

" The dynamics of the inter-ethnic relationships among pastoral peoples in East Africa under political democratization: A case of study of emergence of new ethnicity of the Ariaal in Northern Kenya after national election and decentralization."

By dr. Naoki Naito

From : Center for Research Development, National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan
Thor Larsen loftet: 12:15 - 13:15

Summary

This presentation will investigate the dynamics how the ethnicity of a pastoral society was homogenized and fixed by nation state, and then revived its flexibility.

To ensure that the introduction of a multi-party system in the African countries will be a sufficient condition for a democratic political system, eliminating ethnical antagonism is one of the major keys. Nevertheless, since the introduction of a multi-party system in Kenya in 1992, many ethnic groups have newly created, or re-created, and inter-ethnic conflicts and disputes in relation to political issues took place frequently. That is, it is necessary to seek the possibility of having an opportunity for dialog among groups with different interests that were constructed in the process of the election campaign under the multi-party system.

The Kenyan national election, which was held on Dec. 27, 2007, caused a major disruption in the country. The ethnic claim over political resources through the election also created a confrontational relationship between two pastoral societies at Laisamis constituency in Northern Kenya that have kept symbiotic relationship long time. However, people promoted reconciliation through re-activating the flexibility of the ethnicity after the election. The marginalized pastoral societies in Northern Kenya have asserted various styles of ethnicity according to the political, economic, social, and cultural conditions at any given time.

This presentation will examine the possibilities of ambiguity and flexibility of the ethnicity of East African pastoral societies as their new surviving strategies in modern situation.