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研究課題名(和文) Lifestyle migrant clusters in rural Japan: implications for rural entrepreneurship, quality of life and community resilience

研究課題名(英文) Lifestyle migrant clusters in rural Japan: implications for rural entrepreneurship, quality of life and community resilience

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研究成果の概要(和文)：本研究は、日本の過疎化が進む地方におけるライフスタイル起業と移住について、持続可能なライフスタイル、クオリティ・オブ・ライフ、コミュニティのレジリエンスとの関連に焦点を当てて調査したものです。この研究プロジェクトは9つの著作の出版につながりました。これらの著作は、実証的な知見をもとに、移住を通じた地域や農村の活性化に理論的に貢献するとともに、地方のレジリエンスや持続可能なコミュニティに関連する側面についても考察しています。また、地方への新規移住者をどのように支援するかについての政策提言も行っています。PIはまた、6つの国際会議で研究成果を発表し、様々な国際共同研究を開始しました。

研究成果の学術的意義や社会的意義

Given the current struggles with rural depopulation, this research is important to understand the dynamics of rural in-migration, the way in-migrants contribute to rural revitalization, and especially to give policy recommendations on how to retain newcomers in rural communities.

研究成果の概要(英文)：The study explored lifestyle entrepreneurship and migration in depopulating rural areas in Japan, focusing on the connections with sustainable lifestyles, quality of life, and community resilience. The research project led to the publication of 9 works, which use the empirical findings to make theoretical contributions to regional and rural revitalization through in-migration, while also considering aspects relevant to rural resilience and sustainable communities. The study also offers policy recommendations on how to support rural newcomers. The PI also presented the work at 6 international conferences and started various international collaborations. For example, one collaboration has led to the publication of a special issue on Rural Entrepreneurship Education in the Journal of Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy. The PI is now involved in an international research project on in-migration and cultural change in rural and remote areas, with partners from the UK and Canada.

研究分野：Rural Sociology

キーワード：rural revitalization 地域活性化 移住者 rural in-migrants rural entrepreneurship community resilience rural quality of life

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## 1 . 研究開始当初の背景

This proposal developed at the intersection of rural socio-economic trends that have been receiving increasing attention within rural geography and sociology research and among policymakers. First, the threat of **rural depopulation and decline**, especially in mountainous and hilly regions (中山間地域), due to the low profitability of traditional industries, aging, and out-migration of the younger population, has mobilized research and policy efforts aimed at **rural revitalization**. However, there is increasing awareness that in Japan's **post-growth** society, marked by socio-economic stagnation and general population decline, rural revitalization and resilience are hardly achievable through strategies aimed at **quantitative economic growth**. However, **alternative lifestyle and work patterns** are emerging. Examples are rural '**lifestyle migration**' and the concept of 'return to rural' (田園回帰). Many in-migrants aspire to engage in rural-based lifestyles, often establishing small businesses to reconcile livelihood goals with personal needs and values, a concept defined in the international literature as '**lifestyle entrepreneurship**'.

Attracting and retaining in-migrants thus requires **developing attractive rural communities** with sufficient **quality of life** and **entrepreneurial opportunities** beyond primary industries. At the same time, emerging **global sustainability challenges** will require, among other changes, a **shift towards diversified sustainable farming** and **multifunctional agriculture and rural areas**. This is an **opportunity for peripheral rural regions**, which are by nature less productive, to advance sustainable and innovative practices. For example, recent literature has also highlighted the **contribution of organic farming to rural revitalization** in Japan. Newcomers to agriculture (新規参入者) are increasingly interested in organic farming, and they are often urban-to-rural in-migrants.

## 2 . 研究の目的

**Lifestyle entrepreneurship**, especially in rural areas, has been gaining attention in other fields (such as tourism studies), for its connection with **individual and community well-being** and its potential to support rural economies. At the time of the research proposal, however, there was not a lot of research on the connection between in-migration, rural lifestyle entrepreneurship, and community sustainability and resilience.

The purpose of the research was therefore to 1) examine **how the attributes of rural communities attract in-migrant lifestyle entrepreneurs**; 2) map the **diversity and interconnections of different in-migrant businesses within the local small-scale entrepreneurial ecosystem**; and 3) explore **how this affects in-migrants' quality of life and community resilience**.

