

Patronage, Pork and Power in Rural Africa:
Examining 'Urban Bias' with 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 three key variables, namely reversibility, 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.

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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 (R. 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. These policies thus harmed the vast majority of rural Africans through a variety of mechanisms, including overvalued exchange rates, low prices for export crops from marketing boards and a redistribution of resources from agriculture to industry, among others. While some variation existed among African regimes in their policy choices, (R. Bates, 1981) argued that much of the economic malaise that had struck the continent by the early 1980s was due to this urban bias.

(R. Bates, 1981)'s 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. However, there is much evidence that these two contingencies are no longer valid. The economic reforms which overtook the continent in the 1980s as well as the democratic reforms which spread in the 1990s both decreased the reliance of African leaders on urban interests and limited their ability to oppress and co-opt rural interests. The currency devaluations and higher prices to farmers that came as a result of these twin reforms plausibly suggest that the urban bias thesis does not hold up today and has not been valid for the better part of two decades (Freeman & Lindauer, 1999, p. 15; Jamal & Weeks, 1993; Riddell, 1997).

Yet while some of the poor agricultural policies noted by (R. Bates, 1981) have indeed been addressed by African governments, it is not so clear that rural populations have benefited. Rural poverty is as serious as it ever has been, inasmuch as rural areas continue to lag far behind urban areas in living standards (as measured through statistics on education, health and poverty), with no indication that this gap is closing (Mwabu & Thorbecke, 2004; Sahn & Stifel, 2003). Indeed, recent analysis of the aforementioned economic reforms has revealed the way that both rich farmers and urban dwellers have tended to benefit at the behest of small farmers, who continue to migrate to urban areas. Moreover, price fluctuations and higher prices for agricultural inputs has led to a shift to non-farm activities in the countryside, which in turn has contributed to rising rural food prices and food aid dependence, a growing landless agrarian class and a consolidation of land ownership under large-scale farmers (Meagher, 2001; Ponte, 2001). Of those who have benefited from government reforms As noted by (Bryceson, 2002, p. 730) 'this is a perverse outcome for a set of policies that was originally implemented in the name of correcting urban bias and "getting the prices right" for Africa's peasant farmers.'

How, then, can we account for these conflicting accounts? Obviously there must be something missing either in Bates's theory or the ability of democratic and economic reform to abolish urban bias. I argue here that a crucial element of Bates's thesis has been underexamined, namely the ability of governments to co-opt rural

elites through the use of patronage. In countries which have both democratized and reformed their economies patronage has taken an even more important role than it previously played. This patronage has manifested itself in a variety of ways, depending on the various political and economic variables specific to African countries. I thus employ here the concept of institutional choice (Boone, 2003), whereby African politicians have chosen to employ different institutional strategies in different political and economic environments, but always with the same goal, namely the perpetuation of their rule. As with (R. Bates, 1981), I argue here that a significant amount of Africa's economic malaise can be attributed to political factors, and that, for urban bias to be addressed in full, it is necessary to first examine the way African politicians use patronage as a cheap way to rule over the countryside.

In order to examine the importance of patronage in rural Africa, I first examine in more detail why we should not expect current African governments to perpetuate urban bias. I then delineate theories of patronage and pork-barrel politics as applied to the African context before moving onto a detailed account of two countries led by two of Africa's 'new generation of leaders,' namely Rwanda and Uganda. I show that, despite implementing democratic and economic reforms as suggested above, both countries have perpetuated poor rural policies due to each regime's ability to wield quite different types of patronage. Finally, I conclude with suggestions as to how we might better understand patronage across contemporary Africa .

2. Urban bias, Democratization and Economic Reform, 1980-present

As noted above, (R. Bates, 1981)'s thesis largely relies upon two key 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. I address both in turn.

