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Imidugudu, Villagisation in Rwanda
A Case of Emergency Development?

Contents

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As a response to the return of hundreds of thousands of refugees after the war and genocide in 1994, the new Rwanda government launched a settlement programme, Imidugudu. Since early 1997, this programme targets the entire rural population, that has to be regrouped in villages. The settlement programme is implemented with support from international agencies, including UNHCR and numerous NGOs.

The first part of this paper reviews the considerations of the agencies supporting the programme. From the start, ambiguities concerning the aims and appropriateness of the policy and the performance and feasibility of implementation made the programme controversial. Agencies nonetheless supported the policy, hoping it would adequately address the shelter crisis and contribute to a solution of some of Rwanda's pressing development problems.

The second part of the paper considers local processes of implementation. Two case studies look into the perceptions and practices of the actors involved, including the local population, regional authorities, and implementing NGOs. The studies make clear that Imidugudu contributes to the resolution of a major housing problem. However, little as yet has been achieved to address settlement, land, agriculture, and other economic activities in an integrated way, as the policy had envisaged.

The case of Imidugudu brings out dilemmas of 'emergency development'. Faced with a shelter emergency in Rwanda, agencies accepted a blue print policy for development. Given the variety in local conditions, and the differential actors' responses, a case-to-case approach would better suit the rural development needs of the country.

1.   Introduction: Returning Refugees in Rwanda

In the aftermath of the 1990–1994 war, the tiny central African country of Rwanda had to rebuild itself from the destruction, both human and material, caused by the genocide and the war. It also faced the return of an estimated 2.5 million refugees

in a four year period. The reintegration of these returnees is seen as a prerequisite for reconciliation and development and is therefore a priority for the government as well as the international community. A cornerstone of the reintegration is formed by a programme to create villages where returnees and the on-staying population without accommodation are provided with housing and services. This ambitious programme, by the name of *Imidugudu*,[1] aims eventually to regroup the entire rural population of the country in villages. By the end of 1998, four years after the war, construction had started in around 250 communities. An estimated 85,000 houses were completed, with the assistance of United Nations organisations and international NGOs and numerous more houses with local means only. From an emergency situation a far stretching development programme was born.

This paper is about the Rwanda *Imidugudu* programme. The first two chapters describe how the policy evolved. It was a response to the large population influx into the country, and was in accordance with the Arusha agreements of 1993. It meant to solve an existing development problem, namely of the increasing people/land ratio, a dwindling agricultural sector and few urban settlements that could absorb the surplus population from the rural areas. From its inception, *Imidugudu* has been controversial. While on the one hand the policy received substantial support, there were also organisations that did not want to get involved in the village programme. They questioned the aims and appropriateness of the policy, criticised its implementation, and pointed to the disappointing experiences with village formation programmes in other African countries, such as Tanzania, Ethiopia and Mozambique.

Nonetheless, *Imidugudu* has become a hinge to enrol the continuing support of the UNHCR and a large number of other international NGOs. Village formation, or more specifically, supporting the construction of houses, has become a major activity of many of these organisations. The third chapter of the paper reviews the considerations of the agencies supporting the programme and discusses the ambiguities that came into being. It will explore the meaning ascribed to the programme, the needs the policy is meant to address and the stakes involved for the assisting organisations. One factor that stands out is how support evolved from the immediate needs of the country in an emergency situation. As we will conclude, the experiences with *Imidugudu* give rise to some caution on how to integrate relief and development in post-conflict situations.

The fourth chapter of this paper asks how *Imidugudu* was implemented at the local level. One of the fascinating aspects of the *Imidugudu* policy is that it has evolved into a multimillion-dollar programme, in the midst of vagueness. After the presentation of the policy, rumours started to circulate in Kigali about its aims and possible implications. Some of this initial confusion has remained, because the instructions that were issued to implement the policy were never ratified in parliament, leaving ambiguity about its pace and scope. Monitoring and evaluation have lagged far behind implementation and with the fast pace of settlement building over the last few years, even the most basic statistics of the aggregated costs and achievements are unavailable. The research informing this paper has been one of the ongoing attempts to gain insight into the local processes of

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[1] The term *Imidugudu* refers to the villages under the programme; the singular *Umudugudu* refers to one village.

implementation.[2] It looks at the question how the programme gets shaped locally in the interplay of three sets of actors: the local government, implementing NGOs and the local population.

The case of *Imidugudu* contributes to present discussions about repatriating refugees and development. As the following section will elaborate, issues pertaining to repatriation have only recently gained importance in policy and academic circles. The complexities involved in the Rwanda case may highlight some of these issues. One of the central questions is how emergency situations may be responded to in such a way as to enhance long term development. *Imidugudu* may be viewed as probably one of the most daring experiments taking up this challenge.

Issues of returning refugees

In 1985, the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) was given the affirmation that it had a legitimate interest in the return of refugees. This reflected a change in donor policies towards repatriation. Until that time, issues of repatriation had received little attention. Some refugee situations were too delicate in the cold-war days to consider repatriation. In other cases, repatriation was, apart from some logistics, considered a natural and unproblematic move, following the successful resolution of conflict and the restoration of peace in the home area of the refugees flow (Rogge, 1994:22). Implicitly, it was assumed that both refugees and the home situation were untouched by the period of exile and that life could resume as before the disturbance that caused the flight.

It was not until the 1980s that the problematic nature of repatriation became a matter of concern. It was realised that repatriation often took place under far from ideal conditions. At the end of colonialism, refugees fled their countries mostly in the context of anti-colonial wars, after which they were able to return home safely. In later times, it were mostly political repression, internal violence, collapse of instituti-ons and extreme poverty which led people to flee.[3] As those problems were of a protracted nature, exoduses tended to become permanent (Rogge, 1994:18). When people returned, it was often to a situation of instability. According to Stein,

> "today, most voluntary repatriations occur under conflict, without a
> decisive political event such as national independence, without any change
> in the regime or in the condition which caused the flight" (Stein, 1994:52).

Sometimes, returns were not voluntary at all: in some cases the conditions in the host country, political upheavals spreading over from the home country (Allen and Turton, 1996:2) or lack of assistance made refugees decide to return.

While the complexities involved in repatriation became clear, repatriation as such moved higher on the agenda of the international community. Increasing refugee

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[2] Although some major evaluations have been done on the international interventions in the Great Lakes Region (see a.o. Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, 1996; Lautze, Jones and Duffield, 1998), these focus on the crisis and emergency relief. Relatively little attention has been given to the rehabilitation and development following the war.

[3] However, Terence Ranger (1996) argues that it is misleading to identify types of refugee-returnee situations with a distinction between colonial and post-colonial regimes as both types of repatriation occured during colonialism as well as in present times.

flows resulted in increasing frictions in host countries and costs for refugee programmes grew. With the Cold War coming to an end, some of the political obstacles to repatriation were removed, giving another impetus to policies geared towards repatriation. At the same time, it became recognised that returned groups needed to get their livelihoods ensured, and this has become a matter of concern of refugee programmes, such as those of the UNHCR (Allen and Turton, 1996:3).

As we shall see, the Rwanda case exemplifies the intricacies involved in repatriation. The returnees did not find a peaceful haven to return to, but a politically, socially and economically extremely volatile situation. The magnitude of the number of returnees only added to the problems. Moreover, the implicit notion that refugees remain untouched by their experiences in exile obviously did not hold for the Rwanda returnees. Liisa Malkki showed how social experiences of refugees from Burundi in Tanzania produced categories of identity as Hutu and Tutsi. She found that refugees living in towns, dispersed among the host population, and refugees living in camps ascribed radically different meanings to national identity and history, home and homeland and the experience of exile (Malkki, 1995). The invasion of Rwanda in 1990, by forces mainly recruited from Tutsi refugees living in camps in Uganda since 1959, suggests the importance of Malkki's findings to understand the dynamics of present day Rwanda.

Background of the housing problem in Rwanda

Since July 1994, between 2.3 and 2.6 million people have moved back into Rwanda, of which 1.3 million in 1996 only (UNHCR, 1998). These returnees consisted of different groups. An important distinction was made between what was called, in the military-style parlance of emergency operations, the 'Old Case Load' and the 'New Case Load'. The 'New Case Load' consisted of those people who had fled the country as a result of the 1990-1994 war and immediately after the genocide. The 'Old Case Load' consisted of people who had spent many years in exile before they came back. The distinction is important for a number of reasons: their histories, experiences in exile, the ethnic composition of the two 'Loads',[4] and their relative proximity to central state power. To get the picture clear, we need to go back in the country's history.

One of the legacies of the colonial period in Rwanda has been a deep-seated antagonism between the two main ethnic groups of the country: the Hutu and the Tutsi.[5] Recent studies have come to understand colonial history as a period in which the dynamic relations between these two groups became frozen into a situation where the colonisers relied on the Tutsi minority to rule the Hutu majority. They coated this arrangement in dubious myths of 'racial superiority' and a 'traditional domination' of the Tutsi over the Hutu. By the end of the colonial period, the social fabric of society had come to reflect quite accurately the colonial style of ruling and its underlying myths (Prunier, 1997/1995:1-4; Malkki, 1995; Reyntjens, 1994).

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[4] From here on, we shall avoid the term Case Load, and instead refer to Old and New Case refugees, returnees and repatriates.

[5] Apart from these two groups, there is the minority ethnic group of the Twa, comprising about 1% of the population. Their role in the history and present politics is not included in this paper.

This became clear during the de-colonisation process from 1959 to 1964. During the chaotic process of 'democratisation', the Hutu take over of the government and the abolishment of the central Tutsi monarchy, more than 300,000 Tutsi fled the country, mainly to Uganda and Burundi. Several rounds of recurring violence, mainly against the Tutsi minority, produced additional refugees, including one other massive outflow of Tutsi in 1973. Negotiations in the 1980s for the repatriation of these refugees did not succeed, leading in the early 1990s to guerrilla intrusions in Rwanda by the Rwandese Patriotic front (the RPF) made up of Tutsi residing in Uganda. Efforts to end the civil war resulted in the 1993 Arusha Agreement. The agreement did not succeed in bringing the designed peace, but was to play a role later in the post-war dealing with issues of land and housing.

On April 6 1994, a mortar attack on the aeroplane carrying President Habyarimana meant the abrupt beginning of a brutal genocide meant to kill all the Tutsi as well as the Hutu political opposition. The main perpetrators of the genocide were the *Interahamwe*, a civilian militia affiliated with Habyarimana's single party, the MRND(D) (*Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement et la Démocratie*). The genocide raged over the country, took the lives of an estimated 800,000 people,[6] maybe even reaching to one million, and destroyed countless properties. In the meantime, the RPF intensified its offensive and was able to take over control in Kigali in July 1994. During the war and immediately after the genocide, two million people crossed the border, mainly to Zaire and Tanzania. These were mainly comprised of the Hutu population, both engaged in and innocent to the genocide, seeking refuge for expected retaliation by the RPF. They were to form the New Case refugees.

