

Eras Journal - Caroline Norma

Abstract of Reconstruction in service of the Japanese nation: Yokohama city and the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923

This paper examines the history of the reconstruction of Yokohama city after the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake in Japan and finds a basis of comparison with the reconstruction of Kobe city after the 1995 Great Awaji-Hanshin Earthquake.

It suggests that a prominent feature of both reconstructions was a focus on the building of major national infrastructure projects, and that the enlistment of municipal residents and resources in national infrastructure building is an example of political elites 'cashing in on chaos' to strengthen their own position through disaster reconstruction. By examining the nature of the two earthquake reconstructions, which are separated by more than 70 years, it is evident that some degree of continuity exists in the Japanese nation building project.