

Rethinking the Relationship between Neo-patrimonialism and Economic Development in Africa

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Abstract Is it possible to work with the grain of neo-patrimonial politics to boost investment and growth in Africa? Current donor orthodoxy is that neo-patrimonialism is irredeemably bad for economic development, but evidence from other regions, together with a re-examination of the African record itself, suggests that this may not be true. We present evidence from case studies of Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi and Rwanda to show that provided mechanisms can be found to centralise economic rents and manage them with a view to the long term, neo-patrimonialism can be harnessed for developmental ends.

Is it possible to boost poverty-reducing economic investment and growth in Africa by working *with*, rather than *against*, prevailing political-economic realities? That is the question this article seeks to answer. Most African political economies, it is well known, are characterised by high levels of clientelism, corruption and rent-seeking – a constitutive feature of systems frequently called ‘patrimonial’ or ‘neo-patrimonial’ in development literature. Working with African realities consequently implies harnessing neo-patrimonialism for developmental ends.

Working with, rather than against, neo-patrimonialism implies a radical shift in donor priorities, since for more than 20 years orthodox development practice has sought to reform or erase it via the ‘good governance agenda’. However, an emerging body of research has begun to question whether clientelism, corruption and rent-seeking are as detrimental to development as once believed, and it is on the foundations of this counter-orthodoxy that Africa Power and Politics Programme (APPP) research builds.

Emerging results from a comparative review of the African and Asian development literature, a desk-based comparison of economic performance since independence in seven African countries, and fieldwork in a further five countries, suggests that neo-patrimonial governance is compatible

with strong economic performance providing two conditions hold. First, there must be a bundle of broadly pro-market, pro-rural policies in place; and second, there must be an institutional system for centralising and distributing economic rents with a view to the long term.

The first finding, on policy, chimes with those of two major research programmes on Africa: one is the African Economic Research Consortium (Ndulu *et al.* 2008), and the other is Leiden University’s ‘Tracking Development’ programme (Henley 2010; van Donge *et al.* 2010); we will not rehearse it in any detail here. By contrast, our second finding, which concerns institutions, is comparatively novel in an African context – although it is foreshadowed elsewhere – and we consequently devote the bulk of our discussion to it. The article proceeds by discussing some of the literature on neo-patrimonialism and development, then moves to empirical evidence and mid-level theory construction, before concluding.

1 Neo-patrimonialism and development in theory

The term ‘neo-patrimonialism’ grows out of Max Weber’s notion of ‘patrimonialism’, an ‘ideal-type’ of traditional rule in which authority is based on ties of *personal* loyalty between a leader and his administrative staff (Weber 1947). In Weber’s schema, patrimonialism has various

sub-types, including 'sultanism' and 'prebendalism', but the details need not concern us here. The important point is that in all its variants, the system is held together by the personal distribution of material resources and perks (many of which are 'rents' in modern economic terminology), distributed and consumed as though they were the private property of the ruler and/or his staff. 'Neo-patrimonialism' refers to a political economy in which this basic authority system is combined with, or exists behind some formal, impersonal elements of governance, like a legal system that demarcates the public and private domain, or an administrative code with formal criteria for staff hiring and promotion (Zolberg 1966; Médard 1982; Chabal and Daloz 1999).

Although there may be disagreement among Africanists over how great the personalised aspects of administration are in specific countries, and over the extent to which 'neo-patrimonialism' has become a catch-all concept capable of explaining everything (Therkildsen 2005), few doubt that the term captures an important part of African political reality.

A similarly small number doubt that neo-patrimonialism is bad for modern economic development. Conventional wisdom holds that the distribution of rents to political cronies tends to create damaging market distortions harmful to growth in the long run (Bates 1981; World Bank 1981), while the arbitrariness and instability said to be typical of neo-patrimonial rule is anathema to rational capitalist investors (Diamond 1987; Callaghy 1988). It is for these reasons that donors have so vigorously promoted good governance solutions, intended to break the personalistic bonds between a ruler (patron) and his staff (clients), strengthening more impersonal, contractual norms (World Bank 1989; Moore 1993; Williams and Young 1994). In the area of investment climate promotion, for example, this is manifested in efforts to increase regulatory transparency and promote business associations, replacing cronyist, 'hand-in-glove' business-politics ties with more impersonal, arm's length relations, typical of best practice in the West (Moore and Schmitz 2008).

