

## Chapter 3

# Family Formation among *Karioki* Performers in Kampala, Uganda

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### Abstract

During the 1990s, the entertainment industry greatly developed in Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. One of the associated entertainment forms, *karioki*, developed around the year 2000. *Karioki* is performed at night on stages at bars and restaurants, and is operated by young people ranging in age from their mid-teens to mid-twenties who dance and sing. It is clear that some prejudices exist against *karioki* performers. However, many of these performers survive, find partners, and have children in the same way as others. This study examines how *karioki* performers form their own families. This is first accomplished by discussing how performers relate with their parents or guardians. Second, it explores what performers think of marriage, and how they act on those thoughts. Third, it examines how they rear their children, even if they continue doing *karioki*. Through studying the actual stories and episodes of *karioki* performers, this study aims to clarify that performers have various social relationships, and that their relationships and ways of thinking are very flexible, which helps them rear children in any kind of situation.

**Keywords:** performer, marriage, childcare, social relationship, conflict

### 1. Introduction

In Africa including Uganda, the human population has been growing. Pregnant young women and family structures that do not fit with financial statuses are regarded as problems in urban areas. However, it is important to examine the relationships and values involved in these circumstances by studying the child-rearing methods. Therefore, this paper discusses ‘family formation’ in Kampala, Uganda, which is how people in developed countries in which a declining birth rate has become a serious problem, such as Japan, would refer to this practice. In addition, this study especially focuses on performers who engage in modern nightlife entertainment, and explores how these performers start families. Similar to people in other countries and societies, performers in Uganda who expose themselves in public at night are regarded as being improper. In this regard, this paper also investigates how performers create families when they are surely portrayed in a negative way, which may provide insight on support for African youth.

The main objective of this thesis is to examine how youth performers relate to ‘family’ by observing their lives. In this paper, ‘family’ describes parents or guardians, partners, and children in order to discuss the form of entertainment called *karioki*. Since I began researching *karioki* in 2006, I have examined social interactions among performers during the creation of *karioki*. My research elucidated several things, as follows. A *karioki* group represents a unit in which diverse people repeatedly meet and leave. Youth performers have techniques for producing shows with new performers, and even institutionalise the fluidity of their combinations backstage and on stage. This is the key to performing *karioki*, and is also the essential element of their urban youth relationships. It can be presumed that the same character they display in making the social relationships observed in *karioki* can also be seen in the making of their families.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, it explains *karioki* itself, and discusses *karioki* performers’ backgrounds, and how people think of *karioki*. Second, it examines how performers develop relationships with their parents or guardians when starting to attend *karioki* events as performers. Third, it explores how performers consider marriage. Fourth, it discusses how they arrange child-rearing needs. Basically, this paper examines marriage and child-rearing by focusing on female performers. Data used in this paper were collected through observations and interview research I conducted between 2006 and 2014. To show when data were collected through my research, the year will be written after statements by performers (e.g. ‘(in 2014)’). The names provided for all performers in this paper are fictitious. The characters ‘(F)’ follow the names of females, and ‘(M)’ for males.

## 2. Modern Entertainment, *Karioki* in Kampala

What is *karioki*? *Karioki* comes from karaoke as seen in Japanese popular culture. Karaoke originates from the Japanese word *kara*, which means ‘empty’, and *oke*, which is taken from the English word ‘orchestra’. As such, karaoke is the act of using a microphone to sing to instrumental sounds that have been commercially recorded. People enjoy this activity very much in Japan, and it has spread all over the world as a form of popular culture. However, the well-known and popular form of karaoke entertainment found in Kampala, Uganda as discussed in

