

Probation Officers in the Community

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Yuki TAKAHASHI (Fukushima Univ. JP)

Self-Introduction

- Ph.D. in Law
- An associate professor in Fukushima Univ. since 2015
- Also working as...

Chair Person of the Committee on Recidivism Prevention in Fukushima Prefecture

Chair Person of the Committee on Management Meeting of National Probation Hostel in Fukushima

Chair Person of the Visiting Board of Fukushima Prison

Part-time Lecturer of Aizu-Junior College, department of Education and Social Work

Introduction

- Concern

Probation officers should look more closely the communities where probationers or ex-offenders live in order to...

- strengthen links between other local actors

- & increase community inclusion for ex-offenders

- Current Situation around Probation and Parole

- more jobs with PC data or paper documents than jobs in the community

- more focus on the risk of probationers than resources in the community

Introduction

- Contents of the Presentation

- Overview of the Probation/Parole system in Japan
- Current Situation and Problems of POs in Japan
- How POs can/should Work in the Community

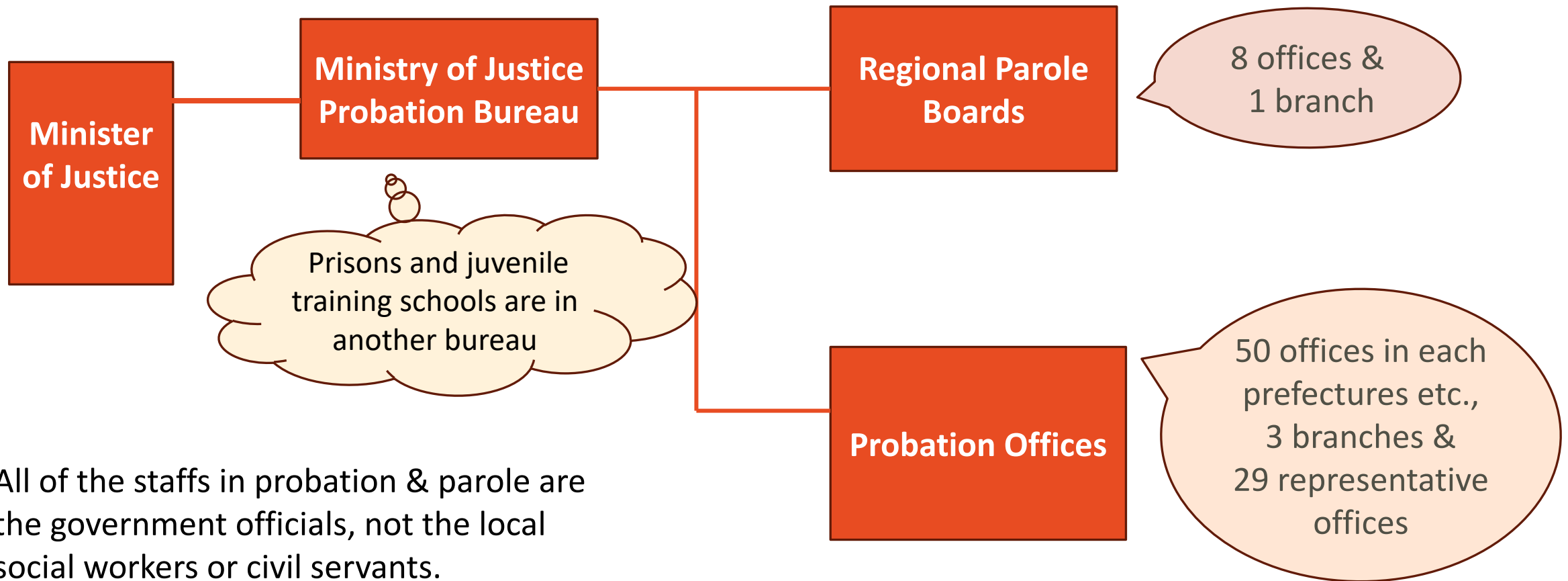
- Methodology

laws and official policies or papers on probation and parole in Japan

theoretical perspective based on sociology and social welfare

comparative laws between Japan and other countries

Probation & Parole in Japan: Organization and Recruitment of POs



Probation & Parole in Japan: Organization and Recruitment of POs

● Population

Entire Probation Bureau: about 1,300

POs working in Probation Offices : about 800

Volunteer Probation Officers(HOGOSHI): about 47,000

● Recruitment

Most POs are recruited via 'Specialized Examination on Humanities in MOJ'.