Bates' first assumption is that African governments, with the exception of select countries like Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya, owe much of their legitimacy and existence to urban dwellers, a thesis which is largely incorrect today for two reasons. The first and more prominent reason is the move towards democratization in Africa since the end of the Cold War, 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). This general shift from one-party or non-democratic regimes to competitive multi-party systems has meant that governments can no longer ignore the interests of rural dwellers as they had formerly done. As noted by (Varshney, 1993), increasing democratization could see 'rural bias' take over from urban bias as politicians scoured the countryside for votes. Evidence has shown that democratization in Africa has led to both higher levels of civil liberties and more spending on primary education in Africa (Lindberg, 2006; Stasavage, 2005), which seems to suggest that similar mechanisms should operate to eliminate urban bias.

A second reason why African governments are no longer dominated by urban interests is due to the significant number of them that have emerged out of rebel rural movements in the past two decades. Uganda's Yoweri Museveni was famously the first rebel leader in post-colonial Africa to fight a successful guerrilla war against an African government in the countryside, where he used Maoist techniques to build up support among the rural population of central Uganda and eventually take power in 1986. Soon after other rebel leaders started to assume power around the continent, including Pierre Nkurunziza (Burundi), François Bozizé (Central African Republic), Idriss Déby (Chad), Laurent Kabila (Democratic Republic of Congo), Isias Afewerki

(Eritrea), Meles Zenawi (Ethiopia), Charles Taylor (Liberia), Sam Nujoma (Namibia), Paul Kagame (Rwanda) and John Garang (Southern Sudan), among others.¹

Despite the prevalence of what (Richards, 2005, p. 572) calls the 'urban gang warfare model' in understanding these rebel movements, which are normally understood as 'urbanized gangs predatory upon land-owning peasants,' there are at least three reasons why these rebels were far more indebted to peasants than to urban dwellers. First, they largely fought against urban-biased regimes which often explicitly targeted peasants in their counter-insurgency attacks, thereby leading rebels to be distrustful of urban interests. For instance, the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia 'destroyed peasant livelihoods and communities' in its struggle against the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) (Silkin & Hendrie, 1997, p. 167), while, despite a verbal commitment to the peasantry, the Habyarimana regime in Rwanda perpetuated urban bias by redistributing coffee profits among the Hutu urban elite (Kamola, 2007; Verwimp, 2000). Secondly, as most of these leaders had to operate in economically poor environments, they had to cultivate relationships with rural farmers just to survive. Indeed, successful rebel movements like Museveni's National Resistance Army in Uganda and Afewerki's EPLF in Eritrea that had poor access to resources committed far fewer atrocities than rich but unsuccessful ones like RENAMO in Mozambique or the RUF in Sierra Leone (Weinstein, 2007; Wrong, 2006).² Third, contrary to (Mkandawire, 2002) and as a result of the first two reasons,³ many rebel movements have relied upon the recruitment of peasants to swell their ranks. For example, in Sierra Leone it is clear that the Revolutionary United Front targeted peasants rather than the urban proletariat for recruitment and abduction (Richards, 2005). In Ethiopia the TPLF was explicitly established on the principle that the 'national armed struggle should be waged that would advance from the rural areas of Tigray to the urban areas;' thus, despite being founded by university students like many rebel movements, TPLF leaders focused on recruiting peasants as they 'could endure hardship in the rural circumstances to which they were accustomed' (Berhe, 2004, pp. 579, 586).

Bates' second assumption was that African governments were able to oppress and/or buy off rural opposition, an assumption that is also no longer as evident as it once was. The aforementioned wave of democratization that swept through Africa in the 1990s disabled many mechanisms of central-government rule over the countryside, including the banning of opposition parties and arresting its leaders. The demise of one-party rule meant that governments could no longer merely transfer party officials to civil service positions or prevent local farmers who supported the opposition from access to loans or tools. Indeed, the fact that Eritrea is perhaps the least democratic country in Africa explains why it remains dominated by urban-biased policies and thus does not fit well with my explanation of rebel movements above (Reid, 2006; Tronvoll, 1998).