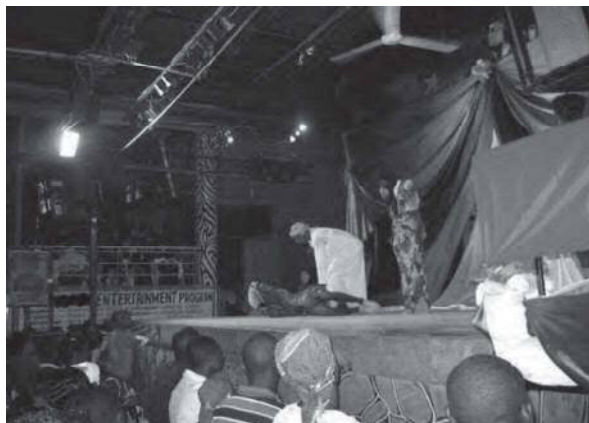


Figure 1. A *karioki* performance in Kampala (2009)

this study is not exactly like Japanese karaoke. Rather, karaoke is performed in Kampala by young people who range in age from their mid-teens to mid-twenties; these performers hold fake microphones and do not sing, but lip-sync to recorded music. In this paper, the Kampala form of karaoke entertainment is referred to as *karioki*, which is how people in Kampala usually pronounce the word. *Karioki* consists primarily of three components: ‘mime’, ‘dance’, and ‘comedy’. ‘Mime’ represents singing without actual vocalization by using body movement and lip-syncing for expression. ‘Dance’ represents moving one’s body to music. In this component, movements are sometimes choreographed for several performers to dance together.

However, the dancing is impromptu at other times. ‘Comedy’ resembles the mime component, but tends to rely more on playful body movements and humorous performances than on the expression of singing a song. As such, *karioki* is created through an arrangement of these three components. Between 30 and 50 songs are usually played at one *karioki* show, although this number can sometimes reach as high as 70. The length of one song is around 3-10 minutes, which means that one *karioki* show usually runs for 3-4 hours. Every time there is a shift between songs, the performers or the performance items are changed.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, Kampala was politically insecure. In the 1990s, however, as the population and income levels rapidly increased, Kampala’s entertainment industry developed. *Karioki* is one of the entertainment forms that developed around 2000 (Daimon, 2016). In Kampala, *karioki* is performed on stage in restaurants and bars, and mainly occurs at night. While *karioki* mainly involves youth performers, the audience is not limited to young people. For example, adult couples also come to enjoy their leisure through *karioki*. Parents also attend performances with their children during public holidays. People who attend *karioki* performances are of different income groups. If the restaurant or bar where *karioki* is performed is in a business centre, the audience must consist of affluent people; if it is in a nearby slum area, the audience may consist of the lower classes. Therefore, *karioki* can be called a form of popular culture that is loved by a variety of people.

Here, the backgrounds of some *karioki* performers are provided. Among 89 *karioki* performers (including former performers) whom I interviewed, more than half (i.e. 50 performers) are ethnically Baganda (32 of the performers have two Baganda parents, and 18 performers have fathers who are Baganda). The Baganda culture uses a patrilineal system (Roscoe, 1965: 82). Among the 26 performers whose two parents are not Baganda, 9 had two parents from the same ethnic group (※1). Those who have parents from outside Uganda (e.g. Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya, Malawi, and the Republic of the Congo) made up 30% of the total (i.e. 28 performers). Therefore, it can be pointed out that the majority of performers are ethnically Baganda, but many are born from parents of different ethnic group (including foreigners), and their heritage is complicated. This reflects the ethnic construction of Kampala itself. In the Kampala district, Baganda make up more than half of the population (56%), followed by small percentages of Banyankole, Basoga, Batoro, and foreigners (3%), including Rwandans and Tanzanians (UBOS, 2002).



Figure 2. *Karioki* performers (2010)

The educational backgrounds of these performers are generally not too low, but varies. Some did not finish primary school, and others graduated from universities. The percentage of

performers who finished their secondary school studies is higher than the percentage of those who completed them for the whole of Kampala (UBOS, 2002); that is, 51% among 70 *karioki* performers, and 21% among Kampala's overall population from 15-29 years of age. Among the performers who finished secondary school, 16 proceeded to study in colleges or universities. *Karioki* performers are not outsiders to the educational system. Rather, most follow and acquire education.