## 3 . 研究の方法

This was a primarily **exploratory research** conducted in the Chuugoku-Shikoku region, which is relatively under-researched within Japan. Target informants were entrepreneurial in-migrants operating in depopulating rural communities. Due to the qualitative nature of the research questions, data collection was conducted through **field visits with in-depth semi-structured interviews, supplemented by visual data collection** (photography and videos).

Data analysis used a **Grounded Theory approach** to uncover the determinants of in-migrants' choices to move to a specific rural community to open their own business. Furthermore, the research examined the social networks of entrepreneurial in-migrants in the locality, to understand the formation and characteristics of the local entrepreneurial ecosystem connected to in-migrants and the

processes of cooperation, competition, networking and knowledge creation/sharing occurring both within and outside the locality (such as with broader rural-urban networks). The results have been published through a series of publications (see list) on different academic journals and books focused on rural sociology and rural policy. We outline the results in the next section.

#### 4 . 研究成果

The study was a successful first step in exploring lifestyle entrepreneurship and lifestyle migration in depopulating rural areas in Japan, focusing on the connections with sustainable lifestyles, quality of life, and community resilience. **The research project has led to the publication of 9 works** (6 journal articles and 3 book chapters). The works use the empirical research findings collected during the research, making **theoretical contributions to the discussions on regional and rural revitalization through in-migration**, while also considering aspects relevant to rural resilience and sustainable communities and lifestyles.

The papers also offer **policy recommendations on how to strengthen programs aimed at attracting newcomers to rural areas**. The PI also presented the work at **six international conferences**, including one as invited keynote speaker and another as the session organizer. Through this project, the PI has also **started international academic collaborations** with researchers in Italy, the UK, Canada and the US. For example, one international collaboration has led to the publication of a special issue on Rural Entrepreneurship Education in the Journal of Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy. Furthermore, a new Special Issue proposal on “Rural Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice” has been successfully accepted by the Journal of Small Business Economics. Finally, the PI has also been involved in an ongoing special issue on “Alternative Food Networks for Sustainable, Just, Resilient and Productive Food Systems” in the Journal of Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems, which currently has 14 published articles.

In connection with this project, the **PI is now participating in a Knowledge Frontiers 2024 project called “INTANGIBLE: Understanding the socio-cultural dimensions of island population change in Scotland, England, Canada and Japan,”** an international study focused on remote island communities and with many connections to rural in-migration. **This international research collaboration focuses on in-migration and cultural change in rural and remote areas, with partners from the UK and Canada.** Participation in this project will enable the use of the results collected from the research conducted so far from a comparative perspective, to better understand the extent to which Japan’s rural depopulation and migration issues, and the policies undertaken by the Japanese government to attract migrants to rural areas, might be adapted to other regions. Despite cultural, social and economic differences, other places affected by rural depopulation will benefit from testing strategies directed at supporting rural newcomers and their integration into the local community as part of a more holistic approach to rural revitalization focused on quality of life.

Finally, given that some aspects of the research could not be fully developed, the PI also intends to continue the original line of research through successive KAKENHI finding applications, particularly focusing on the concept of organic farming clusters connected to rural-in-migration, and to extend the research to European countries and European partners as well.

5. 主な発表論文等

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3. 雑誌名 Journal of Rural Problems	6. 最初と最後の頁 36 ~ 43
掲載論文のDOI (デジタルオブジェクト識別子) 10.7310/arfe.58.36	査読の有無 有
オープンアクセス オープンアクセスとしている (また、その予定である)	国際共著 該当する

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2. 論文標題 Hybrid food networks and sustainability transitions: Shared and contested values and practices in food relocalisation and resocialisation	5. 発行年 2022年
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2. 論文標題 From locked-down to locked-in? COVID-induced social practice change across four consumption domains	5. 発行年 2022年
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3. 学会等名 SICRI “ Islands and Migration ” Research Symposium (国際学会)
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4. 発表年 2021年

〔図書〕 計0件

〔産業財産権〕

〔その他〕

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6. 研究組織

氏名 (ローマ字氏名) (研究者番号)	所属研究機関・部局・職 (機関番号)	備考

7. 科研費を使用して開催した国際研究集会

〔国際研究集会〕 計0件

8 . 本研究に関連して実施した国際共同研究の実施状況

共同研究相手国	相手方研究機関
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