

FROM RITUAL DANCE TO DISCO: CHANGE IN HABITUAL USE OF TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL AMONG THE BAKA HUNTER-GATHERERS OF SOUTHEASTERN CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT For centuries Pygmy hunter-gatherers in central Africa formed economic interdependent relationship with farmers based on a barter economy. The recent monetarization of daily transaction changed the local socio-political power balance. Previously, tobacco and alcohol were produced by farmers for self-consumption and were used in the barter of agricultural labor with the Pygmies. We conducted intensive field research in Ndongo Village in early 2009 to supplement ethnographical data from previous research. We have documented and analyzed recent trends in tobacco and alcohol consumption among the Baka to examine their adaptation to the ongoing economic transition from a barter economy to a monetary economy. Whereas the increased opportunities to earn a cash income has led to the excessive consumption of alcohol, smoking and drinking became one of the great pleasures of sedentary village life. The use of social space for drinking and smoking has changed dramatically: From *mbanjo* traditional meeting space to public bars in the village. Baka youths are attempting new ways to forge solidarity at such new social spaces instead of traditional practices of song and dance.

Key Words: Farmer Hunter-gatherer relations; Monetarization; Sedentary life; Solidarity; Cameroon.

INTRODUCTION

The Baka are one of the Pygmy hunter-gatherer groups in the rainforests of the Congo Basin (Hewlett, 1996). Since the 1950s, the Baka have adopted a sedentary life and shifting cultivation (Althabe, 1965). As their lifestyle has become sedentary, based at settlements, there has been a concurrent increase in the consumption of alcohol and tobacco. Today commercially manufactured imported tobacco and alcohol are widely distributed by merchants supplementing locally produced traditional products. This paper describes both the positive and negative aspects of the Baka's smoking and drinking habits in an attempt to examine their adaptation to the sedentary new lifestyle, after a half century of the sedentarization process.

Tobacco and alcohol are favored in many cultures as recreational substances, consumed for enjoyment rather than nutrition (Takada & Shikohin Study Project, 2008). Most previous studies emphasize the negative effects of alcohol and tobacco use in indigenous societies (i.e., poverty, marginalization, exclusion, and exploitation). The introduction of alcohol to the Canadian Inuit society had a destructive impact on individual's health and the local communities as a whole,

a phenomena anthropologists regard as irreversible (Seale et al., 2006). In Africa, alcohol abuse contributes to violence and deaths among the Hadza of Tanzania (Marlowe, 2010: 287). Further, research among the San of Botswana, indicates that drinking associated with the introduction of wage labor led to an increase in violence, including sexual offenses (Ikeya, 2002: 221). In contrast, a few studies, for example Sylvain (2006) demonstrate the positive aspects of drinking among the San. It inspires hope and fosters solidarity in a drastically changing socioeconomic environment.

From a medical standpoint in *The Lancet's* special edition covering "indigenous health," alcoholism and alcohol-related violence is considered a major health risk threatening indigenous people in Africa (Ohenjo et al., 2006). Previous studies, specific to the Pygmy hunter-gatherers of central Africa, also highlighted the risks associated with drinking and smoking. Jackson (2003) reported high levels of alcoholism and domestic violence against women among the Twa in Rwanda. Froment et al. (1993) reported a high prevalence of hypertension (more than 15% of adults) among the Bakola of southwestern Cameroon, probably attributable to excessive use of salt, cigarettes, and alcohol.

Before the adoption of shifting cultivation in 1950s, the Baka maintained economic interdependent relationships with neighboring farmers based on bartering agricultural foods (plantain banana, cassava, rice, yautia, etc.) and forest products (ivory, hunted meat, honey, mushrooms, fruits, medicinal plants, etc.). This is reported for other Pygmy hunter-gatherers of the Congo Basin such as the Mbuti (Ichikawa, 1986), the Efe (Terashima, 1986), and the Aka (Bahuchet & Guillaume, 1982). Previous studies highlighted the importance of agricultural foods, followed by iron tools, as the objects exchanged between farmers and hunter-gatherers (Bailey, 1985; Ichikawa, 1986; Terashima, 1986; Bahuchet, 1990). Recreational substances are regarded as less important for hunter-gatherers than objects that are indispensable for subsistence. However, alcohol and tobacco have frequently been documented as objects of exchange, or gifts given by farmers to hunter-gatherers, throughout the Congo Basin (Ichikawa, 1986; Terashima, 1986; Hanawa, 2004; Takeuchi, 2005; Roulette, 2010; Sakanashi, 2010).

The economic relationship between farmers and hunter-gatherers in the northwestern Congo Basin are thought to have evolved from mutually reciprocal donations of gifts in the barter economy, and later in the monetary economy (Bahuchet & Guillaume, 1982). With this historical background how have the role and significance of recreational substances changed?

Hanawa (2004) conducted research on the socioeconomic relationship between the Bobanda farmers and the Aka Pygmies of Motaba River Basin in northeastern Congo-Brazzaville. In the early 1990s, the Bobanda and the Aka did not use money in any economic exchanges. Hanawa revealed that in their transactions the giving of gifts occurred more frequently than barter exchange. The gift giving was one-sided, with the Bobanda giving items to the Aka. In this case, gifts played a role in maintaining the inequality between the Bobanda and the Aka (i.e., the Bobanda's predominance over the Aka). The Bobanda mostly used recreational substances such as palm wine, tobacco, and marijuana as gifts to their Aka partners (Hanawa, 2004). In the areas where cash economies prevail, Sakanashi

(2010) reported the use of recreational substances by farmers in exchange for labor from the Pygmy hunter-gatherers in southern Cameroon whose neighbors are the Fang. Fang farmers used various objects for exchange and did not pay the full wage in cash. They offered meals, alcohol, and other recreational substances to “motivate” Baka laborers during working hours on farms (Sakanashi, 2010).

