Agriculture is the most important element of the Rwandan economy. However, since about 2004, the Rwandan government has been implementing coercive land and agriculture reforms on private and professional farmers. The program, “Vision 2020,” was created by the Government of Rwanda to substitute subsistence farming with commercial agriculture, eventually making all farm land part of the commercial land market. Rwanda has the highest population density in sub-Saharan Africa and it is still rising, therefore land scarcity, food insecurities, and poverty are a problem. Due to the overpopulation, the desire to improve rural areas is increasingly making changes come about faster. Huggins believes that with the urgency of this government control, human rights will be violated and citizens will have a greater risk of food insecurity and poverty. The government plans to give large areas of land to “professional farmers,” forcing the poor members of the population to work for these farmers instead of producing their own food. The agricultural plans, Huggins points out, don’t have much leeway when it comes to issues such as economic and climatic conditions, for example, diseases, droughts, and infestations. The article points out that the economy appears to be benefiting from the policies on paper, however, most of these benefits are going to the few wealthy members of the population which increases the inequality, and therefore tensions among Rwandans. The New Times reports citizen’s frustrations with the policies, for example, fear of losing their land for good, loss of control over their land, and the possibility of corruption in the system. Reliability in the authorities has been reported as an issue in many areas, with orders of seeds never reaching farmers and promises of materials that never end up arriving. Huggins concludes that if the reforms continue to go on in such dictatorial ways, citizens may begin to fight back against the authorities and other government officials.

Huggins writes this article mostly from the point of view of the farmers and writers of The New Times, a pro-government newspaper. Although the paper is pro-government, Huggins only references sections of the paper that include the reactions of the people affected by the reforms. According to Huggins research, farmers have lost all control over the use of their land to local authorities. If the farmers don’t follow the regulations, the authorities have been known to use force. Authorities will confiscate land, charge fines, uproot crops, and sometimes even use physical violence. Huggins assumes that the Rwandan government has negative opinions of previous agricultural practices of rural farmers. This is not necessarily true however, the changes were made in hopes of benefiting the country’s economy as a whole rather than individual families. The previous practices may not have been useful for large-scale farming.

Great choice of article and a very good summary with some evidence of critical thought.