Here, the motivations of *karioki* performers are studied. Youth who attend *karioki* can obtain rewards at each show. Most performers mention financial problems as a reason that they started to perform *karioki*. Among 50 performers who were performing *karioki* from July to December of 2007, those who did not have a job other than *karioki* made up more than half (i.e. 27 performers). Among these performers, there are those who aim to earn money for school fees and obtain assistance for rearing children, and others with high levels of education who are trying to collect finances for starting their own businesses. Among those with other jobs, there are some who consider *karioki* as a side business while working as employees of a company.

However, financial needs are not only the ones which prompt these individuals to perform *karioki*. In addition to situations in which earnings were needed, some performers commented on their interests in song and dance. Here is one example:

'When I was in S2 (secondary grade 2), I entered my school's dance group...I also joined dance competitions and taught others how to dance on the weekends. I just had an interest and I did not get any money from it, but I thought it was better than when I had nothing to do at recess. After I graduated from secondary school, I began to do *karioki*...Because my father died, I needed some money. And I also liked and enjoyed *karioki*, so I started doing it' (Rex (M), in 2007).

Most performers had dance experience through club activities and competitions at school before starting *karioki*. Attending *karioki* can be seen as an extension of schooling. For example, one performer said, 'I do *karioki* just to kill the time. I do it for fun instead of going to a club or a disco' (Takashi (M), in 2007). Others considered *karioki* as a way to join 'Kampala', which means that *karioki* was the only job they could easily start when they came to Kampala from the village in which they grew up. Others also thought of *karioki* as a way to promote their names while aiming to become musical artists.

The reasons behind the motivation to become a *karioki* performer can vary, and relate to the different rewards that each performer receives. As such, *Karioki* youths form groups. Each group earns different rewards; among the same group, each member obtains a different reward. Some performers earn more than waiters working at restaurants, but others cannot get enough money to eat. In this way, there are various reasons that bring youths to perform *karioki*, although it cannot be denied that *karioki* rewards attract them.

### 3. The Image of *Karioki*

This section discusses how the people of Kampala think about *karioki*, which is important information for examining how *karioki* performers create families. The public estimation of *karioki* in Kampala is both positive and negative. Some people say that they enjoy *karioki* quite a bit as an attractive form of entertainment. In Kampala, there is a saying that 'most Ugandan musicians come from *karioki*?'. Therefore, those who love local songs composed by Ugandans appreciate *karioki*. When I took a picture of banners advertising *karioki*, someone asked me, 'do you like musicians?' The reason they think of *karioki* performers as being similar to musicians reflects the establishing process of *karioki*.

Currently, when looking at the signboards set at the *karioki* performance place, various spellings of the performance can be seen, such as 'Kareoke', 'Karioke', and 'Karaoke'. However, there is no doubt that *karioki* originated from the Japanese form of popular culture called karaoke. The activity first reached Kampala in 1996. The owner of Sublina's pub saw a karaoke machine in Nairobi, Kenya, and then brought one to his bar in Kampala (Kabuye, 1996). An event called 'Karaoke Night' started with this machine, which gave local youths the chance to promote their singing voices on stage through karaoke and patrons who would support them until they became singers (Omony, 2000; Schneidermann, 2008: 55). On the other hand, there is another thing that youths promoted on stage through karaoke, which is dancing that follows the style of American musicians (O'Connor, K., 2000; O'Connor, S., 2000). At 'Karaoke Night', which became very well-known among the youth, it was not just singing a song, but also dancing that seemed to become an important part of performance evaluations.

