

生活史に見る時間意識の日独比較

——主観的個人化を中心として——

Comparison of Time Consciousnesses in Life History Narratives between Germany and Japan

—— Focusing on the subjective Individualization ——

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time consciousnesses, narrative, individualization, Germany, Japan

<要 約>

In this paper, time concepts observed in analyzing life history are compared between Germany and Japan. The analysis is focused especially on the way of thinking of 'individual time', which contains a modern idea that an individualized person can decide about his life and live a progressive life.

The findings are as follows: in modern Germany the concept of individual time was shared among middle-class men. Now this way of thinking spreads among other people, that is to say, women and working-class people. Although Japan imported the ways of thinking from Europe, even middle-class men did not have the concept of individual time or, to be precise, they understood it slightly differently.

These differences may not necessarily continue as they have, however. Now Japanese society is faced with structural transformation, which forces people to live an individual life. As a result, the narrative form of Japan may become more similar to that of Germany in the near future.

1 Introduction

Time is not always conceived in the same way, that is; time consciousness is different in each group. G. Gurvitch explains that social time is not only different from time to time and from culture to culture, but also from class to class, from group to group. In a society, there is not only one certain unified monolithic time, but rather a spectrum of time ⁽¹⁾. However, even if there are various time concepts, as A. J. Gurjewitsch points out, a dominant social time exists in each society. The social time of the dominating group or class continues to be decisive, until they lose their control over the social life and their influential ideological power ⁽²⁾. Time consciousness dealt with in this paper is that of the dominating group. In spite of differences, in my opinion, some time concepts and consciousness are common to many societies, for example time concepts that underlie modern industrial society, which had their birth in Europe and were imported by many non-European countries in the process of modernization.

These time concepts can also be seen in Japan. Since the Meiji-Restoration in 1868, Japanese society has accepted not only modern systems and institutions in western society, but also their way of thinking, including time concepts. The modern way of thinking originating in Europe, however, was not always received without any change. Some ideas were directly accepted. Some were changed a little and accepted. These processes can occur not only in Japan but also in every culture, when systems or ideas in a foreign culture are imported. Moreover we Japanese have received the time concept that was a little transformed sometimes without knowing that it was transformed, and believe that this concept is the same as that in western society.

As an example of that, the concept of working time can be taken. Excessive working time among Japanese businessmen was criticized by people in western society between the second half of 1980's and early in the 1990's. For the people in European society, especially in Germany, it was not understandable that people in Japan did not stop working far long, when Japan had become a well off society. For Japanese, it was difficult to understand how western people could easily shorten their working time individually. What the phrase 'working time' means in German and in Japanese – 'Arbeitszeit' in German and 'rodo jikan' in Japanese – and the phrase 'spare time' means – 'Freizeit' in German and 'jiyu jikan' in Japanese – are of course not completely different, but not quite the same.

In this paper, I will focus on the way of thinking of 'individual's time', which seems to be related to the concept of working time and of spare time in modern society and which contains a modern idea that a person – to be precise, an individualized person – can decide about his life and live a progressive life.

The construction of this paper is as follows. Firstly, the works about time consciousness in Europe, especially in Germany, will be examined to ascertain what scientists in Europe considers as the main characteristics of dominant time consciousnesses in modern western society. Secondly, the narratives of life history collected in my research in Germany will be analyzed as to how the subjects interpret and express their own life history. Thirdly, the analysis in a final report of a joint research project that gathered Japanese narratives of life history will be examined. Finally, the slight differences in time consciousness between Japan and Germany in reference to 'individual time' will be inferred from life history analysis.

2 The characteristics of modern time concepts conceived by western scientists

The first issue to be investigated is what western scientists regard as the characteristics of modern time consciousnesses concerning a person's life. It is induced by analysis of time studies by western scientists. From the examination of the works by Gurjewitsch, R. Koselleck, and R. Vierhaus, it is becoming clear that scientists in

Europe consider an open future, a linear line, abstractness, and progress, both in society and the individual, by human's enterprise as the main characteristics of modern time concepts ⁽³⁾.

