

Patronage, Pork and Power in Rural Africa:
Evidence from Rwanda and Uganda

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Abstract:

Bates (1981) identified how African governments perpetuated poor agricultural policies due to their need to stay in power. His thesis was largely contingent on two assumptions, namely that governments are both dominated by and subservient to urban interests, and that they are able to control potential rural opposition leaders through a mixture of oppression and cooptation. Yet, despite democratic and economic reforms over the past two decades, current data nonetheless suggests that the gap between urban and rural poverty remains as large as it has ever been. I argue here that a key reason why poor rural policies have persisted lies in a crucial and largely under-examined element of Bates' thesis, namely the ability of governments to co-opt rural elites through the use of patronage. To examine the processes by which patronage has perpetuated urban bias I develop a theory of patronage as institutional choice along the lines of two key variables, namely geography and visibility. I examine the two case studies of Rwanda and Uganda, and show how very different strategies of patronage have allowed both regimes to perpetuate poor agricultural policies while also securing large majorities of the electorate in rural areas.

Organisation pour la démocratie populaire – mouvement du travail (ODP-MT)
(Organization for Popular Democracy – Labour Movement)
Name of ruling party in Burkina Faso, 1989-1996

Office de distribution du pain; mange et tais-toi
(Office for Bread Distribution – Eat and Shut Up)
Popular wordplay on ODP-MT (Harsch, 1998, pp. 636-637)

1. Introduction

At the heart of the urban bias theory as presented by (Bates, 1981) is an analysis of how African governments stay in power, and the resultant counter-intuitive agricultural policies that they use to maintain themselves. The need for governments to both build up a political clientele and prevent their opponents from rebelling led to agricultural policies that benefited those most able to endanger the regime, namely urban dwellers, and hurt those least likely to do so, namely peasants specifically and rural dwellers in general. This thesis was largely contingent on two assumptions, namely that governments are both dominated by and subservient to urban interests, and that they are able to control potential rural opposition leaders through a mixture of oppression and patronage. Much of the current evidence on Africa suggests, however, that urban interests are no longer as powerful as they once were, especially due to the wave of democratization that swept the continent in the 1990s. This rebirth of African democracy, a shift so striking that one commentator called it ‘the most significant political change in the continent since the independence period three decades before’ (Van de Walle, 2001, p. 235), has meant that the former options of ignoring the mass of rural citizenry and oppressing political opposition are no longer as valid as they were under non-democratic and one-party rule.

Yet, despite this shift, there is much evidence that urban bias has persisted across Africa and the developing world in general, with a large and persistent urban-rural gap in the delivery of public services (Bezemer & Headey, 2008; Mwabu & Thorbecke, 2004; Sahn & Stifel, 2003). The continuation in urban bias despite democratization has thus contributed to an increased recent emphasis on the importance of patronage and clientelism as a mechanism for the continuation of urban bias. As such, a rapidly growing literature on patronage and clientelism in political science has attempted to understand how, why, where and when politicians allocate material incentives for political support. Much recent attention, for instance, has focused on the relationship between economic development, democratization and patronage, whether politicians target patronage at ‘swing’ or ‘core’ voters, how politicians and voters overcome commitment problems and why/whether politicians target their own ethnic group for patronage.¹

However, within this literature there has been little attempt to explore variations in the *types* of patronage politicians employ, specifically why the nature of patronage distribution can vary across countries. This paper thus discusses patronage as a series of ‘institutional choices’ or strategies (Boone, 2003) which hinge upon a series of trade-offs. Specifically, I explicate two variables which help to explain different types of patronage, namely geography and visibility, and why politicians might choose one strategy over another. More specifically, I attempt to understand why politicians might choose to allocate patronage in a state’s periphery versus its centre, and why the patronage that is distributed can vary between being very visible and obvious to being practically invisible and secret in nature.

¹ A non-exhaustive list includes (Chandra, 2004; Kasara, 2007; Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007; Lyne, 2008; Nichter, 2008; Robinson & Verdier, 2003; Stokes, 2005, 2007).

In order to understand this variation I take the two case studies of contemporary Rwanda and Uganda. These two states are ideal because, despite a great deal of similarities in the regimes of these two countries, the allocation of patronage in both states is strikingly different. As I show below, the reason why patronage in Rwanda is centralized and relatively invisible while it is peripheral and highly visible in Uganda has less to do with the structure of each country's regime than it has to do with the historical nature of power in each country. The use of Rwanda and Uganda as 'most-similar' case studies thus allows us to investigate the nature of patronage allocation while holding a great number of variables constant.

In the rest of the paper I first introduce a typology of patronage as institutional choice, before examining the two case studies of Rwanda and Uganda. Finally, I conclude with wider thoughts on patronage and urban bias across Africa and the developing world.

2. A Typology of Patronage

In theory political patronage is a quasi-universal form of politics, whereby politicians allocate material benefits to citizens in return for political support. Despite their confusion in the literature, it is important to distinguish patronage, which is generally not illegal, from corruption, which is considered illegal inasmuch as it involves politicians both allocating and receiving material benefits. Patronage and clientelism – here I use these two concepts interchangeably – obviously vary across time and space; previous attempts to create a typology of patronage have generally focused on how differing levels of modernization, regime power and electoral laws explain this variation (Khan, 1996; Lemarchand & Legg, 1972; Lyne, 2008). However, in a patronage-based system the benefits received by citizens can vary considerably in their composition, specifically as regards both their geographical location and their visibility. As such I examine here the nature of patronage allocation along the two variables of geography and visibility.

