

THE DAILY LIFE STRATEGIES OF SMALL-SCALE FARMERS AFTER A PROLONGED WAR: THE LONG-TERM INFLUENCE OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

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ABSTRACT Southern African countries have been constantly plagued by war and political struggles. In particular, when the war in Angola ended in 2002, people repatriated back to the country. Previous papers have not specifically included a perspective on how local people in eastern Angola accepted humanitarian aid, nor how it was incorporated into their daily livelihood strategies in this post-conflict situation. In the absence of this perspective, this study aimed to clarify the livelihood strategies of small-scale farmers called Mbunda following a prolonged war in Angola, focusing on how a humanitarian aid crop was utilised by the farmers. In eastern Angola, it is difficult to establish mutual aid relationships because people's lives have become fluid. Social networks in post-conflict areas create vulnerable contexts for people, particularly those who rely solely on cassava for their food. The accelerated flow of people also contributes to the risk of a serious labour shortage. In this situation, the Mbunda continue to cultivate cassava and early maturing maize distributed via humanitarian aid to achieve self-sufficiency and start their lives immediately in a new place. Small-scale farmers have localised the humanitarian aid goods so as to have flexibility in their daily lives.

Key Words: Small-scale famers; Post-conflict society; Humanitarian aid; Self-sufficiency; Social vulnerability; Eastern Angola.

INTRODUCTION

Southern African countries have been constantly plagued by war and political struggles. In particular, the war in Angola (which began in 1961 and was one of the most prolonged wars in Africa) forced refugees to flee their homes and escape to host countries such as Zambia, which shares a western border with Angola (ex. Nsolo, 1996; Bakewell, 2000). While the refugees resided in the host countries, they adapted to their cultures and societal norms. Now that the war has ended, more than 70,000 people have repatriated back to Angola (DW, 2012).

People in eastern Angola have not always had strong access to humanitarian aid, because there is not a long history of such aid being provided to the region (DW, 2012). Additionally, the area surrounding the border of eastern Angola has a low population density. In this context, however, farmers have achieved self-sufficiency using the limited humanitarian aid available. Unlike settled farmers, such as those in Mozambique, however, little is known about how people in eastern Angola have accepted and utilised resources from humanitarian aid for daily agricultural production.

In southern Africa, maize is one of the most important crops distributed as humanitarian aid. Once a war has ended, it is important for people to be able to

immediately achieve food self-sufficiency where they reside. Sometimes, humanitarian aid is provided in the form of improved varieties of crops, such as early maturation crops. In this case, the priority is helping to alleviate hunger quickly in a post-conflict country where food supplies have been destroyed.

Though the war ended in 2002, the situation on the ground in eastern Angola has not necessarily shown stability in terms of people's livelihoods. Recent political reforms revealed the vulnerable state of agricultural development in southern Angola. Attempts to reach post-war stability were mostly approached through people's own recovery efforts and national reconstruction programmes promoted by the Angolan state, as well as through the Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development approaches of non-governmental organizations (Rodrigues, 2014). Though United Nations (UN) agencies like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that their repatriation programme had distributed a lot of goods like food and farm tools, previous papers have not specifically included a perspective on how local people in eastern Angola accepted humanitarian aid nor how it was incorporated into their daily livelihood strategies in this post-conflict situation.

In the absence of this perspective, I aim to clarify the livelihood strategies of small-scale farmers called Mbunda following the prolonged war in Angola, focusing on how they have utilised a humanitarian aid crop. In particular, an examination of the reasons why local farmers in eastern Angola used humanitarian aid crops after they resettled is included in this paper. Through the above, this paper aims to find how small-scale farmers were able to localise humanitarian assistance in their daily lives after a prolonged war in southern Africa.

HISTORY OF THE MBUNDA PEOPLE AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

I. The Mbunda People of the Angolan Borderland

The Mbunda people discussed here are Bantu-speaking people who mainly live in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eastern Angola and Western Zambia (von Oppen, 1996). Previous studies have noted that these people came from the Luba and Lunda kingdoms that prospered in 19th-century Angola (Cheke, 1994). When they came to Angola, they lived along small rivers and engaged in agriculture in shifting cultivation fields and wetlands located near rivers. They conducted shifting cultivation farming that was based on pearl millet agriculture, hunting, gathering and fishing. After the Portuguese came to Angola, they started to cultivate cassava and maize. They ate millet and cassava as a thick porridge that remains a staple food in the region and boiled maize harvested early while it is still green.

