriculture Cooperative, began a campaign called NPC movement for the regional development of Oyama-cho. NPC movement's catch phrase was

"let's plant plums and chestnuts and go to Hawaii." The NPC movement has always aimed at regional development. The first NPC (New Plum and Chestnut) movement started in 1961, developed into the second NPC(Neo Personality Combination) movement and the third NPC (New Paradise Community) movement. These movements of Oyama-cho were advanced not by the government, but by one charismatic person.

Despite not having any appointment, in March 1977, Mr. Kinji Yawata (Harumi's son) led a group of young leaders and visited then Lieutenant Governor Hiramatsu. They were convinced that Lieutenant Governor Hiramatsu would become the next governor, and they thought that they would not have a chance to speak to Hiramatsu easily when he became a governor.⁵ Later Hiramatsu said that the meeting with Kinji Yawata was the starting point for learning about OVOP activity for regional development in Oita Prefecture and think about the future possibilities of developing OVOP as a

prefectural policy.⁶ With this as a turning point, the OVOP activity was advanced and developed to become OVOP campaign.

2.2 Start of OVOP Policy in Oita Prefecture

A policy is defined by Kamo and others (1998) as ideas, courses, and plans of action intended to gain, maintain, and increase a certain value by individuals or groups. Dye (1984) defines it as the government's choice for a certain action. According to Anderson (1983) a policy is a goal-oriented action line. Based on these definitions, policies can be divided into two groups. One is a policy merely pronounced in words but without a budget. The other is a policy with a budget. The OVOP policy had two starting points. First, the local government started the policy without providing a budget, and then it started providing the policy with a budget. Both of these points can be seen as the start of OVOP policy.

As mentioned earlier, former Governor Hiramatsu learned about OVOP activities for regional development and

⁵ From an interview with Mr.Fujiwara of Oyama Agricultural Cooperative on February 2, 2010.

⁶ From an interview with former Governor Morihiko Hiramatsu on February 1, 2010.

met younger leaders who were ready to meet the challenge for the new wave of regional development in Oita. The younger leaders appealed to him that they had to develop their activities into other areas beyond the traditional framework. Former Governor Hiramatsu felt it necessary to give a name to the existing activity, so he named it “One Village One Product”.⁷

In the year he became governor, Hiramatsu declared “One Village One Product” to be a prefectural policy in the Liaison Meeting with Town Mayors on November 26th, 1979 and in the Liaison Meeting with City Mayors on December 4th, 1979. This was the start of OVOP policy because here the local government declared its will to advance OVOP campaign proactively. Governor Hiramatsu started the OVOP policy by this declaration. The implementation of OVOP policy began on October 17th, 1980 when “One Village One Product Pavilion” was erected at the 5th Agricultural Festival in Oita Prefecture.⁸

OVOP policy was thus commenced. However, at that time the OVOP policy did not have a budget. Governor Hiramatsu did not want to put a budget for this policy, so the head of Agricultural Department made a proposal to promote the OVOP policy in the existing agricultural festival. Governor Hiramatsu asked all towns and cities to set up a booth for each region to exhibit one agricultural product. Hiramatsu added that if a region did not have anything to exhibit, the head of the town had to stand in the booth.⁹ This was the time when the Prefecture began to promote OVOP campaign and changed it into OVOP policy.

Next, the OVOP policy with a budget started. One of the first movements was the Human Resources Development activity as a project of OVOP policy. Governor Hiramatsu was convinced that each region had charismatic and talented individuals. He thought it was necessary to learn from regional leaders about the ideas and mind-set for regional development and felt the necessity of the service for Human

⁷ From an interview with former Governor Morihiko Hiramatsu on February 1, 2010.

⁸ Oita Prefecture OVOP 21 Promotion Council et al., 2001

⁹ From an interview with former Governor Morihiko Hiramatsu on February 1, 2010.

