

'Memory and Identity in North Africa'

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Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

December 22, 2022 to December 24, 2022

Location:

Morocco

Subject Fields:

Humanities, Social Sciences, Social History / Studies

CALL FOR PAPERS

Background

Memory Studies is a multifaceted academic discipline that is situated at the juncture of history, social sciences and culture. From its humble beginnings as a mnemo-technic to its complicated uses in psychology and psychoanalysis, memory has stirred wide and transformative questions, particularly with its deployment in sociology. Halbwachs' notion of collective memory (1925) has since been a fixture of what became known as Memory Studies. This movement toward the social has led to the profusion of works around "collective memory," which Olick and Robbins (1998) claim, became the core of scholarly exploration in early 20th century. Varied disciplines, such as literature, sociology, archive science, and historiography, among others, draw on the epistemological frameworks that developed the fields that engage with remembering. The rise in interest in commemorative practices after WWI and WWII has brought attention to genealogies, biographies, diaries, museums, and monuments, giving more presence to questions of trauma, loss, memory and history. Hence Memory studies have directed attention to the ways in which memory has become a cultural and sociological practice whose roots are entangled in political and identitarian issues and institutions (Assmann 1995; Rothberg 1993).

Memory has become the glue that cements groups and communities, endowing them with commonalities that allow them to build shared ethos and identities. Ironically, Pierre Nora has written that "we speak so much of memory

because there is so little of it left” (1984) or rather because memories occupy such a pivotal place in shaping national identities that there is not enough of it. Sites of memory, commemorative practices, museums, historiographical projects, autobiographies, rituals, pilgrimages, and annual celebrations of victories are all deeply immersed in memory, which shapes the commemorating societies’ present in light of their past. However, there is a significant difference between memory practices in the Global North and their counterparts in the Global South. The North suffers from a glut of memory whereas the Global South has yet to fully account for seminal historical events that have far-reaching resonances for its nations and societies. While there is a focus on memories of resistance to colonialism, one can easily observe the selective nature of commemorations. Specifically, memory in North Africa, which is a vast region with an incredible cultural diversity, has been mostly driven by statal actors who focus on official aspects of the past. Groups and communities that did not fit the national narratives were simply left out (Boum 2013).

Imazighen, Arabs, sub-Saharanans, and Jews are some of the groups that have yet to occupy their rightful place in North African memory. Although these groups are heavily present in the quotidian life of their societies, both physically and symbolically, their inclusion in the commemorative projects will be salutary for the future of these societies. The public sphere has not been amply flexible for the diverse cultural identities of the region, affecting the way renditions of the past are reenacted in the present. Official memories have overshadowed other memories, leading to the appearance of marginal sites of commemoration (El Guabli 2019). The overpowering presence of an official, unifying approach to memory counters the very essential trait of memories as being diverse, in-flux, and malleable.

This conference aims to reflect on a rich array of memory-focused topics, including performance rituals, celebrations, festivals, objects, places, literature, artifacts, and specific historical moments using the interdisciplinary methodologies honed in Memory Studies. We seek papers that draw on Memory Studies to reflect on issues related to identity, history, historiography, commemoration, remembrance, and changing conceptions of the self and the collective in North Africa. Thus, we ask how much memory is present in the North African spheres? How have memories of the past in North Africa been promoted and appropriated for the sake of a more flexible public sphere? Who are the memory stakeholders? How do they mobilize memory? What place do minority

memories occupy in the grand narratives of different states? Can 'subaltern' memories exist and be performed in public?

We invite scholars in all disciplines to submit their proposals. The themes of papers may include, but are not restricted to, the topics of:

- (Post)Colonial Memories in North Africa
- Memory dynamics and the Public Sphere in the Maghreb
- Representations of cultural memory in literature in North Africa
- Competitive/comparative models of cultural memory in North African states
- Memories and Trauma transformation
- Cultural memory in institutional discourse
- Amazigh memories/identities in North Africa
- Narratives of Jewish memories/identities in North Africa
- Migrants' Memories across borders
- Cultural memory in Film and Music
- 'Vernacular' and 'Subaltern' Memories
- Cultural Memory in individual Diaries, Memoirs, and (Auto)biographies
- Memories and Identities in History Textbooks
- Museums, Monuments, and Photographs
- Digital Memories and Modes of Transmission
- Transitional/Restorative Justice and Memory

By hosting an interdisciplinary conference, we hope to cross-fertilize local engagements with memory by a wider engagement with the approaches and methodologies that have been generative in other academic settings and social contexts.

Confirmed Keynote Speakers

Dr. Aomar Boum

University of California Los-Angeles, CA

Dr. Brahim El Guabli

Williams College, Massachusetts

Deadlines

Abstract submission deadline: **July 5, 2022**

Notification of acceptance: **July 15, 2022**

Full paper submission deadline: **November 25, 2022**

Conference Days:

December 22-24, 2022

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