Unfortunately, these reforms have made only limited headway to date, and there are good reasons not to expect rapid progress in the near

future. In the political sphere, for example, the widespread introduction of multi-party elections has not replaced neo-patrimonialism: it may even have intensified it. The reason is that in countries with weak public finances and public services, it is very difficult for politicians to make credible commitments to programmatic investments in public goods such as typically win elections in the West (Khan 2005; Keefer 2007). Even if the finances to make such commitments were available, it might be irrational for politicians in young democracies to supply them. Most voters are poorly educated, operate under severe information constraints, and are thus not in a position to make sound judgements about the credibility of politician commitments to goods of this nature (Keefer 2007). They find it easier to evaluate a concrete donation in the form of a private good, such as a job or a club good, such as a local school, than programmatic commitments to 'employment creation' or 'quality education'; often they simply plump for the candidate that is ethnically most like them, furnishing some probability that at least their ethnic group will be favoured (Chandra 2007; van de Walle 2007). In fact, game theory tells us that rational voters will always prefer politicians that operate clientelistically until incomes reach such a level that they are indifferent to the private goods politicians can supply (Lyne 2007). So it is that in most parts of the continent multi-party democracy has not led to increasingly contractual relations between voters and politicians over manifesto commitments; normally it has led to increased clientelist pressures, at best a downward extension or inversion of the patrimonial pyramid.

When it comes to business-politics relations, there are significant disincentives to levelling playing fields and making regulation transparent. To begin with, because markets in most African countries are poorly developed, political power is often the easiest route to wealth (Diamond 1988). Neo-patrimonialism allows African politicians to supplement their incomes through corruption, or to use the power of the state to gain a foothold in business. Second, the business sector is a valuable source of rents for politicians to distribute in the interests of buying off political rivals, or winning election contests: from an individualistic perspective, African politicians have little interest in nurturing an independent business

sector (Emery 2003). And it is important to note that this is not merely an African phenomenon. For North *et al.* (2006), the majority of states in human history, and certainly most falling between primitive hunter-gatherer society and advanced industrial society, have been 'limited access orders' in which 'the political system manipulates the economy to create rents as a means of solving the problem of violence' (North *et al.* 2006: 3).

If neo-patrimonialism is here to stay, at least for the foreseeable future, the prognosis for African economic development appears bleak. Or does it? In recent years, a growing number of counter-orthodox studies has begun to question whether good governance arrangements are the best or only route to progress in developing countries (Chang 2003; Grindle 2004; Khan 2006; Rodrik 2007; Moore and Schmitz 2008; Levy 2010). Evidence from Asia, where cronyism, corruption and rent-seeking appear to have been compatible in some cases with very rapid, poverty-reducing growth, shows that 'good' governance is not essential for strong economic performance. Governance need only be 'good enough' (Grindle 2004), and a variety of institutional forms can satisfy investors' functional needs (Rodrik 2007).

Some Africanist work has drawn attention to similar issues. For example, in an important article, Chris Allen (1995) rejected the idea that all African countries had been equally dysfunctional, arguing that the more stable and successful economies had endured by introducing forms of centralised bureaucracy. Sandbrook (1985) recognised that rulers of exceptional skill, like Côte d'Ivoire's Houphouët-Boigny, had been able to prevent the personalised state's characteristic downward slide. Richard Crook (1989) went so far as to coin the term 'developmental patrimonialism' in that connection. Even Jackson and Rosberg (1982), responsible for some of the more lurid images of neo-patrimonial governance on the continent, recognised that personal rule had brought political stability to large parts of Africa for significant periods of time.

Greater insight into how it is that clientelism, corruption, and rent-seeking can sometimes be compatible with development is provided by Mushtaq Khan's work, which focuses on the role of economic rents in development. According to

Khan (2000b), rents are 'excess incomes', which in perfectly efficient markets should not exist. However, in the real world, rents are widespread, taking such forms as profits from monopoly trading, income from subsidies, income that comes from owning scarce resources, or income from corruption (Khan 2000b). Some rents are inefficient and growth retarding, while for others, the opposite can be true. As Khan says, 'Managing development may, in fact, require the continuous discrimination of efficient from inefficient rents by policy-makers and analysts' (Khan 2000b: 21–2).

