

Converting Life-world in Pursuit of Sauce, Space, and Source: People's Trajectories and Spaces in Uganda

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Abstract

In this study, I want to make clear how the people are converting their Life-worlds in Runga, a village on the shores of Lake Albert, in the hope that this may contribute to the sociological study of communities in transition. To describe the life-world, I have chosen the three basic aspects of life, which I have dubbed “sauce, space, and source”, meaning daily food, a place to stay, and burial place.

I am going to divide this paper into three parts after the introducing the research site. Firstly, I am going to focus on three scenes of the everyday lifeⁱ, and explain the context of what is happening in their life-world to point out some features of the life-world in Runga. Secondly, I will show the migration patterns closely related to the three aspects I mentioned. Lastly I will summarize the main findings of my study, to try to give some suggestions about the recognition of a community in transition.

Key words

migration, community in transition, life-world, diversity, meso-level strategies

1. Introduction

Over the last decade, sociological studies in Africa are undergoing metamorphosis, from solid culture to fluid community to spaceⁱⁱ. Neoliberalism has provoked a great deal of controversy. According to these discussions, people who are peripheral in space, power and social economic status become even more peripheral under a neoliberal political regime, and are compelled to abandon their social-cultural identity through internalizing the neoliberal political rationality.

On the other hand, numerous attempts have been made by strategic sociologists to focus on those people's everyday practices or tactics, in the hope of motivating them to improve their own lives. For this, the people should use their existing local, global and national networks to connect with others through cooperation and solidarity. I posited this article on the lines of these trial studies.

The purpose of this paper is to probe into this controversy a little further through the examination of transitional communities in Uganda. Hopefully, this article will assume

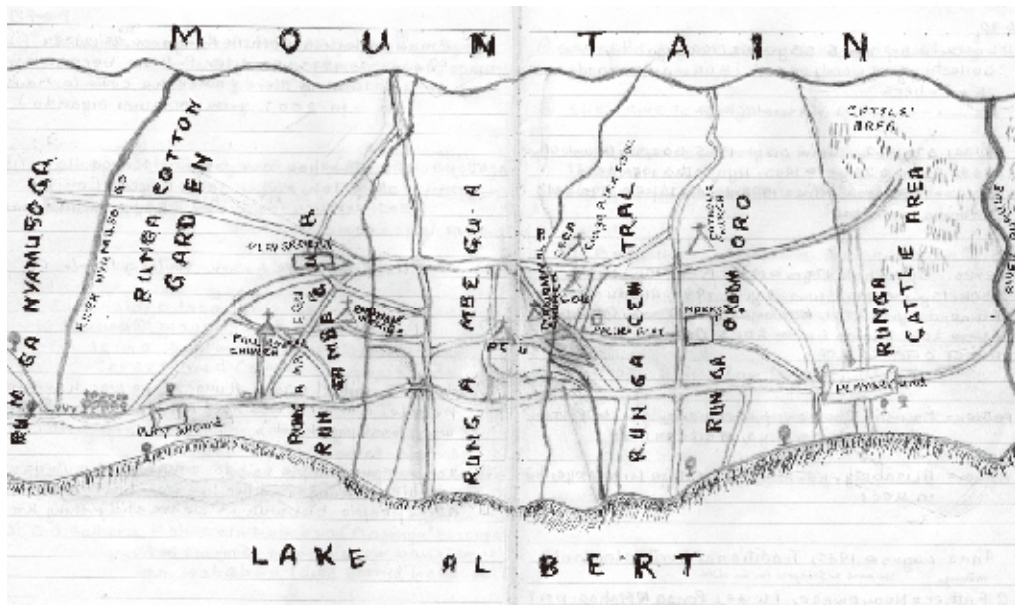
another degree of the importance of redefining community.

