

From "new breed" to entrenched African leaders; examining the modernization rhetoric and policies of Paul Kagame, Yoweri Museveni, and Isaias Afwerki.

Anne Pitsch Santiago, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Political Science
University of Portland
Portland, OR. USA

Manuscript prepared for presentation at the
Western Political Science Association
Annual Meeting
March 28-April 1, 2018
San Francisco

Draft, Not for Citation
Please contact the author with comments or questions
Santiago@up.edu

Abstract

In the 1990s, Meles Zenawi (Ethiopia), Yoweri Museveni (Uganda), Paul Kagame (Rwanda), and Isaias Afwerki (Eritrea) were heralded as a “new breed” of African leaders by President Bill Clinton, and though few believe that these men have lived up to the expectations of outside observers, the latter three remain entrenched in their governments with varying levels of economic and political success. This research focuses in on how Paul Kagame and Yoweri Museveni have shaped the narrative of modernization within their countries for both domestic and international audiences. I argue that these leaders attempt not only to change people’s attitudes about their economies and political systems, but also try to influence the cultural transition and modernization of the ways of life of their people. It is through trying to change culture and lifeways that these leaders hope to bring about modernization of their economies. The case of Isaias Afwerki, though also still in power, will be considered briefly as a contrast to the approaches of Museveni and Kagame. Using content analysis, I examine 3 years of political remarks, press releases and speeches by these leaders in order to draw conclusions about their motives, methods, and visions for their countries through the deliberate development of social narratives for domestic and international audiences.

Introduction: The New Breed of African Leader and Modernization

Western support for African dictators became much less routine after the end of the Cold War. With the communist threat neutralized, western governments and International Financial Institutions re-emphasize democratic norms in their rhetoric, and attempted to implement them in their development policies. A renewed interest in the linkages between economic and political freedoms was emphasized in the post-Cold War era, and with the end of some long-standing conflicts on the African continent, there was hope that new leadership would lead to enduring peace, stability, and prosperity. This hope led President Bill Clinton to exclaim a “new breed” of African leader that was young, economically and politically savvy as well as pragmatic, and willing to engage honestly and energetically on expanding an economic and political vision for their countries that was shared by the West. Four East African leaders, Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, and Paul Kagame of Rwanda, became the face of the changing African continent. To date, however, none of these leaders has willingly left power. The only one to lose power was Zenawi who died in office in 2012. Thus, Museveni has been in power for 32 years, Afwerki for 26, and Kagame for 23 (though not officially as Prime Minister or President during this entire time period). The “new

breed” of leaders has looked an awful lot like the “Big Men” of Africa of days gone by, yet an examination of the impact of their visions for progress for their countries and the resulting policies that have been put into place, leads to a reassessment of African leadership styles and their outcomes. This paper examines the political rhetoric of Yoweri Museveni and Paul Kagame on economic modernization and land use issues in their respective countries in order to explore the question: in what ways do Museveni and Kagame attempt to shape their messages of land reforms and economic modernization within the context of a global economy dominated by neoliberal principles? Briefly, the case of Isaias Afwerki, a much more reticent leader, will be utilized to contrast the rhetorical styles adopted by Museveni and Kagame. This paper also serves as a preliminary attempt to develop a model of rhetoric that can be used for comparative purposes in other African states. Examining the rhetoric helps us to understand how economic modernization, specifically in terms of agriculture, investment, and land reform, is framed within African states. Further, examining this type of rhetoric by the heads of state gives us some indication of how agriculture, investment, and land use policies are being pursued and whether they will result in economic modernization over time.

With the dominance of the neoliberal global agenda within the international economy, I expect that the governments of East Africa will have similar approaches to modernization of their economies that will reflect the neoliberal global agenda. However, given the different historical experiences of each state, including past experiences with conflict, traditional land ownership structures, government institutions and trust, and strength of civil society and the independent press, the geographical diversity, and different political leadership styles between them, I would also expect that the rhetoric of economic modernization in terms of land reform, agriculture, and investment will reflect the historical differences of each country.

