



Stuck: Rwandan Youth and the Struggle for Adulthood (Studies in Security and International Affairs)

Marc Sommers

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Young people are transforming the global landscape. As the human population today is younger and more urban than ever before, prospects for achieving adulthood dwindle while urban migration soars. Devastated by genocide, hailed as a spectacular success, and critiqued for its human rights record, the Central African nation of Rwanda provides a compelling setting for grasping new challenges to the world's youth.

Spotlighting failed masculinity, urban desperation, and forceful governance, Marc Sommers tells the dramatic story of young Rwandans who are “stuck,” striving against near-impossible odds to become adults. In Rwandan culture, female youth must wait, often in vain, for male youth to build a house before they can marry. Only then can male and female youth gain acceptance as adults. However, Rwanda's severe housing crisis means that most male youth are on a treadmill toward failure, unable to build their house yet having no choice but to try. What follows is too often tragic. Rural youth face a future as failed adults, while many who migrate to the capital fail to secure a stable life and turn fatalistic about contracting HIV/AIDS.

Featuring insightful interviews with youth, adults, and government officials, *Stuck* tells the story of an ambitious, controlling government trying to govern an exceptionally young and poor population in a densely populated and rapidly urbanizing country. This pioneering book sheds new light on the struggle to come of age and suggests new pathways toward the attainment of security, development, and coexistence in Africa and beyond.

Published in association with the United States Institute of Peace.

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