The Mbunda are organised into social groups called *limbo* (referred to as *membo* in the plural), which consist of three to four generations of matrilineal kin who reside together. A *limbo* is traditionally a political and reciprocal unit with a headman. According to the Mbunda in Angola, the headman of a *limbo* is responsible for deciding where the people belonging to that *limbo* will cultivate the land.

In 1911, the Portuguese colonial government set up their administrative office in Moxico Bairo in Moxico Province. In 1919, an additional office was built in Lumbala N'guimbo in the same province. The colonial government forced residents of these areas to pay taxes and work for them. The Mbunda people started to flee to Zambia because they did not want to be forced to work under such conditions.

In 1961, the independence war started and the Mbunda joined the conflict as freedom fighters. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was based in Moxico Province and the border area of Zambia (Fig. 1). During this time, more Mbunda people went to Zambia and stayed in local villages and refugee settlements, like Mayukwayukwa and Meheba. They received humanitarian aid in the form of maize, rice, beans, vegetables and so on. In the refugee settlements, the Mbunda and other refugees were able to cultivate fields by themselves.

When Angola became independent from their colonizers in 1975, a civil war soon followed. More people, including Mbunda, started to escape from eastern Angola where the MPLA was fighting with the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola's (UNITA) guerrilla forces. Only a few Mbunda remained in these rural parts of eastern Angola until the end of the war.

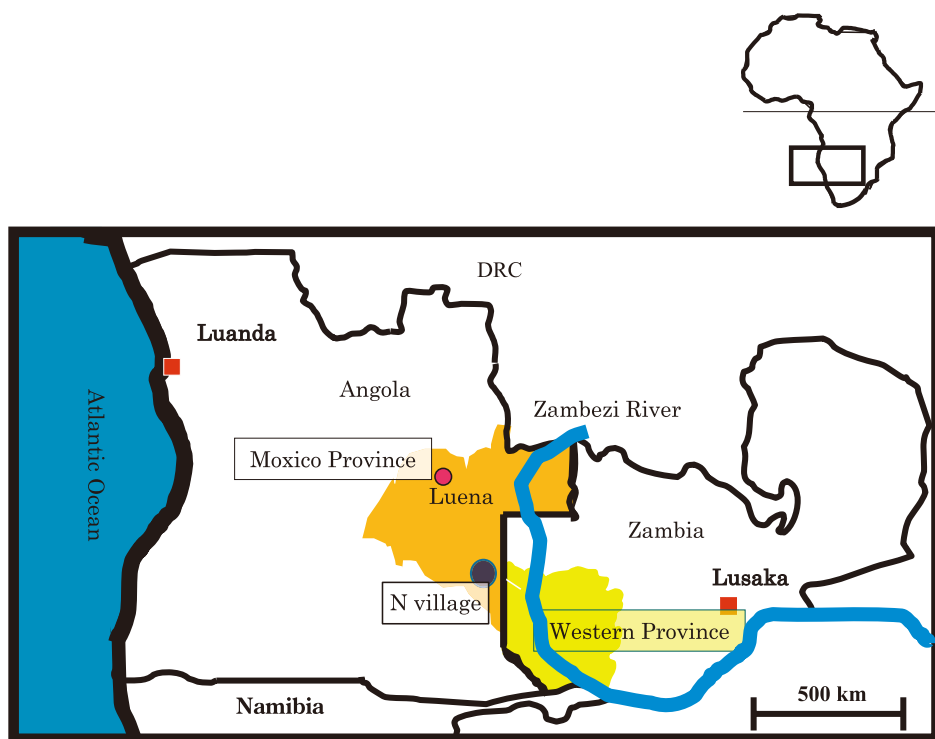


Fig. 1. Research area

II. Humanitarian Assistance

The UN imposed economic sanctions on Angola until the cease-fire of 2002. The import regulations on commodities such as diamond resources also became an issue in the civil war in terms of funding sources for the country's economy, and the UN was therefore involved in an attempt to arbitrate a cease-fire between all parties involved in the conflict. Simultaneously, 10 UN agencies, 80 international NGOs, 300 local NGOs and many other government agencies were engaged in humanitarian assistance efforts. However, this humanitarian aid was concentrated not on eastern Angola but rather on the western part of the country. After 2003, the UNHCR and IOM recommended that communities prepare to receive returning refugees from Zambia, and this involved a full-scale repatriation effort to address this movement of people back into Angola.