Land Reforms in Uganda, and Rwanda: Similarities and Differences

Over the past decade, land has become a contentious issue within African political systems. There is a significant ideological divide between those who assert that the best opportunity for economic development in the country includes land reforms, investments, and modernization of the agricultural sector and those who assert that land reforms are a veiled attempt by governments and large corporations to appropriate peasant lands, that modernization of the agriculture sector will take away the only resource of value to many rural dwellers and force more people off the land and into urban areas. Those who represent the peasants distrust the motives of the government and corporate interests, but generally do not address the limitations of subsistence agriculture in the face of population growth, soil degradation, and climate change threats. Those who represent government and corporate interests argue that the only way states have ever modernized and diversified their economies in order to compete in a globalized world is through land reform, private ownership, and mechanization of agriculture, but rarely spend serious thought on the consequences for those who would be forced into major lifestyle changes in the short-term. In some ways, the debate over land use illuminates the tension between individual rights and the common good, and who gets to define interests as well as economic development goals.

Historically, the African state has been both dominant in setting the policy agenda for the country, but at the same time weak in its capacity to successfully carry out this agenda. Especially since the waning years of the Cold War when external donor governments and international financial institutions began to heavy-handedly encourage states first to liberalize their economies and then their governing structures, African states have been heavily influenced by external actors in setting policies and reformulating laws related to land use. Prior to 1990, there was little attention paid to land reform either domestically or internationally within East Africa (McAuslan, 2013). But with the end of the Cold War, the West became triumphant, and

this resulted in a perception that not only democracy, but also liberal economics had won, and therefore the developing states had little choice but to adopt the policies of the West in moving forward along their historical paths to development. Both Uganda and Rwanda represent countries in Africa that have adopted modernization agendas, and this shows through in their approach to land reform, land use, and agriculture investment in general.

Uganda

Uganda has four land tenure systems that have their roots in pre-colonial political structures as well as the British colonial administration. The Buganda Kingdom had achieved semi-autonomous status at independence, but later the federal government abolished all kingdoms and appropriated their lands. Further, under Idi Amin in 1975 the *Land Reform Decree* nationalized all land. Effectively, all land tenure systems were abolished under this decree. After the civil war that resulted in the victory of the National Resistance Movement (NRM), the Museveni government needed to restore peace and stability, and to improve political and economic governance after the chaos of the previous regimes. The NRM government restored its relationship with global lending institutions and donor governments, and began to establish a vision, embracing neoliberal reforms, for the economic future of the country. Museveni also restored the Kingdoms of Uganda in 1993 and re-established the four traditional land tenure systems in the *1995 Constitution*, reaffirming them in the *1998 Land Act*. The *1998 Land Act* also established the rights of both landowners and *bona fide* occupants of landⁱ, instituting nominal ground rents set by the federal government. This resulted in confusion over whose rights (land owners or customary users) were considered primary and whose secondary under the law. This was especially so in the Buganda kingdom and some areas of the West where individual land ownership was established under colonial rule

It is clear from the *National Development Plan 2010/11-2014/15* that the Government of Uganda (GoU) has firmly embraced neoliberal thinking. Its Vision Statement confirms this: *A Transformed Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 Years*. Additionally, *The Uganda National Land Policy* states that its overall goal is “to ensure an efficient, equitable and optimal utilization and management of Uganda’s land resources for poverty reduction, wealth creation and overall socio-economic development” (Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, 2013, p. 9). But, the modernization agenda in Uganda faces challenges because of the existing land tenure systems that may not be compatible with the government agenda, and is often contested by traditional land users.

Mamdani argues that customary law was a mostly constructed myth utilized by the colonial powers to rule indirectly through chosen ethnic elites. He asserts,

indirect rule was grounded in a legal dualism, central to which was the colonial construction of administrative justice called ‘customary law.’ It was the antithesis of rule of law. It was, rather, legal arbitrariness. Indirect rule was the form of the state that framed the social life of the ‘free’ peasantry p. 147).

Boone (2014) argues convincingly that both colonial and post-colonial rulers in Africa have deliberately structured rural land regimes in order to better maintain political order in the countryside, and as a result, land clashes occur along ethnic rather than class lines (p. 12-14). This ultimately benefits the state by repressing broad-based, rural, class-based political organizing. One reason the GoU has lacked success in land reforms is its unwillingness to consider ethnicity as a factor to be managed, even as it also manipulates ethnic identities in order to garner patronage and electoral support (Green, 2006). Green (2006) points out that the evolution of the NRM’s current land policy was not without conflict itself, with both ideological clashes and threats to the personal (land) interests of the leadership (p. 376). Nevertheless, land reform has been envisioned as both a means of mitigating conflicts as well as a means of advancing the economic transformation of the state. Yet at the same time, the attempts at reform are at best half-hearted because it benefits the Museveni regime to preserve the status quo,

maintaining patronage networks and catering to the powerful elites, while appearing to be working towards reforms that the GoU argues will benefit peasants by giving them better tenure security or access to jobs within commercial ventures.