2.1. Geography

One choice faced by rulers in the distribution of patronage is geographical, whereby they can hand out patronage at the centre or at the periphery. The advantage of the former is spelled out in the old mafia adage, 'keep your friends close but your enemies closer': in other words, provide your political enemies with patronage to keep them from rebelling while also keeping an eye on them. Such a strategy involves the distribution of patronage within the central government and usually in the state capital, thereby encouraging provincial rivals to leave their rural source of power behind. The classic practitioner of this strategy was King Louis XIV of France, who drew together his nobles at the court of Versailles in order to prevent a recurrence of the *Fronde* and other provincial revolts that preceded his rule (Tocqueville, 1955 [1856]).

However, there are at least three problems with this strategy. First, except in countries without a periphery, patronage that goes to the centre will trickle down to peripheral citizens, most likely through their ethnic 'delegates' at the centre. This strategy, however, requires an enforcement mechanism between urban migrants and their rural brethren, and when this mechanism fails or is non-existent and patronage does not trickle down, poor citizens in the periphery will often take up arms in revolt, as arguably took place in Mali and Sierra Leone in the 1990s (Azam, 2007, p. 236).

A second problem is a risk that, once clients are 'hooked' on patronage and a state fully suffers from what (Azam, 2007, p. 215) calls the 'redistribution syndrome,' those who receive less patronage than others can become angry and threaten the government. Indeed, the oft-heard claim from coup d'état leaders that the previous regime was 'tribalistic' or 'corrupt' is merely another way of saying that patronage

was unequally distributed across society. For example, President Félix Houphouët-Boigny's relative parity of patronage distribution in Côte d'Ivoire allowed him to rule in peace up to his death from natural causes in 1993, but his successors' inability to redistribute to northerners led to a coup d'état in 1999 and an ongoing civil war since 2002 (Azam, 2007).

A third and final problem with patronage at the centre is that a sudden drop in patronage can lead to instability as clients grow angry and rebel against their former patrons. Once they had decided their patrons were more a burden than a benefit, these clients could use the commercial networks and links they had formerly established to fund and launch insurgencies, as seen in the collapse of such regimes as Doe's Liberia, Barrie's Somalia and Mobutu's Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo; DRC), among others (Reno, 2002, 2006). Indeed, as noted above, one of the more notable recent changes in African politics is the number of rebel leaders who have come to power since the mid-1980s.

An alternative approach to the centralized model is thus for a government to create patronage in the periphery, where clients cannot threaten to overthrow the regime in power. While this strategy is politically safer for the government, its downside is that clients are free to develop independent sources of power in the countryside and, potentially, develop secessionist or rebel movements (Reno, 2002). Similarly, this strategy can prove dangerous where peripheral clients can develop local power alongside ties with neighboring states, as happened with Laurent Kabila in eastern DRC in 1960s (Schatzberg, 1997). Thus, in states where secession, rebellion or invasion is not a worry or where peripheral areas do not threaten the centre, we should expect leaders to employ patronage in the periphery rather than the centre. Conversely, where the periphery poses a political challenge to the centre, we should expect leaders to centralize patronage.

2.2. Visibility

A second trade-off is in the visibility of patronage, whereby the patron can choose to utilize patronage that is either visible to the general public or unknown to many others beyond the recipient. Where politicians face serious political competition they have incentives to use public resources to win elections (Block, Ferree, & Singh, 2003; Stein & Bickers, 1994), whereby their spending often takes the form of 'pork' or club goods that are both observable and whose benefits are easy to trace back to the politicians who created them. In young democracies where voters have limited information about the quality of candidates and politicians are unable to give credible pre-electoral promises to voters, the incentives for pork creation are even higher than in more established and developed democracies (Keefer, 2007; Keefer & Khemani, 2005; Mani & Mukand, 2007). As such, evidence abounds of highly visible public projects that developing world politicians have utilized to win elections, including state farms in Ghana and Nigeria (Bates, 1981, pp. 114-115), sugar factories and port facilities in Côte d'Ivoire (Azam, 2007, p. 234), wells in Pakistan (Keefer & Khemani, 2005, p. 13), drought relief programs in Botswana (Charlton, 1993, p. 342), highway and education infrastructure in Mexico (Magaloni, Diaz-Cayeros, & Estevez, 2007) and, perhaps most famously, famine relief projects in post-independence India (Sen, 1999), among others.

However, in states with little electoral competition – which includes dominant-party democracies and all non-democracies – the pressures for redistribution are much lower as politicians have less of a need to curry votes from the public. In such countries there is thus more of an incentive for politicians to distribute either pure public goods or private goods, rather than the club goods prevalent in democracies.²

² The failure to distinguish between excludable (club) public goods and non-excludable (pure) public goods unfortunately mars much of the patronage literature.

This logic helps to explain the recent evidence that democracies do not outperform dictatorships on key measures of public goods such as immunization rates, infant mortality and spending on education and pensions (Gauri & Khaleghian, 2002; Mulligan, Gil, & Sala-i-Martin, 2004; Ross, 2006), and that the well-established correlation between high levels of education and democracy may be more a result of the influence of education on democratization rather than democracy's influence on education (Glaeser, Ponzetto, & Shleifer, 2007). It also explains why rulers who do not face competitive elections rely so much on the provision of private goods to maintain their support. A classic example of this phenomenon can be found in Mobutu's DRC: when the Kabila government's aptly-named Office of Ill-Gotten Gains (OIGG) attempted to locate his estimated \$8 billion fortune, it only managed to find \$4 million in his Swiss bank accounts. The rest of the money, it seemed, had been distributed as patronage, but a lack of records meant that any attempts of the OIGG to track down who received what was largely hopeless (Wrong, 2000).

(Mani & Mukand, 2007) provide a formal model which captures much of the logic presented here; most importantly, they distinguish between young and mature democracies. Indeed, previous attempts at creating formal models of patronage distribution have incorporated assumptions from advanced democracies which do not apply to the developing world. For instance, in arguing that leaders are more likely to provide pure public goods like primary education in democracies, (Stasavage, 2005) incorrectly assumes both that there are no overlaps between rural and urban voters and that rural voters are homogenous. Instead, it is more plausible to assume that politicians in young democracies are more interested in assembling a minimum winning coalition by providing enough club goods to a select number of rural voters in order to win 50% plus one of the vote.

