

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 entrepreneurs¹ 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/km² (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 neat 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,

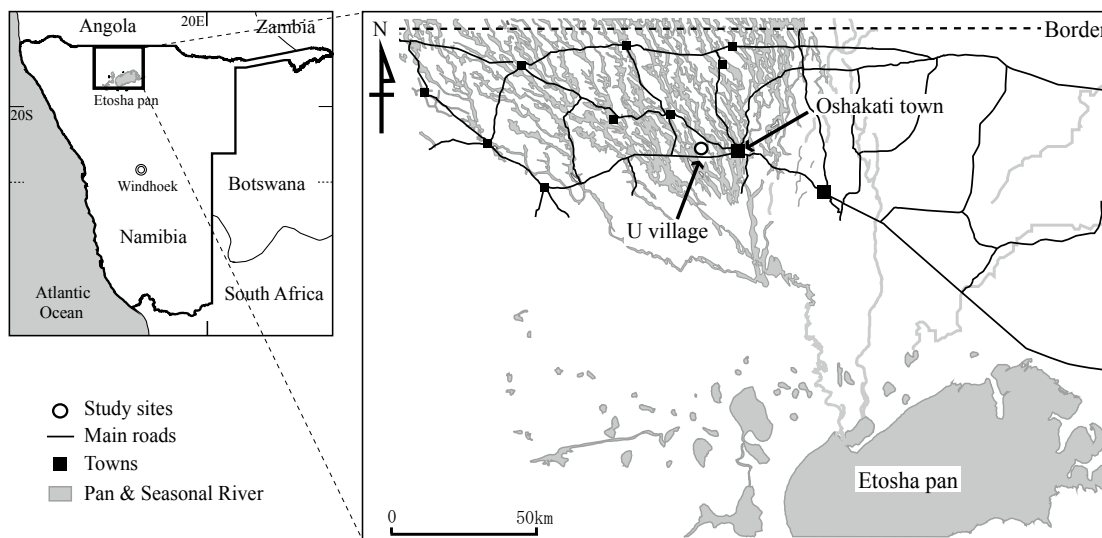


FIGURE 1. Research Area.

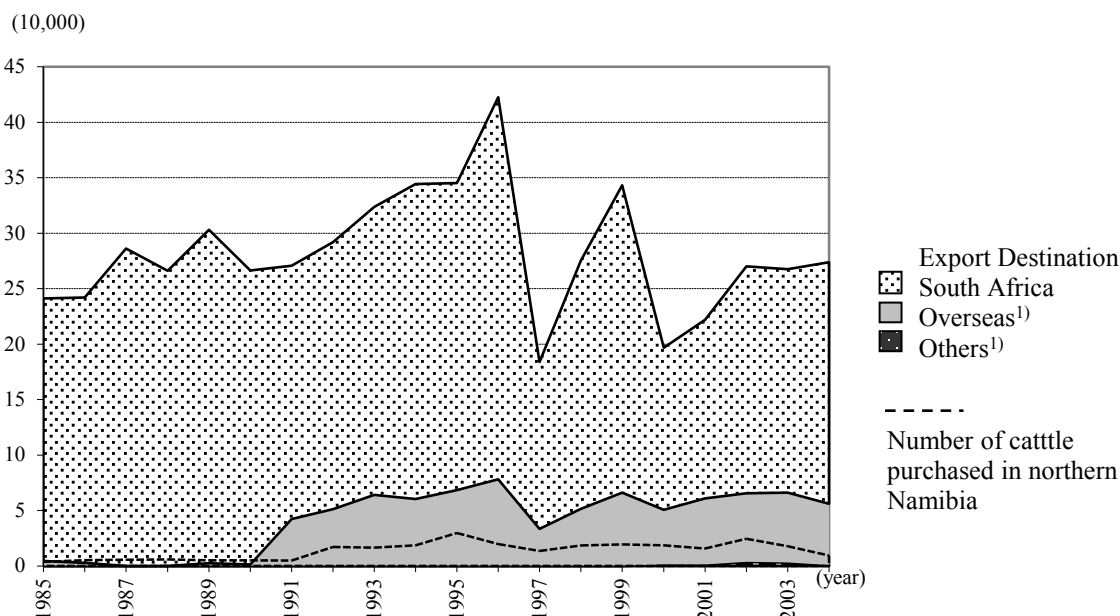


FIGURE 2. Relationship between the number of cattle exported and the number purchased in northern Namibia.