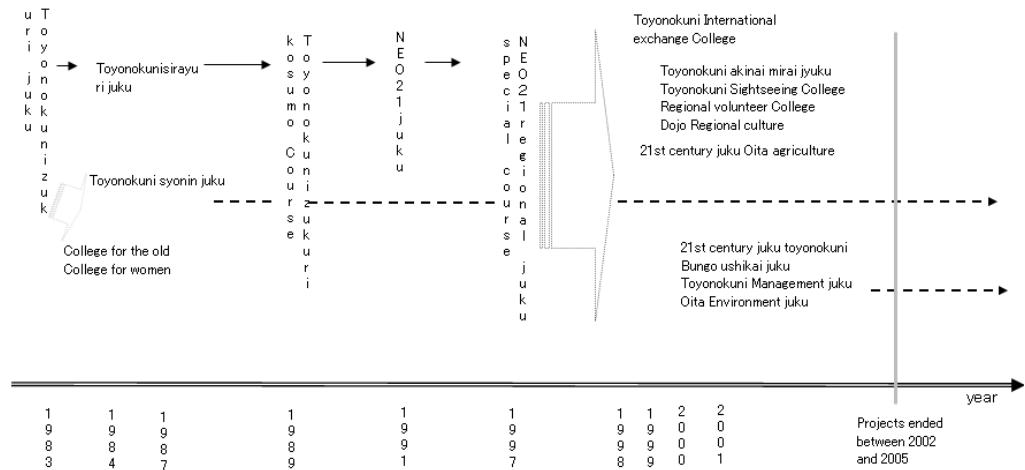
Resources Development. Public Relations and Hearings Department promoted the project. The Prefecture established the *Juku* for training human resource and budgeted the rent for facilities to be used and fees for lecturers.¹⁰

Figure 4 summarizes the development of the project for Human Resources Development of Oita Prefecture.

The first project was *Toyonokunizukuri-juku* which started in 1983. The Prefecture gradually changed and specialized the contents and curriculum of the *Juku*. Moreover, the projects in *Toyonokunizukuri-juku* were diversely extended, aiming at the development of human resources in a wider range, such as international exchange, tourism, commerce, management, volunteer works, environment, agriculture, and stock raising. However, most of these projects have been stopped since governor Hiramatsu's last term ended.

¹⁰ From an interview with former Governor Morihiro Hiramatsu on February 1, 2010.

Figure 4 Project of OVOP policy in Oita, which were related to Human Resources Development



Note: This figure was produced by the author. Oita Prefecture, One village one product movement: a record of 20 years, 2001. Morihiko Hiramatsu, Local leaders in the 21st century, 2005, pp.118—129

URL:<http://www3.coara.or.jp/~toyojuku/about/katudou.html> (retrieved on December 22, 2009.)

Table 1 summarizes how the budget for projects related to human resources development was distributed. Soon after Hiramatsu became the governor in 1979, he promoted the OVOP policy. Although there was a budget for Human Resource Development in 1980, it is not certain whether the budget was related to the OVOP policy. In 1981, a budget was officially formed for the promotion of OVOP campaign for the first time, but the budget

was actually compensated by various specific revenues. Hiramatsu once said that the enterprises that made profit by OVOP provided money to further promote the OVOP policy, and therefore, according to Hiramatsu, OVOP policy did not require any special disbursement of tax money.¹¹ However, there is evidence to show that the

¹¹ From an interview with former Governor Morihiko Hiramatsu on February 1, 2010.

OVOP policy had a budget. Policy expenses from 1991 to 1995 include a budget for the opening and promotion of *Toyonokunizukuri-juku*, which aimed at Human Resources Development in relation

to OVOP policy. It is clear that the OVOP policy with a budget was started when the promotion of the projects for Human Resources Development began.

Human Resources Development in relation

Table 1 Changes in the budget for the project of Human Resources Development

Year	Department	The name of project	Budget (a monetary unit: thousand Yen)
1980	Regional Promotion	Community building leader training service	2,200
1981	Regional Promotion	one village one product service	15,840 (income)
1991	Public Relations and Hearings department	Toyonokunizuku master course open	14,642
	Public Relations and Hearings department	Toyonogunizuku service	19,000
1992	Public Relations and Hearings department	Toyonogunizuku service	21,000
	Public Relations and Hearings department	NEO21zyuku service	9,948
1993	Public Relations and Hearings department	Toyonogunizuku service	21,000
	Public Relations and Hearings department	NEO21zyuku service	11,304
1994	Public Relations and Hearings department	Toyonogunizuku service	21,000
	Public Relations and Hearings department	NEO21zyuku service	9,267
1995	Public Relations and Hearings department	NEO21zyuku service	9,182

