INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND SPORT: FROM SIMMEL'S PERSPECTIVE

Koyo Fukasawa

University of Electro-Communications, Tokyo, Japan

Can modern sport contribute to reactivating community in urbanized society? This essay, referring to the feature of urbanization, considers the significance of intergenerational communication to the regeneration of community and the character of sports for promoting exchanges among different generations. In sport activities, we can find, for example "the form of sociability". Sociability implies the ability to enjoy and relish relationships with others and supposes such an attitude.

INTRODUCTION

The appearance of modern sport in our society can be considered to be an inevitable consequence of urbanization. We can recognize that sport has played an important role as a model of modern society and that modern sport especially has created a negative side of society. The transformation of community, the fragmentation of local society, the competitive circumstances, and individualism it has led to, and the deterioration of morale/normative consciousness, are believed to occur in the same way. Thus, the significance of trying to regenerate the intergenerational partnership and to revitalize the community has been talked about continuously. This is why we need intergenerational communication. We hope sport will take back the sense of community lost via the progress of urbanization or the trend toward the nuclear family, and thus restore the previous social order. In Japan, in recent years, with fewer children continuing to develop and corporation's retreat from sport sponsorship, comprehensive community sports clubs are beginning to be formed with heightened expectations for community sports. Such clubs are hoped to be a playground where different generations can enjoy sports and to stimulate local revitalization and intergenerational communication.

Such attempts, however, might presently seem like wax fruit because we have not yet found any basis for local revitalization or reconstruction of community by intergenerational communication.

As I stated, if modern sport brought about a negative aspect of society or if it was a remote cause of the transformation of community or disintegration of local society, it is paradoxical that we would try to reconstruct the local society by means of modern sport activities.

Instead, we should seek another aspect of sport that can activate intergenerational communication and form human relations.

PURPOSE AND ISSUES OF THIS ESSAY

In this essay, I will quest for the nature of sport that promotes intergenerational communication. To make clear this question, I will address the following issues:
1. orientation to community in the urbanizing process,
2. the social background of the request for intergenerational communication: the character of a big city,
3. the necessity of intergenerational communication,
4. the research subjects in intergenerational communication,
5. and the roles, possibilities, and limitations of sport activities toward the promotion of intergenerational communication.

ORIENTATION TO COMMUNITY IN URBANIZING PROCESS

In order to address the social background of the request for intergenerational communication, the subject of urbanization and social change must first be discussed. We can say that this problem has aroused the collapse of local community or the individualism that is a primary feature of modern society. We are driven by an impulse to see a similarity between the thought that has guided us to a dissolution of community and the thought of modern sport.

Actually, we can learn about the movement of recurrence to community in the crisis of local society at

the turn of the 20th century. In the United States, the movement for the revival of traditional community began with industrialization and urbanization. Its main objectives were bringing back participatory democracy, beautification campaigns in cities, and retaining open competition. Against the new educational movements that emphasized individualism, Dewey and Parker set forming community as their goal (Miyamoto, 2001).

In the U. K., the task of education reform was to seek "the society as organization" and the mode of "individuals" who constituted that society in "the school as community" (Yamazaki, 2001).

Under the two models of "Gesellschaft" and "Gemeinshaft" noted by Toennies, the schools in Germany tried to fix the country's Gemeinschaft – like character in response to a Gesellschaft – oriented trend. These attempts took two forms: the first was making schools Gemeinschaft – like in the city and the other was leading a school life in the rural area going out of the city (Watanabe, 2001).

In Japan, economic recovery in the 1960's caused urbanization and movements to form new communities arose to develop community sports or put up community centers. These community activities or situations were hoped to bring back intergenerational ties and to promote reconstruction of the community. We may explain the need for intergenerational communication from those perspectives. However, it is hard to say that these attempts, including educational efforts, were successful.

We can point to the following problems hindering the formation of community-oriented movements:

1. Is it possible to change the urbanized society to a community or to control this society today? Should we regard a city as an environment that is hard to control?
2. Community could subsist as an ideal type or a kind of common fantasy. Is it practically possible to return to a community?

