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Special Issue on  
Exploring African Potentials: The Dynamics of Action, Living Strategy,  
and Social Order in Southern Africa

Edited by Akira Takada, Isaac K. Nyamongo and Koki Teshirogi

**Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies**

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**Exploring African Potentials:  
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## Foreword

Changes happening in the Southern African region from the end of the 1980s remind me of a 'reverse domino theory'. The domino theory, proclaimed before the Vietnam War, warned of a menacing communist expansion towards South East Asia. Following the 1989 breakdown of the Berlin Wall, events in Southern Africa appear to follow a chain reaction resembling the process assumed in the domino theory, although in the opposite political direction.

The Berlin Wall's breakdown signaled the beginning of drastic economic and political change in Southern Africa. The end of bilateral confrontation opened the way for an extension of capitalism, encouraging neo-liberal politicians to push political democratization upon African nations. These countries, which had previously received Communist support, were exposed to the zealous and triumphal Western neo-liberal movement. This movement urged African nations to move towards market liberalization, economic deregulation and political democratization.

The neo-liberal globalization movement has flooded Africa with tidal waves of change since the 1980s. Structural Adjustment Programs represent the first wave of economic reform. This was rapidly followed by political democratization, such as the introduction of multi-party systems and the abolition of apartheid in the Republic of South Africa. Concurrently, economic systems transformed and political regimes evolved and changed.

South Africa's democratization, apartheid's repeal and Nelson Mandela's release, changed this country's relations with other Southern African nations. The South African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), an anti-South African economic and political alliance, transformed in 1992 into the South African Development Community (SADC), which South Africa immediately joined.

Global shifts in politics have brought substantial economic change to Southern Africa. Trade between South Africa and the former SADCC countries has soared. Prior to 1991, there was little trade between South Africa and the former SADCC countries, yet by the late 1990s, South Africa had become these nations' most important trading partner. South African goods account for more than 90% of Angola's and the Democratic Republic of the Congo's imports, more than 75% of Mozambique's, Tanzania's and Zambia's imports, and more than 70% of Malawi's imports.

South Africa's economy, the strongest in the region, faces competition from developed economies and the rising

economies of China and India. The removal of trade barriers in Southern Africa means South Africa's economy is now globally exposed. South Africa's economic liberalization has had two key impacts: a number of top-ranking companies have transferred head offices out of the country, and during the late 1990s, several industries experienced severe economic depression. Increasing unemployment and inflows of migrant workers from surrounding countries have provoked xenophobia. South Africa now faces a dilemma regarding her international standing; she is expected to be a representative of Africa, while she still wants to be recognized as a newly developed economy.

Market liberalization was surprisingly quick for other SADC countries and was characterized by rapid inflows of goods and capital. South Africa dominated the goods trade while China, India and other Western countries increased their investments in SADC nations. Deregulation and an upsurge in mineral prices facilitated increasing investment. The agricultural sectors of SADC countries also received some investment. This may assist the development agricultural production, but some alarm has been raised about future land issues in a number of areas.

The changes caused by economic globalization and political democratization since 1990 reflect 'waves of impact' across different countries. We need to be careful asserting that international political and economic changes are the only factors characterizing the dynamic socio-political change in Southern Africa. Each wave of change reflects different geo-political settings. It is superficial to explain the impact of international economic and political change on the region within the context of the dependence paradigm. I think the Southern African region provides us with a good example of core-periphery relations. This suggests connections between leading capitalist and African countries should be recomposed and understood within their local settings, which form multilayered structures. We need to examine how the initial impact of globalization is localized, or 'distorted' by South Africa, the regional economic giant. This exploration should be pursued in other countries and in smaller scale local settings. Finally, we should consider the repercussions of the 'waves of impact' across smaller and larger environments. Of utmost importance is the unraveling of the tangled web of relations and associated impacts at regional, national and local levels.

Today, events in Africa cannot be explained from just a local or international political viewpoint. We need to shift our

focus towards different perspectives. The articles in this book argue that globalization has localized impacts at different levels across Southern Africa. Some authors focus on the historical and political background essential for understanding the local impact of globalization in the region. Other articles discuss people's reactions to globalization at a local and micro-level. Using primary data collected in the field, these studies show us, vividly, the diverse features of social and economic change at local levels. To fully assess and understand the impact of globalization on the daily lives of people, primary field studies are indispensable. From this point of view, I offer my congratulations on this special issue.

Many of the authors are, or have been, students of the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, at Kyoto University in Japan. This Graduate School was founded in 1998. Beginning in the 1950s, Kyoto University has a long history of African area studies. The Centre for African Area Studies, founded in 1986, became the foundation for the Graduate School. Kyoto University's African area studies have a positive approach based upon extensive fieldwork requiring persistent effort. I think the papers in this issue are an excellent example of this approach.

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# Introduction to the Special Issue “Exploring African Potentials: The Dynamics of Action, Living Strategy, and Social Order in Southern Africa”

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Isaac K. Nyamongo

## INTRODUCTION

This special issue is the product of an international symposium titled “The dynamics of socioeconomic changes in local societies in southern Africa: The challenges of area studies”, which was held on 20th November, 2010, at the University of Namibia (UNAM), Windhoek. The symposium was jointly organized by Kyoto University and UNAM with financial support from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) through their International Training Program (ITP) “On-site education of practical languages of area studies”; the JSPS Global Centers of Excellence (COE) Program “In search of sustainable humankind in Asia and Africa”; the Murata Science Foundation; and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) Program for Enhancing Systematic Education in Graduate Schools “Field school program for area studies bridging research and practices”. Scholars from Japan, Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, and Kenya assembled on the extensive campus of UNAM, located on the outskirts of Windhoek. It should be noted that the symposium was organized mainly by graduate students and post-doctoral researchers who, at that time, had a base in the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies (ASAFAS), Kyoto University. The majority of the presentations were delivered by these young scholars. Distinguished African scholars, including Pempelani Mufune (University of Namibia), Scarlett Cornelissen (Stellenbosch University), Oleosi Ntshbe (University of Botswana) and Isaac K. Nyamongo, were invited as commentators. The staff of Kyoto University, including Shuhei Shimada, Kazuharu Mizuno, Junko Maruyama, and Akira Takada, also contributed to the symposium as session facilitators. The active engagement of the audience led to a heated discussion, which lasted throughout the day, and the gist of the symposium was summarized in a local newspaper. We wish to thank everyone who gave moral and practical support and who helped to bring about this wonderful gathering. Although we were unable to include all the papers presented in the symposium, due to various restrictions, the animated debate that they generated resonates in this volume.

The Southern African region today is rapidly developing.

As the summary of the symposium indicated, socioeconomic changes have occurred on both supranational and national levels in Southern Africa. These changes include the economic growth of the Republic of South Africa following its democratization and the expansion of its influence over other Southern and Eastern African countries; mixed migration flows, which include forced or spontaneous refugees, and cross-border labour migrants, following the end of the Angolan civil war; and the breakdown of unbalanced socio-economic structures as evidenced by the cataclysm in Zimbabwe (ASAFAS 2010: 2).

Socioeconomic fluidity at the supranational level is by no means new in this area. Over time, fluidity has been one of the most distinctive features of the region, having been apparent for many centuries, although it has taken different forms in different historical periods and geographical places. For example, according to Livingston (2005), the discovery and development of significant gold and diamond deposits in late nineteenth century South Africa, sometimes termed the “mineral revolution”, led to the development of a tightly controlled migrant labour system. The mines drew large numbers of migrant workers into South Africa from all over the Southern African region (Livingston 2005: 113). The labour migration to South African mines has had a great impact on the livelihoods of local societies in the region. Even people living deep inside of the Kalahari became used to large population movements through the direct migration of labour to the mines. Additionally, returnees from the South African mines were thought to have brought diseases, such as tuberculosis and venereal disease. Local villagers then developed counter rituals for healing such diseases. These rituals played a central role in reversing, mystifying, and remedying the moral disorder caused by the cross-border labour migration (Livingston 2005; Takada, forthcoming).

The Southern African region has become increasingly involved in the global system. The mineral revolution fuelled Western (British, German, Portuguese and other European nations) imperialism, which introduced so-called “indirect rule” in the region, and eventually helped spark the South African war (“The Second Boer War”). The South African war



was fought from 1899 until 1902 between the British Empire and the Afrikaans-speaking settlers, and ended with a British victory (Livingston 2005: 113). The divide and rule strategy of the colonial governments prevented small powers from linking forces in local societies. The territories of various ethnic groups were subjugated by the colonial governments in the name of “modernization” (Thornton 1996), while hiding their real politico-economic interests. The colonial governments also used these areas as a recruiting ground for cheap migrant labour in the mines and white-owned farms of South Africa. South Africa itself became independent from Britain in 1910, when the Union of South Africa was formed. It soon became the regional giant under the white minority government. The workers in the mines and white-owned farms, upon completing their contracts, were returned to the “reserves”.

After the Second World War, the geopolitics in the region began to change significantly. However, the Union of South Africa refused to comply with these changes. In reaction to criticism over its apartheid policy, and particularly criticism of the total differentiation of life-spheres based on race and culture, the Union of South Africa withdrew from the British Commonwealth and became the Republic of South Africa in 1961. However, much political wrangling and struggling took place during the cold war period. For example, the United Nations was in conflict with South Africa over the governance of South West Africa (present-day Namibia). The South-West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO) asked for assistance from the United Nations and established bases outside the country. Support was also received from socialist bloc members including Cuba, the Soviet Union, and East Germany, in an attempt to expand their influence in Africa.

The breakdown of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was followed by dramatic economic and political changes in the Southern African region. The current political, economic, and cultural situation in the region undoubtedly differs considerably from that under the cold war and apartheid era. The global trend of neo-liberalization under the name of democratization and development has rapidly engulfed the Southern African region. Most Southern African countries were in no position to resist the wave of change, and are still in transition toward this end. The ideological battle seems to have passed. Neo-liberalization is arrogant with regard to inequality and unfairness. However, it presupposes the maintenance of the current political regime and is not concerned about the fundamental contradictions within the social structure. At the same time, newly developed technologies and strategies for processing information (see Teshirogi’s paper in this volume) have facilitated competition and integration across areas in which there were previously borders minimizing socio-economic activity. Changes have occurred on many levels of reality in multiple arenas. Linkages and pathways among these levels have been established

or strengthened and the boundaries between neighbouring areas have become increasingly blurred. Consequently, each local community has to face difficult questions involving the level of social reality they can accommodate, to navigate through the changing social and natural environment. The aim of this volume was to deepen our understanding of these circumstances through a consideration of what is referred to as the “micro-macro link”, explicating the social dynamics of choice of action, the formation or improvisation of living strategies, and the construction of social and moral order from an area study approach that has been developed in ASAFAS. Before discussing this approach, I would like to give a brief description of previous studies.

### THE MICRO-MACRO LINK AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS

As Alexander and Giesen (1987) has pointed out, the micro-macro debate has been the key issue in contemporary social sciences. Early works in the debate are characterised by an opposition between micro and macro approaches. In the context of studies on African societies, the macroscopic structural transformation of society has been the focus of analysis in the fields of political economy, and development studies, among others. Changes in local societies have tended to be treated as nothing more than part of the transformation in these domains of study (ASAFAS 2010: 2). For example, socialist movements flourished in many locations in Africa in the mid-twentieth century, leading to arguments about the development of emergent properties at the level of the collective group and system. In the actual political arena, this ideological formulation attracted many African leaders who were struggling to unite their people, due to their diverse backgrounds.

While Marxism adopted a structuralist approach to explain how the collective order is achieved, Émile Durkheim and his followers promoted an alternative macroscopic approach, namely the holistic approach, for analysing the structure of society. The latter attitude is represented in Durkheim’s viewpoint that social facts are external to individuals and should be treated as distinct things (Durkheim 1895/1982: 32, 38). By means of empirical analyses, these classical theorists attempted to demonstrate that social forms have determinative and forceful influences on individuals. Symbolic and emotional collective representation, which is expressed and maintained through ritualistic and religious institutions, is thought to provide the medium for transforming individual actions into collective social and moral order.

The approaches of both Marx and Durkheim are complexly intertwined and have been applied to most macroscopic arguments in African studies. However, these approaches have been challenged by a radical counter argument, which has a microscopic and individualistic

orientation. In particular, a rational approach to action, which is mostly found in neoclassical economics, incorporates the view of a person as a rational decision maker within their surrounding reality. The emotional and collective aspects of taking action are underestimated in this approach. In practice, the rational approach often lacks the empirical evidence that would verify it as incorporating the view of a person, and the premise itself has been passed over. This is partly because scholars have aimed to develop a simple but strong methodology, which might predict or, more realistically, guide individual actions by quantitative and objective analysis.

In the domain of sociology, Georg Simmel is regarded as one of the pioneers who supported and promoted micro analysis. Simmel, a relatively isolated thinker in contrast to his contemporary Durkheim (Levine 1971: x), claimed that formal social relationships, such as conflict and exchange, should be considered purely in terms of their observable and quantitative characteristics. He thereby tried to demonstrate that the structure of social order emerged from the cumulative choices of individual actions (Simmel 1950). His approach led to and supported later behaviourism (e.g., Skinner 1978) and social exchange theory (e.g., Homans 1958, 1961), which have investigated mechanisms that organize the course of human interactions. These studies assume that there is no macro structure without the interaction of group members.

Despite the fact that the terms “macro” and “micro” are necessarily relativistic, the macro and micro approaches lead to a disagreement over the relationship between society and its members, or structure and agency, and have provoked several inconclusive debates. The debates have led to numerous attempts to establish linkages between these two approaches. Reviewing these debates, Alexander and Giesen (1987) produced a valuable and still useful summary that classifies sociological approaches to the micro-macro relation into the following five categories: (1) rational and purposeful individuals create society through contingent acts of freedom; (2) interpretive individuals create society through contingent acts of freedom; (3) socialized individuals re-create society as a collective force through contingent acts of freedom; (4) socialized individuals reproduce society by translating the existing social environment into a microrealm; and (5) rational, purposeful individuals acquiesce to society because they are forced to by external social controls (Alexander and Giesen 1987: 14). These categories differ as to the premise of whether action is rational or interpretive and whether social order is negotiated between individuals or imposed by collective or emergent forces (Table 1). Alexander and Giesen (1987) claimed that neoclassical economics had a significant influence on option (1), while Durkheim, and later Marx, explored options, (4), and (5), respectively. It should be noted that, these approaches are actually interrelated, and impinge on each

other. Most contemporary studies of the micro-macro link have pursued option (3) or a combination of several of these options.

The categories advocated by Alexander and Giesen (1987) not only characterize the approaches taken by scholars that aim to elucidate the relationship between social order and individual actions, but also portray the features of time and place in which society and individuals are located. In other words, the relationship between society and an individual can be divergent depending on the spatio-temporal settings. In this special issue, by adopting the area study approach developed in ASAFAS, we will see that the people of Southern Africa vary enormously regarding their responses to the current changing situation in the region.

Given the process of rapid globalization, the attempt to promote area studies is driven by a need to transcend the existing disciplinary boundaries and allows a better understanding of divergent areas in the world. ASAFAS thus aims to nurture specialists who possess detailed and intimate knowledge of the areas and who, at the same time, are equipped with a global perspective. For this purpose, ASAFAS has emphasised the importance of fieldwork, which is a hallmark of area studies that makes it distinct from other domains of study. During their five-year PhD program, each graduate student is expected to conduct intensive fieldwork, during which they learn the vernacular language and conventions, and promote a range of empirical research on/with the local people in various parts of Africa, to develop a profound and empathetic understanding of the local society.

This should provide a unique contribution to the discussion of the micro-macro linkage. It helps the researcher to understand the vernacular logic that constitutes the living strategies of ordinary men and women who are experiencing the current social changes, and the context in which those individuals are situated. Through participating in social interactions undertaken in local communities, the researcher should be able to determine which living strategies are acceptable and which are unacceptable for lay people when they face uncertainty in their livelihood.

The methodology also makes it possible for the researcher to take part in the process of constructing a social and moral order, together with local people. Through intensive discussion, we arrived at the common conclusion that local changes cannot be dismissed simply as responses to macroscopic socioeconomic changes. Rather, these responses have the potential to impact on future macroscopic socioeconomic changes (ASAFAS 2010: 2). In the Southern African region today, the number of individuals adopting a certain living strategy can vary dramatically and rapidly. The size of a population that has adopted a specific living strategy has a critical impact on the success or failure of the living strategy itself. Moreover, the order of society as a whole can be

**TABLE 1.** *Classification of micro-macro relations.*

		Action	
		rational	interpretive
Social order	create	(1) Teshirogi Ito	(2) Murao Fujioka
	re-produce	Matsumoto	(3) Miyauchi
	acquiesce	(5)	(4)

1) (1) to (5) indicate the types advocated in Alexander and Giesen (1987).

achieved through the reiterating of negotiations and making adjustments among a range of living strategies. Hence, there exist recursive and reflexive interplays between the microscopic social interactions and macroscopic socioeconomic changes, mediated through the implementation of various living strategies. Which particular action an individual will take is embedded in the state of the current social order, but the social order per se can be reformulated or a new social order can emerge by accumulating and organizing these actions. Various indigenous strategies of survival and resiliency will be found and observed at the intermediate levels of these processes.

In brief, the strength of the articles compiled in this volume lies in the intensive analysis of the dynamics of action, living strategy, and social and moral order in the face of changing social structures. The analysis will allow the researchers to comprehensively understand the entwined relationships among multiple compelling realities, and will further enable us to reconsider the potential of African lay peoples, who have been “frequently overlooked by macroscopic policymakers and international assistance groups (ASAFAS 2010: 2)”. An overview of the contribution of each article is given below with reference to the themes mentioned above, in an attempt to determine common ground on which we can further develop discussion of these articles.

#### SUMMARY OF ARTICLES IN THIS VOLUME

##### ***The positive integration and flexibility of local communities***

Although there is no doubt that globalization, in the form of mass migration, astounding levels of economic growth, and the increasing use of mass media, has dramatically changed the world, it does not necessarily standardize or uniformize local societies. Rather cultural differences are often focused and emphasized to mobilize group identities, both within and outside any particular social group (Appadurai 1996: 12-13). In this respect, a number of studies have demonstrated the

positive integration and flexibility that local societies have displayed in the face of globalization.

Matsumoto exemplified this in her study about the transition of livelihoods in a rural village in Lesotho, which had a long history of incorporating non-agricultural and cash-earning activities into agriculture from the very foundation of the settlement. This small, landlocked, and mountainous country is entirely surrounded by South Africa in terms of its geographical location. It is thus not difficult to imagine that their livelihood has been severely impacted by the politico-economic situations of the regional giant that surrounds it. Soon after the settlement of mountainous areas at altitudes of 2,000 m or higher in the late-nineteenth century, the population began to rely on workers who migrated to South Africa and other countries in the region to seek jobs, to supplement local earnings. In particular, following the discovery of diamonds and gold in South Africa in the late-nineteenth century, the population of migrant workers in South African mines grew rapidly, and Lesotho became known as a labour reserve for the mining industry. Most young men, after initiation, undertook such migrant labour to obtain their own wealth and demonstrate their masculinity. Plausibly, the labour migration also allowed migrants to escape from the gerontocracy in their home village at least temporarily (cf., Livingston 2005). Through an intensive interview of the life histories, livelihoods, and cash income of local residents, Matsumoto found that most men in their 60s and younger had experienced migrant labour. Wages sent by migrant labourers facilitated the development of a cash economy in their home village. The investment in agriculture and livestock farming also increased. Their incomes were spent on buying items for use in daily life, clothes, and livestock (mainly cattle and sheep). People cultivated maize and wheat as the staple crops, raised cattle for food, ploughing, and bridewealth, and raised sheep and goats for wool and mohair that provided them with a cash income.

However, since the 1990s, factors such as the reduced price

of gold, resource exhaustion, and wage inflation have resulted in a large retrenchment of Lesotho workers. Moreover, the end of the apartheid policy led to the protection of employment for native South Africans, and decreased the number of migrant workers from neighbouring countries, including Lesotho. Consequently the number of Lesotho workers in South African mines has declined dramatically. Migrant workers have had to undertake less profitable jobs, such as house building, farm work, and retail work and, therefore, the amount of income returning to the home village has decreased. Additionally, the number of livestock has decreased due to the decline of remittances. The situation has been worsened by an increase in stock theft in the local village. In response, people have shifted their agriculture from the cultivation of crops for home use to large-scale commercial crops, and have become more involved in alternative temporary work to earn interim cash. The traditional income generating activities of women, such as brewing and selling alcohol have also become increasingly important.

It is a common feature across the Southern African region that the increased demand for labour in South African mines attracted migrant workers, mostly young men in search of a better life, from a wide-range of different communities in the neighbouring countries. However, the consequences of the resulting prosperity and the decline of migrant labour in South African mines differed considerably from one community to another. In the mountainous villages of Lesotho, where natural resources for agriculture are scarce, the remittances of migrant labour had a huge impact on the livelihoods of local people. When the migrant labour was active, migrant workers and their relatives substantially increased the number of livestock and agriculture flourished, which facilitated the social division of labour. Following the decline of migrant labour in the South African mines, the number of livestock decreased and the unemployment rate increased. This situation resulted in widespread stock theft and made it difficult to maintain livestock farming as a living strategy. Under these circumstances, some people developed a new livelihood by cultivating more cash crops and engaging in casual work, through which they could generate income. Although these changes appear to reflect reasonable choices by individuals who wished to alleviate economic distress, the author does not say much about the internal dynamics and interactions among the community members with regard to how these living strategies were formed and how they were selected. By scrutinizing these emerging processes, we can reconsider whether livestock farming and other living strategies are the outcome of choices by “rational individuals” or a “traditional relic” (see Ferguson 1985). We can then properly appreciate the particular relationship between self and society in the mountainous villages of Lesotho, and understand the new

social order that has enabled the local community to navigate through the drastic socioeconomic changes of the Southern African region.

Fujioka's paper tackled this difficult theme by demonstrating the challenges to the local society in north-central Namibia from the wider market economy and the repercussions of these challenges. Since the independence of Namibia in 1990, increasing numbers of entrepreneurs have emerged in rural communities. Among others, some farmers in the Kwambi, a subgroup of the Owambo agro-pastoral society, have started to participate in a “new” approach to private livestock farming, namely the cattle post. On the surface, this approach to farm management differs greatly from the indigenous methods practiced by the Owambo agro-pastoralists in their former homeland (Ovamboland) under the apartheid regime. Instead, it resembles those used by white commercial farmers in the former freehold land. The new approach has changed the social relationships among households (e.g., cattle post owners employed herders who were not their family members) and appears to have shaken the foundations on which the socio-economic system of north-central Namibia has been built.

However, cattle post owners, most of whom are engaged in well-paid occupations, such as soldiers and civil servants, have tended to be reluctant to sell livestock through the formal market, and use their property for customary practices, such as gifts for weddings and to strengthen ties among neighbours. Although these affluent individuals have actively adopted new methods of livestock farming, they have not shifted completely to the market economy. Rather, in several cases, these new livelihood-related activities that were introduced by the cattle post owners were then transmitted to other farmers and improved their livelihoods. Hence, while economic disparities are currently growing in north-central Namibia, the socio-cultural characteristics of rural communities, especially the value placed on co-existence and harmony, still works as the key to maintaining the cohesiveness of the local community and achieving the development of the community as a whole.

The public image of modern Namibian history, in which an array of repressed black peoples stood up against the dictatorial white people of European descent, deserves a certain political justification. In light of academic deliberation, however, the process toward independence was certainly much more complex. At the same time, the dichotomy between “traditional” lifestyle and “modern” economy is too simple to use as a tool to analyse the social dynamics that have occurred in north-central Namibia. They are not only compatible but also intriguingly interrelated. Note that it was still under the apartheid regime that the Owambo began engaging in the management of cattle posts, which resemble the commercial farms run by white people. Thus, the hegemony of white people at the politico-

economical level did not necessarily lead to a subordinate attitude in the economic activities among Owambo people. After independence, the number of cattle posts increased substantially. However, this should not be interpreted as a loss of their identity. The Owambo people have, rather, interpreted the changing situation in their own way and have developed multiple identities in multiple contexts in post-apartheid Namibia. Fujioka's argument suggests that the Owambo people's view on personhood is seen as a variant of the general African concept of personhood, which is relational rather than material (Karp 1997). While being integrated into social relationships in the local Owambo community, those involved in cattle posts have become incorporated into their symbolic and regional systems without abolishing their personhood. This has cultivated cooperative relationships between the emerging local elites and their followers, who have expected the local elites to provide a certain level of support on behalf of the community as a whole. If the social and moral order of north-central Namibia develops on the foundation of these relationships, the collective force could give rise to enormous progress in achieving localized modes of civil society.

### ***Cultivating a niche between the global and local politico-economic systems***

When a state introduces the global politico-economic system to a local community, the community will face changes to its social structure. However, local exchange practices are not completely encapsulated by the mechanisms of state control. Sometimes a hiatus is generated, in which up-and-coming individuals can exert their agency. In such circumstances, these individuals may transform the hiatus into a niche for the development of novel living strategies. The following two papers demonstrate this.

Teshirogi discussed the recent changes of communal livestock farming in north-western Namibia. As in north-central Namibia, where Fujioka's study was based, in north-western Namibia, white people of European descent have also run large commercial farms, while local people have lived a meagre life based on small scale livestock farming. After the independence of Namibia, racial and ethnic segregation was denounced. The government of Namibia tried to empower the local people and integrate local economic activity into national and international trade networks. Within this context, the livestock auction system was introduced to the rural areas of north-western Namibia. Then communal farmers were empowered. According to Teshirogi, the commercialisation of livestock farming has increased rapidly among communal farmers in this area over the past four to five years. Unlike other traditional pastoral societies in marginalised areas, the people in Teshirogi's study site have been in close contact with commercial farms since the colonial era: They had been

employed in nearby commercial farms and obtained livestock as a reward for their labour. These experiences provided the basis for the smooth incorporation of the commercialisation of livestock farming into their society. The newly introduced livestock auction system allows the former communal farmers to take into consideration the balance between the price offered by their buyers and the demand for cash in their households when making decisions regarding the transactions of their livestock (mainly cattle and goats). Moreover, the increasing availability of cash income has stabilised their livelihoods and allowed them to purchase luxury items, such as vehicles and power generators.

Note that this does not mean that everyone has taken advantage of the situation. Despite the government's expectations, not everybody benefitted from the introduction of an auction system, and economic disparity actually increased among the local people in the study area. To determine how the level of economic disparity has grown, the study analyzed the influence of the use of mobile phones, which spread rapidly into the study area after 2006. Africa has the world's fastest-growing rate of mobile phone subscriptions (ITU 2006). When Teshirogi conducted the fieldwork in 2010, the number of mobile phones already exceeded the number of households in the village. People typically used these mobile phones to communicate with their relatives or friends when they were in towns, but they also utilised them for various tasks with respect to livestock farming, such as checking prices at auctions before participating and/or looking for buyers when they needed to sell livestock. Individuals who actively participated in auctions tended to make full use of mobile phones to accumulate their wealth. Moreover, the utilisation of this new medium of communication has also enabled people living in towns and cities to transcend the previously established geographic boundaries and undertake economic activities in rural villages, where they seldom visited. The author refers to these urban-based farmers as mobile farmers. Mobile farmers quickly took advantage of this situation and started accumulating their own wealth, while many locals lost their properties.

The number of mobile farmers, who typically direct employed herders via the phones, has been increasing in recent years. Some mobile farmers have purchased livestock as a side business and others have done so to enhance their social security with the aim of settling in a rural area after their retirement. The rapid increase of mobile farmers as the stakeholders in livestock transactions might expose the livelihood of local people to the risk of price fluctuations in global markets and/or of overgrazing in certain places. It is likely that more time will be required to fully assess how and what kind of social and moral order is accomplished through the reorganization of relationships among the people, social structure, and natural environment of north-western Namibia.

The importance of the relationships between rural and urban areas for conducting contemporary rural businesses is also the focus of consideration in Ito's paper. Ito conducted an intensive fieldwork campaign in a village located in the Southern Province of Zambia. The village has experimented with a policy of modernization. After the construction of the Kariba dam, a number of local villages near the lake were relocated to unfamiliar places. People then started cultivating the land and herding livestock in these areas. They also developed a burgeoning non-agricultural sector, which includes socio-economic activities that have been studied as a "rural informal sector (RIS)" and "micro- and small-scale enterprises (MSE)" (McPherson 1996; Bagachwa 1997).

According to Ito, it is important to make a distinction between year-round and seasonal activities to fully understand the development of rural businesses, with year round activities having the potential to develop into a self-sustained non-agricultural sector/enterprise, while seasonal activities were mostly non-farming based and were used to supplement an agricultural income. As Matsumoto (this volume) reported, in contemporary Africa, most farmers are diversifying their livelihoods by combining agriculture with other cash income sources. The importance of non-agricultural income sources is increasing in Africa, as opposed to other regions (Reardon 1997; Barrett et. al. 2001). In this paper, Ito focused mostly on year-round commerce and trade activities, such as the management of grocery stores and bars as practiced in rural Zambia. By interviewing 18 shop owners, she assessed the characteristics of these activities and their impacts on local communities and livelihoods.

The results indicated that the oldest shop was founded in 1992. In the time since, which has seen a rise in the local economy, the number of shops has continued to increase. Most of the shops were located around the main market along a paved road. The shop owners had relatively high educational backgrounds, and had more productive assets, such as farmland and cattle, than other village residents. They invested money earned by labour in urban areas, or money obtained through cash crop production or the sale of livestock, to establish the shops. They tended not to limit themselves to one activity, but increased their profits by simultaneously engaging in multiple economic activities. Agriculture, particularly cash crop production on a large scale, was one of the additional revenue streams available to shop owners. During the rainy season, some shop owners worked in their fields alongside their families. Other owners did not go to their fields at all and left the agricultural work to their family and paid workers. Some shop owners also built and managed houses, which were rented to generate income.

For the shop owners, the relationship with urban areas, and especially neighbouring towns was very important for

sustaining and expanding their businesses. Customers outside the villages are essential if the shops are to survive. The shop owners provided two types of employment, namely, salaried employment and piecework. Salaried employment was rare and unlikely to increase in prevalence in the immediate future. In contrast, piecework had a considerable impact on the whole village economy. Most of the community had easy access to piecework, which met their labour demands and served as a major informal source of income generation.

Since the 1980s, Zambia has experienced drastic socio-economic changes. In the mid-1980s, the government introduced Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Zambia then shifted from a one-party socialist system to a multi-party democratic system in 1991. The new government further promoted market-oriented economic reformation. However, these policies were not successful. Urban unemployment increased, many low-income urban dwellers were pushed into poverty, and labour migration to major cities decreased (Potts 1995, 2005). The rapid increase of rural shop owners since the 1990s is largely a consequence of these socio-economic changes. The development of neighbouring small towns at this time also supported and fostered rural shops as businesses.

