KRISTIN DOUGHTY, *Remediation in Rwanda: Grassroots Legal Forums.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, (hb $65.00 – 978-0-812-24783-1). 2016. 283 pp.

BERT INGELAERE, *Inside Rwanda's Gacaca Courts: Seeking Justice After Genocide*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press (hb $64.95 – 978-0-299-30970-1). 2017, 234 pp.

In recent years, academic scholarship on Rwanda has increased dramatically. The vast majority has focused on the challenges that Rwanda faces in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, during which an estimated 800,000 civilians—most of whom were members of the nation's ethnic Tutsi minority community—were murdered by extremists affiliated with the nation's ethnic Hutu majority. Particular interest has centred on the government's varied approach to transitional justice aimed at recognizing and addressing the harms endured by the Tutsi minority during the genocide. The government has pursued what former Prosecutor General of Rwanda, Gerald Gahima, characterized as "universal accountability," using a complex blend of national courts and *gacaca*—a reinvented dispute resolution mechanism that originated as a means of restoring social harmony following community-based conflicts with the Nyiginya Kingdom that ruled Rwanda from the sixteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. Rwanda has pursued legal accountability on an unprecedented scale compared to other genocides in which prosecutors have tried only a select few high-level officials deemed to have had the greatest criminal responsibility for atrocities.

Among Rwanda's diverse array of post-genocide transitional justice mechanisms, the *gacaca* courts that operated across the country from 2005 to 2012 have arguably captured most interest of scholars, transitional justice practitioners, and the public alike. *Remediation in Rwanda: Grassroots Legal Forums* by Kristin Doughty and *Inside Rwanda's Gacaca Courts: Seeking Justice After Genocide* by Bert Ingelaere are refreshing additions to a topic that has otherwise felt exhausted in recent years. Both books are based on long-term immersion in Rwanda involving direct engagement with Rwandans who have been actively involved in *gacaca* and, in Doughty's case related grassroots legal forums as well, as bystanders, accused génocidaires, survivors, witnesses, and judges. This immersion allows Doughty and Ingelaere to offer valuable insights into the daily practices of *gacaca* and its ability to accomplish five core goals: establishing the truth of what happened during the genocide; pursuing accelerated legal accountability for the vast numbers of Rwandans who were accused of genocide-related crimes; eradicating a perceived culture of impunity where atrocities against Tutsi were concerned; supporting national unity and reconciliation; and administering justice using a uniquely Rwandan form of dispute resolution with which Rwandans would be familiar, increasing the likelihood of their support for the trials.

Ingelaere's *Inside Rwanda's Gacaca Courts* begins by highlighting *gacaca* as a "traditional" institution adapted by the post-genocide ruling party—the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)—with the intention of facilitating restorative justice by promoting "truth-telling" among the general public. He provides a brief historical overview of *gacaca*'s evolution from its use to address small-scale interpersonal conflicts in the pre-colonial period, to the RPF's decision in 1999 to experiment with *gacaca*, before putting it into practice across the country in 2005. Shortly after its nation-wide launch, however, Ingelaere finds that the RPF altered *gacaca's* intended goals, and instead used it to pursue retributive justice. While *gacaca* was supposed to centre on the confessions of people who had committed crimes during the genocide—ranging from looting the homes of murdered or fled Tutsi, to torturing and murdering of their Tutsi compatriots—Ingelaere notes that in practice, trials relied on accusations, whereby "a significant number of the defendants on trial were accused, pleaded not guilty, and were convicted" (5). Furthermore, he finds that public participation rates in *gacaca* were surprisingly

low compared to the mass participation that the RPF and international supporters envisioned, averaging at 2.2 percent of the nation's overall population (66). Ingelaere grounds these observations in an impressive range of data acquired over three years of intensive fieldwork, including ethnographic immersion, life history interviews, focus-group discussions, and observation of over 2000 trials spread across seven sectors—the underlying qualitative and quantitative methodologies for which are carefully outlined in his second chapter, "Learning 'to be Kinyarwanda.'"