Note: Author makes this table. Compiled from Oita Prefectural Assembly Secretariat, Assembly Information No.2, 1980, Oita Prefectural Assembly Secretariat, Assembly Information No.2, 1981, Oita Prefectural Assembly Secretariat, Assembly Information (II), 1991, Oita Prefectural Assembly Secretariat, Assembly Information (II), 1992, Oita Prefectural Assembly Secretariat, Assembly Information (II), 1993, Oita Prefectural Assembly Secretariat, Assembly Information (II), 1994 and Oita Prefectural Assembly Secretariat, Assembly Information (II), 1995.

3. The end of OVOP policy and its conversion toward a new direction

This section shows how the Prefecture rounded up the OVOP policy in order to bring it to an end. The Prefecture began the process by setting up the office for the promotion of One Village One Product movement. Also, we will see how the people in Oyama-cho and Yufuin view the human resource development projects, which were promoted by the Prefecture after the OVOP Policy was dropped. That will show us the conversion of OVOP policy toward a new direction.

3.1 The movement of OVOP policy toward its end

In 2000, toward the end of the Hiramatsu administration, the Oita prefecture set up an office for the promotion of OVOP movement in the Public Relations and Hearings Department. The role of this new office was not to further develop the OVOP policy, but to collect information about the projects of *Toyonokunizukuri-juku* and the expansion of OVOP policy in the world. According to Hiramatsu, the office was established in order to round up the OVOP policy in Oita.

In other words, the prefectural government was trying to conclude the OVOP policy and the OVOP policy was coming to an end.¹² As a matter of fact, the office for the promotion of one village one product published a book called *One village one product movement: A Record of 20 Years*, which summarized the details of OVOP movement. According to Yamagami (et al., 2007), this paper is the best record of OVOP movement in Oita.

(1) Development of OVOP policy in other countries

In the mid-80s, the OVOP policy was introduced as a policy all over Japan. Other countries began to pay attention to the OVOP policy as well. For example, Minister of Foreign Affairs in China visited Oita in 1986. Former governor Hiramatsu said that at that time the Prefecture was not trying to develop the OVOP policy in other countries.¹³ However, the visit from China triggered the tours of inspection of OVOP movement in Oita. Many countries sent a

¹² From an interview with former Governor Morihiko Hiramatsu on February 1, 2010.

¹³ From an interview with former Governor Morihiko Hiramatsu on February 1, 2010.

group of inspectors to Oita Prefecture and they began promoting OVOP policy at home. Today, the OVOP policy is adopted in Thailand, China, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos, South Korea, and Mongolia, African nations such as Malawi and Tunisia, and a part of South America such as Paraguay. OVOP policy has already achieved positive results in China and Thailand(Hiramatsu, 2008). Consequently, the Oita Prefecture set up the office for the promotion of one village one product movement and began phasing out the OVOP policy. However the office was closed in March 2003. With the start of the Hirose administration in 2003, OVOP policy began to be phased out as a policy of the Prefecture.

Afterwards, former governor Hiramatsu established an NPO called Oita Committee for the Promotion of OVOP International in 2005, in order to advance OVOP movements and spread OVOP policy in the world. Since then, OVOP policy has been evolved not as a policy of the Prefecture but as an OVOP movement evolved into the various policies in the world. That is to say, the OVOP policy as a policy of the Prefecture came to an end while expanding into foreign countries.

(2) The movement of *Toyonokunizukuri-juku*

As was discussed above, *Toyonokunizukuri-juku* and other organizations derived from the *Juku* were the only OVOP policy projects with a budget aiming at the Human Resources Development that could be verified. Figure 4 shows the development of these projects. I regard the termination of the projects as the OVOP policy. In the comprehensive plan of Hiramatsu administration, *Toyonokunizukuri-juku* was promoted for Human Resources Development and treated as one of the Ten Program Projects of Oita. However, the Strategic plan of Hirose administration does not include the promotion of *Toyonokunizukuri-juku* project for Human Resources Development.

