“Shall we Fear the Regime?”
Anxiety and Reflexivity of Eritrean Migrants in Switzerland

Panel: Anthropology of Fear
Objectives

Fears experienced by Eritrean migrants who deserted from endless conscription and arrived in Switzerland since 2004.

Fears about the Eritrean transnational state limiting the political commitment of the new migrants against the current Eritrean government.

Reflexive debates about fears play a central role in the emergence of youth groups opposed to the current Eritrean government.
• Fears in the transnational space: state surveillance and retaliation

• Reflexivity and political mobilization of dissidents

• Conclusion
The Fears about the Transnational Eritrean State

- Insecurity of Eritrean conscripts and exile
- Historical presence of transnational organizations
- Deserters’ fear of loyalists in Europe (informers)
- Surveillance abroad / retaliation in Eritrea
- Rumors, mistrust and fear to speak up
Reflexivity and political agendas dealing with fear

- Decisive role of fear for political mobilization
- Overcoming fears because they are the power of the Eritrean state
- Transformation of definitions of fears and risks
- Legitimizing and delegitimizing fears
Conclusion

Fears limiting political mobilization

• social differentiation
• circulation/intensification
• fear as a strategy

Political and reflexive processes

• delegitimization of fears
• new risk assessment
• limits of discourses

A turning point for Eritrean social movements
(Mistrust amongst dissidents limits mobilization)