While the large flows of New Case refugees were still crossing the borders to neighbouring countries, an estimated 800,000 people started moving in the opposite direction, repatriating into the country following the RPF. These were the Tutsi in exile, many of whom had been living for as much as 30 years in Uganda, Burundi or Zaire. This influx is what relief agencies referred to as the 'Old Case Load'. They were not a homogeneous group. Distinctions in the country of exile accounted for major differences among them, and their socio-economic status was quite diverse. Those taking part in the Kigali government have come to symbolise this group to the extent that one easily forgets that in majority they were poor country dwellers that were to survive of cultivation.

Despite the massive destruction of the war and genocide, housing was originally no major problem. The Old Case repatriates and the genocide survivors whose houses were destroyed could start to live in houses and work the fields vacated by the New Case refugees. However, gradually most of the Hutu refugees came back to Rwanda. In the first two years after the war, half a million New Case refugees returned. Then, by the end of 1996, a sudden massive return of an estimated 720,000 people from Zaire occurred. They came as a result of the attacks on the refugee camps by joint forces of Laurent Kabila's ADFL, Zairian Banyamulenge groups and Rwanda's army. The new Rwanda government was keen on dismantling the camps, that had become centres to regroup the Hutu *Interahamwe* and from where small-scale border attacks were launched. The

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[6] Estimates vary between 500,000 and 1,000,000, but the number of 800,000 is generally accepted.

resulting influx of New Case repatriates created a huge problem of shelter. This was exacerbated by the return of another 480,000 returnees from Tanzania in early 1997.

The new Government had promised to respect the entitlements to property abandoned by the New Case refugees. This meant that the repatriating New Case repatriates could reclaim their houses and fields from the Old Case repatriates that temporarily occupied them, rendering these people homeless. Other New Case repatriates stayed homeless because they found their houses destroyed or were not able to reclaim them from their new occupants. In some places sharing arrangements were made between Old Case repatriates and New Case returnees. A huge number of people, however, ended up living under plastic sheeting provided by relief agencies. In 1997, estimates of the number of families in immediate need of housing ranged from 250,000 to 300,000.

The *Imidugudu* policy was a response to this immediate need for housing. It was a relief programme, that sprang from an emergency situation. On the other hand, it had the ambition of a long-term development programme, meant to address the entire population and evolved from earlier development planning practices in the country. Although its focus was on accommodation, it implied a conversion of land use planning and agricultural production, and carried in it expectations for the future concerning development of infrastructure and social reorganisation. Hence, we label *Imidugudu* as a case of 'emergency development'. It was launched under the pressure of an emergency situation, but turned out to be far stretching in its implementations and implications. As we will see in the next chapter, it was also not without a history.

2. The *Imidugudu* policy: coming into being of a masterplan

Immediately after the war in 1994, the Rwanda Ministry of Social Reintegration started to plan agglomeration sites with the support of the UNHCR. At that time there was no pressing housing need, but was expected that the New Case refugees would come back in the near future. The new government had adopted the Arusha Agreement as law. This agreement concluded between the RPF and the Habyarimana government in August 1993, had stipulated that the Tutsi refugees in exile could not reclaim their former entitlements to houses and lots upon their repatriation. They would be compensated with formerly state owned land and would get support to reinstall themselves. In December 1996, when the influx of New Case returnees from Zaire created an acute problem of shelter, the Cabinet Council decided on a habitation policy for both urban and rural settlements. The policy encompassed far more then the accommodation of the needs of returning refugees. This was the outline of a grand engineering scheme that would radically alter the settlement patterns in the countryside. It addressed the entire population, not just the repatriates, and brought the detailed planning of rural space in the hands of government authorities.

The Cabinet Decision stated that the dispersed settlement pattern in the countryside was a waste of space, and therefore "all the rural inhabitants should be regrouped in villages (*Imidugudu*)" in order to separate space for habitation from space for agriculture and grazing. It called an end to the spontaneous settlement of people, and declared that from then on the capacity of the authorities should be strengthened in order to identify and distribute rural space. The policy statement further called for agrarian reform and the encouragement of activities outside of the agro-pastoral field.[7] Some time after the Cabinet Council meeting, in January 1997, different Ministries came out with instructions on how the policy had to be implemented. Although the political and legal status of these instructions remained unclear for a long time, they gave an idea of the direction the policy was to take. The eventual aim of the policy was that the entire population would be regrouped in villages. These villages were going to be constructed with the help of *Umuganda*, a tradition of community labour stemming from the colonial days. It got prohibited to build new houses outside of areas designated for *Imidugudu* settlements.

The policy was going to be accompanied by the redistribution of land. How this was going to happen remained unclear. Until the drafting of this paper, in March 1999, the only proposal for a new juridical framework for land reform which was made public was a document written by a FAO-consultant (Barrière, 1997).[8] Under the existing legislation, the state formally held almost all the land, while in practice customary land rights regulated the access to land holdings. The FAO document proposed to perpetuate the state's ownership to the land, and to formalise the customary practices. According to the proposal, the state could grant different forms of entitlement to land users, such as rights of passage, gathering, and cultivation. The document also contained measures to prevent the future subdivision of the land.

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[7] Third resolution of the Cabinet in its meeting of December 13, 1996.
[8] At the time of writing of this article (March-April 1999), a new proposal for land reform was discussed in Cabinet.

From subsequent statements of the government several grounds for the policy to regroup the rural population in villages became clear. One consideration was efficiency: villages would facilitate the provision of services. Another consideration given was that the policy contributed to security and to reconciliation. It would be easier to defend villages than scattered households. The integration of different ethnic groups in the villages was expected to lead to informal and eventually relaxed relations between them. "When everybody is living together they share their work, their problems, their beer". A central consideration, however, remained that the policy would address the problem of settlement and land use. This had been an ongoing issue since independence.

Imidugudu in the line of earlier policies for housing and land use

Together with Burundi, Rwanda had the highest population density in Africa, estimated by the end of the 1980s at 282 inhabitants per square kilometre (ACORD, 1998:3).[9] At the same time, it was the least urbanised country, with less than 10% of the population living in the cities, of which two thirds again in the capital city of Kigali (Hentic, 1995). The typical settlement pattern of Rwanda was formed by hills covered with a mosaic of scattered houses built near the neatly delineated banana 'plantations' and agricultural fields of the households. This settlement pattern was considered the cultural practice of banana growers, but it was also the consequence of colonial practices, such as the scattered delivery of services by spatially competing churches and the discouragement of urbanisation. It was only in the 1950s that the colonial government started a programme to resettle some of the rural population in villages. The '*paysannats*', as the villages were called, were settlements on idle lands, where families were allotted plots along the roadsides, of two hectares each, for agriculture and housing. The programme meant to intensify traditional agriculture and to achieve a better distribution of the population over the countryside (Silvestre, 1974:8).

Few *paysannats* were formed during the colonial period, but the policy was pursued after independence, until the 1970s. Settlements were created in sparsely inhabited regions, and where lands were abandoned due to the 1959 exile of refugees. The settlers were encouraged to reduce the number of large cattle and to increase agriculture, and were given instructions to grow marketable crops, in particular coffee. The policy thus resulted in a more even distribution of the population over the countryside and an intensification of commercial agriculture. It was also tainted by ethnic dimensions, however. A region like the Bugesera (see the first case study below) became the host area for Tutsi families from Ruhengeri and other densely populated areas. These saw in the forced resettlement to this tsetse-infected region a scheme to eradicate the Tutsi. In the cases of resettlement in fertile areas, the policy was apparently used by local authorities to favour (Hutu) relatives and people from their own region by giving them good lands. The *paysannats* have become a substantial characteristic of the countryside in certain regions. In 1983 a total number of 55,000 families lived in such settlements (ACORD, 1998; Bart, 1993). Although

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[9] For mid 1998, the population was estimated at 7.8 million people, or 303 people/ square kilometre (UN Resident Coordinator, Annual Report 1998; 5-6)

paysannats contributed to distribute the population over the countryside, they did not actually result in the formation of villages. Settlers tended to continue constructing scattered dwellings and landholdings still became fragmented through 'inheritance' practices.

In the course of the decades, the population continued to grow while non-agricultural economic activities failed to take off, so that the people/land ratio continued to deteriorate. Estimates set the average landholding per family at 1.2 hectare in 1978, going down to 0.94 in 1991, and reaching 0.7 in the post-war period (ACORD, 1998:4). Many writers on Rwanda regard the economic situation of pre-conflict Rwanda and especially the pressure on agricultural land as a central issue behind the violence (Prunier, 1997:364; Pottier, 1997; André, 1996; a.o.). According to Pottier (1997:1), "[i]n the build-up of the genocide, land scarcity and the despair of land-less, jobless youth were factors much larger than ethnicity itself". Ethnicity, then, became the channel to unleash the growing socio-economic despair. This was painfully clear, when during the genocide *Interahamwe* promised people they would get the land of their victims, as one of the strategies to incite Hutu to kill their Tutsi relatives and neighbours.

Land scarcity or land myth: competing narratives

Although the mounting socio-economic pressure in the prelude of the war and genocide form a generally accepted social fact, the question is how to explain and solve this problem. Competing narratives distinguish the old Habyarimana government from the post-war government. Both narratives have the character of an explanatory story with a scenario for development (compare Roe, 1991). While for Habyarimana the central issue was the people/land ratio, the post-war government focuses on development planning and the diversification of the economy.

The Habyarimana government blamed the deplorable economic situation that had evolved in the early 1980s on the scarcity of agricultural land in combination with an increasing population. This people/land argument was increasingly turned into a suitable narrative to access donor funds, riding the popular themes of overpopulation and environmental depletion. At the same time it provided the government with a political argument against the aspirations of those Tutsi in exile that wanted to repatriate. In the 1980s' negotiations on a possible repatriation of Old Case refugees, the Rwanda government claimed that the country was already overpopulated and that there was simply no space for repatriates (African Rights, 1994:15). While focusing on the agricultural implications of the people/land issue, the old government did little to encourage employment outside of agriculture (see: Brusten, 1996), and its practices were geared to keep the population in place. In particular, urbanisation was discouraged. The government even tried to diminish the importance of the cities by the removal of certain services from urban centres and the creation of modern services at a distance from urban centres. Strict mobility controls were introduced, among others in the form of 'permis de residence' and by prohibiting anybody from residing in the city unless he or she could show proof of employment (Hentic, 1995). It was only towards the end of the 1980s that some cracks started to show in this approach.