As regards co-opting rural opposition, the evidence is not as clear. Certainly the ability of governments to purchase political support through state rents has diminished since the 1970s, both due to the fiscal crises that such resulted from the resultant market inefficiencies of rent-seeking as well as the privatization,

¹ One could also include here Abdirahman Tuur, the first President of the still-unrecognized state of Somaliland.

² Charles Taylor provides a rare exception here.

³ (Mkandawire, 2002) argues that African rebel movements largely have urban roots and have historically treated peasants with disdain. However, as Mkandawire's argument is largely based on an analysis of RENAMO (Mozambique), the RUF (Sierra Leone), UNITA (Angola) and anti-Kabila movements in the DR Congo, all of whom failed to take power, one could argue that the success of the aforementioned leaders who did eventually take power was due in part to the way they accommodated peasants' demands.

liberalization and devaluation promoted by the World Bank and IMF to help combat these crises. While these reforms no doubt hindered the ability of African politicians to hand out patronage to politically marginal areas and thereby buy support in the countryside, it is also clear that these reforms 'have been partially undertaken, reversed, diverted, compensated for and manipulated' by governments in order to maintain and even create new sources of patronage (Van de Walle, 2001, p. 274). For instance, the governments of Zimbabwe and Côte d'Ivoire have altered property rights in order to utilize land as a patronage resource (Boone & Kriger, 2006), while, despite reform efforts at reducing the size of the civil service, governments have been able to increase the size of their cabinets and legislatures over the 1980s and 1990s (Van de Walle, 2001). Most striking, however, has been the proliferation of foreign aid to Africa, which has increased dramatically from the early 1970s through to the present: while the continent received half as much aid as Asia in the 1960s, by the 1980s it had reached parity and, despite a dip in the 1990s, overtook Asia by the early 2000s (UNCTAD, 2006). From an internal standpoint, aid dependence has increased in Africa, as the number of African states receiving more than 10% of their GNP in aid grew from 17 to 31 from the late 1970s through the late 1990s (Goldsmith, 2001). It is thus possible that, in part due to this increased amount of aid, government resources are actually higher today than before the reform era (Van de Walle, 2001, p. 274).

3. A Typology of Patronage

The fact that African states have democratized and are increasingly ruled by former rebel leaders would thus suggest that rural concerns should play more of a role in policy formation; the persistence of the government control over state resources, however, suggests that patronage may now be more of a key factor in understanding why rural development remains an enigma across the continent. An analysis of how African governments utilize patronage requires us, however, to first take a step back and examine the nature of patronage and its distribution.

In theory patronage is a quasi-universal form of politics, whereby politicians allocate 'material incentives' to people in return for political support (Wilson, 1961, p. 370). The literature on patronage is voluminous and growing; much recent attention has focused on the relationship between economic development and patronage, whether politicians target patronage at 'swing' or 'core' voters, and why politicians often target their own ethnic group for patronage (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007; S. C. Stokes, 2007). Yet within this literature there has been little attempt to explore variations in the types of patronage politicians employ, specifically why patronage varies between being centralized and peripheral, visible and discreet, or reversible and irreversible. As such, in the following section I discuss patronage as a series of 'institutional choices' or strategies (Boone, 2003) which hinge upon a series of trade-offs. Specifically, I explicate three variables which help to explain different types of patronage, namely reversibility, geography and visibility, and why African politicians might choose one strategy over another.

1. Reversibility

A first tradeoff exists at the point of enforcement, i.e., whether politicians can cut off patronage to bad clients who fail to honor their implicit promises of support. Where patronage can be withdrawn, for instance as with regards to state jobs, tariffs, transfers, favorable taxes, etc., politicians can thereby enforce continued support among their clients (Robinson & Verdier, 2003). The reversible nature of this type of patronage – which can be either private/individualistic (as with jobs) or public/communal (transfers or lower tariffs/taxes) – can help to enforce reciprocation in what amounts to a series of repeated games between politicians and voters.