The relocation following the construction of the Kariba dam created a difficult situation for the people in the study area in terms of maintaining their prior subsistence. However, the experience of relocation and their indomitable spirit enabled them to develop diverse and flexible visions of a better livelihood without having to conform to the previous customs. Some migrated to the city (Lusaka) or resort area (Siabonga). Others opened up small shops on the road between Lusaka and Siabonga, targeting commuters. The shops provided piecework opportunities for the rural villagers and may ultimately act as a catalyst for the structural change of the whole village.

So far most RIS or MSE studies have presupposed a linear course of socio-economic development. The premise is that movement from agricultural, informal, and rural sectors to non-agricultural, formal, and urban sectors, respectively, facilitates socio-economic development. However, Ito's study demonstrates that people have survived the uncertainty resulting from the economic reformation of Zambia while flexibly moving back and forth across these sectors. In that process, rural entrepreneurs have developed a niche for promoting new economic activities. It is thus important to scrutinize not only geographic mobility but also sectorial mobility when attempting to understand the impacts of social changes on rural villages, rural livelihood dynamics, and the reformulation of social order in the Southern Province of Zambia.

***Exploring a new living strategy after the deprivation of livelihood foundations***



Ito's paper indicated that where a community was deprived and then reconstructed the foundations of their livelihood, local actors were not involved in wider national and supra-national political events. Rather, they created a new living strategy as a solution to their immediate hardships. The following two papers deal with the further cruel varieties of such loss and struggle.

Murao examined land use and livelihoods among self-settled refugees who had emigrated from Angola to a village located in the Western Province of Zambia. They lost properties in the process of displacement, which was driven by the Angolan civil war. The study examined the micro dynamics of the social activities, which re-established their autonomous livelihood in Zambia, in the light of political changes at the macro level. The individuals studied had practiced shifting cultivation in Angola for a long time. After they moved to the Zambian village, which was founded in 1964, their land use options were restricted by the traditional political system of the Lozi people, who were their hosts in the new location. The Lozi developed their kingdom, equipped with strong administrative and judicial systems in the Zambezi floodplain area (Gluckman 1941). The Lozi people owned most of the natural resources of the area and tried to impose their control over all immigrants, including the Angolan self-settled refugees, by attempting to integrate them into the Zambian government's Land Act, which acknowledges the legitimacy of traditional Lozi chiefs to control the customary land (Brown 2005).

Since the subordinated Angolan immigrants were excluded from the affluent Zambezi floodplain, which was already occupied by Lozi people, they engaged in shifting cultivation in the upland fields and small-scale cultivation in the kitchen gardens around their residences. Therefore, the Angolan immigrants followed their previous subsistence strategy, with a tacit understanding that primary forests were to be left in the upland. After the Angolan immigrants settled in the upland, the Lozi chiefs allowed them relative autonomy and did not make any direct intervention on upland land distribution. Since the 1990s, the government has implemented market-oriented economic reformations under the SAPs and the sale of cassava produced from shifting cultivation became a new income generating activity for the immigrants.

However, the immigrant society does not exist in a stable situation. It is characterized by frequent population in-and-outflows. The immigrants have continuously expanded into the fertile primary forest and opened new fields for shifting cultivation. The movement has been a source of intra-group competition. The increase in the number of matrilineal kin groups (sg. *limbo*, pl. *membo*) also prompted the immigrants to open fields near their own houses in the village. To avoid conflicts and discrepancies, they have established a new custom, which was not practiced in Angola: When a person

wishes to use primary forest near to where other *limbo* members have already started cultivation, they must negotiate with the headman of the preceding *limbo* to arrange and use land there.

By using their conventional wisdom regarding shifting cultivation, the Angolan immigrants found an ecological niche for the active use of the upland areas that the farmers of the Lozi host community had neglected. The compensative land use enabled the politically marginalized Angolan immigrants to coexist with the host community in a relatively peaceful manner. However, the prevalence of shifting cultivation generated competition within the immigrants. According to the author, scholars of African self-settled refugees have assumed that, after achieving self-sufficiency, stable livelihoods for these groups can be maintained (cf., Kakeya and Sugiyama 1987; Oyama 2007). Murao's study leads us to reconsider this assumption because it revealed intra-group competition among the resettled immigrants. To resolve conflicts caused by the competition, they established a new custom that reinforces the practical unit of their indigenous social organization (i.e., *limbo*) and thereby smoothes the progress of autonomous land use. This brought about a new social and moral order in the study area.

Miyauchi is also concerned with the conflict about the space for livelihood caused by officials in the "democratized" South Africa. Despite having a comparatively stable political situation and consistent economic growth, South Africa has faced a number of challenges that have polarised society since democratisation in the early 1990s. Wealth and resources have not been distributed equally or appropriately, due to the rapidly changing situation. In South Africa today, a number of examples of neoliberal rationalities of rule can be identified, which have extended market models into realms that were once heavily bureaucratized during the apartheid era (Hart 2008).

In neoliberal projects, people are required to become entrepreneurs, who take responsibility for their own welfare. Virtually all aspects of social activity are reconceptualised along economic lines (Rose 1999). Since the government has promoted entrepreneurship and self-help, this strategy and its accompanying rhetoric has created many difficulties in the everyday life of South African lay people. If nations are, as Anderson (1983) argued, "imagined communities", then, Miyauchi claims, the present situation would generate only "imagined entrepreneurs". Virtually no entrepreneur is more successful than they are required or imagined to be. Increasing poverty, social polarisation and the frustration of people in a *bulimic* society (Young 2007), which occasionally engenders extreme violence against others, need to be recognised as the changeable reality of contemporary South Africa.

Unsurprisingly, people who engage in informal economic activities are part of some of the most repressed and abandoned

groups in these situations. The official size of the informal economy of South Africa is still comparatively small, because most informal economic activity in urban centres was defined as illegal and, thus, took place behind the scenes under the apartheid regime. After the change of political regime, however, the level of informal economic activity has experienced increasing growth in South Africa (Devey et al. 2006).

This does not mean that the new government sufficiently recognizes such activity. Rather, people working in informal conditions are often violently dislocated and eliminated from new urban spaces that are being shaped in commercially-oriented forms. The new inequalities have thus increased the indignation of the poor. For example, after the democratization of South Africa, a project began to redevelop the neglected Warwick area in Durban, where numerous informal street traders have historically worked. Within a few years, the area became widely recognised as a model for the sensitive integration of street traders into urban planning. However, in 2009, the Durban Municipality suddenly announced that they would construct a big shopping mall in the area to make the space more profitable and safer. With their livelihoods threatened, a number of informal traders argued against the plan and gained support from various social sectors. Accordingly, the project was eventually halted in 2011.

Joubert Park in downtown Johannesburg is another example of growing informal economic activity. Numerous informal small businesses, such as motor spares shops, food and cigarette hawkers, and luggage porters, actively operate there. However, local officials and their affiliates have removed them on many occasions in an attempt to reshape the area. The regeneration plan of the city of Johannesburg did not consider the informal traders to be a part of the desired future in the re-imagining of the city. As a counter response, a project was initiated to establish a comprehensive profile of all informal economic activities, to generate an awareness of the potential role of these activities in contributing towards the economic and cultural regeneration of the city.

The democratization program in South Africa has accelerated integration and competition among various actors who used to be located in disjunctive sectors. This has generated few winners and a great number of losers. People living in conditions of instability and informality do not remain silent. Through an analysis of the above case studies, the author concluded that South Africans are faced with uneven development, unequal redistribution of resources, and an inequality of opportunities for participating in economic activity. From their own perspective, the residents of these cities have advanced a political struggle for recognition (Honneth 1995). The conflict itself can be a form of integration (Gluckman 1965). When the struggle unites people, changes

can be initiated in neo-liberalistic policy. By seeking “the right to the city” [i.e., a common right to transform and renew ourselves by (re)making the city (Harvey 2008, 2012)] and “spatial justice” [i.e., a social justice embedded in space as a fundamental dimension of human societies (Soja 2010)], there can be some hope for people who currently struggle to acquire living spaces in the public sphere, and to achieve a true democratisation, which generates a new form of civil society.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The objective of this introduction has been to find common ground from which the six papers compiled in this volume can be considered. Table 1 summarizes the relative positioning of the arguments in the six articles in terms of the classification advocated by Alexander and Giesen (1987). Ito's, Teshirogi's, and Matsumoto's papers stressed the comparatively rational and objective character of new living strategies adopted by local people. In contrast, Murao's, Fujioka's, and Miyauchi's papers placed more emphasis on the interpretive-subjective perceptions of local people that have provided the foundations for establishing their new living strategy. In the former group, Teshirogi's study identified relatively contingent and autonomous choices by each individual as the primary source of social order, while Matsumoto's paper suggested that the existing social and natural environment imposed considerable constraints on the shaping of the social order. From this perspective, Ito's paper is intermediate between these two studies. In the latter group, responsibility for individualistic creativity and imagination with regard to (re)constructing the social order is emphasized most strongly in Murao's study, followed by Fujioka's and then Miyauchi's study.

At a time when support for area studies is wavering, and sponsorship for Africanist research is yet more precarious, such resources should be nurtured (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999: x). The area study approach can make a unique contribution to discussions regarding socio-cultural diversity in the Southern African region. Faced with rapid socioeconomic changes across the region, local communities have displayed various responses, such as demonstrating the positive integration and flexibility of local communities (see Matsumoto's and Fujioka's papers), cultivating a new niche in the hiatus that has arisen between the global and local politico-economic systems (see Teshirogi's and Ito's papers), and the exploration of new living strategies after the removal of their livelihoods (see Murao's and Miyauchi's papers). These approaches also highlighted the fundamental continuities in each area, before and after the global trend of neo-liberalization had prevailed. The observed continuities have stressed the resilience of local social structure in relation to global changes, which operate on many levels of reality in multiple arenas. While writing this essay, Nelson

Mandela passed away on December 5, 2013, at the age of 95, at his home in Johannesburg. We still need some more time to determine whether or not the death of the anti-apartheid icon and moral compass of South Africa symbolically brings to a close the age of struggle. However, it is certain that his legacy has already pervaded the many compelling realities in the region and has facilitated a mutual understanding across those realities. The articles that follow, we believe, will contribute to furthering our understanding in this regard.

## NOTES

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# The Decline in Migrant Labour and its Impact on Diversified Rural Livelihoods in a Mountain Area of Lesotho

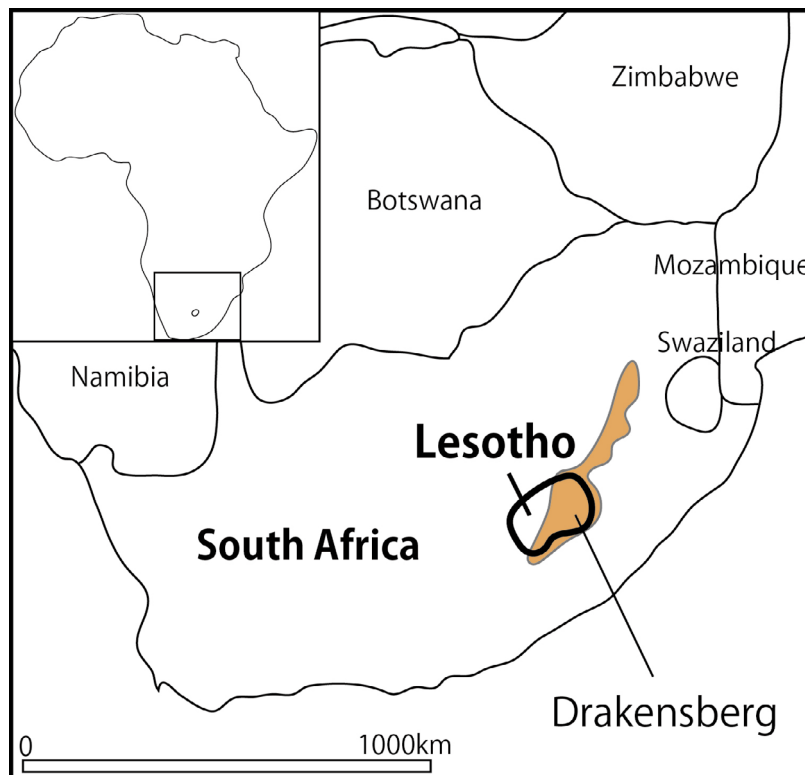
Miyo Matsumoto

**ABSTRACT** Lesotho is a mountainous country located in the Drakensberg Mountains in southern Africa. This small, landlocked country is about 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> and is completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa (South Africa). Its rural inhabitants depend on agriculture and pastoralism; they also work as migrant labourers in the mines of South Africa. Maize and wheat are the staple crops, cattle are raised for food, and sheep and goats are raised for sheared wool and mohair that are sold to provide cash income. Migrant labour is also a very important source of livelihood, and most young men, after initiation, undertake such labour. Following the discovery of gold in South Africa in 1886, the population of migrant workers in South African mines grew constantly, and Lesotho became known as a labour reserve for these mines. Soon after settlement of mountainous areas at altitudes of 2,000 m or higher began in the late 1800s, the population began to rely on local workers who migrated to neighbouring countries for jobs to supplement local earnings. Thus, wages sent home by migrant labourers have been responsible for the development of mountain farmland along with agriculture and livestock farming. However, since the 1990s, factors such as the reduced price of gold, resource exhaustion, and wage inflation have resulted in a great retrenchment of Basotho workers, and the numbers of workers have declined dramatically. This paper focuses on rural villages in the mountain region of Lesotho where cash-earning activities were incorporated into residents' livelihoods during the early stages of village establishment, and analyses the impact of the macro-social changes in South Africa after the 1990s on this mode of livelihood. The research was conducted in L village, in the mountainous Mokhotlong district, for a total of 12 months (August 2005–March 2006, January–March 2008, March 2009). During the research period, the author lived in the village and interviewed villagers, using the English and Sesotho languages, about their personal histories, livelihoods, and cash income. Interviews that focused on the personal histories and experiences of migrant labourers found that most men in their 60s and younger had experienced migrant labour, and their incomes had been spent on buying items for daily life, clothes, and livestock such as cattle and sheep. After the 1990s, the reduction in available mine employment had a serious effect on households in L village, which lost a major source of income. A decrease in remittances also reduced the ability to purchase livestock, a situation made worse by an increase in stock theft in the country. This resulted in the shift of livelihood modes from a non-agricultural base to an agricultural base, with villagers focusing on agriculture as a significant source of income. However, this has led to another concern: an increasing burden on the land. [*Lesotho, diversified livelihoods, deagrarianisation, migrant work, macro-social change*]

## INTRODUCTION

The diversification of livelihoods in rural communities in developing countries through the incorporation of non-agricultural activities has been discussed by many researchers since the 1990s. Previous research has presented an image of farmland being marginalised or excluded from economic development due to the population's reliance on subsistence agriculture (Reardon 1997; de Haan & Zoomers 2005; Hajdu et al. 2011). Many poverty-reduction policies have targeted the agricultural sector, neglecting the cash income sources of non-agricultural sectors. However, as these poverty-reduction policies began to be reviewed from the 1990s onward, income-generating strategies at a household level were noted. This review indicated that farmers were no longer relying solely on agricultural production but rather were diversifying their livelihoods, combining agriculture with other cash income

sources (Ellis 2000a; de Haan & Zoomers 2005; Zezza et al. 2009; Hajdu et al. 2011). Cases in which the income sources of the non-agricultural sector surpassed that of the agricultural sector have been reported (Kamanga et al. 2009; Davis et al. 2010; Winters et al. 2010); for instance, the importance of non-agricultural incomes in Africa is increasing compared with other regions (Reardon 1997; Barrett et al. 2001). In addition to the sale of agricultural products, informal means of earning cash, such as the sale of homemade food, home-based manufacture of utensils, and provision of transportation services to the city have been observed frequently, particularly in southern Africa. Such activities have now become part of development plans (Hajdu 2006). A review of research indicated that the diversification of modes of livelihood that incorporate means of earning cash from the non-agricultural sector is a survival strategy for farmers during times of socio-



**FIGURE 1.** *Map of Lesotho and southern Africa.*

economic change and an effective measure for overcoming poverty (Ellis 2000b).

Past studies have presented livelihood diversifications being accompanied by social changes (Bryceson 2002). In other words, it is a deagrarianisation process in which farmers accept social change and incorporate non-agricultural activities into their livelihoods. But a question remains: Do livelihood diversities still perform as survival strategies for farmers during times of macro-social change, even after their establishment?

To address this question, I focused on a case study of Lesotho's mountain region, which has a long history of incorporating non-agricultural activities from the beginning of human settlement in the 1800s.

### ***Lesotho's economic dependence on South Africa***

The Kingdom of Lesotho (Lesotho) is a mountainous country located in southern Africa that includes the Drakensberg Mountains in the eastern half of the country. With an area of approximately 30,000 km<sup>2</sup>, it is completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa (South Africa; Figure 1).

Lesotho is no exception to the trend that has prevailed across southern Africa: it is a country where non-agricultural cash-earning activities are thriving, as mentioned above. The agricultural sector involves crop farming, which includes cultivating crops such as maize and wheat, and livestock farming, which involves raising cattle for ploughing as well as sheep and goats that are a source of cash. The country's non-agricultural sector mainly involves migration to South

Africa for work, operating general stores, or joining the taxicab industry. In the mountain regions, at an altitude of 2,000 m or higher, the population began to rely on local workers who migrate to neighbouring countries for jobs to supplement local earnings soon after human settlement began in the late 1800s. Thus, wages sent home by migrant labourers have been responsible, along with agriculture and livestock farming, for the development of the mountain farmland. This development is sustained by the diamond and gold mines that were discovered in South Africa in the late 1800s, making South Africa the main provider of employment for people from neighbouring countries.

Compared with other southern African countries, Lesotho heavily depends on South Africa economically. In addition to its geographical location, i.e., entirely surrounded by South Africa, this dependence stems from the fact that the country is unable to sustain itself by agricultural production alone, being densely populated and with two-thirds of its area covered by mountainous regions. Lesotho relies strongly on imports, with 26% of its export value and 77% of its import value coming from trade with South Africa (Lesotho Bureau of Statistics 2009). Furthermore, the total remittance payments sent back home from South Africa by Lesotho migrant workers accounted for 27% and 46% of the GNP and GDP, respectively, in 1993 (IMF 1994). With such a background of economic relations with South Africa, many studies have been concerned with the dependence of the household economies of Lesotho on migrant workers' remittances. These studies have revealed the



importance of cash income to both the national and household economies (Maloka 2004; Showers 2005; Murray 2009).

However, in the 1990s, there was an over-supply of black labourers in the mines. Therefore, there were fewer job vacancies in the mines, causing the number of migrant workers to decrease (Bardill & Cobbe 1985). As mechanisation progressed, the need for manual labour, jobs that the Lesotho village men could fill, declined. Furthermore, mines closed due to the depletion of resources and the worsening financial situation caused by the decline in gold prices. Moreover, South Africa gained democratic rule and abolished apartheid in the 1990s. This led to the protection of employment for native South Africans, who were oppressed during the apartheid era, reducing the number of migrant workers from neighbouring countries, including Lesotho. These socio-economic changes in South Africa caused significant ripples not only in the country itself but also in the societies and the economies of the entire region due to its significant socio-economic impact. In Lesotho, there was, of course, an enormous impact of income loss. In a survey by Mensah (2011), the differences in monthly income among the three household types - non-migrant household, former migrant household and current migrant household – were statistically significant, decreasing from an average of R3,683<sup>1</sup> for a current migrant household to an average of R1,643 for a former migrant household, demonstrating the connection between the decline in the number of migrant mine workers and the decrease in household income and level of welfare in Lesotho.

Taking into account this major social change in southern Africa, in this paper, I focus on rural villages in Lesotho's mountain region and analyse the transformations of migrant labour and agricultural activities at the household level. By so doing, I aim to examine the impact of macro-social changes on rural diversified livelihoods.

### **Research methods and description of the village**

Field research was conducted for a total of 12 months, from August 2005 to March 2006, from January to March 2008, and during March 2009. I stayed in L village and investigated livelihood activities by interviewing all 64 households using English and Sesotho. Former migrant workers were also interviewed about their life histories to examine changes in livelihood in the village.

Village L is located approximately 45 minutes away from the mountain town of Mokhotlong, which can be reached by car on unpaved roads. Buses run about five times a day to the town and back. As of 2006, the population of the village was 428 (including migrants). Of the village members, South African residents were mostly male migrant workers in their 20s and 30s, and this number encompassed approximately 30% (22/69 people) of the total number of males in their 20s and

30s in the village.

### **MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD FROM THE 1940S TO THE 1980S**

There were three main means of livelihood at village L: migrant labour, agriculture, and livestock farming. In this and the following sections, I describe how the means of livelihood in the village changed during the 1990s based on the migrant work history of the adult males.

#### **Peak period of migration**

The peak period of migration to South Africa was from the 1940s to the 1980s. The beginning of the peak period was traced only from the 1940s because the eldest interviewee (born in 1918) reached the age of eligibility for migrant labour in the 1940s. All the people interviewed had migrated for occupational purposes, except two residents, who had been turned down due to health reasons and one person who could not leave home because he had to take care of his father's large herds. Most of the people (26 out of 30 people) interviewed had been employed in South African mines through The Employment Bureau of Africa<sup>2</sup> (TEBA; Figure 2).

The real wages in the mines rose as the years passed, and although there were differences among the workers<sup>3</sup>, the average wage was R6 per month during the 1940s. By the 1960s, it had increased to about R10 per month. Thereafter, the monthly wages rose to R700 in the 1970s. The wages in the South African gold mines increased fivefold between 1972 and 1976 due to the good economic climate (Showers 2005). According to an ex-teacher in the town of Mokhotlong, who taught from 1979 to 1989, students at the time talked of how everything would be fine even if they failed their exams so long as they found a mining job. Even teachers were said to have left their jobs to work in the mines. In village L as well, OP, who progressed to a residential high school after finishing elementary and junior high schools in the village, went away to work in a South African mine after graduating from an agricultural vocational college in 1977.

The time spent working in a mine ranged from a few months to a year. When the contract ended, the workers renewed their contracts or moved to another mine with higher wages. For example, AZ worked in the mines from 1959 until 1978, when he hurt his foot. Then, he worked for different periods in different mines: 6 months in Guduld, 4 years in Daggafontein, 6 years in Western Deep Level, 1 year in Leslie, and 7 years in Vaal Reefs. Such contractual arrangements suggest that there was a high demand for mine labourers at the time and thus many opportunities for employment. Therefore, workers were able to move among different mines within South Africa.

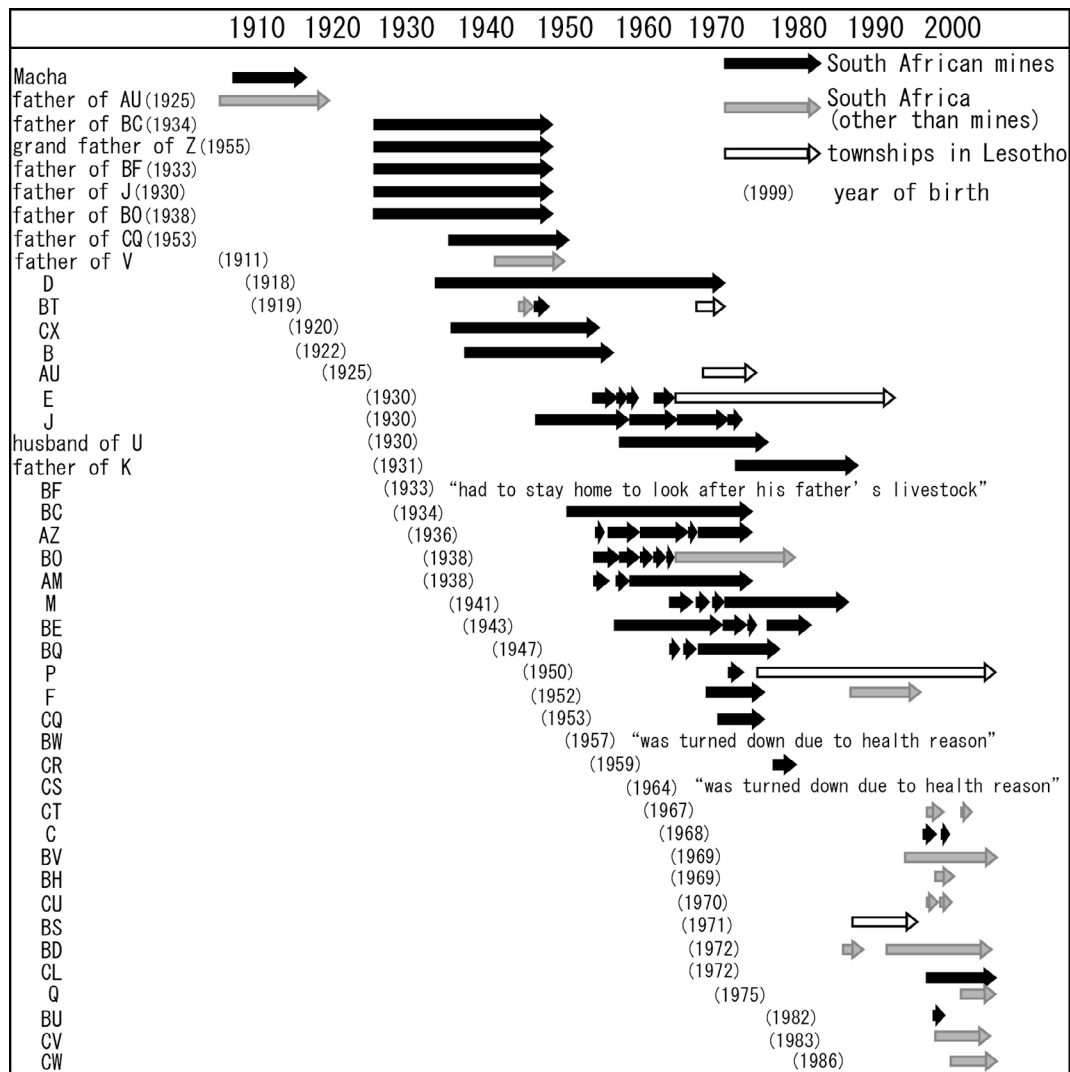


FIGURE 2. Life histories of migrant workers.

### Use of remittance

I interviewed 22 people who migrated for work from the 1940s to the 1980s and asked them how they had spent their wages. The most popular item among the purchased goods was livestock, with cattle being bought by 14 interviewees. One interviewee bought 20 cattle in 1963. One reason that people were able to buy so many livestock was that in the 1960s, cattle and sheep were inexpensive, costing R5 and 25cents each, respectively.<sup>4</sup> Sheep (a few dozen) and horses were bought by seven people. Eight people bought farming implements for ploughing. Seeds (e.g., maize, wheat, and vegetables) were also purchased and people were employed to work on the farm while men were away for mine work. Wages were also used for living expenses such as food and clothing; however, they never spent the entire amount on living expenses. Therefore, most of the remittance was invested in agriculture and livestock farming (Table 1).

For young men in Lesotho, going to work in the mines was a symbol of masculinity. Therefore, it was commonplace for men, once they had reached the age of maturity, to work in

the mines and earn money to purchase livestock.

### Agriculture

Crops were produced mainly for subsistence, with maize and wheat cultivated as staple foods, while added crops such as peas and cowpeas (black-eyed beans) were cultivated for supplementary food, in addition to vegetables such as cabbages, potatoes, and pumpkins. In the interviews, many people stated that the production of crops was sufficient until the 1960s and that when the wheat harvest, which was not normally cultivated for sale, resulted in a surplus, it was sold within the village.

Because a male workforce was needed in farm work to manage the cattle during ploughing, when the male heads of households migrated for work, family members who looked after the home would generally help out. In most cases, it was the migrant worker's father who looked after the farm, followed by the migrant's brothers and other relatives. Some people also hired help and paid them with money earned by the migrant family member. Additionally, a system called *seahlolo*<sup>5</sup>

TABLE 1. Usage of remittances (~1980s).

	livestock				farming implements	food	clothing	others
	cattle	sheep/goats	horse	donkey				
V	10	60	1			○		
D	3	20	1		yoke			
CX				2	yoke	○		
AU	1x several times	2x several times	1x several times		yoke			
E					seed (wheat)			education
J	2				yoke	○	○	
K	5	30	10					
BC	1				seed (maize, wheat, peas)	○	○	
AZ	"many"		"many"		2 yokes			
BO	8				hire a person			
AM	5	12	1	1	yoke	○	○	
M	1							
BE	20, 3	50-100						
BQ							○	
P	1				4 yokes			
F	7							
CQ	3		2		yoke	○	○	education
CR		30						

was used to bring in additional help. For example, the wife of BE said that she was helped by *seahlolo* to feed her children when her husband was away for work. Because most of the farming implements had been bought using money earned from mine work, it could be said that the operation of agricultural work was supported by the cash income of migrant labour.

### Livestock farming

As mentioned previously, many farm animals were bought using money earned at the mines. The livestock most frequently purchased were cattle. In addition to their use in ploughing, cattle were also used as bride wealth. Because sheep and goats were cheaper than cattle, they were the second most frequently bought livestock and were purchased in numbers of 10 or more at a time. Their wool and mohair were a source of income, and sheep and goats were also produced as investments because they could be sold individually. Migrant workers are said to have invested in livestock as a "pension" for their retirement.

### Livelihood of the village during 1940s to 1980s

In summary, many of the village men went to work in the mines during the period from the 1940s to the 1980s. The wages were used to provide for major expenditures, such as livestock and farming implements. Wages were also used for labour costs such as managing agriculture and livestock farming and employing people to perform agricultural tasks. Although income from working in the mines was also used for purchasing daily necessities such as food and clothing, most of the earnings from migrant labour were invested in agriculture and livestock.

In general, people talked about their time as migrant workers nostalgically, saying it was "good back then."

Agriculture and livestock farming functioned well, supported by sufficient cash earnings from migrant labour. Moreover, when surplus crop was produced, it could be sold, and the village was able to support its small population.

### MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD FROM THE 1990s TO 2010s

#### Decline of migrant labour at the mines

In village L, after the 1980s, the rate of contract renewals and employment of new labourers decreased significantly, in accordance with the national trend. The concomitant decline in cash earnings had a great impact on the village's livelihood. When BE applied for a contract renewal in 1986 and BU did the same in 2003, they were both rejected by their respective mining companies. When BD applied for mining labour jobs through TEBA in 1991 and BH did so in 1999, they were both declined, as new recruits were not needed. Of those interviewed who were engaged in migrating for the purpose of labour from the 1990s onward, only three of the migrating workers were employed in the mining industry (see Figure 2). Since the 1980s, TEBA has continually reduced the numbers of new mining labourers being hired, tending to favour labourers with considerable experience (Bardill and Cobbe 1985). In 2002, TEBA effectively stopped hiring new labourers. Only when a labourer dies in the mines, a relative of the deceased is allowed to be employed as an inexperienced labourer. Thus, BU was employed by a mine in 2003 as a new employee because his uncle had died in a mine. However, he was not allowed to renew his contract after completing his initial 11-month contract.

