

Author: Shogo Kudo

Principal Adviser: Associate Professor Yarime Masaru

Student no.:47-106796

Co-Adviser: Professor Onuki Motoharu

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Sustainability in Marginalization Process of Rural Community:

Implication for Managing Aging Societies

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to analyze the marginalization process of rural community, represented by aging and population decline, from the perspective of resident's living condition. In other words, it aims to elucidate the actual changes that residents face in the marginalization process of rural community. A series of field survey was conducted in Yurihonjo City in Akita Prefecture. Total of five rural communities were selected from remote and central area of the city. Field survey was composed of questionnaire-based household survey and interview survey in each community. In order to capture the living condition of residents, the applied variables in the questionnaire were set based on the categories in Sustainable Development Indicators. This process ensured a wider perspective on capturing living condition of residents. The comparative analysis of the result first illustrated a significant difference on farming type between remote and central community. In remote community, more

households are engaged in cultivation for self-consumption purpose than central community.

This finding implies that various activities may gradually change their contents rather than their immediate disappearances in the marginalization process. Second, the results of self-evaluation on living condition, future concerns, and residents' willingness to stay in the same community prevailed that the residents of remote community are more concerned on the practical factors to sustain living condition of individual households, while residents of central community expressed higher level of concern on the sustainability of the entire community. Those observed differences in field survey are rooted in the continuous outflow of young population from rural to urban area. This implies the existence of urban system on the other side of those various marginalizing phenomena in rural community. Thus, the result of this study suggests the importance of establishing a new interaction, more of interdependence, between rural and urban areas in today's local governance as one of the potential measures to the current situation of rural community.