2. Research Site

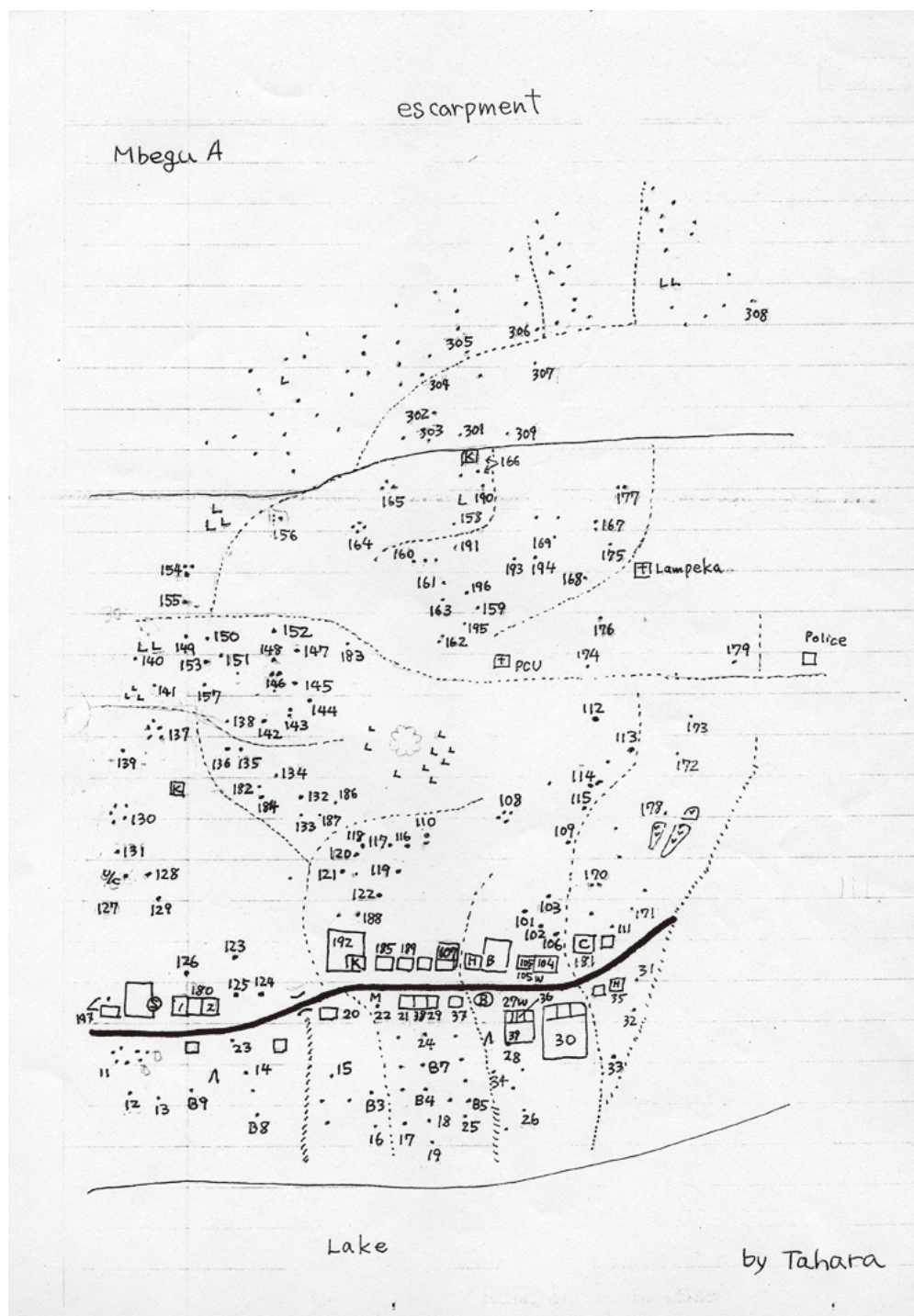
Fish and water, the natural resources of Lake Albertⁱⁱⁱ in Uganda, attract people from a wide range of areas—Bullisa, West Nile, and the DRC, among others. I will focus on one multi-ethnic village, Runga, a fishing community located on the east side of the lake. From February 2001 to January 2010, I intermittently conducted research at Runga belongs to Hoima District, the centre of the Nyoro Kingdom; hence, the locals predominantly constitute the Bagungu of Bunyoro descent. Presently, however, 80% of the people are Alur who had migrated here in late 1990s. Besides, the national fishery policy has changed the method and target of fishing; since 2002, several contractors, mostly Baganda people from Kampala are staying at this village to purchase small fish.