An organised repatriation programme for people returning from Zambia was conducted from 2003 to 2007 though voluntary repatriation was also occurred. This programme was carried out by the governments of Zambia, Angola, the IOM and the UNHCR. People were first accepted in Angola in each of the major cities, including the capital Luanda, and then in prominent cities like Luena, Luau and Lumbala N'guimbo in Moxico Province. Returnees began to move from these cities and towns to other areas across the country. In addition, the IOM implemented a programme to reintegrate the returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

According to the interviews I conducted at the Ministry of Social Assistance and Reinsertion in Moxico Province, a reception centre was established in 1998 by the IOM and UNHCR for the repatriation programme. It provided a place for returning refugees to stay once they had reached Angola. Provision of meals, household goods and the like was also covered by this programme. In addition, in order to support the resettlement, agricultural tools, seeds, tents and tin roofs were distributed, and cash to pay for items was handed out. At this repatriation centre, returnees contacted people living in the areas they intended to travel to, as well as Angolan domestic relatives and acquaintances, before repatriation began.

The reception centre was built as part of the first stage of the repatriation programme, and it was installed during the development of Lumbala N'guimbo, which was near to my research site. People returned to the area by means of air, water and land travel from Zambia's Western Province to Lumbala N'guimbo. These returnees then first gathered at the reception centre before gradually moving to a village that was rebuilt into Lumbala N'guimbo, which was then almost entirely uninhabited.

RESEARCH AREA

I. N Village

An intensive survey was conducted in N village, which is located 380 km south of Luena, today's provincial capital of Moxico Province, and 30 km south

of Lumbala N'guimbo along the main road that runs from the provincial capital. The survey was conducted over three months during the 2013 to 2015 period, with interviews held with people in the village.

N village was founded before the colonial era by the second chief of the Mbunda Traditional Authority. Before the civil war, N village was located some distance away from the main road. After the war, the Angolan government implemented a national development plan that was concentrated along the main road. This road was determined to be an optimal site for development by NGOs and the National Demining Institute under the government, and was reconstructed after the civil war. Along the road, primary schools, water supply facilities and clinics have been constructed under the national development plan. In 2014, a primary school, clinic and water supply facilities were installed in N village.

The village chief, named Nyundu, served as a doctor in the MPLA army and had to eventually evacuate to Zambia due to the intensification of the civil war. He was instrumental in the reconstruction of the village, allowing people to return immediately after the conflict had been resolved. Because of his intervention, the area that Chief Nyundu governs is currently one of the most populated in the region. In 2014, the population of N village was 1,471 persons, residing across six divisions. Of those villagers, most are Mbunda, and there are also a few Luchazhi, Luvalé and Chokwe, who are also Bantu-speaking peoples.

In 1919, when the colonial government was established, people's lives were significantly altered. Their agricultural products, like cassava, and hunted and gathered items like beeswax, honey, animal skins and meat, had to be paid as tax to the colonial government. Following the imposition of this system, some people fled from their villages and hid in the bush. In 1964, after the independence war had started, Chief Nyundu of N village also went to the bush and made his way to the army camp of the MPLA in Zambia. Unlike their chief, the other villagers stayed in the bush and subsequently returned to the village.

In 1975, when the civil war started, various armed groups involved in the conflict attacked and bombed villages like N village. The UNITA guerrilla forces came to N village many times to pillage whatever was available. The villagers were not able to cook, as provisions were very low. They were forced to stay in the bush gathering and eating fresh wild fruits, like *makolo* (*Strychnos* species). After the MPLA won and the war ended in 2002, Chief Nyundu and the people of N village returned to restart their lives.

In 2002, there were eight people who belonged to the original N village staying in the nearby bush area during the conflict. An announcement was made following Nyundu's voluntary return. This message was broadcast into Zambia, and thus many people repatriated back to Angola through both voluntary and organised repatriation. Ex-soldiers and IDPs in Angola also came back to Chief Nyundu. On their way to N village, they received humanitarian aid and came to N village to settle.