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,² but the system by which the land is managed has changed dramatically since the 1980s.³

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”.⁴

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 size⁵ (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

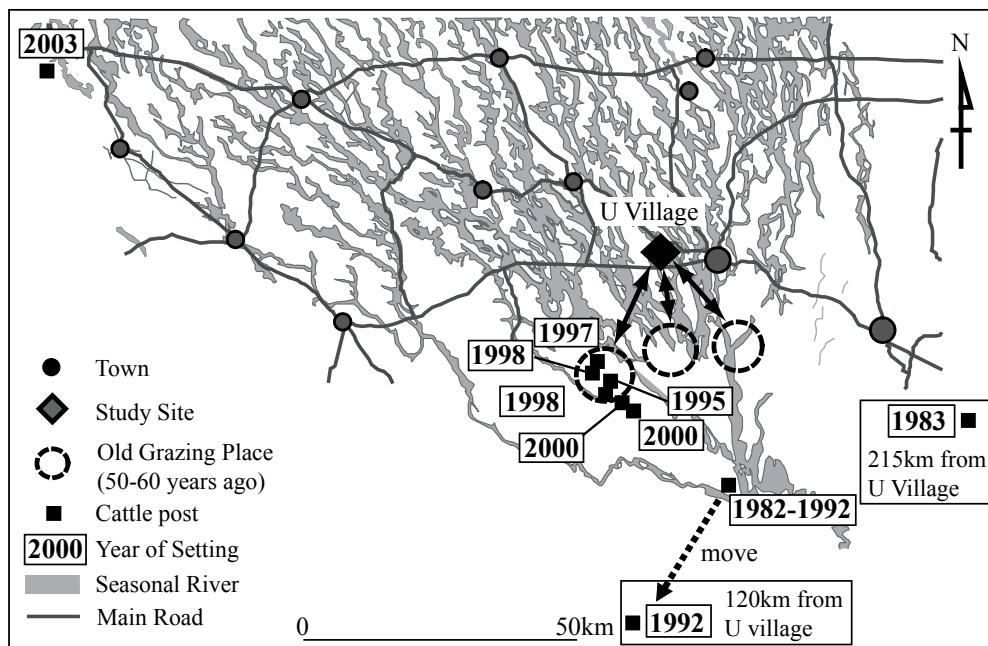


FIGURE 3. Location of grazing places and cattle posts.

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.⁶ 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\$600⁷ 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.⁸ 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

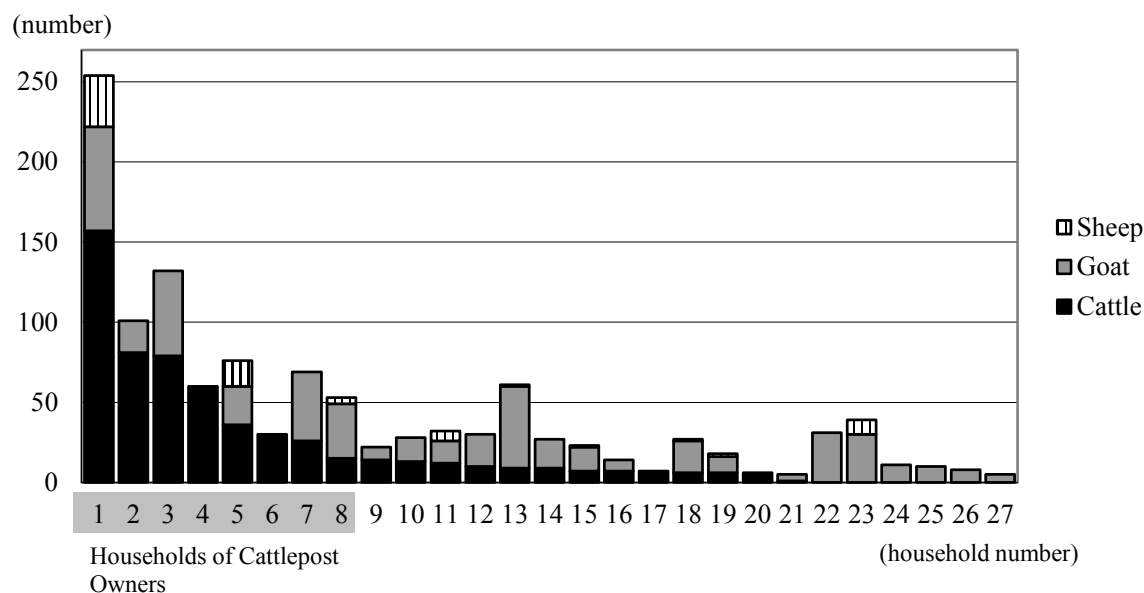


FIGURE 4. Number of livestock among 30 households.

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)⁹, 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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ 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 20th 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.¹² 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 ¹⁾	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 ¹⁾	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.¹³

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 Brahman 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,¹⁴ 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 neighbours¹⁵; 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 gifts¹⁶ 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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