Alula Pankhurst and Francois Piguet (eds.), *Moving People in Ethiopia: Development, Displacement and the State* James Currey, Oxford, 2009, 344pp, ISBN 978–1–84701–613–3

In this timely and informative book, Pankhurst and Piguet present an impressive collection reviewing research on Ethiopia's extraordinary experience of past and current forced displacement patterns. Such a book is most welcome. Massive state-organized resettlement programmes were implemented amid the country's great famine in the mid-1980s. Decades later, natural and man-made disasters, including conflicts, still remain key factors in uprooting populations from their livelihoods. Ethiopia's recent development programmes, massive public investment in infrastructure and urban expansion have created a new layer of development-induced displacement. All these developments are masterfully captured in this collection of essays that contextualizes the current debate in displacement research drawing upon case studies from Ethiopia. The book does not reveal major new findings but makes an impressive analysis of research undertaken over the years, even uncovering hitherto unseen postgraduate dissertations. Almost all the contributions are made by social anthropologists and sociologists. The lineup is a reminder of the skewed nature of displacement research in Ethiopia, where anthropologists are its chief commentators. However, *Moving People in Ethiopia* makes a welcome plea for expanding the research agenda, and its expansive scope and vision makes it relevant to the international literature in the area.

The book commences with the editors' introduction, which explores the historical and spatial dimensions of displacement. It particularly highlights how Ethiopia's geographic division into highland and lowland areas, with marked cultural, social, ecological and economic distinctions, influenced the pattern of population movements. It brings to light the complexity of migration patterns affecting nomadic pastoralists populating the lowlands, whose relationship with the state and projects promoted on the basis of 'national interest' have been antagonistic.

Part II reviews some of the issues underpinning current displacement theories, and provides an insightful analysis of the most common shortcomings of resettlement projects in different parts of the world. It uncovers the flawed assumptions that too often accompany current writings and operational guidelines. Two authors, Turton and De Wet, argue that the conceptual differences being alluded to among the various victims of displacement, who otherwise go through similar experiences, have not been supported by any sober outcome of scientific inquiry, but is primarily based on political and policy considerations. They make a convincing apology for what one of the authors calls 'a unitary study of forced displacement.'

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Part IV discusses present state-run resettlement programmes based on lessons learnt from the past. Amid the great famine in the mid-1980s, the military government implemented massive resettlement projects through its powerful Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. These programmes, however, were poorly conceived, hastily organized, and aggressively implemented by local cadres and peasant associations' officials with very little participation from the displaced persons themselves. No particular attention was given to how these projects were impacting host communities. Because of their glaring shortcomings, donors largely shunned the programmes and it left immense community dislocation, economic hardship, political crisis and cultural shock. When the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power in 1991, many of those resettled returned to their original areas, where they discovered that their lands had been occupied by new settlers. Though the context has dramatically changed, it is remarkable how settlement programmes continue to be applied as Ethiopia's enterprise of moving people undergoes its own evolution. Under EPRDF, a new federal constitution was adopted in 1996, ethnic federalism, according to which the country was reorganized into nine self-administering regions based along ethnic and linguistic lines, it was instituted by the government, which has deployed enormous resources to improve infrastructure. Significant urban expansion is also underway. Between 2002 and 2006, more than half a million people were resettled. In addition to the continued challenges of food insecurity and conflicts, these new economic developments (discussed in Part III) emerge as potential contributors of population displacement.

Part V explores victims' experiences of displacement and presents case studies, which include mental health problems amongst urban displaced persons in Addis Ababa; the experiences of Ethiopian returnees from Sudan; coping mechanisms adopted by IDPs during the 1998-2000 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea; and the demobilization and reintegration experience of ex-*Derg* soldiers, particularly, of women. Pankhurst and Piguet, in Part VI, review case studies included in the book and draw some conclusions. They argue that, for resettlement to work properly, decision-making processes ought to involve those who will be directly affected. They also advocate an articulation of policy guidelines that makes no distinction between the various categories of the uprooted (refugees, IDPs, migrants, returnees). However, the practicality of this otherwise attractive suggestion can easily be questioned. For example, whereas Ethiopia's partnership with UNHCR in relation to refugees is well-defined within international and domestic legal arrangements, no similar framework exists with respect to those that are displaced by either natural disasters or construction of public works. The particular needs and situations of these victims may also require differentiated responses.

Ironically it is in the book's chief preoccupation that its materials are considerably limited both in scope and depth. Part III addresses the challenges of development-induced displacement. However, its revelations do not measure up to the promise of the authors' broader research agenda. Contrary to the book's own plea for bridging research, it offers very little space for non-traditional social scientists to contribute. If a proper treatment of the international legal framework, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, were given, one would have easily observed the similarity between Michael Cernea's theory of 'Impoverishment Risks and Reconstructions', on which much of the contributions are based, and the 'needs based approach' used by the team of experts, under the UN Secretary General's Representative on the Human Rights of IDPs, to develop the Guiding Principles.

The book suffers from other shortcomings. Other than the case of the Ethio-Eritrean war, displacement-generating conflicts, such as the 2003 crisis in the Gambella region and the ongoing conflict in the Eastern part of the country, are not sufficiently addressed. The problems of Eritrean and Somali refugees, in the Northern and Eastern part of the country respectively, are ignored. Nor does the book examine Ethiopia's legal framework and practice regarding protection of refugees in any systematic fashion. Discussions concerning the revision of the national disaster preparedness strategy, and the decision to scrap the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission and bring it under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, have also not been treated. But these developments lay bare the dangers of narrow conceptualization of causes of displacement, which this valuable book unequivocally and deftly warns against. Over all, *Moving People in Ethiopia* is a very ambitious, comprehensive and rigorous study of the complex nature of population movements in Ethiopia and it promises to provoke further inquiry and debate.

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