Similarly, (Robinson & Verdier, 2003; Stokes, 2005) assume that both politicians and voters have commitment problems, while it is more realistic to assume that developing world politicians have far more problems with credibility than voters, for two reasons. First, while voters may be able to vote a politician out of power, it is not uncommon for African politicians to manipulate election results when they are not favorable to those in power, as recent evidence from Kenya and Zimbabwe clearly shows. Secondly, the ability for politicians to punish errant voters is obviously not just limited to the undersupply of public goods (Robinson & Verdier, 2003, p. 18) or reneging on offers of particularistic policies (Stokes, 2005, p. 316), but also includes malignant neglect and actual physical punishment. Recent examples of this phenomenon include the Museveni government's lack of interest in eliminating various rebel movements in the opposition-dominated areas of northern Uganda since the late 1980s, and the Mugabe regime's failure to deliver food relief to opposition areas suffering from famine in Zimbabwe (McClelland, 2006).

Thus, according to this logic, we would thus expect that leaders in competitive democracies would more likely to employ easily visible types of patronage, or 'pork,' as they seek to win their next election, while leaders in states without serious competitive elections are less likely to rely upon visible and permanent types of patronage. Phrased another way, politicians with low discount rates have a higher interest in employing visible project-based patronage that could bring them a large one-off benefit, rather than a series of more modest long-term gains. Conversely, when politicians are better able to plan for the future due to a weak opposition, we should expect them to employ less visible types of patronage like state jobs, tariffs and taxes that they can (threaten to) withdraw from unworthy clients.

3. The Use of Patronage to Perpetuate Urban Bias: Evidence from Rwanda and Uganda

Table 1 recapitulates the two institutional strategies listed above, along with examples of what types of patronage comprise each strategy.

Institutional Variable	Option 1	Option 2
Geography	Centre (Central Government Jobs)	Periphery (Local Government Jobs)
Visibility	Non-Visible (Individualized Transfers)	Visible (‘Pork’)

As with practically all of the other empirical literature on patronage, I employ here a case-based approach in order to examine the empirical evidence behind these predictions. Specifically, I examine the two case studies of Rwanda and Uganda, with the goal of explicating exactly how Presidents Paul Kagame and Yoweri Museveni have utilized patronage to perpetuate urban bias in each case. These two states, despite being neighbors and sharing many common factors, have rarely been analyzed together. In the rest of this paper I thus introduce the two states, examine how each government perpetuates urban bias, and demonstrate how and why Kagame and Museveni chose different institutional strategies for the allocation of patronage. I show how Kagame and Museveni chose to allocate patronage in accord with the underlying political and economic structures of Rwanda and Uganda along the lines suggested above.

3.1 Background Information on Rwanda and Uganda

Rwanda and Uganda have many factors in common which have been previously been taken to account for varying types of in patronage allocation (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007). Both are overwhelmingly poor, rural,³ land-locked countries blessed with high-quality farmland suitable for growing coffee, historically both country’s main export, with concomitant higher population densities than any of their other neighbors. Presidents Kagame and Museveni have a remarkable amount in common as well. Both men were raised in southwest Uganda, attended the same secondary school in Mbarara district, left Uganda for Tanzania in 1978 to fight against Idi Amin’s regime, and fought together against Milton Obote’s regime in the early 1980s (Waugh, 2004). After joining Museveni’s government as the head of military intelligence in 1986, Kagame started his own rebel movement of Rwandan exiles, invading Rwanda in 1990 and taking Kigali in 1994.

Both Kagame and Museveni took power as the leaders of rebel armies which had fought against regimes that targeted the formerly dominant ethnic groups in each country, namely the Tutsi and Baganda, as part of their counter-insurgency strategies. After overthrowing the previous regime, both Kagame and Museveni formed a post-conflict government that was broad-based for several years, followed by a narrowing of the regime towards the President’s political party (the Rwandan Patriotic Force [RPF] and the National Resistance Movement [NRM]) and ethnic brethren (Tutsi and Banyankole, which comprise around 14% and 10% of the total population, respectively). Both Presidents initiated a process of democratization, beginning with local elections alongside the creation of a constitutional commission designed to solicit views of the public on the design for a new constitution. Once the new constitutions had been approved by both parliaments, Kagame and Museveni set up presidential and parliamentary elections under majoritarian rules (in 2003 and 1996, respectively), which they and their parties overwhelmingly won. In both cases

³ The 2007 Human Development Report gives urban population rates for Rwanda and Uganda as 19.3% and 12.6%, respectively.

the new constitutions mandated for the first time significant minority representation in the parliament, especially for women but also for youth and the disabled.⁴

As such both regimes, while still ranked as semi-authoritarian by both the Polity IV⁵ and Freedom House databases,⁶ nonetheless score as well or better than all of their predecessors.⁷ Post-conflict reconstruction in both countries, as well as efforts at post-genocide reconciliation in Rwanda and successful HIV/AIDS policies in Uganda, have drawn large amounts of praise and aid from donors and visits from US Presidents Clinton and Bush. As such both leaders were for a while dubbed members of the 'new breed' of African leaders that were supposed to lead Africa to a new era of democracy and development (Oloka-Onyango, 2004).