Since the Projects of *Toyonokuni-shoninjuku* and *Toyonokuni-keiejuku* are continuing, we may think that the *Toyonokunizukuri-juku* is still developing. However, the contents of these projects are not necessarily the Human Resources Development, but closer to regional management. Governor Hirose once abolished *Toyonokuni-keiejuku* and then,

after erasing the character of OVOP policy, reorganized the *Juku* as a part of local management project in 2007. It only focuses on the training of the people who would support the economy of Oita Prefecture. The OVOP policy came to end with the change of power in Oita Prefecture.

3.2 Innovation from OVOP policy to New OVOP activity

As was discussed above, OVOP activities were originally based on various local areas in Oita. They shifted to OVOP campaign when local leaders of OVOP activities sought for the expansion of OVOP activities beyond their regions. Then, when the Prefectural government began to promote OVOP campaign, it became OVOP policy. Although OVOP policy has been terminated, OVOP activities are still continuing in some regions. I will discuss the situations in Oyama-cho and Yufuin, two of the starting points of the new OVOP activity.

In Oyama-cho, various activities for regional development are now performed by the agricultural cooperative, and the movement for regional

development is not led by a charismatic person as before. The central figures of present OVOP activity do not have a lively discussion with the generation of people who once contributed to the OVOP campaign. They do not collect information from other regions or countries as much as before, either. The agricultural cooperative, which once was a central organization of OVOP campaign, now puts more stress on agricultural management than creating an environment to promote the development of human resources.¹⁴ It seems that OVOP campaign has lost its momentum in Oyama-cho.

In Yufuin, on the other hand, there is active communication between the generation that initially started OVOP campaign and the generation that is engaging in the new OVOP activity now. In addition, there is an atmosphere that makes it easy for people to gather and become involved in new OVOP activities. According to Mr. Yoneda of Yufuin Tourism Association, this atmosphere has been

¹⁴ From an interview with Mr. Fujiwara of Oyama Agricultural Cooperative on February 2, 2010.

created thanks to the existence of *Juku* for Human Resources Development, established for OVOP policy promoted by former Governor Hiramatsu. It was worthwhile to learn in *Juku* that there were people who cared about the region. He added that *Juku* was also very worthy because it allowed people to find the next theme for regional development. The *Juku* had a significant impact on OVOP policy in Yufuin.¹⁵ Today, The *Toyonokunizukuri-juku* is gone, but "*Nishikaze-ka*", a *Juku* originally established for OVOP activities has been revived since last year.

We can see from this case in Yufuin that *Juku* of the OVOP policy promoted by former Governor Hiramatsu became an useful place for the discussion of regional development and that the development of human resources assisted by OVOP policy has been incorporated into an existing OVOP activity and helped its conversion to a new OVOP activity.