However, in southeastern Cameroon, we observed a different situation from those previously reported: The commoditization of the Baka labor force. Thus, we will focus on the social context of the change and continuity in the use of recreational substances, especially tobacco and alcohol, in relation to the considerable increase of Baka wage laborers (Kitanishi, 2006; Hayashi et al., 2010) and the emergence of Baka cacao planters (Oishi, 2012) as a consequence of the sedentary lifestyle in settlements. We will also focus on how the Baka are trying to maintain solidarity using tobacco and alcohol, referencing to the recent change in their social space uses.

RESEARCH AREA, PEOPLE AND METHODS

The research site is situated in Ndongo Village, Moloundou District, Boumba-Ngoko Department in the East Region of the Republic of Cameroon. It is surrounded by dense tropical rainforests with a humid temperate climate. There are two rainy seasons and two dry seasons each year: December to February is the major dry season, March to May is the minor rainy season, June to August is the minor dry season, and August to December is the major rainy season. The landscape is hilly compared to adjacent northern parts of the Republic of Congo and there are a few marshes and swamps with raphia palms. In 2008, there were approximately 600 habitants comprising 300 Baka hunter-gatherers (60 households), 250 Bakwele farmers (40 households), and 50 Hausa and Bamileke merchants. The Baka live in 9 settlements scattered along roads or walkways. 2 of the Baka settlements, Mokakasa and Monbongu,⁽¹⁾ are located particularly close to the farmers’ and merchants’ settlements, forming a mixed settlement area (Fig. 1).

At the settlements, the Baka’s primary activity is shifting cultivation, cacao cultivation, snare trapping, and wage labor (Hayashi, 2000; Hayashi et al., 2010; Oishi, 2012). In the minor dry season of 2007, the Baka adult males devoted 10.3% (74.4/720 observed hours) of their time to their own farm work and 19.7% (141.9/720 observed hours) to wage labor for neighboring farmers and merchants (Hayashi et al., 2010). The Baka adult females devoted 8.3% (59.9/720 observed hours) to their own farm work and 17.1% (123.3/720 observed hours) to wage labor (Hayashi et al., 2010). Most of the Baka possess their own plantations of food and cash crops. Between 1998 and 2000 the Baka households created plantain banana fields of an average size of 0.27 (range, 0.03–1) ha (Kitanishi, 2003). Between 2009 and 2010, 89.2% (58/65) of Baka households possessed their own cacao farms of an average size of 0.8 (range, 0.1–2.8) ha (Oishi, 2012). Although this data shows the progress of sedentarization, the Baka in the research area also continue a temporary hunting and gathering lifestyle in the forest, especially at the end of the major dry season between March and April (Hayashi, 2000; 2008).

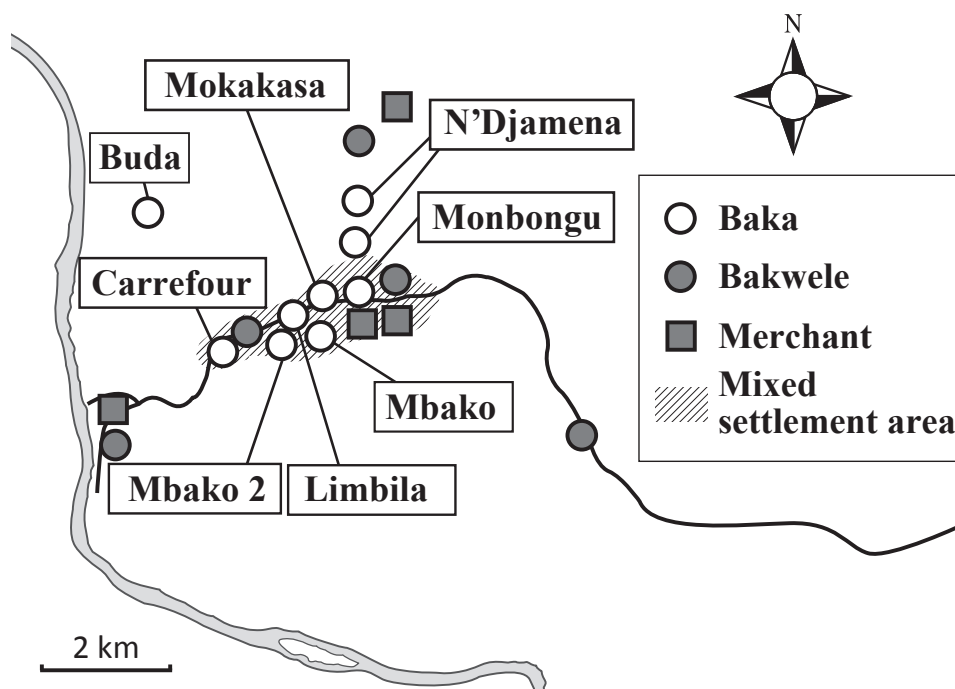


Fig. 1. Distribution of Baka settlements in the research area (March 2009).