In most developing countries, economic rents are distributed through patron–client networks. Managing these networks thus becomes crucial to a political economy's prospects for growth (Khan 2000b). The Asian cases demonstrate that economies are able to grow even when substantial rents are distributed to relatively unproductive clients; however, there must be some limit to non-productive rent creation and rent-seeking, and this must be compensated for by more dynamic rent use elsewhere. Policymakers need to balance the demands of politically strategic groups for hand-outs, then, with the hand-ups required by genuine entrepreneurs.

Under what institutional conditions is productive rent use likely to occur, however? Khan and others have already gone a long way to answering this question, especially in the Asian context (Khan 2000a; MacIntyre 2003; Khan 2009, 2010). We have built on their findings to illuminate our original query about whether it is possible to harness African neo-patrimonialism for developmental rather than predatory ends.

2 Re-examining the African record

We conducted research into economic performance in seven 'middle African' countries, initial results and the methodology of which we have presented elsewhere (Kelsall *et al.* 2010). Two variables emerged from the research as centrally important: the degree to which the process for creating and allocating economic rents was *centralised*, and the degree to which it was oriented to the long term. In our schema, rent management is centralised when there is a structure in place that allows a person or group at the apex of the state to determine the major rents that are created and to distribute them at will. It is long-horizon when leaders have a vision that

Table 1 Different types of rent regime

		Centralisation	
		Low	High
Time horizon	Short	Free-for-all	Non-developmental kleptocracy
	Long	Losing battle against corruption	Developmental rent utilisation

inspires them to create rents and discipline rent-seeking with a view to expanding income through productive investment over the long term.

Centralisation permits a leadership to put some limits on rent-seeking and to play a coordinating role, steering rent creation into economically high potential areas, or to areas that must be resourced in the interests of political stability. A long-horizon orientation, meanwhile, is important for reasons similar to the ones that make countries that forego consumption in the present for investment in the future, faster-growing over the long run. Long-horizon rent creation means directing a substantial portion of rent-earning opportunities to activities that involve increases in value-added, or transformations in the productive forces over time – as when subsidies are provided to an infant industry that in the long run will compete internationally.

This does not mean, it must be stressed, either that the motivations for creating this rent structure are public spirited, or that all the rents earned in this system are productive or clean. Following the concept of ‘roving’ vs. ‘stationary’ bandits, even a purely selfish leader may calculate that he stands to maximise his take (i.e. his parasitic rents) from the economy if it is allowed to grow over time (Olson 1993). The point, however, is that some parasitic rent collection will have to be foregone in the present if it is to be maximised in the future, otherwise businesses will be so burdened with parasitic demands that they lose their ability to grow.

We can explore the relationships further by arranging the variables along two axes, giving rise to a matrix that shows four basic or ‘ideal’ types of rent management.

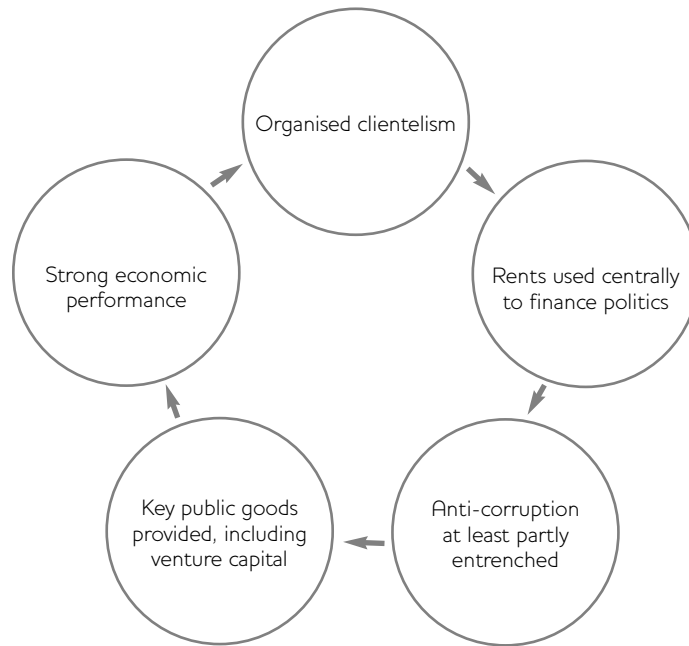
In the matrix’s top left quadrant, rent centralisation is low and the leadership has little interest in disciplining the rent process with a view to the long term. In its most extreme form,

the result is a highly competitive free-for-all in which anyone with the ability to extract rents takes the maximum they can in the short term, grasping as much as they can today for fear there will be nothing left to take tomorrow. In this scenario, economic growth is likely to be well below potential, since out-of-control rent-seeking stimulates investor flight. The clearest examples from Africa might be the Nigerian First and Second Republics, the First Republic in Congo, or Sierra Leone under Albert Margai.