Conclusion

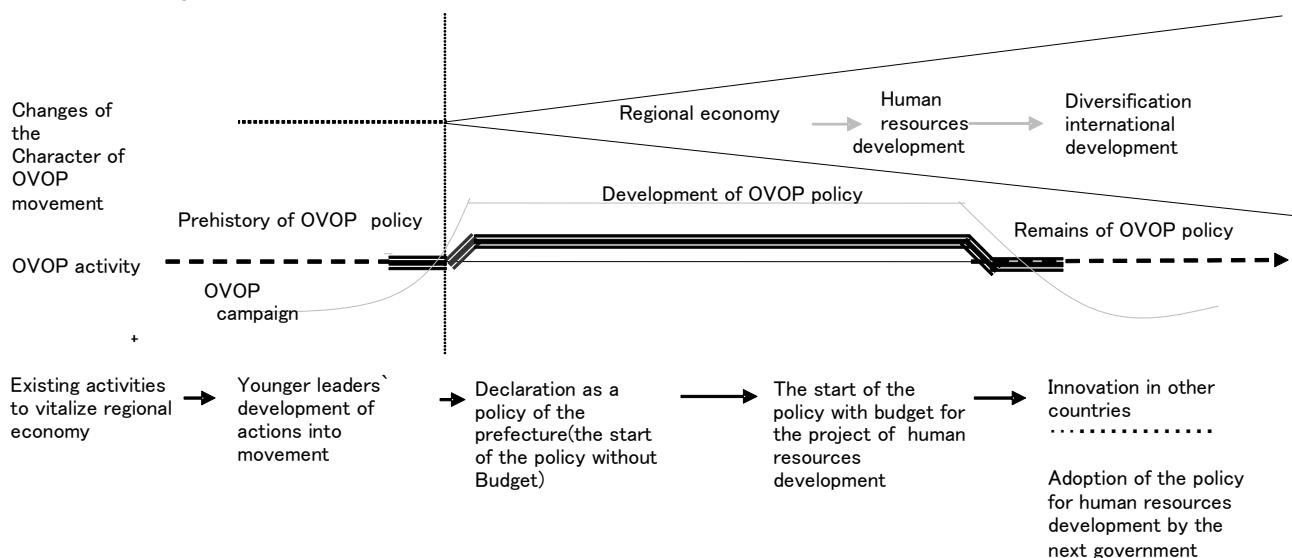
This study shows how a policy was started and concluded in Oita Prefecture. The OVOP movement is divided into OVOP activity, OVOP campaign and OVOP policy in order to show the transition of OVOP movement from OVOP activity through OVOP campaign to OVOP policy, until the end of OVOP policy (See the figure 5 below). This is only one model to depict the beginning and end of a policy, but the significance of this study is that it shows some findings about the mechanism of policy development acquired from an actual case. We might also say that this case in Oita is a model of the beginning and end of a policy under a government leader of a certain type of personality. Investigation on the influence of the personality of the leader on policy development can be a future issue for research.

The government of Oita Prefecture put a budget for the OVOP policy as a service of Human Resources Development in 1983. This study analyzes the prehistory, development, and completion of the policy in Oita. The OVOP

¹⁵ From an interview with Mr.Yoneda of Yufuin General Office of Tourism on February 1, 2010.

policy drew attention as a new policy for the vitalization of a region, both in Japan and in other countries. Today, various regions in the world have adopted OVOP for regional revitalization. While OVOP movement has been thus diversified, OVOP as a policy with a budget was brought to an end in 2005. The characteristics of OVOP shown in this model are as follows.

Figure 5 Model of OVOP Movement



① Before OVOP policy was adopted, OVOP activities had existed in some regions as activities for regional vitalization. There were leaders who were trying to tackle new challenges. ② In order for the local OVOP activities to expand into other regions and to become a

wider campaign, it was important to have young talented people that wanted to participate in activities beyond the existing framework of the region. ③ In response to such activities and campaigns, the administration first began the OVOP policy without a budget and then as a policy with

a budget. (4) The policy without a budget began with the declaration of a new policy by the governor and was developed into projects to attain the policy goal, making use of existent projects. The policy supported and assisted the activities of local talent. (5) The policy with a budget began with projects that were easier to attach a budget to. For example, Public Relations and Hearings Department led the projects for the development of human resources in local areas. (6) Toward the end of the development of OVOP policy, prefectural policies in relation to OVOP movement were rounded up to offer organized information useful for local revitalization. At the same time, OVOP drew more international attention and became diversified. (7) With the change of prefectural administration, the OVOP projects with a budget came to an end one by one, until the OVOP policy of Oita Prefecture was terminated. (8) After the end of OVOP policy, the OVOP movement has changed into an NPO movement, which offers information on OVOP in Oita through seminars and other activities and continues Human Resources Development in the world. (9) With the end of the OVOP policy,

most of the projects for Human Resources Development were finished. However, the new administration has maintained a part of the project as its own policy for the training of local commercial management. (10) After the end of OVOP policy of Oita Prefecture, some local OVOP activities are utilizing the fruits of Human Resources Development in the area, which were assisted by OVOP policy. However, such development of human resources has been limited to those regions and cooperation among regions has not yet been verified.

The beginning and the end of the OVOP policy in Oita Prefecture have these characteristics, which help us to understand the mechanism of development of a new policy and how a policy can be started and terminated.

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