Our description relies on ethnographical data obtained in the previous field research, which we have collected at the research site intermittently since 1998. In addition, intensive field research took place from February to March 2009. The period fell at the end of the major dry season, which is a slow season for farming activities, before the slash-and-burn. We used language of Baka, Bakwele, and French in the fieldwork. We first collected basic data (manufacturing processes, distribution, and prices) on all recreational substances observed in the research area. The alcohol content by volume for the locally distilled liquor was measured using a spectroscopic analysis meter (a hand-held alcohol refractometer AL-21alpha, Atago Co. LTD., Tokyo). We measured the frequency and the amount of alcohol consumed during the 10 consecutive days (from 16 to 25, February 2009) for 12 Baka adults (i.e., 6 married couples) by individual tracking method. Before the observation began, we explained the objectives of the research and obtained each participant's consent. The data were supplemented by personal interviews at the end of the day when direct observation was impossible. We observed social interactions associated with drinking and smoking in different situations in the settlement by participatory observation. For comparison to the Baka, a brief interview and participatory observation was conducted with the Bakwele farmers.

UTILIZATION OF TOBACCO, ALCOHOL AND EXOTIC ITEMS BY LOCAL PEOPLE

Tobacco and the Other Smoking Plants

The Baka call all types of tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum* L., SOLANACEAE) *ndako*. Locally produced tobacco leaves are referred to as *mongolo*. We observed a gender difference in the Baka's use of *mongolo*. Tobacco leaves are dried on hot ashes and crushed into pieces between the fingers. The men then roll the powder into a cigarette made with dried Marantaceous leaf to smoke (*bɔpi*). Elder men sometimes use hand-made pipes (*mokondo*) made out of a metallic tube and wood (Fig. 2, Left). Baka women chew *mongolo* powder mixed with ashes. Chewing tobacco is called *najikan* (Fig. 2, Right). Baka adults also enjoy *mongolo* by as snuff (*zong*). Both Bakwele and Baka grow tobacco in their farms, but they do not produce enough to meet demand. Peddlers and merchants bring dried leaves from the other areas of eastern Cameroon, such as Yokadouma City.

In addition to smoking tobacco, some Baka and Bakwele men prefer marijuana (*Cannabis sativa* L., CANNABACEAE), which is called *njama*. A small amount of marijuana is rolled with *mongolo* powder. The Baka also smoke leaves of other wild and cultivated plants. Baka hunters preserve the importance of tobacco in hunting activities. The Baka people procure tobacco leaves in the village and bring them to their mobile camps. When these are finished in the forest, they often use leaves of *botunga* (*Polyalthia suaveolens* Engl. & Diels, ANNONACEAE), *batama* (not identified), and pepper (*alamba* or *mesimemba*; *Capsicum annum* L., SOLANACEAE) instead. The Baka told us these leaves are the “ancestors of *ndako*” used before the arrival of tobacco, which European or Arabic traders brought to the Congo Basin forest in the 16th century (Jeffreys, 1963). According



Fig. 2. *Mongolo* uses by the Baka: An experienced hunter and his pipe (Left); a Baka female adolescent chewing tobacco (Right).

to the Baka, *batama* is the strongest of these plants and can make the smoker drunk and dream of many ancestors. *Botunga* or *Polyalthia suaveolens* is widely used for smoking in other central African societies, including Aka hunter-gatherers of the Central African Republic⁽²⁾ (Roulette, 2010). Although commercially produced paper rolled cigarettes,⁽³⁾ which are called *dorok* in Bakwele, and *ndako na tendele* (which means “tobacco of the Whites”) in Baka, have become popular among the youth, *mongolo* remains the most favored because of its strong taste and aroma.

Alcohol

Palm Wine

Brisson’s dictionary of the Baka language (Brisson, 2010) describes alcohol as *njàmbù*. However, this is not the term used for general alcohol drinks in the research area but only for honey wine (mead).⁽⁴⁾ Alcoholic drinks are generally referred to as *menyoke*, which seems to be borrowed from the Bakwele word *menyok*.⁽⁵⁾ The Lingala word *masanga* is also used. There are 2 types of alcohol locally produced and consumed: Palm wine and distilled liquor.

Palm wine is called as *mbila*⁽⁶⁾ in Baka and *menyok me leer* (which means “alcohol of oil palm”) in Bakwele. Palm wine is used in various areas of Africa from the savanna to the rainforests in tropical Africa (for example, Hanawa & Ichikawa, 1995; Ito, 2010). Hanawa (1996) described how everyday drinking of palm wine forms social ties among the Bondongo farmers of the northeastern Congo-Brazzaville. *Raphia* palms (*Raphia* spp., ARECACEAE) are a dominant feature of the landscape in the lowland marshes. The Bondongo depend on *raphia* palms, which allows the routine harvest of palm wine for extended periods without having to harvest the tree. As *raphia* palms grows some distance from the settlements, palm wine is produced from oil palms (*Elaeis guineensis* Jacq., ARECACEAE) in the research area.

Both Baka and Bakwele men prepare the palm wine. Its consumption is not limited to adult men. Women and children also sometimes enjoy it. Oil palms are a semi-domesticated species of tree that rely on human activity for reproduction (Hanawa, 1996). They are abundant in abandoned settlements and agricultural fallows. After the plant body is cut down, the top of the pith is notched. The sweet sap flows out from the notch and in half a day ferments to become alcohol (3–4% of alcohol content by volume). A piece of tree bark is often added to the container to give a bitter flavor. We observed a variety of flavors produced by the addition of different species of tree bark. Some barks make palm wine quite strong. As over-fermented wine becomes too acidic, the sap is harvested twice a day, in the morning and evening. 2–3 L of palm wine is produced per day from an individual palm. The sap harvest can continue for several weeks.