As to the style of an autobiography, the experts seem to agree that a structural change occurred in the process of modernization, namely; "from an annalistic conception, where the life gains its structure from the sequence of outside historical or seasonal events, to a progressively historical concept, which is organized around and by his (=an autobiographer's) own self" ⁽⁴⁾. Furthermore, the experts seem to agree that in a typical modern autobiography an author tends to write about his inner life and the process of acquiring his identity. But until quite recently, it was typically a man of middle class (=Bürgertum) who wrote autobiographies with those characteristics, rather than a woman or a man of working class ⁽⁵⁾. Most women at that time had to be 'an existence for others' and had hardly any chance to develop their independent self or to possess her own time ⁽⁶⁾. For people of working class, solidarity was more important than to be independent ⁽⁷⁾.

B. Adam pointed out that the dominant time concepts in modern society were ones which the modern industrial society required of male employees ⁽⁸⁾. Moreover, M. Kohli says that the structural change in an autobiography is related to the process of individualization ⁽⁹⁾. From these, it can be inferred that those who were independent and individuals were mainly male employees of middle class, who were removed from traditional bonds and worked in the modern sector, and that they tended to conceive their life as being apart from others and to interpret their life progressively.

Secondly, a paper by Kohli on the social structure and institutions that gave some people the opportunity to live their own life and to have ideas of living an individual life will be examined. He says that historically the structural transition from a life course regime to another one can be observed and that this transformation process, which is one aspect of individualization from bonds, can be summarized in the following theses. Firstly, the significance of life course as social institution strongly increased. In the new regime, the course of lifespan, a kind of time, became the central principle of structuring and the chronological age is the main criterion. Secondly, a chronological standardized 'normal life course' emerged. Thirdly, the life course was organized around the working system in the modern society, structured according time (age), and divided into three parts; preparing phase (education), activity phase (work), and retirement phase ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Finally, the recent structural changes and thesis of 'individualization' in Germany are investigated. As an example of that, the arguments over individualization by U. Beck, E. Beck-Gernsheim, and Kohli are examined. They insist that since the second half of 20th century, not only middle class men, who had already been individualized in 18th and 19th century, but also men of working class and women are in the process of individualization. On the one hand, more and more workers and women are forced to live a life individually by the social system. It is called objective individualization. On the other hand, the number of people who wish to live their life by themselves has increased. It is called subjective individualization ⁽¹¹⁾.

To sum up, in modern western thought, in this paper mainly in German thought, a person's life is conceived to be independent of other things, such as of his family or other people. A person is supposed to live his life progressively by his own effort on the basis of the institutionally standardized 'normal life course'. This man is the so-called individual. What is written in 'typically modern' autobiographies is the progressive life history of this individual. While, at a certain stage of modernization, those who told their life history in this way were mainly middle class men, more and more people began to regard their life in a similar way to middle class men ¹⁾.

3 Life history analyses

(1) Method of investigation of life history

To compare time consciousness in Japan with that in Germany, life histories were investigated in Germany and Japan. One research was carried out in Nagoya, in the middle of Japan, as one of the most important components of a research project named 'Working hours, spare time, and family time in Japan. How are western time concepts dealt with in Japanese society? (Arbeitszeit, Freizeit, Familienzeit in Japan. Der Umgang mit westlichen Zeitlichkeitskonzepten in der japanischen Gesellschaft)' between 1993 and 1996. The head of this project was S. Shimada, who was an assistant at research institute at the university of Erlangen-Nuremberg in Germany. I was one of his collaborators on this project. The other project was made in Nuremberg and in Cologne in Germany between 1996 and 1998 as my own research project subsidized by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. The number of the interviewees in Japan was 28 and that in Germany 17 (Table1 and 2).

Although the methods of investigation in both research projects were in principle the same, there were a few differences.

In both research projects, the interviewees were asked to tell their life history freely. In their narratives, they were not asked questions by each interviewer. In both projects, the interviewees had to tell their life history to a foreigner. In Nagoya, they told a German woman or Shimada, who has been living in Germany since he was 15 years old; therefore, for the narrators in Nagoya, he was almost a foreigner who did not know the state of things in Japan. In Germany, the interviewees told me, a foreigner for them.

