How Are Young People in Africa Thinking and Living?
: Education, Unemployment, Aesthetics, Politics, and Singleness

November 22nd (Sun) 2020
Start 4:30pm (UTC+9/JST),10:30am (UTC+3/EAT: Uganda),8:30am (UTC+1/CET: Poland, Denmark)

🌍Abstract of presentations🌍

<Session 1> Impact of Education on Youth
4:45-5:45pm (JST), 10:45-11:45am (EAT), 8:45-9:45am (CET)

Dr. Chris OPESEN (Assistant Lecturer, Makerere University, Uganda)
'Culture, Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education Aspects in East Africa: Ethnographic Evidence from the Pokot Context of Female Genital Modification Rituals'

This paper explores how female genital mutilation (FGM) as a cultural rite of passage to womanhood in Pokot is negatively impacting on inclusive and equitable quality education (SDG 4) potentials in East Africa. Evidence the paper presents is based on life story analysis, interviews, discussions and hermeneutics ethnographically conducted at the Pokot Kenya-Uganda border. Meaningfully, analysis and interpretations were inductively and thematically conducted. Overall, FGM is impacting on E. Africa's inclusive and equitable quality education (SDG4) potential by driving (a) withdrawal of children from school (b) forced and early child marriages (c) stigma and ostracism (d) and lastly, the vicious cycle of chronic poverty. To expedite the potential of inclusive and equitable quality education (SDG4) in E. Africa beyond achievement of Universal Primary Education Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2015, the solution lies in culturally competent FGM and education interventions adapted to the Pokot context.

Dr. Soichiro SHIRAISHI (Assoc. Professor, Hirosaki University, Japan)
'Extended "Age of Opportunity"? : Adolescence, Uncertainty and Globalism among Youth in East Africa'

Since the free primary education policy launched in the latter half of the 1990s, there is an obvious increase in the number of pupils joining secondary education in Eastern Africa. Many youths from rural areas have experienced rural-urban migration as a result. In this presentation, I focus on secondary graduates, their higher school navigations, and job seeking complexities. Based on literature and field research both in Eastern Uganda and Western Kenya, (i) I describe the 'matters arising' for their migration to town/city, and (ii) try to connect some cases from field research to discussions of social/cultural anthropology. To work out rural-urban migration or higher education entry, there are several socio-economic matters for them; manage tensions with parents over school fee matters, less quality education and school equipment in rural areas. After the migration; they identify safety networks with friends or siblings as the basement of city life, and seek chances to step up to the next life stage, for instance, get a full-time job or entrance into university. But, how are they different from the 'African youth on the streets' whom urban ethnography focused on in previous years, anyway? –This may be one of the main discussions of the session.

<Session 2> Youth's Dream and Challenges
5:55-6:55pm (JST), 10:55-11:55am (EAT), 9:55-10:55am (CET)

Dr. Wakana SHIINO
'House Girl's Life Plan in Nairobi: Reality and Dream'

In this presentation, I focus on the conditions of the women who become 'house girls' or housemaids. After Africa's independence in the 1960s, several distinctive patterns of rural-urban labour migration were formed. The term house girl refers here to women living with a family to do housework and take care of children on behalf of the female family members who work outside the home during the daytime. In Africa in recent years, the number of households in need of house maids has increased due to the increase in the middle class. It becomes possible that well-educated and well-employed elite women do work outside and have children because they have house girls who take care of all the housework and children. And such elite women can do self-actualization as women with their carriers and children. But, what about house girls? In East African patrilineal societies, women are married to another clan. Uneducated girls have no place to live, either because of poverty or because they have become single mothers, and there is only one way out; to become a house girl. The house girl as profession has a big merit that the place and work are a set. I can say it is the matching between women who have no place in the village and seek employment for survival, and women who are employed and unable to do household chores and care for their children and need some help. And, of course, this is clearly due to economic disparities between women. In this presentation, I will look at some examples of house girls to depict their 'dreams' and reality. Through these, I would like to examine how the image of Africa's economic growth, higher education, longing for white-collar work, and successful people living a 'better life' in recent years fluctuate among house girls and so on.