A severe food shortage in 1987 exacerbated the enduring economic crisis and resulted in spontaneous population movements from regions without any land left to regions with more space. The government was finally forced to revise its restrictive migration policy. In 1988, it began a new programme, centred around so-called '*pôles de développement*'. Development poles were supposed to be multifunctional rural centres, providing non-agricultural employment opportunities. The *pôles de développement* were seen as an interface between the rural and the urban, which could simultaneously solve both the problem of increased land scattering and the lack of development in the cities (ARAMET, 1997). The new government policy found mainly expression in a limited number of projects implemented by a Rwandese NGO ARAMET (l'Association Rwandaise de Recherche et d'Appui en Aménagement du Territoire). This NGO helped to design the new development narrative that was to guide the *Imidugudu* policy.

ARAMET was founded in 1988 with the objective to support local initiatives for development by means of the structural reorganisation of space and the creation of employment outside agriculture (ARAMET, 1997). Before the war in 1994, ARAMET had started to create *pôles de développement* in a few centres. They were located in existing settlements that were considered to have potential for growth. A development plan was designed for each of the areas, which was implemented through a range of projects including the creation of services, vocational training and the provision of credit. After the war, some of the management of ARAMET fled the country with the New Case refugees, but the programme was nonetheless continued. The leaders of the NGO had distinct ideas about the land question, which they tried to disseminate in policy-making circles. They organised seminars, lobbied with politicians from their institutional network, got some research contracts with the government, and were invited to participate in the National Habitat Commission.

The central idea of ARAMET was that the core problem of Rwanda was not overpopulation or land scarcity in itself, but a lack of proper planning. This had, in their view, resulted in unfavourable land use and settlement patterns and had thwarted the possibilities for a more diversified economy. This was also the idea adopted by the new post-war government, forming the basic rationale of the *Imidugudu* policy. The central tenet was that the socio-economic pressure could be resolved through better land use planning, better settlement patterns, and economic growth outside agriculture. This new development narrative also provided the answer to the problem of repatriation. It supported the reconciliation message, advocated by the new government, that the country had enough resources to sustain all Rwandese people, and that every Rwandese living abroad was welcome to repatriate.

In its rationale, the *Imidugudu* policy represented an integrated approach, based on the techniques of development planning. As we shall see, this was not how it always evolved in practice. In some cases, the envisaged policy was followed (see Gilad, forthcoming). In other places, as one of our case studies suggests, the techniques of planning could also turn into a rigid force, with the emphasis almost exclusively on the element of habitation, ignoring the issues of land use and economic growth outside agriculture. Before moving to the case studies, let us first consider the discussions raised by the policy and the kind of support it engendered.

3.   *Imidugudu* as a widely supported controversy[10]

A number of *Imidugudu* villages have been built with exclusively local resources, but a lot of them have had some form of international support. UNHCR has by far been the major supporter, providing resources for policy making and planning, and subcontracting numerous NGOs to implement housing programmes. Another important contributor was WFP, which provided 'Food for Work'. The UNDP also supported a limited number of settlement sites. A Joint Reintegration Programming Unit (JRPU) was set up in Rwanda to co-ordinate the efforts of the different UN agencies. Although there was thus considerable support for the policy, some other actors have withheld theirs. Hardly any bilateral aid has been made available for the programme. There were also a number of NGOs that have critically refused to engage in the housing scheme, or that negotiated certain conditions before supporting it.

Although few actors wholeheartedly embraced the policy, it nonetheless has engendered much international support. The formation of villages has had more priority than, for example, the reform of agriculture or other programmes for which maybe equally pressing needs have been identified. However, this has never been without discussion. As turned out from reports and interviews,[11] *Imidugudu* has been controversial from the start. In this section we explore the controversy it entailed, and try to figure out why the policy has nonetheless been able to reach the scale it has with the support of many international organisations.

We will not be able to find a complete answer to this question. Programmes tend to get a life of their own and, once started, find continuation without continuous reflection on why to move on. Partial explanations we find at three levels. In the first place, we shall look at the rationale of the plan, and the arguments raised in favour and against it. As we will see, for every criticism counter arguments availed, and the policy and its implementation contained enough ambiguities to feed both contenders and supporters with empirical substance to their claims. However, decisions to support or not to support do not always follow from rational considerations of arguments and calculated assessments of needs and risks alone. They are complicated by two other kinds of factors.

One of these, we may label as emotional. Emotional responses are rarely given analytic attention. Or, to be more precise, emotions of ordinary people are taken into account, for example in cases of ethnic hatred, but emotional responses are normally not associated with heads of programmes, technical consultants and other office bearers in development. However, when talking to these people it was clear that to some of them *Imidugudu* was appealing, whereas others had an equally strong aversion against the programme. We found this related to cultural

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[10] At the time of drafting this paper, a new phase had started in the history of *Imidugudu*, because of the large number of internally displaced people in the North West of the country, for which the government was seeking funds to implement Imidigudu. Considering that the situation was still very fluid when writing this paper and that the North West had not been part of the fieldwork, because of the difficult security situation in that area, *Imidugudu* in the North West has not been taken into account in this paper.

[11] Apart from secondary material, this section is based on interviews with officers of 25 international NGOs and UN organization, as well as a limited number of donor representatives.

factors, such as the need to believe in feasible solutions and to be able to provide a response to the atrocities that have taken place in Rwanda.

Finally, on a more mundane plane, we will look into the politics of development, the dynamic relation between the different institutional stakeholders, namely the government, non-governmental organisations and funding agencies. Power relations, institutional interests and matters of organisational mandates provide additional explanations for why development evolves as it does. The case of *Imidugudu*, as we will find, sheds particularly light on the politics of the so-called continuum between relief and development.

Questions and considerations

This section elaborates on the questions and considerations that played a role in the controversy surrounding the *Imidugudu* programme. Those considerations were one of the constitutive elements shaping the response of international agencies. What the different actors involved said against but also in favour of *Imidugudu* concerned three aspects: the appropriateness of village formation programmes in light of experiences elsewhere, and in particular for the Rwandese context; the political aims and complications; and its feasibility regarding implementation. The *Imidugudu* programme was surrounded by a number of ambiguities, which was among others the result of the lack of in-depth insight in local implementation. A number of these ambiguities will be addressed in the two case studies in the latter part of this paper.

Appropriateness
A first question that constantly reappeared in discussions on *Imidugudu* was the general appropriateness of villagisation programmes. Rwanda is not the first country to try such an approach. In Africa the examples of Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Mozambique come to mind. Villagisation programmes in these countries have not been favourably evaluated over time: they were considered expensive failures, violently enforced, causing large scale social and economic disruptions at great costs for those involved (Scott, 1998; for a recent review of the experiences of villagisation in East-Africa see Cannon Lorgen, 1999*)*. These experiences were, of course, known among the international organisations confronted with requests to support *Imidugudu*, and raised substantial caution regarding the Rwandese plans.

The Rwanda government's riposte to this caution was given in August 1997, by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Firstly, the government emphasised the "fundamental cultural dimension" of settlement, on which grounds it felt that:

> "Rwanda cannot and should not base its rural development and settlement
> planning on comparison to other countries where similar programmes
> have failed" (Mininter, 1997).

The same document claimed that a major difference between the Rwanda case and the aforementioned experiences was that in Rwanda the resettlement would be done on a voluntary basis, making use of local knowledge and participation:

> "Participants will be encouraged, through economic incentives as well as the provision of socio-economic infrastructure […]. Beneficiaries will be encouraged to participate in the planning, design, and layout of their villages. They will participate in the construction of their own houses" (ibid.).

A second reason why *Imidugudu* was not deemed appropriate was found in the Rwandese context, in which agriculturists were used to live scattered over the countryside in houses built near their fields. Critics stated that the increasing distance to farmland would obstruct the potential for agricultural production. It would limit soil improvement with manure and household waste and would slow down production while people would not be able to protect their crops properly. It was, moreover, considered to be against the cultural conceptions and preferences of the population. It was argued that the local language had not even a concept for 'village', and it was pointed out that in earlier settlement programmes people were not very interested in villages (see Bart, 1993).

The Rwanda government, on the other hand, claimed that agriculture would improve if valuable soils were freed for agricultural production, and that it would be beneficial for the environment, if habitation got concentrated (Mininter, 1997). The cultural argument was counterpoised by stating that scattered residencies were more the product of colonial and post-colonial practices than a Rwanda 'cultural trait'. Earlier policies always discouraged the evolution to other land use patterns. Among others, colonisation disrupted the growth of pre-colonial trading centres. Competition among different churches resulted in an extensive but scattered service provision, and the church also actively discouraged urbanisation. One European consultant stated in this respect:

> "Rwanda is probably the only country in the world where I would say that there is a lack of urbanisation, rather than too much migration to the cities".

A final question raised on the appropriateness of the policy concerned the exclusive nature of the solution opted for in *Imidugudu*. For some time, it appeared that the Rwanda government saw *Imidugudu* as the only form of settlement fit for the entire country. Such a blueprint approach would not reckon with the regional diversity in the country, and seemed to counter the policy aim of economic diversification. Only recently, and sporadically, have policy discussions opened up to consider a more varied approach to settlement and population movements, for example by starting to consider urban policies, that would allow for the growth of Kigali and other towns.

Politics of Imidugudu

Some people interviewed were aware of the problematic aspects of a policy like *Imidugudu*, but nonetheless saw the need for such a programme in Rwanda, due to the special political circumstances. In the first place, as someone said:

> "There was the political need of the government to make a gesture for reconciliation. *Imidugudu* conveyed to all the New Case Load refugees staying on the other side of the border: See, we are making all the effort to enable your return".

In the second place, many pointed to considerations of security. With increasing *Interahamwe* rebel activity in different parts of the country, *Imidugudu* was presented as a measure to both better protect people and to enable firmer control on rebel movements. The question was, however, if this consideration applied for the whole country. The Rwanda government had always maintained that the policy would enhance security and reconciliation. In the above mentioned document, for example, it stated that:

> "Regrouped settlement will in the future constitute the best formula to ensure not only security but also national reconciliation because the people who live together will have common interests for which they work together to preserve. Close to the villages, police and gendarmerie will be established […]" (Mininter, 2/8/1997).

Among critics, on the other hand, there were doubts about possible hidden aims of the policy. When it became clear that the programme would not only cover repatriates, but the resettlement of the entire population, some observers suspected the Government of Rwanda of having a hidden strategy. It was, for example, suggested that the government aimed at improving the position of the Old Case returnees and was looking for ways to bend the outcome of the Arusha Agreement. The reorganisation proposed in the *Imidugudu* policy could well be interpreted as an attempt to redistribute land in favour of the Old Case refugees and the genocide survivors. According to these observers, the programme might increase polarisation and temper reconciliation.

Since the impact and political effects could not be accurately assessed at the start of the programme, the matter of whether to support it, thus mainly depended on the level of trust agencies put in the new Rwanda government and its proclaimed objectives. While some believed the government was trying to install a '*Tutsicracy*' (see for instance Prunier, 1997:369), or represented urban elite interests only at the expense of the majority of poor country dwellers, others considered the government as genuinely seeking reconciliation and development. Several other factors complicated a proper assessment of the intentions of the present government.