Yet in both Rwanda and Uganda the central governments have pursued policies that have largely failed to benefit the vast majority of citizens who live in rural areas. Rwanda has seen a striking decrease in the percentage of minimum nutritional needs met by domestic agricultural production from 83% to 63% (Donovan, Mpyisi, & Loveridge, 2002), in part thanks to the government's failed rural policy of *imidugudu*, or forced villagization (Van Leeuwen, 2001). A recent land law in 2005 has only exacerbated these trends by lifting restrictions on land ownership and allowing the state to take over land that is not efficiently farmed without market compensation; as with the *imidugudu* policy it also seems designed to benefit Tutsis, especially those who had fled Rwanda in 1959 like President Kagame (Pottier, 2006). In Uganda, the urban-rural gap has continued to grow throughout Museveni's reign as the government has failed to come up with new sources of income for farmers previously engaged in the decaying coffee and cotton industries (Kappel, Lay, & Steiner, 2005). As in Rwanda, Ugandan land policy has focused on compulsorily acquiring land on behalf of urban investors and Museveni's ethnic brethren, despite legislation to the contrary which remains largely unimplemented (Green, 2006).

3.2. The Institutional Logic of Patronage in Rwanda and Uganda

Yet, despite these poor rural policies, Kagame and Museveni have nonetheless found most of their electoral support in the countryside.⁸ As I now demonstrate, this supposedly illogical outcome can be explained by both presidents' deft use of patronage to gain support in accordance with each country's political and economic endowments. In order to do so I return to the two sets of institutional choices detailed above, before examining how each president has utilized patronage to his advantage.

Geography

Above we concluded that rulers that were unconcerned about political threats from the periphery but were concerned about potential rebellions from the centre

⁴ The 2003 elections saw 48.8% of the Rwandan parliamentary seats go to women, currently the highest female parliamentary representation in the world.

⁵ Uganda has scored -4 since 1993 while Rwanda has scored -6 (1994-1999), -4 (2000-2002) and -3 (2003-present). Scores of -10 and 10 represent pure authoritarian and pure democratic rule, respectively.

⁶ Since 2004 Rwanda and Uganda have scored 11/14 and 9/14 respectively, whereby a higher number represents more authoritarian rule.

⁷ The only exception to this is the second Obote regime (1980-1985), which ranks better than Museveni in both databases. Both databases, however, are measures of democratic rule at the national level and thus do not take into account the destructive character of civil wars like that which devastated central Uganda under Obote's rule.

⁸ Both presidents received below-average totals in their capital cities in the most recent elections.

would tend to allocate patronage in peripheral areas, and vice-versa. Uganda, despite verbal threats of secession from southern political leaders in the 1960s and northern politicians today more recently, does not have a serious history of secession or peripheral rebellion that has threatened the center.⁹ Indeed, the various rebel movements that have erupted in Uganda's periphery have all failed to threaten the center; the one partial exception, Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement, was defeated only 50 miles from Kampala in 1987 but never drew any real strength outside Acholiland. Much of this peripheral weakness in Uganda is due to the fact that none of Uganda's major indigenous ethnic groups have politically or numerically powerful brethren in neighboring countries.

On the other hand, however, Uganda has a long history of central instability, with five coup d'états overthrowing regimes since independence. Moreover, the one Ugandan rebel movement that successfully overthrew the regime in Kampala was Museveni's National Resistance Army, which was based in central Uganda rather than its periphery. More recently, President Museveni has faced numerous threats from within his ruling NRM party, most notably from his former personal doctor, Colonel Kizza Besigye, who broke ranks to run against Museveni in the 2001 and 2006 presidential elections. Thus we would expect to see the peripheral allocation of patronage in Uganda.

Rwanda is quite different from Uganda in this respect, in that, with the exception of Juvenal Habyarimana's coup d'état in 1973, it does not have a history of rebellion from the centre. It does, however, have a history of being surrounded by enemies intent on overthrowing the regime in Kigali. As opposed to Uganda, much of Rwanda's continuous problems with her borders is a result of the fact that three of her four neighbors have significant Tutsi and Hutu minorities, all of whom have welcomed Rwandan migrants at various points and thus facilitated the formation of rebel movements.

Rwanda's history of foreign invasions and enemies started only a year after independence, when in late 1963 Tutsis exiles launched two failed invasions from Burundi, the second of which reached as close as 12 miles from Kigali before being repelled; a week after the second invasion Rwandan Tutsi refugees in Uganda launched another failed attempt. More recently, in 1990 Paul Kagame and the RPF led another invasion of Tutsi exiles from Uganda, eventually taking Kigali after the 1994 genocide. The RPF's success led the *interahamwe* who committed much of the genocide to flee across the border to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); their presence there supposedly prompted Rwanda's subsequent invasion of the DRC. The Congolese invasion, whereby Uganda also sent in its armed forces, later turned the relations between Kagame and Museveni sour to the point where the Rwandan and Ugandan troops fought each other in the Congolese city of Kisangani in 1999-2000. At the same time many *interahamwe* reformed as the Army for the Liberation of Rwanda (ALIR) and invaded the provinces of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri in northwest Rwanda, only to be repelled by the Rwandan army after fierce fighting (Orth, 2006). This long history of invasion from three different neighboring countries, the threat of ALIR and its successors, the presence of a hostile neighbor only 80 km from Kigali, and Kagame's own successful history in leading an invasion of Rwanda from Uganda in 1990, all suggest that Kagame would be concerned about the allocation of patronage in peripheral Rwanda that might fall into the hands of his enemies. In other words, we would expect to see more centralized patronage in Rwanda and more peripheral patronage in Uganda.

Visibility

⁹ The one exception here, namely the Tanzanian invasion of Uganda in 1978 was, of course, a counter-invasion in response to Amin's invasion of Tanzania.