This village, Runga is located on the shores of Lake Albert in the northwest side of the bottom of the African Great Rift Valley, which is isolated from the other villages in the Hoima District by a deep escarpment. Table 1 tells us how people are increasing in 2000s and Table 2 shows the existing facilities in Runga. Runga is divided into some parts as Map 1 and 2 show. I visited all the compounds in Mbegu A of Runga, 131, and interviewed 255 people through a translator. Table 3 shows the composition of ethnic group among 255 people and the majority being born in the 1980s and 1970s in Table 4.

Map 1 Runga drawn by Jenaro Oungi, 4th May 2009



Map 2 Compounds in Mbegu A in Runga drawn by Tahara Noriko, 2009



※The number corresponds to compound I visited in order.

Table 1 Population of Runga

	2001	2003	2008
households	---	607	781
male population	over 500	1590	1037
female population	over 400	1741	923
children population	600 (under 18years)	370 (under 5 years)	1469 (under 18 years)
total	1600–1700	3701	3429

Source:information from LC1 office

Table 2 Existing facilities in Runga

shops	hotels	bars	churches	video parlors	clinics	phone booths	dipo
31	7	6	9	2	4	4	1

Source:information from LC1 office

Table 3 People in Mbegu A

	f	m	total
Alur	123	102	225
Mugungu	4	14	18
Munyoro	0	3	3
Muganda	0	1	1
Mugisu	1	0	1
Muhem	0	1	1
Musoga	0	1	1
Ukebu	0	1	1
English	0	1	1
unknown	2	1	3
total	130	125	255

Source:interview by Tahara Noriko, 2009

Table 4 Born year of people in Mbegu A

	f	m	total
1930's	0	2	2
1940's	0	4	4
1950's	9	8	17
1960's	18	33	51
1970's	35	33	68
1980's	43	32	75
1990's	15	5	20
unknown	10	8	18
total	130	125	255

Source:interview by Tahara Noriko, 2009

3. The features of Life-world

3-1. Three scenes of everyday life

The first scene I want to show is a BMU meeting, held in 21 Aug 2009. BMU stands for Beach Management Unit, which was introduced to Lake Albert in 2006 by the Department of Fisheries Resources, to improve the management of fisheries resources by the stakeholders themselves. In this village, the first election was held on July 31, 2007, under the guidance of Local Council 3^{iv}. At it, the chairperson was elected, and the other 14 members were then decided by the chairperson, Local Council 3, and the other villagers. Although about 80% of people in this village are Alur, only 2 members among the 15 selected are Alur. The others are all Bagungu.

On the meeting, chairperson of BMU introduced himself in Lugungu, and the Defense Secretary of BMU, who is Alur, then translates the sentence into Alur^v. "*Eni Defense* (secretary) *makakeni, ecungo ma calo chairman ma tin eni*," meaning "This is the Defense Secretary of this village, he represents the chairman here." And another man, who has come from Kampala to trade small fish, and is Mugungu by ethnic group, so that he is now translating the same sentence from Lugungu into Luganda.

The second scene is one of light fishing. I met three fishermen from another village are at work collecting lampara nets from the water at midnight of 25 June 2009. I am there and recording video from the boat, together with my research assistant and some members of BMU in Runga. The first sentence is addressed to us by a fisherman, "*Uwor dhano mi ngom zo*," meaning "You give respect to everybody equally." The second sentence is from the conversation among the fishermen "*Gin e re uketho kani?*" One man asks the others where they have put one of the items they use in their work.

The third sentence is "*Eyero nia podi jamundu bino neno...*" meaning "White person is still coming to see us". They are talking to me. The last sentence is from my research assistant. "*Eni nyithi ngom ubed uwore*," meaning "I am a man of the soil, give me respect." The literal meaning of "*Eni nyithi ngom*" is man of the soil, or man from here, actually meaning the Bagungu people.

In the third scene a fisherman and buyers are talking about us at 22 Aug 2009 when my research colleagues visited my research site to share the idea of fishing community^{vi}. "*Ee, ee, bag mimulo de unen o*," meaning "Ee, ee, even the bag you are touching can be seen." And reply is "*Jufua moko uwaco nia gikwale gidok kude i Congo*," meaning "Some of our people say they will steal it and take it back to Congo."