The bottom left quadrant in Table 1 represents a relatively rare type. Here, the leadership desires to take the long view, limiting rents so as to maximise its own take or to serve what it views as the interest of society as a whole. However, because it lacks the machinery to centralise rents, its ability actually to implement the long-term view is strictly limited. Various periods of Tanzanian history provide illustrations, including Ben Mkapa’s first term in office (1995–2000). His leadership initially appeared to be characterised by a fairly genuine embrace of a donor-driven development vision, together with a much-vaunted war against corruption. However, by 2000 it was clear that on the latter front very little progress had been made, undisciplined rent-seeking abounded in strategic areas like tax collection and energy production, and Mkapa himself was soon feathering his nest.

The upper right quadrant, by contrast, describes the situation where the leadership has had considerable success in centralising the rent process. Few big rents are generated or allocated without its knowledge. In theory, the President and his inner circle would have the power to limit rent-taking, but for one reason or another, they do not take the long view. In extreme cases, the administration becomes little more than an anti-developmental kleptocracy and economic performance will be considerably below potential as a result. Mobutu’s Zaire and Abacha’s Nigeria are perhaps the archetypes.

Figure 1 Developmental rent management



The bottom right quadrant of Table 1 is the most interesting from the point of view of our argument. Here, the leadership has succeeded in centralising control over rents, and also takes a long-term approach to rent maximisation. The regime retains a strongly patrimonial or neo-patrimonial character, in the sense that there is a systematic blurring of the boundaries between public resources and the private property of the ruler(s). It is not necessarily free of illegality or ‘corruption’; in fact, these may reach quite high levels and may well be the major source of finance for the political activities of the ruling groups. However, the rent process is organised in such a way that it does not hurt the climate for investment in the ways that typify the other regimes. Indeed, if it finances domestic investment including public works and other ventures with positive externalities for other investors, the net effects may be quite favourable. Corruption, too, may be less harmful than under the other types of regime because it is more predictable and moderated by concerns to grow the economy. It may also be more disciplined in structural terms, with the effect that, for example, a professional and hierarchically coordinated state bureaucracy is able to be retained in the face of clientelistic pressures. In other words, anti-corruption efforts may be at least partly entrenched in a serious

and effective way. Within sub-Saharan Africa, we believe Seretse Khama’s Botswana to be a good example of this type. The virtuous circle of developmental patrimonialism is illustrated in Figure 1.

Greater insight into the mechanisms involved can be provided by looking at our country case studies. Here we concentrate on four cases: Kenya, Rwanda, Malawi and Côte d’Ivoire, which illustrate particularly well the relationships we wish to highlight. Table 2 shows the relations between regime type and economic performance.

As depicted, the strongest performing regimes in our sample were Kenya between 1965 and 1975; Côte d’Ivoire between 1960 and 1975; Malawi between 1961 and 1978 and Rwanda from 2000 onwards. Aside from having a generally pro-market, pro-rural bias in economic ideology and policy, as predicted by other research programmes, all the strong performers had certain institutional characteristics in common, manifesting a centralised, long-horizon rent process.

The precise mechanism for centralising rents varied from place to place, but in all cases – as we might expect for neo-patrimonial states – it involved a blend of top-down, personal rule with

Table 2 Regimes, rent management and economic performance

Regime	Rent management	Economic performance relative to potential
Côte d'Ivoire		
1960–75	LC	Strong
1975–80	LD	Weak
1981–93	SC	Mostly weak
1993 ff	SD	Mostly weak
Kenya		
1965–75	LC	Strong
1980–2002	SC	Weak
2002 ff	SC?	Mostly reasonable
Malawi		
1961–78	LC	Strong
1980–94	SC	Weak
1994–2004	SD	Weak
2004 ff	LC?	Mostly strong
Rwanda		
1962–73	SD	Weak
1973–94	SC	Mixed, mostly poor
2000 ff	LC	Strong

Key: LC, long-horizon, centralised; LD, long-horizon, decentralised; SC, short-horizon, centralised; SD, short-horizon, decentralised.