Table 1 Basic attributes of interviewees* in Germany

	birth year	educational level	family status	one's social standing	husband's position	kids number
A	1938	university, A**	married	housewife	dean	4
B	1931	commercial***	widow	housewife	ex-director	4
C	1963	university, A	married	doctoral student	dentist	1
D	1944	commercial	married	part-time employee	employee	2
E	1966	university, A	married	housewife	dentist	1
F	1932	commercial	widow	housewife	ex-director	2
G	1961	commercial	married	employee	technician	2
H	1960	university, A	married	part-time teacher	assistant at uni.	2
I	1927	commercial	married	housewife	unknown	2
J	1962	university, A	single	employee	—	0
K	1971	university, A	single	student	—	0
L	1938	commercial	married	housewife	ex-engineer	2
M	1965	commercial	married	housewife	minister	2
N	1961	college, A	married	part-time employee	motor shop owner	3
O	1942	grammar****, A	married	housewife	ex-employee	2
P	1938	college, A	married	housewife	trustee	3
Q	1951	university, A	married	teacher	employee	2

* All were femals.

** 'A' means A-level.

*** 'Commercial' means commercial school graduate.

**** 'Grammar' means grammar school graduate.

Table 2 Basic attributes of interviewees in Japan

	birth year	educational level	family status	one's social standing	husband's position	kids number
Ma(f*)	1951	unknown	married	employee	president	2
Ak(f)	1943	university	single	teacher	—	0
An(f)	1969	college	single	private teacher	—	0
Ab(f)	1957	university	married	housewife	employee	4
Ao(m**)	1925	elementary	married	ex-driver	—	unknown
Na(m)	1925	elementary	married	cofee shop owner	—	3
Ka(m)	1947	university	married	flats owner	—	2
Mo(m)	1957	junior high	married	judicial scrivener	—	0
Mi(m)	1950	college	married	ceramic artist	—	2
Sa(f)	1945	barber school	married	boutique owner	barber	2
To(f)	1933	university	married	welfare commisioner	ex-civil servant	2
Td(f)	1944	university	married	part-time employee	employee	3
Mr(f)	1929	junior high	married	housewife	unknown	2
Ky(f)	1957	high school	married	part-time employee	employee	2
Hs(f)	1957	college	married	housewife	employee	1
Ns(f)	1957	university	married	housewife	employee	3
Yk(f)	1964	university	married	housewife	employee	0
St(m)	1957	university	married	independent	—	3
Tr(m)	1950	high school	married	tax accountant	—	1
Sm(f)	1939	junior high	married	independent	independent	4
Ml(f)	1940	high school	widow	no occupation	ex-employee	3
Kr(f)	1956	university	married	housewife	teacher	3
Us(f)	1948	unknown	married	housewife	employee	2
Og(f)	1938	high school	married	yoga teacher	employee	2
Ni(f)	1958	college	married	piece worker	employee	2
Mt(m)	1935	unknown	married	ex-teacher	—	2
Sb(f)	1935	junior high	married	part-time employee	employee	1
Mk(f)	1929	unknown	married	housewife	cofee shop owner	3

* 'f' means female.

** 'm' means male.

However, there were two differences between the projects. In Germany, after finishing their narrative, the interviewees were asked their opinion, such as; “What do you think about women being independent and role division by gender? ”, whereas in Japan not. Moreover, while both men and women were interviewed in Japan, only women were interviewed in Germany, due to limitations of time, money and the number of the personnel. I was the only person who did this research in Germany, because it was my personal research. The reason why women were chosen as interviewees was as follows. Firstly, according to the results of research on autobiography in Germany, the narrative form of some women is becoming similar to that of men these days ⁽¹²⁾. Secondly, Shimada advised me that to investigate women's life history would show the difference of narrative forms between individualized people and not individualized people in Germany. Therefore, I decided to focus on life history of women in my research in Germany.

(2) Analysis of life histories in Germany

After the life history narrative, interviewees were asked if they wanted to be independent and what they thought about the gender role. All interviewed women over 50 were for the role and did not want to be independent. Most

women less than 50 years old were against the role and wanted to be independent, with the exception of one woman (Ms. M, born in 1965). The group of the women who did not wish to be independent is called group-A and the group who wished to be independent group-B, here. These differences in opinions seem to correspond to the way of narrative, although similarities can be seen.

Both groups had a tendency to start their story at their birth, to continue with their childhood, school days, working life, and marriage (if they had married), and to end with their present situation, that is; they told their story chronologically.