The group called Obsessions is generally accepted as the 'Father of *Karioki*'. Obsessions was formed by graduates and students of Namasagari College in 1999. This school is known for performance because it produces an annual drama in the national theatre (Kalyegira, 1998; Kimbowa, 2000). The original member of Obsessions obtained performance experience at Namasagari College, and started to perform at Sublina's pub, which was the location of the karaoke machine. Obsessions later performed at other bars and restaurants. Furthermore, the year after the group was formed, members began to perform drama at the national theatre. These performances gained the attention of newspapers, which wrote about them repeatedly (Nakazibwe & Serugo, 2002; Serugo, 2002; Serugo, 2004). The main Ugandan daily paper, *the Daily Monitor*, wrote about Obsessions as the 'Best Modern



Dance Group' or as the 'Dance Troupe Obsessions', which shows that the group concentrated on dance performances. Followed by the success of Obsessions, many youths started to form groups, and performed at various bars and restaurants. In 2004, Obsessions started to make their own songs and act as singers. The songs of Obsessions are now very popular, and are frequently used on *karioki* stages. Thus, Obsessions started as a dance group, then became a real singing group, and is now called the 'Father of *Karioki*'. In addition to that, people who gained success as musicians and people who developed *karioki* had been performing on the same stage. When these circumstances are taken into consideration, it is understood why *karioki* performers and musicians are considered to be similar to the citizens of Kampala. People who appreciate musical talent, therefore, also think positively about *karioki*.

However, *karioki* also has a bad reputation. Some people say that *karioki* performers are prostitutes. The reasons for this are as follows. The venues at which *karioki* is performed are bars and restaurants. *Karioki* is also performed during late-night time slots. The costumes for ladies expose much of their bodies. Performers are thought of as people who will do anything to get money. One lady, a 24-year old employee, said 'performers do *karioki* to survive'. One male, a 25-year old shop owner, said 'I don't want to date with girls who do *karioki*. Because they can change their mind easily for money' (in 2007). Furthermore, the image of *karioki* performers as school dropouts has spread in Kampala. For instance, one day I showed the picture of a certain *karioki* performer to one of my Ugandan friends, a 39-year old traditional dancer, who knew I researched *karioki*. I told him that this person was teaching at a primary school. My friend replied to me by saying 'does he [the performer in the picture] teach at school and after that he does *karioki*? That is such a pity' (in 2010). The way he said 'that is such a pity' is used in Luganda, which is my friend's native tongue, when hearing of something terrible, such as someone's death. He conversed with me while laughing, though, which aids awareness to the opinion of people in Kampala that *karioki* performers should not be associated with school or education.

#### 4. Relationships between Performers and Their Parents

What happens between *karioki* performers and their families when they start to do *karioki*? Through observing a number of incidents, this section examines the relationships between performers and their parents or guardians. When starting to join *karioki* as performers, these individuals received strong opposition from their parents or guardians. There are few cases in which parents approved of the choice to become a *karioki* performer and then supported their child from the beginning. These reactions clearly show that the generation of performers' parents does not have a good image of *karioki*.

When Barbie (F) started *karioki*, she did not tell her mother. When her mother discovered it, Barbie persuaded her to understand by saying 'I do *karioki* because I want to start singing my own songs. Through my *karioki* experience, I can learn how to perform on stage without fear' (in 2014). After Barbie joined *karioki*, she became employed by a company while forming her own *karioki* group and performing *karioki* as a leader. During the time Barbie had her own group, I sometimes saw her mother visit her in Kampala from her village. Her mother seemed to acknowledge that Barbie did *karioki*.



Figure 3. 'Dance' at *karioki* (2010)

When Rick (M) started *karioki*, his mother opposed him, and tried to make him complete his course at school. However, she did not have enough money for his school fees, and left him to do *karioki* while telling him to study later (in 2014). As mentioned in section 1, *karioki* performers get rewards each night, which can sometimes exceed the payments received by restaurant workers for a whole day in the market. Rick did not mind the rewards, but inherently enjoyed *karioki*. 'I wanted to become Michael Jackson [a popular American musician] and started *karioki*', he said while laughing (in 2014). These stories prove that youth performers easily do what they want although they see some opposition from their families.