Firstly, the security situation had continued to make the years since 1994, into a period of peace and war at the same time. In response to continued *Interahamwe* activity, Rwanda had been engaged in military operations in the Kibeho refugee camps (1995), in the North-western provinces of the country (until late 1998) and in neighbouring Congo, where Rwanda troops were involved in the rebellion against President Laurent-Désiré Kabilla, which started in August 1998. While these military operations continued, with severe consequences for human, social and economic life (see African Rights, 1998), the government was at the same time busy rehabilitating the country. The result was a multi-faceted government. It was shrouded in the secrecy of military operations, but at the same time engaged in a relative transparent democratisation process, among others leading to local elections in March 1999.

Secondly, the effect of government policies on the ethnic relations in the country and the possible ethnic properties of these policies, were difficult to gauge since ethnicity had officially disappeared from public discourse, as decreed by the government.[12] This decree was meant to contribute to reconciliation, but also

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[12] Even without this decree, ethnicity is so sensitive that it has almost turned into a taboo. This seems especially the case in the interaction between expatriates and Rwandese. Rwandese among

rendered possible ethnic implications invisible and complicated political discussions on programmes like *Imidugudu*.

Thirdly, the government and its bureaucracy were not homogeneous. There were political factions and different social networks, for example according to country of former exile. There was also variation in the personal commitment of different government officials, with some suspected to define their interests primarily in terms of their own economic enterprises, while others were generally admired for their sincerity and relentless efforts to improve the situation in Rwanda. These differences in the government resulted in contradicting signals and practices and led to different interpretations of the nature and aims of the government.

In the particular case of the *Imidugudu* policy, some people interviewed found it difficult to weigh the different rhetoric messages and relate these to practice. Some high government officials, including secretaries, displayed a relaxed attitude regarding the scope and pace of *Imidugudu,* and seemed not to attach central value to this programme in relation to other government policies. Others spoke about the policy in flowery speech, emphasising its essential value for the 'renewal' of the country, and setting highly unrealistic target dates when they expected the whole population to be regrouped in villages. This was all the more confusing, given the few official statements regarding the policy. The main question remained unanswered: which approach was followed in practice. Did *Imidugudu* get toned down in its implementation, or did local actors follow the rhetoric of some of these national figures? As our case studies will illustrate, no general answer can be given to this question, because of the diversity in implementing practices at municipal and local levels.

Given the complications in assessing the political intentions and possible implications of the *Imidugudu* policy, some organisations refrained from supporting the policy, but many were giving the policy for the time being the benefit of the doubt, and supported it despite some reservations they may have had.

Implementation

The major rationale for getting engaged in housing programmes, for example for the UNHCR, was the immense need for shelter, due to destruction and the massive repatriation of refugees. Early 1997, this was estimated by the government at 300,000 families. There were, however, some questions, on the exact need for housing. The figures were based on estimated numbers of future repatriates, which according to some were set too high. Secondly, the question remained whether housing was in all cases the primary need, especially for the high number of families that had found temporary shelter by sharing housing with relatives. No possible alternatives to the plan were explored, and as one UN officer said, whose agency was not involved in *Imidugudu*: "There have been no studies to alternatives, until then I would not build a single house".

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themselves discuss ethnic issues in private. All expatriates do too. They have their names in code for the different ethnic groups (such as the tall ones and the short ones, the Thai and the Hungarians, the dots and the stripes, and numerous other variations), which allow them to speak among themselves about ethnicity in an unobtrusive way. The subject has, however, mainly disappeared from public discourse.

The questions regarding the need for housing became more poignant when it concerned the regrouping of the population already having residences. This implied in many cases the destruction of the original house, in order to rebuild another house, sometimes just a few hundred meters away from the old house. This raised the question of enforcement. Although the government had stated that participation was to be voluntary, in many regions regrouping in effect was compulsory, and non-participation fined. Stories circulated about forced evictions, but it remained unclear whether these were isolated incidents, or whether these had become the rule.

Other questions concerned actual implementation. It soon turned out that in the beginning, implementation had met many problems. There were cases in which planning had been haphazard, and critics pointed to settlements that lacked even the most basic resources like water. After the first year, however, implementing organisations started to acknowledge these shortcomings and begun to address them. From then on, agencies carried out need assessments and tried to provide services accordingly. It remained to be seen, however, how successful this was or could be. While the construction of houses continued, it seemed that services and other measures continued to lag substantially behind. Doubts were raised whether it was financially feasible to provide services in all settlement sites.

When the programme was underway for some time, critical comments on *Imidugudu* were exacerbated when stories started to circulate about empty ghost towns, and reports commented on the low occupation rate of the houses in settlement sites. This called into question the real need for housing, and the willingness of people to join the programme. However, several surveys that have been conducted since suggest that occupancy was rapidly scaling up, and empty houses became more an exception than a rule.

Several of our interviews were with officers directly involved in the programme. The narratives of these officers invariably centred around the theme of 'emergency'. In their view, the emergency nature of the situation legitimated the initial neglect of the procedures according to which beneficiaries were identified and their low levels of participation during construction. The emergency was also cited to explain why agencies had embarked on the *Imidugudu* policy, without much consideration about its feasibility or the appropriateness of making it the first priority for development.

Affections and aversions

When interviewing international officers of relief and development institutions, considerations about *Imidugudu* were coloured by the simple like or dislike for the programme. Both negative and positive connotations were related to the same set of properties of the policy. It was a grand scheme, promising a blueprint solution for the vast problems of the country, and highly visible in the landscape. Either considered beautiful or ugly, the neat settlements with long rows and blocks of uniform houses evoked strong images with observers that got reflected in their assessment of the programme.

The aversion of some people could, among others, be located in the grandness with which some national politicians advocated the policy. Rwandese political culture is characterised by the kind of speeches that Western observers often perceive of as

rhetoric. Replete of superlatives, and with little reference to actual performance, they sound unbelievable to many ears, and taken literally, they sound scary for their unbridled objectives, targets and ambitions. Few of the international observers appeared to appreciate this kind of 'rhetoric', but some believed these were not reflective of actual practice. Others, however, got scared away from the policy, and wanted to have nothing to do with it as a result. In the same vein, the image of conformity conveyed by the settlements may have evoked reactions of distaste in some people.

Being Western development scholars ourselves, having arrived in Rwanda four years after the war, we found it in first instance difficult to understand why so many actors approved of the policy. Development studies have amply shown the risks involved in blueprint, top-down schemes. As Emery Roe opened his article on development narratives: "No one has a good word for blueprint development" (1991:287; see also Long and van der Ploeg, 1989, Long and Long, 1992). In a recent book, James Scott (1998) recaptured present insights on certain grand schemes, including villagisation projects that "aimed to improve the human condition but failed". These projects shared a modernist ideology, a belief in the possibilities to create rational order by scientific means. According to Scott, the reliance on scientific implementation, with disregard for local knowledge and practices, formed the major reason for the failure of these schemes.

Many of the international officers have been students of development and are familiar with the literature on limitations of development planning and blueprints. Having probably experienced such limitations themselves earlier in their career, their engagement in the policy seemed to call for an explanation. One such explanation may be found in the difficulties to learn from complicated problems. As Roe observed probing into the perseverance of blueprint development:

> "Indeed, the pressure to generate narratives about development is directly proportional to the ambiguity decision makers experience over the development process. The more uncertain things seem at the micro level, the greater the tendency to see the scale of uncertainty at the macro level to be so enormous as to require broad explanatory narratives that can be operationalized into standard approaches with widespread application" (Roe, 1991:288).

This observation seems very astute for emergency situations as in the case of the returning refugees in Rwanda. In this case, both the ambiguities and the pressure to act were enormous, creating the need for a straightforward narrative from which an equally straightforward line of action followed.

The appeal of the *Imidugudu* policy to a number of actors was reinforced by the memories of the atrocities that had taken place in the country. Few events in recent history have so much shocked humankind as the Rwanda genocide of 1994. The slaughtering of hundreds of thousands people by hand, in a fashion that was both organised as full of raging madness, has left a deep impression. Many people were convinced that after the genocide a radical change had taken place in this country. Several staff of agencies working in Rwanda commented that it was now a new country. One of them, who had not been working here prior to the war, said:

> "I think it is better that I was not here before. Because it is a new country.
> People who worked here before, may make mistakes because they think it
> is all the same, but it is a totally new country".

From an outsider's point of view, this remark seemed to be more related to wishful thinking than a state of fact. Others, in contrast, claimed that the Rwanda situation needed radical solutions, exactly because the country had *not* changed. They saw in the continuation of pre-war problems the foreboding of renewed violence and therefore considered radical change imperative. One of them said:

> "Radical solutions are inevitable. Something has to happen, and we cannot
> leave the situation unchanged, just because that would be the tradition.
> There is no question about the need for drastic measures, the only question
> remaining is *how* to do it".

The *Imidugudu* policy was particularly suitable to the felt need for a feasible, drastic programme with a high power to change. It literally promised to renew the country. It envisaged that everybody would get a place in neat, integrated communities.[13] The construction of these communities, a major job in itself, appeared moreover as a visible and do-able operation. We suggest, then, that part of the support for *Imidugudu* may have stemmed from its appeal to build a new, radically altered and ordered society. This appeal may have played an invisible role in the deliberations of development officers in response to an emergency situation.

Institutional interfaces, mandates and interests

Agencies do not act merely according to the rationale of their policies and discourses. Other dynamics shape decisions and practices, such as institutional and individual interests, power games and dynamic interactions with other stakeholders. We found three such factors to be particularly relevant: pressure of the government on NGOs and their intent to stay in the country; institutional competition and the mandate of relief organisations; and the role of the UNHCR funding. In addition, economic interests may have played a big role in the programme.

The Rwanda government and the international organisations.
NGO activity is often thought to be separate from state projects, especially in some African conflict situations, where states are considered weak. In the case of Rwanda, however, the state is relatively strong (Prunier 1995), and it would be a mistake to draw a sharp dividing line between state activity and so-called civil society programmes. NGOs engaged in housing as part of the *Imidugudu* policy, reported that local authorities had a large hand in the implementation of the programmes, since they selected the site as well as the beneficiaries. Often, NGOs have the objective to assist vulnerable groups, but in certain cases the selection of these vulnerable people was left to the local authorities. One staff admitted that he had no idea how the local

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[13] The following anecdote wonderfully illustrates the point. One foreign visitor taken to the countryside to visit some *Imidugudu* exclaimed: "How wonderful these houses. Maybe they should still add mailboxes at the front doors."

authorities selected beneficiaries, and added: "It is better not to get involved in those kind of issues".