The following differences, however, can be seen between the two groups. The women of the group-A had a tendency to tell mainly facts which occurred in their life. For their each life event, they did not say what they had wanted or future plan at that time. Furthermore, it is difficult to divide the narrative about their life from narrative about their family members lives in their story, that is; they often talked a lot about their family members when they were narrating their life history. From this, I infer that the group-A did not have isolated 'self' image. In contrast, in narratives of the group-B, when they were talking about the events that were important for them, they tended to explain the reasons for their action, namely; motives, which came from their inside, not outside. They said that they had had some purpose in their mind, taken adequate measures, and finally had some result of this action, namely; they told their life history as a history of self-realization. Moreover, they did not talk much about their family. In their mind, their own life and their family members lives seemed to be clearly separated. These tendencies were the same as those in autobiographies of middle class men mentioned above.

(3) Life history analyses in Japan

As we have seen above, in the modern western society, people live their life according to a chronological standardized 'normal life course', which is divided into three parts; preparing phase (education), activity phase (work), and retirement phase. The Japanese government also started to build the modern life course regime after Meiji-Restoration. It was around the beginning of 20th century when the school system, modern enterprises, and retirement system were completed and the three parts of the modern life course regime was established in Japan. At that time, however, only a certain group of people lived their life according to this life course model. It was after World War II when most people in Japan came under the influence of this regime ²⁾.

The life histories in Nagoya were analyzed by Shimada, a German collaborator and me. And it was Shimada who took final responsibility for what was written in the final report. This report written in German assumed its readers were German, therefore what was mentioned in it was something strange for Germans about Japanese life history narrative. The matters made special mention of can help us understand what seems to be different from an outside perspective. The contents of the report that seem to be important for my analyses are as follows.

Among those men and women who were investigated in Nagoya, several differences could be seen. Firstly, the male narrators told their life history chronologically, while the narrative form of the women varies; some told chronologically, others narrated by subject matters, for example about stay at Korea or hardship of caring for a grandmother in-law in case of Ms. Ma (born in 1951). Secondly, the contents of narrative were different. Most part of the narrative of male interviewees consisted of his birth, school life and his job career. They seldom talked about family life, their wife and marriage. On the other hand, among female narrators, there were only few who talked about their job career to some extent. Most female interviewees talked about little or nothing about their job. Differences among women can be seen, too. Relatively young women under 30 who had no child talked about their birth, childhood, school days, and sometimes a little about their career lives chronologically. The housewives with chil-

dren often talked mostly about their family life and a little about events before marriage, such as about their childhood or job. In their narrative, there was no continuity between the time before and after marriage. By the women who were divorced, or did not get married by a certain age, in other words, the women who thought they deviated from 'the standard female life course', the reasons of their deviation were mainly told and constructed the plot of their explanatory narrative.

In spite of these differences, when they were talking about decisions in their life, all interviewees, irrespective of gender and age, told firstly about social contexts at that time, and then the process of decision, often not mentioning their own will, but mentioning that this was done by mutual consent⁽¹³⁾.

4 Life history and time consciousnesses

(1) Life history comparison between Japanese and 'subjectively individualized' German

Comparing the narratives of Japanese interviewees with those of 'subjectively individualized' Germans, the following two differences can be seen.

The first difference is what was mentioned at the beginning of a narrative. All German narrators started their narrative with the word 'I'. For example, "I was born in 1931 in the suburbs of Nuremberg called Groß-Grünbach" (Ms. B), "I am called N. I was born on June 6th, 1961" (Ms. N), or "I am going to be 31 years old next month. I am married and have a child" (Ms. C born in 1963). On the other hand, some Japanese narrators started their life history by talking about their family's situation before they were born.

Secondly, how to narrate the turning points of their life must be mentioned. Those who wanted to be independent in Germany told their motives or own decisions, then means taken for their purpose, and finally the result of their trial, when they were talking about the turning point of their life. They talked as if they made their turning point by themselves. In other words, they created their chance by themselves. They had the idea that they decided their life by themselves and constituted their narrative progressively.

In one example, Ms. E (born in 1966) said, "In my childhood I wanted to be successful in my life. ... That was because I got A-level". After graduating from university, however, she did not find a job. She said, "At first, I did not know at all how to rebuild my life". Her words show that she thought it was her who made her life.