The logic above suggested that rulers in competitive democracies would employ more visible patronage, or pork, in order to win elections, while their counterparts in less competitive states would allocate patronage less visibly. Here again we see a marked contrast between Uganda and Rwanda, which have very different histories of political competition. The nature of each country's social composition has much to do with this difference: some 85% of the Rwandan population is Hutu, making it possibly the most ethnically homogenous country in Africa (Fearon, 2003). Uganda, on the other hand, has a claim to the title of the most ethnically fractionalized country in the world (Alesina, Devleeshauer, Easterly, Kurlat, & Wacziarg, 2003), with the largest ethnic group, the Baganda, only comprising some 17% of the population. Similarly and just as important in many ways, Rwanda has been dominated since colonial times by Catholicism, which currently accounts for 56.5% of the population, while its Protestants have always been splintered among a number of different groups. Uganda, on the other hand, has historically been split between Catholics (currently 42% of the population) and Anglicans (36%),¹⁰ with the latter assuming national power after independence thanks in part to British support.

Thus Rwanda only had a post-independence history of single-party elections before Kagame's rule; its sole multi-party election took place before independence in 1961, when the Hutu Catholic PARMEHUTU party secured 77.7% of the vote. However, even before independence Uganda was politically split between the Protestant Uganda People's Congress and the Catholic Democratic Party, who had fierce electoral battles in the first two post-independence elections of 1962 and 1980. In the latter case the election was largely assumed to be stolen by Milton Obote, whose brazenness in doing so launched Museveni's ultimately successful rebellion. Not surprisingly, the differences between the two countries has continued to the present day. If we compare each country's first post-constitutional election, Museveni received 74.3% in 1996 while Kagame got 95.1% of the vote in 2003; in each country's first legislative elections, the NRM received 57.8% of the seats while the RPF coalition received 73.8%.

Another measure of political competition is the nature of regime change, and here again Rwanda and Uganda differ. Rwanda's most recent political succession, namely the resignation of President Pasteur Bizimungu in 2000, was peaceful; in all it has had only three extralegal regime changes since independence, in 1973 and 1994 (twice). Uganda, however, has had no peaceful political transitions since independence, with six extralegal regime changes in 1971, 1979, 1980 (twice), 1985 and 1986. The result is that Uganda's presidents have only lasted in office for a mean of 5.1 years and a median of 3.4 years, while Rwandan presidents have lasted in office for 9.2 and 8+ years, respectively.¹¹ Thus, as a result of Rwanda's relative lack of political competition compared to Uganda, we would thus expect to see more visible patronage in Rwanda than in Uganda.

3.3 Patronage in Current Rwanda and Uganda

We now examine the actual use of patronage in contemporary Rwanda and Uganda to see if it conforms to our theoretical predictions. If we recall, we predicted that patronage in Rwanda would be centralized and relatively invisible, while in Uganda it would be peripheral and visible. As I now show, the evidence conforms very well with these predictions.

Rwanda

¹⁰ US State Department 2007 Report on International Religious Freedom; <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/>.

¹¹ Kagame's time in office currently marks the median tenure for Rwandan presidents.

Patronage distribution in Kagame's Rwanda has largely been focused on central government jobs, both in the cabinet and the legislature, particularly the Senate. Rwanda's 26 Senators serve for eight year terms; of these twelve are elected by provincial councils, eight are appointed by the President to 'ensure the representation of historically marginalized communities,' four are appointed by the Forum on Political Organizations and two are elected by university staff. Kagame has used his power to appoint to the Senate both Alvera Mukabaramba, a presidential candidate in 2003 from the opposition Party for Progress and Concord, as well as Stanley Safari, former vice-president of the Democratic Republican Movement (MDR) and son-in-law of Theodore Sindikubwabo, interim President of Rwanda during the 1994 genocide. The Senate's President since 2004 has been Vincent Biruta, the chairman of the opposition Social Democratic Party (PSD) which received 12.3% of the vote in the 2003 elections, while one of the two Vice-Presidents is Prosper Higiro, former President of the Liberal Party (PL) which received 10.6% of the vote in the elections. In all there are seven non-RPF members in the Senate, comprising 26.9% of the seats, a far cry from the 4.9% opposition candidates received in the 2003 presidential election. Opposition party members were also selected in 2008 by a joint parliamentary session to represent Rwanda in the East African Legislative Assembly, including the former Senator and cabinet minister Odette Nyiramirimo (PL), ex-MP and President of the *Union Démocratique du Peuple Rwandais* Claire Kayirangwa, and ex-MP and former Deputy Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly Jacqueline Muhongayire (PSD).

Moreover, Rwanda's 2003 constitution has institutionalized power-sharing across political parties by stipulating both that the President and Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies must be from different political parties (Article 58) and that no party can control more than 50% of seats in the cabinet (Article 116). These provisions, while ostensibly designed to prevent future conflicts, not only allow for the allocation of cabinet posts as a means for the distribution of spoils to opposition party members, but, by stating this openly in the constitution, greatly increases the credibility of Kagame's offers of patronage redistribution. As such the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies is Centrist Democratic Party (PDC) leader Alfred Mukezamfura, while opposition members in the cabinet include the current Prime Minister (former MDR member Bernard Makuza), Minister of Youth (PL President Protais Mitali) and Internal Security Minister (President of the *Parti Démocrate Idéale* Mussa Fazil Harerimana), among others.

One could, of course, argue that these parties have little popular support and are only incorporated in government in order to allow Kagame to pretend that his regime is broad-based, despite the fact that he banned the main MDR opposition party in 2003. Yet of the three original opposition parties other than the MDR which formed a coalition against Habyarimana upon the return to multi-party democracy in 1991 and which were allocated cabinet positions in the 1993 Arusha Agreement along with the RPF and then-ruling MRNDD party, the leaders of all three – the PL, PDC and PSD – have seats in the Senate or cabinet today. Moreover, Kagame has tried to buy off MDR members with offers of positions in the central government, which, as noted above, proved successful with Stanley Safari and Bernard Makuza, and which for a while was successful with former Prime Minister Pierre-Célestin Rwigema and former Foreign Minister Anastase Gasana.