technocratic competence, something rather different from the accountability relations promoted by today's good governance agenda. For example, in Kenya political parties, including the ruling party, had been emasculated by the late 1960s, and the most important decisions on rent utilisation were made by President Kenyatta and his 'Kiambu court'. Decisions were implemented by a civil service that had inherited much of the competence of the British colonial administration (Leys 1975; Tamarkin 1978). A similar story could be told for Côte d'Ivoire, where President Houphouët-Boigny reined in the independence of the ruling party, so he could have the final say on important economic decisions himself, albeit assisted by a competent planning machinery in which French technical advice loomed large (technocratic decisions were then rolled out to the provinces through the territorial administration and other key executive agencies (Tuinder 1978; Rapley 1993). In Malawi, Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda

exercised near total domination over his MPs and ministers whom he called 'my boys', determining the main economic rents to be created with the help of a decidedly neo-colonial administrative corps (see Cammack, this *IDS Bulletin*). In Rwanda, President Kagame has exercised enormous personal sway over economic decision-making, in which the ruling party holding company, Tristar, plays a significant role in the collection and allocation, including reinvestment, of rents.

In all these cases, a neo-patrimonial system characterised by top-down clientelism permitted Presidents or ruling cliques to impose some discipline on the utilisation of rents. In Kenya, for example, President Kenyatta worked closely with Charles Karanja of the Kenya Tea Development Authority to ensure that tea-growing did not expand into uneconomic areas (Leonard 1991). In Côte d'Ivoire, the *Caisse de Stabilisation*¹ set an efficient price for cocoa

growers for many years, while the Ministry of Agriculture, provincial administration and extension services supervised the expansion of the cocoa industry into virgin lands (Tuinder 1978; Crook 1990). In Malawi, most parastatals were profit-making and generated funds for reinvestment, as did the President's private company, Press Holdings (see Cammack, this *IDS Bulletin*). In Rwanda, meanwhile, the administration has been subject to effective top-down performance disciplines in all areas (see, e.g. Golooba-Mutebi *et al.* 2010). In addition, although it was common in all these countries for state employees to leverage their public positions for private gain (many politicians and civil servants set themselves up in business) the prevalence of the most damaging forms of corruption like embezzlement or theft appears to have been comparatively low.

We can contrast these cases with regimes where rents were decentralised, like in Côte d'Ivoire between 1975 and 1980. Sometime in the mid-1970s Houphouët lost control of rent management to his barons (Médard 1991; Alemayehu 1997). Economic decisions were increasingly made outside of the normal planning process, and the result was a massive expansion in the number of parastatal projects, many of them inefficient (Riboud 1987; Médard 1991; Alemayehu 1997). Economic performance declined and debt spiralled. A similar fate befell Malawi between 1994 and 2004. President Muluzi was so focused on securing re-election for himself and his beleaguered party that the discipline surrounding rents and corruption was relaxed completely. There was an unseemly scramble for spoils, a veritable free-for-all, and the economy precipitously declined (see Cammack, this *IDS Bulletin*).

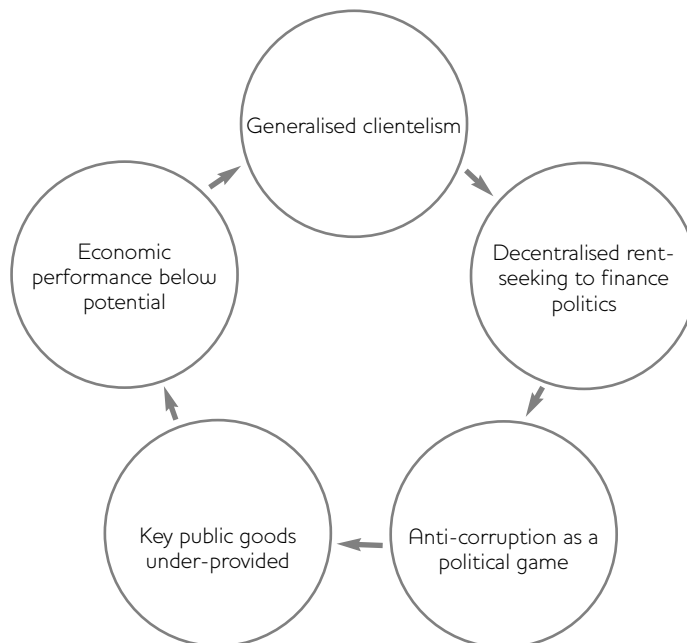
As our matrix predicts, however, rent centralisation is not sufficient *in and of itself* to create the conditions for economic growth. Another variable that our strong performers had in common was a long-horizon approach to rent management.