In addition, several NGO officers interviewed pointed to instances where local authorities put pressure on them to get engaged in a housing programme. One NGO officer related how meeting after meeting he was asked to start housing. After this NGO nonetheless refrained from constructing settlements, a government officer was heard at some point to compare this NGO unfavourably to another NGO that *had* complied to their request. A number of NGO staff interviewed stipulated that the choice of activities was practically dictated by local government authorities. One of them said: "In fact, each NGO was allocated a couple of programmes, mostly in the areas where they had been giving emergency aid". Another commented: "It depends on local authorities which direction our programme goes".

The reason why NGOs were vulnerable to this kind of pressure was, of course, that they wanted to stay in the country. NGOs needed programmes for their own existence, employment and funding, and they wanted to protect and continue those activities that they considered as a valuable contribution for the Rwandese population. At the same time, they were aware that the Rwandese government takes its sovereignty serious, and has at occasion expelled NGOs from the country.[14] Although government pressure was apparent in certain regions, it has to be stressed that the picture is not the same everywhere. From the interviews, a picture emerged where the amount of pressure and the priorities given to *Imidugudu* varies per region. In Cyangugu *Préfecture*, for example, the local authorities put much less emphasis on *Imidugudu* and encouraged NGOs to do other rehabilitation work instead. Some NGOs stated that they experienced quite some room for manoeuvre and had found it relatively easy to convince local authorities that they had other priorities than housing programmes.

Agency interests and mandates

An UNHCR officer stated: "There is no more emergency since the end of 1997, when Rwanda entered into a development phase". Some of the international NGOs continued to label the situation in the country as one of emergency throughout 1998, but most agencies shared the opinion of the UNHCR that the emergency phase was over. Yet, quite a number of *relief* NGOs and agencies stayed on in the country. Some agencies had a mandate allowing them to facilitate the transition to development. One project officer said in October 1998:

> "Rwanda is still in a situation of emergency, this backs maintaining a presence. Slowly we move further along the development spectrum".

Thinking in terms of a spectrum, or a set of fixed post-emergency stages that run from relief via rehabilitation to development is hard to maintain for empirical situations. Yet, the stages have gathered an institutional reality because much funding is organised accordingly (see Frerks et al, 1995, Frerks, 1998:28-9).

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[14] In December 1995, the Rwanda government announced that 42 out of the 116 international NGOs had to stop their programme and leave the country. The reason given was that these NGOs were not effective and/ or did not coordinate. Very little has been written about this episode. Those commenting about it said that indeed some of these groups were not very professional. However, it is also believed that some of the NGOs were singled out because they were considered too critical with the Rwanda government.

The question whether Rwanda was still under emergency could thus be of crucial importance to justify the ongoing presence of an organisation, and led to organisational competition. In the Rwanda situation, such competition was apparent between the UNHCR and other development oriented UN organisations. In 1997 the UNDP and the UNHCR together set up the Joint Reintegration Programming Unit, in an effort to bridge the relief – development divide and to improve co-ordination among their agencies (UNDP, 1998).

The legitimisation of an organisational presence also depended on the activities the organisation developed. As it turned out, housing programmes could easily fit in mandates of both relief and development organisations. Relief organisations engaged in housing programmes as an extension of their mandate to provide shelter. Two relief NGO officers openly admitted that they justified their presence in the country by heading their housing activities under shelter programmes. Remarkably, the UNHCR in its writings consistently spoke of 'shelter' programmes instead of 'settlement' or 'housing'. Development organisations, on the other hand, could defend their involvement in housing because it was considered conditional before people could care for their development. As an officer of the World Food Programme stated:

> "Our shelter activities were a contribution to food production. If people do not have a house, they can not concentrate on agriculture. People are constantly busy to get money to construct their houses, so they are always hungry".

Imidugudu was thus facilitated by the fact that it could be fitted in the mandates of a wide range of organisations.

Funding and other economic interests

One institutional reason why many NGOs, both international and local, engaged in housing programmes was the availability of funding for such projects. As was mentioned above, the UNHCR acted as a major supporter of *Imidugudu*. It also availed of the largest funds (120 Million in 1997), most of which were subcontracted to NGOs. Some NGOs simply joined the bandwagon and took on housing projects, because that was where the money was. As one NGO officer stated:

> "If UNHCR offers you a job you are happy to accept it. We are only invited, the government and UNHCR set the policy".

Finally, we have to take into account the power of a programme with big money and lots of material. Projects may be valued more for the development they contain, than the development they bring (Hilhorst, 1997). People are, for example, often more interested in the employment generated by NGOs than in their programmes. Likewise, implementers of infrastructure and other hardware projects sometimes benefit more than the supposed beneficiaries. The amounts of galvanised iron sheets, nails, and other equipment needed for the *Imidugudu* settlements were indeed big, and the economic stakes high. Some people suggested that a lobby of the industry of galvanised iron was one of the driving forces behind the programme. Besides, the programme was surrounded by rumours, and some proven cases, of corruption, petty thefts and not so petty embezzlements.

Concluding

The review of controversies around *Imidugudu* shows there were grounds to either support or reject the policy. Moreover, there were a lot of ambiguities. So far, most of the discussions have been general and little can yet be said about the impact of the policy for different regions of the country. One conclusion about the constraints of 'emergency development', however, stands out at this point. Tim Allen (1996), as well as other authors have advocated to break away from the above mentioned continuum from emergency relief to development, and instead opt for an integrated approach. The *Imidugudu* policy may be viewed as a case of 'emergency development', which on the one hand contains traces of earlier ambitions for long term development and on the other hand has long-term development consequences by its very nature. It calls for some caution about the wisdom of emergency development. In this case, agencies embarked on the programme in the emergency of a situation of massive repatriation into the country. However, under pressure of the emergency, the programme was started without feasibility studies, and without exploring possible alternatives. Moreover, the emergency seems to have lured agencies to accept a blueprint policy, which under 'normal' conditions of 'development' planning they might not have accepted. The programme also complicated the co-ordination of different organisational mandates but simultaneously offered to each a sufficient legitimisation for continued involvement.

4.   *Imidugudu* in practice

The two cases below, of *Imidugudu* in the communities of Kanzenze and Gisenyi, intend to provide insight in the local dimensions of the programme. They aim to show how the national policy of *Imidugudu* is shaped in local implementation through the interaction of different stakeholders. These are the local authorities, the implementing NGOs and the local population. We consider them as strategizing actors that act according to their own interpretation of the policy, their interests, and their opportunities. The national policy is supposed to provide the guidelines, but what really matters, is of course the *interpretation* of the national policy by local authorities, and the way they adapt the guidelines to what they consider as the local particularities. Likewise, the way NGO staff sets about the implementation depends on their relationship with the beneficiaries and on how they perceive their institutional and personal interests in the programme. The local population tries to assess the programme and to maximise the opportunities offered. Local people have to fit the programme into their livelihood practices. These practices not only express how people make their living in different ways, but also how they deal with their needs, interests and values in the different social fields in which they are active (see Long, 1997:11). Life in *Imidugudu* will thus not only be described as a number of daily activities and a set of possibilities and constraints, but also in terms of how people give meaning to what they experience. The emergent properties at the level of the *Imidugudu* are the result of the combined acts of all these stakeholders in the local contingencies. It is expected that these contain much diversity and that have unintended outcomes, but nonetheless they provide insights that should be taken into account when assessing the national policy.

The case of Kanzenze *commune*[15] was chosen because Imidugudu played an important role in this community, among others because the community suffered heavily during the genocide. NGOs have constructed quite a number of villages in the area. Only recently programmes have been started in which the local authorities directly took the lead in implementation. Gisenyi *secteur* on the other hand has gone ahead in the implementation of the *Imidugudu* programme. A few NGOs implemented sites in nearby areas, however, most implementation has been done by the population itself. Before the war, many Tutsi were living in Kanzenze *commune*. Gisenyi *secteur* was predominantly a Hutu area, while after the war a lot of Tutsi settled there. Considering that 'ethnicity' and 'reconciliation' played a role in the discussion about *Imidugudu* this was taken into account in the selection of the cases.[16]

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[15] In Rwanda, the term *commune* refers to a municipality, headed by a *bourgmestre*. In total there are 155 *communes* in Rwanda. Each *commune* is divided in about ten *secteurs,* headed by *conseillers*. *Secteurs* are divided into *cellules* headed by a *responsable,* who is responsible for around 100 families. Those again are divided in groups of houses, headed by a *nyumba kumi* (literally a head of ten houses, in practice this may be up to around twenty). All these officials are appointed. With the first local elections held in March 1999, this situation was changing towards elected local government representatives.

[16] For a more extensive discussion on reconciliation and resettlement see the case studies of mixed settlements by Gilad (forthcoming), that focussed on this issue specifically.

The case of Kanzenze

Kanzenze was one of three municipalities forming the Bugesera Region, at one-hour ride south of Kigali. In the area, two settlements were chosen for in-depth study: Mayange, constructed early 1996, and Gahembe, which was constructed early 1997.

Kanzenze had a dry climate, with only 850 mm rain a year and dry seasons sometimes lasting up to four months. Due to this climatic factor and because of the presence of the tsetse fly, this region remained sparsely inhabited until the early 1960s, when the government resettled Tutsi families from the North to this area (see Chapter 3). This forced resettlement was followed by an influx of voluntary migrants in the 1970s, who came from overpopulated areas in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. The newcomers were mainly incorporated in the *paysannats*, as were described above. At present, Kanzenze *commune* has a number of 161 inhabitants per square kilometre (*Préfecture* de Kigali-rural, 1998:10), which is still considerably less than the national average.

Kanzenze suffered some of the worst atrocities during the genocide, including massacres at the churches of Nyamata and Ntarama with a death toll of thousands each (see African Rights, 1994:22ff). About 35% of the houses were damaged or destroyed during the war. Immediately after the war, a number of Old Case repatriates settled in the area, some to reunite with their relatives, others because they could not go to their own 'home' area due to ongoing security problems. By the end of 1996, large numbers of New Case repatriates came home from Zaire and Tanzania, leading to a serious housing problem. For an estimated 2,000 families out of a total of 16,000 there were no houses (ZOA, 1997-draft).

Imidugudu actors: local government and NGOs

The section in the local bureaucracy dealing with the settlements in Kanzenze was the 'Habitat Commission'. It was headed by the Mayor of Kanzenze, a man from the area, who had joined the RPF during its guerrilla actions in the North, and who came back to the *commune* when the war was over. One of the two municipal officers of the Commission was also local and survived the genocide in Kanzenze. The other one had stayed in Burundi for more than twenty years, but had relatives in the area. The Commission was further composed of the '*conseillers*', the heads of the different *secteurs* of the *commune*.

The way these local authorities explained *Imidugudu* reflected the national rationale quite accurately, and they gave the policy a high priority. Their main motivations to get people settled in villages were the envisaged agronomic and developmental advantages (*Préfecture* de Kigali Rural, 1998:27). According to the *Sous-préfet* of the province (*Préfecture*) under which Kanzenze resorts:

> "The shortage of land should be approached in a *scientific* way: houses have to be built on infertile grounds".