There are also stories showing the bitter conflicts between performers and their parents or guardians. Anna (F) lost both her parents when she was a child. She was raised by her maternal uncle. When her uncle understood that Anna had started *karioki*, he beat her, but she returned to perform *karioki* the following day. Her uncle then told her that he would not pay her school fees, but Anna did not mind, and continued *karioki*. Her uncle then stopped paying. However, Anna continued her education after receiving a scholarship through her sports talent, enrolling in a school that charged less, and asking her boyfriend to pay her school fees. She answered my question about why she continued *karioki* by simply saying 'I just wanted to do it and enjoyed it' (in 2014). Chris (M) was also beaten by his mother when she discovered that he started *karioki*. 'She beat me so much; later, she stopped beating me and forgave me. She said, "you know [what you are doing]."' Chris said (in 2014). He explained why his mother was upset by saying that 'she probably thought I would learn to steal, because *karioki* is a night job'. He also told me why he continued to do *karioki* while knowing that his mother did not like it. 'First, I could earn some money. But



after a while I started enjoying [*karioki*]. People loved me on stage so much, especially when I did “comedy,” he said. He seemed not to mind the objections of his parent, much like Anna. Some parents expressed stronger objections. Hadija (F) was taken to the police by her mother. However, Hadija later continued *karioki* unbeknownst to her mother because she enjoyed music and the stage, where she felt like a celebrity (in 2014).

Parents and guardians generally do not want their children to join *karioki* because *karioki* is a job that requires them to go around at night, and such entertainment is looked down on by people. They also have a negative image of *karioki*, saying that it opposes education, and helps individuals learn bad and criminal things. These images and opinions create conflicts between parents and performers. However, when I observed how performers answered why they continued *karioki*, there seemed to be no resistance from their parents or guardians. They only indicated a great interest in *karioki* itself.

In addition to these facts, the discussion becomes less about how *karioki* brings continuous conflict between parents or guardians and their children. For example, although Anna left her uncle, I saw her attend a marriage ceremony involving relatives at her maternal grandmother's home, where she grew up. Anna also asked them to watch her children, which they agreed to do, even though both Anna and her children's fathers did *karioki*. Hadija, who was taken to the police, started to work as a clerk at her mother's wholesale shop in the centre of town while living with her mother and other relatives. *Karioki* prompts fights among families, but it does not have a strong influence on family relationships. *Karioki* never causes estrangement in families.

## 5. Performer Marriage

In Kampala, especially among the youth, there is no behaviour that indicates marital status like an entry in the family register in Japan. The specified partner would be called *omusajja wange/baa wange* in Luganda, the common ethnic language in Kampala (which directly translates into ‘my man’), or *omukazi wange* (‘my woman’) without minding whether the couple stays together, if there are children involved, or if the couple recognizes the marriage. If the marriage status is registered following the governmental system, a certificate of customary marriage is issued, which is not common in Kampala. To show marriage status, the people of Kampala (especially ethnic Baganda) make a significant point of having a wedding ceremony, which is followed by another ceremony called *okwanjula* (‘introduction’), at which relatives of the husband visit the home of his wife and introduce themselves. Since these ceremonies cost a lot of money, it is rare to see a young couple hold these ceremonies before having a child. Some couples have ceremonies after becoming old and having grandchildren. These ceremonies make the couple and the surrounding people understand that they are married. As mentioned above, it is difficult for a couple to have a ceremony when they are still young (e.g. in their 20s). The same can be said about *karioki* performers. Female *karioki* performers do not talk about marriage based on whether they have children. Although many female performers have experiences of delivery that they will discuss (e.g. ‘I gave birth with *omusajja/baa wange*’ or ‘I have a child with my boyfriend’), they do not seem to think that having a child relates to marriage.



