

Phil Clark and Zachary D. Kaufman, eds. *After Genocide: Transitional Justice, Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Rwanda and Beyond*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. xxviii +399 pp. Index. Cloth. \$50.00.

After Genocide is an ambitious book that falls far short of its stated goals of “assess[ing] the impact of the genocide in Rwanda, Africa and beyond” and “analyz[ing] the nuances of the national and international, academic and political debates that have consequently developed” (p. 1). It does neither. Rather, the volume serves as an uncritical showcase for the accomplishments of the post-genocide government in reconstructing and reconciling Rwanda without due regard to the broader socio-political context in which justice is delivered. The volume provides little new knowledge and also fails to nuance existing knowledge about transitional justice processes in post-genocide Rwanda. These weaknesses are compounded by the lack of editorial cohesiveness in selecting 20 chapters that do not speak meaningfully to one another.

The Preface is one of the few published statements by Rwandan president Paul Kagame for consumption by a Western audience and illustrates how skilfully the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) controls the flow of information in and about Rwanda. Most revealing is Kagame’s attack on Lemarchand chapter’s that the 2001 ban on the public use of ethnic labels is ill-advised. Kagame cites it, declaring, “those who have divergent interpretations of how and why genocide occurred are revisionists and/or proponents of the theory of double genocide” (p.xxii). That Clark and Kaufman allow Kagame’s preface to defame a contributor without providing any contextualizing or indeed giving Lemarchand the chance to respond shows their lack of acumen about Rwanda’s socio-political landscape since the genocide. It also highlights their lack of courage to question Rwanda’s party line and not let the president of Rwanda, a man who brooks no opposition to his authoritarian rule, be the final arbiter of an academic debate.

The first section, “The Politics of Genocide History and Memory”, is the only important section of the volume for it includes some important chapters, notably those by Buckley-Zistel and Hintjens on reconciliation and ethnic politics since the genocide. Also notable are the rich and nuanced contributions by Gasana and Steward on trauma and psychosocial healing at the level of the individual. Also in this section is Lemarchand’s chapter on the politics of memory.

The second section, “Post-Genocide Legal and Political Developments” is where the volume diverges most from its stated goals of assessing the impact of the genocide at the national and international levels. The section provides no new knowledge about how transitional justice processes have worked in Rwanda, as it is largely dedicated to understanding the role of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in delivering justice to Rwandans. There is almost no discussion of the role of Rwanda’s national courts in the post-genocide pursuit of justice. The chapter by Schabas on the spectrum of options available to pursue post-genocide justice is dated, and consequently only includes a descriptive account of the local-level *gacaca* courts, which are at the heart of the government’s reconstruction and reconciliation strategy. The only substantive chapter on *gacaca*, written by co-editor Clark, concludes that *gacaca* will likely succeed in bringing justice to ordinary Rwandans without much empirical evidence or discussion of a growing number of studies that have found compelling evidence to the contrary. His

findings echo the official government position, which is repeated in the chapter written by Rwanda's Prosecutor-General Ngoga.

The third section of the volume, "Lessons from the genocide for Rwanda and beyond" is equally problematic and offers few fresh insights and little analysis. Welsh's chapter on the legal significance the Responsibility to Protect doctrine in ensuring "no more Rwandas" comes to a dead end with the author herself concluding "that we are not yet in a position to promise 'no more Rwandas'" (p. 350). The remaining two chapters illustrate the editors' belief in the ability of macro-judicial institutions such as the ICTR and the International Criminal Court in promoting justice and reconciliation in deeply divided societies like post-genocide Rwanda, an approach that contradicts the more locally grounded chapters of the previous two sections. The concluding chapter highlights the disparate orientations of the volume, and underscores this lack of coherence in choosing to focus solely on transitional justice "as the volume's primary theme" (p. 381). The role of a transitional justice as an analytical concept underpinning the volume is overstated, as the editors actually do little to tie individual contributions to the transitional justice literature or to socio-political realities in Rwanda since the genocide.

The volume is also structurally flawed. Most serious among these is the fact that many of the chapters were written up to five years ago, meaning that the analysis is outdated. This is a serious shortcoming in a country where the socio-political context in which justice is pursued evolves rapidly. Second, the volume does include a bibliography, relying instead on footnotes in each chapter. This would not be worth mentioning if the editors did not single out what they believe to be the faults of "journalistic reports and academic commentaries" (p. 5) without giving readers an opportunity to look up and consider for themselves what "these commentators have failed to show" (p. 11).

Most of the contributions in this volume are to be read with caution, as it is an excellent example of the knowledge construction "for beginners, by beginners" who have fallen prey to the RPF public relations machine that Pottier (2002: 130-150) warns us about.

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