Apart from efficient land-use, the building of roads and health centres and the provision of other services was an advantage often quoted. Reconciliation and integration of the repatriates, new refugees and survivors was given as another positive outcome of the villages. As the *Sous-préfet* stated:

"If people come to live together they will also start working together. When everybody is living together you share your work, your problems and your beer".

The rationale for *Imidugudu* according to these municipal officials thus followed closely the national considerations, with little reference to particular local conditions.

By the end of 1998, ten settlement sites had been finished or were still under construction in the *commune* of Kanzenze. Most of these were built by NGOs, others by different (local) Ministries. The Mayange site was the first village to be constructed in Kanzenze. the selection of the beneficiaries started in July 1995 and the construction in the beginning of 1996. The work in Gahembe started in the beginning of 1997.

Mayange site was constructed by FAH (*Fond Africaine d'Habitat*). Initially, this NGO had seemed very reliable. Its director for resettlement had helped in the early formulations of the national policy. The NGO made a good impression on donor agencies and generated a lot of funds. To the great dismay of the local authorities, FAH never completed Mayange site, since somewhere in the process the budget finished. The same happened in other sites where FAH worked. As a result, the organisation gained a bad reputation locally, and was considered highly corrupt.[17]

Gahembe was constructed by ACORD, an NGO that had been established in Rwanda in 1979. ACORD had a much better reputation locally. Housing was only one among the concerns of the organisation: others included projects for agriculture, cattle, and a social programme. This meant that, unlike FAH that specialised on building houses, ACORD intended to build a more encompassing relationship with the beneficiaries. ACORD neither had been able to finish construction of the intended 100 houses. After the construction of 61 houses the funding was depleted. The expectation in Gahembe was that ACORD would still finish the job once additional funds were found.

Beneficiaries of the settlements

Both Mayange and Gahembe answered a housing need, created by the large number of repatriates. The selection of beneficiaries was done before the implementation started. For Mayange, selection took already place in July 1995. This site was meant for Old Case repatriates who had temporarily taken residence in different villages all over Kanzenze *commune*. They had found accommodation in shops and other commercial buildings, thus obstructing the reconstruction of the local economy, or lived in houses of New Case refugees expected to come home in the near future. The list of beneficiaries was made by the Habitat Commission.

The selection of beneficiaries for Gahembe happened in a different way, with participation of all stakeholders. ACORD, the implementing NGO first formulated the criteria for selection, deciding to prioritise vulnerable groups. Beneficiaries came from the same *secteur*. The Habitat Commission, with the help of local officers of this *secteur*, then made a list of possible beneficiaries on the basis of these criteria. This list was discussed in a community gathering in the

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[17] In the case of this particular NGO, a donor investigation indeed confirmed the allegation of corruption.

concerned *secteur*, where each proposed family had to be approved by the gathering. This participatory procedure was perhaps vulnerable to some manipulation. In a few exceptional cases beneficiaries did not meet the criteria, but used the allocation for instance to build a second house. On the whole, however, it can be considered successful: the population of Gahembe generally met the criteria of vulnerability that were set by the NGO. Widows and their children occupied one fourth of the houses.

Building and occupying the sites

Mayange was built on a piece of land belonging to the Ministry of Youth. A total of 400 houses were planned. After the beneficiaries were selected, they started to clear the area, and once the plots were allocated they started to make 2,000 mud bricks each. FAH provided food for the duration of the brick making. The food was partly used as a commodity, giving some people unable to do construction work room to contract others to make the bricks. Most beneficiaries commuted as regular as they could to the area to work on the site and to make the bricks. In January 1996, construction started. Masons of FAH constructed the house. The first to finish the bricks, were the first to avail of masons to construct the house. Kitchens and latrines had to be built by the beneficiaries; materials for the latter were donated by another NGO in the area. In May 1997, after not having been paid for five months, the FAH masons left the job, leaving a number of unfinished houses behind. Some families were able to complete them on their own, other houses weathered away. By the end of 1998, 347 out of the 400 houses were completed. Some of the families whose house had not been completed continued to live in temporary constructions or in houses of others and tried their best to finish their own houses.

Occupancy remained initially low in Mayange. As long as the New Case refugees had not come back, many preferred to stay in Nyamata (the main village centre of Kanzenze *commune*) or in the other places where they had found temporary accommodation. The area of Mayange was, at the start, moreover unattractive: looking like a desert and without services. People may also have been reluctant, since they knew little about *Imidugudu* and rumours floated that the settlements were dangerous sites, where the poisoning of neighbours was common. One woman residing in Kanzenze stated: "I rather die then move to an *Imidugudu*".[18] Eventually, the authorities gave people an occupancy deadline early 1998.

Clearing of the Gahembe site started in January 1997, a number of 100 houses were planned. In this case, the beneficiaries had to cast lots to determine the order of being given a house. As in Mayange, people made their own bricks. Construction work by ACORD's masons started in June 1997. The NGO provided the materials for the doors, windows, and roofing for houses, kitchens and latrines. Occupancy started in April 1998. At that moment 61 houses were finished. According to the NGO, they only received funds (from UNHCR) for these houses, but they expected money for 39 more. The beneficiaries for those houses had already started to make bricks, but by the time of the fieldwork, the funds had not yet arrived and construction had not resumed. The adobe bricks that had been prepared already had washed away. Some of the intended beneficiaries continued

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[18] Interview by Marijn Noordam and Anne-Marie de Beaufort, spring 1998.

to live on the site in makeshift houses, others still stayed in the houses they had occupied, in cases where the original residents had not (yet) returned from exile.

Services and livelihood

The houses in Mayange were designed to form blocks of forty houses. Most of them had four rows of ten houses each. A certain socio-economic differentiation among the occupants was clear from the houses, of which some had metal and glass doors, iron bars installed in front of the windows, or built extensions. One occupant owned a private grinding machine, another one a lorry. Most people depended on agriculture for their subsistence.

The services available in the area were a water system, with an irregular provision of water, and a health centre of which the logistics were not yet available. The water system was provided by an American NGO, the International Rescue Committee (IRC). There were outlets at several street corners. The problem was that the capacity at the source of the system was insufficient, so most of the times, inhabitants had to fetch water from a stream, one hour away from the village. Since that water was not clean, however, drinking water was fetched from Nyamata, at one and a half hours walking distance from the village. ZOA, a Dutch relief agency with a large programme in the region had committed to equip the health centre, but for the time being the people had to walk one hour to get health services in a neighbouring sector. In this place was also the primary school attended by the children in Mayange who thus had to walk approximately six kilometres to get to school. There were several small shops in Mayange, and since the beginning of October 1998, there was a weekly market.

At the end of 1998, Gahembe consisted of four rows of thirteen houses each, and one unfinished row of nine houses. Each house had a small addition, for the kitchen and the latrine. Gahembe was located on a slope, where before a *paysannat* was created (see above). Gahembe was constructed on an infertile piece of land in the middle of this *paysannat*. More to the East and down to the slope of Gahembe, there were houses and fields, neatly outlaid alongside streets running parallel over the slope, continuing for about three and a half kilometres. There had been no services realised in Gahembe. Water needed to be fetched at a 45 minutes walk, and children went to school in another part of the *secteur* at approximately two kilometres. In both sites, Mayange and Gahembe, the lack of drinking water on the site was a major source of complaint for the population.

There were a couple of small shops in Gahembe, with items like sugar, salt, and soap. Only a few people had income outside agriculture (a carpenter, a street vendor, a job at the *commune*, all in Nyamata) and occasionally people did wage-labour outside the village or labour for fellow-villagers for which they got paid in kind. There were no aid programmes of NGOs in the area, and many people related about their hardships to make a living.

Land distribution and use

Mayange was built in an area formerly belonging to the government, which had not been under cultivation, except for a few fields. When the families moved into Mayange, they first cultivated on plots they had rented or borrowed. In 1997, every household was allotted two hectares of land for cultivation. Since the authorities

feared that "people will only take the land, but not the house", land was only allotted after people actually had settled in the village. After one year, a survey turned out that only one third of the allotted land had been taken into production. At the same time, people in the village experienced land shortage. Several explanations were given for this paradoxical feature. Lack of rain had made people wait before clearing the land, some families had no labour available due to illness or for other reasons, or they considered the land too far. The first who had arrived had got the land near to the village while others were given land at a distance up to seven kilometres from the settlement. One man explained, for example, that he had a field at five kilometres away, but preferred to work on a smaller piece of land near the village that he was able to borrow.

The land distribution alleviated the hardships of life in Mayange. As many people related, the first year they had moved to the site, they often went hungry or had to survive on cassava leaves. Frequent disease made it even more difficult to go out and find some food or work. This situation had considerably improved over the years, according to the Mayange residents.

In Gahembe, the land situation was more problematic. This site was surrounded by an area that before the war already had been used intensively for agriculture by families in the *paysannat*. There was some idle land, which belonged to victims of the genocide and refugees that had not (yet) come back. As there were no regulations concerning these lands, they were not available for reallocation. As a result, only seven families in Gahembe had land of their own. Newcomers had no land at all. They borrowed land from people living in the neighbourhood, some for free, others paid part of their harvest to the owner. The borrowing arrangements concerned usually tiny pieces of land. One household was found borrowing little pieces of land of five different owners, on different parts of the slope where the soil was suitable for different crops. A dry piece of land was used for peanuts, a more humid one for beans and vegetables, and a stony piece of land for cassava. The informal arrangement that people in Gahembe had for land, were not long lasting and could not resolve the actual land shortage.

The Gahembe residents had expected that the local authorities were going to provide them with land. Some claimed the authorities had actually promised this. Their expectations may also have been raised because they knew that families in Mayange had been given land. However, the local authorities so far had not made a provision for land. Some government officials acknowledged the problem, others stated that it was the responsibility of the residents to find land through informal ways. The law stipulated that an occupant of a plot had to vacate the land upon the return of the original owner, but included no clause on what the temporary occupant had to rely after giving up the land. The Kanzenze authorities had no stand on the matter, but waited for a policy for land redistribution from the central government.

There was some talk about the possibilities for land redistribution, but this was a sensitive issue. The only 'large' land holdings in this area that might have been subject to distribution belonged to survivors of the genocide, who inherited land from their killed relatives. One man in the *paysannat*, for example, occupied a house by himself. Of his extended family of about fifty people (his father, four uncles and their families), only seven survived the massacres. They divided the land among themselves, and gave some parts to relatives that came back from Uganda. This still left him with a relatively large piece of land. It would be very difficult to redistribute

these lands, because, as someone said: "This might be explained as a kind of confirmation of what the *genocidaires* intended, and the government does not want to hurt the survivors". Some people interviewed suggested that some of the local authorities were opposed to redistribution, in order to protect their own 'larger' landholdings.

