

## Laboratory / Center profile

### Decentralization/Regionalization Laboratory

#### Representative:

Associate Professor Ken Victor Leonard Hijino

**Professional Background:** Financial Times Tokyo correspondent, Cambridge University Faculty of Oriental Studies PhD, JSPS Post-doctoral fellow, and guest researcher at Osaka City University. Swedish National.

**Research Field:** comparative political institutions, party organization theory, and comparative systems of local politics and local democracy. His recent research interests include: conflicts of interest among actors engaged in the regional (*doshu*) system and decentralization reform, and improvement in the process of consensus building at the level of local governments.

Professor Hidekazu Nishimura

**Research Field:** Next-generation mobility control system design, model-based systems engineering, and design of the regional (*doshu*) system.

**Publications:** "Systems Modeling Language–SysML" (translation supervisor), "Fundamentals of Control Theory using MATLAB", "Control Systems Design using MATLAB" (co-author) (Tokyo Denki University Press) and more. He receives many requests for joint research and lectures from private companies.



One can say that modern Japan entered into its course of political centralization in the tenth year of the Meiji Period (1877) with the end of the Seinan War. With the conclusion of this civil war, those of the ancient regime resisting the abolition of the feudal order, including the social and economic privileges of the warrior class, were finally subdued. Forces and resources across Japan, including local into warriors who had lost their livelihoods, gathered in Tokyo, now made capital of the new Meiji government. The city grew at astounding speed as the capital of a modernizing state and economy. It was in such a time that the Yukichi Fukuzawa (founder of Keio University) published his pamphlet: *Theory of Decentralization*. By pointing out the adverse effects of centralization and an expanding central bureaucracy in those early years of modern Japan, the book urged the necessity of decentralization of political power. Learning from Western states, Fukuzawa categorized the governing functions of a modern nation into "government" and "administration" and argued that the central government should focus on military affairs, taxation, foreign affairs, and monetary/financial policy whereas local governments should take charge of policing, roads, bridges, banks, schools, temples/shrines, and sanitation/health. This, he wrote, would enhance the ability of the state to handle foreign affairs, minimize unnecessary public investment, and enable context-specific nation building adapted to the diverse realities of different localities. Fukuzawa also pointed out the importance of nurturing a sense of autonomy among citizens and local communities through decentralization.

Today, one hundred and thirty-five years after the first publication of the *Theory of Decentralization*, problems of excessive political centralization are still discussed in Japan. At the same time, the necessity of decentralization is acknowledged and advocated more than ever. The question remains however: how exactly can we

decentralize the over-concentrated political and economic system to revitalize and realize independent local governments and communities?

Such a problem involves complicated and large-scale system design, something at the heart of Keio SDM's research competencies. Which governing functions, authorities, financial sources, and tax sources should be handed over to governments of which level? On what criteria should regionalization be carried out? A holistic approach considering all parameters associated with the decentralization, combined with cost-benefit analyses of various stakeholders, will be necessary. Moreover, decentralization reforms inevitably create conflicts of interest among different actors whereby positive and negative stakeholders clash with each other. A thorough understanding of such conflicts of interest and seek ways to overcome the obstacles when re-designing the local government system would be necessary.

With an aim to research such areas, I established the "Decentralization and Regional (*Doshu*) System Laboratory" this April together with Professor Hidekazu Nishimura. The Laboratory applies methodologies of systems engineering to the design of decentralization and the regional (*doshu*) system. Introducing the model-based systems approach allows graphic concretization of the structure and allocations of administrative and fiscal functions related to the regional (*doshu*) system. In addition, the graphically organized model facilitates discussion among those who are engaged in system design. The Laboratory also places an emphasis on stakeholder analyses which enable us to examine factors hindering decentralization and the regional (*doshu*) system and to explore the degree to which it could be realized. We plan to collaborate with outside experts and aim to make the Laboratory a forum for discussing "the shape of the nation" with independent and self-reliant regions.

(References for *Theory of Decentralization*: "Nihon-teki jichi no tankyū" by Hisao Ishikawa)

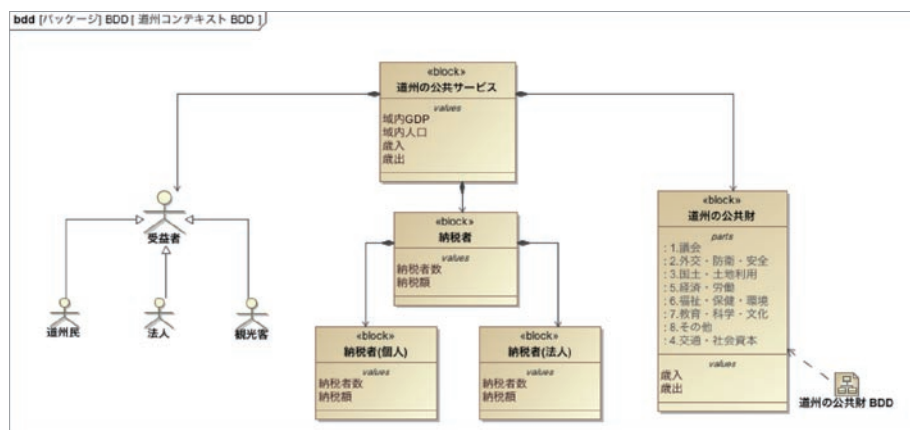


Figure: Design of the regional (*doshu*) system using SysML (Systems Modeling Language) prepared by Mr. Toru Kobukai, 2nd year master's student



SDM Research Institute, Graduate School of System Design and Management at Keio University  
Collaboration Complex, Keio University, 4-1-1 Hiyoshi, Kohoku-ku, Yokohama, Kanagawa 223-8526  
Tel : 045-564-2518 Fax : 045-562-3502 E-mail : [sdm@info.keio.ac.jp](mailto:sdm@info.keio.ac.jp)