3-2. Five features of Life-world in Runga

I would like to move on to the some features of the Life-world. From those scenes, I will draw some features of the Life-world in Runga. At first it is undeniable there is

inequality of interface between the Bagungu and the Alur, which is clearly indicated by the composition of BMU. In other words, local power is held only by the Bagungu, who do not want the Alur involved in the political system.

But we also observe another kind of interface in the scene where people are translating from Lugungu to Alur, and from Lugungu to Luganda. This kind of scene is common in Runga on the occasion of meetings. Translation is always demanded by people attending. Here we can see the germination of interface between different ethnic groups, as they try to understand each other. I would like to say that this kind of cooperation, which appears through necessity, is a feature of this life-world. This is the occasional cooperative construction of spaces where people are getting together.

I also want to point out another aspect of the common way of living here from the situation of the people of BMU. Last year the village lost three members of BMU, for one woman died in an accident to the transport boat on the way to Panyimur fish market, another man also died on his way to a fish market in the southwest of Uganda, and the third was a fisherman who left for another fish landing site in search of a better life. These cases indicate that even the members of BMU, who may be better-known and considered more stable than other members of the community, cannot be depended on to remain in it. Thus I can point out the third feature of the way of living, which is the way in which people move away or stay put within their life-worlds.

The fourth point is related to the expression, "*Eni nyithi ngom*", Man of the soil. As my research assistant told other fishermen, "Alur should respect Bagungu". Actually both the Alur and the Bagungu think that this is the land of the Bagungu, even although the majority of the population is Alur, and although in fact some Bagungu are now renting land from the Alur, whose first generation migrated to this area from West Nile Province in the 1950s to 1960s. The area around Kapaapi originally belonged to the Bagungu, but now tenure of some land has been transferred to the Alur.

One reason why they do not think of this area as belonging to the Alur is related to fishery rituals. Along the lakeshore, there are some *mulamansi*, "spear master" in Lugungu, who can perform rituals to ensure a big catch and safe fishery by sacrificing animals on behalf of the people. The *mulamansi* for Runga covers an area from Kibiro village to Nyamasoga centre, taming the spirits Karundu and Werindi. Similar work is done by the *jalam* in West Nile for the Alur. But the Alur people say, "If the *jalam* came to perform the rituals, his power would not work here, because this is not our land". I think this sentence is quite accurate in expressing the consciousness of the Alur. Most Alur think this is a place for working, but to which they do not belong, so that the bodies of the dead are often carried back to their place of origin for burial. Their recognition of "belongingness" in another word I use source, is related to the fifth point I am going to make.

This fifth point appears in the sentence, "they will steal it and take it back to Congo". Robbery occurred almost every day during my stay in Runga, and this kind of explanation is commonly offered. It seems that the people wish to stay on the safe side of the lake in Uganda, avoiding the dangers in the DRC. This point correlates with my fourth point. Although most Alur here originated from the DRC, their discourse shows an ambivalent attitude to the DRC "home".

There are some people who brought their family shrine from their original home, and who told me "This is our home". I have observed the diversity of concept in their discourse about home. Table 5 shows that, from generation to generation, the actual burial place is now gradually increasingly in the Runga area, rather than in the DRC. In the next section I am going to show the migration pattern, which is related to the ambiguous sense of home.

Table 5 Burial place

	village name	GGF	GF	F
DRC	Abira	38	32	22
	Mukambo	20	21	10
	Anguza	14	12	10
	Angaba	10	11	6
	Jupio	8	7	4
	Jukoth	5	4	3
	Parombo	5	4	5
	Djegu	6	6	5
	Nyalebe	4	2	0
Uganda	Runga	0	2	6
	Kyamukwenda	1	3	5
	Kigoro bya Kyeramyia	0	2	5
	Mahagi Port	1	2	4
	Bullisa Biso	0	1	4
	Bullisa Ngwedo	0	0	4
	Kihungya	0	0	4
	Buganda	0	3	2
	Kayongo	0	1*	1*

