

# The Recovery of Living Conditions after the Great Earthquake

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## Abstract

This paper reports some research results based on the large-scale survey conducted in 2016, 20 years after the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake. The survey was targeted to the current residents of the quake-damaged area in 2016; about 80% of them lived in the damaged area at the time of the quake. We focused on the two questions: “do the quake’s influences persist till 2016?” and “how do the recoveries of living conditions and income conditions comoved for 20 years after the quake?” About the 30% of the quake-time residents answered that they are being suffered from the quake’s influence in 2016. This is not consistent with the dominant view in the natural disaster research, which claims that the disasters’ influences do not persist over time. We guess that the latter view applies only to the aggregate damaged-area economy but does not apply to the individual disaster victims.

We found that the factors like the damages on the house and/or the workplace, the unemployment after the quake, the double-loan ownership for the reconstruction, matter for the persistence of influences. We also found that the delay of the living-condition recovery has a positive correlation with the delay of the income-condition recovery, and that the double-loan ownership lengthens those delays. In addition, we found, the recovery level of income conditions tends to be higher for the post-quake residents than for the quake-time residents. This suggests that the recovery of the aggregate damaged-area economy might reflect the post-quake residents’ strong recovery.

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