

Tokyo sees a dramatic decline in population inflow and a sharp rise in outflow

The pandemic brought change to unipolar concentration in Tokyo

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Population inflow to the Tokyo metropolitan area has fallen significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Population migration in 2021 has become a focus of attention as one of the many socio-economic impacts brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this report, we analyze how the COVID-19 crisis has affected the migration trend in the Tokyo metropolitan area as well as Tokyo itself based on the “Annual Report on Internal Migration in Japan Derived from the Basic Resident Registration,” compiled by the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

The net population influx (population inflow - outflow) in 2021 into the Tokyo metropolitan area (prefectures of Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba, and Saitama) stood at 80,441 people, recording a dramatic decline of 65,135 from the pre-coronavirus period of 2019 (**Chart 1**). On the other hand, the net population influx into the Osaka metropolitan area (prefectures of Osaka, Kyoto, Hyogo, and Nara) in 2021 was -5,507 people, a decline of only 1,650 from 2019, while the Nagoya metropolitan area (prefectures of Aichi, Gifu, and Mie) was -11,237 people, a slight increase of 278, showing that the population influx into the Osaka and Nagoya metropolitan areas hardly changed compared to 2019. From these statistics, we hold that the substantial fall in the net population influx into the Tokyo metropolitan area caused population deconcentration to regions other than the three metropolitan areas.

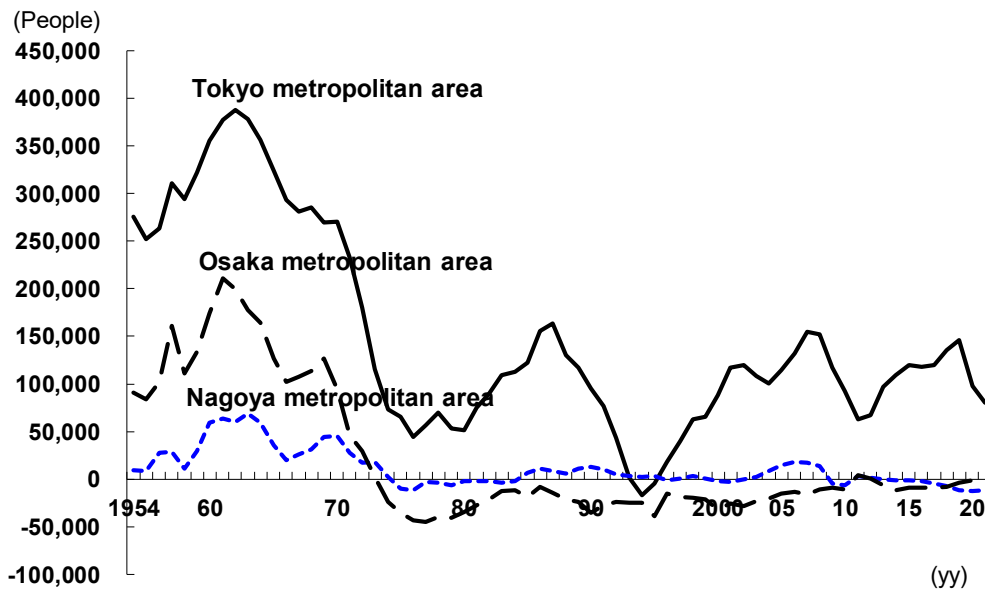
Net in-migration to Tokyo plummeted

If we look at the net population influx in 2021 by prefecture (**Chart 2**), while Tokyo saw its net in-migration reach 86,573 in 2019 before the pandemic, it fell dramatically to 10,815 in 2021. Prefectures that experienced a decline in net population inflow other than Tokyo were limited to Osaka, Aichi, Hiroshima, and Kyoto, and many prefectures in 2021 saw their net population inflow increase. Not only Tokyo’s neighboring prefectures of Kanagawa, Saitama, and Chiba, but also the northern Kanto region (Ibaraki, Tochigi, and Gunma prefectures), Koshinetsu region (Yamanashi, Nagano, and Niigata prefectures), and those prefectures with large cities serving as regional economic hubs, such as Hokkaido, Miyagi, and Kumamoto, experienced notable increases in population inflow. Furthermore, in the prefectures of Miyagi, Ibaraki, Yamanashi, and Shiga, the substantial

population outflow trend seen in 2019 turned to a net inflow in 2021.