II. Livelihood Strategies in N Village

Today, the subsistence of N village is managed through plant gathering, poul-

try husbandry, forestry conducted in the primary forests and, above all, by agriculture. Much like other villages in Moxico Province, the people of N village perform shifting cultivation in the upland fields and small-scale cultivation in kitchen gardens located at their residences (Fig. 2). In N village as it existed before the conflict, the main sustenance came from pearl millet and cassava cultivation conducted in the upland and slope areas. The community also ate a thick porridge called *chibundu*, made with pearl millet and cassava.

In this area, maize differed from cassava in its use. They ate boiled maize that they harvested early. Cassava is a historical ingredient used to cook a thick porridge, and this tradition continued in the post-war decades. However, the west coast of the region, which stretches from the central highlands of Angola, and western Zambia are places where a thick porridge made with maize is eaten. It was a familiar crop for the people that had been evacuated during the war and the porridge was served in the regions. Thus, the livelihood strategies practiced in N village were changed as a result of the conflicts in the region. It is important to discuss each strategy in turn in order to understand how they have shifted in this process.

Cassava and maize produced through shifting cultivation are very important to the villagers, not only as staple food items, but also as cash crops. This is because they are available year-round and can be harvested in adequate amounts even in infertile woodland areas. The hunting of animals using guns is carried out widely, and the animals are sold. People earn money through farm work; construction of roads and schools; and by selling gasoline, meat, dried fish, maize, cassava and cow peas.

Every household sells cassava and maize. They soak cassava for three days in a stream and dry it, then sell the dried item at local markets in Lumbala N'guimbo or Luena. They can harvest cassava all year and this makes the crop a stable source of cash income. Pearl millet cultivation was conducted before the conflict but is rarely seen today. This is because maize has taken over as one of the main crops.

The farming system of N village involves managing their fields both as individuals and as households. Male labour is required to cut down trees for cultivation. Female landowners may ask men to cut trees for free if they belong to the same *limbo* or in exchange for cash if they are members of a different *limbo*.

The people of N village planted maize and cow peas only in the first year (as

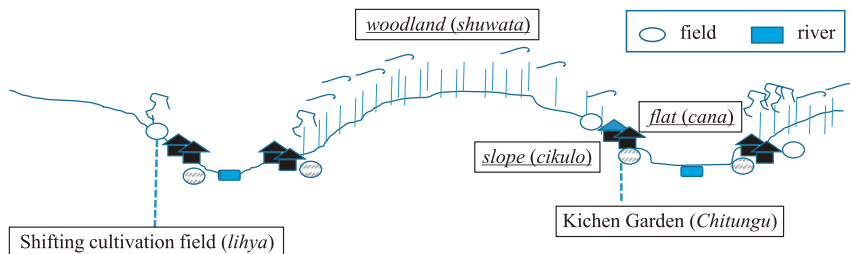


Fig. 2. Land use in N village (conceptual diagram)

shown in Fig. 3). They were able to achieve self-sufficiency mainly by producing cassava, though they grow maize adjunctively. Cassava is planted at the end of the dry season after a slash-and-burn. In particular, sweet cassava tubers can be harvested around the end of the year (Fig. 4). The next year, they started to harvest some developed tubers of bitter cassava 15 months after planting. Then the tubers, which remain underground, continue to grow. The harvest is contin-