Distilled liquor

Distilled liquor is the most frequently consumed alcohol in the research area. It is called *menyok me du* (which means “alcohol of fire”) in Bakwele, or in common names of *ngolongolo* and *arki*.⁽⁷⁾ Distilled liquor is widely produced and

consumed in central African farming societies such as Ngandu (Takeda, 1990), Songola (Ankei, 1995), and Lese (Terashima, 1997). As it is used in exchange for labor in agriculture, the frequency of distillation increases in active farming seasons such as the periods of slashing and burning to create new fields, and of cacao harvest. Distilled liquor is commoditized and can be purchased at the price of 1,000 FCFA per L, and 100 FCFA per glass (approximately 0.1 L). Distilled liquor is manufactured throughout the year. Preparation and vending of distilled liquor is the women's role in many farming societies in tropical Africa (for example, Kakeya & Sugiyama, 1985; Terashima, 1997). Alcohol production provides a valuable opportunity to generate a cash income for the Bakwele women, especially for single mothers and widows.

In southeastern Cameroon, cassava is used as a raw material for the production of alcohol and sprouted maize as the starter for fermentation. The Bakwele use bitter cassava for alcohol making, which is planted on a larger scale than sweet cassava. Bitter cassava contains hydrocyanic acid and needs to be detoxified. After the plant surface is peeled, cassava tubers are soaked in water for about 3 days to remove the toxins, and then dried in the sun. While the cassava tubers are prepared, seeds of dried maize are placed in water to germinate, and then re-dried and pounded into powder. The dried cassava tubers are also pounded into powder and then boiled. Mixed with maize powder, unrefined muddy cassava undergoes fermentation for 1–2 days before the distillation.

Distillation takes between 3 hours and half a day. Bakwele women who regularly distil alcohol have special huts close to their cassava farms. Distillation requires distillers to stay in hot and humid environments around a fire. When the steam comes out, the distiller has to cool the metallic tube that the hot air passes through to facilitate the conversion of alcohol gas into liquid. The distillation of a drum of unrefined fermented cassava produces 5–12 plastic bottles (equivalent to 7.5–18 L) of alcohol. The first and second bottles have a higher alcohol content than the latter bottles. The first bottles had 30–45% of alcohol content by volume.

The first bottles are often given to the distiller's husband or boyfriend as a gift. Then the remainder of the bottles are mixed. The distilled liquor after mixing had 16–33.2% of alcohol content by volume ($N = 15$, 22.6% average, $SD = 5.9$). The Baka women help the Bakwele women to prepare distilled liquor. However, Baka women seldom prepare it by themselves. It may be partly because they do not have the capacity to produce a surplus of cassava and maize after the amount needed for their own consumption.⁽⁸⁾ Baka women know the distillation techniques, but they do not practice it regarding it as farmer women's work.

Commercially manufactured alcohol

Since the escalation in cacao prices in the latter half of 2000s, more non-Muslim merchants, many of whom are Bamileke and Bamoun from the central and western regions of Cameroon, have been coming to the research area. They bring products such as beer, whisky, and red wine from cities. Although these products are 2–4 times more expensive than they are in large cities,⁽⁹⁾ they are popular among the local people. Bottled beer and red wine in paper packs are too expensive for most of the Baka to purchase on a regular basis. However, a small, more



Fig. 3. A variety of plastic bags of whisky.

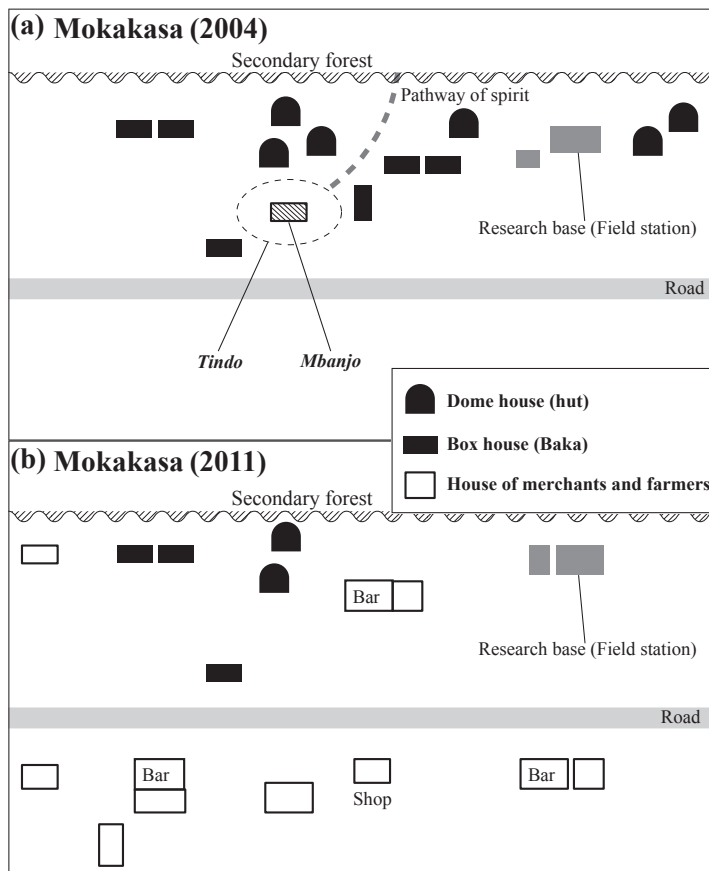


Fig. 4. Change in the space arrangements at the Mokakasa settlement in 2004 (a) and in 2011 (b). There was a marked changes in the settlement structure. In 2004, there was a meeting place (*mbanjo*) and a common open space (*tindo*) at the center of people's residences. Residents also recognized there exist a pathway of ritual spirit between the open space and secondary forest behind the settlement. In 2011, both of *mbanjo* and *tindo* dissapeard. Instead, bars increased around the settlement.

affordable (price of 100–300 FCFA) pack of 40–50 ml of whisky, called a *sache whisky*⁽¹⁰⁾ in French (which means “whisky bag”), is sufficient for the Baka (Fig. 3). Its high alcohol content of 40–50% and handy package to carry appeals to the Baka. Beer and whisky are distributed in considerable amounts in the cacao harvest season.

