



AFRICA IN MOVIMENTO / AFRICA ON THE MOVE

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TITLE: MEMORIES OF ASMARA FROM ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT:

This paper is the product of a fieldwork I conducted between Octobers 2013- January 2014. The nature of field research is an intensive, structured interview with people who used to be residents of Asmara pre 1990s. In conducting this research the primary aim of this paper is to both document and interrogate the ways in which Asmara- the capital of Eritrea is remembered in Ethiopia today. By analyzing people's recollection of Asmara from Ethiopia, the paper concerns itself in showing how the act of remembering deals with selective knotting of past and present as well as "reinvents" the city as a site where multiple places of the region interacts. It is argued that People's recollection and narratives of Asmara in Ethiopia is not only recollection of the past but also recollection of past geographies. Therefore their memories establish the relation between the past and present as well as create networks of regional memories. The ways in which people remembers and narrate the city as place of work and home for diverse groups of people, points us to note that the life of a city is intertwined with the nature of people's movement, migration, porous regional borders, ecological changes in the region.

Presenting and investigating people's accounts of their lives in the city, the paper analyses the ways in which Asmara is remembered and narrated in Ethiopia. In so doing this research seeks to understand both the content of memories, and the relationship between moment of remembering and its past. In so doing, by refocusing on regional issues, domestic life, popular culture, and the place of individual experience, informal and spontaneous forms of interactions, as characteristic of a people's history, it interrogates the content and intentions of memories of Asmara in Ethiopia today. The moment of remembering Asmara is also interested in the ways in which narratives of infrastructural organization of the city is used or mobilized in reconstructing memories of the city.

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