In addition to the domestic factors that have influenced land reform in Uganda, McAuslan (2013) convincingly produces evidence that the Museveni government was heavily influenced by the World Bank which, from the mid-1980s, began to assert itself in policy decisions on agriculture and land use in many African states. For example, in Uganda, the Bank facilitated a working group in 1987 to study current land tenure, and it recommended in 1989 that the Amin era *Land Reform Decree* be repealed and a new policy to facilitate the development of a land market based on freehold titles (McAuslan, 2013).

One criticism of Uganda's land policy is that, though laws have been established both through the Constitution and the *Land Act* (1998), little has been accomplished in reforming land tenure and establishing a national framework for making decisions on land use. One of the most difficult problems in resolving land tensions in Uganda is related to the dual rights of land owners and land users (*bona fide* occupants). Both freehold and leasehold rights are guaranteed within Uganda's Constitution and *Land Act*, but there has been no rationalized procedures to determine under which conditions whose rights take precedent. Owners of the land, most of whom are not the descendants of those who were granted the land under colonial rule, but rather purchased the land from those descendants, want to be able to utilize their land as they see fit, but are restricted by the dual rights provisions within the law (McAuslan, 2013). With the value of land increasing and with population pressures on the rise, this lack of established process for resolving the rights question bodes ill for land reform and peaceful coexistence in Uganda. This point is well stated by McAuslan. "The cause of current evictions is not the lack of laws protecting occupants but rather these laws themselves, which create conflicting rights over land, as well as the lack of a functioning registration system and a coherent land policy that could guide land administration (McAuslan, 2013: 92)." McAuslan concludes that Uganda's land

reforms have done little to advance the interests the government claims to have regarding economic development and modernization, and in fact reinforce the status quo of the colonial era, and do little to resolve any of the land problems that Uganda has experienced since Independence (2013).

Rwanda

The regime of Paul Kagame has been controversial. From the time of the genocide when the Rwanda Patriotic Army defeated the Hutu Power extremists, Kagame has been the main leader in Rwanda, whether in the role of Defense Minister, Vice President or as President since 1994. Kagame has led Rwanda in a particular direction: embracing modern technology and foreign investment, enforcing civic duty, forging a national identity, and shaping a mind-set of "never forget" while at the same time fostering a "can-do" attitude amongst his people. His attitude towards agriculture, land use and investment encompasses this forging ahead agenda.

Rwanda is the called "les milles collines," or land of a thousand hills, and the country has traditionally consisted of both subsistence agriculturalists and pastoralists. Early in its history, land in Rwanda, like in many African political systems, was vested in the community, and individuals were granted rights to utilize portions of land for their own needs. Over time, the communal nature of land in Rwanda was transformed to more individual rights with specific chiefs granting individual concessions of land (McAuslan, 2013). The practice of "right of first occupancy" was widely practiced. Similarly to other areas, when Rwanda finally gained independence from the Belgians in 1960, the newly established Hutu government proclaimed that any land not registered under customary or occupancy rights became state land (McAuslan, 2013). Little changed related to land policy during the period from independence to the 1994 genocide, yet the situation for land users deteriorated steadily during this time because of increased population numbers and limited government investment into improving agriculture. Land tension, as much as anything else, was a major factor leading to the devastating genocide of 1994.

It is the history of conflicts over land that led the newly established RPF government to adopt a policy of transformation of land policy after they ended the genocide and worked to deal with the traumatic rebuilding of the state after it. In 2005, the government adopted the Organic Land Law which reiterated that the state had the right to manage the process of land ownership and which attempted to unify existing practices under a single unified legal system (McAuslan, 2013). The Organic Land Law clearly demonstrates that Kagame's government intends to rationalize the use of land through a legal process and institutional framework. One of the main challenges that Kagame's government had during his first term in office was balancing the needs of the Hutu and Tutsi who lived through the genocide with those of the million or more Rwandese who returned to help "rebuild" and start new lives after living in exile. This balancing act has been especially important when it came to both the processes of accountability and reconciliation, and the distribution of land to various stakeholders over time. Kagame's policies have been very controversial amongst many critical both within and outside Rwanda. One example is the *imidugudu* villages that were designed to provide land and security for both survivors and returnees, but participation in which was hardly voluntary. Yet, as many Kagame supporters both inside and outside the country attest, the country has made tremendous economic progress over the course of his leadership. Whether his land policies are finally judged to be transformative or harmful in the longer term remains to be seen.