Some of the non-Muslim merchants settled and started bars close to the Baka settlements. The bars sell a variety of alcoholic drinks and tobacco from early afternoon to midnight and play popular music. These bars have had a significant impact on the social life of the Baka. The Mokakasa settlement is a good example. In 2004, there was a *mbanjo* space in the center of settlement. *Mbanjo* is a public space open to all members of the settlement and was used by Baka men for sharing meals, chatting, playing traditional guitars, and discussing matters of importance. In 2011, the *mbanjo* disappeared completely and people gathered around bars instead (Fig. 4).

The bar is quite different from *mbanjo* in that it is a space where farmers, merchants, and the others all mix. The change in the Mokakasa settlement was radical. Because the bars attract many Bakas from the all settlements, the abandonment of *mbanjo* was widely observed at the other settlements such as Mbako, Limbila, and Buda, which are relatively far from bars (Fig. 1).

SMOKING AND DRINKING AS PART OF DAILY INTERACTIONS

Smoking and drinking in the Baka’s daily life

Smoking in Baka culture

Smoking and drinking are perceived differently to the Baka. Smoking is linked to their cultural identity but alcohol is not. Although the Baka use tobacco in their forest life and their village life, drinking alcohol is limited to settlement life. The Baka hunters maintain that smoking tobacco is so integral to hunting in the forest that they cannot continue hunting without tobacco. For example, during the hunting and gathering expeditions, the Baka will often move their forest camp closer to a village because of the lack of tobacco.⁽¹¹⁾ One of our elder informants, Emmanuel⁽¹²⁾ suffered from persistent cough for years. Many people advised him to stop smoking, in vain. He told us that he would not stop smoking as long as he is living as a hunter.⁽¹³⁾ Baka adults smoke in the morning and evening in the settlements. The Baka will often share *mongolo* or cigarettes among themselves. Tobacco sharing is not limited to them. The demand for sharing of tobacco constituted a considerable part of the daily communication between the researchers and the Baka. We also observed young Baka male children imitate adults smoking (Fig. 5).

These moments of observation demonstrate the positive perception of smoking and illustrate that it is deeply embedded in the Baka’s daily life. In the last section, we note that present day the Baka and the Aka share the knowledge



Fig. 5. A Baka boy pretending to smoke using lightened woody stick.

of smoking the indigenous plant *Polyalthia suaveolens*. Roulette (2010) also reported that Aka adult females valued males' smoking habit as positive in their mate preferences.⁽¹⁴⁾ From ethno-linguistic evidence the Baka and the Aka separation is estimated to date back 250–300 years (Bahuchet, 1993). If so, the smoking tradition has a history of at least several hundred years among hunter-gatherers of northwestern Congo Basin.

Alcohol consumption and social contexts

Unlike tobacco, the Baka consume alcohol only at the settlements. The Baka do not often produce palm wine and seldom prepare distilled liquor themselves. They obtain alcohol from farmers or merchants in exchange for their labor or cash. How often and how much alcohol do they consume? To answer this question, drinking behavior was recorded for 10 consecutive days in 6 married Baka couples (12 individuals of 6 males and 6 females) ranging in age from early 20s and mid-50s (Table 1).

Among the participants, 3 individuals (1 man [M4] and 2 women [F5 and F6]) did not drink at all during the research period. They stated that they do not drink alcohol. The remaining participants drank varying amounts. The average frequency of consuming alcohol was 0.5 (range, 0.3–0.6) times per day for men and 0.33 (range, 0.2–0.6) times per day for women. The average amount of *menyoke* consumption was 0.146 (range, 0.09–0.22) L per day for men and 0.063 (range, 0.01–0.195) L per day for women. M1 consumed the largest amount of alcohol of all the participants. On days 6 and 9, he consumed enough whisky to get very drunk. The Baka adult drinkers consumed alcohol throughout the research period even though it was a quiet season after the cacao harvest and sales.

Table 1. Frequency and amount of alcohol consumption of 12 Baka adults (6 men and 6 women) for 10 consecutive days from 16 to 25 February 2007

Individual No.* (Estimated age)												
	M1 (30-35)	M2 (40-45)	M3 (50-55)	M4 (20-25)	M5 (20-25)	M6 (45-50)	F1 (30-35)	F2 (35-40)	F3 (50-55)	F4 (20-25)	F5 (20-25)	F6 (45-50)
Daily records**	Day 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Day 2	5	4	3	0	3	2	5	0	0	0	0
	Day 3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Day 4	0	4	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
	Day 5	5	5	2	0	2	0	3, 0.5w	3.5	1	0	0
	Day 6	2w	0	0	0	0	0	0	3p	1	0	0
	Day 7	10	3	3	0	0	4	0	3	5p	0	0
	Day 8	2	2	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
	Day 9	4w	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	3p	0
	Day 10	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Drinking days (N)												
	6	6	6	0	4	3	2	6	3	2	0	0
Total												
	Menyoke (L)	2.2	2.1	1.1	0	1	0.9	0.5	1.95	0.1	0.1	0
	Whisky (L)	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0.025	0	0	0	0
	Palm wine (L)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	0.3	0	0

*: Married couple is tagged with same number.