Yet this same logic also means that voters may worry that whatever benefits they receive can disappear as quickly as they arrived. More permanent patronage – such as the water projects discussed by (Ferejohn, 1974) – may be attractive to voters for the exact opposite reason, namely that it cannot be withdrawn so easily, and thereby demonstrates a more permanent and thus more credible commitment to the voters in question than reversible policies. Indeed, where patronage networks have a poor history of redistribution towards the poor, as they do in Africa, one would expect voters to become cynical over time and prefer patronage that cannot be withdrawn at a politician's whim.

While it is tempting to attempt to capture this interaction in formal terms, previous attempts to do so have failed to capture the power inequalities between politicians and voters. More specifically, whereas (Robinson & Verdier, 2003; S. Stokes, 2005) assume that both politicians and voters have commitment problems, it is more realistic to assume that African 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.⁴ Indeed, (S. Stokes, 2005, p. 317)'s assumption that politicians and voters will have repeated interactions 'indefinitely into the future' thus does not fit a continent with a long history of invalidated, cancelled and overturned elections. 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 (S. Stokes, 2005, p. 316), but also includes malignant neglect and actual physical punishment. Indeed, recent examples 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).

This logic therefore suggests that politicians in unstable states will have low discount rates and thus a higher interest in employing 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, we should expect them to employ more reversible types of patronage like state jobs, tariffs and taxes that they can (threaten to) withdraw from unworthy clients.

2. Geography

A second tradeoff is geographical, whereby politicians have the choice of handing 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 of course King Louis XIV, 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

⁴ Recent disputed elections in Kenya and Zimbabwe seem to indicate that this practice is by no means outdated.

does not trickle down, poor citizens 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'etat leaders that the previous regime was 'tribalistic' or 'corrupt' is merely another way of saying that patronage was unequally distributed across society. To take an 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'etat 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 cases of the DR Congo, Liberia and Somalia, among others (William Reno, 2002, p. 842; W. Reno, 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 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 movements (William Reno, 2002, p. 840). In Africa, this concern 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 Congo-Kinshasa (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). Thus, in states where secession is not a worry or where peripheral areas do not threaten the centre, we should expect African 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.

3. Visibility

A third and final 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 competitive elections they have incentives to provide 'pork' or club goods that are both observable and whose benefits are easy to trace back to the politicians who created them (Stein & Bickers, 1994).⁵ In young democracies where voters have limited information about the quality of candidates, the incentives for pork creation are even higher than in more established and developed democracies (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 (R. 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) and, perhaps most

⁵ Similarly, competitive elections are far more likely to lead to a political business cycle, or politically-motivated economic policies, than non-competitive elections (Block, Ferree, & Singh, 2003).

famously, famine relief projects in post-independence India (Sen, 1999), among others.

However, in states with little electoral competition – which includes some democracies as well as all non-democracies – the pressures for redistribution are much lower as politicians have less of a need to curry votes from the public. Indeed, this logic helps to explain why patronage in many single-party African countries up to the 1990s was more likely to take the form of forging links between elites, with very little trickling down to the rest of the population (Van de Walle, 2007).⁶ In such countries there is thus more of an incentive for politicians to distribute either pure public goods or private goods. This logic helps to explain why dictatorships have higher immunization rates than democracies, as immunization and other types of preventative health care are less visible to voters than curative health care (Gauri & Khaleghian, 2002; Mani & Mukand, 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 President Mobutu’s Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo): 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).

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 elections, while leaders in states without serious competitive elections are less likely to rely upon visible types of patronage.

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

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

Institutional Choice	Option 1	Option 2
Reversibility	Reversible (Taxes, Tariffs)	Non-Reversible (Projects)
Geography	Centre (Central Government Jobs)	Periphery (Local Government Jobs)
Visibility	Non-Visible (Individualized Transfers)	Visible (‘Pork’)

To return to our focus on urban bias, however, it remains to be seen whether governments have utilized these various types of patronage in order to rule the countryside. One way to test this theory could be through a cross-national, large-N approach. However, while it is possible to measure urban bias quantitatively, establishing cross-national variables that measure patronage is practically impossible, especially in the developing world (Kitschelt, 2000; Wantchekon, 2003).

