

engagement with state-led practices of unity and reconciliation through discourses of fear, development and securitisation as narratives central to Rwanda's current social and political transformation (pp. 225–43).

This is a book that deserves to be widely read. The analysis could use more historical depth, and the rich corpus of ethnographic studies on Rwanda since the genocide is barely consulted. Still, Purdeková's study will appeal to both Rwanda and African Studies scholars, and is a must-read for graduate students preparing to do fieldwork in Rwanda. Scholars working in development studies, peace and conflict studies, comparative politics and cultural anthropology will be rewarded for a careful read. Development workers and diplomats will also benefit, as understanding the power dynamics behind government efforts to unify and reconcile Rwandans is central to their work.

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A Short History of Modern Angola by DAVID BIRMINGHAM
London: Hurst & Company, 2015. Pp. 159. £17.99 (pbk).
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David Birmingham dates his 'modern Angola' to around 1820, when an ascendant Portuguese monarchy began to consolidate and extend its presence in Angola beyond the coastal trading posts established over the previous three centuries. This brief and engaging volume charts the patterns of trade, migration and evangelisation that led to elite formation and ultimately to separate nuclei of nationalism in distinct regions of Angola.

The broad outlines of Birmingham's account are familiar enough. He examines the creole society that developed in and around Luanda, rooted in a slave economy; the networks associated with the pre-colonial Kongo kingdom, straddling the borders of today's Angola and Democratic Republic of Congo; and the trade routes from the Benguela coast to the Central Highlands that led to the incorporation of the Ovimbundu kingdoms into the political sphere of what we now know as Angola. What is remarkable about the book is the source material that Birmingham brings forth to add substance to this history of the Angolan nation – much of it comprising travellers' diaries but including also a rare account by a freed slave (p. 48) – and the eye for detail that enlivens the telling of it, often eccentric but no less poignant for that.

Three themes stand out. One is the ubiquity of slavery, the details and the terminology changing under the pressure of international norms, but its essence surviving in the forced labour of late colonialism and in the kidnappings practised by the rival armies in the years of intra-Angolan conflict. Another is the role of non-Portuguese foreigners, Boers, Hungarians and above all the British, whose presence in the story serves a reminder not to view Angola simply as the expression of a uniquely Portuguese colonial will. Indeed, if there is a lesson to be drawn about the particularity of Portuguese colonialism here, it is about how ready the Portuguese were, whether for lack of funds or lack of interest, to leave the dirty work of wealth extraction to others, be they Africans or Europeans. Finally, Birmingham does not admit a simplistic

reading of Angolans' agency in the shaping of their destiny: his deft account of capital accumulation and class formation makes clear that Angolans were slave traders and slaves alike.

The chapters dealing with the period after independence take a different approach, without the kind of illustrative narrative material that makes the first half of the book so compelling. The coverage of the war years and after appears to rely on a synthesis of material from a variety of secondary sources. The book stands on its merits as a history, and it was not strictly necessary to bring the story right up to the present. In documenting events only months before the publication date, these final chapters sometimes feel breathless. The book's eminent contribution to our understanding of post-colonial Angola is in the continuities that it lays bare. Birmingham situates the war within the social divisions that he traces during his treatment of the colonial period, and his approach makes quite clear how through nearly 200 years and several successive and outwardly dissimilar regimes, the predatory relationship between elites and people has remained constant.

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How South Africa Works and Must Do Better by JEFFREY HERBST and GREG MILLS.
London: Hurst & Co. 2015. Pp. 226. £25 (pbk).

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This book epitomises the looming sense of unease about South Africa's future. Despite the very considerable achievements of the African National Congress (ANC), economic growth has today slowed to a trickle, the country displays an astounding level of inequality, and it suffers from an alarmingly high level of unemployment which entrenches enervating poverty. Even worse, the ANC under President Jacob Zuma, if not actively opposed to tackling the malaise, seems at a total loss at how to address it. So, as its blurb proclaims, this book is to be welcomed as a contribution to 'growing our economy and achieving radical socio-economic transformation', 'whatever our ideological departure points'.

As a 'how-to' book, it takes us through punchy reviews of South Africa's 'development story', its expectations, and the challenges confronting major sectors of the economy: agriculture, services, manufacturing and mining. It concludes with discussions of the value and limitations of the extensive array of social grants in addressing poverty, the huge failures of the education system, and how 'the redistributive impulse' needs to be accompanied by greater emphasis upon entrepreneurialism and growth. Its conclusion provides a list of recommendations about how business, the state and organised labour could do better. This narration is buoyed up by reference not only to the usual success stories such as Malaysia and Singapore, but also, pleasingly, to quite a number of domestic success stories, such as the emerging table grape business in the Northern Cape.

Basically, the analysis is centred around five themes. First, emphasis is laid upon the high cost of labour relative to its cost in competitor countries. Whatever the arguments made, in response, about the need for employed