We can illustrate the importance of this relationship by considering some regimes where rents, while centralised, have *not* been oriented to the long term. Daniel Arap Moi's Kenya, between 1980 and 2002 is a case in point. Shortly after Moi replaced Kenyatta as Kenya President, a new

rent process came into being. The new president focused his energies on rehabilitating KANU (Kenya African National Union) as a personal patronage machine. But in contrast to Kenyatta, who had developed a set of stable long-term patron-client relationships with local big men, Moi assured his own ascendancy by intervening in local power struggles, and constantly reshuffling those beneath him (Barkan 1994; Throup and Hornsby 1998). At the top of the system, Moi and a handful of close cronies were using state power to create huge business interests, while just beneath was a patronage merry-go-round, in which those with temporary access to power were eating as fast as they could in the knowledge that they would soon be dismissed from the table (Barkan 1994; Throup and Hornsby 1998). Moi undoubtedly had knowledge of the main rents being created and sought after, and had the personal authority to discipline those misusing them. But this he chose not to do, since there appeared to be no clear vision for how to maximise rents over the long run. As with Malawi in the same period, senior technocrats had lost the competence or the confidence to advise the President on a sensible economic strategy (see Cammack, this *IDS Bulletin*). Economic management drifted, International Monetary Fund-backed structural adjustment proved inconclusive, and the economy, from so promising a position, slid backwards (Barkan 1994).

Another factor causing Moi's economic management to suffer was the growing discontent that stemmed from his exclusionist politics. Long-horizon rent management, it should be noted, also implies an inclusive political strategy. Rents need to be shared around sufficiently so that no important groups feel completely excluded (since this might provoke an investment-detering insurgency or other stability-damaging violence); at the same time, a political strategy must not be so inclusive that rents are mostly dissipated in redistribution, since this will starve the economy of surpluses for investment. All of our strong performing states distributed rents fairly inclusively, albeit around an ethnic core – usually that of the President. Jomo Kenyatta's reported remark to his non-Kikuyu ministers that 'My people have the milk in the morning, your tribes the milk in the afternoon' is a good illustration (Wrong 2009: 51).² Contrast this with post-Houphouët Côte d'Ivoire, where the break-up of Houphouët's

Figure 2 Rent management in the African modal pattern



ethnic ‘grand coalition’ and Southern chauvinism led to armed rebellion in the North (Akindes 2004), or Kenya under the first presidency of Mwai Kibaki, in which Kikuyu hegemony was perceived to be so overwhelming that political violence ensued (Wrong 2009).

While on the subject of Kibaki’s Kenya, readers will note that it comes with a question mark in Table 2, being a difficult case to categorise. In fact, its ambiguity may be representative of many contemporary African regimes which seem to fall between the two types of centralised, short-horizon rent management, and a decentralised free-for-all. A familiar story in these states is that members of the high political leadership are permitted to indulge in non-productive rent creation and rent-seeking with the tacit, if not direct knowledge of the President (who may or may not profit personally).³ Some of the proceeds are used to fund election expenses, and some are pocketed privately. In addition, ruling party candidates are permitted to engage in various types of rent-seeking in order to fund their own constituency campaigns. This may be coupled with a certain permissiveness towards petty rent-seeking at lower levels of the administration.

This scenario is not necessarily *disastrous* for development. Thanks to improved financial

management (an aspect of centralisation), election-gearred rent creation may not be so great as to seriously upset macroeconomic balance, and the country may be considered relatively investor-friendly as a result. Indeed, if this type of election financing contributes to overall regime stability, the investment effect might be net-positive.

But if seriously unproductive rent creation gets into strategically important sectors of the economy, like roads, power, or port facilities, public goods crucial for business are likely to be under-provided, and investment and performance will consequently be sub-par. APPP researchers believe the majority of African states are currently in this predicament. Buoyed by a favourable external environment, they have been growing at around 5–6 per cent per annum in recent years. Nevertheless, we think performance in most remains below potential, and are sceptical of the idea of an Asian-style poverty-reducing economic transformation. And if rent-driven election financing generates anger and resentment, perhaps because, as in Kibaki’s Kenya, it takes an ethnically exclusive form, the net impact on investment is likely to be negative (see EIU 2008, 2009). Figure 2 illustrates what we take to be the African modal pattern.

