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**Karareba, Gilbert et al. 2018. Primary School Leadership in Post-Conflict Rwanda: A Narrative Arc. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 242 pp. ISBN: 978-3-319-60263-9.**

**Author:**

Vojtěch Šmolík – Philosophical Faculty, University of Hradec Králové, The Czech Republic

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University of Hradec Králové  
Philosophical Faculty

not demand a high level of expertise; and (7) adjusting and advancing the very concept of what a “museum” is.

This anthology discusses the important question of how African history should be interpreted, remembered and displayed in a modern museum practice. The contributions deal primarily with cases from English- and French-speaking sub-Saharan African countries, without paying attention to the Portuguese- or Spanish-speaking parts of the continent. The difference between European and African perceptions of history, museums as institution of arts and the accessibility and conception of exhibiting practices is made apparent. The cooperation with European museums, projects and foundations can maintain and develop some African museum exhibits and/or cultural heritage institutions, but it predominantly is based upon the colonial history (e.g., the Bamum throne given as a present to the German *Kaiser* during the German colonial era in Cameroon; the British Museum cooperating with Ghana (the former British Gold Coast colony), which provokes repeated demands of “decolonizing” African historical artifacts displayed in museums. All articles offer a rich bibliography connected with the respective theme. Illustrations, photographs and documents provide rich illustrations in the texts. Thus, the book is a valuable contribution to understanding museum practice about Africa and a welcome call for the deepening of Europe-Africa cooperation in the field.

Jan Klíma

**Karareba, Gilbert, Clarke, Simon and O´Donoghue, Thomas. 2018. *Primary School Leadership in Post-Conflict Rwanda: A Narrative Arc*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 242 pp. ISBN: 978-3-319-60263-9.**

The issue of education in Africa is often and widely discussed as part of the broader developmental context by scholars from Africa as well as by those from the Global North. Education constitutes a crucial variable in the economic and social development of each country; it empowers children to be active members of the society and serves as a mechanism for learning values and attitudes. As such, it has

been consistently identified as one of the priorities by the global development agendas. Until 2015, the UN Millennium Development strategy aimed at achieving universal primary education which was considered key to achieving the other seven goals (from eradicating extreme poverty to developing a global partnership for development). Under the current agenda of Sustainable Development Goals, this objective is further extended to provide universal access to all levels of education, eliminate all forms of socio-political inequality and support teachers and educational leaders in multiple ways.

Particular attention should be paid to the role of education in post-conflict societies. In the long-term, Africa is the continent with the highest number of intra-state conflicts. Therefore, various methods of post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation have been applied across the continent. Education is usually given high priority as its infrastructure is often devastated by these conflicts. It also plays a crucial role in dealing with the past and serves as a tool for reconciliation. The issue of leadership in education is thus critical in the process of restoring the education system. This extensive field study on issues of primary school leadership in Rwanda by the author collective around Gilbert Karareba provides an intriguing insight in a specific case of such processes in a post-conflict country. While education was widely misused for political purposes before the 1994 genocide, the current education system is portrayed as largely reformed and representing today's development. Education is presented as a showcase of the current government, despite the fact that it had been widely misused for political purposes before the 1994 genocide.

Karareba et al. aptly begin with an historical excursion into the pre-genocide period, covering the development of leadership in education during both the colonial and the post-colonial period. Without understanding previous processes, it would be impossible to contextualise contemporary trends. The notion of Gourevitch's *dual colonialism* rightly underlines the process of establishing a highly exclusionary system of education based on artificially created and strengthened ethnic divisions in Rwandan society at the time. Arguably their excursion is not complete, however. On the one hand, the authors correctly point to the selective method applied by the colonial authorities, which polarised the education system by teaching

minority Tutsis and majority Hutus in separate ways. On the other, they omit the dictatorial structure of education largely based on ethnic favouring implemented after Juvenal Habyarimana seized power in 1973. Despite explaining the unhealthy relationship between the state and the Catholic Church, which had been an influential actor in the management of schools, including the appointment and evaluation of school leaders, Karareba et al. do not elaborate on Habyarimana's policy of ethnic quotas in education. As Hilker (2010: 6) put it in her report for UNESCO, "Tutsi quotas for schooling were at levels below their demographic representation and [that] the situation was worsening." Such policy had an inevitable impact on school leadership, together with the general repression against Tutsi leaders. According to Uvin (1998: 34–35), only a few Tutsi were employed in the country's administration both at the local and the national level.