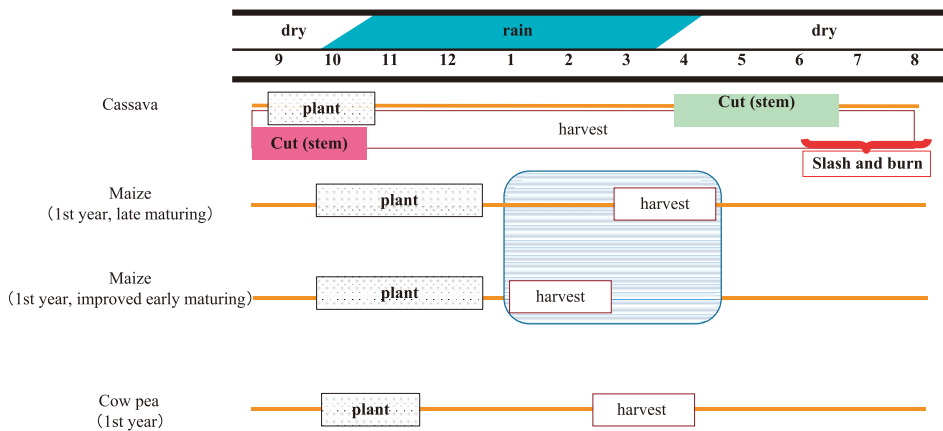
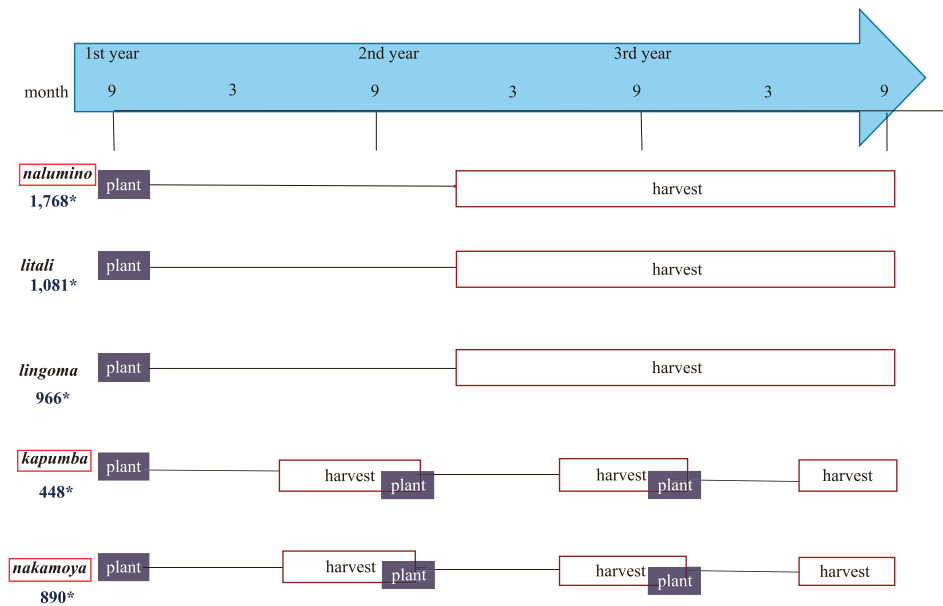


Fig. 3. Cropping system in shifting cultivation



□ A variety from Zambia
*number means total number of each cassava variety

Fig. 4. Cassava calendar

Table 1. Cassava varieties in N village

	Plant* (month)	Growing period* (month)	Months to harvest* (month)	Number of cassava plants**
Bitter type				
<i>nalumino</i>	9~10	15	48~72	1,768
<i>litali</i>	9~10	15	60	1,081
<i>lingoma</i>	9~10	15	36	966
Sweet type				
<i>kapumba</i>	9	6	24	448
<i>nakamoya</i>	9	12	24	890

 A variety from Zambia.

* Interviewed 30 persons.

** Average of total cassava plants in the fields of four persons of 30 persons.

ued for 36 months after planting. Then, they replant the stems of the harvested cassava plants in the same field and continue to cultivate the plants for 12 to 16 years in total. When production of cassava decreases in older fields that have become infertile, the villagers abandon them. They subsequently establish new fields and expand their cultivation area into the fertile primary forest. Since each villager normally cultivates more than three plots, a vast cultivated area per person is required.

Fig. 4 shows the agricultural history of each variety of cassava, which is also shown in Table 1. Cassava can be harvested throughout the year, though the period for harvesting the tubers is limited, and so the times when each variety can be harvested need to be allocated accordingly. As the tubers from one crop of fibrosis progress, there is no forced bias in terms of harvesting in a particular year after planting. As can be seen from this table, because there is no harvest of sweet species from September onwards, the people have remained self-sufficient in drawing on their staple food sources while compensating any maize deficits. Shifting cultivation occurs through a combination of long and short harvesting periods of different sweet and bitter cassava varieties during the cultivation period, and this farming technique is utilised over six consecutive years.