Figure 4. Backstage with their child (2007)

Here, we discuss the kinds of situations performers consider as ‘marriages’. When a female performer begins to live with a partner who has some financial support and stops performing *karioki*, the word ‘marriage’ is used to explain her recent state. If a female *karioki* performer is not seen doing *karioki*, it is also said that ‘she got married’. When I went to see the female performers whom other performers explained as ‘married’, however, most of them did not recognize themselves as married, even if they lived with their partners. On the other hand, there are many cases in which performers have already left *karioki*. For instance, as Isaac (M) said, ‘in 2009, I formed a *karioki* group. But among the ladies there is nobody who is serious. They just get married and pregnant. So, our group was broken down’ (in 2011). Thus, marriage is not considered to be practiced when one is involved in *karioki*.

How do female *karioki* performers think of marriage? These performers obtain a specified partner mostly among other *karioki* performers or the audience. It seems, however, that they consider men who are older and have financial resources as marriage partners rather than members of their peer group. If an individual does not work in *karioki*, they can receive enough money to live and rear children, which is an important condition attached to ‘marriage’. Therefore, when a female performer considers getting married, she mostly tries to quit *karioki*. For example, July (F) explained why she stopped performing *karioki* by saying ‘at first my husband (baa) asked me to take care of our baby after I gave birth, and there is no respect for *karioki* [*karioki* performers are not respected by people]. Additionally, I felt so bad when he was waiting up for me while I finished *karioki* at night’ (in 2014). On the other hand, when female performers use the word ‘marriage’, they seem to feel envy, and miss other performers who have gone to a world that does not involve *karioki*. This is also true for male performers who talk about ‘marriage’.

*Karioki* forms a space in which female performers can obtain a specified partner before proceeding to the

next step in their lives. It also helps them earn money, promotes their performance, and provides them with fun. As will be discussed in Section 5, however, marital status is not always permanent. If a performer gives up *karioki* for some time because of ‘marriage’, they can easily return to *karioki*, regardless of if they have children.

## 6. Child-Rearing and Performing



Figure 5. ‘Mime’ at *karioki*

First, it should be noted that giving birth in itself does not stop individuals from performing *karioki*. Although *karioki* is performed by youth groups, membership in each group is loose. According to my research, *karioki* is performed by individuals according to their own situations (Daimon, 2015). Under the same group name, the same members are not present at each *karioki* performance. Although members sometimes get together and practice ‘group dancing’, which requires consistent choreography, they do not practice hard every day. This situation allows pregnant performers to attend *karioki* according to the condition of their bodies. During my research in 2007, I watched one such pregnant performer, who continued to ‘mime’ rather than ‘dance’. It was surprising to see her enter the stage and then rest backstage while breathing with difficulty. However, other performers did not seem to mind her actions, which also astonished me. Neither the owner of this *karioki* group, a lady of a restaurant, nor the audience seemed to care about stopping her performance because of the pregnancy.

*Karioki* does not require performers to have a certain shape or limit their figures. Preferably, it demands that performers have various body types. If a female performer develops a different body shape after delivering a baby from before she was pregnant, she can therefore be welcomed to return to perform *karioki*. As a person can be allowed to enter the *karioki* stage and perform even if they have never practiced *karioki*, the barrier to joining *karioki* is low. *Karioki* does not insist on hard practices. In this regard, female performers can keep performing *karioki* before and after delivering a baby. Giving birth does not require them to give up *karioki*.

After birth, a child should be raised through the care and support of others. In Japanese society, parents prepare an environment for their children that includes sufficient financial stability to raise them. In other words, having a child without thinking about these arrangements is not preferred. What about the case of *karioki* performers in Kampala, Uganda? It is clear that *karioki* is an unstable job for rearing children. That is, rewards can change depending on the time or situation, although some performers receive considerable payments. In addition, since performers need to go out at night, it seems that continuing to perform *karioki* would make it difficult to raise children.

Many performers, however, remain active in *karioki* after they give birth. Most of them ask their parents or relatives to look after the child.