Although mining job opportunities have decreased, migrant workers have become engaged in other work. When villagers could not find work within Lesotho, they went to

TABLE 2. Usage of remittances (1990s–).

	livestock				farming implements	food	clothing	commodities	expenditures in S. Africa	others
	cattle	sheep/ goats	horse	donkey						
CT						○	○	○		
C			5			○	○			
BV						○	○	○	living expenses transportation	
BH						○	○			
CU							○		living expenses transportation	
BD						○	○		living expenses transportation	
CL										construct brick house
Q						○		○	living expenses transportation	
BU		1			yoke	○	○		transportation	
CV						○		○	living expenses transportation	
CW						○				give to parents

only C, CL and BU are the mine workers

South Africa to search for jobs. They often knocked on the gates of white farm owners, seeking work and sometimes engaging in direct negotiations. Most of the work they have found involves house building, followed by farm and retail work.

One of the major differences between working in the mines and other migrant labour is the income. Whereas the households of mining labourers can purchase livestock such as sheep, although not as many as in the past, migrant workers in other jobs do not have the extra money to buy livestock because a large portion of their wages is used for living expenses (Table 2).

### Agriculture

Farm fields can be divided into two types. Farmland where staple crops are cultivated is called *tsimo*, and vegetable gardens where vegetables are grown around one's home are called *jarete*. According to interviews, the oldest *jarete*, where cabbages, carrots, and potatoes were cultivated for home use, was established in the 1940s. Although *jaretes* were cultivated mostly for home consumption until the 1980s, from the 1990s onward, young and older people alike started expanding them, growing produce as cash crops as well (Figure 3).

In recent years, the range of *tsimo* crop cultivation has also undergone changes. Although cultivation of crops for home use continues, additional cultivation of cash crops such as cabbages and carrots began in the 1980s. In the 2000s, a household planted sunflowers in an entire block of *tsimo* and started selling seeds on a commercial basis. In 2009, three other households planted a few sunflowers on their farms with the intention of growing seeds so as to cultivate the crop on a larger scale (Figure 4).

Thus, the decline in migrant labour and the start of

intensive use of farmlands coincide in the village. This can be speculated that the lack of migrant labour earnings is driving households to expand their *jarete* or convert *tsimo* from cultivating crops for home use to large-scale commercial crops, with hope for compensation of income loss.

### Livestock farming

The number of livestock is declining nationally, and the Lesotho Bureau of Statistics (2009) attributes this decline partly to the theft of livestock. In fact, the number of cases of stock theft has been increasing since the 1990s (Dzimba and Matoane 2005), and according to Kynoch and Ulicki (2000), 40% of households who do not own livestock attribute this lack to stock theft. Dzimba and Matoane (2005) reported that due to the increase in mortality rates in Lesotho in recent years, the demand for livestock to slaughter at funerals is increasing. Moreover, they also point out the increased unemployment which has forced many of them to turn to livestock theft as a means of survival, and concluded that the main cause of stock theft was the increased unemployment in the country.

In village L, the damage caused by stock theft was serious, with a noted increase in theft cases since the 1990s. A household that had 40 sheep stolen during one night was suddenly deprived of their precious source of income, gravely affecting their domestic financial situation. In most theft cases, cattle kept in livestock corrals next to the house were taken away during the night or cattle were stolen while grazing on the mountainous areas during transhumance in summer. Although a neighbourhood watch was established as a countermeasure, members only pursued the stolen livestock but did not engage in preventative measures. In 2008, stock owners began to build small sheds next to their cattle pens where the shepherds would stay at night to keep watch over the animals.





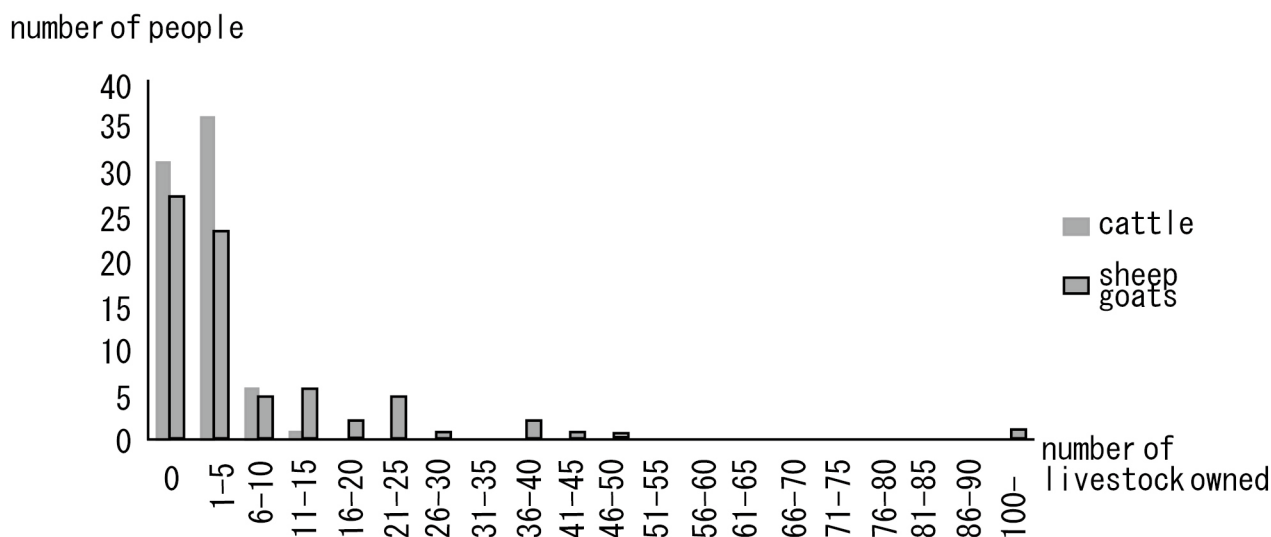


FIGURE 5. Number of livestock owned in L village.

were currently engaged in brewing and selling alcohol. Next to making *joala*, baking and selling bread (*lipapata*) was the most common activity engaged in by women. Women also often gathered and sold firewood (*patsi*). Using a pickaxe, women gathered shrubs 30 cm or more in length by digging them by from the roots. It was difficult and heavy labour, and women were required to collect large amounts to provide for their own home use as well as to sell; therefore, this form of business was not as common as making *joala*. Nevertheless, it is a common means of earning cash when there is no money to buy raw materials needed to make *joala* or *lipapata*.

As described above, due to the reduction of major sources of income, i.e., the decline in migrant worker's remittances, and also the damage caused by cattle theft, villagers started to rely on agriculture as a source of cash. Moreover, casual labour within the village is also becoming an important source of cash income, complementing insufficient earnings from agricultural work.

## CONCLUSIONS

During the period when the population of Lesotho's mountain region started to increase, migrant work in the South African mines was already one of the main means of livelihood in Lesotho. Thus, the history of the mountain villages developed against a background of non-agricultural activities. The wages for mining labour increased annually, and many youths went to the mines to work. Most of the earnings were used to purchase livestock and farming implements, and this livelihood structure in which migration labour that supported agriculture and livestock farming continued for decades. During this period, villagers cultivated food only for their own consumption. However, this structure changed in the 1990s.

Along with the socio-economic changes in South Africa during the 1990s, the number of mining labourers decreased significantly in the Lesotho mountain region, cutting off a

major source of income. Meanwhile, although raising sheep and goats remained a major source of income in addition to migration labour, villagers were unable to rely on stock farming due to a serious increase in stock theft during that period. As a result, crop cultivation shifted from growing crops solely for domestic use to cultivating cash crops, gradually raising the importance of agricultural work as a significant source of income. Furthermore, cash income resulting from the work of village men and women also came to play a significant role in domestic incomes.

Similar drastic changes in modes of livelihood were observed throughout southern Africa. For example, in Botswana, a decline in migrant labour to the South African mines has been one of the reasons for the changes in the life course of male villagers (Townsend 1997). During the peak period of mine work, the miners left their families in the villages, and their extended families, including their parents and any kin who needed support, were economically dependent on remittances. However, after the decline of migrant labour, men (especially young men) gained the option of staying permanently in urban towns with their nuclear families. As a background of this, there was the increasing demand for labour in rapidly growing capital of Gaborone. Andersson (2006) described the Malawian case in which after the 1990s, form of international migration has changed. After centrally organized mine migration to South Africa ended in the 1980s, migrants who were engaged in an informal commodity market have newly emerged. Contemporary movements of migrants are more diverse and are less tied to labour works. In these countries, social changes did not impact the structure of diversified livelihoods itself because people continued to engage in other non-agricultural activities, instead of mine works.

However in my case study, diversified livelihoods seem to have transitioned to agrarianised ones. After South African



mine labour became limited option for foreigners, ex-mine workers of other countries were absorbed into their domestic employment markets, whereas in Lesotho mountain region, there was shortage of other means of earning cash. As a result, locals had to focus on using available natural resources (i.e. to engage on agricultural activities) that required little investment.

To address the previous question, “do livelihood diversities still perform as survival strategies for farmers during times of macro-social change, even after their establishment?”, I conclude that the diversification of livelihoods may be an effective strategy in protecting the lives of villagers from macro-social changes because it provides options for making a living. In Lesotho mountain case, livelihoods were diversified in that non-agricultural activities were conducted alongside agricultural work, but there was only one option, mining work, which fully supported the financial soundness of village agriculture.

As Yaro (2006) indicates, diversification *per se* does not automatically lead to livelihood security, as few profitable non-farm activities exist for the many affected by economic decadence, population pressure, climatic variability and social marginalisation. According to literature on livelihood diversification, limited access to non-farm activities can be resulted from the need of investments for profitability, that precludes many poor people from engaging in them (Meagher 2000; Yaro 2006). In addition to this, Lesotho’s forepassed colonial policy has also influenced the shortage of non-agricultural income source, who had offered minimal formal employment opportunities to locals. The government’s aim of that time was to tie the locals to South African labour markets in mines, agriculture and industries (Southall 1994). After the independence in 1966, the new government attracted foreign manufacturing industries to create new jobs, by reference to the low cost, docility and easy availability of workers, but success was limited due to the competition with the former homelands in South Africa (Southall 1994). This historical case was partly responsible for Lesotho’s poorly developed employment market.

Moreover, because only minimal investments have been made in agriculture until 1980s, it is unlikely that effective land-use systems for intensive agriculture were established in the studied case. Therefore, after the transition to agrarianised livelihoods, the increasing burden on the land in the future is a concern.

Nevertheless, the livelihood structure of managing agriculture work by having non-agricultural activities as the base has the long-term advantage of not imposing an excessive load on the soil, particularly in mountainous land where the natural environment is fragile. However, this economic structure has strong ties with the global economy and is vulnerable to socioeconomic changes. So, the number

of available options can influence the vulnerability of village economy and natural resources, otherwise they may need intervention by government or aid organisations to manage land for sustainable use.

With the construction of the Polihali Dam in the mountainous region, which is beginning in 2012 as part of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project,<sup>8</sup> the government aims to alleviate poverty by offering jobs involved with this construction to residents of the region. However, this employment will only be temporary, and when construction is completed, a repeat of what transpired from the 1980s onward is likely to occur. To protect the local residents from economic instability, it is necessary to create long-term job opportunities for the local population as well as devise methods of sustainable land management, or the risk of imposing a further load on the natural resources will remain significant.

## NOTES

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1. Currencies in Lesotho include the Maloti (plural form) or the Loti (singular form). However, due to the Common Monetary Area arrangement, this currency is fixed at a one-to-one rate with the South African currency, Rand. Therefore, it is possible to use Rand notes within Lesotho. Accordingly, this paper will use the Rand (R).
2. TEBA is a recruiting company that is operated by the mining companies.
3. Wages differed depending on the mining company, the specific position, and the worker’s experience.
4. In 2009, a cattle cost R3,000 and a sheep cost R700.
5. This is a system in which the landowner provides agricultural land, while the tenant provides the seeds and cattle for ploughing. Farm work such as planting, weeding, and harvesting is done in collaboration, and the harvest is divided equally.
6. Because the cow manure accumulated in cow pens is hardened from being walked on, it is dug up in small blocks for use as solid fuel.
7. Because houses in village L are built on a slope, a flat area has to be dug out before construction can begin.
8. This is a joint development project of Lesotho and South Africa. It involves the construction of several large dams and other infrastructure like roads, bridges, and power lines with the aim of transferring water to the Gauteng region of South Africa and providing electricity to Lesotho (Devitt & Hitchcock 2010).

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# Rural Entrepreneurs and Social Connections: The Management of Cattle Posts and Interactions among Farmers in North-central Namibia

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**ABSTRACT** Increasing numbers of entrepreneurs have emerged in rural agrarian societies of Namibia. These entrepreneurs have introduced new approaches to maintaining livelihoods, and these new approaches may have changed the social connections among households that had been based on the previously rural economy of Africa. This paper examines recent changes in the social connections and relationships between rural entrepreneurs and other farmers in a specific local society in post-apartheid Namibia. Some farmers in the Owambo agro-pastoral society have changed their approach to livestock farming by establishing an annual cattle post. This approach to farm management differs from local methods, which have used a seasonal cattle post, and resembles those used in commercial farms. However, farmers involved in annual cattle posts tend to use their salaries from jobs in the subsistence economy, which is strongly supported by social relationships, to invest in the new enterprises. Although these individuals have entrepreneurial skills and have actively introduced new methods of livestock farming, they have not totally shifted to the market economy. Indeed, despite major economic disparities, the characteristics of rural economies, especially the value placed on coexistence, may lead to greater upward economic mobility among rural households. [*entrepreneur, agro-pastoral system, moral economy, meat industry, economic disparity, coexistence*]

## INTRODUCTION

Recent changes in African agrarian societies, such as increasing de-agrarianisation and enhanced rural–urban relationships, have changed local societies and the ways in which local people maintain their livelihoods (e.g., Bryceson 1996; 2010). Rural residents have tended to diversify their approaches to maintaining their livelihoods, and entrepreneurs<sup>1</sup> have begun to start business ventures in rural areas. Although these activities have been viewed from the perspective of economic development or rural industrialisation, they may also magnify changes in social relationships and enhance economic disparities among households in local societies.

On the other hand, some scholars have noted the unique character of African peasant society. Hyden (1980; 1983) focused on the behavioural characteristics of African peasants in an “economy of affection,” who mainly rely on structural constraints inherent to the peasant economy. Hyden defined the “economy of affection” as “a network of support, communications and interaction among structurally defined groups connected by blood, kin, community or other affinities, for example religion” (Hyden 1983). Although these works caused a stir amongst African peasants and led to some arguments (e.g., Cliffe 1987), these characteristics have also been considered important in terms of the livelihood and social security of households, especially those with less wealth (e.g., Sugimura 2008).

This paper examines rural entrepreneurs who have started

a ‘new’ type of cattle post (farm) in northern Namibia and investigates the relationships between those farmers and others in a specific agro-pastoral society. Two issues pertinent to this topic are examined: the post-apartheid situation and economic disparities among households.

The land and natural resource management system in southern Africa is characterised by peculiar features. One of these involves the coexistence of different land-ownership systems, communal and private, which represents a structural legacy of the apartheid regime (Nelson 2010; Murombedzi 2010). In Namibia, the use of fences to enclose communal land has been practised since the end of 20th century (Tapscot and Hangula 1994). It has been reported that wealthy people tend to dominate land and natural resources (e.g., see VISION 2030 published by the government; Werner 2001) through such activities as establishing “cattle posts”, which are seen as tantamount to the privatisation of grazing land by government; it is then the government that is then accused of using fencing to enclose the land (VISION 2030). These activities may also increase tension in relationships among cattle post holder households and others (see Verlinden and Kruger 2007).

This paper aims to examine recent developments in the social relationships between rural entrepreneurs and other farmers in an agro-pastoral society in post-apartheid Namibia by clarifying how changes in the approach to livestock farming and managing cattle posts have affected interactions among farmers. First, I will clarify 1) the process by which cattle post

owners and their management system emerged; 2) interactions among households involving livestock, livestock products, reciprocal gift-giving, and the cooperative use of cattle posts; 3) place these activities in the context of social relationships and address the potential role of “entrepreneurship” in upward economic mobility.

## RESEARCH AREA

I conducted fieldwork at U village in the Oshana Region of north-central Namibia. U village is located in a suburban area, 12 km west of the town of Oshakati, which is the central town in the Oshana region (Figure 1). Many seasonal rivers (*oshanas*) in this region flow from north to south, and flooding from the north occurs during the rainy season, from December to March. The mean annual rainfall, which is concentrated during the rainy season, is 400–500 mm (Mendelsohn et al. 2002).

Data from the Namibian government give the population of the Oshana region as 161,916 and the population density as 18.7/km<sup>2</sup> (Republic of Namibia 2003). The population in the same region was 134,884 in 1991 (Republic of Namibia 1995); thus, the population increased by 20% in a decade. As a result, the residential area has rapidly expanded to include more of the frontier area.

The 2001 population census lists the population of U village as 590 (97 households). The dominant ethnic group in this area is the Owambo. The Owambo are agro-pastoralists who migrated to this area from the northeast (Williams 1991). The name “Owambo” is a generic term, and is composed of several subgroups including Kwanyama, Ndonga, and Kwambi (Mendelsohn et al. 2000). Most residents of U village are members of the Kwambi subgroup. The Kwambi people live in nuclear family units, or in extended families residing in the same homestead. In my survey, I considered those living in one homestead, whether nuclear family units or extended families, to be a household. This grouping is analytically valid when examining subsistence activities because households are the primary unit of food consumption within the research area. Although some literature has noted that the Owambo have traditionally practised polygamy (e.g., Tönjes 1996), all households examined in this study were monogamous. Residents build homesteads that are separated from one another, forming scattered settlements, and engage in livelihoods related to agriculture, primarily cultivating pearl millet, raising livestock (mainly cattle, goat, and sheep), fishing in seasonal rivers, and gathering wild vegetables or edible insects. Some villagers work in and around the village or in town.

Namibia (formerly South West Africa) was colonised by Germany in 1884. After the end of World War I, Namibia was ruled by South Africa from 1920 to 1990, and the apartheid

regime was introduced. Beginning in the 1960s, the South African government established homelands, which were lands designated by the colonial government for different “ethnic groups”. Most Owambo villages were located within their homeland (Ovamboland). The colonial government permitted ownership of private land in freehold lands but not in homelands. Homelands were managed by senior headmen and the headmen who managed the granting of usufructs for the land and natural resources in each village. After independence, a system with two forms of land was maintained, but the names of the types of land were changed to “communal land” (formerly homeland) and “commercial land” (formerly freehold land). The traditional land-management system was retained in the national legal system, which coexists with the traditional leadership structure (senior headman and headman).

Under apartheid, farmers on fenced commercial farms operated the official meat industry and farmers sold their livestock and dairy products at the official market (Rawlinson 1994; Liagre et al. 2000). Livestock farmers on communal lands were almost ignored by the official market; thus, most farmers in the communal land engaged in bartering or trading through local livestock markets. Moreover, the colonial government banned the movement of livestock from communal to commercial areas to prevent the spread of infectious livestock diseases.

After independence, however, the official meat industry encouraged the involvement of livestock farmers from the north in the official market because of the need to increase meat production for export overseas (e.g., Rawlinson 1994) (Figure 2). The Meat Board in Namibia noted that most meat production was destined for overseas countries, especially EU countries (Meat Board of Namibia 2004). Although the number of cattle exported overseas and the number purchased in northern Namibia increased after 1990, livestock purchased in the north still do not meet the new demand (Figure 2). Therefore, one of the important issues facing the industry was how local farming in the north could be integrated into the official meat market (Liagre et al. 2000). In 1992, a branch of the Meat Corporation (Meatco), the country’s largest meat company, was established in Oshakati. Additionally, a local livestock market, which offered people the opportunity to buy and sell cattle, goats, and sheep 3 days per week, was established in the towns of Oshakati and Epalela.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Field research was conducted in U village for a total of 25 months from 2002 to 2011. During the field research, I resided in a homestead and observed the daily activities and activities related to the livelihoods of villagers. I interviewed the owners of 30 homesteads in U village and surveyed the economic conditions of the households (e.g., number of employees,

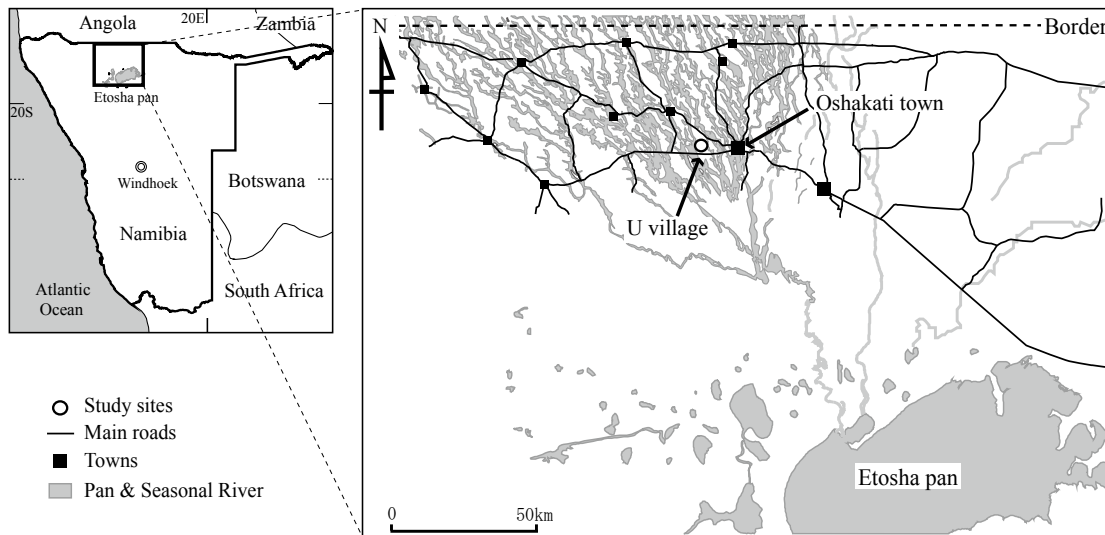


FIGURE 1. Research Area.

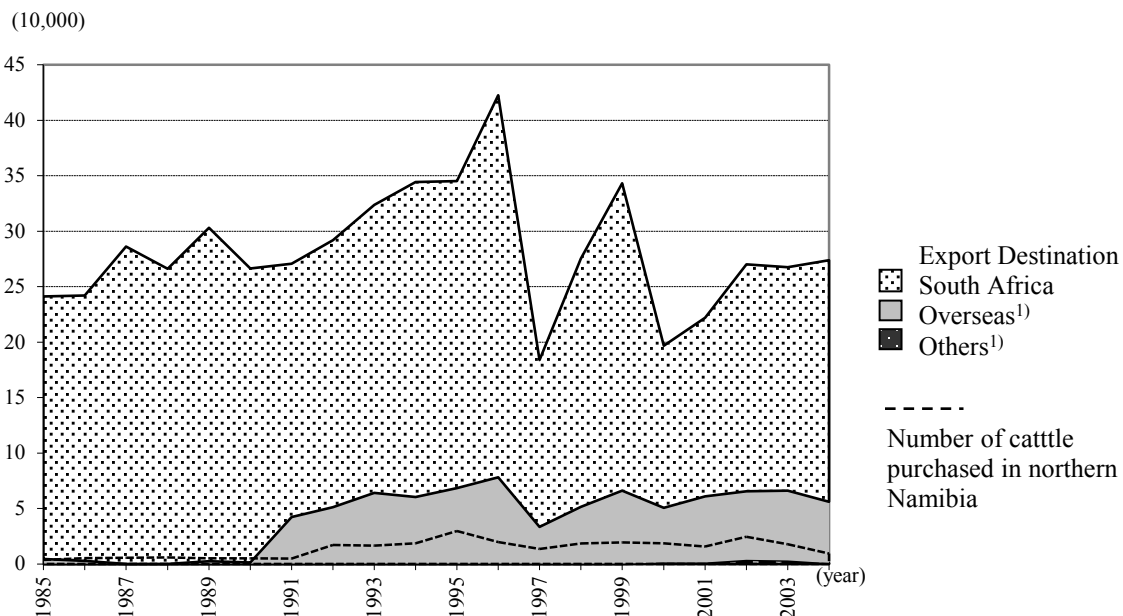


FIGURE 2. Relationship between the number of cattle exported and the number purchased in northern Namibia.

Source: Meat Board of Namibia (2004).

1) "Overseas" means the countries which are located in outside of African continent. "Others" means the countries which are located within African continent except of South Africa.

2) The number of cattle purchased in northern Namibia is represented in the number purchased by the three Meatco branches in northern Namibia, i.e., Katima Mulilo, Oshakati, and Rundu.

total income, participation in economic activities such as selling livestock and managing cattle posts, and historical changes in livestock farming) to identify changes in livestock farming. Additionally, using a hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver, I counted the number of livestock per household and measured the areas devoted to cattle posts and farming in 2004. I also interviewed residents about the number of livestock that they had bought, sold, or given as gifts every year from 2002 to 2008. I asked people to use a notebook to record their experiences of gifting foods, such as meat and milk, from February to March 2007 to determine the frequency

with which particular gifts were given. I also analysed cattle trading data provided by the Meat Board in Namibia, and interviewed the manager of the Oshakati branch of the Meat Corporation about the purchasing system used in the meat industry.

## EMERGENCE OF NEW CATTLE POST FARMERS AND THEIR LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

### *Emergence of new cattle post farmers in U village*

Since the 1980s, a new agro-pastoral system has emerged in U village. The new system is characterised by the use of remote

pastoral lands known as cattle posts. The use of remote pastoral land *per se* does not constitute a new system,<sup>2</sup> but the system by which the land is managed has changed dramatically since the 1980s.<sup>3</sup>

Before the 1980s, the livestock of the Kwambi people grazed around the beds of seasonal rivers from the beginning of the rainy season to the middle of the dry season. After the crops were harvested, livestock grazed inside the crop fields. Some villagers identified two benefits of this mixed farming. First, livestock were able to feed on the crop stems, which contain many nutrients, after harvest. Second, allowing the livestock to graze on the fields used for farming provided manure for the soil. At the end of the dry season, livestock, especially cattle, were moved to grazing land about 30 km south because of the lack of pasture around the village. Seasonal grazing camps were established around these areas, which were called *ohambo* in the local language. The location of this grazing land was determined by each subgroup, and the villagers primarily used three different locations (Figure 3). According to the elders, the male members of homesteads looked after the herds of livestock in *ohambo*.

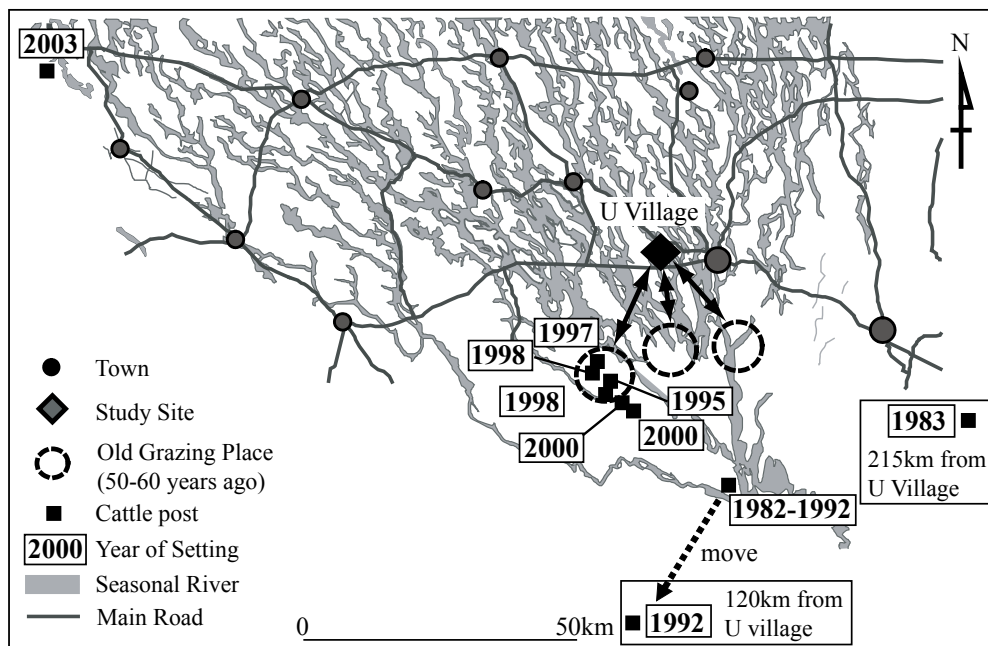
This seasonal migratory grazing was one feature of the Owambo pastoral system (Siiskonen 1990; Kreike 2004; Mendelsohn 2006; Verlinden and Kruger 2007) that has changed since the 1980s. At the end of the 1980s, the number of people who brought their cattle to seasonal grazing camps had decreased. One cause of this was the reduction in the number of livestock due to the serious drought in the 1980s. At the same time, some people erected fences around grazing land to restrict the areas previously used for *ohambo* for their private

use. Although these private grazing lands are still known as *ohambo*, there are some differences between this grazing system and the system that was used in the seasonal grazing camps (*ohambo*: cattle post) several decades ago, especially with respect to their enclosure by fencing, employment of herders, and annual use of the land. In this paper, I use “whole year grazing system through the use of (annual) cattle post” to distinguish the new system from the “seasonal grazing system through the use of seasonal grazing camp”.<sup>4</sup>

The first annual cattle post by a U villager was set up in 1982, and the number of cattle post farmers subsequently increased, particularly during the 1990s (Figure 3). By 2006, nine cattle posts were launched by eight of the 30 households (27%). These cattle posts were established around the sites of what had been seasonal grazing camps before the 1980s. The first cattle post was established around a site that had been selected due to its proximity to water; however, it was moved and re-established after the serious drought that occurred between 1991 and 1992 (Figure 3). Additionally, some farmers set up cattle posts on the basis of the quality of the land for raising livestock rather than only on the basis of seasonal grazing camp locations.

Each fenced area is between 20 and 87 ha, and livestock graze both inside the fenced area and outside the cattle post. During my study, eight cattle posts included crop fields inside the fenced area (Table 1). These fields were between 2 and 12 ha in size<sup>5</sup> (Table 1) and were used to grow the same varieties of crops as found in the village fields.

Most of the livestock are kept in the cattle posts for most of the year (around September–May) and some cattle



**FIGURE 3.** Location of grazing places and cattle posts.

Source: Field surveys by Fujioka in 2006 and 2007.



**TABLE 1.** *Details of cattleposts in U village.*

Owner	Main Occupation (Past)	Distance from Village	Year of Cattlepost Setting	Area (ha)	Herd boy		Livestock	Number of Cattle	Year of Crop Field Setting	Area of Crop Field (ha)
					Number	Wage (month)				
A.D	Regional Councilor, Management of Bar	45km	1982-92	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		128km	1992	#	2	N\$400	Cattle, Goat, Sheep	157	-	-
		21km	1995	67	1	N\$400	Cattle		1995	12
L.P	Management of Bar (Officer)	23km	1998	87	1	N\$300	Cattle	26	1998	5
P.A	Mine worker	25km	2000	86	1	N\$300	Cattle	30	2000	4
S.A	(Mine worker)	26km	2000	31	1	N\$300	Cattle, Sheep	36	2000	4
F.A	Army	95km	2003	25	2	N\$400	Cattle	15	2006	3
P.I	Builder	20km	1998	30	1	N\$400	Cattle	60	1999	2
M.A	Administrator	215km	1983	65	2	N\$500	Cattle	81	1991	6
D.A	(Mine worker)	20km	1997	20	1	N\$350	Cattle	79	1997	7

Source: Field surveys by Fujioka in 2006 and 2009.

