

## **Conventional and Unconventional Approaches to Strengthening Business and Investment in Africa: Rwanda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia Compared**

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The Africa Power and Politics Programme is interested in finding ways of improving the climate for investment in Africa that fit better with the grain of African political and economic realities than current ‘best practice’ models. Put bluntly, this means finding ways of working *with* rather than *against* the kinds of corruption, cronyism, and rent-seeking that are often glossed as ‘neo-patrimonialism’ in the Africanist literature. A comparative review of historical materials has already shown us that provided certain conditions hold, neo-patrimonialism can be compatible with an attractive investment climate and strong economic performance. The current paper examines some more recent cases. We look at one country (Tanzania) that has employed a relatively conventional approach to stimulating economic investment, and two others (Rwanda and Ethiopia), that have adopted more unconventional methods. Our argument is that best practice policy in Tanzania has been undermined by an anti-developmental strain of neo-patrimonialism, while in Rwanda, and perhaps Ethiopia, working with the grain of a more developmental patrimonialism has led to better economic results.