**: The variables indicates the consumption of *menyoke* (N cups of 0.1 L). The variables with "w" and "p" indicates the consumption of whisky (N plastic bags of 0.05 L) and palm wine (N cups of 0.1 L).

Descriptions of the social aspects of drinking from observed cases follow.

Case1: Woman F3 drinking alcohol in the morning (20 February 2009)

At 6:15, F3 got up and made a fire in the back of her house. She then consumed half a glass of *menyoke* brought to her by her husband (M3). She started cooking breakfast and consumed another half a glass of *menyoke*.

Although drinking in groups is common among the Baka, in this case, F3 drank alone. Once the Baka obtain alcohol, they often consume all of it immediately with whoever is present. However, some of people also keep alcohol in their houses for their personal use. This case shows how accustomed the Baka are to drinking in their everyday lives.

Case2: Resolving alcohol-related trouble by sharing alcohol (19 February 2009)

At 8:00, a small meeting started with 10 Baka people in attendance. The purpose was to discuss a Baka man Sam's domestic violence incident, which was related to alcohol. After 10 minutes, Sam distributed *menyoke* among all the participants. Several people testified about the violence to which the man had subjected his family. Sam received a warning from the elders and the meeting was over by 8:45.

In this case, the Baka community recognized the alcohol-related violence of a problematic individual and called a meeting to discuss the case. To settle the dispute, the perpetrator shared alcohol among the meeting participants. This brought a consensus among those present. Other than the elder's advice, there was no evident sanction. This reflects accepting of alcohol the Baka are, even in the face of domestic violence. It also demonstrates how alcohol is used as a negotiation tool among them.

Case3: A fight between husband and wife related to drinking (20 February 2009)

During the principal sampling on F3, 5 drunken Baka adults arrived. F3 was preparing lunch in the back of her house. The drunken adults continued talking loudly. F3 shared meal with them. After an hour, F1 gave F3 an unfinished bag of whisky. F3 drank it cracking cucumber seeds into it for seasoning. Around 15:30, the couple M1 and F1, who were still drunk, started to quarrel about M1's extramarital affairs with a woman in another settlement. This degenerated into a physical fight involving people nearby including F3. The fight ended at 17:00 after a Bakwele woman intervened and mediated.

This case demonstrates a typical example of the escalation of alcohol-related conflict after continuous co-drinking. In a situation where the majority of the settlement residents are drunk from early in the day, an argument between a couple can easily develop into chaos involving people in the vicinity. When it lasts for hours, neighboring farmers are compelled to intervene. At the time of the research, M1 was drunk and caused problems every day. His drinking-related episodes were the subject of much gossip. Kimura (2014, in this volume) also described how M1's drinking behavior was perceived and mentioned by the fellow Baka in the

transcription texts of daily conversations. People were critical of the alcoholic troublemaker but also enjoyed the tension he created.

Alcohol, Cash, and the Labor Force: Multiple Reasons for a Barter Exchange System between the Baka and the Bakwele

The Bakwele farmers are dependent on the Baka labor force. Paid labor is called *mesala* in Bakwele and *mbela* in Baka. The going rate for half a day's labor is 500 FCFA or 5 glasses (0.5 L) of distilled liquor⁽¹⁵⁾ (Hayashi, 2000; Kitanishi, 2006). This is the only kind of alcohol used for payment. The Bakwele households who do not have cash rely on alcohol to exchange for labor. In addition to the 0.5 L, the Baka demand alcohol while they work. The Bakwele need to give them alcohol at regular intervals to "motivate" the laborers (Sakanashi, 2010). If they do not, the Baka will not report for work or will choose to work for another Bakwele household, one more generous in their provision of alcohol during work. However, if the Bakwele offer too much alcohol, the Baka laborers will become too drunk to work efficiently.

The Bakwele need to get the balance right to ensure they have the labor force they need while limiting the alcohol consumption. The Baka also exchange information about the taste of the distilled liquor provided. They know the quality of distilled liquor made by different Bakwele woman. When farmers use inferior alcohol, the Baka will stage a "go-slow." The Baka and the Bakwele always negotiate the exchange of labor and alcohol. There is significant competition for the Baka labor between Bakwele households. In addition, the Baka can purchase alcohol using their cash income from wage labor, bush meat trade, and their own cacao farms. Despite this, the Baka often ask farmers for advance payment in alcohol for future farm work.

Case4: Demanding advance payment in alcohol (10 September 2007)

4 Baka adults (2 males and 2 females) accepted farming work at Feeny's, a Bakwele woman's, plantation for the next day. They asked Feeny for alcohol as an advance payment. At 17:00, they visited Feeny at her house 2 km away from their own settlement. Feeny gave them 1 L of *menyoke* in a plastic bottle and another 2 cups. They immediately shared the 2 cups and half an hour later 2 women left with the bottle of alcohol leaving the drunk men behind. They intended to drink the rest after the evening meal.

It is common for the Baka to get their wages in advance from Bakwele in a form of distilled liquor. Their craving for alcohol drives them to become indebted to the farmer. If the amount of debt accumulates or a Baka who received advance payment abandons farm work, the farmer will claim to pay the debt back in cash.