⁶ Cf. (R. H. Bates, 2008), Chapter 3, for a related argument about the relationship between democracy and the distribution of private and public goods.

As noted by (Miguel & Zaidi, 2003, p. 22) in their discussion of education spending as patronage in Ghana,

Patronage flows may also be larger in sectors other than education: the anecdotal evidence centers around large infrastructure projects (e.g., electricity and roads), which are more visible than education funding, as well as civil servant salaries. Unfortunately, our dataset does not allow us to explore these other important dimensions of patronage politics, nor are we aware of other datasets that contain comprehensive information of this sort in an African setting. We believe there is an urgent need for further micro-empirical studies of patronage in these sectors, and of the allocation of public investment more broadly, to determine the generalizability of these findings within the larger context of recent African political liberalization and institutional reform.

Thus, as with practically all of the other empirical literature on patronage, I employ here a small-n case-based approach. 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.⁷ 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.

The independent variables that Rwanda and Uganda share are numerous. Both are overwhelmingly rural,⁸ 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 neighbors. Current Presidents Kagame and Museveni took power as the leaders of rebel armies which had fought against regimes that targeted specific ethnic groups (Tutsi in Rwanda, Baganda in Uganda) as part of their counter-insurgency strategies. After conquering the capital, the rebels 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). Simultaneously, however, both Presidents began 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 constitution had been approved by the parliament, both Kagame and Museveni set up parliamentary and presidential elections (in 2003 and 1996, respectively), which they and their parties overwhelmingly won.

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. However, 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. In Rwanda the agricultural sector has seen a striking decrease in the production of bananas and coffee and ownership of

⁷ An exception here is (Eriksen, 2005).

⁸ The 2007 Human Development Report gives urban population rates for Rwanda and Uganda as 19.3% and 12.6%, respectively.

chickens, goats and sheep between 1990 and 2001, which has led to a decrease in the percentage of minimum nutritional needs met by domestic production from 83% to 63% (Donovan, Mpyisi, & Loveridge, 2002). The government's 1996 rural policy of *imidugudu*, or forced villagization, has been responsible for much of this decrease, inasmuch as its implementation involved poor planning, the relocation to infertile and/or remote areas and an increase in crop theft (Van Leeuwen, 2001). The same period also saw increasing land inequality, with all income quartiles losing access to land except the richest, in part thanks to a lack of access by poor farmers to markets, credit, insurance and fertilizers (Ansoms, 2008, p. 10). 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).

As regards Uganda, despite the abolishment of the Coffee Marketing Board monopoly in 1990, which led to producer prices for coffee almost doubling between 1989 and 1996, the urban-rural gap continued to grow over Museveni's first decade in power (World Bank, 1996). This trend only continued over the next decade: during Uganda's most successful period of poverty reduction between 1992 and 2002, the proportion of people living in poverty in rural areas was cut by 30.2% while urban poverty fell proportionally by a much larger 55.8% (Kappel, Lay, & Steiner, 2005, p. 29).⁹ As in Rwanda, the Ugandan government passed a new land law after its new constitution; it was designed alleviate much of the country's land conflicts and spur rural poverty reduction through the provision of security of tenure to poor farmers, the creation of local Land Tribunals and the creation of a Land Fund to enable the government to buy land from absentee landlords and give it back to tenants. However, the government has largely failed to implement the Land Act, choosing instead to focus on compulsorily acquiring land on behalf of urban investors (Green, 2006). This strategy finally came to a head in 2007 when Kampala erupted in protests against the allocation of one-third of the Mabira forest preserve in southern Uganda to Ugandan Asian investors, leading the government to suspend the plan temporarily.

4.1. The Institutional Logic of Patronage in Rwanda and Uganda

Despite these poor rural policies in both Rwanda and Uganda, however, in presidential elections Kagame and Museveni have found most of their electoral support in the countryside.¹⁰ 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 four sets of institutional choices detailed above, before examining how each president has utilized patronage to his advantage.