3 Problems with developmental patrimonialism

Our research shows that provided rent management can be centralised and oriented to the long term, neo-patrimonialism is compatible with strong economic performance. We can confidently assert, then, that in some cases neo-patrimonialism can be harnessed for developmental ends. More than this, our results show that all of the strong performers in our sample had this institutional mix, raising the possibility that transformational performance in Africa may only be possible by centralising rents and steering them to the long term.

But that does not mean that developmental patrimonialism should be *the new model* that donors and policymakers should be rushing to promote in Africa, not least because it comes associated with several problems.

One is a question mark over whether it can be implemented in contemporary political conditions. Our cases have shown that multi-party democracy presents powerful incentives for African leaders to focus on the short term, relaxing the strictures on rent creation and corruption, and making long-horizon rent management more difficult to achieve. Rwanda, the only clear-cut contemporary example in our caseload has been able to square centralised long-horizon rent management with multi-party democracy partly through use of a specific institutional vehicle – Tristar. Tristar is a party holding company that has been able to provide capital for joint ventures in hitherto untapped areas of economic potential, channel funds to the ruling party for electoral and other purposes, and channel profits into politically important social infrastructure projects. This has allowed the RPF (Rwandese Patriotic Front) to take a tough line on corruption in other areas of the administration, creating a virtuous circle of public goods creation and development. Because party holding companies, common in Asia, less so in Africa, might be possible institutional solutions to perverse election pressures in contemporary Africa, we are also researching ‘partystatals’ in Ethiopia and elsewhere. Nevertheless, it would be naive to ignore the fact that an important element in the Rwandan regime’s ability to successfully centralise rents is that it is unquestionably a constrained democracy, a ‘hard’ state with a reputation for political intolerance that places it closer to our

other single-party developmental patrimonial regimes than to some of Africa’s more competitive polities. The economic potential of developmental patrimonial systems, then, should be set against the loss of civil liberties they may entail.

The second problem is that even in our sample’s most successful states, developmental patrimonialism proved unsustainable over the longer term. There are a number of reasons for this. One is that decentralising pressures tended to build up over time. In our cases, these variously took the form of pressures to Africanise the civil service, to find parastatal jobs for school-leavers, and to include ethnic groups who had been on the fringes of clientelist networks. It was an unfortunate coincidence that these pressures coincided with an adverse shift in external conditions, and with internal succession crises. In this context, ageing leaders, ‘fathers’ of their nations, either died or proved incapable of maintaining former discipline. Counterfactual conditions can of course be imagined in which all these crises did not strike at the same time, allowing strong economic performance to be sustained for longer, as in Asia. However, it is clear that today’s aspiring developmental patrimonialists (Rwanda, perhaps Angola, South Africa, Malawi and Ethiopia) need to work on the details of an inclusive yet dynamic economic policy – probably a rural bias policy – and to establish a viable system for political succession, if good results are to be sustained. It is also probable that even in the best cases, developmental patrimonialism has a limited shelf-life. After a couple of decades of growth, an economy is likely to be sufficiently sophisticated and diversified as to require a more impersonal management form.

Finally, it should be noted that in some countries, developmental patrimonialism is probably a non-starter. Where centrifugal pressures are very strong, perhaps for ethnic reasons, any serious attempt to centralise rents is likely to prove excessively controversial. Nigeria, and even contemporary Kenya, spring to mind. Other states, like Equatorial Guinea or Congo-Brazzaville, may have administrations in which professional standards have been so eroded by economic decline and political interference, that they have fallen below a threshold at which developmental patrimonialism is conceivable.⁴

Notes

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- 1 The Ivorian equivalent of a marketing board, although operated in a uniquely successful way.
- 2 Arguably after 1969, the Luo did not get much milk at all.
- 3 We speculate that increased media and civil society scrutiny of corruption encourages this

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- interstitial position. Presidents know they need to raise election funds, but they should also be sufficiently distanced from the process for 'plausible deniability' to apply. This may have the perverse effect of relaxing the discipline around corruption (see APPP 2011).
- 4 Although the recent history of Malawi gives some cause for optimism that with the right political will, a very weak administrative state can be significantly rehabilitated.

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