1) Area was measured by hand receiver of GPS.

2) “#” indicates area that could not be measured due to lack of fences.

are moved back to the village for several months (around June–August) to graze in the crop fields. This movement pattern differs from the previous one, and the length of time spent grazing outside the village has also begun to change.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, some farmers keep their livestock in cattle posts on a permanent basis, whereas some livestock (especially calves) are moved to the village temporarily. Thus, the grazing system was drastically changed by the emergence of annual cattle posts.

### **Cattle post management and economic disparities among households**

Cattle post farmers are mostly affluent individuals. To establish a cattle post, an individual must obtain permission from the headman by discussing the designated land. The applicant must pay an establishment fee of N\$600<sup>7</sup> to the headman of the village in which the cattle are to be located. The maximum area of the cattle post is informally agreed upon. Additionally, cattle post owners invest large sums of money to establish and maintain their cattle posts. Owners employ several paid employees (herders) to look after the livestock, and the estimated cost for 1 year of operation is about N\$11,100 (Table 2). This amount is almost equivalent to the price of seven female cattle and thus represents an enormous expenditure.

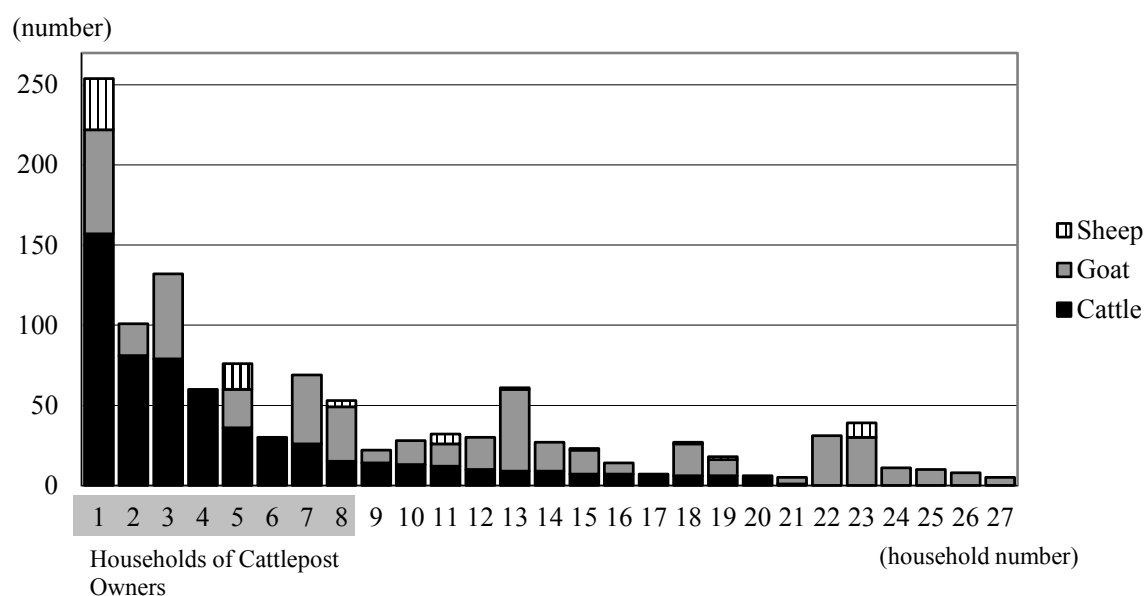
Most cattle post owners in U village were previously or are currently employed in jobs such as civil servants, teachers,

soldiers, or administrators of political parties (Table 1). These people can pay higher salaries than people who have temporary jobs such as shop assistants, bartenders, or cattle post herders. Households with cattle posts own many head of cattle compared with households without cattle posts. The average number of cattle owned by a cattle post household is 60.5, whereas the number owned by a non-cattle post household is 8.2 (Figure 4).

In U village, members of 10 households (30%) had permanent jobs (in 2006). Their salaries were much higher (sometimes 20-30 times larger) than those of temporary workers, leading to increased economic disparity among households within this rural society. I classified all households into three income groups, high-income households (HH), middle-income households (MH), and low-income households (LH), based on total income.<sup>8</sup> The monthly average incomes of households in these three categories were N\$6,130 (HH), N\$615 (MH), and N\$180 (LH). This illustrates the great differences between income groups. High-income households tended to invest their incomes in cars, tractors, and livestock, and in managing cattle posts.

### **Management of cattle posts and entrepreneurship among farmers**

Cattle post farmers have introduced several new management styles. One involves the hiring of herders as employees. In the



**FIGURE 4.** Number of livestock among 30 households.

Source: Field surveys by Fujioka in 2006.

1) Three households that did not own any livestock are excluded.

**TABLE 2.** Cost of maintaining a cattlepost for one year.

Item	Detail	Calculation	Average
Wage for Herdboy	N\$300-500/person/month	N\$500x12months	N\$6,000
Food of herdboy	About N\$50/month	N\$50x12months	N\$600
Vaccination of Cattle	Vaccine: about N\$180 for 50 cattle		N\$180
Transportation	Petrol: N\$5/L, distance from village to cattlepost: about 30km, petrol efficiency: 10km/L, 2times per month	N\$30x2x12months	N\$720
Cultivate field (borrow tractor)	Tractor borrowing fee; 1ha=N\$180	N\$180x4ha	N\$720
Working in field (Sowing or weeding)	helped by boys and girls group: N\$180/h/about 10 persons	N\$180x8hx2times	N\$2,880
Total			N\$11,100

Source: Field surveys by Fujioka in 2006.

1) N\$100=approximately 12 Euro (at 2006).

2) For work in the fields, such as sowing and weeding, cattlepost owners tended to hire groups of about ten boys and girls. The average wage for the whole group was N\$180 per hour.

*ohambo* system, family members cared for the livestock at a seasonal grazing camp, and sometimes herders from two to three households formed one camp. On the other hand, cattle posts employ herders who are not family members. Some herders find the job through radio advertisements. The cattle post owners often visit by car to check the post's condition.

Other examples of new approaches include the use of improved cattle varieties. Although the German and South African colonial governments imported several improved breeds (Rawlinson 1994)<sup>9</sup>, these breeds were used by commercial farms, limiting access to these varieties by those living in the northern communal land.

However, some farmers had introduced these improved varieties into their pastoral system even prior to Independence.

For example, one cattle post owner (Mr. A.D.) bought 30 female Afrikaners variety cattle from a commercial farm in 1982. He subsequently bought improved cattle on four additional occasions. Between 2003 and 2005, four households, including two that owned cattle posts, bought eight head of improved varieties.<sup>10</sup> After Independence, the government recommended people in northern areas to introduce these breeds.

Another example of a new approach to management involves livestock vaccination. The government has promoted the use of prophylactic vaccinations for livestock diseases and offers opportunities for annual vaccinations to infected and buffer zones.<sup>11</sup> However, this measure does not provide sufficient protection because cattle require these vaccinations

twice per year and also need vaccinations for other diseases. Therefore, some people, especially cattle post owners, try to administer vaccines at their own expense despite the high cost. For instance, one owner used 3.5 bottles (about N\$245) for 53 cattle and another used seven bottles (about N\$490) for 116 cattle on a single occasion.

Cattle post farmers have also introduced species of livestock and domestic fowl uncommon in this area, including sheep, pigs, and guinea fowl. These cases demonstrate that cattle post owners actively introduced new management styles, operating techniques, and species.

### **SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS, LIVESTOCK TRADING, AND NEW PRACTISES**

#### ***Livestock buying, selling, and gifting***

What is the relationship between the emergence of cattle post farmers and the development of the official meat industry? To consider this issue, I will focus on the livestock buying, selling, and gifting practises from 30 households in U village from 2002 to 2008.

According to an elder who lives in U village, livestock

trading using money started in this area around the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the colonial era, most adults (mainly men) worked as contract labourers in the city or on farms in central and southern Namibia. Some men invested their salaries in livestock farming.

The major reasons for buying livestock are for breeding, especially after droughts that caused the death of livestock, and to obtain a specific variety of livestock, especially an improved one, for gifting to others, especially for a wedding.<sup>12</sup> A need of large amounts of money, such as funding a child entering school, is the major reason for selling livestock. People generally want to buy livestock more often than someone wants to sell. In the present study, the frequency of buying was almost twice as high as that of selling (Table 3) in U village. During the study period, villagers in all households purchased 78 cattle and sold 40; they bought 35 small livestock, whereas they sold only 11. This is true not only of cattle post owners, but also of households without cattle posts, and the proportion of transactions involving cattle post owners was not very high. A total of 43 transactions by cattle post owners involved purchasing while only 29 involved selling; they bought 14

**TABLE 3.** *Livestock transactions of 30 households in U village.*

	Cattle							
	Buying		Selling		Giving as Gift		Given as Gift	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2003	5	6	1	0	7	0	0	0
2004	7	4	1	1	7	1	18	0
2005	7	5	4	0	12	0	22	0
2006	3	4	23	0	13	0	9	0
2007	3	7	3	1	9	0	-	-
2008	24	3	6	0	22	0	-	-
Subtotal	49 (63%)	29 (37%)	38 (95%)	2 (5%)	70 (99%)	1 (1%)	49 (100%)	0
Cattlepost owner	33	10	29	0	23	0	13	0
Others	16	19	9	2	47	1	36	0
Total <sup>1)</sup>	78 (43)		40 (29)		71 (23)		49 (13)	

	Small Livestock (Goat & Sheep)							
	Buying		Selling		Giving as Gift		Given as Gift	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2003	1	7	1	1	0	0	0	0
2004	1	6	1	0	1	0	3	1
2005	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	0
2006	2	5	3	0	2	1	2	0
2007	1	5	1	0	0	0	-	-
2008	0	3	4	0	4	0	-	-
Subtotal	6 (17%)	29 (83%)	10 (91%)	1 (9%)	7 (80%)	1 (20%)	6 (86%)	1 (14%)
Cattlepost owner	1	13	1	0	2	0	1	0
Others	5	16	9	1	5	1	5	1
Total <sup>1)</sup>	35 (14)		11 (1)		8 (2)		7 (1)	

Source: Field surveys by Fujioka in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2009.

1) The number in parentheses shows transactions by cattlepost owners.

small livestock and sold 1 (Table 3). The number sold included 20 cattle sold by one cattle post farmer on a single occasion in 2006. Thus, although livestock trading by cattle post farmers varies somewhat, these data suggest that this group does not frequently sell their livestock.

The 30 households bought more male than female cattle, purchasing a total of 49 males and 29 females. In contrast, people purchased 29 small female livestock, about five times more than the number of small male livestock purchased. These differences are attributable to the tradition of giving steers as wedding gifts.<sup>13</sup>

The dominant method of acquiring both cattle and small livestock involves the local livestock market (Table 4). Trading with friends, relatives, and the Himba pastoral people, who live hundreds of kilometres west of the village, constitutes another method of acquisition. One cattle post owner drove to a commercial farm located about 300 km south of U village and bought two Brahmins to develop an improved variety of cattle.

The most common method of selling cattle is through the local livestock market; the second most common method

is trading with friends and relatives. Most notably, no trading involved the formal market or the Meat Corporation. According to my interviews with household members, most people knew that the Meat Corporation bought livestock. However, as of 2008, none of the interviewees had traded with the Meat Corporation. On the local market, qualities such as age and the fat ratio of livestock are not the primary criteria used in evaluations; instead, body size is more important. Additionally, farmers hesitate to sell livestock through the formal market because of the procedures required by the government to protect against infectious diseases; these stipulate that a seller must keep livestock in a government quarantine camp for 1 month prior to sale. Thus, the seller must wait 1 month before obtaining the money. Because people usually sell livestock to obtain money immediately, people avoid this system. These observations imply that the expansion of the meat industry has not directly affected the increasing number of cattle posts.

Additionally, the number of cattle given as gifts was similar to the number of cattle purchased. In Kwambi society, as in other agro-pastoral societies in Africa, cattle have special

**TABLE 4.** *Partners and places for livestock transactions.*

		Cattle										
		Friends		Relatives		Local Livestock Market		Pastoral People		Commercial Farm		MeatCo
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Buying	Cattlepost Owners	0	3	1	0	30	6	0	1	2	0	-
	Others	1	5	3	5	7	7	5	2	0	0	-
	Total	9		9		50		8		2		-
Selling	Cattlepost Owners	3	0	1	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Others	2	1	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	6		2		32		0		0		0
		Small Livestock (Goat & Sheep)										
		Friends		Relatives		Local Livestock Market		Pastoral People		Commercial Farm		MeatCo
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Buying	Cattlepost Owners	0	2	0	8	1	3	0	0	0	0	-
	Others	0	0	0	0	5	16	0	0	0	0	-
	Total	2		8		25		0		0		-
Selling	Cattlepost Owners	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Others	4	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	4		7		0		0		0		0

M: Male, F: Female

Source: Field surveys by Fujioka in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2009.

1) Data indicate transactions conducted between 2003 and 2008.

2) "Pastoral people" refers to the Himba ethnic group people who mainly live in Kaokoland, north-western Namibia.

value and are a symbol of wealth. Thus, people do not gift cattle to other households on a daily basis, but commonly do so for weddings (Table 5). According to Kwambi custom, cattle are given as wedding gifts (*omagano*). People give steers to the new couple, but this is mainly reserved for one's own relatives (Table 5). This practise is unrelated to the bride's wealth or dowry (*iigonda*). Wedding gifts include not only cattle; people also gift pots, baskets, tools used in daily life, and sheep. In keeping with a longstanding tradition reported by elders, people do not offer goats as wedding gifts; elders also said that gifting at weddings had been more frequently practised in the past. Because the Chair of the wedding ceremony announces the names of those who gifted cattle and sheep at the wedding party, people tend to gift livestock to their relatives and friends.

During the study period, cattle post owners gifted half the number of cattle given. Importantly, however, not all the individuals who gave cattle were cattle post owners; households that did not own cattle posts also gave cattle as gifts. Moreover, cattle post owners continued to practise this gifting custom even after the inception of the cattle post system, demonstrating that the practise of gifting cattle continues to be an important way of maintaining social relationships among members of Kwambi society.

With respect to the relationship between gifting and receiving households, more livestock was gifted to individuals in other villages rather than to those in the same village (Table 5). These tendencies were contrary to the gift-giving pattern for dairy products. People identified cattle as a special gift for specific ceremonies, especially weddings; they decided if they would gift cattle based on kinship relation. However, household owners who owned steers did not necessarily gift cattle at most of their relatives' weddings. For example, at one wedding in U village,<sup>14</sup> one cattle post owner who was an uncle of the bride did not gift cattle. He mentioned that "My cattle are not big enough for a wedding gift. A wedding gift is not an obligation, so I don't need to gift necessarily."

In addition, people decided voluntarily to gift cattle in the wedding of an influential household in the same village. In the case of a regional councillor's daughter (the councillor lived in U village), limited cattle holders in the same village gifted cattle to the new married couple. The people without

kinship ties did not gift cattle except to a person with whom they had a special friendship. At the wedding of a headman's son, most cattle gifting was from people who lived in other villages. Those gifts showed that people "voluntarily" choose to give cattle without any obligatory force, based only on one's connections to others. Although custom dictates that a person with cattle should gift cattle in a relative's wedding, most cattle owners mentioned that the gift of cattle was an important matter; it's a pleasure to breed cattle. That is an important point, and one of the reasons for establishing a cattle post and investing large amounts of money.

### **Gifting dairy products**

Kwambi people, like those in other agricultural societies in Africa, often gift various food and natural resources. In Kwambi society, people commonly follow a norm of reciprocal help known as *ethipa lyothingo* (literally, "neck bone"). This phrase contains two meanings: 1) when people slaughter their livestock, they give away its meat, which is then hung around the necks of their neighbours<sup>15</sup>; and 2) households, like neck bones, should be strongly connected with one another. Members of different households help one another with daily labour and give surplus food such as meat, milk, and edible insects to other households. This practise increases the opportunities for households to obtain food and to maintain social relationships within and outside the village (Fujioka 2010). Additionally, due to the large number of livestock at cattle posts, holders can provide large quantities of milk.

From February to March 2007, 30 households gifted 41 times of livestock products such as milk and meat and were also given 41 times of gifts<sup>16</sup> by other households (Table 6). Although the social relationship between giver and recipient might strongly affect the pattern of giving, differences in number of livestock owned and economic conditions of the households involved were also noteworthy factors. To analyse how these economic conditions affected reciprocal help, I examined gifting patterns according to economic group (Table 6). High-income households (HH) were more likely to gift livestock products (76% of these households gave gifts), whereas low-income households (LH) were less likely to gift (22% of these gave gifts). A different pattern was observed with

**TABLE 5.** Details about gift of cattle and small livestock.

	Purposes of Gift			Relationships with Recipient			
	Weddings	Others	Total	Grandchildren	Relatives	Friends	Total
U Village	19	0	19	0	8	11	19
Other Villages	55	5	60	5	45	10	60

Source: Field surveys by Fujioka in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2009.

respect to receiving gifts: only 27% of HH were recipients, whereas 41% of LH were recipients. Moreover, households tended to be givers or receivers according to economic status when economic status was defined in terms of food, as reflected in the number of cattle and cattle posts associated with each household. All cattle post holders were included in the HH group and they frequently gifted livestock products. People give livestock products not only to their relatives, but also to others and frequently to friends (Table 7).

Foods received from other households and used as side dishes were consumed on a daily basis (Fujioka 2010); thus, the practise of gifting resources under the “neck-bone” norm was especially important for the daily livelihoods of low-income households.

### **Influence of cattle post farmers**

The livelihood activities of cattle post farmers have influenced other farmers in various ways, leading the latter to change their approaches to their livelihood. First, cattle post farmers have shared their cattle posts with farmers who do not own cattle posts. Although the owners of cattle posts usually manage only their own livestock, some allow their relatives' cattle to graze on their cattle posts, especially during the rainy season. Four instances of this practise involved blood relations and occurred

in U village in 2011; three households, also related by blood, have been involved in this practise since 2002. This practise can lead to an increase in the number of livestock owned by farmers without cattle posts, especially by those who do not have access to enough labour to care for livestock during the rainy season.

Second, cattle post farmers have influenced others by temporarily entrusting their livestock to farmers who do not own livestock enabling the latter to obtain manure for their fields. Most farmers in north-central Namibia do not use chemical fertiliser, but instead use manure from their kraals. Because farmers who do not own livestock have no access to manure, some have been allowed to keep livestock belonging to others for several days at the beginning of the dry season so that the cattle can graze on their crop fields and deposit manure. I identified two instances of this practise in U village, and this instance did not involve payment or blood relations. In addition to these cases, several cattle post farmers gifted manure obtained from their kraals to the households of relatives who lived in the same village. Transporting manure by car, three gifted some portion of their manure to other households. Thus, the activities of cattle post farmers helped improve the livelihoods of other households.

New livelihood-related activities have increased in U

**TABLE 6.** *Ratio of gifting-given times for livestock products.*

	Gifting		Given	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
HH (n=10)	31	76%	11	27%
MH (n=10)	1	2%	13	32%
LH (n=10)	9	22%	17	41%
Total	41	100%	41	100%

HH: High-income Households, MH: Middle-income Households, LH: Low-income Households

Source: Field surveys by Fujioka from 10 Feb to 31 Mar 2007.

**TABLE 7.** *Relationships with recipients about livestock products gift.*

	Household Numbers	Giving Times
Relatives of Husband Side	7	9
Relatives of Wife Side	2	4
Parents/Children	2	7
Friends	16	21
Total	27	41

Source: Field surveys by Fujioka from 10 Feb to 31 Mar 2007.

village. No households around U village had guinea fowl between 2002 and 2003. Later, one cattle post farmer obtained several birds and tried to keep them around the cattle post and at a house in U village. Several other farmers expressed interest in this development and were given eggs by the owner. In 2011, five households were keeping guinea fowl, and some of these tried to sell the birds and eggs. Thus, the experiment conducted by a cattle post farmer influenced other farmers, perhaps leading to livelihood-related changes and upward economic mobility.

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This study examined how a market economy and meat industry have penetrated local livestock farming in an agro-pastoral society in Namibia, more specifically from the perspective of rural residents participating in the economy for dairy products. The findings are summarised below.

First, some households have started participating in the new style of livestock farming that was introduced in the 1980s, which is a different system in terms of grazing period and setting fenced grazing boundaries. Those households have as a common feature a head of household with a high-salary job in town, especially those who obtained other employment in the early 1980s, when Namibia's political system moved from colonial apartheid toward sovereign independence. Although these households tend to invest their money in livestock farming and establishing their cattle post, they do not necessarily manage the cattle post because the business is designed to be a constant source of income, and thus reflects the same practises used in commercial farming. Indeed, most of cattle post owners sell their livestock, but they also use the livestock to maintaining social connections by gifting livestock to other households. Several decades ago, Ferguson (1985) identified a similar situation amongst Basothos livestock farmers in Lesotho, and argued that livestock keeping could be understood simply as the outcome of choices by 'rational individuals'; it was not a 'traditional relic' but rather a product of a contemporary social process. I found similar phenomena in Owambo society, now strongly involved in globalisation. This concept of a new cattle post farmer means that we should not try to understand livestock activities as a classical dichotomy of modern and traditional practises or by applying a dual economy theory.

Second, these farmers can best be understood as entrepreneurs. They have actively introduced new techniques and have changed livestock management methods. These attitudes qualify them as entrepreneurs. Some scholars have noted that the pastoralists in East Africa had the spirit of "entrepreneurship" (e.g., Lewis 1975; Goldschmidt 1971) a half century ago. The Owambo may also have changed their livelihood through historical processes, but the opportunities to

acquire new technical information and materials have expanded as a result of globalisation.

Third, the current grazing system used by cattle posts is different than before, most notably from the fencing of pastureland. In addition, economic disparities have expanded, observable in numbers of livestock and the land area. Although classic discourse about penetration of a cash economy tends to emphasise the collapse of social relationships in a society cause by the "satanic mill" (Polanyi 1944), and the advancement of individualisation, some wealthy Owambo people invest cash earned outside the village into subsistence livestock farming, and use their livestock to maintain social relationships. Tsuruta (2008) noted that the meaning of subsistence, as well as that of satisfying biological needs, should also include the notion of social relationships. This may be one reason why most people accept the establishment of cattle posts even when the activity is illegal.

It is important to consider how people distinguish among the official market, the local market, and other trading. The most common method for selling cattle has traditionally been through friends and relatives. During the 6-year study period, households never sold their livestock to the official company, Meat Corporation. I interviewed household owners about Meatco; most people knew about it and also knew that the company usually buys livestock. Thus, they were selective in choosing a trading partner, indicating that they were strongly involved in the market economy.

One of the reasons for this decision was that the purchase price offered by Meatco (Meat Board) was lower than the local market price. This discrepancy was mainly due to the SA standard, which gives preference to high-quality meat. People tended to sell older livestock rather than young stock. The price of C-rank cattle (older than 4 years old) is lower than A-rank (younger than 1 year old) or AB-rank (1–2 years); thus, this system puts the Owambo traders at a disadvantage. Additionally, the Owambo do not provide mixed, highly nutritious feed to their livestock, so the grade of "fatness" is generally low. In contrast, on the informal market, qualities such as age and fatness of livestock are not the main evaluation points; rather, body size is more important. For this reason, older livestock can be sold on the informal livestock market without penalty.

In addition, the Owambo were hesitant to sell livestock because of the law requiring procedures to protect against infectious diseases. That law stipulates that livestock must be kept in a quarantine camp reserved by the government for 1 month prior to sale. Thus, the seller must wait for 1 month to obtain the money from a sale. In most cases, Owambo people sell livestock to obtain money urgently; therefore, people tended to avoid this system. Finally, most instances of trade were among acquaintances, and these informal trades between

visible partners maintained and recreated relationships.

An interesting issue that emerged from the research was that cattle post farmers do not frequently buy and sell livestock. In general, pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in sub-Saharan Africa prefer to increase their livestock and are reluctant to sell it. This same tendency was found in the research area; however, the distinctive feature about the Owambo was that they had already been involved in a market economy for other sources of livelihood.

There are some apparent reasons for this favouritism toward livestock purchase. One reason is the frequent necessity to replenish livestock after drought, as occurred in the 1980s and again in 1992; the livestock population is also depleted by consumption, either through eating or gifting. Before the abolition of apartheid, people rarely bought livestock with money, but more recently both formal and informal trade channels for obtaining livestock with money have been established, and as a result, some wealthy people tend to increase their livestock.

Another motivation for purchasing livestock is to introduce improved cattle varieties. As mentioned in section 4-3, the German and South African colonial governments imported several improved breeds. However, commercial farms managed by colonists were generally the only ones to raise these breeds, and people who lived in northern communal areas had little access to this stock. The reason for introducing improved varieties was not to breed the “pure” improved variety but rather to produce hybrids with local cattle varieties. In the Owambo language, cattle breeds that come from outside are called “*oshishimba ngombe*”, indigenous varieties are called “*oshivambo ngombe*”, and hybrids are called “*vundakanitha*”. *Vundakanitha* are more highly valued than *oshishimba ngombe*, because hybrids are capable of withstanding more severe environmental conditions, especially drought, and producing more milk than “pure” varieties. In particular, the Owambo value hybrids of crosses between male improved varieties and female indigenous varieties.

Finally, the purchase of cattle by rural entrepreneurs has an impact on the stability of society as a result of land enclosure. As discussed previously, cattle post owners tend to maintain social connections through livestock transactions. This raises the question, how is social co-existence and land enclosure compatible? The privatisation of large areas of land is one of the critical social problems in post-apartheid Namibia; in fact, this practise is “illegal” under the Communal Land Act. Although the land problem is among the most sensitive issues, as reflected in the historical dilemma about its illegality, it has not emerged as a major source of conflict in the daily lives U village residents, who live in peaceful coexistence.

One reason for the lack of conflict is that the cattle post is not an entirely new farming style, but rather has historical

continuity from the seasonal cattle grazing style practised before the 1980s. The local name “*ohambo*” is still used to refer to the present-day cattle post, which is surrounded by fences; therefore, people have accepted this farming activity. Additionally, other people living in the central and southern parts of the country own the land privately, and most people know of those landholding arrangements. However, criticism of the process of land privatisation is a real issue. At present, the density of the population is not at a critically high level, and the land available for households has been expanding by moving the boundary for development toward the frontier. However, land privatisation and attendant disparities will become more sensitive social issues as available space decreases.

After independence, an increasing number of high-income workers began setting up cattle posts, which enhanced worsened/improved the economic disparities among residents in rural areas. These changes, caused by job opportunities and education, have also reproduced economic disparities as a result of the children in wealthy households entering private schools. In this paper, however, I emphasised the influence of skills and management techniques of cattle post famers on farmers without cattle posts, and demonstrated that this influence may lead to upward economic mobility among the latter. Although most farmers currently tend to be reluctant to sell their livestock, some are motivated to trade on the formal market. In this sense, they have the potential to participate in economic development while maintaining social relationships characterised by coexistence.

## NOTES

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1. I define “entrepreneurs” as people who extend or commercialise their indigenous livelihood activities and make the most of various economic opportunities, regardless of existing classification, i.e., formal/informal and other industrial categories.
2. A reference to seasonal movement for grazing purposes was found in the one of oldest records of the explorer Francis Galton (Galton 1851).
3. According to some elder U village residents, including Mr.



S.A. (born in 1943) & Mr. D.A. (born in 1931).

4. The term “cattle post” has also sometimes been used among local people. The original term for this institution, referring to seasonal grazing land, *ohambo*, was found in an old report written by an explorer (e.g., Galton 1851).
5. The average area of crop fields in U village is about 2.8 ha.
6. This tendency was also pointed out by Verlinden and Kruger (2006).
7. Based on the rate in 2006: N\$100 = approximately 12 Euro (Dec 2006).
8. Total income was derived from the value of stable incomes, the total number of permanent jobs, temporary jobs, and pensions. Although people also had other sources of income, such as selling products and allowances, I adopted some criteria that encompassed the largest proportion of total income sources, and the stability of the sources.
9. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Afrikaner breed dominated the commercial herds. After the 1980s, Brahmans flourished to such an extent that the present cattle herds consist mainly of Brahman-type animals (Rawlinson 1994).
10. According to their explanation, those varieties consisted of five Brahmans and three Afrikaners.
11. The government currently cautions especially against foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP), anthrax, and rabies. In 2003, FMD vaccinations were administered in the East Caprivi, Kavango, north-central, and Tsumkwe regions; CBPP vaccinations were given in those areas as well as in Opuwo (Republic of Namibia 2004).
12. In interviews, household heads who traded livestock during the research period answered questions about the reasons for buying and selling livestock.
13. Most of these cattle were slaughtered for wedding feasts.
15. Eight weddings were held in U village during my stay in the village.
15. Some people also noted that individuals who slaughter livestock give the neck meat to neighbours.
16. A gift is something given by other household members. In this paragraph, gifting is focused only on livestock products.