The post-genocide developments in the education system have been shaped in two periods. In the first, 1994–2000, the schools' infrastructure was intensively rebuilt and personnel was recruited in order to restore the state of education in general. However, continuities with the previous system remained in place, as Karareba et al. point out: "school leadership during the emergency reconstruction phase included the centralisation of authority and of the administration and management of the schools. On this, school principals continued to have very limited autonomy in decision-making. They were expected to implement centrally developed guidelines, curricula, policy, and formal rules and procedures. School principals also continued to be recruited locally, but they were approved of and appointed by central education offices. In addition, school principals continued to be appointed based on their teaching experience and on their knowledge of pedagogy, rather than on their leadership potential" (Karareba et al. 2018: 135).

Since 2000, reforms have been implemented to decentralise education. Karareba et al. express a critical attitude towards this process, defined as *deconcentration*, as many of the functions have remained in the hands of central authorities. Nevertheless, this development has opened up the arena for a new wave of leaders, who might be recruited locally and get more autonomy in the decision-making process. However, the author collective does not comment on the obsession of the current Paul Kagame's regime with an absolute control over society, and the

hidden process of *tutsisation* of the whole administration of Rwanda. Such a contextualisation may shed a more realistic light on the de facto level of decentralisation favouring local structures and local leaders, which might well be biased by the need of the regime to install its people all over the country (Schmiedl & Šmolík 2017: 61–62).

The current state of things is analysed through extensive field research. As the Rwandan authorities often tend to overestimate its performance in several areas, field research may provide a better view on the realities on the ground. A detailed structure of a catalogue of valuable research questions framed by a set of interviews allowed the authors to immerse themselves into the personal perceptions of school leaders, and hence, to unveil both the positive developments and challenges in their activities. General progress in Rwandan education is highlighted in terms of universal access, bridging the gender gap, and the reconstruction of schools infrastructure as well as the curriculum. Important school leadership developments are also observed as a “shift from a centralised school administration to a decentralised one ... the introduction of *imihigo* (performance contracts) in school leadership and management ... and the implementation of the school management project ...” (Karareba et al. 2018: 193). The majority of them were traced by the author of this review in his own field research on education in Rwanda in 2017, which is yet to be published. Perhaps as a word of caution, it might be wise if Karareba et al. would treat the presentation of Rwandan authorities a little more carefully, as they often uncritically only refer to official resources (e.g. Rwandan Ministry of Education reports and documents). Persisting challenges then include particularly the critical engagement with the top-down mechanism of implementing education changes regardless of local specifics and the needs of particular schools. There is also much pressure on not allowing history to repeat itself. Further challenges include the lack of education programmes for school leaders (including teachers) and the “poverty of households and illiteracy of parents” (Karareba et al. 2018: 207). The authorities, however, largely deny this, because it does not portray Rwanda as a model country of post-conflict development.

The fragile development of Rwanda after the 1994 genocide remains a prolific research topic. Scholars dealing with post-conflict reconstruction and development aid often mention education as

an important area of restoring societies emerging from conflict. However, most of this research does not offer nuanced analyses of grassroots level challenges. The major obstacle for inferring credible conclusions may be the uncertainty over the answers while conducting interviews in Rwanda, as links to the genocide and current politics represent an extremely sensitive topic. The *Narrative Arc* presented by Karareba et al. deals with this problem in a cautionary manner and from a professional distance. Although the author collective does not succeed in dealing with official resources published by Rwandan authorities in a sufficiently cautious manner, its analyses present valuable insights into a largely underdeveloped area. Moreover, its conclusions ensure the reader that they are well aware of possible gaps or reserves by remarking: “Overstating [the] challenges ... may hinder academic debate and could paint an overly negative picture of primary school education and school leadership in Rwanda. [Despite] the challenges described, [there are] strategies school leaders [and the] Rwandan government have adopted. Significant progress has been made in terms of primary school enrolment, increasing girls’ access to education, textbook delivery, the introduction of free [education] and the creation of new teacher training colleges and colleges of education to produce enough qualified teachers for primary and lower secondary school education. There is, however, much room for improving primary school education generally and school leadership specifically, in Rwanda“ (Karareba et al. 2018: 207).

To sum up, Karareba’s et al. contribution to this specific field of study within the general area of post-conflict reconstruction and post-conflict education, respectively, may encourage more scholars to pay attention to the very distinctive realities in the Rwandan education system, that may either support or question the country’s development achievements.

Vojtěch Šmolík

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