Material culture, lived religion and homemaking practices among Eritrean refugees across Europe

Thursday, March 14th
4 p.m. – Meeting Room – III floor

Speaker:
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Chair:
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This presentation discusses the importance of the religious domain in the ethnographic research I carried out in three different European countries (Italy, Sweden, the UK) on the nexus between home and migration among refugees from the Horn of Africa. Once we see religion not only as a system of beliefs, but also as a sociocultural phenomenon with a material dimension that pertains to the uses and constructions of space, daily practices, objects and forms of social interaction, its role in the homemaking process comes to be particularly relevant. Following the framework of the HOMInG research project, I conceptualize migrants’ attempts to create a sense of home in their countries of arrival as a process that entails practices and relations, emotions and materiality, which occurs in different kinds of spaces (private, public and semi-public) and which often involves multiple locations (countries of origin, of settlement, of transit, and so on). Based on my multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork, this paper focuses on icons, devotional gatherings and worship places related to the Orthodox Christianity, a field that is still understudied in relation to Eritrean mobility and homemaking, especially in its material dimension. The aim is to shed light on how the “lived religion” affects the ways Eritrean refugees (try to) re-establish a sense of home in the urban settings of Rome, London and Stockholm.

The seminar takes place within the framework of the HOMInG project - The Home-Migration Nexus - homing.soc.unitn.it
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