

Abstract of Master's Thesis Academic Year 2007

A Study on Practical Communities Socializing Experiences of the Catastrophe

Various kinds of catastrophic situation have occurred in the world in recent years. One type of catastrophe is a natural one: earthquakes, hurricanes, deluges and volcanic activities. And another is an artificial one: the wars, conflagrations, holocausts and terrorisms called "new war". Of course these types of catastrophe are different at the point of the mechanism that the catastrophe come about, but it's common for the people and communities affected by these catastrophes to need the process that recover from physical and psychic damages.

This thesis examines how the past experience of the disaster recovery remains in present society and influences present people's mind. I propose an alternative analysis that describes restorative lore of the experience of the disaster as a social function theoretically based on Social System Theory proposed by Niklas Luhmann, focusing on the only case the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake occurred at January 17, 1995. This leads on to three fractionated cases: 1) a nonprofit organization community, "HANDS" consists of bereaved families, 2) the community of storytellers narrating their personal experience to people in the memorial museum "the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution", and 3) community radio, "FMYY" organized as a tool of acceleration of communication about recovery of community.

These case study show three different communities beginning with the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and keeping each ongoing activity have mutual function to hand down memory about the disaster to the coming generation in conclusion. In particular, the functions are specified as five as follows: the communication to share and bequeath what the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake is, the communication about an earthquake, the communication about promoting policies about prevention of disasters, the communication of building a relationship and healing over distress in psychic system. This indicates that practical communities born of specific experience play an important role of shifting personal experience to shared memory.

Keywords:

socializing experience, the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, Social System Theory, subjective realities, functional analysis

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