

Economic experiences of South Manchuria Railway employees in postwar Japan, 1945-1956

The economic impact of large influxes of population is a topic that has been much debated. This research contributes to those debates by examining one of the most significant, but least researched, examples of postwar migration – the repatriation of more than six million people to Japan after World War II, including both demobilized soldiers and civilians. One pervasive image of Japanese civilian repatriates is that of the immigrant farmer of Manchuria, despite the fact that many returned from other regions, including Korea, Taiwan and Sakhalin, and that repatriates consisted of not only farmers but also colonial government officials, employees of public and private corporations, small business owners, teachers, and priests amongst others. In relation to Japan's postwar economic recovery and growth, this paper will focus on another major group — the employees of Japanese wartime public corporations. In particular, it will examine approximately 100,000 people who had worked for the South Manchuria Railway Company (SMR) and their postwar occupational transitions.

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