Inasmuch as these patronage opportunities are central government jobs, they are both centralized and largely invisible forms of patronage. Kagame has refrained from creating patronage opportunities in the periphery: as (Golooba-Mutebi, 2008, p. 27) notes, the RPF strategy of bringing former enemies and exiles into its fold seems based on a belief that they 'were less a threat at home than they were likely to be from outside the country's borders.' Indeed, while increasingly utilizing patronage opportunities in Kigali by creating new ministries, Kagame has simultaneously

reduced the amount of patronage in the periphery. Specifically, he reduced the number of *communes*, the second-highest level of local government which were subsequently renamed as districts, from 154 to 106 in 2002, before reducing them again to 30 in 2006. In the same year Kagame also decreased the number of provinces, which are the highest-level of local government, from twelve to five.

This reduction in the number of local government units certainly fits in as well with Kagame's lack of interest in employing visible patronage or 'pork.' An overwhelming concern for Kagame has been the provision of secure national borders, the prime example of a pure or non-excludable public good. Indeed, rather than focus his energies on creating club goods or 'pork' for electoral purposes, Kagame ran his 2003 campaign on non-distributive issues like security, stability, reconciliation and economic recovery (Waugh, 2004), while his government has achieved significant achievements in health and education outcomes by returning to pre-1994 trendlines and even surpassing them in the case of gross primary school enrolment (Lopez & Wodon, 2005).

Uganda

Uganda has seen a very different system of patronage than in Rwanda. While Museveni has, like Kagame, used central government positions as a source of patronage, he has not allocated them to current or former political rivals but rather political allies. Since his rebel days Museveni's base has been among the Bantu-speaking peoples of southern and western Uganda, specifically the Baganda of central Uganda and his own Banyankole ethnic group in western Uganda. Under his rule it is these two groups which have most benefited in Kampala: to take a recent snapshot of the cabinet as an example, of the nineteen senior ministers in 2004, eleven were from the west and five were from Buganda, with only two from the North and one from the East (Mutumba, 2004). Similarly, two of Museveni's three Vice-Presidents and three of his four Prime Ministers have been Baganda, while five of six army commanders, as well as two of the three Inspector Generals of Government responsible for fighting government corruption, have been westerners.

Politically Museveni began his reign with a broad-based government that included the main opposition leader, Democratic Party chairman Paul Ssemogerere, as a member of his cabinet up to 1995 alongside other leaders from the Conservative Party and the former UNRF rebel movement. In this initial period Museveni enjoyed an overwhelming amount of political support across the country, thanks both to his sharp restrictions on political party mobilization as well as a genuine appreciation of his efforts at post-conflict reconstruction. Thus, as predicted by the theory above, Museveni had the latitude to pursue pure public goods provision, most famously in the case of universal primary education, which played a major role in his 1996 presidential election victory (Stasavage, 2004).

However, Museveni's broad-based support began to narrow in the late 1990s, as political party leaders and even former rebel army allies like Besigye turned against him. Similarly, public goods provision began to stall after Museveni fulfilled his 1996 election promises: most of the increase in Uganda's net primary school enrolment rate actually occurred *before* the introduction of Universal Primary Education in 1997,¹² with enrolment and completion rates in decline since 2004. Moreover, with no non-NRM and only a few token non-Bantu ministers and army officers left, Museveni instead continued to shift towards other forms of patronage to rule over Uganda. In Bantu areas he restored four of the five ethnic kingdoms abolished by Milton Obote in the 1960s, namely Buganda, Bunyoro, Busoga and

¹² Uganda's net primary school enrolment rate went from 53% in 1990 to 85% in 1997, 94% in 1998 and 92% in 2006 (McGee, 2000; Uganda, 1999, 2007).

Toro, just in time for the 1994 Constituent Assembly elections.¹³ These kingdoms were not granted the political powers they held in the 1960s and under colonial rule, but were rather allowed to exist as cultural institutions. In non-Bantu areas, which have never had large ethnic kingdoms, Museveni has focused on the creation of new districts (the highest level of local government). In complete contrast to Kagame, Museveni has created 47 districts since 1990, or new highest-level sub-national units than any other country in the world. These have been concentrated in non-Bantu areas of Uganda and have been consistently created around election times: in 2000 and 2005 Museveni created districts only a matter of months before elections the following year, while in the 1996 and 2006 campaigns he promised to create new districts after the elections. Moreover, voters in new districts have responded in all three presidential elections, voting more for Museveni by a margin of 14.9%, 3.1% and 14.3% in 1996, 2001 and 2006, respectively (Green, 2008).

These two types of patronage – the restoration of kingdoms and new districts – have proven to be peripheral and highly visible. Almost by definition the restored kingdoms and new districts have been in the periphery, with only one of the 47 districts created in an urban area. The kingdoms have brought many new jobs to rural parts of central and western Uganda: even the Buganda kingdom, whose capital is in Kampala, has used funds to restore its various palaces and shrines across rural Buganda. Each district has also brought a whole slew of new jobs to rural Uganda, including more than two dozen technical support positions and a new set of district councilors representing special interest groups like women, the youth and the disabled, not to mention the district chairperson. These positions have a profound local trickle-down effect, as people who take up new district positions are usually promoted from further down the bureaucratic chain. Moreover, due to a government policy that district capitals are to be constructed in the geographic middle of a district, district creation has led to a large number of local construction jobs across Uganda. Finally, inasmuch as donors increasingly interact directly with local governments across the developing world, new districts in Uganda have also brought new donor jobs as well. As Uganda's districts are not represented at the central government level (with the exception of Women MPs from each district), Museveni thus does not face the risk of creating clients that could eventually overthrow him.

