

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

Akira Takada

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	(2) Murao
	re-produce	Ito Matsumoto	Fujioka (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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- Akira Takada Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University. 46 Yoshida-shimoadachi-cho, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto, 606-8501, Japan.**  
*takada@jambo.africa.kyoto-u.ac.jp*
- Isaac K. Nyamongo Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies, University of Nairobi. P.O. Box 30197, Nairobi, Kenya. *inyamongo@uonbi.ac.ke***