Rhetoric and Action on Modernization in East Africa

One of the biggest problems in distinguishing reality from rhetoric when it comes to land grabbing and land use conflicts in general in many African countries is that there is very little accurate information available either from the governments or the organizations advocating on behalf of small scale farmers (Oya, 2013).

Paul Bjerck (2013) analyzes how the allocation of land in Tanzania has been a process of

historical discourse of political authority. Who has the authority to allocate land also has the authority to rule over the people and set the political agenda. Looking specifically at the land policies of Julius Nyerere, Bjerk analyzes the links between oral tradition, colonial policy and popular discourse, and explains that “[t]his is not an essay about land law or tenure regimes, but an exploration of the discursive underpinnings shaping local debates about land policies (2013:256).” Similarly, this essay is interested in exploring the differences in how political leaders in Uganda and Rwanda have framed policies related to economic modernization for their people. By examining the rhetoric of political leaders, popular press, and civil society organizations, we can better understand how agriculture, investment, and land reforms take shape as well as draw conclusions about the underlying assumptions that different actors have about the role of economic modernization and social change in their societies.

Uganda is an easy case to analyze. The State House systematically publishes press releases on the government’s website that highlight President Museveni’s activities, speeches, and travels around the country to encourage cooperation with governmental objectives. In a recent analysis, I examined 258 State House press releases that covered three and a half years (Santiago, 2015). During this time period, President Museveni repeatedly encourages other states to engage in greater trade with and foreign investment within Uganda, encourages peasants to adopt commercial agriculture and to effectively change their way of life in order to modernize the economy and bring about greater prosperity for all (Santiago, 2015).

When examining Uganda’s official development policies, including the *National Development Plan [2010/11-2014/15]* and *The Uganda National Land Policy*, it becomes clear that the government has adopted a neoliberal approach to development. The government’s stated goal is to transform Uganda “from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within 30 years” (Uganda National Planning Authority, 2010). It is my contention that President Museveni has adopted a deliberate strategy of guiding the nation to accept changes in life ways, traditions, and even cultural norms in order to achieve economic development and

modernization. Museveni's remarks across the country are saturated with references to modernization, promoting transition from peasant agriculture to commercial agriculture and processing facilities as a value added good. In his speeches and remarks, Museveni promotes modernization 190 times, he discusses investment 370 times, addresses poverty eradication and promotes household income generation over 80 times, and mentions development over 330 times. Most interesting, however, is his admonishment of people for following traditional customs. For example, in addressing Resident District Commissioners on handling land disputes in 2014, Museveni stated, "[y]ou need to sensitize people on how to live a prosperous life by being a producer not a parasite" and he further urged the RDCs to eradicate the peasantry altogether by encouraging people to end subsistence farming and embrace commercialized agriculture (President cautions, 2014). And, in speaking to community leaders in Kigezi Sub-Region about a poverty eradication effort by the government in 2012, Museveni is quoted as saying, "I think it is criminal to conserve peasants for the 2012. If you know that in a modern economy to have money is necessary, how can you not education your people on how to have money (President asks, 2012)?" He further emphasized to the local leaders that they have a role in encouraging peasants to select enterprises that can command big international markets so that not only the farmers, but also the country as a whole, can benefit from their production (President asks, 2012). I posit that what the analysis of Museveni's rhetoric reveals is that there is an underlying belief that state-led land policy implementation can drive changes in culture and lifestyle amongst the rural peasantry, and that this is necessary in order to launch Uganda into a modern society within a generation (Santiago, 2015). I would characterize Museveni's modernization rhetoric as *patrimonial admonishment*. Museveni appears to treat his people as members of his extended family who are simply rather backwards and not quite enlightened in the same way that he is, and he seems to view himself as the grandfatherly figure who needs to both encourage and admonish his grandchildren into changing their simple ways in order to bring about a greater situation for all. He is willing to engage with the people, but has the vision

that they lack, and hence his admonishment to do better not only for themselves, but for all the country. Through his persistent admonishment, he appears to believe he will move people along the modernization path, away from tradition, superstition, and backwardness.