1. Reversibility

To reiterate our conclusions above as regards reversibility, we noted that politicians with high discount rates would tend to employ short-term patronage, as they would be more concerned about winning the next immediate election than setting up a structure of patronage that would allow them to rule over a series of

⁹ Part of the reason behind these disparate trends lies in Uganda's geographical inequalities: its two most rural regions, the north (9.3% urban) and the east (6.6%), have been relatively neglected by the central government and abandoned to a long and destructive civil war, respectively. For more see (Finnström, 2008) and (Jones, 2008), respectively.

¹⁰ Both presidents received below-average totals in their capital cities in the most recent elections.

elections. Rwanda and Uganda demonstrate variance here, as the two countries have different histories of state stability. Uganda has had no peaceful political transitions since independence, with six extralegal regime changes in 1971, 1979, 1980 (twice), 1985 and 1986. On the other hand, 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). 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 We would thus expect to see more reversible patronage in Rwanda than in Uganda.

2. Geography

As regards geography, we concluded that rulers that were unconcerned about secession at the periphery but were concerned about potential rebellions from the centre would tend to allocate patronage in rural areas. Uganda, despite verbal threats of secession from southern political leaders in the 1960s and northern politicians today more recently,¹² does not have a serious history of secession. However, Uganda has a long history of coup d'états directed from Kampala, most recently in 1980 (twice) and 1985. Moreover, 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.

The logic above also suggested that rulers that were unconcerned about rebellions from the centre but were concerned about the periphery would tend to allocate patronage in the centre. Here Rwanda seems an apt example. As a very small country – among non-island African states, only Djibouti, Gambia and Swaziland are smaller – it does not have much of a periphery, and thus also does not have a history of secessionism. Yet, with the exception of Juvenal Habyarimana's coup d'état in 1973, it also does not have a history of rebellion from the centre. It does, however, have a more recent history of being surrounded by enemies, namely the *interahamwe* who fled across the border to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) after the 1994 genocide, and whose presence there supposedly prompted Rwanda's subsequent invasion of the DRC. The Congolese invasion later turned the relations between Kagame and Museveni sour to the point where the Rwandan and Ugandan armies fought each other in the 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). 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 suggests 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.

3. Visibility

The logic above suggested that rulers in competitive democracies would employ more visible patronage, or pork, in order to win elections, while their

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

¹² Buganda kingdom leaders threatened to secede in the 1960s, while at least two politicians from northern Uganda have threatened to do so more recently, but in both cases the threat was merely verbal.

counterparts in less competitive states would allocate patronage less visibly. Here again we see a marked contrast between Uganda and Rwanda, as while both Uganda and Rwanda hold elections, the latter are much less competitive than the former. If we compare each country's first post-constitutional election, Museveni received 74.3% in 1996 compared to Kagame's 95.1% in 2003; in each country's first legislative elections in the same years, the NRM received 57.8% of the seats while the RPF coalition received 73.8%. This disparity is not limited to recent elections: Uganda's post-independence elections in 1962 and 1980 saw such fierce competition between the Uganda People's Congress and the Democratic Party that the latter election was largely assumed to be stolen by Milton Obote, whose brazenness in doing so launched Museveni's ultimately successful rebellion. Rwanda, on the other hand, only had a post-independence history of single-party elections; its sole multi-party election took place before independence in 1961, when the PARMEHUTU party secured 77.7% of the vote. Thus, inasmuch as Rwanda is less democratic than Uganda and Along these lines we would thus expect to see less visible patronage in Rwanda than in Uganda.

4.2. Patronage in Rwanda and Uganda

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

Rwanda

Patronage distribution in 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 Higiuro, former President of the Liberal Party (PL) which received 10.6% of the vote in 2003. In all there are seven non-RPF members in the Senate, comprising 26.9% of the seats,¹³ a far cry from the 4.9% opposition candidates received in the 2003 presidential election.