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# Recent Changes in Communal Livestock Farming in North-western Namibia with Special Reference to the Rapid Spread of Livestock Auctions and Mobile Phones

Koki Teshirogi

**ABSTRACT** Commercialisation of livestock farming has increased rapidly among communal farmers in north-western Namibia over the past 4 to 5 years. The livestock auction system allows local people to make decisions regarding the sale of their livestock according to the price offered and their household's demand for cash. The availability of cash income has stabilised their livelihoods and allowed them to purchase luxury items. However, not everyone has taken advantage of this situation. The introduction of the auction system in the study area, the increase in income, and the increasing income gap in the study area all occurred in the context of this evolving national situation. This study also observed that the use of mobile phones has rapidly increased since 2006 in rural areas. Today, more than one person in each household in the study area owns a mobile phone. People typically use mobile phones to communicate with their relatives or friends in towns but they have also utilised them for tasks relating to livestock farming such as checking prices at auctions before participating and/or looking for buyers when they need to sell livestock. The utilisation of mobile phones has also enabled people living in towns to herd livestock in rural areas, the so-called mobile farmers. Mobile farmers, who direct employed herders via their phones, have been increasing in the study area in recent years. The introduction of the livestock auction and the rapid spread of mobile phones have contributed to an expansion in commercialisation and the diversification of the sector. As a result, these recent changes to livestock herding may impact the utilisation of natural resources. [*commercialisation, livestock farming, mobile phones, arid land, Namibia*]

## INTRODUCTION

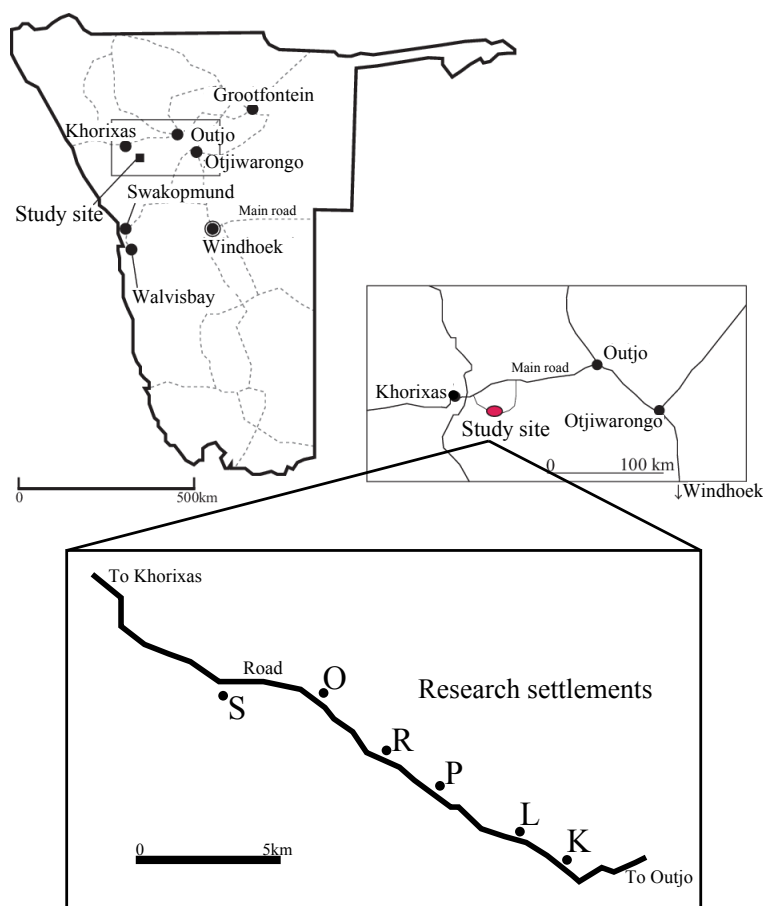
In arid and semi-arid areas of Africa, pastoralism is an important livelihood activity. However, fluctuations and changes in climate and natural resources have made this living uncertain (Scoons 1994). African pastoralists have coped with living in a vulnerable environment by adopting nomadic lifestyles (Ellis and Swift 1988) and by incorporating other livelihood strategies (Scoons 1994). However, some studies have suggested that livestock herding by local people has led to overgrazing and degradation of vegetation (Swift 1996; UNEP 1999).

North-western Namibia has been considered particularly at risk of vegetation degradation by overgrazing (Sullivan 1996a; Ward et al. 2000). While the notion that overgrazing automatically leads to vegetation degradation has been challenged in recent years, the relationship between resource use and the natural environment in arid and semi-arid areas is directly or indirectly influenced by social changes such as globalisation or national policy (Fratkin 1997). More studies on the relationships between social changes and natural environments are needed (Mearns 2004; Okayasu et al. 2007).

This study approaches the above problem through a case study in Namibia, where commercialisation and the expansion of mobile phone use have been identified as significant social

changes. This paper describes how these recent social changes have taken place in the pastoral society and examines how these phenomena affect local livelihoods. The author has conducted the research with a physical geographical approach and has quantitatively determined the character of the local vegetation and the resources used by herders (Teshirogi 2010). The results of this study will be combined with quantitative data for the natural environment provided by further longer-term research to develop an understanding of the relationships between social changes and the natural environment in arid and semi-arid areas of Africa.

The development of commercialisation among subsistence farmers and the associated changes in livestock farming is one of the most prominent recent changes to have affected pastoral societies, not only in Africa but in other parts of the developing world (Jansen 2005; Zaibet 2005). In Namibia, we can identify a rapidly expanding process of commercialisation occurring under a complex historical context. There are two sectors of livestock farming in Namibia: commercial farms and communal farms (Mendelsohn 2003). Since the colonial era, commercial farms have developed fallow lands into vast pastures, contributing to the development of livestock industry (Tainton 1999). On the other hand, owing to the colonial land use policy, indigenous people were forced to move to a "native



**FIGURE 1.** Study area and major town in central to northern Namibia.

reserve or homeland” and have practiced traditional herding, with livestock herders leading a nomadic lifestyle and allowing land to lie fallow (Muller et al. 2007; Werner 1997).

However, in recent years, settled and commercialised farming has increased rapidly among communal farmers (Werner 1997). For example, in north-central Namibia, some households have established “cattle posts”, areas of grazing land surrounded by a fence, and most cattle post owners have high-paying jobs. Their cattle management system is different from the traditional one (Fujioka 2007). In central Namibia, people also enclose pastures, which have recently been commercialised (Werner 1997).

It is impossible to overlook the effects of the rapid expansion of mobile phones on recent social changes not only in pastoral societies, but across the continent. Africa has the world’s fastest-growing rate of mobile phone subscriptions (ITU 2006). Because landlines and the postal system are not used as major communication tools, mobile phones are producing dramatic changes in how people communicate and make their livelihood. There is evidence that many new mobile users are located in rural areas (Sood 2006). However, there are only a few published studies of the linkages between information and communication technologies, livelihoods and poverty in developing countries (Braun and Torero 2006; McNamara 2008).

## STUDY AREA

The study area consisted of six settlements in the Khorixas District, Kunene Region, Namibia ( $20^{\circ}28'S$ ,  $15^{\circ}16'E$ ; Figure 1). The area lies 50 km south-east of Khorixas, the main town in the Kunene Region, and the settlements are scattered along the roadside. Each settlement has 10–30 residents made up of 3–10 households. Every settlement is located near water wells.

The area is characterised by high relief, ranging from about 900 to 1,500 m above sea level and displays geomorphological heterogeneity (Teshirogi 2010). The mean annual precipitation was 220 mm/year for the 46 years from 1958 to 2004 at Khorixas (the data from Namibia Meteorological Service). Rainfall varies widely from year to year. The main livelihood of the residents is livestock farming, which is the most important activity for obtaining both food and cash. Domestic animals in the study area include goats, cattle, and a few donkeys. Every household has goats, which are a source of meat and milk and can be used as gifts, and to be sold. The number of goats varies by household, with some households having more than 100 goats and others holding only around 10. Some households keep cattle for milk and meat as well as for sale, while other households do not have cattle.

## METHODS

To determine the general characteristics of the study area and its auction system, I collected data through interviews and participant observation. The data used in this study were mainly collected between June and August 2010, and in August 2011. I began fieldwork in this area in 2006 and lived with local people in the R settlement for a total of 20 months. Interviews included discussions of the historical and current state of livestock farming in the R settlement and five other neighbouring settlements, viewpoints regarding the use of the auction system in Khorixas of both villagers and administrators and the changes in livelihood brought about by the auction system.

## INTRODUCTION OF THE AUCTION SYSTEM AND COMMERCIALISATION

### *Historical background*

Before Namibia's independence from South Africa in 1990, the animal and meat industrial policy of the South African government was almost completely aimed at large-scale commercial farms in central and southern areas (Rawlinson 1994). Such commercial farmers were almost all immigrant settlers mainly from South Africa and European countries (Rawlinson 1994). On the other hand, the northern area, which was designated as a "homeland" during the apartheid era, was ignored for commercial farming (Rawlinson 1994). A so-called "veterinary fence" or "red line" was erected between the northern communal area and the central commercial farms, and transfers of livestock were prohibited due to concerns about infectious diseases (Sullivan 1996b).<sup>1</sup> Livestock and animal products were mostly supplied to the national/international market by commercial farmers (Mendelsohn 2006; Rawlinson 1994). Commercial farmers carried out livestock farming for the purpose of shipping, and they aggressively introduced improved breeds and mechanised their farms. In addition, policies of livestock promotion were conducted for commercial farmers at that time, while in the northern area there was no established livestock market (Liagre et al. 2000). In the northern area at that time, people practiced subsistence pastoralism for milk and meat, and the economic system was based on exchange (Liagre et al. 2000; Mendelsohn et al. 2000; Hishongwa 1992). The former Damaraland region straddles the red line. The study site was located on the southern side of the former Damaraland and was largely influenced by surrounding commercial farmers (Rohde 1994; Sullivan 1996a).

Before independence, the meat produced in Namibia where the market was limited was mostly exported to South Africa (Rawlinson 1994). After independence, when the government abolished apartheid policies and promoted economic liberalisation, the meat industry in Namibia became geared towards the increase in the numbers of livestock in order to export them to new global markets such as the

European Union (Rawlinson 1994). This accelerated the movement toward integrating subsistence pastoralism into the national/international market.<sup>2</sup>

Several efforts have been implemented by the government to develop the meat industry in the northern part of Namibia. One example was the unification of the criterion of the purchase price for cattle. By 1992, there was a price gap between prices in the homeland and freehold areas while prices in the northern part of Namibia were kept low. After unification, however, the prices in northern Namibia improved. The government also implemented several programs to provide technical support and to improve the quality of meat (Republic of Namibia 2000).

The development of an auction system in rural areas was related to the policies of the Namibian government. In the past, only large-scale commercial farmers played a major role in the livestock industry. However, since independence and the accompanying democratisation, the government has tried to broaden the livestock industrial base to include farmers in the former communal areas. To this end, the auction system has been introduced to each regional town and city.

Initially, the settlement nearest to the study area that held auctions was Outjo, located about 150 km from the study area. This auction system was established during the colonial period to serve the commercial farmers residing in the district. Although rural residents living in communal areas could have participated in the Outjo auction, my informants reported that almost no one in the settlements actually participated at that time. In 2006, an auction system was introduced to Khorixas, the nearest town to the study area. This significantly changed the situation for farmers, as they could now participate in an auction within an hour's commute.

### *Auction in Khorixas*

During my time spent on site, the auction<sup>3</sup> in Khorixas was held on Saturdays at a frequency of once every two or three months, and coordinated by Agra, which is an agricultural co-operative operating mainly in the Namibian farming sectors (Figure 2). Information concerning the auction was announced one month prior on the radio. A floor price was set based on a livestock transaction rate set by the government. The auction handled mainly cattle and goats. Locals could easily participate in auctions by following a set of simple procedures, choosing the number of livestock to sell depending on their own social and economic conditions, such as paying for school fees for their children, medical charges or celebrating marriage for the relatives.

People started preparing for each auction on the previous day by moving their livestock to Khorixas. Households that had their own vehicles did this by themselves. Those who did not own vehicles or who planned to sell a large number of



**FIGURE 2.** Livestock auction at Khorixas. (September, 2011 photo by Koki Teshirogi)

livestock used trucks prepared by Agra, and the transport cost was deducted from the profit.

Purchase prices were determined not only by the body weight and variety of livestock, but also the number and characteristics of buyers. Many buyers are neighbouring commercial farmers, and some originate from Windhoek or other towns with the intention to later resell livestock. In some cases, purchasers bought at prices more than twice the floor price. After an auction, sellers could immediately get cash by showing their registration cards at the local auction office.

#### **Utilisation of auctions and their impact on the study site**

In 2011, 9 out of 23 households sold livestock regularly at auctions. A case study of the households actively using the auction is presented below.

##### **Case 1:**

AH resided at a different farm in Khorixas before independence. In 1995, he moved to the study area because of drought. Before 2000, he sold livestock to commercial farmers around the study area and had not sold at any auctions. In 2000, he started to sell about 10 cattle a year at the auction in Outjo. He said that it was not convenient, however, because there was a high transportation cost, but he had no choice even though the price was low. That is, because of the high transportation cost, even if he did not agree with the price at the auction if he did not sell he would experience a large loss. In 2006, when auctions started to be held in Khorixas, he began to sell small numbers of livestock at every auction. He started to sell goats as well as cattle, as the price of goats was high at auctions. At that time local farmers were selling to commercial farmers at N\$250, but at the auction, the price was sometimes more than twice as high. For example, AH earned approximately N\$20,000 by the sale of seven cattle and bought a car in 2006.<sup>4</sup> In 2010, he was able to buy a generator by selling five goats. He also used his profits to pay the school fees for his children to attend school in town.

AH and most others in the study area were able to sell at the auction in Outjo, but did not actively participate in it. However, in 2006, once auctions were made available closer to their settlement, they started to participate in them and their livelihoods became stable and even improved; many households became able to buy useful items such as cars and generators, and pay school fees.

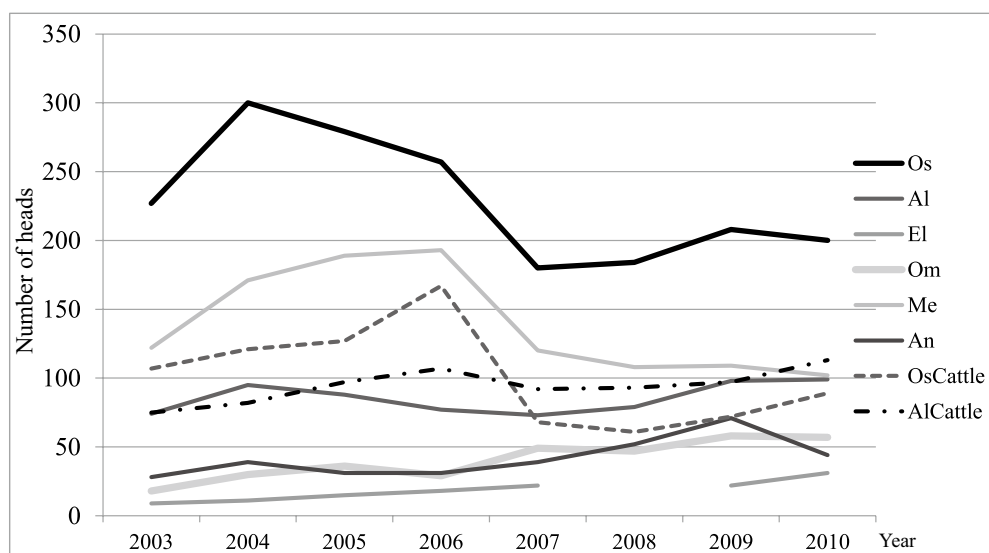
Figure 3 shows the number of livestock by household since 2003. Contrary to the examples described above, some households with a small number of livestock still did not actively participate in auctions and have continued to use livestock solely for household consumption. Such households gradually increased in number. Households with large numbers of livestock largely decreased in number in 2006 to 2007 but became stable after 2007. People I interviewed explained that the reason for the decrease was the greater opportunity to sell livestock at the auction at Khorixas, and the active sale of livestock at the auction after 2006 controlled the number of livestock.

#### **DIVERSIFICATION OF SALES CHANNELS FOR LIVESTOCK BY THE SPREAD OF MOBILE PHONES**

##### **Utilisation of mobile phones for livestock farming**

Another prominent change that occurred in the study area was the rapid spread of mobile phones. In Namibia, as with other African countries, mobile phone use has become very common. In 2008, mobile phone subscribers exceeded half of the population (ITC 2009). For example, Figure 4 shows changes in subscribers to MTC, which is the largest mobile phone carrier in Namibia. The subscribers rapidly increased after 2000. By 2006, the number of subscribers had doubled following an expansion of the area of coverage (Sherbourne 2010). Within 3 years, the number of subscribers grew from 0.6 million to 1.2 million.

Figure 5 shows the changes in the number of people



**FIGURE 3.** Recent changes in livestock numbers in the R settlement of the study site.

above the age of 18 with a mobile phone in one settlement of the study area. Before 2006, the study area was out of the mobile service area and people had to ascend a mountain a few kilometres away to make a call. Two people who owned mobile phones before 2006 were relatively wealthy and also owned cars. At that time they used mobile phones more often when they visited nearby towns than when they were in the settlements. However, after 2007, when a telecommunications tower was built near to the study area, the number of people with mobile phones rapidly increased. In 2010, more than one person in each household owned a mobile phone, including household heads, spouses, and children. The rapid spread of mobile phones had an impact on how people sold livestock.

#### Case 2:

EI was in her twenties and lived in the study area. When she was admitted to a hospital, she needed a large amount of money to cover medical bills. She used her mobile phone to text her friend DH and let her know that she wanted to sell her goats to pay the medical bill. DH in turn texted several acquaintances planning to buy goats. A relative of DH living in Khorixas sent a text stating that she would buy at N\$400. A few days later, DH went to Khorixas, to make the sale, and brought the money to EI. This price was twice that offered by commercial farmers, and she was able to obtain cash much more quickly.

As this case demonstrates, people in the study area can develop their own market using mobile phones. Mobile phones connect people who want to sell immediately and those who want to buy directly. However, if a situation arises where people typically receive price information by mobile phone, there is a possibility that the price may fluctuate, because of the large supply of information and the supply-demand relationship may become more delicate.

Additionally, as noted above, information concerning auctions in Khorixas was announced by radio. These

announcements included the floor price of each auction, but locals could not be sure how the price would increase since it depended on the buyers at each auction. With the spread of mobile phones, however, some people started to communicate with the person in charge of the auction by phone. For example, in one such case, IA communicated closely with the auction official and heard that the price of goats would increase in the following auction. Hence, he participated in that auction and sold five castrated male goats for N\$2,500. This price was 20% higher than the usual price. In addition, the officer would regularly call IA when the price was going to be higher at an auction. Hence, mobile phones made it possible for local people such as IA to obtain detailed information on buyers and prices on a real-time basis. However, IA did not always sell when the price was high.

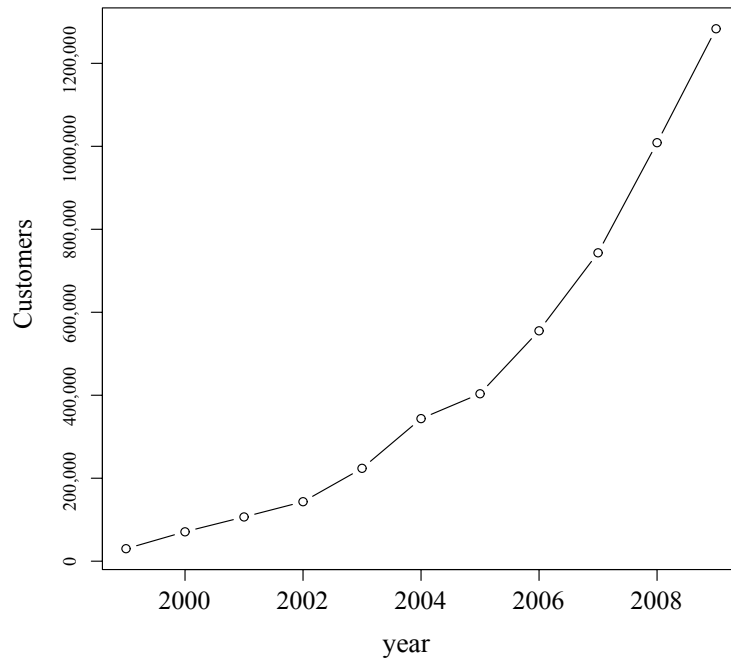
Although the introduction of the auction system enabled local people to sell their livestock at a higher price, auctions were not held every month. If there happened to be an urgent need for a large amount of money, locals could not always wait to sell at an auction. In such cases, they often sold their livestock to commercial farmers. This process took about 10 days to get cash, and they had to sell at the asking price, which was around N\$200–250, and there was no room for negotiation. The case study below describes a situation in which a price received on a mobile phone at the auction was higher than the asking price by the commercial farmer.

It should be noted, however, that there were also some households with few livestock who made a living by unstable wage labour and living off pensions. In these households, the use of mobile phones differed.

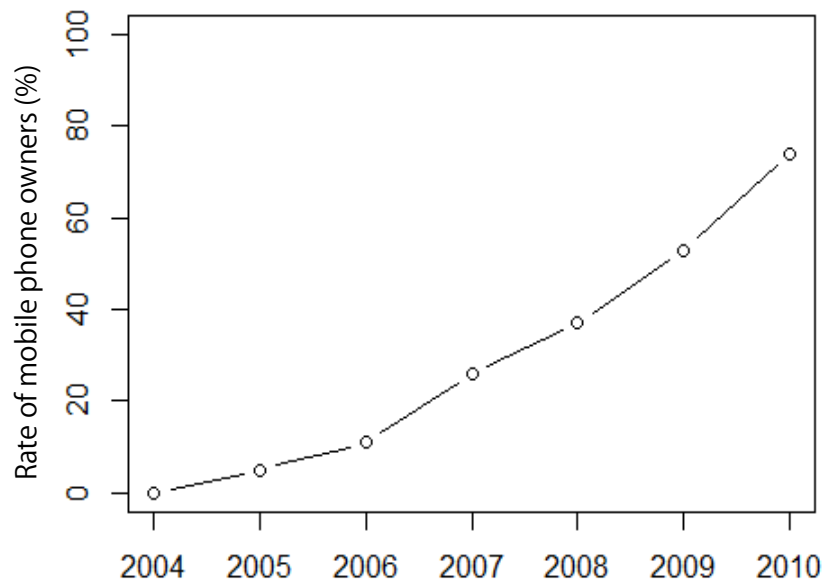
#### Case 3:

SO was in his 50s and owned several goats. He earned a little cash by helping to manage the herds of other households. He





**FIGURE 4.** *The changes of the MTC customer. MTC is the biggest mobile network service in Namibia. Data cited from Sherbourne (2010).*



**FIGURE 5.** *Recent changes in rates of mobile phone owners among people above the age of 18 in one settlement in the study area (N=18-21 which was changed year by year, including elderly people).*

owned an old mobile phone, which a relative in an urban area gave him in 2009. He rarely used the phone, however, and only received calls from relatives living in towns. He had never sold livestock using a mobile phone. In fact, his phone was usually turned off and stored in a safe.

As this case study shows, this mobile phone owner did not use it as a livelihood strategy. This study observed other households behaving in the same manner as SO and using mobile phones only for their personal communication. Hence, the advantages of owning a phone were not uniform but differed greatly.

### ***The rise of “mobile farmers”***

The rapid popularisation of mobile phones has made it possible for urban dwellers to keep livestock in the study area and the surrounding rural areas. They hire herders and communicate with them by mobile phone, buying the herders the phones if necessary. In this paper, I refer to such urban-based farmers as “mobile farmers.”<sup>5</sup>

For example, in one such case, a man working at a veterinary office built a small hut in the study area in 2009 for his son and a herder he employed to live in. He started to keep 30 goats and 10 cattle there. He is from Khorixas but worked at Grootfontein, 300 km away from the study area, as a public official. He visited the study area only once a year; however, he contacted his son and herder by mobile phone once a week and directed them to sell the livestock at the auction or to make a new cattle post.

The woman who bought the goats from EI in case 2 resided in the city and had a job. She was planning to move to a rural area in the near future and told relatives living in the settlement that she wanted to increase her livestock. Therefore, as shown in the last case study, when someone wanted to sell livestock she connected with the seller and was willing to buy even though the price was relatively inflated.

The purchase of livestock by urban dwellers was not only conducted as a side business but also as social security for those hoping to live in rural areas after their retirement. For example, the person working as a public official in Windhoek and a person working as a teacher in Outjo started to herd livestock in the settlement. They needed to hire not only the herders, but also workers to build and repair the houses and cattle posts for their future livelihoods at the settlement. Therefore, they provided employment opportunities for their relatives and youths in the surrounding rural areas. However, the owners of livestock rarely came to this area and instead gave their instructions using mobile phones.

Local people said that in the past, a person who moved to an urban area could not engage in livestock herding in the settlements. The rapid expansion of mobile phones has enabled people living in remote areas to check their livestock at any time. Thus, many urban dwellers have become mobile farmers.

In the study area, rangeland can be accessed freely only

by following official procedures such as applying to the council or local authority. There is no tendency for mobile farmers to be in dispute with local farmers or for local farmers to enclose the rangeland. However, when the numbers of mobile farmers increase, competition for grazing areas might arise. During periods of drought, it has been reported that excessive utilisation of grazing areas has resulted in a number of livestock deaths (Rohde 1994). Further observations are required to determine how local farming entrepreneurs and mobile farmers from urban areas manage the vulnerable natural resources in the area.

### **CONCLUSION**

This paper described the changes in livestock herding in a study site in North-western Namibia under the ongoing social changes following the introduction of an auction system and the rapid expansion of mobile phone usage. It is noteworthy that these two social changes did not independently impact livelihood in the study area, but have interacted.

It was argued that the auction system as a tool for commercialisation in communal areas should be adopted by people in the study area. However, studies regarding the commercialisation of subsistence livestock farming in Africa, have reported that farmers were not likely to sell their livestock even under the encouragement of commercialisation by the state (Holtzman and Kulibaba 1996). Previous studies have focused on the dilemma between subsistence farming and commercialisation based on a market economy. Even in the northern part of Namibia, it was argued that the number of livestock sold were unlikely to increase (Liagre et al. 2000). This was partly due to the lower price at the market than could be achieved through informal transactions (Liagre et al. 2000). A lack of marketing infrastructure, and the distance to marketing outlets have further complicated the marketing system (Fitter et al. 2001).

The reason why the introduction of an auction system was adopted by local people in the study site is explained by their historical experiences in this area. Unlike other traditional pastoral societies located in marginalised areas, people in the study site have been connected with commercial farms since the colonial era. They had been employed by nearby commercial farms and earned livestock as salary. These experiences become the basis for the easy incorporation of a livestock marketing system into their livelihood.

Of particular interest is that mobile phones became the key tool for taking advantage of the auctions. Owing a mobile phone enabled people to directly communicate with the officer in charge of the auction about the prices and they could select when they could make most profit. This does not mean that they cannot directly participate in an auction without mobile phones, but mobile phones do provide an advantage increasing

the chance of successful sales.

It was shown that the commercialisation process enlarged the household income gap. Households actively using the auction were more likely to purchase luxury items such as cars and televisions and improve their overall livelihoods. However, there were some households with fewer livestock that did not use the auction. Income gaps between these two types of households increased as the auction system developed. This gap could be observed in terms of how the people used mobile phones. People actively using the auction made full use of mobile phones but other people only used it when they communicated with their relatives.

Considering that informatisation enables people to access different types of opportunities (Sife et al. 2010), there is a possibility that even the households with fewer livestock can access income generating opportunities and the income gap will shrink. In the study area, however, the use of mobile phone in terms of livelihood activity differed between individuals. Therefore, at the time of this study, informatisation tended to increase the income gap rather than reduce it.

This study also noted that the two social changes (utilisation of auctions and mobile phones) led to a diversification of the transactions involving livestock farming in the study area. Previously, livestock transactions happened among the communal farmers themselves and nearby commercial farmers. After the introduction of the auction system, however, it included buyers from other parts of the country and officers from international enterprises selling livestock globally. At the individual level, through mobile phone communication, they can connect with a network of possible buyers outside the settlements. In addition, these changes in communication and livestock marketing generated “mobile farmers” in the study area. They were not just keeping the livestock in the rural area using mobile phones, but willingly increasing the livestock and considering it as a commercial product.

The various types of new individuals involved in livestock farming in the study area may introduce new vulnerabilities to the social and ecological system. For example, increasing the stakeholders in livestock transactions would expose the livelihood of local people to the price fluctuations of global markets, which was not previously experienced. If we look at the relationship between mobile farmers and communal farmers, there may be competition for pasture land if mobile farmers continue to increase in number, although this is not yet seen as a problem.

There is also an issue of how these social changes and the associated changes in the livelihood system will affect natural resources. In this study, it was shown that the overall number of livestock will become stable because of the constant sales at the auction, but overgrazing could still occur. By combining the

results of this paper with quantitative research on the natural environment, relationships between the natural environment and social change, which is also an important topic elsewhere in Africa, can be examined over a longer term.

## NOTES

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1. This is the official reason, and it also strengthens the geographical reality of this artificial division between the northern communal areas and southern commercial areas (Sullivan 1996b).
2. After independence, the meat industry of Namibia was administered by the Meat Corporation (Meatco). The Meat Control Board of South West Africa (Meat Board) was also organised during the South African era, and now they are responsible for controlling the volume of meat transferred to the market and for determining the market price (Rawlinson 1994).
3. There are two types of livestock auction (public and permit auctions) that take place in the study area. Public auctions involve multiple buyers and multiple sellers, while a permit auction involves a single buyer and multiple sellers. In this article, the term auction refers to public auction, because currently almost all auction is public, and permit auctions are minimised.
4. In early 2010, \$US1 was equivalent to N\$7. A goat typically sold for N\$300 during informal transactions but for N\$500 at auctions. In some cases of cattle sales, the difference in price reached N\$1,000.
5. In East Africa, the keeping of livestock by relatives living in remote areas is common practice as a form of livestock exchange (Little 1985), but this paper is only concerned with those who are handling livestock management through mobile phones.

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# The Growth of 'Rural Business' and its Impact on Local Society in Zambia

Chihiro Ito

**ABSTRACT** Securing a livelihood in rural Africa has become progressively more complex in the last several decades, as typified by the burgeoning rural non-agricultural sector. Rural society is difficult to understand without considering the non-agricultural sector. Non-agricultural activities include various types of income-earning activity. The rural businesses described in this study engaged in year-round, rather than seasonal, activities. Although the focus of this study is nearly identical to what has been called the 'rural informal sector' and 'micro- and small-scale enterprises', previous studies have examined its impact from a macro-scale perspective, such as by describing the size of the sector in terms of employment volume and enterprise development. Few studies have examined rural business dynamics or their impact on a certain community. This case study of commerce and trade in rural Zambia assessed the characteristics of rural businesses and their impacts on local communities and livelihoods. During a field survey, I interviewed 18 business owners in the study area of rural Zambia. The results indicated that business owners had relatively high-level educational backgrounds and productive assets. They did not commit themselves to one activity, but increased their profits by engaging in multiple economic activities simultaneously. Importantly, the relationship between rural and urban areas, especially neighbouring towns, appeared to be essential for sustaining and expanding rural businesses. The examination of business impact showed that salaried employment provided by shop owners was rare and unlikely to increase. However, temporary labour contracts, piecework, easily met labour demands. Most community members had access to piecework, which served as an essential income-generating activity in the study area. Finally, this study demonstrates the importance of a flexible view of sectoral and geographic mobility in attempts to understand rural livelihood dynamics, relevant impacts on rural society, and development prospects. [*livelihood, rural business, urban-rural dynamics, small town, Zambia*]

## INTRODUCTION

Although the agricultural industry still dominates the labour force in rural Africa, non-agricultural activities have attracted increasing attention (Barrett 2001; Bryceson and Jamal 1997; Reardon 1997). Diversification of livelihood is expected to help alleviate the vulnerability and poverty of rural people and has begun to be incorporated into development policies and foreign aid programmes within the framework of the sustainable livelihood approach (Chambers and Conway 1992). To understand present-day rural African societies and explore possibilities for rural development, the dynamics of non-agricultural activities must be examined.

In the area of rural Zambia examined in this study, each household included members engaged to some extent in non-agricultural activities. Since the 1990s, a portion of the population has engaged in small-scale commerce and trade and service sector employment, resulting in a rapid increase in the number of grocery stores and bars. This economic activity appears to differ from other seasonal activities in terms of capital basis, continuity, and spill-over effects in other households. Previous rural livelihood studies have often lumped such activities into the categories of 'rural off-farm' or 'non-agricultural activities', although more specifically,

the service sector (rather than the industrial sector) has been dominant in the de-agrarianisation process in Africa (Bryceson 1996). Outstanding economic activity has generally not been a focus of rural studies, which, as noted by Oya (2007), have tended to view rural societies as 'undifferentiated aggregates'. Relatively few studies have examined the reality and influence of 'better-off' households in rural society based on empirical data.

