

Duality of New Immigrants as Human Resource to Revitalize Rural Communities: A Case Study of Local Community Organizations in Iida City of Nagano Prefecture

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Summary

This paper analyzed key features of new immigrant residents from urban areas to Iida city and discussed how they could be turned into a human resource to revitalize rural communities. It highlighted how their dual role being an actual member of traditional community and at the same an immigrant from other world would work. Major findings are summarized as follows. First, newly formulated organizations (machi-zukuri committee) in Iida city have been making rules on new immigrant residents, which facilitated the acceptance and communication with new residents. Second, it was the city government staff dispatched to the committee who encouraged the members to realize their potential for development through city projects and promote better communication with immigrated residents. Third, new immigrant residents intentionally or unintentionally exerted their dual role depending on the situation in the relationship with local society. This attitude contributed positively to the maintenance and revitalization of community. The manner that they exerted the dual role can be classified to three types by degree of discretionary: a) just following existing local custom, b) partially discretionary, and c) starting an entirely new activity. Fourth, the extent and manner that new immigrant residents were integrated in the local community varied by organizations. Their capacity and will for local community revitalization was better utilized in the newly formulated organizations. In order to make use of new residents for rural revitalization, formulating new flexible community organization and introducing new management methods which are different from traditional ones is indispensable.

Key words: Rural migration, Duality of immigrant residents, Human resources in local community, Local organizations in rural community