EARLY MATURING MAIZE FOR FOOD

The people in N village combine some varieties of cassava and maize from Zambia, Angola and humanitarian aid sources. Today, cassava is cultivated with a mix of things that can be obtained in Angola following repatriation, including cultivated varieties of the plant found in Zambia. As shown in Table 1, four of the villagers actually counted the number of cassava that they cultivate, and the total sum is shown in the table. From the table, it can be seen that the bitter

species *nalumino* (which was brought back to Angola from Zambia) is the most commonly cultivated variety. The table shows that the sweet species (a variety that was also brought back from Zambia) is cultivated less frequently. Having said this, the conditions for the plant to flourish favourably are more prevalent in Angola than in Zambia, as the sweet species prefers moist ground conditions. Therefore, people are able to farm both the bitter and sweet species on their land in this region. Though both the bitter and sweet species are grown, the bitter species is widely cultivated.

The reason the bitter species is widely cultivated is related to people's taste. Through interviews with 45 people, including 32 returnees from Zambia and 13 IDPs and former combatants, it was found that 28 returnees and five IDPs and former combatants preferred *nalumino*. Four returnees and four IDPs and former combatants were fine with any species. The remaining four IDPs and former combatants gave no answer.

Also, as shown in Fig. 3, two types of maize are grown in N village: namely, an improved early maturing species and a late maturing variety. The late maturing species was brought back to Angola from Zambia, while the early maturing species was distributed in its seed form at the reception centre upon the people's return to the region. Most of the people who came to N village after the war received the early maturing variety of maize as part of the emergency humanitarian aid that was distributed in Lumbala N'guimbo. The people who received the seeds continued to grow them for nearly 10 years after that in N village.

The reason why the improved early maturing species is still cultivated is related to people's daily food consumption. Before the conflict in Angola, maize differed from cassava in its use. As mentioned above, cassava is a historical ingredient used to cook a thick porridge, and this tradition continued in the post-war decades. Maize was a familiar crop for the people who had been evacuated during the war, and maize porridge was served from the central highlands of Angola to western Zambia.

In addition, for the majority of N villagers who fled to Zambia, maize was a representative seed that had been delivered during their refugee period. In particular, the local Zambian white maize from outside of the country has a long cultivation period. Furthermore, maize was used in lieu of cash in exchange for labour in the Zambian villages. Therefore, the presence of maize is an important indication of the changes in the day-to-day management of the livelihoods of the returning people. The crop flowed into Zambia from Angola, and this allowed people to use traditional recipes in preparing their porridge, regardless of whether they were in Zambia or Angola. It is for these reasons that maize is seen as an important crop.

As well as cassava, for both the late maturing variety and improved early maturing variety of maize, interviews about preference were carried out with 45 people, including 32 returnees from Zambia. In addition, six IDPs and former soldiers answered that they prefer the late maturing variety and another seven IDPs chose the early maturing variety. According to the returnees who participated in the interviews, the late-maturing variety found in Zambia does not have any aftertaste. Some of the taste is a protein left in the mouth, which is seen as

a kind of side dish that marries well with the flavour. The improved early maturing species has a slight viscosity and unique flavour, which does not interact well with vegetables and meat. Thus, most of the returnees from Zambia prefer the late-maturing variety from Zambia. The reasons why the people, including returnees to N village, cultivate the improved early maturing variety of maize are food security and cash income.

As mentioned before, the early maturing maize that was distributed as part of the emergency humanitarian assistance efforts grows in three months. This is considered to be a short growing season. Therefore, people can harvest this variety three months earlier than the late-maturing one (Fig. 3). Especially in January to March, maize is harvested early to make a thick porridge—a mixture of maize and cassava that the villagers prefer—and it is also therefore valuable. In addition, from January to March, the local production of maize that is to be sold is relatively small; after that it becomes possible to sell a lot. N village is located several kilometres from the local market of Lumbala N'guimbo, and in the rural areas there is no main source of cash income aside from agricultural products. In order to purchase items such as food and household goods, retail crops are produced by all households in the village as part of their primary cash-earning activities.

