

These earlier chapters lack a single unifying argument. At times, I found myself formulating Holmén's argument for him. I arrived at the following: self-sustaining producer organisations in rural Africa typically mix a market-oriented approach with some sort of sharing mechanism or public good (p. 202). Those that survive tend to be indigenous and internally focused rather than externally generated and outwardly oriented; working with the state is not as good as some would imagine; success is less common than failure; and, rural organisations are rarely in and of themselves transformative. Holmén thus offers a critique of liberal conceptualisations of development, and challenges the way in which Western development agencies think about NGOs and civil society organisations. It is an important, if conservative, thesis (and a more conservative thesis, perhaps, than the author would like to make).

In terms of presentation, the text repeats some of the idiosyncrasies of the wider literature on NGOs. There are fifty-five abbreviations or acronyms, twelve of which refer to different sorts of organisation (CBOs, COs, CSOs, FOs, GONGO, INGOs, LOs, NGOs, POs, QUANGOs, SACCOs, VOs – though interestingly there are no FBOs). The language sometimes slides into the slippery prose of project assessments or programme evaluations, making for a more difficult read than is really necessary. In the case studies, the more personable voice of Holmén comes through, and one gets a clearer sense of his argument and how this differs from what others are saying.

Snakes in Paradise is similarly perplexing for the way that it takes a fairly nuanced approach to peasants associations and rural development organisations, but paints 'development' and the 'aid industry' with fairly broad brushstrokes. The frequently crude analysis of these larger structures and regimes limits the overall success of the argument. Reservations aside, Holmén provides an important new synthesis on the work of producer organisations and rural cooperatives, and a useful reminder of the often conservative nature of economic development and social change in Africa.

BEN JONES

University of East Anglia

War and Survival in Sudan's Frontierlands: voices from the Blue Nile

by W. JAMES

Oxford University Press, 2009. Pp. 339, £25.00 (pbk).

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With this book, James completes a trilogy of monographs on the Uduk people of the Sudan/Ethiopia borderlands which bears comparison with her teacher, E. E. Evans-Pritchard's, famous Nuer trilogy. James has worked for over forty-five years with the group who are generally known – if known at all – as 'the Uduk'. In this time, she has followed their history of survival (the key word in the subtitle of her first book, *Kivanim Pa: the making of the Uduk people – an ethnographic study of survival in the Sudan–Ethiopia borderlands*, 1979) in the face of conflict, suffering and multiple displacement. Her linguistic and other ethnographic skills are today unparalleled in the region. Unlike Evans-Pritchard's Nuer books, however, her work is as historically and politically aware as it is ethnographically deep and anthropologically sophisticated. It represents something of a climax (one hopes

not an ending) to the long-standing engagement of the University of Oxford's Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology with the peoples of North East Africa.

The present work focuses on the effects of the 'Second Sudanese civil war' (1983–2005) on the Uduk, whose homeland was destroyed in 1987. Since then, the bulk of the Uduk people have crossed the Sudan/Ethiopia border at least five times, while others have been displaced to Khartoum and South Sudan, and some have even made their way to the United States. Although firmly grounded in the oral histories of individuals, the book does not just concentrate on the lives of a small and insignificant group of people in an obscure corner of North East Africa, but looks at the wider role of international forces and agencies as well as their local results. Paradoxically (but characteristically for James), after pages of harrowing detail of tragedy and suffering, it ends with chapters on dance, music, poetry and religious innovation that testify to the strength and creativity of the human spirit in the face of events that most of us, fortunately, can barely imagine.

As a fine contemporary multi-sited, multifaceted ethnography, *War and Survival* will be read by all anthropologists interested in North East Africa, but ought to reach a much wider audience of historians, political scientists, sociologists and representatives of many other disciplines, as well as aid and development workers. In fact, it would be worth reading for all those working on conflict, borderlands, refugees, religion and the arts (among many other topics) in Africa and elsewhere. It reflects James' innovative and sophisticated approach to analysing the relationship between contemporary history and the *longue durée*. It also represents an informed yet subtle indictment of the role of the so-called 'international community' in responding to war and persecution. As Alex de Waal writes on the back cover, it should be studied by 'anyone wishing to understand the experience of war or genocide'.

All this may sound depressing, but there are so many aspects of the book that are lighter, and even humorous; I particularly liked the Uduk satirical songs she translates. To declare an interest, James was my doctoral supervisor and I am a long-standing admirer of her work. But that is not why I am unusually enthusiastic in my praise of this remarkable book. I believe it is a very important work and that it should be widely read. I also believe that those who do so will tend to agree with me.

MARK LEOPOLD
University of Sussex

Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda by T. LONGMAN

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Pope John Paul II reacted to criticism of the Christian church and its alleged involvement in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda by stating that only individuals (thus Christians as well) were implicated in the genocide, but that the church as an institution was not to blame. In *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* Timothy Longman challenges this claim. He suggests that the churches and even Christianity bear an important responsibility for the Rwandan genocide. At least, Christian faith as it existed in Rwanda. The latter issue, a contextualisation of