Rwanda's government website also provides a treasure trove of reporting on the activities and speeches of President Kagame. From 2012-2015, there are hundreds of reports generated that project an image of President Kagame traveling around the country and around the world promoting the narrative of a rebuilding, capable, and confident Rwanda. For example, in 2012, there were 134 stories reported that revolved around all of the state and international visits that President Kagame engaged in over the course of the year. Interestingly, there were very few mentions of "land policy" or land use issues, perhaps because the land reforms were both adopted and implemented in a top-down way that had not happened under Uganda's land reforms where more resistance and discussion took place. "Agriculture" itself was mentioned 37 times, while "investment" was mentioned 57 times, and "invest" 49 times, in these reports. "Modernization" was mentioned only once. In 2014, "development" concerns were mentioned 177 times, "agriculture" 24 times, "land" related concerns only once. Kagame talks about investment frequently. In 2015, "development" was evident 145 times, "investment" over 80 times, and "land" or "agriculture" only a handful of times. Though land issues and agriculture are not repeatedly addressed by the President in courting his own people or the international community, one can discern from his remarks that Kagame's approach to investment is broad and reflects his pragmatism. He discusses economic investment by foreign interests, but also investments that the people and government of Rwanda need to make in themselves... investments in girl's education, investments in health, investments in human capital and knowledge. His approach to economic development, modernization, and advancement can be summed up by remarks he made at 45th St. Gallen's Symposium in Switzerland:

I don't believe there are people who should take good living standards for granted and the rest should forget about it. I want to think that irrespective of challenges we live through, there are so many opportunities in Rwanda and Africa...Africa needs to work

together, faster and more effectively and get ourselves out of this position where we are victims and people have to exercise their generosity and sympathy over us or fight over us. We need to be participants in this world and raise ourselves to the standard where we can develop our continent and our own countries (Size is not destiny, May 2015).

What Kagame's rhetoric about economic development and moving Rwanda forward does demonstrate is a focused commitment to bringing Rwanda greater economic development, utilizing the knowledge and skills of Rwandans as well as capitalizing on investors who want to engage, and a strong belief in the capabilities of Rwandans who can succeed through an iron will and focused leadership. One press release on the government's website captures the leadership style of Kagame well and focuses on his pragmatic approach to economic development. At the annual National Leadership Prayer Breakfast in January 2015, Kagame stated,

Working towards the achievements we deserve should not be a onetime event; it should be an ongoing journey and a way of life. Ask yourself what do we want to stand for as a nation and what is your role in achieving it? Let us be thankful for our progress but use this opportunity to evaluate our individual roles as leaders. Our role as leaders is to work towards ensuring that the gap between what is morally and politically correct is as small as possible. If something is correct morally, why shouldn't it be correct politically?... We should not stop at being thankful, we must also ask ourselves how much time we spend contributing to our achievements. No one owes us our livelihood and we do not owe anyone our livelihood. When you are fighting on the side of the truth, you are not afraid; you don't give up or expect others to fight your battles. Rwandans must fight to be at the high table. We have been items on the menu for too long ("President Kagame attends", 11 January 2015).

Resilience, responsibility, and competence are all core themes in Kagame's rhetoric on modernization, and he has benefitted from the fact that a million or more returnees came to the country in the mid-1990s precisely to rebuild their country, with their energy aligned well with Kagame's own vision for the country. This has not meant, however, that disagreements over land rights or investments are non-existent. One of the biggest challenges has been managing the needs of genocide survivors with those who came after, especially given that the leaders of the country have been returnees rather than survivors.

Kagame's remarks on economic modernization, investment, and progress can be characterized as *pragmatically resolute*. He is straightforward in his approach, and committed in

his belief that Rwanda can succeed in a globalized world as well as any other state can. For example, at the 14th World Export Development Forum in Kigali in September 2014, he states,

There is no country so isolated, disadvantaged that it can't find a competitive edge in the global economy. To overcome geographical and other disadvantages, we must benchmark ourselves against the best in the world. After all, real wealth is in the head, not in the ground. Building a competitive, modern economy requires smart investments in human capital and productive knowledge. We should see competition as an opportunity rather than a problem. To overcome geographical and other disadvantages, we must benchmark ourselves against the best in the world ("Real wealth is in the head," September 2014).

