



AFRICA IN MOVIMENTO / AFRICA ON THE MOVE

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TITLE: REREADING COLONIAL EDUCATION IN ERITREA: THE AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT:

Africa has long and lively traditions of education, of both formal and informal kinds, the models and contents designed to fit African realities. With the expansion of Europeans on the continent, another kind of education was introduced. In many respects, Western education, with its values and knowledge mainly developed in a Western context, has had more profound impacts on African societies than any other colonial legacy. Train tracks may be removed, but mind tracks change the social fabric of society. Conventionally, colonial education has been represented through a victim perspective, with the Africans as passive subject to its impacts and ramifications. This article will look at the challenges of representing colonial education through an agency perspective, how to explore and understand African responses and actions to the changing scenes of education. The main focus will be colonial education in Eritrea.

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Christine Smith-Simonsen is currently the Director of the Centre for Peace Studies at the University of Tromsø. She holds a PhD in African history. She is familiar with Eritrea through studies both at MA and doctoral level. Her doctoral thesis was on Norwegian relations to Eritrea, while her MA thesis dealt with the case in point; education in colonial Eritrea.

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