**THE CHARACTER OF A CITY:
THE SOCIAL CONTEXT THAT DEMANDS
INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION**

Now, what character does a city have? In contrast to communities that have common norms or aims, cities could have an association that is characterized by Simmel's comment, "the modern association, the purposive group (Zweckverband), ties comrades together only so far as the firm-defined purpose demands... Otherwise allowing them full freedom" (Simmel, 1992).

We can find other characters of city in intellectualism and functionalism, namely role differentiation or fragmentation. Describing the intellectualistic trait in

a big city, Simmel said: "As contrasted with an emotional or volitional relationship in a small city, in order to live adaptively in the big city where objective culture has been developed, we have to exert our understanding which is the most superficial, conscious and transparent layer in our mind, and has the greatest capacity for adaptability" (Simmel, 1957). The intellectualistic trait could lead to the development of a stereotypical awareness of different cultures or generations. Could it become a barrier to understanding others?

Big cities have also developed objectivity or computability for coping with complexity, as symbolized by the money economy. People have been supporting their own livelihood by the exchange of their abilities for bread and butter or rice through specialized work by a division of labor (Simmel, 1957).

Now, big cities are where we can live if we keep a minimum relationship of roles. Going a little too far, a big city could become a hotbed of NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) or "Hikikomori" in Japanese (to withdraw into a person's own world). "Hikikomori" implies an infantile sense of almighty power and an inclination to avoid committing oneself in society with an interest in it, as well as a fear of or negative attitude toward building relationships with others. The cause and effect relationship is not adequate for explaining these cases, so we had better think of it as a social issue. In other words, this problem could happen to the best of us. "Hikikomori" may occur when people are living without a relationship to society. In fact, it is impossible for "Hikikomori" to exist in countries other than advanced countries having urbanized cities. We should also keep in mind that in normal adults, similar characteristics to "Hikikomori" may be recognized. That is to say, normal adults may be living only for their work, so that they are forced to experience poor or fixed interpersonal relations, or their circumstances subject them to achievement-oriented and impersonal relationships. When someone can live and cope with life only in determinate interpersonal relationships, we would say that it is potentially a "Hikikomori" situation even if that person achieves social status.

The requirement in getting over these underlying problems is not exactly to recall the community like logic that tries to maintain one group continuously. Actually, I think that it is difficult to advance normative consciousness or boost morale through building a sense of community in today's society. The trend toward socially differentiating or complexifying the development of technology could bring blurred sensibility or impaired judgment. So-called "modern subjects" face the task of having to keep independent minded intention, judgment, and moral sense against those tendencies.

Today's modern societies with urbanization are becoming more and more in need of communication. In

other words, high modernity is the time that most needs communication, because the sense of consideration to others is increasingly demanded as modernity makes progress and our society reaches maturity as an "advanced information society" or a "consuming society". In contemporary society with high modernity, the social attributes that offer the frame of reference of "social standing" or "community norm" are almost of no use. People now need to form close ties with others and gain their approval relying on their own communication skills. Through such communication, the fragmentary life could transform into a new life with the comprehensive acceptance of the individual.

Now, I will point out two purposes of intergenerational communication:
1. To establish a wealth of human relations.
2. To share private wants with other and create a public nature.

NEED FOR INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Intergenerational communication may be examined from two perspectives, those of the individual and the organization.

From the standpoint of the individual, it is efficient and necessary to enliven communication, for example, in the minimum unit of a family or a sphere in which familiarity is kept. In addition, interaction between persons of different natures also deepens their self-understanding. For example, richer and broader communication is hoped for in the intergenerational sport activities in clubs than in activities by age group. At puberty, young people face many matters that are unknown to them or beyond their comprehension. They are tormented with what they don't understand, e.g. how others see them or the meaning of someone else's action. Because others' behaviors are beyond their comprehension, they lack key communication skills. However, they can meet a variety of life and different values through involvement with different generations and they could also better understand themselves.

