



# **The Struggling State: Nationalism, Mass Militarization, and the Education of Eritrea**

*Jennifer Riggan*

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A 2003 law in Eritrea—a notoriously closed-off, heavily militarized, and authoritarian country—mandated an additional year of school for all children and stipulated that the classes be held at Sawa, the nation's military training center. As a result, educational institutions were directly implicated in the making of soldiers, putting Eritrean teachers in the untenable position of having to navigate between their devotion to educating the nation and their discontent with their role in the government program of mass militarization.

In her provocative ethnography, *The Struggling State*, Jennifer Riggan examines the contradictions of state power as simultaneously oppressive to and enacted by teachers. Riggan, who conducted participant observation with teachers in and out of schools, explores the tenuous hyphen between nation and state under lived conditions of everyday authoritarianism.

*The Struggling State* shows how the hopes of Eritrean teachers and students for the future of their nation have turned to a hopelessness in which they cannot imagine a future at all.

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