

【Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (S)】

Ecological future making of childrearing in contact zones between hunter-gatherers and agro-pastoralists in Africa

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Purpose and Background of the Research

Background: This project is a study to challenges the “crisis of child rearing”, which has become often voiced in recent years. Many of the crises of contemporary society have been implicated by modernity, and when confronted with them we often look back to the hunter-gatherers. In the late 18th century, Rousseau envisioned the “natural man,” or man in his natural state, living autonomously in small groups with little inequality. In the 20th century, anthropologists began to report on hunter-gatherers reminiscent of the natural man. Such research has been reflected in the human images that form the basis of modern society. Since then, however, research has made significant progress, revealing a picture of hunter-gatherer societies that does not necessarily fit the early reports. It is now essential to get out of the palm of Rousseau’s hand and elucidate the formation process of cultural diversity in hunter-gatherer societies in relation to the ecological environment, surrounding ethnic groups, nations, and other social institutions.

Purpose: From this perspective, we will conduct action research in Botswana, Namibia, and Cameroon, where Japan has a world-class record of research on hunter-gatherer societies, and based on the analysis of video materials obtained, and clarify the process by which habitus, or the physical disposition that generates cultural actions and thoughts, and its surrounding microhabitats, i.e., familiar behavioral, linguistic, and institutional environments, are mutually constructed (Fig. 1).

In this way, this project aims to understand the link between social transformation and socialization in theory, and in practice, to construct a better future for children who are now being socialized. This will allow us to re-found the humanities and social sciences and to study with the societies and people of Africa, which has experienced remarkable growth in recent years.

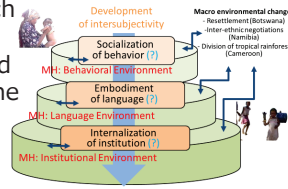


Fig.1 Mutual construction of habitus and microhabitats (MH)

Expected Research Achievements

The three areas were chosen because Africa is expected to undergo the greatest social change among all the continents over the next few decades and is therefore important for building a global future, and because these three areas are important for understanding the negotiation, fusion and development of diverse views of nature, subsistence and culture, since they cover a wide range of climatic environments, from steppes to tropical rainforests, and are all contact zones between hunter-gatherers and agro-pastoralists. Specific research plans for the three areas are described below.

Central Botswana (macro-environmental change: resettlement): In Botswana, we will focus on the reorganization of health-related CCI due to the resettlement of the G|ui and G|jana, who for many years led a hunter-gatherer lifestyle in the Kalahari Desert. Botswana has a history of overcoming the HIV epidemic and now, like Japan, is confronting the corona disaster. In collaboration with University of Botswana, which has a MoU and student exchange agreement with Kyoto University, the project will promote

action research on child health promotion. Specifically, regarding the socialization of behavior, we will analyze the transformation of children's hygiene behavior in the settlement following the construction of additional latrines. Regarding the embodiment of language, we will implement health education using storytelling and examine its effectiveness. Regarding the internalization of institution, we will clarify the generational differences in health concepts that occurred with the introduction of modernization policies.

North-central Namibia (ibid.: Inter-ethnic Negotiations): In Namibia, the !Xun and #Akhoe, regional minorities and hunter-gatherers, and the Owambo, majority agro-pastoralists, have been negotiating for centuries. We will focus on how this relationship has been restructured since Namibia's independence in 1990. Therefore, we will conduct action research with graduate students from the University of Namibia and Kyoto University, where co-tutelle is promoted, to facilitate inter-ethnic exchange among children. On the behavioral aspect, we will identify changes in children's eating habits due to the promotion of agricultural practices and weaning foods. On the language aspect, we will analyze the practices of multilingualism in early childhood education, which is aimed at reconciliation among ethnic groups. On the institutional aspect, we will discuss the reorganization of children's identities in line with the revitalization of traditional culture.

South-eastern Cameroon (ibid.: Rainforest Partitioning): In Cameroon, we will focus on how Baka hunter-gatherer are reorganizing their ecological knowledge (EK) following the division of the rainforest into national parks and commercial logging areas. In the area, there is a field station (FS) of Kyoto University, which has resumed dispatching researchers. This project will also use the FS as a base to conduct action research to revitalize children's acquisition of EK. On the behavioral aspect, we will implement temporary childcare during women's subsistence activities and clarify the effects on multiple-child care, which has been the focus of many researchers on child-rearing and attachment. On the language aspect, we will conduct classes on traditional knowledge for caregivers and clarify its impact on children's acquisition of EK. On the institutional aspect, we will discuss the impact of the introduction of welfare policies on traditional child care and care for children with disabilities.

Overall: Furthermore, synthesizing these three cases, we will discuss the process of reorganization of the behavioral, language, and institutional environments in response to macro environmental changes, and the general characteristics of the process by which young children develop intersubjectivity through socialization of behavior, embodiment of language, and internalization of institution. The annual plans are as follows.

Academic Significance and Ripple Effects

1. To overcome the weakness of child development research based on methodological individualism through a microscopic analysis of CCI, and to elucidate the interdependence of the developmental process of culturally mediated intersubjectivity and the process of modifying cultural frameworks and environments through action.
2. To integrate and develop the communication research of the principal investigator and his colleagues from an ecological perspective, and to comprehensively theorize the roots of sociality. This will open up and establish an academic field that bridges anthropology, psychology, linguistics, sociology, economics, and other fields.
3. To present creative options for resolving social conflicts in each area in response to the aforementioned macro environmental changes, and to support the construction of a better future.

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