Similarly, in meeting with Rwandan ex-pats in London in October 2014, he asserts, "[w]hat we want is for every citizen to be self reliant, to compete on the global market and live a decent life. Our willingness to fight for dignity has not subsided in the last 20 years. It has increased (Don't wait, October 2014)." And, in addressing residents during the monthly *Umuganda* day of service in February 2014, "[d]evelopment is within our ability. You are as capable as anyone else anywhere in the world. Our goal is to ensure that every Rwandan plays an active role in the socio economic transformation of our nation basing on our belief that every Rwandan deserves good standard of life ("President Kagame," 22 February 2014)." Further, his vision of how to move the country forward is summed up by this statement that he delivered at the World Economic Forum in Ethiopia in May 2012, "[d]onor money is good. Private sector money is better. When they come together it is excellent. We must remember to mobilize and involve the youth and women in agricultural transformation. Our greatest asset is our people, we must build their skills and knowledge so that investment creates jobs and incomes." Like Museveni, Kagame has a clear vision about how to move his country into a globalized economy, and he has arguably been more successful at attracting foreign investors, and gaining the confidence of governments and financial institutions than has Uganda, at least partly because there has been limited opposition to his programs, and what opposition has been raised has been effectively sidelined by his government.

Analysis

Uganda suffered from decades of civil war and Museveni's ascent to power was a result of hard-fought battles. One of the lessons from the internal conflict for Museveni was the need for unity and the avoidance of recognizing the role ethnic difference plays in determining land politics across different regions of the country (Green, 2006 or 2008). Similarly, Kagame has worked to persuade, through encouragement, tough love, but also fear, the people of Rwanda to put their national identity above their ethnic identity as a means of moving the nation forward after the devastating events of 1994. As a result of trying to unify the country under a single approach to development, Museveni has been sometimes heavy-handed and has certainly played the role of wise father-figure scolding and cajoling his children towards greater maturity and transitioning to a modern way of life. Kagame's rhetoric is often high-minded and more intellectual than the paternalism of Museveni, but firm and brooking no opposition. As Desrosiers and Thomson argue, Kagame projects himself as a benevolent leader in an attempt to both win over the international community, but also discipline the Rwandan population into following his vision for the country (2011). They further argue that this approach of Kagame is not that different from his predecessor, Juvenal Habyarimana, whose death sparked the 1994 genocide (Desrosiers and Thomson, 2011). Both Museveni and Kagame certainly exude a persona of the wise, battle tested statesman, but the challenges facing each nation, as well as its historical narrative are different, and this impacts each leader's rhetorical approach, and level of success.

The abundance of information in Uganda and Rwanda may also reflect the extent of the influence of external actors on the policy agenda. The IMF and other international actors have held Uganda up as a successful reformer, and Rwanda as a committed and inspiring model. Both have successfully worked with the international financial institutions and aid agencies, as well as with private investors, to push for change and economic growth. Museveni and Kagame have wholly accepted the neoliberal agenda put forward by the international development actors

and have been actively pushing their populations to do the same. Another factor to consider when explaining the leadership styles of Museveni in Uganda and Kagame in Rwanda is that neither country has yet realized a democratic transition. The hold that Museveni has had on power for over 30 years, and Kagame for over 20, has allowed these men to set the policy agenda from the top-down, while in other countries like Tanzania and Malawi, leaders have been more cautious in promoting specific change when there are multiple stakeholders who have differing perspectives on the peasantry, land use, and land ownership.

A Juxtaposing Leadership Style: Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea

Like Rwanda and Uganda, the government of Eritrea, through the Ministry of Information, puts out press releases fairly regularly, though not nearly as abundantly as the other two governments. Unlike Rwanda and Uganda, however, the press releases by the Ministry of Information in Eritrea are largely targeted at contradicting negative reports by international agencies that are highly critical of the authoritarian regime ruling the country, and highlight speeches from government ministers who defend the sovereignty of the nation against criticism. Unlike Uganda and Rwanda, reporting on the positive activities of the president of Eritrea promoting his agenda to his people are not the focus of the government's information campaign.

Since being named President in 1993 after helping to lead the three-decade long rebellion against Ethiopia for Independence, Isaias Afwerki has become increasingly autocratic, and many would say isolated, in East Africa. Some critics call Eritrea the "North Korea" of Africa for its strict restrictions on information, and in 2015 was named the most censored country in the world by *The Committee to Protect Journalists*. *Reporters without Borders* asserts that press freedom in Eritrea ended on 18 September 2001 when the government arrested all opposition members who had signed an open letter urging constitutional changes and free elections. The independent newspaper publishers and journalists who had carried the letter were arrested a week later, and those arrested have not seen their families since (Reporters Without Borders, 2016). In addition,

the country is ranked 189th out of 190 by the World Bank in its 2018 Doing Business profile that measures business regulations and their applications, human rights organizations including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and a special *Commission of Inquiry* of the UN Human Rights Commission all describe Eritrea's respect for human rights abysmal, and thousands of Eritreans have been fleeing the country in recent years due to lack of opportunity as well as the mandatory national service that has no particular time of service imposed and which has become indefinite for some young people. Many of the Ministry of Information press releases that are available on the government's website are an attempt to refute reports of human rights abuses, people fleeing, and any other criticism that has been focused on the government.