※GGF:great grandfather, GF:grandfather, F:father

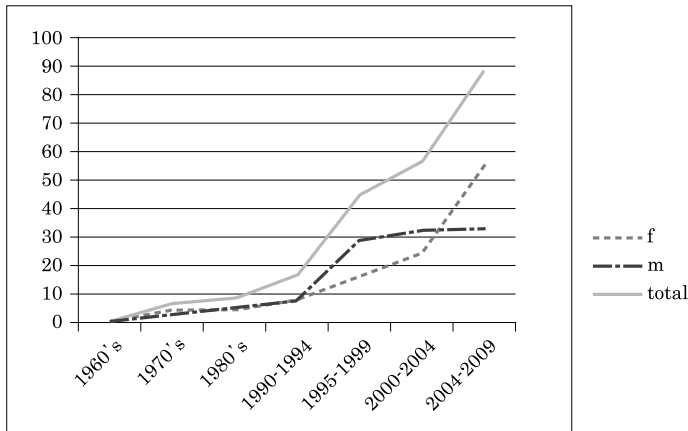
Source:interview by Tahara Noriko, 2009

4. Migration Patterns

I want to describe the migration of the Alur^{vii}. Figure 1 shows the year of arrival in Runga. Most people arrived in the late 1990s. Table 6 shows people's occupations. Most men are fishermen or other workers, and most women are engaged in job called *abicamokani*, which translates literally as 'I shall eat where', and whose meaning is 'Where I eat, there I stay'. This phrase succinctly sums up the situation, as most migration is caused by the

economic motivation of seeking daily necessity.

Fig. 1 The time period of the migratory people's first visit to Runga



Source: interview by Tahara Noriko, 2009

Table 6 People's occupation

	f	m	total
fisherwoman/man	6	45(8)	51(8)
barrier	0	45(5)	45(5)
abcamokani	77(2)	1	78(1)
fishmonger	8(1)	8(3)	16(4)
employee by BMU	0	1	1
carpenter	0	3	3
farmer	8	10(1)	18(1)
collectiong firewood	9	1	10
kiosk	1(1)	11(9)	12(10)
seller for foodstuff	10	0	10
hotel	4(3)	1(1)	5(4)
tailor	0	3	3
clinic	1	2	3
TBA	2	0	2
nurse	1	0	1
video shop	0	1	1
bar	0	1	1
church	0	3	3
others	0	4	4

※Plain number is Alur and number in parenthesis is other ethnic group.

Source: interview by Tahara Noriko, 2009

If we trace their trajectory, we find that there are some patterns of migration as

follows. Since people's reasons for migration are diverse, I cannot categorize them, so I have grouped similar cases, and arranged these cases in order of the time they or their parents or grandparents started to move from the DRC and West Nile.

(a) The parents/grandparents of the first group migrated to Buganda Region as migrant plantation labour in the 1930s-1940s, and then came to Bullisa, Kigorobya, and Biso in the 1970s. They were evacuated in order to avoid the Museveni battle of 1985 in Biso, then in 1985-6 went down to the lake shores to fish, and finally arrived at Runga. The second or third generations of those people now live in Runga^{viii}.

(b) Next are those whose grandfather/father migrated to Butiaba in the 1950s to work for the Launch "Mary" project, and tried to settle in Kigorobya, but then went down to the lake to fish, finally arriving at Runga. Butiaba was the port town during the colonial period. After their work in Butiaba, these people did not return to their hometown, but settled on the lakeshore near Butiaba to fish^{ix}.

(c) The third group started migrating from one coastal village to another, and finally arrived at Runga in the 1960s-1970s. They were the first people to land in Kakoma of Runga, most of them having escaped from the Mulele war. From the first they were fishermen^x.

(d) The grandparents/parents of the fourth group migrated to Bullisa in the 1960s, then returned to the DRC in the 1980s, but came back to the lake area to fish during the 1990s, finally arriving at Runga.

These people also tried to escape from the Mulele War, and returned to their hometown after the war, but again were forced to return to the coast to avoid the political turmoil in their hometown^{xi}.

(e) The next group came to Kapaapi in the 1980s, moving down to the lake shores in the 1990s, and finally arriving at Runga. Most of them are from DRC and West Nile, and migrated in order to find jobs as a means for their survival. This pattern might also be reflected in the former case.