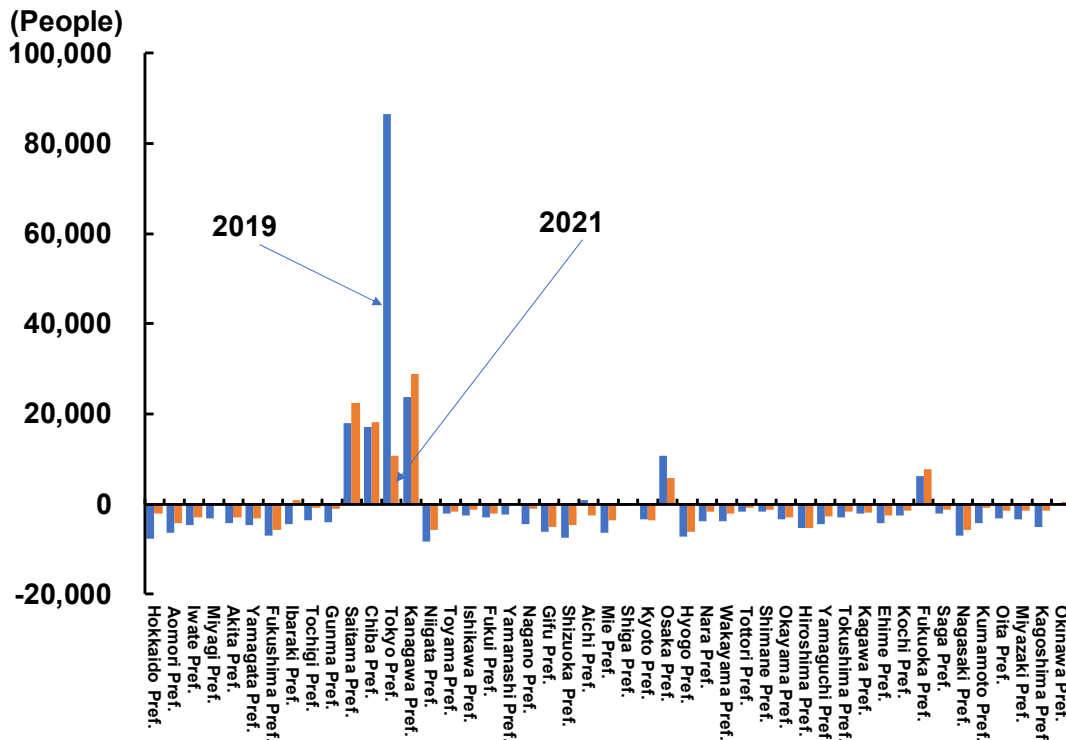
Of these prefectures, Tokyo experienced the greatest change in net population inflow due to the pandemic; in 2021, the population inflow to Tokyo declined by 39,010 while the outflow jumped by 36,750 compared with 2019, showing a simultaneous in-migration decrease and out-migration increase. Consequently, Tokyo’s population in 2021 (as of January 1) fell for the first time in 26 years (**Chart 3**).

[Chart 1: Net population influx into the three metropolitan areas]

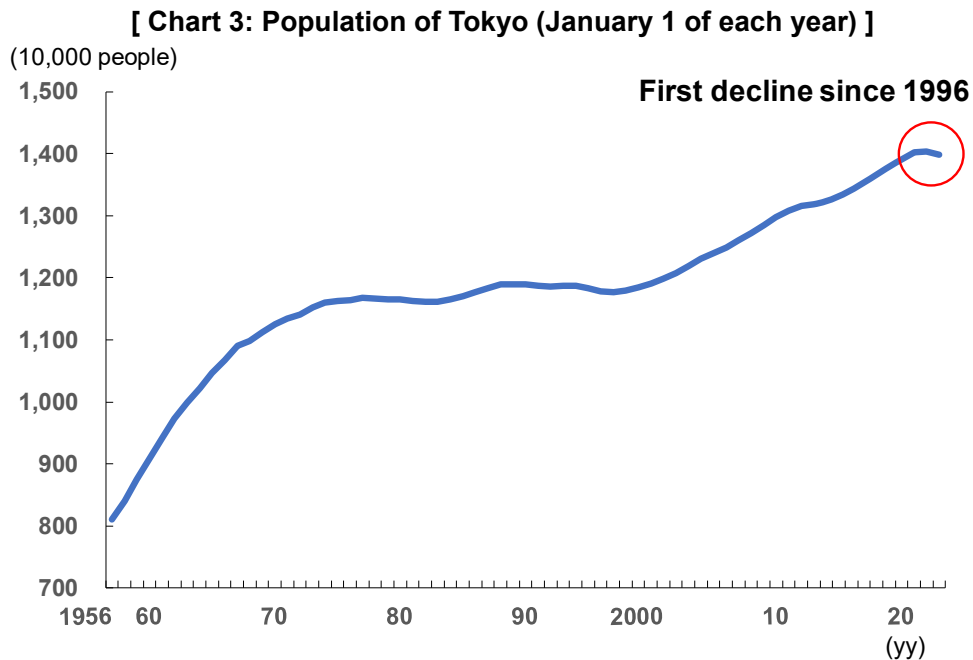


Source: Made by MHRT based upon the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, *Annual Report on Internal Migration in Japan Derived from the Basic Resident Registration*, for the respective years.

[Chart 2: Net population influx by prefecture (2019 and 2021)]



Source: Made by MHRT based upon the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, *Annual Report on Internal Migration in Japan Derived from the Basic Resident Registration*, for the respective years.



Source: Made by MHRT based upon the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, *Population of Tokyo (estimate)*.

Spread of remote working during the coronavirus crisis has affected Tokyo's overconcentration of population

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, working people tended to reside within a commutable distance from their office based on a consideration of work-life balance and housing expenses, and difficult to commute areas were generally eliminated as potential localities where they could live.

But the penetration of remote work during the pandemic has almost succeeded in detaching areas of residence from business districts. If people are asked to come to the office only once or twice a week, even areas far from the office can become one's place of residence. We are actually seeing growth in net population inflows not only in the neighboring prefectures of Tokyo but also in the northern Kanto region and Koshinetsu region during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, a full remote work style that allows people to reside anywhere in Japan is attracting more attention. By employing a full remote work style, people can "migrate without changing jobs," and any place in Japan can become one's residence. The close proximity of municipalities to business districts used to be popular because it achieved "having one's workplace near one's house," but in the full remote work era more people may select living in areas where they can enjoy a higher quality of life.

For workers, remote working has now become a condition concomitant with wages. Companies aiming to attract talented human resources irrespective of where they live cannot avoid introducing remote work systems. We also observe the notable trend of implementing full remote work systems centered on IT-related firms. For this reason, we believe it will be difficult for the net population influx into the Tokyo metropolitan area to return to the level recorded prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reference

Refer to the original Japanese report by clicking the URL below for the reference material.

<https://www.mizuho-ir.co.jp/publication/report/2022/pdf/express-jp220331.pdf>

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