

HASHTAG ACTIVISM FOUND IN TRANSLATION: UNPACKING THE REFORMULATION OF #MeToo IN JAPAN (*)

**Ms. SAKI MIZOROKI, HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM, ISRAEL
UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO**

In 2017, the MeToo hashtag spread across the globe. However, it showed limited success in the Japanese Twittersphere and instead inspired local initiatives such as #WeToo and #Furawādemo (“flower demo”). To understand this reformulation, we analyzed 15 interviews with Japanese social media users and 119 Japanese newspaper articles. The results corroborate the framework we label VTM (values, topics, media), suggesting that an intersection between perceived Japanese values, the topic’s gendered and sexual nature, and media affordances explain the movement’s local development. While perceived Japanese values clash against those associated with #MeToo, new formulations “soften” the protest by blending in values such as reserve and harmony. Overall, we show how perceptions of popular values rather than values as essential orientations shape activism. Finally, we discuss the study’s implications for understanding cultural variance in cyberactivism, highlighting how divergent notions of “safe space” shape such movements.

Saki Mizoroki is a doctoral student at the University of Tokyo and a visiting research fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. Her research focuses on feminist media studies, drawing on her extensive experience as a journalist. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Sophia University and a Master of Public Policy from the University of California, Berkeley. She has worked as a journalist for a top-national Japanese newspaper, The Asahi, as well as internet media, BuzzFeed Japan.

This talk is organized by David H. Slater (Professor of Anthropology, FLA).



Date: April 28th (Friday)

Time: 5:30 PM (JST) – 7:00 PM (JST)

Zoom only

Join Zoom Meeting

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Meeting ID: 994 6853 7215

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