From the perspective of the organization, intergenerational communication is hoped to promote the vitalization of social groups. The effort by each individual who shares a purpose and its value would improve the general social standard.

WHAT IS "SPORT FOR STIMULATING INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION"? WHAT ARE ITS POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS?

What sport activities for stimulating intergenerational communication can we imagine if we had to rethink from the perspective of the "subjective culture" (meaning sport as a form of sociability) that Simmel proposes? Sociability implies the ability to enjoy and relish relationships with others and supposes an attitude like this. The participants involved in sports, in this situation, do not deal with others instrumentally, but sustain ties in order to have a relationship with each other. Sports will pull their own weight as a medium that joins participants. In sports, the players will be asked to control their desires or inconsiderate behaviors while they might enter into a connection with others freely without being expected to meet social demands or produce any results.

To play a sporting game with different generations could also affect those who are past their physical best by encouraging them to challenge themselves as well as others and increasing their vitality.

HOW SHOULD MODERN SPORT BE MODIFIED FOR INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION? INTRODUCTION OF A HANDICAPPING SYSTEM

A sporting game in which different generations play is hard to practice by rule-setting on formal equality because of the difference in performance levels. It would be necessary to set the rules by introducing a handicapping system. The task becomes how to create common rules of a game so that participants can raise the level of fun. It is also possible to deepen the understanding of others and self by having a discussion on the rule-setting.

ORGANIZING TEAMS BY DIFFERENT GENERATIONS

By specifying that teams must be intergenerational, the game will promote cooperation among different generations and make communication active. If that's so, the team members might need understanding of others and concern for others.

Sport as a "form of sociability" aims to enjoy relations themselves in a sport game, which is the link, for example, between an offensive player and a defensive player in a ball game, the pitcher and catcher in baseball, partners in tennis, and so on. Players are expected not to accomplish some achievements or meet social demands but to control their arbitrary conduct or selfish want in a liberal relationship. In other words, they

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are expected to have a delicate sense of role distance. I hope that those types of sport games will expand into a model of lifelong sports.

At the end of this essay, I'll refer to the question of whether the intergenerational communication in sport activities could extend to daily life. Maybe this issue will link to socialization through sports. The intergenerational relation established in sporting events may stay only in that situation since its character is similar to that of urbanized society, in which people share a part of their lives with others in an arbitrary manner. In fact, it is not improbable that the intergenerational communication would fade away at the end of a sports event. Thus, intergenerational communication is unlikely to have an impact on our daily life in general. It could be hard to discover the function of the comprehensive community sports clubs, which regenerate community. Except for a regenerative function, we should seek an association model of sports clubs aiming at social relationships.

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MEZIGENERAČNÍ KOMUNIKACE A SPORT: SIMMELŮV POHLED
(Souhrn anglického textu)

Může moderní sport přispět k reaktivaci komunity v urbanizované společnosti? V této eseji, týkající se urbanizace, uvažujeme o významu mezigenerační komunikace pro obnovu komunity a o povaze sportu umožňující posilovat kontakty mezi různými generacemi. Tyto možnosti nacházíme ve sportovních aktivitách, které jsou „formou společenskosti". Společenskost vyžaduje vztah, díky němuž se lze radovat z kontaktů s ostatními, a tento přístup také předpokládá.

Klíčová slova: komunita, urbanizace, společenskost.

Assoc. Prof. Koyo Fukasawa, Ph.D.

University
of Electro-Communications
Chofugaoka 1-5-1
Chofu-shi
Tokyo
Japan

Education and previous work experience
1999–2003 assistant profesor in the department of human communication,
1998–1999 researcher in Nippon Sport Science University in Tokyo,
1991–1998 doctoral program in health and sport science at University of Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan.
Scientific orientation
The philosophy of rules in sport, the concept of sport and competition, the communicative character of the body.
First-line publications
Fukasawa, K. (2005). The meaning of competition for physical education: Are competition and cooperation opposed to each other? In H. Tomozoe & Y. Okade (Eds.), *The principles of physical education as liberal education*, 57–62. Japan: Taishukan.
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