Article 116 of Rwanda's 2003 constitution stipulates that no party can control more than 50% of seats in the cabinet, ostensibly to allow for power-sharing. This provision not allows 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 any offers to opposition members. Opposition members in the cabinet thus include the current Prime Minister (former MDR member Bernard Makuza), Minister of Youth (PL President Protais Mitali) and Internal

¹³ Other non-RPF members in the Senate include Augustin Iyamuremye (PSD) and Agnes Mukabaranga (Christian Democratic Party); another senator representing minority interests is Elie Mpayimana, a journalist and member of the Twa ethnic group.

Security Minister (President of the *Parti Démocrate Idéale* Mussa Fazil Harerimana), among others. Opposition party members were also recently selected 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).¹⁴

Inasmuch as these patronage opportunities are central government jobs, they are both reversible and centralized forms of patronage. Indeed, Kagame has clearly shown opposition leaders that he can take away their power as easily as he can hand it out; precedents include imprisoning both former President Bizimungu and former Minister Charles Ntakirutinka in 2002 two weeks after claiming in a speech that, 'while [opponents] have occupied high office in the country, they go on preaching division among Rwandans' (Reyntjens, 2004, p. 193).

Kagame has also 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,¹⁵ 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).

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 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 Democratic Party leader Paul Ssemogerere as Second Deputy Prime Minister from 1989 to 1995, and both Conservative Party leader Jehoash Mayanja-

¹⁴ 'Parliament Elects Representative to the EALA,' *New Times* (Kigali), 12 May 2008.

¹⁵ In 2008 Kagame created three new ministries, bringing the total number to 22; 'Full Vote of Confidence Given to Women in Reshuffle,' *New Times* (Kigali), 13 March 2008.

Nkangi and former Uganda National Rescue Front leader Moses Ali, both of whom served in various cabinet posts from 1986 until the late 1990s. However, in 1996 the Conservative Party split over Mayanja-Nkangi's continued support for Museveni, while in the same year Ssemogere resigned from government to run against Museveni in the 1996 presidential elections. In the electoral era Museveni's broad base thus dissipated to a few token non-NRM and non-Bantu ministers like Ali, the late Attorney General Francis Ayume and current Minister of Lands Omara Atubo.

Museveni has rather employed another form of patronage in order to rule over the non-Bantu and opposition areas of Uganda, most notably the creation of new districts (the highest level of local government). In complete contrast to Kagame, Museveni has created 46 districts since 1990, or more highest-level sub-national units than any other political leader 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.

Uganda's new districts have proven to be nonreversible, peripheral and highly visible. First, despite a Museveni-appointed Commission of Inquiry into the Local Government system arguing in 1987 that Uganda already had too many districts (Uganda, 1987), Museveni has never even discussed the possibility of abolishing districts. Thus districts, despite in theory being reversible, have been nonreversible in practice.

Second, almost by definition new districts have been in the periphery, with only one of these 46 districts created in an urban area. Each district has 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.

Lastly, new districts have been very visible as well. 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, in that 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 President Museveni to demonstrate the seriousness of their claim (Buwembo, 2005).

5. Conclusion

In this article I have argued that, in a era of democratization and rebel-governed regimes 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 three variables, namely reversibility, geography and visibility. I then showed how, despite having multi-party elections, new constitutions and rebel-led governments, both Uganda and Rwanda have seen the perpetuation of rural policies that fail to benefit the majority of each country's electorate. I demonstrated how both Presidents Kagame and Museveni have utilized quite different strategies of patronage in order to win elections, whereby Kagame employed reversible, central and relatively invisible types of patronage while Museveni focused on nonreversible, peripheral and highly visible patronage.