The issue of cattle

The issue of cattle raising exacerbated the land shortage. The Old Case returnees to the area brought considerable numbers of cows. Before the war, cattle keepers in the *paysannat* kept their cows in the stable and used to have fields for fodder production. Grazing was only allowed on locations assigned for this purpose. The repatriates introduced free grazing and since there were no new regulations, everybody just did as he preferred. After the return of the New Case refugees at the end of 1996, it became more difficult for the cattle keepers to find grazing grounds on the slope, especially after the construction of the Gahembe site. There was also little water in the area. Faced with these problems, a number of large cattle keepers left for Gashora and Umutara, areas which were previously relatively empty and where a lot of cattle owning Old Case returnees settled. Cattle keepers that remained in the Kanzenze area usually only had a few cows, kept alongside other agricultural activities. Despite the departure of a lot of the cattle, the unregulated grazing of cattle still posed problems. No provisions were made for this at the time of the fieldwork, but the authorities were contemplating measures to limit the numbers of cows, and considered designating land for grazing purposes.

Beneficiaries as strategizing actors

The intention of *Imidugudu* was to provide people with a house where they would settle and find a livelihood. Beneficiaries, however, are social actors that use their knowledge and capacities to make the best of situations, according to how they assess their room for manoeuvre. The question was if and how they would indeed settle in *Imidugudu*.

Families that moved to Mayange and Gahembe were in need for a house. The experiences at the Mayange site suggested that people might have preferred to stay in their temporary residences, but they knew this was not feasible once the owners would come back. They needed a house, and *Imidugudu* was where the government wanted them. As someone said: "Everybody is totally free to choose where to live as long as it is in the *Imidugudu*". And another: "*Imidugudu* is the policy of the government, so that is where you have to go". Nevertheless, people in Mayange whose houses were not finished by FAH, were actually doing their best to finish their houses and many families cemented their houses by their own means. This indicated that they were glad to find a house and reckoned to stay for a considerable time at least.

There were also families who considered their house in the *Umudugudu* as a temporary residency. According to the villagers, Mayange first "looked like a desert". A few families upon completion of their house decided not to occupy it but to sell it instead and moved back to Uganda. Cattle holders moved on to other sites in Rwanda. There was no explicit regulation concerning ownership of the houses and the house lots in the *Imidugudu* villages, but according to the authorities it was not allowed to sell the houses. Informally, transfers took place:

A young man told that he sold two houses in Mayange, belonging to his uncle and his father, for 50,000 Francs each. After they had been allocated a house they decided to return to Uganda. The man, proud of his transaction, told that: "Last spring, the *commune* threatened to give away the empty houses if the owners did not occupy them. They put an ultimatum of a month, which was prolonged with two weeks, another two weeks, and a couple of days. Somebody else then even sold his house for 5,000 francs only, because he was afraid he would lose it without getting anything."

Other families settled in *Imidugudu*, but planned to move on if possible, at some future point in time. Consider, for example, the following case:

R. was about seventeen years old, when in 1959, he and his parents fled to Burundi, leaving the rest of the extended family in Gikongoro. He grew up in Bujumbura. When in 1994 the Burundese president Ntaryamira was killed, the situation for Rwandese in Burundi became difficult. They had to move into camps. In November 1994, R. was able to come back to Rwanda, using a transport organised by the new government. He wanted to go back to Gikongoro. In Rwanda he learnt that none of his relatives had survived the massacres and that Gikongoro was not save. His transport left him in Kanzenze *commune* and, after some days, he was given a house of which the owner had fled. When Gahembe site was planned he was included among the beneficiaries. When he was busy making adobe bricks for the house, the owner of the house he occupied returned. They lived together in the house until R's own house had been finished. He had not been given land, so he cultivated then here, then there. In 1998, he found a job as watchman in Nyamata, but that only lasted for five months. He had to take care of eight children. One of them was a grown up boy of marriageable age who needed a house for himself as well. He regarded his house as 'temporarily', as it was not cemented. If possible, he would still put some cement. However, if he had had money, he preferred to go to Gikongoro, where he might have been be able to claim some land of his deceased relatives.

Several houses were not occupied by the original beneficiaries. These were cases where people had let the house to relatives or other people in more urgent need of housing. Land could have been a reason to officially maintain a presence in an *Umudugudu*. A neighbour of an occupant who actually resided in the town centre of Nyamata, explained:

"Even if somebody owns a house in the city, he would keep his house in the *Umudugudu*, because you can only have land when you have a house in the *Umudugudu*".

A salaried NGO worker residing in Nyamata related that he had an additional house in an *Umudugudu* that he held on to because of the land. He had let the house to tenants. Since he had not been able to find people who wanted to move to the settlement, he had to give them part of his land to cultivate before they were willing to move in. According to this man, several more people had made similar arrangements. These cases tell us, that people indeed try to find their own ways to enhance the opportunities of *Imidugudu*. They also make clear that at this point not much can be said yet about the future prospects of the settlements. People may consider their residency as less permanent than the authorities expect.

Imidugudu entering a new phase

The above concerned the residents of Mayange and Gahembe, both sites where people moved to who were actually in need of a house. Since the end of 1998, *Imidugudu* entered a new phase in Kanzenze. The construction of sites got speeded up, and involved increasing numbers of families who already had a house of their own.

In line with the national policy, the aim of the local authorities in Kanzenze *commune* had always been to eventually regroup the whole population of the *commune* in villages. From the start of the programme, new constructions had only been allowed in *Imidugudu* sites. NGO programmes rehabilitating war-damaged houses were stopped, and individuals that built outside of the designated settlements were fined. One man we met, in order to circumvent the restriction, had started to build a new house during nights, hoping not be found out before the house was finished.

At first, new houses had to meet certain requirements, such as having a roof of iron sheets provided by the community, and using adobe bricks. In October 1998, the municipal government decided to drop these requirements in order to speed up implementation. Until that time, only construction had been started or completed in ten sites, but they had planned a total of 105. One *responsable* explained that:

> "The discussion about how construction could be speeded up was motivated by the fast approach of January 1999, which was the original deadline for everybody in Rwanda living in settlements".

Clearly, national rhetoric about the programme was a serious matter for the authorities in Kanzenze, and they were keen to meet this 'deadline'. From then on, it was allowed to construct houses with beams, branches and mud, instead of adobe bricks and iron sheets.[19] NGOs were no longer asked to build villages, but only to provide materials. With the materials, people were expected to construct their own houses or houses had to be constructed by communal labour (*Umuganda*). In March 1999, the environment of Kanzenze had changed in a landscape of numerous settlements under construction, a skyline of squares of poles, some of them covered by a galvanised iron roof, waiting to be covered by mud.

With the speeding up of *Imidugudu*, increasing numbers of families who already owned a house were ordered to move. One of the sites we visited was an old *paysannat*, Gitwe. The villagers in Gitwe had stayed in the area since decades. Their houses were built in the typical fashion of the *paysannat*: every family had constructed their house near the road, on the strip of two hectares of land allotted to them, meaning that the houses were more or less 100 metres apart. They had been busy since two months constructing new houses, grouped together on a plot which was just about a few hundred metres away from their old house. Most families had already put poles and beams, and few trees were left in the area. Asked what they thought of the transfer to the *Umudugudu*, people were mainly silent, which we attributed to the presence of the *conseiller* who had accompanied us to the area.

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[19] This had especially environmental implications. Houses made with bricks, need around 100 poles for the construction. Mud houses, on the other hand, need a complete frame of beams, therefore using much more wood.

People were usually resigned in commenting about going to an *Umudugudu*, but small gestures and comments suggested many would prefer to stay in their own house. For example, one day a woman was interviewed who owned a cemented house and land alongside the main road through the *secteur*:

> The house had always been the property of her family. She has been allocated a plot for construction of a new house in a neighbouring *secteur*. Until that time, nothing had been done and the land was not even cleared yet. She would have to build the house by herself: the government would only provide material for the roof. She thought, she would be able to keep her land, which is close enough to the site to continue cultivating it. Asked where she would prefer to live, she only nodded: "in this house".

Other people, presently residing in Nyamata (the major village of Kanzenze *commune*), said they feared losing their social network, or were afraid they could not make a living of cultivation on their own. Others welcomed the transfer, hoping they would be getting land in the new area. There was no open protest against *Imidugudu*, but some people requested to be exempted.

> A widow living in Nyamata told she did not want to be living in an *Umudugudu*. She did not want to live with people from Uganda, Zaire, Burundi and Tanzania, whom she did not know at all. She said that when she had been asked to go she had not been interested. She had gone to the *bourgmestre* to explain that she was not able to live in an *Umudugudu* in the countryside, as a single woman with two small children. She could not cultivate the land and would not be able to earn her living in another way. She had not been forced to move to an *Umudugudu*. According to a friend of hers, the local authorities would not have dared to force her: "They are very careful with survivors. Everybody knows what this woman experienced: she lived in Ntarama and her 4 sons have been killed".

Another person also commented that survivors could not be forced: "The authorities would not dare to, since some people are mentally not safe. They already lost their family. The government knows you have to be patient with people here". This did not apply to all survivors, however. A neighbour of the widow quoted above, also a survivor from Ntarama, whose house had remained intact, had been told nonetheless to move to an *Umudugudu*.

Concluding

The two settlement sites of Mayange and Gahembe were almost fully occupied and had alleviated the housing need of the beneficiaries. This does not mean that all residents planned to stay settled in the area: some had already moved out, others had aspirations to do so in future. In both sites, the installation of services lagged behind housing construction, and programmes to enhance economic activity outside of agriculture were negligible. In both sites people mainly depended on cultivation for their living. This made the issue of land a very crucial one. In Gahembe, the non-availability of land was a major problem. People survived through informal arrangements to borrow or rent pieces of land, but this was no sustainable solution. The land problem was experienced more intense, because expectations had been raised that people were to be given a plot.

Local people responses to the policy varied according to the interests and opportunities they had. For those people who already had a house, the need for

land may have been a motivation to look forward to enter an *Umudugudu*. This further underscores the crucial importance for the authorities to address the issue of the land. The responses of the Kanzenze authorities to the *Imidugudu* policy show that, in this case, a strict interpretation was followed of the national policy and the local government literally aimed to regroup the whole population in the shortest possible time span.

The case of Gisenyi

Gisenyi *secteur*, the area of the second case study, was located in the Southeast of Kibungo *Préfecture*. It was about 60 kilometres from Kibungo town, the agglomeration with the offices of the *Préfecture*. Gisenyi could be approached from the main road to Tanzania, by a 9 kilometres long sandy track through a valley, which reached to the Akagera River in the West, the natural border with Tanzania. An in-depth study was conducted in seven out of the ten villages in Gisenyi *secteur* of which construction was initiated by the local authorities, and one settlement site, Bukora III, that was implemented close by Gisenyi by a NGO.