The kingdoms and new districts have been very visible as well. The restoration of the kingdoms in 1993 drew international attention, and each kingdom has focused on local development projects within its area. As regards the districts, Uganda's decentralization program has reallocated power over public land from the centre to the districts, which also receive collectively more than one-third of all central government expenditure in the form of grants. Thus districts are a highly visible form of patronage to the majority of citizens who need to access government services. The creation of new districts is also a simple process, whereby Museveni's government proposes a set of new districts to be voted on by the National Assembly. The clarity of Museveni's role in creating new districts can be seen in the often bizarre forms of protest that take place when citizens demand a new district, for instance when the residents of Tororo district publicly ate rats in full view of Museveni to demonstrate the seriousness of their claim.

3.4 Historical Extensions and Counterfactuals

The point of the 'most similar' comparative research design is to demonstrate that the two cases are almost identical with the exception of dependent variable and the crucial independent variable, thereby isolating and clarifying causality (Gerring,

¹³ The one kingdom Museveni did not restore was his own, Ankole, ostensibly because it was not popular, but possibly also because a restored traditional king would be technically superior to all Banyankole, including Museveni.

2007). Of course, what this approach suggests is that the same causal explanation should apply when the cases are not so similar; in the current context, this would mean that patronage allocation in Rwanda and Uganda should not only conform to the theory developed above under the regimes of Kagame and Museveni but also under previous rulers as well. Here I briefly examine four previous regimes in Rwanda and Uganda, whose success and failure clearly demonstrates support of our theory.

In Rwanda, the pre-genocide regime of Juvenal Habyarimana was quite successful at allocating patronage to maintain its hold on power. On the one hand Habyarimana claimed at least to be interested in the allocation of patronage to the countryside, with positive references to agriculture and the Hutu peasantry in his speeches (Verwimp, 2000). However, as under Kagame, Habyarimana centralized power in Kigali rather than the countryside, using his coffee revenues to buy off his opposition in Kigali while also channeling large amounts of state resources to Hutu elites from his region of Gisenyi. Thus, despite being considered anti-Tutsi in retrospect, Habyarimana nonetheless hired Tutsi as cabinet ministers, ambassadors and as senior members of his MRND party. In accord with the theory here, however, Habyarimana allowed Tutsi no remit in the countryside, with 'an almost total absence of Tutsi from the organs of the local state: there was only one Tutsi prefect, the prefect of Butare who was killed in the genocide, and not a single Tutsi burgomaster' in 1990 (Mamdani, 2001, p. 141). Until the early 1990s Habyarimana's regime was also focused on the provision of pure public goods, such as transport infrastructure, high levels of access to safe drinking water and health and education facilities, and the maintenance of a good macroeconomic environment with low levels of inflation and government debt (Gakusi & Garenne, 2007; Lopez & Wodon, 2005). Habyarimana's loss of control from the late 1980s onwards thus had arguably less to do with the internal dynamics of his rule than with the collapse of international coffee prices, the winds of change blowing through Francophone Africa and the invasion of the RPF, which consisted of Tutsi exiles whose allegiance Habyarimana was unable to purchase.

In Uganda, Idi Amin's rule similarly conformed to the Museveni pattern of decentralized and visible patronage. Amin's rule is well-known for its destruction and violence; needless to say, pure public goods provision suffered greatly under Amin's regime. Moreover, Amin was notorious for almost exclusively appointing to the military and his cabinet fellow Kakwa, Nubians and Sudanese from north-west Uganda. Yet Amin was able to maintain himself in power by creating new sources of patronage that he could allocate to his political rivals. In 1972 he notoriously exiled the country's Asian community, thereby opening up a great deal of highly visible patronage resources. Rather than centralize these assets by resting them in government hands, Amin instead redistributed the vast majority to individuals; while evidence is very sparse on who received these assets, there is at least some indication that they did not only end up in same hands who controlled power in Kampala. Similarly, in 1973 he introduced a whole new provincial tier of regional government, numbering ten across the whole country, while also nearly doubling the number of districts from 19 to 37; as under Museveni these new provinces and districts allowed Amin to placate his political rivals and remove them from Kampala at the same time (Jørgensen, 1981). Amin's ability to redistribute enough patronage to maintain himself in power thus lasted until the collapse of the East African Community in 1977, the US ban on the import of Ugandan coffee in October 1978 and his subsequent disastrous invasion of Tanzania two weeks later (Nurnberger, 1982).

Another way to test the theory presented here is to examine counterfactuals, i.e., off-the-path behavior by politicians that led to adverse consequences (Boone, 2003). Here again the evidence is strong. As opposed to Habyarimana's centralized patronage, Rwanda's first President Grégoire Kayibanda did not redistribute

centralized resources to his political enemies. Unlike Habyarimana Kayibanda completely shut out Tutsis from his government after 1964, yet allowed Tutsis to gain access to lower-level jobs, especially in schools. However, what was perhaps most important in Kayibanda's downfall was his failure to distribute centralized patronage to Hutus outside a small circle from southern Rwanda, who dominated the powerful state marketing board TRAFIPRO. Instead, Kayibanda kept troublesome military leaders like Major Sabin Benda and future RPF chairman Lieutenant-Colonel Alexis Kanyarengwe far from Kigali, appointing them instead as directors of a tea factory in Cyangugu and a seminary in Gisenyi, respectively. Moreover, despite managing a growing economy with increasing international coffee prices and growing amounts of foreign aid per capita, Kayibanda's regime nonetheless oversaw a decline in the quality of pure public goods provision, with under-five mortality increasing and primary school enrolment dropping from 64% to 44% between 1964 and 1973 (Gakusi & Garenne, 2007). Kayibanda's final mistake was to create local anti-Tutsi vigilante committees in 1972-73, whose power was quickly usurped by local Hutu politicians who, along with the aforementioned military officers outside the remit of Kigali, supported Habyarimana's military coup in July 1973 (Reyntjens, 1985).

