

【成果報告】

The concept of family centers around normative notions of gender and social structure. Within philosophy, the recently developed field of conceptual engineering considers methods for revising concepts to better reflect their actual nature, often in a socially progressive manner. The aim of this project is to propose a revision of the concept of family that is better suited for the actual family structures observed in contemporary society.

The notion of family that is enshrined in our social and political institutions crucially involves heterosexual marriage, procreation, and childrearing: a man, a woman, and some number of children. Other kinds of family units, such as non-heterosexual couples, unmarried couples, childless couples, and people in polygamous or otherwise nonmonogamous relationships are excluded from the traditional, normative family unit. Since this unit is the one referenced by political structures, nonnormative families are not provided the advantages given by governments to normative ones: privileges in taxation, in visas and immigration, in inheritance rights, in hospital visits and insurance, and so on. This is a serious social problem, given the rapidly increasing number of nonnormative families in Japan and elsewhere in the world.

The project reported on here has two aspects. The first is a philosophical analysis of the concepts of family in use in various contexts in current society: within government documents, among the general public, in minority cultures. The aim is to find a common thread from which a concept of family useful for a range of social purposes can be developed. The second aspect is the construction of an art installation considering the concept of family, consisting of a video installation and a collection of joint work by project members. The method used was to assemble a large, temporary family structure around a core family group (the PI's family) engaged in a family project (moving house); each participant became a temporary family member and joined the moving project and was recorded by videographic means, in addition to contributing work to the collection of art pieces and texts assembled at project's end in the form of a zine. The piece thus consists of a video work, a zine, and the philosophical paper written by the AI. Plans for exhibiting the work are currently underway in several contexts.