

Book review on: Riggan, J. (2016). *The Struggling State: Nationalism, Mass Militarization and the Education of Eritrea*. Temple University press: Philadelphia

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Jennifer Riggan's book, recently issued, "The Struggle State: Nationalism, Mass Militarization and the Education of Eritrea" is a volume of 259 pages. This field work based comprehensive work is the most impressive contribution that could show the lived conditions of Eritreans after independence and Ethio-Eritrea border war time. The book comprising detail information of Eritrean nationalism project of the state and the ways it construct the sentiment are through mass militarization and the schooling system, these issues are interrelated each other. The book contains various matters organized into five parts included in to three broad issues about nationalism, mass militarization and education system that are intertwined each other. It discusses the Eritrean state on the making as the party's agenda, construction of the statehood of Eritrea on the mind of the youth through intensive and obligatory military training that would thought to imagine state.

The book embraces detail information about the life situations in Eritrea that the three years of field work study have yielded. It begins with the case based lived experiences of residents especially teachers in the war time, highlights state-people relations under everyday authoritarianism, militarization, and middle actors and about her research components. Chapter one and two examines the genesis of Eritrean nationalism and contradiction of government nation building project, and people's experience of coercive forces (dimensions of coercive state effects and utilization of different modalities through which the state is imagined). Starting from chapter three, issues are intertwined, deals with the dilemmas of teachers in taking responsibility for future Eritrea, teachers' authority and power to imagined the nation and shaping the nation's young, and the teacher state Eritrea in morality and control over schools.

The overall objectives of the book are to investigate how Eritreans perceived the state and nation when they encounter coercion, the making of nationalism through militarization, the issue of diversity (in author's term 'national identifications') under serious of control and "encampment", the state-people relations under repressive government system, how the ruling party instrumentalized schooling system for political purpose, the responsibility of teachers under the coercive state and the teacher state of Eritrea.

There has been considerable discussion on nationalism on the making as the party's program, people-state relations and massive militarization of Eritrea with supportive evidence. Eritrea's sole and ruling party is envisaged Eritrean nationalism through different programs to be imagined by the people and recalling the legacy of the "struggle" not to be forgotten. The national service program is central to the construction of

nationalism sentiment and people were also mobilized during Ethio-Eritrea border war for further strengthen the sentiment of Eritrean nationalism. Related to these, utilizing for nation building, education is an instrument of the ruling party to ensure its project of imagined militarized nation-state of Eritrea.

The very value of education is believed to recruit new generation that conform to the national value system and equipped with knowledge for national development which is not working in Eritrea case. In brief, the schooling system which was designed in road map to ensure the party's nation building project was apparently different from other countries system of education. Riggan says schooling system is systematically designed as it played role for Eritrean nationalism construct in preparing students for mass militarization. Even teachers are 'middle actors' and lost their vision of creating all rounded students who will be in long run pillars for their national development.

Due to multiple systems of tight controlling and coercion, even professional workers are under extremes of security follow ups and enclosed in securitization. With regard to the future fate of Eritrea as a nation, Riggan described that the role of teachers as important socializing agent is replaced by other roles. She questions, however, the result of making this agent powerless as:

They are no longer positioned to do the work of the state or to reproduce the nation by socializing a new generation of young people. What could be more emblematic of the impotence of the state than a generation of teachers—the ones charged with reproducing the nation—who have fled? (pp. 197)

Extreme securitization of citizens is expressively described in author's statement as "The logics of encampment in Eritrea are not just about protecting the nation from security threats but also about making Eritrean subjects who ascribe to the ruling People's Front for Democracy and Justice's (PFDJ's) version of what it means to be Eritrean" (pp. 199).

The good quality of the work is that, methodologically, primary data were collected from the lived experience of people and documentary analysis was made rigorously from existing related literatures. Cases were included and briefed to depict clear pictures of the lived conditions of the people and taken day to day activities as sources of information. Study participants' selections and the selection of cases were systematically interesting. Sometimes the author might also experience different situations like what subjects do as citizens of Eritrea. She has tested the life of Eritreans in one way or another that makes the book awesome and provides

opportunities for the author to get sufficient information the issues studied.

I doubt the study thorough addressed how Eritreans perceived the nation-state before they got independence from Ethiopia. How do they compare the situations what they experiences before and after independence? However, it is

rather important to see the concluding remarks of the book that extreme encampment, enclosure and controlling, the vicious circle of coercion with in the state apparatus forced young to leave their country. The party's project of creating militarized nation-state through mass militarization, tight controlling, serious securitization, and coercion results failed Eritrea as a state.