In northeastern Congo-Brazzaville, the Bobanda farmers also frequently use tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana to maintain their labor force, giving to their Aka partners in a fictive kinship. Hanawa called such donation advance gift because the donation usually occurs before the barter exchange (Hanawa, 2004). The Aka wish to receive these gifts, but they try to avoid being forced into labor by the

farmers (Hanawa, 2004).

Sakanashi (2010) asserts that in southern Cameroon, the labor use of the Baka by the Fang is not a simple relationship of employer and employee. The Fang farmers make considerable effort to maintain social relationships to the Baka by offering a variety of objects including agricultural foods, bush meats, and palm wine. In these previous studies, farmers maintained a traditional patron-client relationship and used a labor force of hunter-gatherers in a reciprocal framework (Hanawa, 2004; Sakanashi, 2010). The farmers try to take advantage, whereas hunter-gatherers try to balance the inequalities by stealing crops and working slowly.

However, in the research area, monetarization of economic exchange has made it difficult for farmers to maintain such an unequal patron-client relationship. Here the “advance gift,” which Hanawa defined in Bobanda-Aka relationships, has changed into the form of the “advance payment.”

From Ritual Dance to Disco

Drinking at dancing rituals became common in the late 2000s in the research area. Organizers of the dance needed to prepare a respectable amount of distilled liquor. In the previous studies (Joiris, 1996; Tsuru, 1996; 1998; 2001; Bundo, 2001), few instances of drinking in Baka dancing and singing ritual were recorded. The frequent and large amount of alcohol used in dancing rituals seems to be a recent development. Dancing and singing constitute the ritual spirit performance called as *be* in which “all the band members including children and women take part” (Tsuru, 1998: 52). Male dancer(s) and numerous female singers enliven each other’s performances to arouse excitement (Tsuru, 2001). The Baka performers refer to such interaction between the participants as “making *be* hot” (Tsuru, 2001: 65). It is not surprising that the Baka started to use alcohol as a means to “make *be* hotter.” As drinking became associated with ritual performances, the participants focused more on alcohol consumption in the ritual⁽¹⁶⁾. Many Baka



Fig. 6. Baka youths enjoy dancing at the disco.

youths, who have revenues, choose to drink and dance in bars which offer a wider variety of recreational substances rather spend an evening at traditional dance rituals. Baka youths sometimes share the expenses of gasoline fuel to run the borrowed generator to open disco by themselves (Fig. 6). They replaced traditional ritual practices with these new types of recreation as an occasion to demonstrate their economic adaptabilities to the others and to strengthen solidarity among them.

CONCLUSIONS

The Baka's Habitual Drinking in Relation to Changing Relationships with Neighboring Farmers

Alcohol production has been discussed in relation to the origin of agriculture because it requires a large amount of surplus starch foods. Hunter-gatherer's producing alcohol on a large-scale is rare. Although it is not clear when Pygmy hunter-gatherers first had access to alcohol, we know it dates back further than the northern hunter-gatherers, such as the Canadian Inuit (Seale et al., 2006).

Turnbull described the Mbuti Pygmies' life as divided into two distinctive worlds of the forest and the village. Tobacco and alcohol are products of the village world where the farmers are dominant which attracts the Mbuti (Turnbull, 1976). Ecological anthropological studies by Japanese researchers (Ichikawa, 1986; Terashima, 1986) revealed ecological interdependence between Pygmy hunter-gatherers and neighboring farmers by complementing carbohydrates (agricultural foods) and animal protein (bush meats). Sato (1983), Takeda (1990), Kimura (1992), and Takeda & Sato (1993) have shown the subsistence ecology of central African forest dwelling farmers has been adapted to a rainforest environment by combining multi-subsistence activities, which include hunting, fishing, and gathering, with sedentary swidden agriculture. The Bakwele also practice hunting and fishing activities to procure animal protein for themselves (Siroto, 1969; Oishi, 2014, in this volume). The Bakwele depended on Baka's labor force for the production of both food crops and cash crops (Hayashi, 2000; Oishi, 2012). The Baka relied on the Bakwele for cultivated foods before their successful adoption of agriculture. The two peoples have a well-established mutually beneficial interdependence.

When the Baka began producing staple food for themselves, the ecological importance of the exchange with farmers decreased (Kitanishi, 2003; Oishi, 2012). As a result, recreational substances like tobacco and cigarettes increased in importance as the objects of exchange. Sedentarization changed the living conditions of the Baka drastically. Some have moved closer to farmers and merchants whereas others keep their distance. The circulation of recreational substances between them is ongoing. Because of this, alcohol is available throughout the year without have to produce it themselves. A series of economic interventions from the outside world (i.e., operations of logging companies and expansion of cash crop cultivation) brought an abundance of cash and advanced the monetarization

of exchange between local peoples. In this process, the farmer's distilled liquor has been commercialized. The Baka also secured purchasing power by engaging in wage labor and cash cropping, which enabled them to purchase alcohol and the other products, as they will.

Hanawa (2004) defined the farmers donations of recreational substances to the Aka as advance gifts. Takeuchi (2005) noted "though article of tastes make the Aka satisfied, it can contribute nothing to their livelihoods." Tobacco, alcohol, and the other recreational substances are used by farmers to motivate the hunter-gatherers to preserve their social relationships with farmers. However, present Baka, who have experienced a market economy more directly than the Aka did in the 1990s, preferred to purchase alcohol than to receive it as a gift. Alcohol changed its meaning for the Baka from a gift from farmers to merchandise that can be purchased. Many Baka use the majority of their cash income on purchasing alcohol. Thus the advance gift changed its form to advance payment, and then into the debt (Oishi, 2012). Thus, many of the Baka have formed daily drinking habits at the settlements because of the changing economic relationships with neighboring farmers and merchants in the market economy.