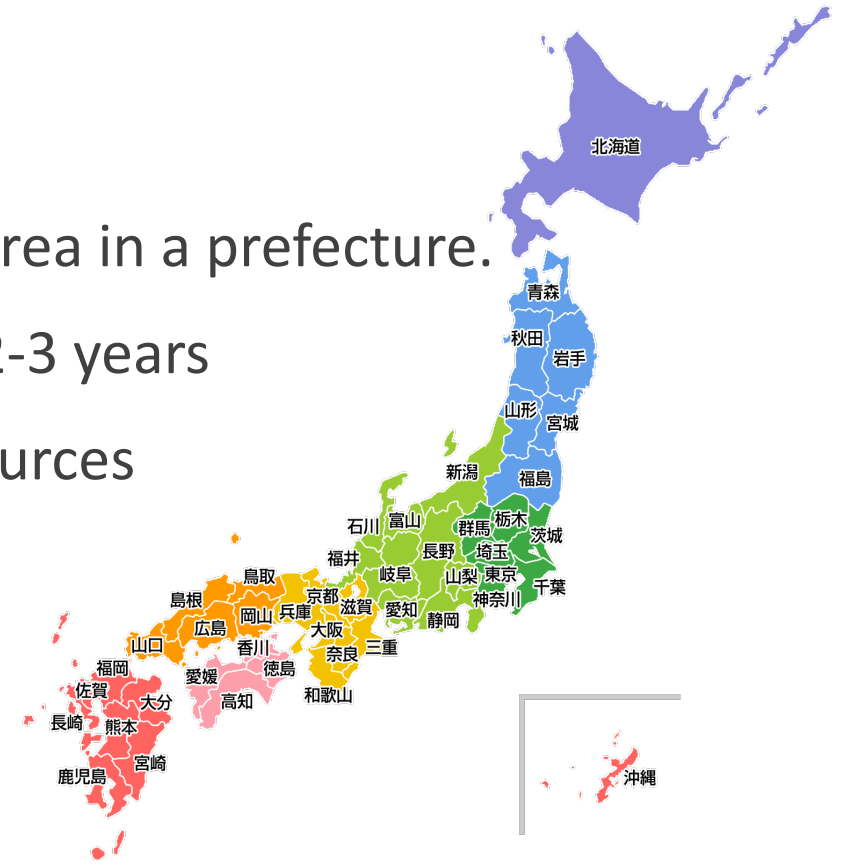
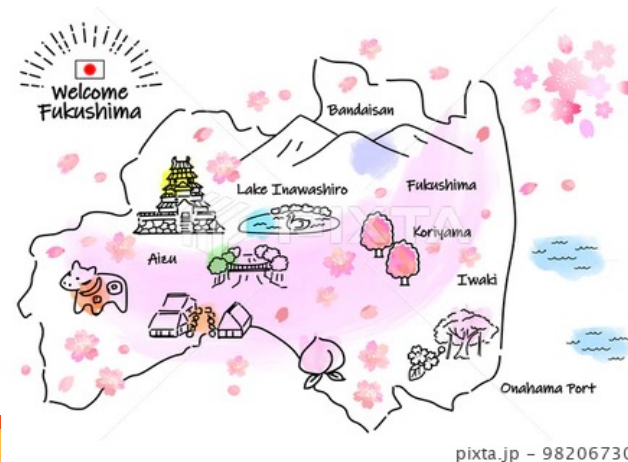
→It was introduced in 2012 to increase POs' professionalism

→Main subjects : Psychology, Education, Sociology, and Social Welfare

Number of people recruited in 2024 : about 40 !

Features of POs within the Japanese System

- Small number of POs and many VPOs(HOGOSHI)
- Large area is covered by each probation office
⇒POs' job cannot be done without VPOs living each area in a prefecture.
- POs often move from an office to another office in 2-3 years
⇒Not enough time to become familiar with local resources



Probation & Parole in Japan: Current Laws & Policies

- Recidivism Prevention Act 2016

Article 4(2) **Local governments** are responsible for formulating and implementing initiatives tailored to the situation in the areas under their jurisdictions with regard to preventing recidivism, **in keeping with an appropriate sharing of roles with the State** and in accordance with the fundamental principle.

Article 5(1) **The State and local governments** must coordinate with each other to ensure the smooth implementation of initiatives to prevent recidivism.

- Revised Probation Act 2023

In Article 88(2)...**'Consultation and Advice for the Community Members'**

Probation offices shall respond to consultations from local residents or relevant organizations, and provide information, advice and other necessary assistance by using their knowledge on offenders' rehabilitation.

Probation & Parole in Japan : Current Laws & Policies

- Backgrounds of these Enactment

Probation/parole term will expire based on the law or sentence, though ex-offenders' desistance efforts will continue.

Many ex-offenders have complicated vulnerabilities, such as mental illness, addiction, and being elderly, young or handicapped.

∴ Long term care by the local social welfare service and community members are needed.

- The Local Committee on Recidivism Prevention

In every prefecture and some cities or towns...

Local Recidivism Prevention Plan & the Committee of Recidivism Prevention

Ex.) In Fukushima: local government, probation office, Fukushima prison, prosecution office, probation hostel, VPOs and other probation volunteer groups, job center, researcher etc.

Analysis : Problems in Community Work by POs

- More community work by POs are required by the current situation in Japan.
- However...

What I found in the local committee in Fukushima →→

△ This result in a loss of communication with other agencies.

Why this happened? : My Hypothesis

The PO who joins the committee is changed every year.

PO is too busy to chat with participants.

PO might not be interested in the local community very much?



Analysis : Problems in Community Work by POs

- Practical Background of My Hypothesis

Features of POs within the Japanese system as mentioned at p.6.

∴ They do not have enough time to be familiar with others in the committee.

- Theoretical and Historical Backgrounds of My Hypothesis

Due to the 'Specialized Examination on Humanities', **many POs graduated from faculty of psychology.**

← POs in the U.K. had ever have to be qualified SWs.

More risk assessment/management roles are required for POs.

→ It may reduce their time to explore the local community.

Analysis : What is needed to enable POs Work in the Community?

- More training in community social work and more chances to understand the local community

∴ Exploring and developing social resources requires professional social work skills and communication with other agencies in the community

- Hiring people with diverse background as POs

Ex.) the experience of working in the local government or voluntary sector, a lived experience as those with vulnerabilities.

- Less transfer and more time to live and work in the same office

→ For POs : more interest and motivation to develop local resources

For local residents : better communication and cooperation with POs

Conclusion

- Through community work by POs...

Community probation will work better with understanding and partnership with local agencies.

& **Inclusivity in every local government or community will be increased.**

- In order to make POs work more in the community, we need...

a recruitment and training system aimed at motivating POs candidates and junior POs to work in the community

a working environment for POs to spend more time getting to know local communities and their residents

Acknowledgement

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Fukushima is a lovely place,
though we met a great
atomic accident in 2011.
I am happy if you visit
Fukushima !