

BOOK REVIEW

Catherine A. Honeyman. *The Orderly Entrepreneur: Youth Education and Governance in Rwanda*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016. xiii + 301 pp. Figures. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Paper. \$27.95. ISBN: 978-0804799850.

The idea of entrepreneurship education stems from two concerns in the global development community: a commitment to the project of universal education as a Sustainable Development Goal on the one hand, and the so-called “youth bulge” in Africa which has economists at the World Bank and United Nations nervous about unemployment and poverty on the other. One response to these two issues in international policy and development circles is entrepreneurship education. This is expressed by educational programs that are designed to prepare young people for a world in which they will be self-employed micro-entrepreneurs, rather than wage laborers or public sector employees. What happens when entrepreneurship education is adopted as policy by a government that is committed to achieving high rankings in development goal metrics but has zero tolerance for informal economic practices?

In *The Orderly Entrepreneur*, Catherine Honeyman follows the itineraries of a World Bank promoted and national government-sponsored entrepreneurship curriculum in Rwanda. Readers are taken into the offices of international and national policymakers, Rwandan classrooms, and finally out into the barbershops and kiosks that populate Rwanda’s economy. In the process, Honeyman interrogates what she sees to be the central paradox of the Rwandan state—one that entrepreneurial education makes visible. The Rwandan government demands that its citizens adhere to a neoliberal ethos of self-reliance and personal responsibility when it comes to employment and the distribution of state services. But they must also acquiesce to heavy business regulations, high taxes, and an orderly “formal business aesthetics” in practice. Honeyman calls this Rwanda’s “post-development” state, or a state that is committed to neoliberal economic policies but is at the same time hostile to the liberal political ideals of individual freedom and mass democracy (14).

Honeyman’s work brings the difficulties of implementing entrepreneurial education under a government that has fashioned itself in the image of Singapore into stark relief. In often entertaining ethnographic moments, policymakers, teachers, and students try to reconcile entrepreneurship

ideals of creativity, risk-taking, and self-reliance with Rwanda's particularly stringent business regulations and tax requirements. Curriculum builders struggle with how to design classroom scenarios that promote creativity and innovation, while still needing to somehow be in line with an extensive list of state regulations. Teachers must struggle with promoting active learning and experimentation in schools that are in no way equipped to do this. And they must teach to students who are themselves conditioned by a missionary tradition of rote learning with an emphasis on passing written exams, rather than on critical thinking. Many students outright reject entrepreneurship education as not a worthwhile subject on the grounds that they already know how to hustle (Chapter 6 157–60 and Chapter 7)—an argument that I found compelling, especially in the final chapters of *The Orderly Entrepreneur*, when we learn that the type of enterprises that work best in Rwanda are those that get around the very rules that are taught in the curriculum.

Yet despite the above, Honeyman is careful avoid any analysis that might be read as critical of the Rwandan state (244). This is a perplexing stance, given that so many of Honeyman's interlocutors do just that—criticize the government's demand that they both account for the lack of employment opportunities as individual micro-entrepreneurs, but nevertheless adhere to impossible state regulations better suited to a world of formal employment. All of this seems to leave the question that Honeyman asks in Chapter 2 unanswered: why does Rwanda need an entrepreneurial education program in the first place? What work is this program actually doing, if its stated aims are unnecessary? Instead of exploring these questions, Honeyman pulls together a series of policy recommendations as her conclusion—as though the purpose of ethnography is to help state officials better govern their citizens, rather than to critically engage with dominant discourses.

With the above said, *The Orderly Entrepreneur* does pose several interventions into both the literature on the Rwandan state and the development enterprise in general. One of the strengths of the book is that Honeyman provides enough ethnographic details so that her readers may reach conclusions that are different from her own. For example, Honeyman's research challenges common representations of the Rwandan state as a top-down, highly centralized organization. Instead, readers get a glimpse of state spaces where policymakers are hatching haphazard projects that often go nowhere or fall apart during implementation. If one suspends the author's assumption that these policymakers know what they are doing, then this book affords a fresh insight into the workings of the Rwandan state: the very source of "formality" in Rwanda is an informal enterprise itself—fraught with exceptions and ad hoc improvisations that are implemented with a lack of regulation or foresight. In addition, while the international backdrop to entrepreneurial education in Rwanda remains largely unexamined by Honeyman, her history of Rwanda's education system (Chapter 3) does provide a foundation for exploring this in greater detail. In an age when microfinance is booming, the World Bank is investing

heavily in entrepreneurship education programs. In these contexts, it would seem that the purpose of reforming Rwanda's education practices is more about reproducing a "base of the pyramid"—or future micro-finance consumers—than about actual innovations in pedagogy.

The Orderly Entrepreneur is a book worth reading because it points to these issues and provides a space to debate them further. Honeyman writes in a prose that is clear and accessible, making the book a good candidate for courses on international education, development, or the state.

Samuel Shearer

Washington University in St. Louis

St. Louis, Missouri

sshearer@wustl.edu

doi:10.1017/asr.2018.138

For more reading on this subject, see:

Ansoms, An. 2013. "Large-Scale Land Deals and Local Livelihoods in Rwanda: The Bitter Fruit of a New Agrarian Model." *African Studies Review* 56 (3):1–23.

doi:10.1017/asr.2013.77.

Matfess, Hilary. 2015. "Rwanda and Ethiopia: Developmental Authoritarianism and the New Politics of African Strong Men." *African Studies Review* 58 (2):181–204.

doi:10.1017/asr.2015.43.