

# The Effects of Post-disaster Temporary Housing Approaches on Well-being Restoration in Japan

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## Abstract

In the aftermath of a major disaster, restoring well-being of affected people is just as important as rebuilding physical infrastructures. The loss of housing and forced evacuation can adversely impact well-being of affected individuals, through destruction of their pre-existing local communities. The local communities, characterized by strong ties among members, have significant bonding social capital. Experience from past disasters that prioritize rapid relocation to temporary housing reveal that the pre-existing social capital, in particular bonding social capital, is disrupted, causing social isolation of affected persons and increased mortality.

This paper analyzes the impact of maintaining bonding social capital on well-being restoration, using the data from the diverse approaches to temporary housing allocation that followed the Great East Japan Earthquake as a natural experiment. Some municipalities prioritized community-based allocation, while others focused on household-level allocation. The former emphasized social capital preservation, while the latter prioritized swift provision of improved living conditions.

The results from analysis of the web survey data collected in 2023 demonstrate that subjective well-being levels are elevated among households who relocated while maintaining their community ties. This finding suggests that the maintenance of bonding social capital contributes to the restoration of subjective well-being.

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