Anth/AFS/GNDR 247 Gender issues in modern and traditional Kenya

Readings
Required texts for this course are:


Other short readings will be distributed to you in advance, each week. You will also be required to make use of Kenya’s daily newspapers, the Daily Nation and the Standard, both of which are available daily on the table in the Study Center seminar room, and for sale widely throughout the city.

Outline of the course

Week 1
- Background to Kenya; landscape, climate, vegetation
- Kenya’s natural resources and the rural economies
- Reflections on your rural homestay in Meru; gender roles, division of labor
- Land ownership in rural Kenya; past, present and future

Readings:
Ngugi, Mumbi. “You have a right to own property, so insist on it!” Sunday Nation, Nairobi, 30th May 1993.
Saturday Nation, March 5th, 2011; three pages of short articles about recent changes in the application of Kenyan laws on the inheritance of land by women.

Week 2 (a): Gender issues in coastal cultures, Islamic and others: the Swahili and other communities of the Kenya coast:
- The formal teachings of Islam on gender roles and how these play out in society
- Property rights, inheritance
- Public and private space; husband-wife relationships
- Division of labor

Readings:
Week 2 (b): Gender and environment: control and management of natural resources.
- Soil erosion and soil conservation
- Fuelwood and water

Readings:

Week 3 (a): Gender and education:
- Preparation for adult life in pre-colonial Kenyan cultures
- The colonial period: access to education for boys and girls
- Independent Kenya: barriers to girls’ education remain

Readings:
“Girl’s marriage halted and her parents seized by police”. *Daily Nation*, 4th January 2006.
“Schools to be converted to single gender” *Daily Nation*, 8th February 2012.

Week 3 (b): Introduction to gender roles among the Hadza (preparation for field trip)
Readings:

Week 4: Gender issues in urban life:
- Economic issues and social issues; impact of urbanization on gender relations
- Small scale traders and shopkeepers; the ‘jua kali’ sector.
- Health issues: access to clean water and healthcare, the impact of HIV/AIDS on family life.

Readings:
“SODIS in Kibera and Mukuru”. Project Description, KWAHO/SANDEC (extracted from KWAHO website)
“WatSan in Kibera”, Project Description, KWAHO/WaterCan (extracted from KWAHO website)

Films:
Slum Survivors. IRIN (Integrated Regional Information Networks of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), 2007.

Week 5: (1) Gender issues among pastoral nomadic communities, conditions in the pre-colonial times and how they have changed, with special reference to:
- Division of labor
- Property rights
- Political and economic power

Readings:

Week 6: Further reflections on ‘tradition’ versus ‘modernity’ in relation to gender issues.
- Genital cutting
- Early marriage and its influence on girls’ education

Readings (1) on Genital Cutting – also known as Female Genital Mutilation:
Read your own chapters of Voices from Mutira and The Ostrich Wakes to find the ways in which the different women, young and old, talk about this issue and their own experiences.

“Know your body: the female ‘cut’” Daily Nation, 21st February 2012.
“World Vision Kenya on Zero Tolerance to FGM” Daily Nation, 7th February 2012.
“Kenya tops in drive against female ‘cut’” Daily Nation, 9th February 2012.
“50 girls rescued from forced ‘cut’ this year” Daily Nation, 13th February 2012.
“It is high season for circumcision as new law against the rite fails to bite” Saturday Nation, 17th December 2011.
“Church initiates of 2,500 boys in Meru” The Star, 20th December 2011.
“Circumcisers reign supreme despite tough laws against female cut” The Standard, 28th December 2011.
“Villagers ignore the law and go on a girl circumcision frenzy” Daily Nation, 8th December 2011.
“Girls initiated into adulthood minus cut” Daily Nation, 13th December 2011.
“Law alone won’t end female circumcision” Daily Nation, 24th September 2011.
“Parents disown girls for evading ‘the cut’” Daily Nation, 7th February 2011.

Film:
Womanhood and circumcision; three Maasai women have their say. Barbara Hoffman, 2002. Berkeley, CA : Berkeley Media LLC.

Readings (2) on early marriages and impact on education:
Walsh, D. “In a Kenyan school, Masai child brides find new world”. Boston Sunday Globe, 10th December 2000.
Sigei, J. “Panic as Maasai morans raid school for ‘wives’”. Daily Nation, 14th November 2011.

Websites:
Maasai Education Discovery
http://www.maasaieducation.org/about.cfm


Week 7 : Concluding discussions:
- Islam and gender in today’s Kenya.
- Presentations of project proposals for the Take-home final.
- Concluding discussion on ‘Perspectives on gender’ with a panel of Kenyan women professionals’.

Readings on Islam and gender in Kenya:

Assignments:

Three papers, each earning 20% of your overall grade:

One short take-home final exam: this will earn 10% of your overall grade.

Class participation, including your contributions to class discussions and reports on newspaper articles and your assigned chapters of the class texts: this will earn 30% of your overall grade. It will include a short write up on the Coast field trip.