

as fundamentally didactic, with filmmakers who “instruct audiences worldwide” (141). The contrasts that she draws along the way are sometimes jarring to a reader familiar with African cinema, as when “raw” women’s filmmaking is compared to Ousmane Sembene’s “glitzy” work (70). And Orlando’s description of all contemporary African cinema as “Afropolitan” (40, 93, 141) both erases any distinction between filmmakers working in Africa and those based in Europe or North America and ignores a by-now extensive literature debating this term.

It is disappointing that *New African Cinema* appears to have been rushed to press without sufficient editing and revision. In an early discussion of Rwanda, for example, Orlando claims that filmmaking “has returned to the country following the genocide of the early 1990s” (9). To support this assertion, she offers a list of films by non-African directors, yet never mentions Kivu Ruhorahoza’s 2011 *Grey Matter*, the first feature-length film shot in Rwanda by a Rwandan filmmaker. Later in the same introductory chapter, Orlando reverses chronological time to state that the Lumière films shot and screened at the turn of the twentieth century “fueled the fires of colonial desire and were thus a determining pillar of the French *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission) of the nineteenth century” (25). Orlando’s writing is uneven and can be confusing. In only the second paragraph of the book, we read that “Films from nations as diverse as South Africa, Algeria, and Senegal, reflective of equally varied film industries and ideologies, are contributing feature-length films and documentaries, as well as made-for-TV videos, to a market that has become globally interconnected and transnationally exciting” (2). Moreover, *New African Cinema* contains numerous typos and errors. Examples include: “exotifying” (22), “Paul” Vieyra instead of Paulin (31 and Index), “Safe” Faye instead of Safi (31 and Index), Paul “Willeman” instead of Willemen (40 and Works Cited), “Burkina Fasian” instead of Burkinabé and “Angolian” instead of Angolan (66), the identification of Tsitsi Dangarembga as from Kenya instead of Zimbabwe (66), and “Goré” instead of Gorée (101).

Rachel Gabara
University of Georgia, Athens
rgabara@uga.edu

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Scott Straus. *Making and Unmaking Nations: War, Leadership, and Genocide in Modern Africa*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015. xiii + 386 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$26.95. Paper. ISBN: 978-0-8014-5332-8.

What is the logic of genocide? Why would state actors seek to eliminate an entire social group, rather than rely on other forms of violence or coercion to realize their security goals? Straus answers this question by comparing most-similar cases in modern Africa—that is, cases which shared similar risk factors as identified by the existing literature, yet which had divergent outcomes. Examining countries which have experienced mass,

categorical violence (Sudan and Rwanda) and those which stepped up to but ultimately retreated from the brink of genocide (Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal), Straus inductively builds an argument which integrates the power of ideas with material factors. He finds that mass, categorical violence is more likely to occur in cases of armed conflict where there is an elite consensus, national-local alliances, and popular compliance to commit sustained and widespread violence, along with limited sources of restraint, such as international interventions. Additionally, he draws attention to a key ideational factor: an exclusionary political narrative which identifies a certain social or ethnic group as the primary political community which the state serves to benefit and protect.

While Straus is clear that material factors are essential to understanding genocide, ideological frames crucially shape the threat assessment of political elites. Where inclusive political narratives operate, state actors will view rebels and their supporters as winnable. The logic of violence in such cases is not to eliminate, but to shape the future behavior of the enemy population and eventually reincorporate them back into the political community. Conversely, where political narratives construct the state as the protector of a primary political community to the exclusion of others, elites are likely to view insurgents and the social groups they draw their support from as an existential threat. By conceptualizing the enemy as an uncontainable threat which stands outside of the political community, such narratives convince political elites of the righteousness of genocide.

The book makes impressive contributions to our understanding of genocide. Where ideology has been described as at best of secondary importance in Africa, Straus makes a forceful argument for the role of ideas. By putting cases of "possible genocide" front and center, the analysis tackles the problem of false positives in the existing literature. The rich, in-depth country case studies convey the author's deep knowledge of the region and guide the reader through the steps of his argument.

This rich analysis inspires the following observations: First, inclusive and exclusive political narratives appear in each case (although perhaps less so in the case of Senegal). There is discussion of exclusionary politics in cases where genocide did not occur, such as *Ivoirité* in Côte d'Ivoire and Tuaregs as a foreign body in Mali, as well as pluralistic narratives for an albeit brief period in Sudan under Numayri and in Rwanda under President Habyarimana. What distinguishes countries which experienced genocide from those which did not seems to be not so much the presence of an exclusionary narrative, but rather that such a narrative became dominant at a critical moment. Straus insists that his goal is not to explain the choice of one narrative over another (235), but if we accept his argument that certain types of narratives significantly heighten the risk of genocide, this would seem to be an essential task. It is a question, however, to which the book offers a limited answer.

Second, one might counter that political narratives are endogenous to underlying material factors which might also explain genocide. Straus is well aware of this critique, discussing it briefly in the conclusion. He rejects

the claim, noting that factors which might explain the nature of political narratives as well as genocide, such as ethnic demography or the economic value of a social group, fail to travel across countries. As Straus himself acknowledges, however, political elites must work with the social fabric they have if they want to govern (331). While the specifics may vary from case to case, Straus' own analysis suggests that elites faced economic or political incentives to build inclusive, multi-ethnic coalitions at critical junctures in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal. Côte d'Ivoire faced a labor shortage which encouraged immigration as well as internal migration, while Mali has been characterized by cross-cutting identity cleavages. No one ethnic group constitutes a clear majority in Senegal, and Casamance is an important region economically for its agriculture and tourism. These features suggest that elites in these instances faced incentives to engage in inclusive politics, building coalitions across groups in order to come to and maintain state power. Conversely, the cases which resulted in genocide are examples of incentives for exclusive politics. Arab-Muslims controlled the state in Sudan and seemed to have little need to build coalitions with southerners, while Hutus constituted a super majority in Rwanda.

To acknowledge that political narratives have material underpinnings does not necessarily deny the power of ideas. Indeed, the narratives which emerged out of these political coalitions that were formed at critical historical junctures may in turn come to play a key role in perpetuating genocide, as well as other phenomena. In conclusion, Straus' analysis clearly advances our understanding of genocide and powerfully demonstrates the role of ideas. It also raises important questions about the interplay between material and ideational factors, shaping the agenda for future research.

Megan Turnbull

Skidmore College

Saratoga Springs, New York

mturnbul@skidmore.edu

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HORN OF AFRICA

Getnet Bekele. *Ploughing New Ground: Food, Farming & Environmental Change in Ethiopia*. Woodbridge, UK: James Currey, 2017. xv + 207 pp. Maps. Bibliography. Index. \$90.00 Hardback. ISBN: 978-1-847-01174-9.

Over the past century, and especially since the late 1950s, successive Ethiopian regimes have sought to modernize and commercialize agriculture by pursuing often contradictory land policies and development approaches. In *Ploughing New Ground*, Getnet Bekele provides a rare and interesting, spatially disaggregated analysis of what became of farmers, herders, local landscapes, and Ethiopia's overall food security as a result of these efforts. The study focuses on the lake region of Ethiopia's middle rift valley, an area with high agricultural