Post-conflict reconstruction and the development of economic distribution between Angola and the surrounding area are in progress, and this is a vital component of the livelihoods in the village. The area is becoming a new regional economic bloc as restructuring is incorporated into the resettlement efforts. In particular, after the reconstructed base of the Benguela railway was opened in 2013, villagers began to dry cassava in order to sell in the provincial capital of Luena and many of the western coastal areas of the country. Products that were imported from Portugal and other countries into Lumbala N'guimbo and the surrounding areas were also sold in N village. According to my interviews as well as previous studies (von Oppen, 1996), this logistical arrangement has allowed the places that were destroyed in the colonial period to be rebuilt. In addition, at the same time as the return of people from Zambia, Namibia and so on, a number of items from southeast African countries such as South Africa were flown in for sale. Opportunities for non-agriculture-based income and agricultural income in N village are certainly linked with the great movement of these local economies, along with the rapid growth of the national economy, which is based on underground resources.

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY AFTER THE CONFLICT

The improved early maturing maize plays an active role in the post-conflict society in the region. The reason that the people cultivate this maize is related to social vulnerability after the conflict. Today, the socio-economic relationships between the people of N village are minimal. The villagers frequently consider resettling in other locations in the village. Some N villagers who did not live in this region before the conflict do not have relatives in the village or its immedi-

ate vicinity. Therefore, people feel they live with people they do not know. Traditionally they live with their kin and reciprocally help each other in a *limbo* (von Oppen, 1996). In a *limbo*, the labour force of the neighbouring relatives is offered outside the household as well. However, after the conflict people came from all over and the area of N village expanded. This situation has made it difficult for people to build mutual relationships.

In order to create stability and self-sufficiency with the cassava and maize in N village, road construction, farming, land clearing and harvesting activities need to be supported by a labour force so that agricultural products can be used and sold. In general, the fields that have been reclaimed by the villagers are far away and it takes more than an hour to walk there from their residences. It is difficult for them, as they have to attend to their fields once in three days in order to harvest cassava. Further, as described above, they harvest cassava and soak it in water, after which it must be dried in the sun. In assessing the composition of the households in N village, it is not necessarily the case that there are sufficient numbers of labourers available to conduct harvesting activities throughout the year. In households where there are no adult men, the labour force is particularly insufficient, especially in terms of having the people necessary to conduct activities related to the start of the farming process and the utilisation of the shifting cultivation practice, such as cutting trees and beginning the cassava harvest.

In addition, 40 years of protracted conflict have left little in the way of rural livelihoods, and this persists even now, 15 years after the war ended. It is difficult for people who are handicapped to work in a mine or government office. Also, for the households of elders who have no relatives in the village, it is difficult to manage the fields, cut trees and cultivate. They also lack a labour force. It is necessary for the people to focus on cultivating maize because they can harvest a lot of it with fewer people.

However, if livelihoods were only dependent on maize, it would be very difficult for people in N village to continue their subsistence agriculture practices. Moxico Province is located in the Kalahari sand zone, which extends to southern Africa, and the villages and fields are formed on a Kalahari sand layer with a depth of at least 100 m. The Kalahari sand layer constitutes very poor soil quality, and near N village there is particularly sandy soil that is not suitable for maize cultivation. Because of this, some of the people trying to rebuild their lives only stay in N village temporarily, before finding their relatives and moving on.

Among the households of N village, most of the returnees were born in N village and later went to Zambia. Native N villagers who returned from Zambia had exchanges with people who were in the same refugee camp. They said, 'Zambia would cut you off once you had returned. Sometimes, at the moment you returned, it was difficult to know if you could rely on relatives in Angola. So, first people moved anywhere that everyone could stay'. This is why they asked Chief Nyundu to stay.

For example, in N village there was a returner whose village in Angola was destroyed during the civil war. It is still difficult to locate all of the relatives who lived together in the past. But in 2014, he finally found one and asked to be able to emigrate to be near them.

For those who were thinking of moving from N village to another location, the fact that maize was distributed as emergency humanitarian aid was very important to achieving immediate self-sufficiency after they moved. The social networks of the villagers were vulnerable following the conflict, and so people moved frequently for various reasons, as they recognised that they could rely upon the early maturing maize.