Indeed, such socio-economic activity has been only brushed upon by rural informal sector (RIS) and micro- and small-scale enterprise (MSE) studies. The RIS is composed of small-scale private units employing fewer than 10 people that are involved in the production and distribution of goods and services (Bagachwa 1997:141). Members of this sector are informal; that is, they are not registered with the government, they are excluded from official statistics, and their access to market, credit, education, and public service institutions is limited. MSEs are defined as organisations that are involved in income-generating activities besides primary production and employ 50 or fewer workers (McPherson 1996). Within the category of MSEs, micro-enterprises are businesses with 10 or fewer workers and small-scale enterprises employ between 11 and 50 workers. The RIS and micro-scale enterprises are

similar, distinguished only by government registration.

This study uses the term 'rural business' instead of RIS or MSEs for two reasons. One reason is that the presence or absence of government registration has little meaning in such rural activities. For example, the study area contained registered and unregistered stores pursuing the same types of economic activity, so differentiation on the basis of government registration is not ideal in the attempt to characterise the rural economy. Another reason is that previous studies of the RIS and MSEs have not distinguished between seasonal and year-round activities. This study focused only on year-round commerce and trade and service sector employment, regardless of government registration.

Previous studies have focused mainly on the scale of the RIS, the type and extent of employment it provides, and its contribution to national development. A series of studies by Michigan State University and GEMINI (McPherson 1996; Mead and Liedholm 1998; Mead 1994) portrayed the sector as the 'driving engine' for national development and the basis for entrepreneurship and small-scale capitalism.<sup>1</sup> These large surveys across multiple African countries provided descriptive characteristics of the sector. Mead and Liedholm (1998) showed that 17 to 27 per cent of the total labour force of the surveyed countries was employed in the MSE sector, most MSEs were one-person enterprises, commerce and trade was the dominant category, and opening and closure rates of MSEs were very high, especially in rural areas. They argued that micro-scale enterprises in rural areas were less likely to grow than were middle-scale enterprises or enterprises in urban areas (McPherson 1996).

The extent of the sector's development capabilities can be investigated in the context of a livelihood strategy, as rural people engage in non-farm activities to supplement their agricultural income. From this perspective, the expanding non-agricultural sector in rural Africa looks more like short-term risk-minimising behaviour than a trend toward specialisation and division of labour (Bryceson 1996). If this is true, the RIS and MSEs in rural areas may have little chance to develop as a sector/enterprise.

These discussions have helped to illuminate the magnitude and importance of this sector. The sector's growth potential and possible contributions to national economic development have been discussed. However, few studies have examined the dynamics of year-round rural non-agricultural economic activities and their impact on other households and the livelihood system in a certain community as a whole. The present study assessed the characteristics of rural business and its impact on livelihoods from the viewpoint of employment opportunity.

This paper is organised as follows. The two sections that follow describe the fieldwork and study areas. The following

three sections describe findings of the fieldwork, focusing on the characteristics of rural business, the emergence of rural business, and impacts on other households in terms of employment. The final section summarises the results and theoretical contributions of the research.

## METHOD

Fieldwork was conducted in the Lusitu area of Southern Province, Zambia, for 19 months starting in 2006.<sup>2</sup> Basic data on local livelihood were collected through participatory observation and interviews with all heads of household ( $n = 51$ ) in two villages in the study area.

Eighteen shop owners were identified at the two main markets and in other areas where daily activities were carried out. In some cases, a proprietor owned two establishments. In total, the 18 interviewees owned 22 establishments. Interviews were conducted individually. It included questions on the general attributes of the owners, how and why they had started their business, the current situation of their business, other activities in which they were investing and engaging, and basic life histories. Records on wage labour called 'piecework', provided by six shop owners over 30-day period in June and July 2010, were collected to analyse the impact of businesses in terms of employment.

## STUDY AREA

Lusitu is located in the Siavonga District of Southern Province (Figure 1), approximately 150 km south of Zambia's capital city, Lusaka, on a paved road that connects to the district capital, Siavonga. Public buses run every two to three hours, making Lusitu accessible from a number of cities.

The Siavonga District has approximately 70 thousand residents in an area of 3,413 sq. km. Annual population growth between 1990 and 2000 was 4.6 per cent, the highest in Southern Province (CSO 2003). Eighty-eight per cent of the population lives in rural areas. Urban populations are concentrated in Siavonga and Chirundu, on the border with Zimbabwe. Combined, the two study villages had 51 households and 300 residents in 2011. The primary ethnic group in this region and also the dominant ethnic group in Southern Province is the Tonga.

Average annual precipitation in the study area is 630 mm, but precipitation fluctuates substantially from year to year. Since the 1990s, the frequency of below-average annual precipitation has increased. With a low and fluctuating total annual precipitation, the village of Lusitu, and the valley region of Southern Province in general, are characterised as drought-prone (Cliggett et al. 2007)

To cope with the sparse and fluctuating precipitation, people primarily cultivate sorghum and pearl millet, which are more drought-tolerant than the major Zambian staple of maize.

Food production in the study area varied from year to year. Most households were unable to grow sufficient food to carry them through the year, but food security differed widely among households. In each year, some households had surplus food supplies lasting longer than a year, whereas other households experienced food hardships, even when rainfall was relatively high.

Residents in the study area perform various economic activities to make a living. People need cash not only to cope with food deficits, but also to buy everyday commodities and clothes and to pay school fees. Salaried work was found to provide the most stable income; this category included millers and household helpers and cleaners, employed by the Roman Catholic Church or health care clinics.

Self-employment activities can be divided into year-round activities and seasonal or temporary activities. Year-round activities include management of grocery stores and bars, as described in detail below, and carpentry and repair work. Seasonal activities include those of brewers and vendors of vegetables and other processed products.

Casual labour is termed piecework and includes various types of job that fall into two categories: 1) agricultural jobs, including weeding and harvesting; and 2) non-agricultural jobs, including collecting poles for houses and other constructions. Wages vary depending on the type of job and the employer. Agricultural jobs are, in general, the most poorly paid, whereas some jobs that require a skill or experience have high wages. Piecework can be obtained in two ways: 1) employers inform neighbours and friends that certain jobs are available and 2) people experiencing financial trouble or food shortages seek piecework from households with regular or seasonal income, including those with large areas of cotton that need to be harvested.

Working in nearby towns such as Siavonga and Chirundu is also one of the major livelihood activities (Ito 2010). Other sources of livelihood, particularly in times of drought or when a relatively large sum of money was needed, included selling livestock, requesting food from relatives or neighbours, hunting and gathering, and obtaining food aid.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL BUSINESS

### *Shops and Owners*

The 22 establishments examined in this paper consisted of 12 grocery stores, seven shops that sold alcoholic beverages along with groceries or had an independent bar, one restaurant, one clothes shop, and one shop selling household wares. The grocery stores sold basic goods such as soap, cleaning materials, and cooking oil, as well luxury goods such as sweets and tobacco. Recently, pre-paid cell phone cards, now widely used even in rural areas, and hair extensions for women have appeared in these stores. Although sold in urban areas for some time, these commercial goods were not available in rural areas until recently.

Figure 2 shows the change in shop numbers in the study area over time. It includes only shops that were operational during the study period. Among those, the oldest shop was founded in 1992, and the number of shops has increased since then. Shop owners who started their business in the early 1990s said that, although there were shops prior to the 1990s, the number had increased most rapidly over the past decade.

Most of the shops were located around the main markets along the paved road, with the markets serving as major bus stops in the area. The markets and shops were, therefore, able to include surrounding villagers in their potential customer base.

In Zambia, a trading licence is required to operate an

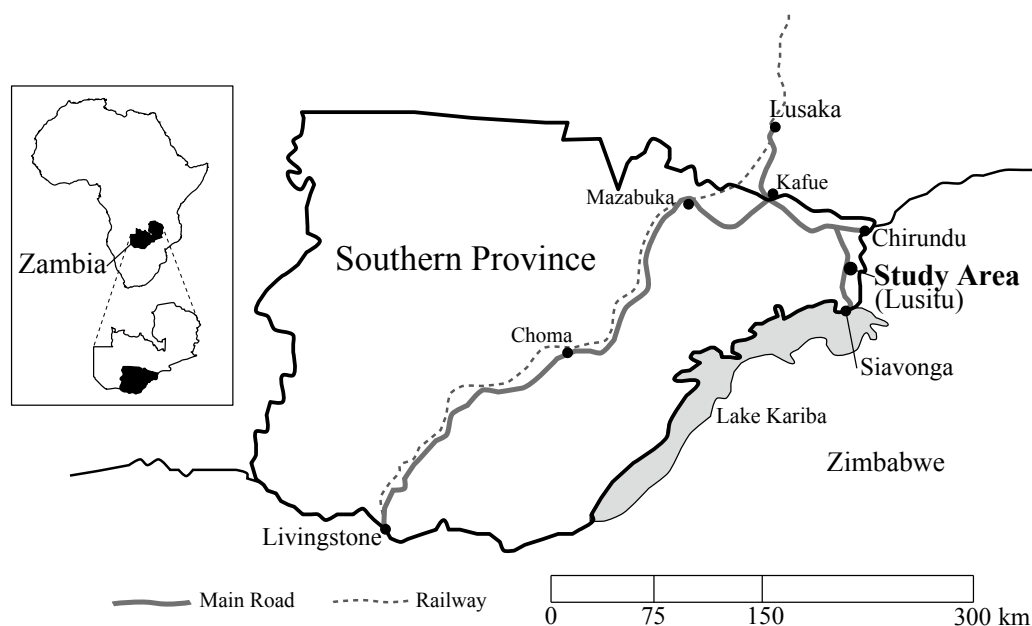
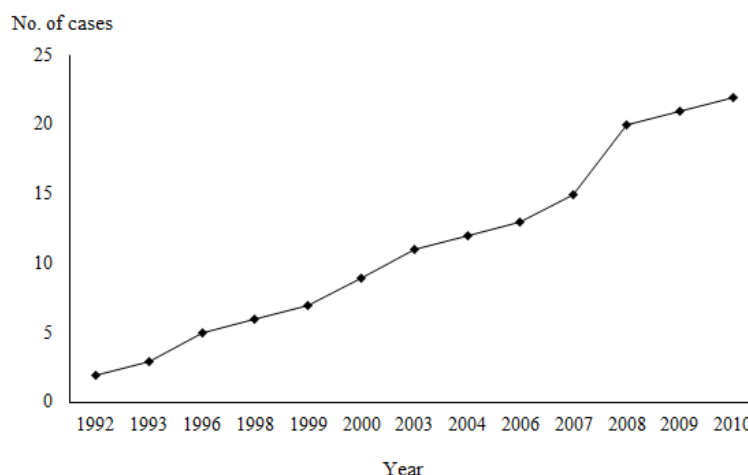


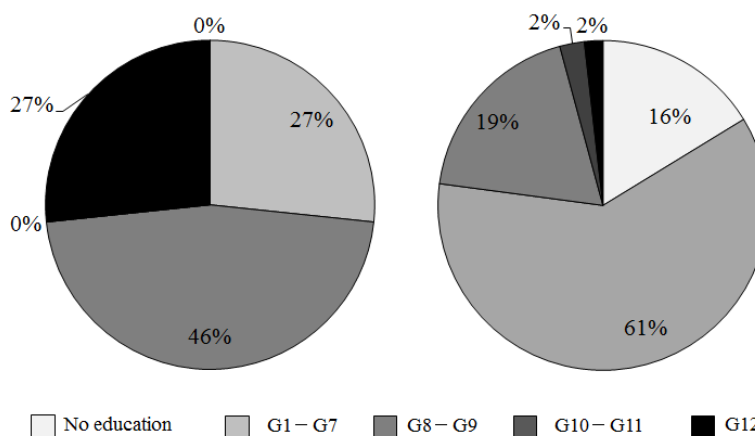
FIGURE 1. Location of the study area.





**FIGURE 2.** Number of shops in the study area by year.

Note: Only operational shops were included.



**FIGURE 3.** Educational background of 15 shop owners (left) and residents over the age of 15 (N = 166) in the study villages (right).

Note: “G” indicates grade.

enterprise. People must apply for this licence at the District Council in Siavonga and pay US\$3.<sup>3</sup> Shop owners must renew their licence every year and it was reported that a council employee would typically come around to check on licences and allow retailers to renew licences that were about to, or had, expired. During the fieldwork period, 19 of the 22 shops had valid licences for the year and the other three shops had expired licences that had not been renewed for one or two years.

The 22 shops were owned by 18 people, 16 of whom were male and two of whom were female. The average age of the owners was 36.8 years (max. 43, min. 22). Of the 18 shop owners, 16 had been born in and still resided in the study area. The remaining two owners came from other regions; one was a high school teacher presently living in the study area, and the other was a bus driver living in Siavonga.

Figure 3 shows the educational background of the shop owners and the population over the age of 15 years in the study villages. Compared with the average of the study villages, the shop owners had a relatively high level of education.

It was difficult to gather detailed information on income

because the shop owners did not normally keep financial records and seemed fearful that such information might be leaked. Only three owners provided any data on income, which ranged from approximately US\$20 to US\$300 per month. They indicated that their income varied seasonally, depending on the agricultural income of farmers.

Figure 4 describes landholdings of seven shop owners and households in the study villages. The average size of a landholding was 3.1 ha in the study villages. However, the average size of a landholding of a shop owner was 7.2 ha (max. 17.2 ha, min. 3.4 ha). Additionally, about half of the shop owners owned cattle although only 20 per cent of farmers in the study villages owned cattle. It was therefore common for villagers without cattle to barter with cattle-owning households using money or labour. However, working in another’s fields kept workers from tending their own fields. In addition, respondents reported that it was difficult for people to increase their productivity without cattle.

**MULTIPLE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES: AGRICULTURE,**

### BUSINESS EXPANSION, AND TOWN CONNECTIONS

The field research showed that shop owners did not limit themselves to just one economic activity. Agriculture, which has long been the main livelihood activity in the area, was one of the additional revenue streams of shop owners. In particular, they commonly engaged in cash crop production on a larger scale, which some shop owners had done even before starting their business. Cotton is a major cash crop in the study area because its production is easy to initiate. In contrast, sorghum is sold to seed distribution companies and requires knowledge and techniques of breed variety control. Thus, farmers must be trained as seed producers and have access to land and a large labour force. Among the 18 shop owners, eight grew sorghum, a much higher proportion than in the study villages as a whole. For example, D.M. owned 17 ha of land and nine head of cattle; in the 2008/09 agricultural season, he earned US\$950 from cotton and US\$190 from sorghum. By comparison, the average cotton profit in the study village was US\$115.<sup>4</sup>

During the rainy season, some shop owners worked in their fields with their family and returned to their shops before noon. Others did not go to their fields at all, leaving the agricultural work to their wives, children, and paid workers. There appeared, however, to be no tendency to stop farming and concentrate on shop management, as evidenced by their discussion of plans for what to plant in the next year in conversations with the author. This indicates that agriculture is still an important livelihood component for shop owners, both commercially and in terms of household consumption.

Some shop owners extended their businesses based on the capital accumulated through agriculture and retail. For example, J.M. started his grocery store in 2000 and owned two shops. In 2008, he bought his first milling machine and built a new room for his 'Hammer Mill' next to his shop. Before that, there had been only one milling machine in the area, which was owned by the church. Each day, women would form long

lines at the church mill, waiting for their turns. J.M. saw an opportunity and decided to buy his own milling machine. In 2010, he bought a second milling machine.

Recently, shop owners have also begun to engage in real estate management. The study area is home to teachers and other professionals working in the school and health clinic. The government provides homes for these workers, but the poor quality and insufficient number of houses were problems. W.H. recognised this as a business opportunity. He invested his money in construction material and built two rental houses. He received US\$70 and US\$120 per month from the respective rental houses. Because government workers are often sent to rural areas for short periods, building their own homes is not a viable option; thus, they appreciate temporary accommodations. Similarly, M.M. built six rooms and charged US\$12 per month each.

Business expansions have extended beyond the strictly rural area. W.H. bought a plot in the neighbouring town of Chirundu and built a rental house, which he currently rents for US\$140. A.M., who already owned a grocery shop with a bar, bought a plot in Chirundu and built a second shop.

A relationship with urban areas was essential for sustaining daily management of the shop. Most of the shop owners who started in the 1990s claimed that the number of shops had increased overall and that there was little profit from each shop at present. What made them continue their businesses was the presence of customers outside the villages. Almost all of the public buses running between Lusaka and Siavonga stop at the shops along the paved road. Bus drivers, conductors, and passengers buy pre-paid phone cards and beverages from these shops. A.M., who started his shop in 1995, explained that he began targeting urban customers because rural customers alone did not provide him with sufficient profit. He began to prepare beverages that rural customers could not afford to buy, but that more affluent urban customers could purchase. Urban dwellers,

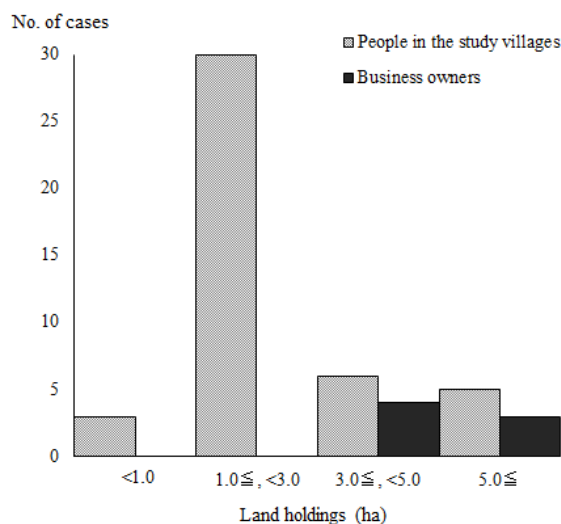


FIGURE 4. Landholdings by residents of the study villages (N=44) and by shop owners (N=7).

mostly from Chirundu and Siavonga, arrived to drink at his bar on weekends. These customers were usually his friends, relatives, or business colleagues.

### THE EMERGENCE OF RURAL BUSINESS

Why has rural business become popular? This section will examine the process by which rural business has emerged by analysing the life stories of individual shop owners and socio-economic changes in Zambia.

#### Case 1: A.M. (Male)

A.M. was born in 1972. In 1991, A.M. went to Mazabuka, one of the largest cities in Southern Province, to look for employment. He found work but suffered from illness. His brother, who was working in Lusaka, brought him back in 1992. After A.M. recovered, he decided to start a business in Lusaka. He rented a plot of land and sold beer at the compound. However, because there were plenty of similar bars in Lusaka, he felt he had no chance of enhancing his business there. Realising that few such shops operated in his village at that time, he decided to start his own. He returned to the village in 1995 and built his first shop that year with money he had earned in Lusaka.

A.M.'s grocery shop and bar is one of the largest shops in the study area in terms of the variety of commodities for sale. A.M.'s previous work experience in Lusaka enabled him to start his present business with know-how and funds.

#### Case 2: C.S. (Male)

C.S. was born in 1973. C.S. went to high school in Ndola, the capital of Copperbelt Province, where his cousin paid his school fees. He graduated in 1995. He remembered that getting a job in Ndola was difficult without a college or university degree at the time; therefore, he went to his cousin's home in Chirundu. His cousin had a banana farm and a retail shop at the market. From 1996 to 1998, C.S. helped his cousin at the shop. He had once planned to go to teacher's college, but he could not earn enough money for the fees. In 1998, he decided to go back to his village to start his own business.

C.S. has one grocery shop. After working at his cousin's shop, C.S. wanted to focus on a 'business of his own' as an alternative to becoming a teacher.

#### Case 3: W.H. (Male)

W.H. was in his thirties. W.H. graduated from high school in 1994. He applied to Zambia Railways but was not hired. He also could not afford transportation to Lusaka to look for employment because his family was poor. He stayed in the village for a year after he graduated from school. In 1994 he decided to start his own shop because many people were having difficulty finding basic commodities in the village at that time. He sold his chickens and erected a small stand, which grew over time. In 1997, he began growing sorghum as a cash crop. In 1998, he built another shop with a bar along the road.

Presently, W.H. has two shops which, along with A.M.'s shop,

are some of the largest in the area. W.H. is open to new ideas. For example, he was one of the first proprietors to put a TV in the shop to attract the customers. Now he has invested in rental housing in both the village and town. In addition, W.H. conducted transactions with the sorghum seed company on behalf of the community until 2009 and is still a leader in a group of producers contracted with the company. He is, therefore, remarkable for his business talent in the study area. His success in the village could be seen as stemming from his failure to get a job in Lusaka. Because he could not find a job in Lusaka, he turned to new opportunities inside the village which allowed him to ply his talents to other economic activities.

There are two obvious ways to start a business: one is to use accumulated cash and experience through migration; the other way is to start with small funds obtained through cash crop production or livestock sale. However, motivations and incentives for launching retail outlets varied amongst the individual proprietors. These stories can be understood better through examining the larger context of Zambian economics and society at the time.

The shop owners in this study were born in the 1970s and early 1980s. They were in their 20s and 30s, the prime of their lives, in the 1990s, which was a transitional stage for Zambia. In 1991, Zambia shifted from a one-party socialist system to a multi-party democratic system. The new government accepted the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank and promoted market-oriented economic reform.

Typical impacts of the SAPs included an increase in urban unemployment and in the number of urban poor due to the privatisation of government enterprises, higher consumer prices, and lower wages. SAPs pushed many low-income urban dwellers into poverty, leading to a decrease in migration to major cities in favour of migration out of urban centres to rural areas (Potts 1995; 2005).

Neither W.H. nor the other respondents directly mentioned the impact of the radical changes in the Zambian economy, but the difficulty of finding jobs for W.H. in Lusaka and C.S. in Ndola was likely linked to the upheaval of the 1990s. Zambian Railways, where W.H. applied for employment, was one of the public enterprises targeted for privatisation. Ndola in Copperbelt, where C.S. was looking for employment, was one of the major cities affected by the negative impact of SAPs. The case study of A.M., who was engaged with the informal job sector in Lusaka, also reflected the general situation of the time, when increasing numbers of people were turning to the informal job sector because of fewer available jobs in the formal job sector.

However, A.M. reported that one reason he had returned to the village is that there were better business opportunities in

the rural area. Similarly, C.S. explained that his return to the village was motivated by a desire to start his 'own business' after he had worked in the nearby town. These individual stories show not only that rural people returned to their villages to cope with Zambia's harsh urban conditions in the 1990s, but also that they had discovered positive reasons for starting their own businesses in these rural areas with their experiences including know-how and funds accumulated in the destinations.

## THE IMPACT OF RURAL BUSINESS ON LOCAL SOCIETY

### *Employment*

Shop owners provided two types of employment: salaried and piecework. Four of the shop owners in this study offered salaried employment. One reason was that two of the shop owners held other jobs (one was a teacher and the other was a bus driver) and could not run their shops by themselves. The other two were J.M., who employed two milling machine operators, and A.M., who employed a bartender. J.M. paid US\$24 to each operator every month.

The average number of people working in a shop was 1.8. Of those working in a shop, 55 per cent were categorised as 'owner', 33 per cent as 'unpaid family worker', and 12 per cent as 'paid worker'. Therefore, most of the shops were managed by the owners themselves with help from family members. Salaried employment was rare.

The owners of multiple shops tended to refrain from employing workers; for example, W.H. had previously employed three workers, but he fired them for stealing. Because of his difficulty finding trustworthy labour, he asked his wife and eldest daughter to tend one of the shops. Similarly, A.M. reported that his bartender had 'cooked the books'. Because he also ran the grocery store, the bartender was responsible for nearly all services. A.M. asked him to keep the accounts, which A.M. would check each week. Once, when I encountered A.M., he was checking the books with the bartender. The number of beers sold and the amount of stock remaining were unbalanced. After the bartender left, A.M. said: 'they are always cooking the books. The grocery was more difficult to manage because of the higher variety of commodities than the bar, I cannot give over this job'.

Although shop owners rarely employed full-time workers, piecework employment often helped them to cope with the labour demands of their shop and cash crop production. During the rainy season, shop owners engaging in cash crop production required labour for weeding and harvesting. For example, D.M. had 17.5 ha of land and provided 22 piecework opportunities from December to February during the 2008/09 agricultural season. The total amount paid reached US\$87. The average amount paid per job was about US\$4. Although this amount is small, for those lacking food and money, it

represented valuable income during a lean period.

Agricultural piecework such as cotton picking was also available during the early dry season; however, other non-agricultural piecework also became available in the dry season. For example, from 26 June to 26 July 2010, six shop owners provided 19 piecework jobs to a total of 66 workers. Of the 19 jobs, nine were related to building and construction and five were agricultural. The others included technical jobs such as painting and welding, and household jobs such as collecting firewood. Employers sought out workers in 14 cases, and were approached for employment in five cases.

Table 1 describes the characteristics of piecework. The average number of employees per case was 3.5. Normally, a small number of people would be employed, with one exception in which 24 were hired; in that case, the local soccer team asked a shop owner to employ them so they could earn operating capital. The average number of working days per case was less than a week. There were some cases in which the jobs were finished in a few hours or a day. The average amount paid per worker per case was US\$18, which was higher than the average amount paid during the rainy season.

The results show that shop owners paid an average of US\$135 for piecework in this month-long period. In Zambia, local government officials earn, on average, US\$76 nationally and US\$40 in rural areas. This indicates that shop owners in the study area could afford to pay almost double the salary of local government employees.

It appeared that a code of ethics for managing and working for a business had not been established, as evidenced by the lack of trust of salaried employees. In this situation, piecework offers a better choice for shop owners to meet their labour demands.

### *Limited impact?*

It might be assumed that employment opportunities are not distributed equally. Here, I discuss the distribution of business impacts by analysing social relationships and piecework tendencies. Table 2 shows the distribution of workers who were employed in piecework provided by D.M. during the rainy season, based on their social relationship to the employer and their residence. Of the employees, 36 per cent had blood kinship with D.M., among those, his nephews or nieces were predominant. Eighteen per cent were friends and neighbours and 36 per cent had no blood kinship. This result indicates that piecework was available to people outside familiar social groups. During the rainy season, especially around the pre-harvest period from December to February, shop owners and households subsisting on salaried work often needed to employ wage labour. People reported that it was easy to get piecework during the rainy season because demand was high and therefore farm owners would hire workers regardless of kinship.

Table 3 describes the distribution of workers who were employed in piecework provided by six shop owners over a month during the dry season, based on their social relationship with the employer and their residence. The largest sub-group of the 26 people employed consisted of neither family nor friends of the employer. Indeed, employers sometimes did not even know the names and residences of their workers, but would still assign piecework to them if they had jobs available.

The number of cases characterised by a maternal uncle and nephew relationship was higher than any other kinship relationship. Tonga people traditionally have a matrilineal society. Resettlement due to the construction of the Kariba Dam has weakened the matrilineal system in the study area (Colson 1971). This study also confirms that the proportion of land inheritance from the mother's side was smaller than that from the father's side. In daily life, however, the matrilineal relationship appeared to have an essential role in resolving economic and social problems. Therefore, it is important to note that traditions of family influence often facilitate piecework distribution.

There were some cases in which a shop owner would ask for technical or specialised work by certain workers, regardless of blood relationship. For example, W.H. asked M.S., a young man living in the village, to conduct welding and painting

work. If W.H. required work to be done on his shop or houses, he called M.S. by mobile phone and asked directly. M.S. has a wife and children and makes a living from piecework only. M.S. said: 'we are not in the kinship relationship, but when I first worked for him, W.H. liked how I worked. After that, he always called me when he has something to be done'.

Notably, piecework is accessible to everyone, even if the employer does not necessarily know the names of everyone he employs. There is a tendency, however, toward a biased distribution among close relationships, especially in the case of technical or specialised jobs. Long-term data are needed to fully understand differences in access to piecework.

## CONCLUSION

This study focused on year-round commerce and trade and service sector employment in rural Zambia, describing their characteristics and impacts on rural society. A prominent feature of this research was that business owners did not limit themselves to one income-making activity. Rather, they made profits from simultaneously engaging in multiple economic activities. Furthermore, business expansions extended beyond the strictly rural area and neighbouring towns were new places for investment. In addition, urban residents from the nearby towns passing through the study area were important because

**TABLE 1.** Characteristics of piecework provided by six shop owners from the period from 26 June to 26 July 2010 (N=19).

	Ave.	Max.	Mini.	Medi.
No. of workers per case (person)	3.5	24	1	2
No. of working days per case (day)	4.7	30	1	2
Amount paid to each person per case/ZMK (US\$)	92,184 (18)	680,000 (135)	5,000 (1)	25,000 (5)
Total amount paid per case/ZMK (US\$)	217,632 (43)	1360,000 (269)	5,000 (1)	69,000 (14)

**TABLE 2.** Number of workers hired for piecework by D.M. during the rainy season, by social relationship with employer and residence.

	Same village <sup>1)</sup>	Same region/ Other village <sup>2)</sup>	Other region	Others <sup>3)</sup>	Total
Kinship Relationship	3 (13.6)	4 (18.2)	0	1 (4.5)	8 (36.4)
Matrimonial Relationship	0	2 (9.1)	0	0	2 (9.1)
Friends/Neighbours	0	4 (18.2)	0	0	4 (18.2)
Others <sup>4)</sup>	1 (4.5)	7 (31.8)	0	0	8 (36.4)
Total	4 (18.2)	17 (77.3)	0	1 (4.5)	22 (100)

Note: Percentage in brackets.

1) Same village as employers.

2) Villages in Lusitu.

3) Including cases in which the informants (employers) did not know where the employees lived.

4) Including cases in which informants (employers) said that they had no relationship to workers.

**TABLE 3.** *Number of workers hired for piecework by six entrepreneurs from 26 June to 26 July 2010 by relationship with employer and residence.*

	Same village <sup>1)</sup>	Same region/ Other village <sup>2)</sup>	Other region	Others <sup>3)</sup>	Total
Kinship Relationship	1 (2.3)	7 (16.3)	0	0	8 (18.6)
Matrimonial Relationship	1 (2.3)	3 (7.0)	0	0	4 (9.3)
Friends/Neighbours	1 (2.3)	3 (7.0)	0	1 (2.3)	5 (11.6)
Others <sup>4)</sup>	1 (2.3)	12 (27.9)	8 (18.6)	5 (11.6)	26 (60.5)
Total	4 (9.3)	25 (58.1)	8 (18.6)	6 (14.0)	43 (100)

*Note: Percentage in brackets.*

*1) Same village as employers.*

*2) Villages in Lusitu.*

*3) Including cases in which the informants (employers) did not know where the employees lived.*

*4) Including cases in which informants (employers) said that they had no relationship to workers.*

they were wealthier and could afford to buy more expensive goods and services. Therefore, the relationship between rural and urban areas, especially between neighbouring towns, is essential for sustaining and developing rural business.

Most studies have explained the rise of non-agricultural activities in rural households as resulting from harsh economic conditions caused by decreasing agricultural income and increasing demand for cash. However, the case studies presented here show that the present study suggest that the above explanation fails to capture and appreciate the agency of individuals and the complex dynamics in the changing society. It is true that most of the shop owners had experienced Zambia's drastic socio-economic changes in the 1990s, such as the degradation of the urban economy caused by SAPs. As a result, they could not obtain work in the formal sector and some engaged in informal job sector in major cities, even when they had high education levels. However, they did not give up and flee for home. Instead, they saw new opportunities for starting their own business in the rural area, based on the experience and funds they had accumulated in urban areas or through commercial agriculture.