Smoking, Drinking and Disco: The Use of New Social Spaces by Baka Youths

The introduction of cash crop (cacao) cultivation into Baka society brought opportunity of economic success as well as economic inequalities between the Baka (Oishi, 2012). Food sharing is now limited in sedentary villages (Kitanishi, 2000). Cash income is seldom shared directly or only among close relatives (Kitanishi, 2006; Oishi, 2012). However, alcohol and tobacco remain items that are shared among all those present at the settlement (Kitanishi, 2006). When someone receives cash income, he/she buys alcohol and tobacco to share among all residents.⁽¹⁷⁾ Co-drinking involves many people, who drink, get drunk, and gather together. Sharing and co-drinking seem to be an opportunity to recognize solidarity in sedentary life (Sylvain, 2006).

Bar and disco culture and the new exotic items changed social space of the Baka drastically. Ritual spirit performances of communal singing and dancing are essential of Baka culture that maintain solidarity between residence members (Joiris, 1996; Tsuru, 1998; Tsuru, 2001). However, contemporary Baka, especially the youths at the research area, prefer to spend time in village bars as new social places. Baka youths do not only remain as the consumer at merchant's bars. They also demonstrate their cultural creativities as well as economic capabilities by organizing their own small bars borrowing generators from other people. We should not forget that they do not totally abandon traditional singing and dancing performances at least at the forest camps. In spite of troubles caused by excessive drinking, the Baka seem to enjoy new ways of recreation at new spaces of social interaction. Whereas such situation can easily be interpreted as threatening the continuity of their "traditional culture," the change in the use of social spaces among the contemporary Baka demonstrates their adaptabilities to changing socioeconomic situations beyond the "essentialist conceptualization" (Sylvain, 2002) of Baka culture which international indigeneism tend to assert.

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NOTES

- (1) Every settlement has a common name shared by the Baka. Kimura (2003) formerly referred Mokakasa settlement as Mbaka1 and Monbongu settlement as Mbaka2.
- (2) The Baka and the Aka have quite similar vernacular names for the plant: *Botunga* in Baka and *tunga* in Aka (Roulette, 2010).
- (3) Most common brands smoked at the research site were British American Tobacco's Gold Seal and Lambert & Butler (LB). Price was 25 CFA francs (FCFA) per cigarette. FCFA is an abbreviation for *Franc de la Coopération Financière en Afrique centrale* (Franc of the Financial Cooperation in central Africa), an African currency guaranteed by the French treasury. The exchange rate is fixed at 656 FCFA per 1 euro.
- (4) The Baka prepare *njàmbù* from wild honey and water, and sometimes with tree bark. The water solution of honey undergoes fermentation to become a sparkling liquor with a low alcohol content. According to the Baka, this alcohol was prepared for medicinal uses and for ritual dancers.
- (5) We suspect that *menyok* may have derived from “*manioc*” in French because it is manufactured from cassava.
- (6) The same word is used to refer to oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis* Jacq.) in the Baka language.
- (7) We find distilled liquors called as *arki*, *aiki*, and *arkina* in many parts of tropical Africa, northern Africa, and West Asia (Shigeta, 1989). In Cameroon, cassava based alcohol is distilled in the tropical forested zone and millet based beer is distilled in the savanna zone (de Garine, 2001).
- (8) Actually, this ecological explanation does not explain why the Baka and the other Pygmy hunter-gatherers are reluctant to prepare alcohol for themselves even after the adoption of agriculture. A counterexample is Bakoya Pygmies of northeastern Gabon who adopted cassava and maize farming on a much larger scale than the Baka. Bakoya women distil alcohol of maize (Soengas, 2010).
- (9) For example, bottled beer (0.65 L) costs 1,000 FCFA in the research area whereas it costs between 400–500 FCFA in large cities.
- (10) This product has emerged quite recently in the middle of 2000s in southeastern Cameroon. Although it had once circulated in Republic of the Congo, the Congolese government soon prohibited its use in the late 2000s because it had brought many violence cases.
- (11) Terashima (1991: 471–472) reported same cases among the Efe of the Democratic republic of Congo.
- (12) We use pseudonym to refer to specific individual in this paper.
- (13) Emmanuel's health deteriorated in 2011 and finally he gave in to the demands of his wife to stop smoking.
- (14) However, Baka adult women did not mention male smoking behavior at the research site (Oishi, 2008).

- (15) This total is as of the early 2009. In 2010, it increased to 1,000 FCFA per a half day (Oishi, 2012).
- (16) Similar situation is also observed among the Baka of different areas such as Ngoïla (Townsend, 2013) as well as among the Aka of the northeastern Congo-Brazzaville (Tomoaki Nishihara, personal communication).
- (17) Among central African societies, immediate use of cash income on tobacco and alcohol is not unique to the Baka and the other hunter-gatherer populations. For example, the Pouvi farmer-hunters of central Gabon use almost 50% of their income from bush meat trade to purchase of alcohol and tobacco, and the tendency was more pronounced among hunters with higher income compared to those with a lower income (Coad et al., 2010). A comparative study is needed across a variety of small-scale societies in this region to clarify the relationship between the increase in cash income and consumption of tobacco and alcohol.

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