



Reviews of books

Jennifer Riggan and Amanda Poole, *Hosting States and Unsettled Guests: Eritrean Refugees in a Time of Migration Deterrence*. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press (hb US\$80 – 978 0 2530 6798 2; pb US\$32 – 978 0 2530 6799 9). 2024, ix + 214 pp.

Hosting States and Unsettled Guests is an expertly crafted and systematic critique of the recent emphasis on encouraging durable solutions for refugees in the global South through the twin pillars of local integration and development projects, as evidenced by initiatives such as the Global Compact on Refugees. Poole and Riggan initially set out to evaluate how Ethiopia's much lauded commitments to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, such as expanding refugees' access to work permits and opportunities to live outside camps, would come to impact the lives of Eritrean refugees in the country. Despite the authors spending several years (2016–19) with this population in Ethiopia, however, they did not observe the Ethiopian government translating these pledges into concrete policies. The authors instead observed the immediate harms that such failed promises inflicted on displaced populations, as well as the long-term teleological violence and temporal suffering that, they contend, are inescapably reproduced by the humanitarian–development–security nexus to which such initiatives belong. They thus use this book to persuasively argue that the sorts of policies designed to 'fix' people in the global South either ignore refugees' future aspirations or engender hopes for progress that are structurally, and cruelly, unattainable.

After an excoriating discussion on the dangers of allowing refugee reception to be framed as a form of 'hospitality' by the Ethiopian government, the bulk of the book addresses teleology, telos and temporality within the refugee regime. Poole and Riggan draw on relatively familiar ideas within refugee and youth studies on topics including waiting, stuckness, precarity and futurity to build their own conceptual framework focused on temporal suffering, teleological violence and caretaking. The result is a captivating and tightly interwoven lattice of theories through which to understand 'time-making' among refugees 'contained' in the global South. They use this framework to explain the 'temporal contradictions' in formal education, which is heralded as a developmental intervention that will keep refugees in Ethiopia, but that in reality torments students through its promise of progress that is effectively barred to them. They then consider how refugees make time meaningful ('time-making') through presentist acts of care and future-making, including through appeals to prophetic time in which acts of God or the UNHCR (in the form of resettlement) will solve people's problems regardless of how they structure their current time. Throughout

the book, their explanatory concepts of teleological violence and temporal suffering are powerful and intuitive for understanding the paradoxical impacts of humanitarian and development interventions, and one can imagine their future popularity among scholars across development, refugee and African studies.

The book provides a compelling framework for linking present to near future to distant future. This raised interesting questions for me about the past and about how refugees' pasts, intergenerational knowledges and regional political histories shaped time- and future-making. Riggan and Poole, for example, briefly note that young people had left indefinite national service in Eritrea because it curtails existential mobility, only to find the same stuckness in the refugee camps in Ethiopia. Similarly, they observed Eritrean refugees' suspicions of the narrative of Ethiopian safety and stability given the long history of forced displacement between the two countries – suspicions that, as the authors tragically recount in the book's epilogue, were rightly held. In future publications, it would be fascinating to learn more about how these personal and political histories conditioned the sorts of temporalities in which this population could find solace. The rich vignettes they share also made me wonder to what extent these young refugees' temporalities could be further unpacked as a function of both their age – in terms of how teenagers and young adults in general undertake risk-taking behaviour and relate to their imagined futures – and an array of global shocks and changes that have threatened youth autonomy and transitions across the extensive global literatures they cite.

Widely publicized atrocities committed in the pursuit of migration deterrence from Sudan to Libya testify to how far current policies are from values of humanity and solidarity. This is why one may doubt whether the changes the authors allude to in the conclusion, such as more programming to enable refugees to 'care for the present' (pp. 147, 153), would have the impacts they suggest. Such reforms may instead simply result in different, but equally debilitating, forms of temporal suffering. This doubt, though, is also the result of Riggan and Poole so convincingly – and heartbreakingly – showing that without 'a radical reorientation of the global system of migration management and humanitarianism' (p. 153), refugees contained in contexts such as this will always be precariously 'making time' within others' care-less schedules. They show that what makes a place tenable is the sort of temporalities it offers refugees to seek a future of meaningful choices, a future in which there is a 'possibility of progress' (p. 155). Spaces and systems ultimately designed to deter migration, as they expertly evidence, almost by definition can never offer this.

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