Their attempts were supported and fostered by the development of neighbouring small towns. Positive impacts of economic liberalisation and regionalisation since the 1990s have helped develop Siavonga and Chirundu, which have attracted many migrant workers from the study area (Ito 2010). As towns have developed, traffic volume passing through the study area has also increased. Shop owners can make better profits from urban customers with stable salaries than from rural customers with fluctuating incomes. Thus, 'rural businesses' have emerged from an increase in the comparative advantages of rural areas and the degradation of major urban economies. Such businesses have also been supported by the

development of regional towns and the entrepreneurial spirit of rural people.

Most of the enterprises in this study were very small. Shops tended to be managed by the owners and their family members. Owners rarely provided salaried employment because of the common problem of workers stealing from their employers. Instead, shop owners often employed temporary labour. Piecework serves as an essential income-generating activity in the study area. In particular, during the rainy season, piecework appeared to work as a food security system for households with insufficient food stocks. Previous studies have suggested that the lack of salaried workers would constrain the development of rural enterprise. Although most statistics use the number of paid workers as a measure of enterprise development, the piecework system provided by the rural 'rich', which is not represented in these statistics, was an essential livelihood system in the community.

Furthermore, rural business activities have had less visible effects on the study area, such as the development of a multi-layered rural-urban network. At present, even rural residents who do not migrate and possess no urban connections are linked with the urban context through the rural business community, whose funds and economic activities are deeply entrenched in urban markets and society. Thus, the socio-economic impacts of urban areas are transmitted to rural societies with greater complexity and speed than has hitherto been realised.

The rural business activity discussed in this paper has been previously categorised as 'non-agricultural activity' or slightly addressed by RIS or MSE studies. Previous studies have discussed the possibility of development of this sector from unilinear development theory. However, the present study revealed cross-sector features of rural business between

agricultural/non-agricultural, formal/informal, and urban/rural sectors, which previous studies have often overlooked. Analysis based on a single sector or a strictly 'rural' context is insufficient to understand the dynamics and impact of rural business. To understand this dynamic form of rural livelihood, its relevant impacts on rural society, and its potential for development, investigations should use a flexible perspective based on the recognition of sectoral and geographic mobility.

## NOTES

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1. The Growth and Equity through Microenterprise Investments and Institutions (GEMINI) project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and conducted mainly by researchers from Michigan State University.
2. After the field survey, Lusitu was incorporated into Chirundu District, Lusaka Province in 2013 due to realignment.
3. Zambian currency was converted to US\$ using the June 2010 rate: US\$1 = 5,050 Zambian Kwacha. The amount required differs by business category; US\$3 was required for retail shops, the most common shop type in the study area.
4. In 2008, the price of cotton was 1,220 Zambian Kwacha (ZMK) per kilogram and that of sorghum was 96,000 ZMK per 50 kilograms.

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# Land Use of Angolan Immigrants in Western Zambia: Rethinking the Autonomy and Coexistence of Self-settled Refugee Communities in Host Countries

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**ABSTRACT** When studying self-settled refugees in Africa, driven by war from rural villages into a host country and losing property in the process, there has been an assumption that after achieving self-sufficiency, the livelihood of these groups is stable. Though there are attempts to refer their livelihoods to identify solutions of refugee problems, this assumption has not been examined comprehensively in the light of political change at the macro level. The present study examines actual land use and livelihoods among self-settled refugee Angolan immigrants in western Zambia in order to comprehensively clarify the dynamics involved in their reestablishment of an autonomous livelihood. The economy of this group depends on shifting cultivation in the woodlands of the Kalahari uplands and subsequent sale of crops. Because land use is limited by the traditional political system of Lozi people, who is the host in western Zambia, integrated into the Zambian government's Land Act, these immigrants have opened shifting cultivation fields from the western edge of the woodlands to the east. Land transactions have therefore followed prior occupation, with a tacit understanding that primary forests have been left as patches among the fields. The immigrants' strong desire to open the dispersed primary forests has been a source of intra-group competition. The autonomous land use of these self-settled refugees that shows new methods of land acquisition which reinforce practical units of common social organization, has demonstrated the dynamics of reestablished livelihood in a flexible and practical manner, allowing them to coexist in a politically marginalized situation in the host country. [*land use, self-settled refugees, Angolan immigrants, autonomy, shifting cultivation*]

## INTRODUCTION

African countries have been constantly plagued with war, political struggle, and violence. Across the continent, war has forced 'self-settled refugees' (defined as those living in rural villages rather than in camps and settlements (Hansen 1977)) to flee their homes to a host country. Having achieved self-sufficiency in terms of food production without aid from either their host country or international agencies (Backwell 1999; Glooba-Mutebi 2006), self-settled refugees are regarded as having an autonomous livelihood and the ability to coexist in their host society and are seen as successful examples to help identify solutions for refugee problems (Glooba-Mutebi 2006; Backwell 1999). For self-settled refugees, government assistance that falls short of sustaining basic human needs is not the second disaster (Hansen 1982). The rural village socio-economic structure in which self-settled refugees reside is therefore seen not only as a conservative tactic by which refugees minimize socio-economic losses and anxiety, but also as a factor reinforcing the refugees' desirability.

Previous studies on the livelihood of self-settled refugee groups have focused mainly on the process of establishing self-sufficiency (ex. Hansen 1977). Hansen's examination of the Luvale people, self-settled refugees and shifting cultivators in northwestern Zambia, shows that this group

recovered its livelihood immediately with reciprocal land distribution from the family community in the host country. Also, African peasant studies of rural areas have analysed land use systems, focusing on land distribution after fallow periods through traditional political systems, including family-based communities (Suchara 1990), and random land acquisition based on previous occupation and a sustainable shifting cultivation system (Ankei 1981; Kakeya and Sugiyama 1987; Oyama 2007). Thus, land use by shifting cultivators in a rural village context, including economically self-sufficient, self-settled refugees, was understood to be essentially stable and reasonable.

On the other hand, in protracted conflict situations, self-settled refugees living in the same manner as their hosts in a rural village undergo political transformations and must adjust to the political administration and land law of the host country. It is therefore important to examine the dynamics of such groups' land use comprehensively and over the long term, focussing on individual and daily land acquisition in the context of macro-political changes.

In this paper, I clarify the land use of Angolan immigrants who are self-settled refugees, in the context of the administrative and political reforms conducted as part of Zambia's nation-building process. My research focuses on



the actual land acquisition process of individuals in order to examine the dynamics of autonomous self-settled refugees' livelihood. The Angolan immigrants in Zambia are a group of shifting cultivators resident in western Zambia for more than 60 years. They have successfully reconstructed their previous livelihood, and they cultivate large amounts of cassava in the woodlands, their only land resource and one that is restricted by their host community under Zambian law. After the gradual population influx from Angola after the 1960s, which included those displaced by the Angolan struggle, land fragmentation occurred in the settlements adjacent to these woodlands, causing competition among Angolan immigrants in this area.

In the following sections, I first describe the political and social backgrounds of the livelihoods of these Angolan immigrants and the restrictions on land use imposed by the host country. Then, I clarify the shifting cultivation system to understand the factors that constrain land use by this group. Finally, I discuss the role played by intra-group competition in situations of valuable cultivable land.

#### SETTING OF THE WESTERN PROVINCE IN ZAMBIA

In western Zambia, the Zambezi River, which is the fourth longest river in Africa, flows from north to south (Figure 1). The Zambezi floodplain spreads on both sides of the river, 50 km wide, and occupies 20% of the total area of the Western Province, which is characterized by two types of vegetation: grassland on the Zambezi floodplain and Kalahari woodland on the uplands. Although the soil of the floodplain is fertile, the fertility of the Kalahari woodland is poor because of sandy soil. There are two seasons: rainy season from October to March and dry season for the remainder of the year. The mean temperature is higher in the rainy season. Flooding of the Zambezi River occurs from February to June, and the annual rainfall is about 800 mm (statistics from Senanga Meteorological Station 2002).

Mongu, the capital of the Western Province, is located about 600 km west of Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. The population of the province was 765,088 in 2000 (Central Statistics Office 2001), accounting for about 7.7% of the country's total population 9,885,591, and is concentrated in and around urban areas such as Mongu. The population density in the Western Province is the second lowest in Zambia, as of 1997, at 6 persons/km<sup>2</sup>.

Many villages in the Western Province are located along the main road on the uplands from Lusaka. The social and economic infrastructures, such as schools, hospitals, local markets, and the supermarket chains of the South African capital, are also sited on the upland. Most of these villages are composed of various ethnic groups, including the Lozi, who were historically the initial habitants in the Western Province. The Lozi own most of the natural resources of Western Province and distribute them to residents, including non-Lozi immigrants, such as the Angolan immigrants and Tonga people from the Southern Province.

In the eighteenth century, the Lozi developed their kingdom in the Zambezi floodplain area and, under strong administrative and judicial systems, subsisted by practicing agriculture, fishing, herding cattle, and paying tribute to the king (Gluckman 1941). Although the Lozi escaped every year from the Zambezi floodplain because of the flooding and lived on the upland in the rainy season, they did not regard the upland as crucial to cultivate and so instead used the floodplain, a practice that differentiates land use patterns between the Lozi and Angolan immigrants in the Western Province today.

After British colonial rule started in 1924, the colonial authority demarcated customary communal land under chiefs' customary tenure. The colonial regime granted chiefs, including Lozi authorities, a great deal of control over land use and allocation of land and natural resources in their domains,

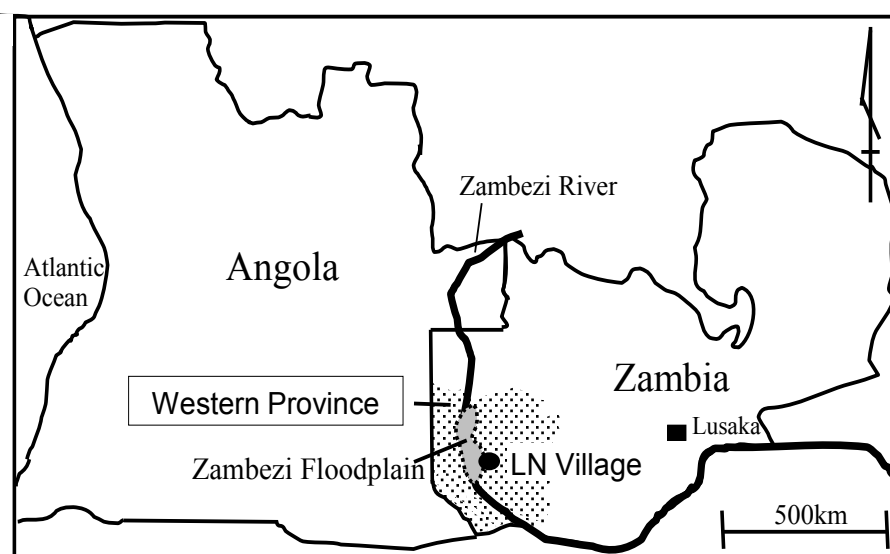


FIGURE 1. Research area.

and treated customary land tenure and judicial processes as fixed in precedent and practice (Brown 2005). British colonial rule ensured, especially, the authority of the Lozi kingdom over its land for mining copper, and named the area Barotseland. After Zambia gained independence in 1964, the new Zambian government integrated the political system of the Lozi kingdom. Although the Lozi signed the Barotse Agreement with the Zambian government just before independence, it soon disintegrated because of a new government, the United National Independence Party (UNIP). Barotseland was officially renamed the Western Province of Zambia. The land was nominally nationalized after independence, and the government theoretically stripped chiefs, including the Lozi king, of their power and attempted to legislate concerning property rights and to develop machinery for land allocation. As a result, until today, in most parts of the country, though no recent statistics are available, chiefs grant occupancy and use rights to customary land, despite the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), through with the government advanced privatization and capitalism after 1991, with funding from donors. According to the recent Land Act of Zambia, the president of Zambia is the *de jure* owner of Zambia's land, which is divided into two categories: national land under the government's control and customary land under the traditional chiefs' control (GRZ 2000), which includes the Western Province. Under this law, chiefs still have strong legal power over their customary land (Brown 2005). In this sense, the land and chiefs in the Western Province have been attached to the state structure and nation building.

Although different ethnic groups live in the Western Province, access to land is controlled by the Lozi traditional authority. Today the fields are segregated; the Lozi have fields in the Zambezi floodplain, whereas the immigrants have been pushed into the Kalahari woodland because the Lozi have claimed the floodplain as their own and do not want immigrants to cultivate there.

An intensive survey was conducted from 2001 to 2007 in LN village, located 150 km south of Mongu, the provincial capital of Western Province, and 10 km north of the district capital, Senanga. The survey involved doing interviews and measuring fields around the village.

### ANGOLAN IMMIGRANTS AND LN VILLAGE

LN village was founded in 1947, during a time in which immigrants got permission from the chief of traditional authority of the Lozi kingdom to use the place where, today, they live and cultivate. Thus, through the Lozi traditional authority, the immigrants attached to the colonial structure, and later, to the state.

In 2004, the population of this village was 277 persons in 79 households. Of those villagers, 77% are Mbunda, 15%

are Luchazhi, 2% are Luvale, 2% are Chokwe, and 2% are Kalenga. The remaining 2% are Lozi who married immigrants. One-quarter of the villagers are considered the first generation of the immigrants, and the remaining three-quarters are in the second or third generation. Among the 43 first-generation immigrants, 60% of them are those who fled from the Angolan war to LN village.

The Angolan immigrants discussed here comprise the Mbunda, Luchazhi, Luvale, and Chokwe. These peoples are included in the Bantu-speaking peoples living mainly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, eastern Angola, and western Zambia (von Oppen 1996). Previous studies have pointed out their similarities in cultural and social customs. They are organized into social groups, each called *limbo* (pl. *membo*), of three to four generations of matrilineal kin who reside together. A *limbo* is traditionally a political and reciprocal unit that has a headman. According to the Angolan immigrants in Angola, the headman of a *limbo* distributed and decided the area where they would cultivate. They lived along small rivers and engaged in agriculture in shifting cultivation fields and wetlands near a river. At that time, each *limbo* was sited 1 to 2 km apart from the others, so they did not compete over land in woodlands with others. Today, although immigrants can get access to land for cultivation by being members of any *membo*, 23 *membo* have been set up within 100 m.

A common feature of immigrant societies is the frequent inflow and outflow of the population. As shown in Table 1, the LN village total population increased from 277 in 2004 to 313 in 2007. Though the main reason for this increase is an increase in birth rate, an outflow of 112 people and an inflow of 109 people occurred during that time. The reasons for outflow are marriage or divorce (78%), visiting relatives (7%), schooling (6%), voluntary repatriation to Angola (6%), and relocation to the district capital for business (3%), and reasons for inflow are marriage or divorce (82%), visiting relatives (10%), and schooling (8%). These inflows and outflows relate to today's negotiations over land as shown later.

Today, the people of LN village subsist by fishing and gathering, poultry husbandry, and forestry in the primary forests, but, above all, by agriculture (Murao 2012). Since they are excluded from the Zambezi floodplain, as mentioned previously, they perform shifting cultivation in the upland fields and small-scale cultivation in their kitchen gardens at their residences. Cassava produced by shifting cultivation is very important to the villagers, not only as a staple, but also as a cash crop, because it is available year-round and can be harvested in adequate amounts in poor woodland areas. Selling cassava became the new livelihood activity after the national government implemented economic policies to liberalize the market under the structural adjustment program in the 1990s.

TABLE 1. Demographic movement from 2004 to 2007 in LN village.

	population in 2004	decline			increase			population in 2007
		death	move-out	total	birth	move-in	total	
a	26	0	6	6	1	4	5	25
b	9	0	0	0	2	2	4	13
c	12	0	2	2	0	6	6	16
d	18	1	10	11	0	8	8	15
e	10	0	1	1	0	6	6	15
f	17	0	15	15	0	5	5	7
g	5	0	2	2	2	3	5	8
h	18	0	6	6	0	20	20	32
i	3	0	3	3	0	0	0	0
j	9	0	2	2	0	0	0	7
k	6	0	0	0	1	4	5	11
l	27	1	3	4	2	3	5	28
m	12	0	2	2	2	0	2	12
n	26	0	10	10	0	16	16	32
o	22	1	15	16	0	12	12	18
p	12	0	12	12	0	0	0	0
q	11	0	1	1	5	0	5	15
r	14	0	7	7	1	1	2	9
s	7	0	0	0	2	11	13	20
t	26	0	8	8	2	7	9	27
u	6	0	6	6	0	0	0	0
h	3	0	1	1	0	1	1	3
i	12	0	0	0	8	4	12	24
j	12	0	2	2	0	6	6	16
k	0	0	1	1	4	9	13	13
l	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3
total	323	3	112	115	20	109	129	313

At that time, they needed much cash because of inflation and charges for education and medical services. They could not find any work to get cash except selling cassava from shifting cultivated fields in the Western Province, a new dependence that deepened the importance of woodlands as their essential land resource.

#### FRAGMENTATION OF FIELDS IN THE WOODLANDS

The farming system of the Angolan immigrants consists of managing their fields both as individuals and as households. Male labour is necessary to cut down trees for cultivation. Female landowners may ask men to cut trees for free if they belong to the same *limbo*, or for cash if they are members of a different *limbo*. The immigrants start to harvest tubers of cassava one and a half years after planting, and they harvest them all. Then they replant the stems of the harvested cassava plants in the same field and continue to cultivate the field for a total of 12 to 16 years. Because production of cassava decreases in old fields of low fertility, the immigrants abandon these old fields. At the same time, they open new fields continuously and expand into the fertile primary forest. Since each villager normally cultivates more than three plots, a vast cultivated area per person is needed. According to an area calculation by means of GPS in 2004, the total cultivated area of the members belonging to *limbo* t, which is average for size and economic condition in the village, as shown in Figure 2, is 31.19 ha, 4.46

ha for each household in the *limbo* and 1.04 ha per person with cultivated fields. This farming system comprises cultivated fields and abandoned fields in the woodland (Figure 3). Figure 3-1 is an air photo from 1973, and Figure 3-2 is a satellite image (Landsat 7: path 175, row 7) from 2000, combined with GPS information collected by the author. As we can see from these Figures, LN village is sited between the Zambezi floodplain and the woodland, neighbouring the N, LY, and LU villages. Gray patches shown in the woodland represent both cultivated and abandoned fields. The frontline of the east side in the woodland shows the frontier of cultivation by the people, avoiding places restricted for cultivation, such as the place along the stream and the National Forest reserve set in 1983, where no one can live or use the resources.

When the Angolan immigrants started cultivation in the woodland in 1947, members of the same *limbo* usually opened their fields side by side. However this custom has changed. One reason for this change was the increase in the number of *membo* in LN village. From 1947 to 2007, the number of *membo* increased from 2 to 23. According to the interview, the first 2 *membo* of settlers came to this village for the vast uncultivated woodlands, 7 *membo* because of squabbles in former places from the 1950s to 2007, though 6 of those were born by separation from those 2 initial *membo*. In the 1960s and 1970s, 14 *membo* were set up by displaced people who fled from the Angolan war. On the other hand, there were 3 *membo*

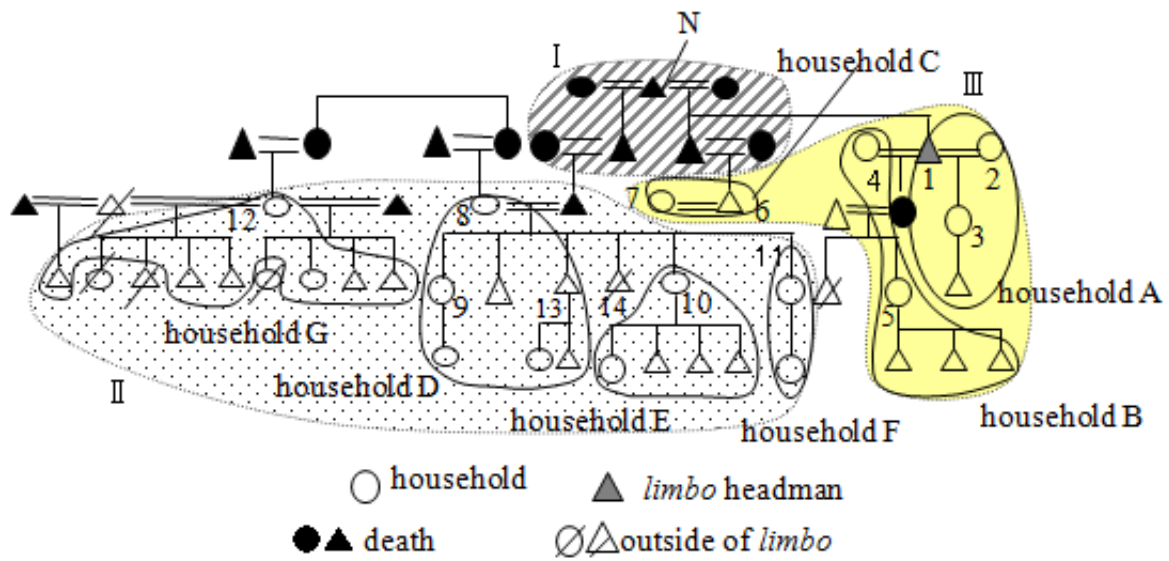
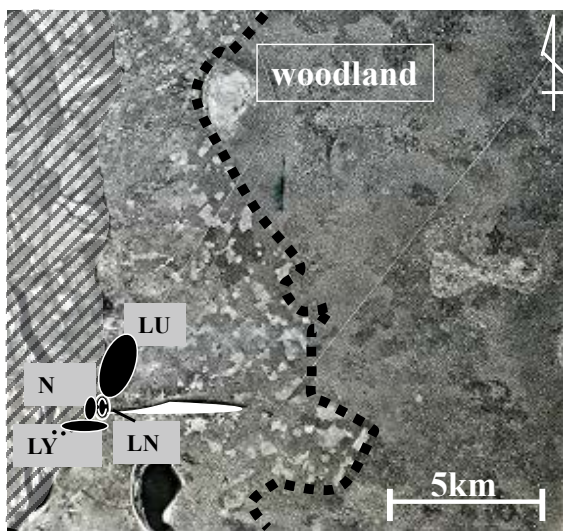


FIGURE 2. Family tree of limbo t (2004).

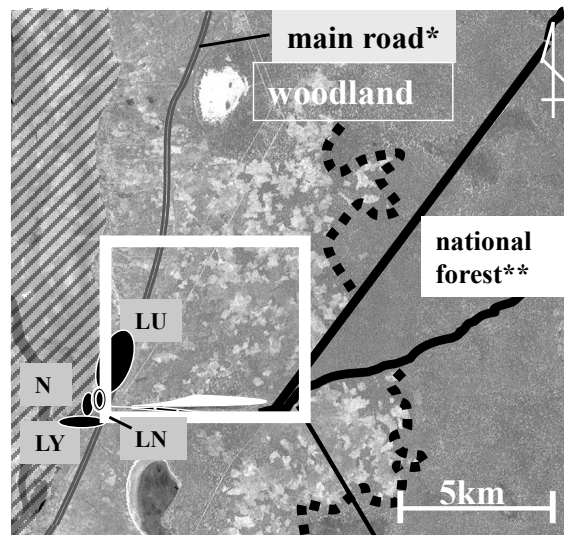
Group I to III and personal numbers show who cultivated in the place of I to III in Figure 4 and the person in case 1 to 3.

3-1 (1973: 26years after settled)



Government of Republic of Zambia (1973. July)

3-2 (2000: 53years after settled)



Landsat 7 (2000. November)

- \*set in 1985
- \*\*set in 1983
- village
- ▨ Zambezi floodplain
- ..... Frontline of cultivated field

□ stream

expanded in figure 4

FIGURE 3. Frontier of fields in woodland.

that moved out. The number of *membo* increased gradually each time.

The gradual increase of the number of *membo* prompted people to open their fields near their own houses in LN village. I explain the case of *limbo t*, shown in Figure 4, as a typical example. *Limbo t* is composed of a family group that includes from household A in 1949 to household C in Figure 2, addressing who cultivated places I–III, shown in Figure 4. As seen in Figure 4, today the fields of *limbo t* are divided; however, in the past (in 1947, for example), all members of *limbo t* cultivated close together. Then, in the 1960s, many displaced people fled from the Angolan struggle into LN village and began cultivating the primary forest close to the field of *limbo t*. For this reason, the primary forest close to place I decreased, and some members of *limbo t* moved eastward toward the primary forest. Group II of Figure 2 moved 2 km from place I, the former place in 1969. Group III of Figure 2 moved from place I to place III in 1979, 4 km from the former place. Some villagers belonging to the other *limbo* had started to cultivate and left some areas of the primary forest for *limbo t*.

Thus, affected by the farming system as well as the establishment of many *membo* after 1947, the people in LN village extended their fields diffusely into the vast primary

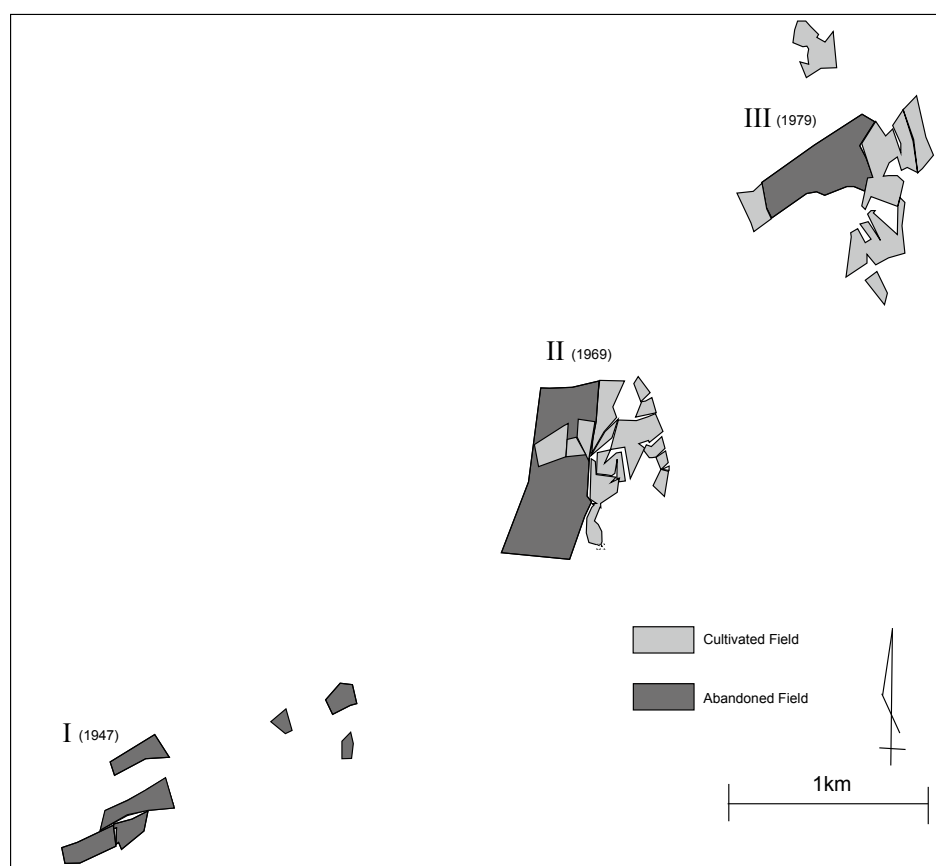
forests eastward, as shown in Figure 4. Following is a discussion of the features of the acquisition and allocation of the land for shifting cultivation to the woodland. After Angolan immigrants settled, they were not exposed to direct intervention on land distribution in the woodland by Lozi chiefs.

## NEGOTIATION AND ACQUIREMENT OF LAND

In this section, I discuss cases of negotiation and arrangement of land use in the dispersed primary forest, focusing on *limbo t*, which is a typical example. Case 1, for example, shows that the members of *limbo t* negotiate over the land of the dispersed primary forest.

### Case 1: Negotiation of land in primary forest left among both cultivated and abandoned fields

No. 10, the second daughter of No. 8 of *limbo t* (see Figure 2), returned from another district after she divorced. No. 10 was cultivating the fields abandoned by her sister and brother for a while and started considering open fields somewhere in the primary forest. One day, No. 11, a younger sister of No. 10 (and third daughter of No. 8), also came back after she divorced and asked No. 8 to allow her to use the abandoned field that No. 8 had previously cultivated; she was granted permission. After that, No. 10, aiming for self-sufficiency, asked No. 8 again to give her a new field in the primary forest. Then No. 10 opened her new field in the primary forest. Around the fields that No.



**FIGURE 4.** Cultivated fields and abandoned fields of *limbo t*.

- 1) The years that *limbo t* member started to cultivate westends in I - III places were provided in parentheses.
- 2) Among cultivated fields and abandoned fields of *limbo t*, primary forest patches are left randomly dispersed.

8 and her daughters cultivated, however, the area of primary forest for those women of *limbo t* was becoming small because the women had extended their fields in the area and other *limbo* members already cultivated the surrounding area. The dispersed primary forest was the arranged place for *limbo t*, with *limbo e* starting to cultivate an area near *limbo t*. No. 8, No. 10, and No. 11 were planning to cultivate the primary forest. No. 11 decided to open the primary forest next to the new field of No. 10 and line out as No. 11's an area where No. 10 wanted to extend. No. 8 was surprised and angry with the behaviour of No. 11 because she knew of No. 10's intention to open that place. Immediately, No. 8 marked out this line, bawling out No. 11. Finally, No. 10 got the land after she employed a man to clear the place.

As shown in case 1, a tacit understanding exists among relevant people about who should cultivate fields close to the primary forest. In general, everyone agrees it is the person who has occupied the plot in the primary forest, the person who cultivates fields closest to the plot. When the dispersed primary forest is decreased, the *limbo* members must open primary forests at an eastern frontier site, as did the woman in case 2.

#### *Case 2: Negotiation of land of primary forest for younger female cousin*

No. 8 in *limbo t* cultivated vast fields. Her younger female cousin, No. 12, came to stay with her from the Southern Province because maize did not have a good harvest there. No. 12 was allowed to use the field that the fourth daughter of No. 8 cultivated. Then No. 12 found the dispersed primary forest that was the arranged place for *limbo t*, as mentioned in case 1. Although she found the land near No. 8's fields, she was afraid of a competitive situation among the members of *limbo t* because sometimes a newcomer, like herself, who did not have strong social ties with others, was driven out by members of the same *limbo* if the person competed with them. Therefore, she asked No. 8, who had been there for a long time and had strong networks with others, to negotiate with those who cultivated near the place where No. 12 wanted to open fields, around the frontline shown in Figure 3. After that, No. 8 negotiated the land of the primary forest for No. 12, negotiating with the people who cultivate near the frontline. No. 8 visited *limbo g* and asked the headman to allow No. 12 to cultivate northwest of the fields, but he refused and said to cultivate on the east side of their fields because some people of *limbo g* wanted to extend northwestward. No. 8 agreed to this and informed No. 12, after which No. 12 opened the east side of the fields for *limbo g*.