A number of websites (Awate.com, Assenna.com, Asmarino.com) run by the Eritrean diaspora or those of other independent reporters in the region (Geeska Afrika Online) have critically countered the government's propaganda machine, but the government has been effective at limiting the domestic population's exposure to alternative viewpoints, and has even gone after journalists living abroad to try to silence them (Reporters Without Borders, 2012). From these external reports, the picture painted of Isaias Afwerki is that he is mercurial, vindictive, and self-important. Like all authoritarian leaders who have stayed in power for decades, Afwerki seems to think that he knows better than anyone else how to advance the interests of the country. Unlike Kagame in Rwanda and Museveni in Uganda, however, Afwerki's capriciousness in power has resulted in a closed and perilous environment for all Eritreans. Afwerki does not bother to consult, and maintains control through fear, imprisonment, capricious manipulation of those loyal to him, and a strong propaganda machine ever fighting against any criticism. His leadership style can be characterized as *capriciously autocratic*.

Though also authoritarians, Kagame and Museveni at least understand that they have constituents that need to be consulted, and they engage with a number of local, regional, and international experts about moving their countries along a modernization path, yet maintain firm control over that path. The outcomes for the three nations in terms of their modernization paths,

and the general living conditions for their people, of each of these three leaders' approach to governing are varied. By far, the worst off are the Eritreans who were hopeful when Afwerki came to power, having credited him with bringing the war for independence to a successful end. Though Afwerki can claim some success in helping Eritrea to be more self-sufficient, especially when it comes to food supply, he has done so through forced labor through the mandatory national service, and has also created a fearful society from which thousands have tried to flee. Museveni has utilized extensive patronage networks to remain in power, and has increasingly vilified anyone who is not aligned with the NRM party. By all accounts, Museveni and his party cadres have been able to enrich themselves through the process of modernization as well. Kagame promotes a narrative of self-sufficiency, determination, and hope domestically and internationally, and yet he does not allow anyone to get in the way of his vision for the country. None of the three "new breed" of African leaders in which the international community put so much hope in the mid-1990s has turned into a democratic leader, but most who work in international development continue to court Museveni and Kagame as legitimate and competent partners. Afwerki, on the other hand, is heavily criticized and more and more isolated.

Conclusions

Uganda's experience with civil war, and the post-conflict attempt by President Museveni to balance ethnic interests and unify the country helps to explain why he has forcefully advocated for his policies through speeches, ceremonial gatherings, and local government events. It may also explain why he took a paternalistic tone in his narrative to convince his people that they should follow his lead and accept the need for foreign and local investment in Uganda's modernization project. His attempts at agenda setting are extensive and similar in frequency, though different in tone, from what Paul Kagame advocates in Rwanda. There, the history of genocide, overreliance on foreign aid, and the need to move past divisions and underdevelopment has resulted in Kagame's government pushing hard for foreign investment

rather than aid, for individual hard-work and attitudinal change, as well as a top-down modernization program that is very pragmatic and that focuses on finding Rwanda's place in the global economy. It focuses not so much on specifically encouraging land use changes as in promoting an idea that skills, culture, and attitudes of Rwandans can lead to greater success in economic development.

More work is needed to systematically examine how the governments of Rwanda and Uganda as well as other African nations, are handling both the pull of modernization and land investments, and the push-back of local land users. Three key commonalities exist among the two countries examined here in their approaches to land reform and investments. First, both were encouraged by outside actors like the World Bank to reform the agriculture sector and liberalize the economy more generally. The global push after the end of the Cold War for liberalization and reform was extensive, and most African governments have adopted the views of the donor institutions on land reform and investment as key variables necessary for economic development. Second, both countries have a top-down approach to land reform. There has been little input from those most affected by the policies until after the reforms have been made. Uganda and Rwandan's governments have been overt in their attempts to shape the narrative over land. Uganda's government is at least rhetorically bringing in the population to the discussion even if it has already decided what policies to put in place. Third, it is extremely important to pay attention to rumor, rhetoric and reality within countries that are undergoing transformations when it comes to land use, modernization, and agriculture. Land has become a hotly contested economic and identity marker. Case by case analysis is needed in order to separate rumor from fact, rhetoric from reality. What is going on at the local level across these societies is not uniform, yet claims have suggested that land investments in particular, and modernization more generally, are either a panacea or a disastrous curse. Measured analysis is needed to better understand under what conditions land use changes are beneficial, and to whom. Finally, the implementation of the changes that have been advocated and pushed forward by

the leaders is not simply a technical exercise but a profoundly political process. There is a great need for dialogue among all stakeholders in each country in order to try to get agreement and buy-in to a particular vision of land use and economic growth, otherwise no matter how rational the laws or how well structured the policies, little will be accomplished in practice.