### The case of Anna:

Anna (F) lost both parents when she was a child. She grew up in the home of her maternal grandmother. When she was 14 years old, she started *karioki*. When she was 17 years old, she gave birth to a child (A) from her boyfriend at that time, who was also a *karioki* performer. Anna continued *karioki*. When she was 19 years old, she had a baby (B) with another *karioki* performer. When she was 23 years old, Anna was staying with the father of B in a house he was building. Anna’s children (A and B) were looked after in the home of her grandmother (at that time, her grandmother was staying with many grandchildren, with the total number who stayed there being around 10). After a while, she left the father of B. When Anna was 26 years old, she got pregnant by another performer while living with a female performer. After giving birth to a third child (C) when she was 28 years old, she lived with C and the father of C. A and B were still staying at the home of her grandmother. Anna never stopped *karioki* because of having children. However, after giving birth to C, she did not regularly perform *karioki*, but attended some dance shows.



Figure 6. On the way to home from *karioki* venue with child (2010)

Anna asked her relatives to look after her children. In 2014, when Anna was pregnant with C, I saw Anna's children (A and B) visit her during school vacation. After seeing my child (who travelled with me during this time), who was one and a half years old, Anna said 'you can have a second baby now. The firstborn will help, just like in my case'. When I visited Anna in 2016, she was living with C and the father of C. I asked her, 'Does your family not say anything about your giving birth?' She replied, 'I have a desire to raise children, no one can say anything'. These comments show that Anna has not seen great difficulties with having children even though she did not manage to stay with all her children all the time.

Some performers request the relatives of a child's father to rear them. For example, Lidia (F) said, 'I am living alone. My baby is staying with her/his father. I was living with a maid and baby before. [The reason I do not live with the baby is] because of the industry I am working in. I come back late at night' (in 2011). Lidia used to belong to a famous drama group. Considering the length of working time and reward, she decided to leave the drama group and restart *karioki*. July (F), who was discussed in section 4, had been rearing her two children while performing *karioki* before she got 'married'. When I completed my 2014 interview with her, her other two children were looked after by their father, and she was living with her husband and his baby, whom July had just delivered. At times, because of each family's ability, her/his child is staying outside of Uganda. Kai's (M) child had been staying in Kenya since the child's mother was from Kenya. Later, Kai's relative took the child to Canada. Kai said that his child did not know him as a father, but as an uncle (in 2011).

In such ways, performers make use of social relationships among their relatives, and some of them continue to work as *karioki* performers. As pointed out in section 3, performers maintain relationships with their relatives although they may have had a conflict when they started *karioki*. It seems, therefore, that they do not see any problem with asking their relatives to look after children, and they manage to continue doing *karioki*. Even if they decide to stay with their child, they still have other people from whom to request childcare, which are usually their nearby at-home neighbours. To accomplish this, performers spend daytimes with their children, and ask their neighbours to take care of them while performing *karioki*. Most of time, neighbours also stay with their own babies or the children of relatives, and know how to deal with children.



Figure 7. Visit to a former *karioki* performer with my child (2014)

In addition, it should be noted that performers can take their children to *karioki* venues. Several times, I watched performers (especially females) take their children backstage during *karioki* performances. Because of the volume of the music, the *karioki* venue is so noisy that the sound of a child or a baby cannot interrupt the *karioki* itself. When the mother or father of a child enters the stage, other performers take care of the child. These other performers do not seem to be annoyed by having to look after a child. In the venue, it is not regarded as a problem to show the *karioki* audience that performers take their children around with them. Accordingly, a performer can enter the backstage area while with a child or holding a nursing baby.

In addition to requesting their family members and neighbours to look after their children, this situation, which allows them to go with children to *karioki* venues, makes it possible to continue *karioki* after having children. It can also be said that the person with whom the children stay sometimes changes depending on the time and situation, as is the case with both July and Kai. Although the change is not only decided by the will of the performers as parents, it is important to indicate that they are not obsessed with thinking that real parents must take care of their children by their own hands.