Around the frontier of the primary forest in the east woodland side, other LN villagers expand fields for cultivation. Though they do not fence or mark the boundary of their occupied area, they share the sense that they have priority and extend fields further into the primary forest. Because everyone concedes the occupation rights of the people who first cultivated, those who come later must seek other places for cultivation when they begin cultivation at the frontier line.

#### *Case 3: Negotiation of the land of primary forest between limbo t and limbo e*

The fields of *limbo e* are located next to the fields of No. 8 and her daughters of *limbo t*. People of *limbo e* reclaimed one of the dispersed primary forests located northeastward, avoiding other primary forests located southwest of where the people of *limbo t* are extending. One afternoon, a man of *limbo e* approached the headman of *limbo t* and said that he and his wife wanted to reclaim the forest of *limbo t* because the forest of *limbo e* was too small to distribute among all of *limbo e*, while there still seemed to be enough land left in the forest for *limbo t*, which was near their current fields. But the headman of *limbo t* said that it would be impossible because there was not enough space to cultivate even in their forest. When the man of *limbo e* asked the headman again, the headman called No. 8 and her daughters, who occupied the fields next to those of the man of *limbo e*, and asked whether they would grant his request. As a result, No. 8 and her daughters rejected this request because of the small size of remaining land in their primary forest.

As shown in cases 2 and 3, the person who comes later to cultivate in the primary forest where other *limbo* members had started cultivation nearby must meet with the headman of the initial *limbo* to arrange and negotiate for land in the primary forest, though such persons did not have to do that in Angola. Today, as shown by these three cases, land use follows tacit understanding and occupation by the first cultivators. Though the land use of shifting cultivators was shown in previous studies (Ankei 1981; Kakeya and Sugiyama 1987; Oyama 2007), that of Angolan immigrants, especially, is marked by what have become factors resulting in the need for a *limbo* as a common social practice unit among the people who cultivate to negotiate over valuable places in dispersed primary forests.

## CONCLUSION

This article has examined dynamic patterns of autonomous livelihood among self-settled refugees, focusing on actual land use of Angolan immigrants in western Zambia. New land use patterns have developed in the context of Zambian nation building, which has integrated all villages and their residents into government-run administrative and land-management systems. Immigrants' autonomous livelihoods are restricted by Lozi traditional organizations, a facet of the Zambian state, and immigrants are still excluded from playing a role in the authorities that regulate land use in the region. Angolan immigrants were not among those receiving aid in refugee camps; but through Lozi traditional organization, the immigrants group has been deeply involved in state political reforms aimed at increasing solidarity and democracy. That indicates the African nation building has brought self-settled refugees into a new marginalized situation connected to their daily livelihoods.

In this context, the actual land transactions of Angolan immigrants show that they are often driven into ad hoc initiatives to acquire dispersed primary forests, seeking

approval for such prior occupation through tacit understanding. It indicates different land use from previous studies, sharing salient cultural traits such as adherence to norms of subsistence ethics and reciprocity within the family community (Hansen 1977) and is directly affected by political change. Especially in competitive situations of land acquisition, the practical members that cultivate an area refer to the *limbo* for their frame of negotiation, involving the headman to legitimise and approve transactions. This demonstrates that they have created a process of land acquisition, reinforcing practical land use members' common social factors. This is a secure method of obtaining land in woodlands where primary forest has been decreased and dispersed patchily, as opposed to opening new shifting cultivation fields at random (Ankei 1981; Kakeya and Sugiyama 1987; Oyama 2007) or redistributing land through traditional political systems and family communities (Suehara 1990).

As previous studies on self-settled refugees have shown (Hansen 1982; Backwell 1999), for self-settled refugees of LN village in western Zambia, government intervention as refugee assistance that falls short of sustaining basic human needs was not a second disaster. The marginalized situation under nation building that forced refugees to cultivate in woodlands has kept them struggling to acquire resources. This article has demonstrated that self-settled Angolan refugee communities established a new autonomous livelihood, in a flexible and practical manner, allowing them to coexist in a politically marginalized situation in the host country.

## NOTES

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# Imagined Entrepreneurs in Neoliberal South Africa: Informality and Spatial Justice in Post-Apartheid Cities

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**ABSTRACT** Despite a comparatively stable political situation and economic growth, South Africa has faced a number of challenges that have polarised society since democratisation in the early 1990s. Although one cannot ignore South Africa's history of apartheid and its negative legacy, wealth and resources have not been distributed appropriately, due to the neoliberalisation of South Africa. In neoliberal projects, people are required to become entrepreneurs, who take responsibility for their own welfare. Although the government has promoted entrepreneurship and self-help, this strategy entails many difficulties when you consider the reality of South African society. Indeed, I assume that this initiative would generate only "imagined entrepreneurs". Unsurprisingly, people who engage in informal economic activities are one of the most affected groups in this situation. Although the size of the informal economy of South Africa is comparatively small, recent growth in the informal economy has been remarkable in the form of traders as well as informal workers within the formal sector. However, people working in informal conditions are often eliminated from new urban spaces that are being shaped in commercially-oriented forms. This paper concludes that by seeking "the right to the city" (David Harvey) and "spatial justice" (Edward W. Soja), there can be some hope for people who currently struggle to acquire living spaces in South Africa. [*economic anthropology, geographical thought, neoliberalism, informal economy, right to the city*]

## INTRODUCTION: "DEMOCRATISATION" UNDER NEOLIBERALISM

When the end of apartheid and the shift toward democratisation occurred in South Africa in the early 1990s, the world economy was already in a post-fordism or neoliberalism transition. Thus, South Africa followed the path of neoliberalisation (Hart 2002:20-21; 2008; Marais 2011:99-107). Although the South African economy grew rapidly in the first decade of the 2000s, only 1.7 million new jobs were created and a large percentage of these were casual, temporary and low-paid (Marais 2011:151). In South Africa today, one can easily find any number of instances of neoliberal rationalities of rule: the proliferation of NGOs; the "responsibilisation" of education, health care and local government; privatised forms of security, and many other examples of extensions of market models into realms that were heavily bureaucratized under much of the apartheid rule (Hart 2008:689). In advanced liberal or neoliberal projects, all South Africans are now required to become entrepreneurs and are forced to take responsibility for their own welfare. Nicholas Rose (1999:141-142) notes that in developing an advanced liberal diagram, all aspects of social behaviour are reconceptualised along economic lines. Indeed, post-apartheid South African society demands that people pursue mentalities that are similar to those of gold rush migrants in terms of a "get-quick-rich mentality" or a "winner-take-all ethos". The BEE millionaires or *Tenderpreneurs* have benefited from white capital during the "democratisation" of the South

African economy under the neoliberal order.<sup>1</sup> Moeletsi Mbeki (2009:95) argues that in the modern liberal capitalist society of South Africa, the one missing factor is support for entrepreneurship from both the politically dominant black elite and the dominant economic elite, who receive protection from domestic and foreign competition by the political elite in return for reparations. The uneven distribution of benefits during the period of expansive economic development and a lack of adequate entrepreneurial opportunities characterises South African society.<sup>2</sup>

Under neoliberal individualism and the principle of self-responsibility, we need to be reminded that neoliberalism is the massive, naked application of state power in order to raise rates of profit for crony groups (Davis and Monk 2007:x). In this context, the state and capital become more tightly intertwined than ever, both institutionally and personally (Harvey 2010:219). Accordingly, it is no wonder that there are increasing concerns about the "underclass", categorised as useless, and a segment of society that has become detached from, and is irrelevant to, the *bulimic society*, where massive cultural inclusion is accompanied by systematic structural exclusion (Young 2007:29-32).<sup>3</sup> In fact, in South Africa, only 1 million people are part of the vibrant formal sector of economic life. A further 12.8 million live lower to higher middle class lives, while 33.3 million are dependent on a spouse, the government, non-government organisations, friends or non-spousal family to survive (BMR 2008).<sup>4</sup> Increasing poverty, social polarisation and the frustration of

people in a *bulimic society*, which occasionally engenders extreme violence against others, need to be recognised as the reality of South Africa, and we need to help those 33.3 million people on the lowest rung to acquire living spaces.

### RESTRUCTURING URBAN SPACES AND SPATIAL JUSTICE

As we have seen, post-apartheid South African society has been transformed by neoliberal projects. Therefore, it follows that cityscapes are dominated by office developments and shopping emporiums, as well as by convention and entertainment centres. More than ever before in its history, Johannesburg's city space is a product that is marked, measured, marketed and transacted (Mbembe 2008:54). Johannesburg has been restructured by a vast but uneven wave of property speculation; the city appears unable to break from its inherited built environment because of the speculative character of South African capital accumulation, or the neoliberal dogma of its rulers (Bond 2007:116). In Johannesburg today, one can witness the rapid consolidation of a new system of separation (Beavon 2000) through the process of suburbanisation (Mabin 2005). Due to deteriorating conditions of public safety, fortress-like gated communities have redrawn the geography of cities and towns (Marais 2011:230). This clearly shows that urban spaces in post-apartheid South Africa are formed of actual products that are indicated by "postmodern geographies" (Soja 1989).

"Pure space", presented as relatively purified, homogenous and controlled environments with spaces where people can walk freely (Low 2003:143), is desperately needed for many South Africans. Indeed, Lemanski (2004:110) has pointed out three key similarities between the apartheid and post-apartheid city: first, the use of fear to justify exclusion; second, the use of spatial mechanisms to displace social problems; and third, the dominance of social and symbolic exclusion. It is safe to say that the new racial or more class-based segregations reflect the total urban spatial re-imagination. Under such conditions, people who engage in informal economic activities are being eliminated from new urban spaces, which are treated as a commodity in South Africa.

Since Keith Hart (1973) highlighted the significance of irregular economic activities by urban dwellers in Accra, and ILO (1972) coined the concept of the informal sector, the idea of an informal economy has been used to describe actual economic conditions in the developing world that escape state regulation (Hart 2010). Although it is difficult to define the informal economy, it is often said that the size of the informal economy in South Africa is relatively small in the context of statistics produced by Statistics South Africa. This is because the development of the informal economy in South Africa has been closely tied to the politics of apartheid in that

most informal sales in urban centres were defined as illegal under apartheid. Even in post-apartheid South Africa, the concept of the informal economy is still often confused with illegal activity (ILO 2002:40). However, although the formal economy accounts for the majority of employment in South Africa, the informal economy has shown a recent marked increase, doubling from 0.97 million people in 1997 to 1.9 million people in 2003 (Devey et al. 2006:231).

Currently, the informal economy can also be found inside formal enterprises through the rapid growth of casual and sub-contracted work (Webster et al. 2008). It is obvious that formal and informal activities are often thoroughly interdependent, supplementing or subsidising one another in complex ways (Du Toit and Neves 2007). Under a neoliberal imperative to reduce the state's grip on "the free market", national economies and the world economy itself have been radically de-formalised (Han and Hart 2011:115). If this has occurred, we need to be reminded of Mike Davis' criticisms regarding "myths of informal economy" (2007:180-185)<sup>5</sup> and we also need to recapture the informal economy in a broader sense. In this paper, although I do not define the term, I use informality as a term that includes people who engage in informal economic activities, are unemployed, are struggling under severe living conditions (even if they are identified as workers in the formal sector) and so on. In any case, we are becoming aware that contests between informality and the restructuring of urban spaces are becoming increasingly common problems in post-apartheid cities.

David Harvey's (2008; 2012) concept of the "right to the city" and Edward W. Soja's (2010) "spatial justice" need to be examined in detail now. The idea of the right to the city was originally developed by Henri Lefebvre in the late 1960s. It was a stirring call to everyone who is disadvantaged by the conditions of urban life under capitalism to rise up and take greater control over how the unjust urban spaces in which they live are socially controlled (Soja 2010:83). Seeking the right to the city is a continuous and more radical effort for spatial re-appropriation, and involves taking an active presence in all that takes place in urban life under capitalism (Soja 2010:96).

Harvey (2008:23) has recently revived the right to the city as one of the human rights that must be encouraged in the new century: "The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire. The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is the right to change ourselves by changing the city. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights."

Similarly, Soja (2010:6) illuminates a concept of spatial justice that promotes more progressive and participatory forms

of democratic politics and social activism, and provides new ideas about how to mobilise and maintain cohesive coalitions and regional confederations of grassroots and justice-oriented movements. Soja's (2010:95) conclusion is that the two concepts, spatial justice and the right to the city, have become so interwoven in their contemporary usage that they have become increasingly difficult to tell apart. I agree that there are similarities between the two concepts because they share the common goal of seeking to recapture living spaces for people who are struggling under uneven development. I also think that the idea of spatial justice provides more in the way of comprehensive strategies for claiming living spaces, not only in cities but also in rural areas. Furthermore, I think that these philosophical and practical movements will be required to ensure "greater democratic control over the production and utilisation of the surplus" (Harvey 2008:37).<sup>6</sup>

It may be helpful to consider some important factors associated with conflicts over urban spaces and movements that seek spatial justice in post-apartheid South African cities. I will use case studies in the following sections. I selected two cases in Durban and Johannesburg, in particular, because both cities represent South Africa's mega cities in terms of population and cultural diversity, and both function as economic hubs. You can find neoliberal urban projects around every corner in both cities. The two cases include different types of movements in terms of size, style, motivation and targets. By discussing cases that involve very different styles of movement, broad conclusions about the possibilities of seeking spatial justice can be drawn. The following two cases are only examples of similar movements that have recently emerged throughout South Africa. It is meaningful to try to explain the recent movements and tensions in South Africa in relation to the concept of spatial justice; this will help identify the issues in an easily understandable way.

### **INFORMAL TRADERS AND NEOLIBERAL GENTRIFICATION IN DURBAN**

Warwick Junction in Durban CBD attracts 8,000 street traders that sell their goods and services to 460,000 pedestrians per day who arrive and depart from the main railway station, five bus terminals and nineteen taxi ranks. Many stalls and markets sell fresh vegetables and fruits, meats, prepared foods, mealies, clays, clothes, music CDs and DVDs, and traditional medicines and provide services such as barbering, sewing and shoe repair. The famous Early Morning Market also attracts many traders and customers (Dobson et al. 2009:5-7).

The history of Warwick is summarised as follows (Attwood 2009; Dobson et al. 2009; Skinner 2009). In 1872, Indian people started markets in the Warwick area and rural African people moved to the city to set up trading sites by the 1930s. In July 1930, the town allocated £15,000 for a proper

enclosure for the Warwick Street traders; the Early Morning Market, comprising 618 stalls, opened on January 31, 1934. However, by the 1960s, street trading had been prohibited in Durban and traders were harshly punished and evicted if found in the city. By the early 1990s, national laws that restricted black economic activity were relaxed and thousands of people moved into the city looking for work or to trade informally where business was favourable and pavement space was available. Since the democratisation of South Africa, the local government has begun work to improve trading conditions for street traders. For example, the city's health department established health and safety awareness training to introduce minimum health requirements. They also compiled a preliminary database of street traders, detailing their activities and documenting what infrastructure they wanted. Street traders also started to become better organised. In 1994, the Self Employed Women's Union was launched and the Informal Traders Management Board was set up in 1995 to represent trader organisations and to serve as an umbrella body with which the council could negotiate.

In 1995, a project to redevelop the deteriorated Warwick area started officially. The council set aside R4.72 million and the European Commission committed to contribute 11% of the municipality's total allocation to the project. The Project Centre provided meeting spaces for project staff, department officials, traders' organisations and residents. Vast spaces in Warwick Junction were modified and improved by this project. Thus, the area was the site of a collaborative planning process that, within a few years, became widely recognised as a model of sensitive integration of street traders into urban plans. Peter Robinson, a professor at the School of Architecture, Planning and Housing, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, and Richard Dobson, an architect, praised the project: "Creativity in the design of urban spaces is not confined to forms of large squares and boulevards, up-market residential developments, or shopping malls and office parks, but can occur in poor areas of a city, and often in small spaces. The evidence from Warwick Junction shows how different groups in the city have used the spaces in and around disused infrastructure to set up a number of informal economic activities. Furthermore, this case study offers a model for urban managers faced with the dilemma of whether to exclude or to work with the informal sector. The experience of Warwick Junction stands in stark contrast to how the informal economy is approached by most local authorities; the approach developed through the project is a model of what is possible in developing country cities."<sup>7</sup>

However, in February 2009, the eThekweni (Durban) Municipality suddenly announced that they were prepared to demolish the Early Morning Market and to replace it with a shopping mall, threatening the livelihoods of 6,000 informal traders. The development included road and freeway

realignments, a more logical positioning of taxi ranks, and the creation of a mall with banking and retail facilities. The traders from the Early Morning Market, who were being moved to premises that were about 300 m away, were concerned that they would miss out on passing trade from buses, taxis and trains that would inevitably be attracted to the mall (Inggs 2009). In June 2009, chaos broke out at the site when the Metro Police barred access to the market and five people were injured by rubber bullets. The traders were granted a Durban High Court order forcing the municipality to allow them to enter the market and continue trading. The eThekweni Municipality was accused of defying a court order permitting traders access to the market (Ndlovu 2009).

This public-private urban restructuring plan was bombarded with criticism by various social sectors, including NGOs, architects and academics who claimed that the municipality had not followed legal and public processes (Comins 2009). For instance, Miles Pennington, the president of the KwaZulu-Natal Institute of Architects noted, in criticism, that, “The city intends leasing a very important commercial site in Durban’s Warwick Junction to a private developer, evicting hundreds of street traders at very short notice. No urban planning, no analysis of precedent, no traders, no informal economy” (Sole 2009). Keith Hart also responded: “I am a democrat and I can’t sit silent while one of the world’s most successful attempts to bring formal and informal organisation together for the common good has been so wilfully assaulted. It is as if the democratic example set by Warwick traders and enlightened local bureaucracy was such an affront to some of Durban’s rich and powerful individuals that they had to smash it.”<sup>8</sup> The South African Communist Party was alarmed: “The whole project has been riddled by a lack of open and transparent dialogue and consultation” (Tolsi 2009), and the Inkatha Freedom Party reacted to reports that Metro Police used rubber bullets on traders: “The manner in which the ANC-led eThekweni Municipality dealt with the traders is reminiscent of the way the apartheid government used to deal with the black communities and their opponents” (Madlala 2009). Harry Ramlall, the chairman of the Early Morning Market Traders’ Association, said that, “Traders are being relocated to an unknown materials management building that has been standing vacant for 30 years and was not designed for business” (Inggs 2009). Finally, it is important to include the opinions of traders who strongly called for the right to live in the space: “We are not going anywhere”; “It’s our life at stake. We’re not going into any marquee”; “A mall is for rich people. We are the poor”; “How would the city councillors and developers feel in our position?” and, “When we tried to have a sit-in last week they used pepper spray on us. We have human rights; we are not criminals” (Attwood 2009).

On the other hand, the eThekweni Municipality and

the developer believed that the project would improve the circumstances of traders. Carlos Correia, the chief executive of Isolenu, the developer of the mall, said that registered street traders would be provided with lock-up facilities for their goods. They would have covered trading sites, proper delivery areas and ablution facilities at no extra cost.<sup>9</sup> Mayor Obed Mlaba said that the project was an opportunity to centralise the city’s transport facilities and to create one hub. Phillip Sithole, the head of the business support and markets unit at the eThekweni Municipality, said that the main aim of the project was to reconfigure roads in the area to deal with the large volumes of traffic (Inggs 2009). The African National Congress (ANC) also supported the project: “We believe that it will boost the economic developments of eThekweni and the economic viability of the informal trading industry as they have been accommodated in the developmental projects.”<sup>10</sup> Mike Sutcliffe, the eThekweni Municipal manager, said he found that the 460,000 commuters who move through the area every day “overwhelmingly indicated” that they “wanted more choice” when shopping there; hence, a proposed franchise-ridden mall (Tolsi 2009). He also said that vendors at the market owed the city R20 million in rental arrears: “It’s been very problematic. In the end, this market is not viable.”<sup>11</sup> From his comment, we can divine the real intention of the municipality: they want to reconfigure the urban space so that it becomes more profitable. Philip Sithole at the eThekweni Municipality provided another point of view. He saw the construction of the regional taxi rank and shopping mall on the market site as a necessary evil in the name of “public safety”: “Heritage and history is very important but in our view it is not as important as public safety.” He added, “People are under the impression that we are out to destroy the market. We are not. The proposed development on the market site is part of a greater Warwick project. We want to rejuvenate the area and make Durban an efficient transport city” (Saib 2010).

The project mentioned above clearly represents “neoliberal gentrification”; Skinner (2009) concluded that the project was driven by private property interests combined with a city that conformed with modernist notions of “cityness” ahead of the 2010 Soccer World Cup. This case also implies that ideas of “the entrepreneurship of urban governance” (Harvey 1989), “gentrification as global urban strategy” (Smith 2002) and “the development of global cities in the South” (Lemanski 2007) are becoming important issues in post-apartheid South Africa. Even though after the Soccer World Cup in 2010 the development company and the municipality were still prepared to go ahead with the Warwick Mall project,<sup>12</sup> in April 2011 the project was eventually halted because of various legal wrangles over the property that was the site of the city’s Early Morning Market.<sup>13</sup> I have no insights into the internal facts that blocked this project. In any event, we need to be vigilant in looking out

for this kind of development.

### SEEKING SPATIAL JUSTICE BY ARTISTS AND TRADERS IN JOHANNESBURG

The centre of Johannesburg currently attracts many foreign immigrants and temporary visitors from neighbouring countries. In immigrant rich Yeoville, the local market reflects the strong Congolese presence through foodstuffs like *fufu*, cassava leaves and dried fish from the Congo River. The visitors shop here and take the goods back to their countries. Informal cross-border trade is a booming business for everyone in the city. It is apparent that Johannesburg is an informal trade hub of the SADC region (Keepile and Kadida 2009).

Joubert Park in downtown Johannesburg has important mini bus taxi hubs. There are large numbers of motor spares shops that specialise in cheap taxi spares and a diverse range of informal motor-related services, which are offered predominantly by Mozambican motor mechanics. Zulu women cook traditional Mozambican food on street corners to cater to the large number of Mozambican mechanics working in the area. At every intersection, men approach taxi drivers selling cigarettes and sweets. Outside the taxi ranks, groups of Zimbabwean and Mozambican luggage porters (trolley pushers) wait for customers that require luggage-carrying assistance (Farouk 2010:234-235).

However, the authorities have often tried to reshape the scene described above. For instance, just after the new government was established, harassment of street traders by police was frequently reported by street traders in Yeoville, who were fined for violating the Traffic Control Law (Simmonds 1998). Although the traders were eventually allowed to stay on the street, the City of Johannesburg also tried to force street traders to move into a permanent market. A city official said, "We want to see traders where they will be able to run their businesses professionally and uplift these from micro to medium enterprises," while a secretary of the Hillbrow-Berea Hawkers' Association said, "Moving people into markets is ridiculous because we rely on passing trade" (Simmonds 2000).

In Joubert Park, a major problem associated with trolley-pushing has been that of victimisation by police; raids have been occurring with increasing frequency and trolley pushers are being detained in prison for seemingly harmless economic activity (Farouk 2010:237). A recent protest action against the criminalisation of trolley-pushing in Joubert Park demonstrated that the trolley pushers are united in their struggle against police harassment. During the protest, they addressed members of the police force and highlighted the fact that they were creating jobs and were not criminals (Farouk 2010:241).

In addition to the authorities, politically affiliated youths have attacked informal traders. Thami Mazwai (2011), the

director of the Centre for Small Business Development, University of Johannesburg, was worried by a series of incidents in which ANC youth league members vandalised informal trading stands in the Johannesburg inner city and striking members of the National Union of Metalworkers of SA raided street hawkers, overturning their carts: "The irony is that the informal traders are now victimised by youths shouting 'economic freedom' or workers on strike for a 'living wage'. What 'economic freedom' is it when the youths do not allow ordinary people the freedom to trade? What 'living wage' are we talking of, when the strikers do not allow others the right to a living?"

The chain of events mentioned above clearly shows that the city's regeneration plans have disregarded migrants and informal traders, who are not considered part of the desired future in the re-imagining of the city (Farouk 2010:236). Here, I introduce an example outlining the desire for spatial justice; it is called "Trolley Works", which is a new multidisciplinary urban intervention project and exhibition that was organised by an artist and urban geographer, Ismail Farouk. The project sought practical ways to regulate and legalise trolley pushing in Joubert Park and its surrounds. Trolley-pushers are urban porters who use recycled supermarket trolleys to carry heavy loads of luggage around the city for a small fee. Because their trolleys, often rented from unforgiving "trolley lords", are essentially stolen, the police have a field day impounding them and fining or locking up their drivers (Buys 2009).<sup>14</sup>

According to Farouk (2010:236), the objective of the Trolley Works project was "to develop a comprehensive profile of the informal trolley pushers and related economic activities in the greater Joubert Park area. By mapping the informal economic activities and the organically generated diversity, the project aims to bring about awareness of the potential role of migrant-controlled business in contributing towards the economic and cultural regeneration of the inner city of Johannesburg."

Farouk, artist Rob Peers and their team of trolley-pushing collaborators have come up with a design for a bespoke steel porting trolley to replace the plastic supermarket trolleys (Buys 2009). In addition to designing these custom-built trolleys to help legalise the activity, the project also seeks to develop trolley pusher-led guided tours of the downtown area (Farouk 2010:237). Farouk said on his project blog: "We hope to expose people to the urban contradictions present in the city and are attempting to address the need to walk in the downtown area of Johannesburg. Walking in Johannesburg is strongly linked to class, race, crime, fear and paranoia" (Buys 2009). The first phase of the Trolley Works project began in December 2008 and it was planned to run until May 2009 (Farouk 2010:241). I would like to emphasise the importance of this kind of movement as constituting activities aimed at achieving some

degree of spatial justice. This has the potential to become a strategy that must be repeated throughout South African urban spaces.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The changes and activities that are happening in Durban and Johannesburg clearly show that authorities eager to formalise and “purify” urban spaces using awareness of “public safety” or “security” are hiding their true intentions of entrepreneurship with regard to urban governance. At the same time, the government has repeatedly promoted the importance of entrepreneurship and self-help in policy papers,<sup>15</sup> while advertisements have also redefined democracy as individual freedom, especially freedom to consume (Hart 2002:25). Inevitably, people have dreamed of succeeding as entrepreneurs in a *bulimic society*. However, the reality is that politically connected entrepreneurs, who are neatly protected, have all the power and ordinary citizens are generally abandoned. As Gillian Hart (2002:25) complains: “You can find that huge numbers of South African are excluded not only from the world of BMWs, but also some of the most basic means of material existence.” In a society of uneven development, unequal redistribution of resources and inequality of opportunities for participating in economic activities, we can say that South Africans are wandering in a labyrinth, seeking to realise identities linked to the idea of “imagined entrepreneurs”, a concept unsupported by material conditions.

As we have seen, many people are struggling to acquire the right to their living spaces. Yet, we have also seen that informal traders together with social organisations have been seeking spatial justice in new urban spaces. I have tried to set out empirical and theoretical analyses of spatial justice, focusing on the informality of post-apartheid cities, in this paper. The two case studies that were presented involved totally different movements in terms of their size, impact and outcomes. However, in both cases, it is safe to say that the aim of spatial justice involved people striving to recapture living spaces, as opposed to being tied to formal movements, such as organised labour movements by/for stakeholders. The drive for spatial justice should not be limited to movements for/by the poor but should be included in efforts for/by all users of urban spaces. The second case study, in particular, which included artists and traders, showed that movements should try to appeal to anyone who has a misguided sense of what urban space should involve. Although each movement makes a small contribution, it is possible to change people’s mindsets and to create new types of movements. Such movements might be able to bring hope to people living in conditions of instability and informality, who are desperate to survive and who are material, not imagined, entrepreneurs. I do not want to deify informal entrepreneurs. I want the drive for spatial

justice to be recognised as a practical and philosophical tool by which people can acquire living spaces and achieve true democratisation in post-apartheid South Africa.

### NOTES

1. The term, *tenderpreneur* (tender+entrepreneur) has been remarkably popular in South African political scenes recently, being used to describe political corruption or ‘grey’ transactions in the government’s tendering processes. The Star describes a *tenderpreneur* as “someone politically well-connected who has got rich through the government tendering system” (“How Malema made his millions” The Star, February 21, 2010).
2. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) survey in 2008, the Total Early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity index (TEA), which is the principle measure of entrepreneurial activity, of South Africa ranked 23rd (TEA rates: 7.8%) out of 43 countries. In South Africa, entrepreneurial activities are hindered by a poor skills base as well as by severe environmental limitations, including poverty, a lack of active markets and poor access to resources. Therefore, many South Africans do not regard entrepreneurship as a positive and viable choice (Herrington et al. 2009:15-16).
3. The contrast between a *bulimic society* and an exclusive society can be seen if one compares Western liberal democracies (and perhaps the new South Africa) with an explicitly exclusive society, the South Africa of Hendrik Verwoerd and P.W. Botha. The latter had explicit spatial and social exclusion, a multi-culturalist apartheid based on racist distinctions, and a controlled mass media that refused to report police brutality and that extolled divisions. It was both culturally and structurally exclusivist (Young 2007:33).
4. The criterion for classification is based on the “2006 income break down for the total population by income category” by BMR: The group earning R0-12,200 consists of 33,329,055 people; R12,201-48,700 consists of 8,947,969 people; R48,701-194,700 consists of 3,909,666 people; R194,701-779,900 consists of 885,862; R779,901 or more consists of 177,447 people (BMR 2008).
5. Mike Davis (2007:179) criticised the “myth of the informal economy” represented by Hernando de Soto’s popular simple recipe: get the state (and formal-sector labour unions) out of the way, add micro-credit for micro-entrepreneurs and land titling for squatters, then let markets take their course to produce the transubstantiation of poverty into capital.
6. Harvey (2008:37) sees that urbanisation has played a crucial role in the absorption of capital surpluses, at ever increasing geographical scales, but at the price of burgeoning processes of creative destruction that have dispossessed the masses of any right to the city whatsoever.
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13. "R350m mall in Durban halted", April 13, 2011, <http://www.property24.com/articles/r350m-mall-in-durban-halted/13412>, accessed February 23, 2012.
14. Theft of supermarket trolleys is a highly organised business. The trolleys are supplied by gangs made up of Zimbabwean youth, who use hired trucks and vans to transport stolen trolleys from shopping centres to the downtown area where they are sold on the streets. The trolley pushers are not directly responsible for the theft of trolleys. However, everyone is aware of the points for stolen trolleys in the area. During quiet periods, stolen trolleys are sold for as little as R50, whilst they can sell for as much as R200 during busy periods (Farouk 2010:239).
15. For example, the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA), a government's economic policy paper published in 2006, mentioned the promotion of entrepreneurs: "There are several interventions designed to support to small businesses. The government is supporting efforts to establish new venture funds for small, medium and micro enterprises."

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Milne RE (1985). The re-birth of journals. *Reproductive Health Matters*, 310:1387–90. At: <[www.rhmjournal.org.uk](http://www.rhmjournal.org.uk)>. Accessed 26 September 1996.

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