

Interactive comment on “Investigating rural community behaviour after the 2004 Chuetsu earthquake: a case study of Kawaguchi town, Japan” by M. Gismondi

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Dear Dr. Chris Philo, Dr. Rhian Thomas and Dr. Matthew Hannah thank you very much for your support and comments on this paper. I has been a really long journey, and I do appreciate your efforts to improve the final output of this paper. Thank you.

I will answer to all the comments in this post.

A. Comments from Dr. Chris Philo The first set of comments have already been addressed and already solved during our first discussion, therefore I will not further explain them here. Concerning instead the second set of comments, the following edits will be done in order to improve the quality of the paper. I do

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agree that it is indeed necessary to make clear to the reader about the "danger of essentializing" the idea of community, especially the ideas of rural and urban community. It is also to be said that the Japanese community is unique and behaves differently from others I had the opportunity to observe and study. Because of this uniqueness it may sometimes appear that some actions described in this paper are "unusual". Kawaguchi town comes from Japanese *kawa* (Kawa=River) *kuchi* (kuchi=mouth,entrance) *machi* (machi=town), therefore it is officially recognised as Kawaguchi town. Same example can be done for the real way of calling Tokyo, which is *Toyko* (*to*= metropolis). The 5572 people refers to the whole population of Kawaguchi town, whereas the 1863 refers to only the 3 study areas. I will also further polish the paper from minor errors as suggested.

B. Comments from Dr. Thian Thomas The meaning of town is explained in the comment above. Concerning the concepts of rural and urban, as you know it is not easy to clearly define them especially in a moment of strong migrations towards urban areas. In my study I want to consider "rural" something that is still connected to the old Japanese lifestyle, traditions, and agriculture. "Urban" is instead what is not. 1. AGREED - The human influence on the disasters is important. 2. AGREED - An earthquake can be prepared in advance, by providing the necessary knowledge to people living in seismic areas and also by using antiseismic construction methods. 3. Consider also al (USGS, 2005; FEMA, 2006) 4. It is Richter, I will clarify that. 5. (OECD, 2009) 6. OK thanks 7. AGREED 8. By "temporal" I simply mean if the earthquake is occurring during the day or during the night 9. AGREED 10. The different type of building is surely a matter of life or death when an earthquake occurs. Here in Japan is common knowledge that offices are made to resist strong earthquakes. In the case of Kawaguchi town, probably the main issue is the distance that the residents, which are not engaged in agricultural activities, have to do every day to reach their job location. 11. Non-structural regulations indicated for ex. where the residents have to evacuate, the shelters location, where to find water (emergency tanks underground), etc. 12. Indeed AGREED, succeed to bring the provisions "in time" is essential. This is also

the main difference between the communities that were independent (with stocks) and those which were not. 13. This is not the main theme of the paper, I believe 1 reference is sufficient 14. I am talking about Japanese policies. The preparation in urban area is more connected on the type of construction whereas on the rural areas is more a "social" related preparation. 15. Explained in the first part. I can indeed add in the title "urban and rural" as suggested. 16. No, it's general discussion as this paper is a report so do not refers to 1 specific earthquake. 17. There is no connection, nor reference, with the earthquake epicentre. 18. Not pertinent with my aim in this paper. 19. I don't think this is relevant. I did, as explained in the paper, a door-to-door interview. I have part of the information you are asking, simply I do not believe that these are important for my final goal. I believe chapter 4.1 efficiently describes the 3 areas. Furthermore there is another paper published by me as reference (Gismondi and Huisman, 2011). 20. Central, peripheral and isolated are only 3 areas selected. Not the whole town. The households I did the interviews are one portion of the 3 areas, the statistics from Table 2 comes from population census (2000); agricultural census (2000); Kawaguchi town local governmental office (2000). 21. They are not considered in the 3 areas, as moved out. But still used in the research to have a general idea of the behaviour and also used in (Gismondi and Huisman, 2011). 22. I live in Japan since 2008 and I have been in that area multiples times (more than 10, total lengths almost 2 months), discussed with local authorities and residents in several occasions. These definitions comes from hours of discussion (especially with local authorities) as well as from other researchers as already cited in my paper. 23. There is no postal questionnaire. I did it door-by-door. 24. This is a complex matter. My paper does not want to be too technical on this, a it's a "social" paper. However, the distance from the epicentre as well as the building structure are indeed important. 25. The sampling was done using random selection. For further information on the exact location please refer to (Gismondi and Huisman, 2011). 26. In peripheral area it was interesting to see the support despite the distance, in sharing food, wood for the fire, and other tools and important objects of primary need. 27. These statistics are general for the whole Kawaguchi town and

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I believe are useful to make understand the reader the devastation produced by the earthquake. 28. It is hard to said that, based just on a picture. The local authorities confirmed that the central area was the most damaged by the earthquake. 29. Local authorities did not have an answer to that. It is believed that it has to do with the distance from the epicentre and also the type of soil (according to the residents, but I do not have any reference). The residents in the peripheral areas said that the ground did not shake that much and appeared less shocked compared with residents from the central/isolated area. 30. I guess here there is a misunderstanding. All the town is basically made of wood, some houses of concrete. 31. I did only one type of interview so I always refer to the same ones. "Although we knew about the high seismic risk of the region, we did not organise emergency procedures in case of earthquakes. - Residents were not aware where to evacuate - Therefore when the first shake occurred panic spread in Kawaguchi with a good portion of the town residents trying to reach the local government buildings seeking support 36. First they prioritize their own family and then grouped. Central and peripheral area are basically connected. 37. Temporary accommodation such as tents, cars, caravan, and emergency houses. 38. scattered (sparse), concentrated (clustered). 39. The reason why the person is afraid is "afraid to be stolen everything". 41. I would like to keep this paper more on a "social" point of view. 42. Generally the whole town had a great benefit from the community. The difference is that in some areas this benefit was greater and faster. In other areas, it took a couple of hours or more to arrive. Some areas got a better organisation and other took more time to organize. BUT, the community had a main role for the whole town. 43. Also the social ties are important. Yes the type of job is important but everything that goes around a certain lifestyle must also be considered. 44. Niigata Prefecture, is famous in Japan for having heavy snow as said on this paper. As Kawaguchi town is a small area it is difficult to answer to this type of question as I believe there will not be so much difference between the 3 study areas. 46. Annual events that are typical of a specific geographic area.

I also do appreciate your technical corrections that I will take in consideration during

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my final editing.

C. Comments from Dr. Matthew Hannah The areas have not been chosen randomly but are real internal boundary of the city, and have been selected after discussing with the city hall. The social delineation defined in this paper comes also from a deep discussion with local officers that are well aware of how the town is divided and behaves. Once the areas were selected I then started to collect information directly from the residents. I strongly believe that the rural communities here in Japan, the ones that are still based upon agriculture, as in Kawaguchi town, are indeed much stronger and have an incredible higher degree of trust as well as cooperation which is lower and even absent in some densely populated urban areas. This is one of the aspects that attracted me the most in doing this research, because of the uniqueness of the Japanese community and their way of react to a natural disaster, which is incredible. The way I structured my research might be not suitable for an European case of study, but it is my belief that it fits with the Japanese case of study.

Interactive comment on Soc. Geogr. Discuss., 7, 39, 2011.

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