Cross-examining the past

Transitional justice, mass atrocity trials and history in Africa

Bouwknegt, T.B.

Publication date
2017

Document Version
Other version

License
Other

Citation for published version (APA):
Acknowledgments

First and foremost, this work is dedicated to two women who have passed away at remarkable age during the research and writing of this dissertation: my beloved grandmothers Egberdina and Bastiaantje. Throughout the many years of traveling to distant and sometimes troubled places that are at the heart of this thesis, they were always a motivation to not think about atrocities and maintain sanity as I would always make it my mission to send them postcards, informing them about the sunny weather, the fascinating people and indigenous cuisines. In composing this text, I have always tried to stick to the golden rule that my grandmothers, who have never set foot in Africa or a courtroom, should be able to understand it. Naturally, I am forever grateful to the unconditional support of another woman, my mother Herna, since 22 August 1979. Without her perseverance, trust and love, this dissertation would have never been before you. Thank you too, beloved Barbora, for being my emotional, spiritual and intellectual companion throughout our many runs and journey’s, including the writing process.

Without a doubt, this dissertation is the fruit of the inspiration, encouragement and trust of many people. I am forever appreciative, first of all, to Nanci Adler, whose academic, professional and personal guidance, confidence and patience over many years has been unreserved. Like Nanci, Peter Romijn was a gentle but insightful critic, an indulgent reader and a tireless promoter, including beyond the writing of this dissertation. Without their unwavering support, I would have never started or finished this work. My appreciation extends beyond them and I am grateful to the numerous warm, friendly and intelligent colleagues, past and present, throughout all departments at the NIOD, in particular Üğur, Vladimir and Kjell, who became friends, and Femke, who was so generous to compile and organise the lengthy bibliography at the end of this dissertation. I also want to mention Antoon De Baets, whose inspirational, erudite and pioneering lectures on non-western history, genocide and transitional justice sparked my critical curiosity in these topics. There are countless other people who warrant mentioning within the broader communities of academia, transitional justice and journalism to whom I am much indebted for having worked with, talked to or had to honour to meet. That also counts for all those people, at home and abroad, I have interviewed and who were willing to share their grim experiences, extraordinary stories and invaluable anecdotes with me.

Last but not least, I cannot praise enough my extended families (Henk, Awoiska, Ivar, Hilde, Lisa, Julia) and my dear friends.

Thijs Bastiaan Bouwknegt, 3 May 2017