In another example, Ms. G (born in 1961) talked about the turning point of her life as follows.

At that time, I wanted some change in my life. I finished my vocational education at the age of 18 and worked at that shop (where I had worked as a student assistant before) for six months. In addition to that, after the shop closed at six o'clock in the evening, I worked at MacDonald's as a cashier between eight thirty and midnight, because I wanted to gain more money and to save it. Six months later, I went to England to work as an au pair girl. That is; I did some housework and child care at a family in England and was offered a room, meal, and some pocket money. Because I had some spare time, I was able to go to school ... for one year. ... This was the important year for me, because this brought me a decisive change. I left my home. That was on one hand a matter of no small consideration. On the other hand, however, it was very important. I tried to get along with those who I did not know in a new place. And I succeeded in it. ... I got the Cambridge certification. ... That year satisfied me. I had had an aim to get the certification. I had thought that this certification would be of use for finding a new job in Germany. It was for me important at least to improve my English ability (interview).

Her story consisted of setting up her aim, selecting measures, and then achievement of her goal; she aimed to improve her English, worked not only by day, but also by night to save money for the study in England, and finally she got the Cambridge certification.

On the other hand, when talking about the turning point of their life, the interviewees in Nagoya tended to talk about other important persons' will or advice and, sometimes, to add their agreement with other person's advice moderately. For example, Ms. An (born in 1969) mentioned firstly the advice of one professor at her Alma Mater, when she was talking about her decision to study in England. Mr. Mi (born in 1950) also mentioned the advice of his high school teacher and that of his father, when he was talking about the reason why he went to a college of art, and then he added his opinion that he was for it, too. Mr. Mi said,

(In my high school days) I wondered what I would do in the future. ...My father said to me that I could not probably be an employee...that I had better find something to do alone. I liked drawing and fashioning. ... And I was good at it. My father advised me to study art. ... I thought it was no matter at which art school I was going to study. ... I thought I could study everywhere if I had will to study. ... I went to a teacher who advised students about their course and asked, "I will study at an art school. Do you know some school that I can enter?" He answered, "With your high school record, you can enter the art college named 'Z Tandai' without taking entrance examination", only if I took drawing test. I said, "It seems easy to enter it, please put me on the recommendation list to the school" (Interview).

From his narrative, it is inferred that Mr. Mi interpreted his life as follows; he did not have clear image about his future at the beginning. But important others, in this case his father and his teacher, got involved with his decision process and gradually he made his future vision to study at an art college. He said he did not know what to do, then mentioned the advice of his important others, and implied that he agreed with it.

Another example is Ms To (born in 1933). Seeing her life in retrospect she said, "I had become a teacher against my will (kokoro narazumo)" and "I was forced to be a teacher (narasarechatta)", although she seemed not to be reluctant to be a teacher, in my eyes. She said that she had not been satisfied with her former job, and then one of her brothers had told her that a teacher had asked him to ask her to be a teacher at an elementary school, due to shortage of teachers. She hesitated, because she had no teacher's license at that time. But she became a teacher and this vocation satisfied her. On another point, she said she had become a head of women's section in the Japan Teachers Union "because I had been asked". Furthermore, the reason why she had become a welfare commissioner was also that "I had been asked". For Ms. To, it seems more important to mention other people's wish than her will.

Another characteristic is they tended to explain that they got something by chance, for example Mr. Ao (born in 1925) and Mr. Mo (born in 1957) talked that they found their job "by chance" (guzen or tama tama).

It did not seem to be important for them to mention their own will. They conceived that their turning point of their life came from outside, and besides, often suddenly.

This does not mean, in my opinion, that the interviewees in Nagoya did not have any wishes or hopes about their life and the idea of 'ones own life'. For instance, Ms. An mentioned the possibility of making her life by herself in her narrative. Mr. Mi often said in his narrative that his parents told him that he could decide his life course as he wished. But, as Shimada points out, they did not think the process of decision making could be made individually, that is; apart from social context ⁽¹⁴⁾.

To sum up, the narratives of subjectively individualized Germans were based on I-centralized self-image, whereas

those of Japanese depended on social context at each time.