It now remains for me to return to the macro-level picture in order to see if we can generalize beyond Rwanda and Uganda. What is clear at first glance if we return to the three patronage variables is that Uganda sits much closer to the African mean than Rwanda. Museveni's strategy of creating new districts as a source of patronage clearly fits well with evidence from around Africa. In West Africa, President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso created 15 new provinces in 1997, in time for a parliamentary election that year and his successful first re-election the following year, while in Benin President Mathieu Kérékou doubled the number of his country's provinces from 6 to 12 in 1999, two years before his re-election. President Idriss Déby of Chad also doubled the number of his country's prefectures from 14 to 28 (and renamed them departments) in 1999, two years before his first successful re-election. In Anglophone Africa, President of Malawi Bakili Muluzi's government created three new districts in 1998, a year before his re-election, while in Ghana President John Kufuor's government created 28 new districts in 2003 and another 28 districts in 2007, in both cases a year before presidential and parliamentary elections. In Sudan, President Omar al-Bashir tripled the number of federal states from 9 to 27 in 1994, two years before his first election. Finally and most recently, the new constitution of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) increased the number of provinces from 11 to 26; while the provinces do not exist as yet the constitution came into force in February 2006, five months before the first round of the country's presidential elections. As with Uganda, in all seven cases the Presidents were incumbents seeking (re)election and, with the exception of the DRC, the highest level of local governments had no official representation at the national level.

Indeed, it is clear that here, as elsewhere, Rwanda appears exceptional in the African context. If we return to the patronage typology spelled out above, we argued that patronage in Rwanda has been less reversible than in Uganda due to its lower presidential turnover rate since independence. While at first glance the Rwandan mean tenure of 9.2 years appears close to the African mean of 11.6 between 1980 and 2000 (Van de Walle, 2005, p. 74), this does not account for the fact that the return of multi-party elections in Africa in the 1990s has lowered this average tenure more recently. Indeed, while only one African president lost an election between 1960 and 1990, fourteen have lost elections since 1990 (Posner & Young, 2007, p. 131).¹⁶ 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 arguably concomitant increases in political predation (R. H. Bates, 2008).

Secondly, Rwanda is exceptional due to its history of invasion and threats from its neighbors. African states have been far more likely to face rebellious threats from inside their borders, especially from within their central governments, than from beyond. The fact that Rwanda is so small helps to explain why Kagame has been so concerned about securing its borders, as Kigali lies less than 150 km from all four of Rwanda's neighbors. In contrast, in Uganda and most other African states conflicts

¹⁶ The one exception prior to 1990 was Aden Abdullah Osman of Somalia in 1967. To put this argument another way, whereas before 1990 presidents faced a 6% (1/16) chance of losing an election, since 1990 they now face a 14% (14/100) chance of losing.

can take place in the periphery without threatening rule at the centre, which suggests that Rwanda's system of centralized patronage may be anomalous.

Thirdly, empirical evidence also suggests that African elections are increasingly competitive. The largest party's share of the vote in free and fair elections has dropped from 74% in the 1980s to 57% between 1999 and 2003, with winning candidates holding steady at 53% of the vote over this period (Lindberg, 2006, p. 67). As cited above, these numbers are much more similar to Uganda's election results than Rwanda's, and would thus lead us to expect more 'pork' spending across Africa than currently exists in Rwanda.

If we return to our original argument about the persistence of poor rural policies, we argued that democratization was a key reason why we should expect better rural policies in Africa today. And here again, Rwanda seems somewhat exceptional. Rwanda currently holds a score of 11/14, or 'not free' from Freedom House, which is incidentally the same score as that received by Habyarimana's regime in the years prior to the genocide. This low score is partially a result of Kagame's carrot-and-stick treatment of his political opposition: those who are not bought off through the patronage strategies noted above are often jailed, like former President Bizimungu between 2002 and 2007, or forced into exile. Similarly, due to its policies of jailing journalists for years at a time and even possibly assassinating some of them (Waldorf, 2007), Rwanda holds a score of 84/100 ('not free') from Freedom House's freedom of the press survey,¹⁷ or one of the worst scores in Africa.

Yet, with exceptions, the rest of Africa seems to be on a slow but sure process of democratization. The logic above thus suggests that irreversible, 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.

¹⁷ <http://www.freedomhouse.org/>.

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