(f) The sixth group came to the fish landing sites of Lake Albert in the 1990s–2000s, and finally arrived at Runga. Most of them migrated purposely for fishing activity. Some younger people brought by fishermen as workers are called barriers. Some people also migrated to escape the civil war and rebels in the DRC and the LRA in northern Uganda, especially the Acholi^{xii}.

(g) Lastly, some came for religious reasons.

Some people were sent to Runga by their church to propagate their religion^{xiii}. In Runga, a Catholic church was started in the 1980s, the Church of Uganda was started in the 1990s, the Pentecostal Church of Uganda was started in 1992, and the Full Gospel church was started in 2002. There is also an Entire End Message.

From the migration patterns I am able to identify two social factors, other than economic activity, which affected migration from the DRC and West Nile. (1) Attraction of migrant labour to Buganda in the 1930s for the purpose of cotton & coffee plantation, and, (2) evacuation of people due to wars: the Mulele War of 1964, the Museveni Battle in Biso, the Kyamukwenda of 1984–85, and the Civil War of 1997–2002 in the DRC. All these migrations were motivated by the desire for survival, in order to pursue “sauce and space”.

5. Conclusion

In this article, I investigated the following points. The people in Runga are transforming their life-worlds under the political hegemony of the Bagungu. The path of migration for seeking “sauce and space” was chosen historically and economically by the Alur. But there are some occasions of cooperation in everyday life through the contacts of people, as at the BMU meeting as we have seen.

Runga can be considered a micro-cosmos of the intersectoral space where people retain and are converting life-world through contacts with other people. In this context, I will present the people’s micro-level strategies to construct their life-world while they have been affected by heterogeneity and diversity of language, economic activity, and social backgrounds.

Future studies can explore some of the issues identified in this study focusing on the distinctive features of the transitional community, for example, rituals propitiating the spirits of ancestors like Abila and Jok, which have been declined at the landing site over the years.

The goal of this paper was two-fold. Firstly, I should like to suggest that it could be helpful to focus on such a political space, where migrants contact with others to come to a mutual consensus, using their language habits to study a transitional community like Runga. There are some relational structures within the individual, which operate in such a space. It is useful to describe meso-level strategies together with micro-practices and macro-context.

The second point, which I have already made, is that their multi-sited lives result in an ambivalent feeling of home, and also create their consciousness of being outsiders; while at the same time there is a diversity in their discourse in everyday conversation which

shows how ethnicity and nationality are cross-community constructs. Their lives are always to be found in a daily movement that lies beyond time and space. To study both people and process in migration, I stress how the diversity among migrants originated from experiences, which reflect the influence of time and circumstances.

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This study is supported by Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (18530428) and the TOYOTA foundation (D08-R-256). I thank for their assistance.

ⁱ Actually, the space where people encounter and are affected by others in their trajectory made possible this study. I made the short video to show Runga in the purpose to understand how people interact.

ⁱⁱ This trend is influenced by Bauman's discussion [関 2007].

ⁱⁱⁱ Lake Albert is an inland body of water covering 5,300 km² that lies across the borders of Uganda and the Republic of the Congo. There are many fishing villages on the lakeshore. The altitude is 621 m, much lower than other domestic lakes, for example, Lake Victoria is 1,134 m. The ecological year is divided into the rainy and dry seasons, and April to August is the largest rainy season. Kigorobya's annual precipitation is 800-1,200 mm, less than Kampala's 1,200-1,600 mm.

In this village, most people moved to the lake from the west Nile to fish for their livelihood. Recently in Uganda, the importance of fish and fish products has increased. Since 1999, some business-people have started coming to this area to buy Nile perch to export. Because of this situation, in August 2002 the government sent the army to burn the people's fishing nets to control illegal fishing.

I conducted the fieldwork over the following months: 26 February 2001-26 March 2001, 30 July 2002-26 August 2002, 9 February 2004-27 March 2004, 27 July 2006-14 August 2006, 21 February 2007-3 March 2007, 26 August 2007-13 September 2007, 29 January 2008-15 February 2008, 31 July 2008-29 August 2008, 27 January 2009-9 February 2009, 14 April 2009-26 August 2009, 26 January 2010-14 February 2010.