The Obote regime in the early 1960s represents a similar example of 'off-the-path' behavior from Uganda. Obote made the mistake of centralizing patronage, most notoriously by abolishing Uganda's southern Bantu-speaking kingdoms and all regional and district assemblies across the country in 1967. In his attempt to copy Julius Nyerere's *ujamaa* policies in Tanzania, Obote announced the partial nationalization of some 80 major companies in his so-called 'Move to the Left,' whose rhetoric indicated that future policies might include the nationalization of land and government redistribution of income. Included among these policies was Obote's notorious 'one plus three' election proposal for the never-held parliamentary elections of 1971, which required putative MPs in a given constituency to receive a base amount of support in three other constituencies in other parts of Uganda and thereby disadvantaged MPs who only had local support (Jørgensen, 1981). All of these moves thus destroyed local patronage networks, especially among the Baganda who stood to lose the most from Obote's policies. Despite efforts to build an inclusive cabinet and bureaucracy with members from all of Uganda's regions, Obote was nonetheless overthrown by Amin in a widely-supported coup in 1971.

4. Conclusion

In this article I have argued that, in an era of democratization in Africa, the continued existence of patronage has allowed leaders to continue poor rural policies. I created a typology of patronage as a series of institutional choices or strategies along two variables, namely geography and visibility. I then showed how both Uganda and Rwanda have seen the perpetuation of poor rural policies through quite different strategies of patronage, whereby Kagame has employed centralized and relatively invisible types of patronage while Museveni has focused on peripheral and highly visible patronage.

The analysis here has several lessons, both for the analysis of urban bias as well as for the study of patronage and clientelism. As regards the former, it is clear that the continued existence of patronage resources has allowed African leaders to win rural votes through the skilled distribution of patronage rather than the promotion of good rural policies. The quote at the beginning of this paper sums up much of the argument, in that African governments have been able to allow citizens to 'eat' by distributing enough 'bread' to win elections; in between elections, however, citizens are largely voiceless and are forced to 'shut up.'

As regards patronage, a lesson here is that the nature of patronage allocation can have little to do with regime type and economic development, but much to do with the different structures of power in a given country across time and space. The

historically different time horizons of politicians in Rwanda and Uganda has meant that patronage in the former is much less visible than in the latter, while each country's differing political geographies has similarly resulted in differing levels of the centralization of patronage. The historical evidence across three regimes in each country – Kayibanda, Habyarimana and Kagame in Rwanda, plus Obote, Amin and Museveni in Uganda – demonstrates as well that regimes that otherwise differ in a great number of ways have pursued similar strategies of patronage allocation in response to the nature of political threats to their power across time and space.

The evidence here thus might go some way to help shed some light on some of the more debated topics in the study of patronage. First, it adds to evidence that the differences between democratic and non-democratic regimes may have less to do with their allocation of public goods and patronage habits than with the composition of political threats to their authority, with non-democracies spending considerably more on their militaries than democracies (Mulligan et al., 2004). As demonstrated here, further research into the differences between competitive and non-competitive democracies might bring these differences into sharper focus. Second, the evidence here suggests that one of the reasons why there is no agreed answer on whether governments allocate patronage to swing vs. core voters is that contexts can differ greatly depending on the sources of stability and instability of a given regime. In Uganda, for instance, (Green, 2008) demonstrated that neither the core nor the swing voter hypotheses do a good job at predicting district creation; rather, as predicted from the argument above, a Bantu dummy variable is significant across a variety of specifications. Finally, the evidence here suggests that a focus on ethnic patronage may miss much of the variation in patronage across time and space: in all six regimes examined here ethnic patronage has been prominent, while arguably none of the six have been overthrown due to an over-concentration of patronage among the president's brethren. In other words, to understand the role of patronage in how and why African leaders stay in power it may be as important to examine how they distribute patronage to citizens from other ethnic groups as they do with their own kin.

Finally, we should note that the patronage strategies demonstrated here are not equally distributed across Africa. The restoration of traditional kingdoms in Uganda has been echoed elsewhere, with ethnic chiefs restored or granted more powers in Cameroon, the DRC, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria and South Africa, among others (Englebert, 2002). Similarly, Museveni's strategy of creating new districts as a source of patronage has been echoed elsewhere in Africa, with new provinces created recently in Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, the DRC, Ghana, Malawi and Sudan. Indeed, the reason for this increased focus on club goods and peripheral patronage is clear when we examine the current state of political opposition in Africa. Unlike Rwanda with its history of political stability and long presidential tenures, the return of multi-party elections in Africa in the 1990s has brought high presidential turnover rates to many parts of the continent: while only one African president lost an election between 1960 and 1990, fourteen have lost elections since 1990 (Posner & Young, 2007, p. 131). The reintroduction of multi-party politics has thus meant that African presidents have been much more likely to raise their discount rate than to lower it, with an arguably concomitant increased focus on the provision of club goods or 'pork.'

Rwanda is also exceptional in its history of invasion and threats from its neighbors and periphery. Unlike Rwanda, most other African states conflicts can take place in the periphery without threatening rule at the centre, which suggests that Rwanda's system of centralized patronage may be anomalous. The is evidence that a concern over locating power in the periphery may indeed have been valid in an earlier era where secession was a serious concern for national leaders in such countries as Nigeria (Biafra) and DRC (Katanga), but secession has largely disappeared as a strategy for African provincial elites over the past few decades as

opposition leaders have increasingly attempted to gain control over the central government instead (Englebert & Hummel, 2005).

In the end, with a slow but sure process of democratization across Africa, the logic above thus suggests that peripheral and visible patronage will play an increasingly important role in Africa in coming years. It is therefore important that scholars continue to study the nature of patronage in these young democracies to better understand how governments continue to pursue poor rural policies at the expense of the majority of their citizens.

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