Mr. Takuya HAGIWARA (Researcher, Kyoto University, Japan)
'Use of Sport ×Social Media for Moving on to the Next Stage of Life: A Case of Young Cyclists in Kenya'

Increased participation in sports on a global level has led to the formation of a new social structure consisting of competitive athletes and people surrounding them. This presentation reports on the challenging life-worlds of the Kenyan youth who try to survive as competitive cyclists, bicycle mechanics, and bicycle tour guides. A male Kenyan in his early 40s, who had made a living as a professional cyclist in Europe, developed a competitive cycling team in a town called Kikuyu, on the outskirts of Nairobi. He recruited 'underprivileged' young people with great physical prowess to train to become professional cyclists. This project currently serves about 15 cyclists, ranging from their late teens to late-twenties, who live together in a training camp. I have conducted ethnographic fieldwork in this camp for 20 months in total since March 2013, using shared housing at their training camp, participant observation in real-time training as well as off-bike activities including household duties. The observation and interviews reveal that they participate in daily training in addition to serving as bicycle tour guides for foreign tourists and as bicycle mechanics for wealthy individuals who own bikes. Prize money, which can be obtained at each race, is also a crucial source for their living. When they could save a considerable amount of money, they open own local store or buying some motorbikes to start taxi business. It is essential to optimize the opportunities intrinsic to social media for building networks. The Kenya Cycling group on Facebook shows its rapid growth around Nairobi. In 2013, the group had less than 1,000 registered members, but now it counts over 25,000 members. This presentation also tries to address the role of social media as well as its possibility (or its limitation) in Kenyan cycling community.

\<Session 3\> Youth, Music and Politics
7:00-8:30pm (JST), 12:00-13:30pm (EAT), 11:00am-12:30pm (CET)

Dr. Piotr CICHOCKI (Assoc. Professor, University of Warsaw, Poland)
'The Sound of the Young Mzimba: (Im)material Connections of Malawian Electronic Music'

The activities of young Malawian music producers relied on material infrastructures. These infrastructures relied on the support from economic migrants and powerful religious institutions. At the same time, cultural practices over sound were based on local social relationships. Through practices like song dedications, collective performances, and quests for sponsorship, young people utilized and strengthened their everyday social networks. On the other hand, by producing music, they created new cultural amalgams of meanings and sounds, which enabled them to amplify their participation in shared religious and political spaces.

Dr. Nanna SCHNEIDERMANN (Assist. Professor, Aarhus University, Denmark)
'Ugandan Music Stars Between Political Agency, Patronage and Market Relations: Cultural Brokerage and Digital "Bigness" in Times of Elections.'

The political agency of musicians in Africa has been analyzed in terms of patronage, as either praising or protesting political leaders. However, in the last few years, youthful and young musicians across the continent have also become leading political figures themselves, with Bobi Wine and the People Power Movement in Uganda as the most prominent example. This article examines the changing relations between popular music and politics by focusing on how musicians engaged with the general election campaigns in Uganda in 2011, 2016 and beyond. Their engagement with formal politics can neither be characterized as relations of political activism, patronage nor market relations. To understand this ambiguous political agency, I offer the notion of cultural brokerage as a way of approaching the plural strategies and indeterminate actions of young musicians on the political scene. Ultimately, the 'bigness' of music stars, running through digital media, has a different relational form than conventional patronage politics, and this may be changing how politics is done in Uganda.

Mr. Ian KARUSIGARIRA (PhD Candidate, TUFS)
'Facing up to Contemporary Political Absolutism through History and Threats: Aesthetics, LGBTI+ and the Youth Movements in Uganda'

As the global crises and national political contradictions associated with 'continuity in change' attempt to share the same space, multi-layered manifestations of contestations over how political life should be ordered have had to grapple with uncertainties and emerging threats to and opportunities for a collective transformative agency (nationally and globally). First, the chapter explains how youth are actively developing populist aesthetic political agency (particularly the role of music), posing a threat to established conventional political penetration. The regime has, on the other hand, continued to narrow the contestation space and increased state-inspired violent containment. Subsequently, lives have been lost and several others under politically-charged incarcerations. Second, the status quo has also had to deal with the global forces of social change such as sexual minorities movement (also coincidently inspired by youth), which amount to a double-edged sword. Conformity with the global demands for civil rights of sexual minorities implies a loss of local political base. Assenting to the

sexual minorities' demand for recognition has been accompanied by negative global ramifications such as sanctions on economic intervention. In the short run, support from the majority homophobic religious conservatives has guaranteed regime consolidation. In the long run, however, the declining global diplomacy and activation of civil society have facilitated status quo disequilibrium and increased chances of political turbulences. This chapter explains these dual complex mechanisms (the aesthetics and LGBTI+), factoring in two somewhat different—but complementary—revolutionary movements tackling the anti-status quo at the national level and anti-homophobia at the global level.