Ingelaere ultimately concludes that *gacaca*'s shift from its initial restorative goals to its retributive reality lies in the courts' importance for shoring up the, at times, fragile legitimacy of the RPF, as well as the strategic interests of Rwanda's rural majority, who used the trials to resolve a range of interpersonal conflicts by making false allegations, among other tactics. Regarding *gacaca*'s increased politicization by the RPF, Ingelaere notes that the RPF used *gacaca* to maintain centralized control by monitoring citizens through a "dense web of administrative structures, a semihidden network of intelligence agents, and continuous reeducation and sensitization activities." Most Rwandans—anticipating constant state surveillance—monitored themselves and each other to uphold rehearsed consensus with government policies (115). Further complicating matters, Ingelaere emphasizes the lay judges' tendency to systematically exclude "all crimes under investigation that could not be qualified as acts of genocide against the Tutsi population," even though *gacaca*'s foundational laws allowed for consideration of criminal acts that occurred during Rwanda's civil war (1990-1994) and genocide regardless of the victim's ethnicity (69). Crucially, lay judges had the ability to consider crimes perpetrated by the predominately Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Army—the RPF's military arm—among other atrocities that targeted Hutu and Twa civilians, but failed to do so. Ingelaere argues that this privileging of truth about Tutsi suffering during the genocide, combined with people's firsthand observations of "the absence of truth, the practice of lying, or of giving false testimony" left many Rwandans with a complicated, but predominantly negative understanding of the trials' restorative potential (95).

Doughty's *Remediation in Rwanda* similarly offers important insights for transitional justice practices in Rwanda, using ethnographic methods to explore how civilians "negotiated moral community and imagined alternative futures" (1). She does so by amplifying the debates that occurred surrounding not just *gacaca*, but two lesser researched grassroots legal forums that mediate disputes between Rwandans—the *comite y'abunzi* (mediation committees) and legal aid clinics—that work in tandem with *gacaca* to help Rwandans achieve reconciliation following the genocide. Her insights are supported by data acquired over eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork that involved attendance at fifty-six *gacaca* sessions, fourteen mediation committee sessions, and twelve legal aid clinic sessions, as well as broader participant observation and interviews with government officials, NGO employees, and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda staff. Following a valuable historical overview that details the production of history under different Rwandan governments dating from Nyiginya Kingdom to the RPF's post-genocide official narrative, Doughty analyses how Rwandans manoeuvred within different mediation practices in the post-genocide period. She starts by outlining the RPF's preferred official narrative and then considers how this narrative was institutionalized in grassroots law by drawing on conciliation-based systems that had long historical roots in Rwanda—*gacaca* and the *comite y'abunzi*—which the RPF, much like its monarchical predecessors, used in tandem with Western-style criminal trials to reinforce state control over citizenry.

Doughty's findings regarding *gacaca* align nicely with Ingelaere's, highlighting the rich conversations that emerged during trials alongside people's concerns regarding state

interference and surveillance, and the overarching sense that "as important as what people said before gacaca was what they did *not* say (107). But her greatest contribution arguably lies in her ability to bring *gacaca* into conversation with the day-to-day functionings of the *comite y'abunzi* and a legal aid clinic to provide a more comprehensive overview of the various options that Rwandans can use to settle disputes including, but not limited to, the genocide.

Established in 2004 to mediate low-level civil and criminal cases, valued at less than three million Rwandan francs (~3,500 USD), among families and neighbours, the *comite y'abunzi* has become a primary mechanism for negotiating rural land disputes resulting from mass movements of people and other events associated with the civil war and genocide, as well as important post-genocide policy changes, such as granting women the rights to own and inherit land for the first time since Rwanda's independence in 1962. While there is evidence to suggest that people typically accepted the *comite y'abunzi*'s rulings as less punitive compared to *gacaca*, Doughty argues that participants often found the process or outcomes unsatisfactory, revealing tensions within families and other intimates alongside the more commonly studied anxieties that persist across ethnic and political lines and with the authoritarian state in post-genocide Rwanda.

Doughty next turns her analysis to a novel legal initiative—the legal aid clinic that was launched by the National University of Rwanda in 2001—to provide legal advice to rural Rwandans surrounding a range of interpersonal conflicts, including conflicts that had already been mediated unsatisfactorily by *gacaca* or the *comite y'abunzi*. Because of its relative novelty, however, legal clinic participants often struggled to make sense of the staff's focus on securing documentary rather than testimonial evidence in support of people's claims, among other legal requirements, and likewise assumed that the clinic exercised state power, even though in reality its staff had no authority to enforce their recommended settlements.

Taken together, these new publications by Doughty and Ingelaere represent important contributions to the literature on transitional justice in and beyond Rwanda. Both authors actively engage with the history and politics that inform the production of knowledge about *gacaca* and related grassroots legal forums in post-genocide Rwanda. Beyond Rwanda, they highlight the complicated negotiations that are often involved in reinventing "traditions" to achieve modern transitional justice goals, and the, at times, unreasonable expectations that transitional justice practitioners and participants can have about these initiatives' ability to promote individual healing, social repair, and a sense of shared justice. These works speak to a broader foundational question for the field of transitional justice regarding whether it is ever possible to achieve such lofty restorative goals in the aftermath of genocide given the processes aimed at facilitating reconciliation are often themselves—as Doughty phrases it—"inherently fraught and violent," or whether we need to consider pursing more cautious and realistic goals (39).

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