Shimada comments on the time consciousnesses in Japan in the final report, “(In the narratives in Nagoya,) not the history of ‘self-realization’, but the course from one situation to another one is talked. What can be inferred from it is that the semantics of ‘individual’ do not exist in those narratives, despite import of the modern life course model. And this gives us important suggestions when we consider the problem of time consciousnesses, because clear subdivision of time into working time and spare time is only possible with the semantics of individual time. In contrast, the narrative of Ms To shows us that a ‘self’ can be described and conceived only in the contexts of human relationships. Under these circumstances, time is always ‘times’ that is shared with others. It is impossible to divide this time in the perspective of individual into various parts. ... On the one hand, there is a chronological time that is universally adoptable. ... On the other hand, there is an interpersonal time that can be grounded culturally”⁽¹⁵⁾.

(2) Individual time, working time, and spare time in both cultures

The important difference that can be inferred from life history analysis is whom the subjects think time belongs to. In Germany, at least in an individualized person, the individual is supposed to possess his own lifetime and to draw up his future plan about his life. Compared with those of individualized Germans, in Japanese consciousness a person’s time is less clearly separated from time shared with others. That shows why it was and is difficult to shorten working hours in Japan. Shortening one person’s working hour is relatively easy, where the concept of ‘individual time’ prevails and the idea that a person’s time and others time are clearly separated is accepted, whereas where the common time precedes individual time, it is difficult.

Along with the difference above, the meaning of ‘spare time (Freizeit)’ is also different between German (or European languages) and Japanese. It is thought that people are able to have ‘spare time’ in German, only when they earn their living, that is; they are independent, because spare time means free time purchased by work. Therefore, it is impossible to talk about spare time of a man out of employment⁽¹⁶⁾. In comparison, in Japan, I argue that ‘spare time’ or ‘one’s own time (jibun no jikan)’ emerges when the common time ends provisionally. In her life history, Ms. Sa (born in 1945) opened her boutique after fulfilling her obligation to her family including her parents in law. She said that managing the boutique was her hobby, her spare time activity. In the discussion over the existence of a housewife in 1972 in Japan, one theme discussed was spare time of a housewife⁽¹⁷⁾. The discussion about spare time of a housewife would be impossible in western thought, because she does not earn her living. But if people think that spare time emerges after finishing one’s duty or at an interval between duties, not only a workingman, but also a housewife and a man out of employment can have spare time and it is possible to express ‘spare time of a housewife’.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, in modern Germany, the concept of individual time was and is shared by middle class men, who are the dominant group in the society. And now this idea is shared among an increasing number of other people, too. Although Japanese society imported the institutions and ways of thinking from Europe, even middle class men do not have the concept of individual time or, to be precise, they understand this concept a little differently, which influences how people interpret and narrate their life. In relation to that, the concept of working time and spare time are understood slightly differently.

These differences may not necessarily continue as they have, in my opinion. The interpretation and narrative

forms about one's life are not standing on air. They and the social structure are influencing each other. Y. Takeuchi says that the meritocracy in Japan influences the ways of thinking and behaving, which were and in part are typical in the business world of male employees (sarariiman) who graduated from university and worked at large companies. And as male employees became the dominant life model after World War II, this model and the way of thinking and behaving influenced not only male employees but also other people ⁽¹⁸⁾. I infer from it that the characteristics of interpretation and narration of their life seen among the interviewees in Nagoya were also influenced from those of male employees. And the time consciousness is not an exception.

Now Japanese society is being faced with structural transformation, which has caused individualization among women and men of working class in Germany. Although, in Japan, even men of the middle class have not become individualized because of too tightly structured standard life course ⁽¹⁹⁾, this structural change may force men and women in Japan to live an individual life. The fact that many economists and politicians call for 'self responsibility' in newspapers or on TV is an evidence of the tendency towards individualization in Japanese society. As the result of that, the life history narrative form of Japan may become more similar to that of Germany in the near future.

Notes

- 1) Although the tendency that more and more people are going to live an individualized life can be seen ⁽²⁰⁾, I do not think it is possible that all people will wish to and be able to live such a life, as pointed out ⁽²¹⁾.
- 2) As to more precise process of institutionalization of life course in Japan, see the researches by Shimada and Ito ⁽²²⁾ and Ito ⁽²³⁾.

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