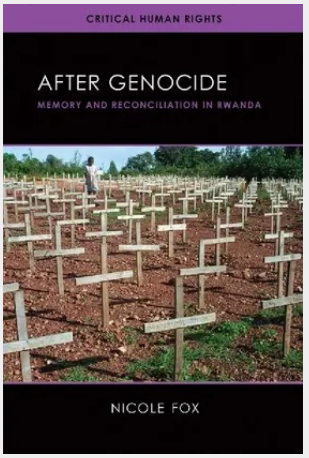
University of Wisconsin Press

After Genocide

Memory and Reconciliation in Rwanda



In the wake of unthinkable atrocities, it is reasonable to ask how any population can move on from the experience of genocide. Simply remembering the past can, in the shadow of mass death, be retraumatizing. So how can such momentous events be memorialized in a way that is productive and even healing for survivors? Genocide memorials tell a story about the past, preserve evidence of the violence that occurred, and provide emotional support to survivors. But the goal of amplifying survivors' voices can fade amid larger narratives entrenched in political motivations.In After Genocide,Nicole Fox investigates the ways memorials can shape the experiences of survivors decades after mass violence has ended. She examines how memorializations can both heal and hurt, especially when they fail to represent all genders, ethnicities, and classes of those afflicted. Drawing on extensive interviews with Rwandans, Fox reveals their relationships to these spaces and uncovers those voices silenced by the dominant narrative—arguing that the erasure of such stories is an act of violence itself. The book probes the ongoing question of how to fit survivors in to the dominant narrative of healing and importantly demonstrates how memorials can shape possibilities for growth, national cohesion, reconciliation, and hope for the future.

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