According to the interviews, maize seeds, which were distributed via emergency humanitarian aid efforts, allowed people to move where they preferred. If an early maturing maize crop was available, it can be seen as an improvement that was distributed via emergency humanitarian aid. For those who have immigrated to a new area and attempted to begin cultivating land, early maturing maize allows them to produce food around their house without immediately having to construct shifting cultivation fields on arable land. In this way, though the maize is not as central a food source as cassava is, it has been incorporated into the livelihood strategies of community members as a crop for staple food and income.

CONCLUSION

For people who have just returned to eastern Angola from Zambia, it is difficult to reintegrate back into society, as some cannot speak Portuguese (the official language of the country) and others are handicapped. There are also limited employment opportunities under the post-war reconstruction programme. There is few place for ex-soldiers, returnees and IDPs to go in Angolan society, except for rural areas and villages. In fact, villages in Moxico have become an important destination for returning people. However, even though there is access to housing and arable land in rural areas, life is not stable for all. Despite the evaluation by foreign agencies that post-war reconstruction is steadily progressing at the macro level, a more multi-faceted perspective is required to assess the micro- and rural-level states of development. This paper has taken the latter perspective.

In the post-conflict situation in eastern Angola, it seems the livelihoods of N villagers have not changed a lot since the conflict began. However, they started to cultivate maize both from humanitarian aid sources and Zambia for their main food source and as a cash crop.

Taste was an important factor in what people chose to cultivate following their resettlement, as the taste of thick porridge affected what became a staple food. There is the recognition that what is important is not protein taste. For people whose lives feature repeated escapes and returns, the fixed palatability of a good, bland staple food is important.

However, research in eastern Angola has showed that the narrative of returnees is inconsistent with the notion that maize from emergency humanitarian assistance efforts has been incorporated. After people repatriated, they received emergency humanitarian aid in the form of maize seeds and cassava stems. Cassava, which was distributed at the first distribution site, does not meet the palate requirements of the villagers, and the amount distributed was insufficient, so the crop is no longer cultivated. A reason for maize remaining a source of emergency

humanitarian aid today is that in areas in eastern rural Angola, such as N village, people live in poor environments and face social vulnerability. The early maturing variety of maize that was distributed through emergency humanitarian efforts has therefore become central to the livelihoods of people in these areas, while they are able to ensure that cassava can be harvested year-round in a poor environment. This has increased the total maize yield, and has contributed to the exposure of this community to food and cash income.

Under these circumstances, people move fluidly in rural areas because of the heterogeneity and decrease in traditional reciprocal practices like labour and food exchange. Within this context, the labour issue affects whether a community is able to make a living by growing cassava and maize using shifting cultivation practices. If rural people in Angola want to make a living from maize and millet, they have to practice cultivation in the fields around their residences and store their produce in a residential area after the harvest. In these circumstances, the labour shortage is less serious compared to the issues facing cassava producers.

In a study on displaced people from Mozambique in Malawi (Englund, 2002), it was found that people establish quasi-kin relationships when living in exile. After the conflict, the returners started to stay with ex-soldiers and IDPs receiving humanitarian aid in Mozambique. Because there were some bitter political enemies during the war, it was very important for people to find political partners to cooperate in daily life, including agriculture. This was more important than environment, taste, harvesting season and the lack of labour. Thus, the process of livelihood reconstruction for small-scale farmers was very much politically constrained by the situation in Mozambique, more so than in Angola. However, in Angola, after the war, political enmity was not deeply rooted because the opposition party, UNITA, had been weakened enough to be powerless by the end of the war. In this sense, humanitarian aid crops like early maturing maize were effectively accepted by small-scale farmers in eastern Angola.

Unlike people in exile from Mozambique in Malawi, even in refugee settlements and villages in rural areas in Zambia there was a flexible labour force that could provide the mutual aid needed to produce cassava (Hansen, 1979; Nsolo, 1996; Murao, 2012). However, after they returned to the Angolan villages, mutual aid relationships were difficult to establish as life had become fluid. Social networks in post-conflict areas have created vulnerable contexts for people, particularly those who rely solely on cassava for food. The accelerated flow of people also contributed to the risk of a serious labour shortage. Thus, small-scale farmers localised the humanitarian aid crop so as to have flexibility in their daily lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS This study was financially supported by JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (No. 25257005 headed by Professor Shinya Konaka).

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————— Accepted January 28, 2017

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