^{iv} The social and economic activity of Uganda is organized by a local government council (LC) system. This village is LC1, which belongs to the Hoima district (LC5), Bugahya county (LC4), Kigorobya subcounty (LC3), and Kibiro parish (LC2).

LC1 executives consist of a LC1 chairperson, a vice chairperson, a secretary general as well as the following secretaries: finance, information, defense, environment, and production. There is also a secretary for the disabled and representatives for young adults and women.

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- v Linguistically, Alur speak Nilotic language, and Bagungu and Baganda speak Bantu. Swahili and English are sometimes used as a lingua franca for communication.
 - vi I am carrying out multi-sited fieldwork, in Mie Prefecture and in Uganda. Two years ago, it occurred to me to wonder what would happen if the people with whom I am working in these two areas met each other. That was then just an idea, but I wrote a project proposal, "Everyday-life Knowledge on Aquatic Life: A Comparative Study of Fishing Villages in Lake Albert in Uganda and Kumano in Mie Prefecture" and applied to the Toyota Foundation for a grant. The proposal was accepted in 2008.
 Last year, 2009, I stayed in Uganda for 5 months of my sabbatical leave. Professor Kirumira and 3 Japanese research colleagues visited my research site to share the ideas of the fishing community, and to prepare for the Kesennuma workshop as a part of the project through the interface of fishermen and other villagers.
 - vii Leopold found the diversity of the reason of migration of People of West Nile under Colonial Rule, 1925-61.

Individual motivations for migration were always complicated. (...) Despite the clear effect of the combination of taxation and a lack of opportunity for earning cash in forcing people into migration, it is a curiosity of this kind of research that people seldom say they were forced to migrate to earn money for taxes: they say they quarreled with their brother, or their father, or neighbours; that they wanted to see the big city, or their family did not have enough cattle to get a wife. However, the structural process by which the West Nilers were forced into migrant labour is fairly clear. To finance itself, the Protectorate government needed money; all households were therefore taxed. However, there were virtually no sources of cash income in West Nile; it was far from the southern economic hub of Uganda, and cotton and other Ugandan cash crops were believed to grow poorly there. To pay their taxes and escape arrest, therefore, West Nilers had to travel to work in the richer districts of the south, particularly the former Kingdoms of Buganda and Bunyoro. They were joined for the purpose by other Lugbara, Alur, Kakwa, and neighbouring peoples from over the border in the Congo and Sudan, who also had taxes to pay and no convenient source of employment within their own colonial border [Leopold,2005:77].

- viii These people are Gil, Namandi (Opar's wife), Ageno Milambe (25h), Namandi (142), Mola (170) other Pajulu, GF of Belungi (190), and GF of Odongo (196). The number in parenthesis is my reference number in my fieldnote. GF and F stand for each Grandfather and Father
- ix These people are GF of Udaga (183), GF of Santina (178) = Madelina (118), and F of Lucia.
- x These people are Michael Tido, and the first chairperson of Runga, Oyer.
- xi These people are Ellnest Thoma, Bana (179), Joyce (105), and Akum (B6).
- xii There people are Batista (as transporters), Nata (as fishmongers), Ongey (188), F of Kermudo (B7), and Johnga (133).
- xiii These are Wathum Robert, and Father of Uvonji(185).

ウガンダにおける移民の軌跡と場 —生活世界の創造を求めて—

田 原 範 子

日本語アブストラクト

アルバート湖の魚、水、そして天然資源は、ウガンダのみならずコンゴ民主共和国など広範囲から人びとを魅きつける。その結果、湖岸地域には多様な民族が往来する場が作られている。本稿では、ウガンダ・アルバート湖東岸に位置する漁村ルンガの生活世界を描くことを通して、移動する人びとが接触し出会う場で、いかなる共同体が構築されうるのかを考察する。そして過渡的であることを常態とする人びとの移動過程とその生活世界を、社会学的に研究するための方法論について提言を行う。

キーワード

移動 過渡期のコミュニティ 生活世界 多様性 メゾレベルの戦術