## 7. Having a Child and Being a Performer

This section examines how having a child relates to performing *karioki*. Most of time, it is male performers who say that they should leave *karioki* because of having a child. Katsutoshi (M) had been in the *karioki* industry for a long time. When I asked Katsutoshi (M) if he wanted to become an artist (in the context of Kampala, this usually means being a singer), he replied 'it is a long way away. And I would need to concentrate on it. I want to become rich, which makes me enjoy myself and it takes a shorter time [than becoming an artist]. I now have two children. I must be more responsible than thinking about becoming a musician. I have to earn money' (in 2011). Hadija (F) has two children with her boyfriend, who used to do *karioki* with her. When she had delivered one baby with him, she told me that her partner quit *karioki*. She explained the reason that he stopped *karioki* by saying 'he does not want to be seen on stage by his child. He feels ashamed' (in 2010). Performers do not care about having a negative image when they do *karioki*. Once they become fathers, however, they start to think about the bad reputation. On the other hand, female performers also talk about 'responsibility' for children, but when they think about ways to earn money for their child, they can easily choose to continue performing *karioki*. Even if they begin to do *karioki* for fun, *karioki* could become an important way to obtain finances for their children after giving birth.



It is necessary to consider that *karioki* performers could be seen by the public as dancers, actors, or comedians by making appearances in promotional music videos or local TV dramas. Besides, performers advertise their activities through social networking services (e.g. Facebook). On Facebook, they do not indicate that they perform *karioki*, but that they are professional musicians or dancers. Through these actions, they can place great emphasis on the artistic aspect rather than being a *karioki* performer. These activities and tools help them avoid the negative, underground image that is associated with *karioki*. In this way, it is currently easy to be a parent and a *karioki* performer separately.

## 8. Conclusion

This paper examines how *karioki* performers relate to their families, and also how they create their own families while performing *karioki*. Although it seems difficult to perform *karioki* and raise children at the same time, performers manage to successfully do this through their flexible social relationships and the indulgent circumstances of *karioki*. ‘Marriage’ can be regarded as separate from *karioki*. Especially for female performers, *karioki* provides a place in which they can move another step forward through ‘marriage’.

A limitation of this paper is that it has not yet clarified what it is that performers give their highest priorities to when creating a family. For example, it is not clear what their main priority is among the options of staying with a child, staying with a partner, or continuing to work as a performer.

Considering the social relationships among *karioki* performers, which my research has made clear (Daimon, 2015), it should be pointed out that performers are able to continuously reset their relationships when they create families. In *karioki* shows and *karioki* group memberships, performers relate to each other loosely, which means they are constantly separating and uniting. As they do in *karioki*, this paper also shows that performers do not adhere to the limitations of the *karioki* performance lifestyle, marriage, or parenting, and they constantly remake and reset their relationships with family, children, and partners. These performers do *karioki*, because they love it, but not because they intend to strongly resist their parents or guardians. Thus, conflicts that may have occurred with family at the start of a *karioki* career can easily disappear, and relationships proceed as if reset. ‘Marriage’ is a step that makes some difference in the lives of performers, and is something they admire. However, this is established by their way of thinking, not by having children. ‘Marriage’ and child-rearing’ are regarded as different matters. It is natural for performers to think of rearing children with their partner. However, once they begin to have children, there are various ways to raise them. It can be said that taking care of children is beyond their control. There are male performers who become ashamed to be *karioki* performers after having children. On the other hand, there are female performers who are engaged in *karioki* because they have children and need to earn money. The ways of managing ‘marriage’ and ‘childcare’ change depending on the decisions of performers, as well as their circumstances or conditions. At times, performers may not be able to decide these things for themselves, which causes suffering. However, this way of living enables them to survive with children because of the flexibility of their social relationships, as well as through their thinking and way of being free from fixed forms of marriage or childcare.

(※1) Among them, 4 performers answered either ‘Both from Tanzania’, ‘Both from Yemen’, or ‘Both from Rwanda’ to my interview questions. Therefore, I was unable to identify the parents’ ethnic group.

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