The next step in this project is to expand the content analysis to cover the years 2012-2017, and then to engaged in a more systematic content analysis that will help to further define the rhetorical styles that I have identified. In addition, I would like to expand this approach to 3-4 other East African states in order to uncover patterns, differences, and problems in the different states' approaches to economic development, investment, and land reform. By uncovering the rhetoric of leaders about their developmental visions for their countries, this project can add to the literature on state survival and authoritarian resilience that we see in African states. Though the rhetoric of both Museveni and Kagame is attempting to advance both Uganda and Rwanda towards greater participation within the global economy, the reality of the peoples' experiences are hampered by the authoritarian nature of each regime. Developing a model for understanding leadership styles within African states when it comes to advancing a vision for progress will better inform our ability to critique and assess both economic development and democratization on the continent.

References

Berk, P. 2013. "The allocation of land as a historical discourse of political authority in Tanzania" *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, v.46(2): 255-282.

Boone, C. 2014. Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Desrosiers, M-E. and S Thomson. 2011. "Rhetorical legacies of leadership: projections of 'benevolent leadership' in pre- and post-genocide Rwanda" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* v.49(3): 429-453.

"Donor Money is good. Private Sector Money is Better. When they come together it is excellent." May 2012. <http://paulkagame.com/index.php/news/666-donor-money-is-good-private-sector-money-is-better-when-they-come-together-it-is-excellent>

"Don't wait for anybody to do you a favor." 22 October 2014. <http://paulkagame.com/index.php/news/1440-don-t-wait-for-anybody-to-do-you-a-favor>

Jayne, T.S., M. Muyunga and L.N. Traub. "Farming and Africa's employment challenge" *The Nation* 31 August 2012.

"President asks Kigezi leaders to help wananchi achieve modern life" statehouse.go.ug/media/news/2012/03/20/president-asks-kigezi-leaders-help-wananchi-achieve-modern-life

"President Kagame attends National Leadership Prayer Breakfast" 11 January 2015. <http://paulkagame.com/index.php/news/1473-president-kagame-attends-national-leadership-prayer-breakfast>

"President Kagame joins Masaka residents in Umuganda to build homes for vulnerable" 22 February 2014. <http://paulkagame.com/index.php/news/1306-president-kagame-joins-masaka-residents-in-umuganda-to-build-homes-for-vulnerable>

"President cautions RDCS on land matters, urges them on economic transformation" Monday 14 April 2014 statehouse.go.ug/media/news/2014/04/14/president-cautions-rdcs-on-land-matters

Reporters Without Borders March 12, 2012; Updated Jan 20, 2016

<https://rsf.org/en/news/eritrea-1>

Reporters without Borders September 21, 2016

<https://rsf.org/en/news/eritrea-ended-media-freedom-15-years-ago-month>

Santiago, A. 2016. "Agenda Setting in Uganda: Influencing Attitudes on Land Through Policy and Persuasion," *Journal of Global Initiatives* v. 10(2): 31-53.

McAusland, P. 2013. Land Law Reform in Eastern Africa: Traditional or Transformative? New York: Routledge.

Oyo, Carlos. 2013 "Methodological reflections on 'land grab' databases and the 'land grab'

literature ‘rush’.” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* v. 40(3): 503-520.

“Pinda scoffs at perpetrators of land grabbing allegations” 24 August 2013. *The Citizen*.
<http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/Pinda+scoffs+at+perpetrators+of+land+/-/1840392/1966106/-/15ggtb0/-/index.html>

“Real wealth is in the head, not in the ground.” 16 September 2016.
<http://paulkagame.com/index.php/news/1420-real-wealth-is-in-the-head-not-in-the-ground>

Uganda National Planning Authority, 2010

ⁱ *Bona fide* occupants are those living on a plot of land for 12 years or more prior to the 1995 Constitution, unchallenged by the registered owner, and regardless of whether or not they are squatters.