While Kibungo's soil was rated 'average to high' considering Rwandese standards, in Nyarubuye *commune* soils were poor in certain zones (*Préfecture* of Kibungo, 1998:16-17). Before 1994, the area was relatively empty, apart from a series of *paysannats*, which had been started in1968 for cultivators wishing to migrate from densely populated areas, mainly in Ruhengeri. The population was predominantly Hutu. In the past, many people from the area had been working in Uganda, going forth and back, depending on the tides of civil upheaval over there.

Kibungo *Préfecture* went ahead in the implementation of the *Imidugudu* programme, a trend confirmed by Gisenyi *secteur*. At the time of fieldwork, virtually everybody was living in one of the several villages constructed in the *secteur*. Two issues played an important role in the context of *Imidugudu* in Gisenyi. The area formed part of Nyarubuye *commune*, which was one of the *communes* that received the highest numbers of returnees in Kibungo. Compared to population numbers of January 1994 it saw its number of inhabitants doubled (*Préfecture* of Kibungo, 1998:iii, 19). Immediately after the war, huge numbers of Old Case returnees had settled in the area. The return of the New Case returnees, some time later, resulted in a large need for houses and land. According to the *conseiller* of Gisenyi, the enormous increase in population was the reason why the local authorities decided to redistribute the land and to concentrate the population in villages, in order to make land available.

Another backdrop to the resettlement operation in Gisenyi was the security situation. After the influx of the refugees from the camps in Tanzania, the area remained unsafe for a long time as a result of infiltration by *Interahamwe* crossing the border river from Tanzania. Spring 1998, for example, witnessed an attack on an LWF (Lutheran World Federation) settlement site, in which eight people lost their lives. Some people in the area had been accused of collaboration, others were simply forced to collaborate. There were unconfirmed rumours about retaliations by the army. Some New Case returnees had disappeared from the area, who may have crossed back over the border to Tanzania. The situation remained tense for a long time and it was in such a volatile context that resettlement was implemented.

Imidugudu actors: local government and NGOs

"No policy in Kibungo features so important as villagisation. Kibungo is at the heart of the national villagisation campaign" (*Préfecture* of Kibungo, Feb-1998: 22). During war and genocide, the largest part of the population of Kibungo *Préfecture* fled the country. Of the estimated 600,000 people only 200,000 remained. Compared to the rest of the country, Kibungo received a disproportional share of returnees: 519,000 between 1994 en 1997 (of which 109,000 were Old Case and 410,000 were New Case returnees). Most people entered at the end of 1996, coming from Tanzania.

In the year 1996, large-scale housing programmes were started and by mid-1997, construction was in progress at some 40 villagisation sites. In many *communes*, the local authorities told the population to regroup in villages or along the main roadsides. Rehabilitation of houses that had been damaged during the war was halted, and the construction of houses outside village sites strongly discouraged. It was estimated that in the beginning of 1999, more than 80% of Kibungo's population lived in villages. Compared to other *Préfecture*s, Kibungo was densely populated with NGOs and many contributed to the villagisation programme. Nevertheless, comparatively speaking, their contribution was small. Only a tiny fraction of all houses constructed in the *Préfecture* was built by NGOs. The local authorities took the lead in construction. The former *Préfet* of Kibungo was praised for his exemplary efforts to implement the programme and was promoted to the same post in Kigali-ville.

In Gisenyi, since January 1997, ten settlement sites of about 150 houses each were constructed in the *secteur*. Most construction was done by the population itself. The local authorities, in the person of the *conseiller,* indicated the locations for the villages and set the date for moving. The *conseiller* himself was an Old Case returnee. He and the *responsables* (of whom some are Old Case and others are New Case returnees) allocated the plots to the individual families. The local authorities were responsible for the distribution of roofing material provided by UNHCR.

Two NGOs, Red Barnet and CARITAS, contributed in the construction of a few houses for vulnerable groups. Red Barnet, a Danish NGO, focused its activities on children. It started a project in 1997 to construct 135 houses for orphans in the commune of Nyarubuye. Forty of these houses were located in Gisenyi. The local division of CARITAS, mobilized thirty families of the Catholic parish to build five houses for widows. CARITAS provided material and skilled labour.

In an area adjacent to Gisenyi,[20] a settlement site was under construction by LWF (Lutheran World Federation), Bukora III. LWF was one of the major NGOs in Rwanda. Since 1995 it ran emergency programmes in Kibungo and since 1996 it had been heavily involved in settlement building programmes. The NGO was involved in the construction of four large settlement sites, of 350 to 500 houses in three *communes*, and additional smaller clusters of houses in other communes. In the larger settlement sites LWF installed a water system or catchment and primary schools. Social mobilisers resided permanently in the sites to give support to associations and small enterprises. Bukora III, in the Gisenyi area, was partially inhabited by people originating from Gisenyi and partially by Old Case returnees.

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[20] Before the massive population influx, this area formed part of Gisenyi *secteur*, but by now it has become an administrative unit in itself.

Beneficiaries and selection

The *Imidugudu* policy as applied in Kibungo stipulated that everybody had to move to a settlement. In Gisenyi itself, a large part of the population moved to one of the self-built settlements, and a smaller part went to NGO sites implemented outside the *secteur*. In this case, the question is not who was an *Imidugudu* beneficiary, everybody was, but who moved to which kind of site?

Since everybody had to move to a new settlement, the authorities did not bother much to ensure that New Case returnees could reclaim their houses. The rule that Old Case returnees had to vacate the houses when the owners returned was not enforced strictly, as it was expected that all were going to move to other locations. In practice, this meant that in most cases, the New Case returnees temporarily had to reside in makeshift accommodations. Those people that could not build their own house in an *Umudugudu* could avail of the option to move to an NGO site.

In the majority of cases, however, the decisive factor was the availability of land. Some Old Case returnees had not been able to get access to land, as well as a number of New Case returnees. Already prior to the war, land suitable for cultivation was not abundant and some of the original inhabitants had been occupying low quality land while others had always been land-less.

The people that moved because they could not access land or were incapable to construct their own houses found in the NGO sites an opportunity to ensure these basic necessities. However, in other cases the need to move was not obvious and more disputed. One controversial case was formed by those families who lost land, because it was designated for *Imidugudu* sites. These people claimed that the authorities had forced them to move away to an NGO site. Another case (to be discussed below) concerned people that lost their land to military officers. Nonetheless, most people that had moved to NGO sites had apparently done so *voluntarily*.

Not everybody that left Gisenyi went to live in an NGO site. A number of Old Case returnees experienced so many difficulties in this unfamiliar area (diseases, difficulties with keeping cattle) that they decided to return to their former place of exile. Some New Case returnees left with unknown destination.

At the start of the *Imidugudu*, few people seemed eager to move to an NGO site. In the opinion of Gisenyi residents, conditions in the villages were difficult, as cultivation had to start from zero. Moving to NGO-implemented sites in first instance appeared a desperate strategy. In the course of time, people realised, however, that the situation changed and started to see some advantages. They referred to the fact that people got a house, that there were a lot of services in the NGO villages and that distributed plots were larger in size than was usual in Gisenyi itself. Nevertheless, given a choice, people usually preferred to stay on their own land. A major problem of the NGO sites remained that these were constructed near relatively infertile soils. A social mobiliser in Bukora III said, that the services probably never could outweigh the disadvantage that the quality of the land allocated to the villagers was very low.

Building and occupying the sites

In Gisenyi *secteur*, ten settlement sites of about 150 houses each were constructed. Building activities purposefully took place in agriculturally less valued areas of the

secteur. The first self-build settlement site in Gisenyi provided a place to live to Old Case returnees coming from the whole *secteur*. The allocation of plots for the houses was well co-ordinated, and the houses were built in neat rows of ten. Thereafter, the process went faster and faster. Resettlement got a boost in the summer of 1997, when the authorities started total regrouping. In three months time the entire population moved to the location of the future sites. People living in specific areas of the *secteur*, moved together to the specified locations for new sites. The composition of these settlement sites thus resembled the composition of the Gisenyi population before moving. A number of sites consisted of mixed Old and New Case returnees, some were predominantly inhabited by either New or Old Case returnees. Some sites were erected in old settlements. In these places, the allocation of plots was less co-ordinated. This resulted in a less delineated building pattern: bending roads and substantial differences in size and quality of the houses.

The self-build houses in Gisenyi were constructed of wooden beams and branches covered with mud, in an improvised way. Some people were able to use materials of their former houses in the *paysannats*. These abandoned houses were all destroyed or taken apart by their former owners. People were allowed to cut trees freely, to avail of beams. This resulted in considerable deforestation of the hill slopes surrounding the villages. The only support available for the construction of the houses was roofing material, which was provided by the UNHCR. In principle, everybody was entitled to a roof, but the quantity available did not suffice for the entire population. In order to prevent embezzlement, the authorities stipulated that roofing was not given until a house was finished. Although this ensured a rather orderly process, the disadvantage was that those people who could not finish their house quickly in the end had no roofing. Unfortunately, these were usually the so-called vulnerable people, such as orphans who availed of little labour assistance in constructing a house.

Services and livelihoods

Before the war, there used to be one tap for drinking water in Gisenyi. In the beginning of 1999, IRC (the American NGO which we already met in the case of Kanzenze) was finishing the rehabilitation of a pre-war water tank, the construction of a new tank on the hill above the villages and the installation of several taps throughout the different sites. As a result, the situation of drinking water improved considerably.

There were a primary and a secondary school in the *secteur*. The veterinary dispensary and agricultural extension, which were present in the *secteur* before the war, have not reappeared. A health centre was situated at a distance of about six kilometres from the sites. Many people remarked that the absence of a dispensary was at least inconvenient. They also remarked that there was no real commercial centre.

Agriculture was the main occupation of the inhabitants of Gisenyi *secteur*. Agricultural production was mainly subsistence farming, although sorghum was grown as a cash crop. In several sites (women) associations were formed that produced sorghum for the national brewing company, BRALIRWA. The company provided the specific seeds for the sorghum, and the produce was sold to a co-operative which delivered the sorghum to the brewery. Apart from agricultural

wage labour, few other paid jobs could be found in the village. NGOs irregularly employed wage labourers for construction work. There were a few craftsman workshops, but as a result of the isolated location of the village it was hard to get materials for craft work.

Although in principle most people had access to at least one hectare of agricultural land, many people were referring to the difficulties they experienced in agricultural production. The problem was neither the size of the plots, nor soil infertility. People assured us that one hectare of land in the area was enough as the soil was fertile. Fertility had even increased as a result of war as the land had been lying fallow. However, it was difficult to start anew and many people said they did not finish cultivating the whole of their land yet.

> A farmer told, that after three years of absence his land had become a wilderness again and all the weeds made cultivation difficult. "It is like starting anew", he said. For the moment, he did not consider renting land, as he still had enough work on his own land.

The displacement from the land for cultivation was regarded by many as a major disadvantage of the resettlement process. People generally explained it as a disadvantage to be living off their fields. People said that when living on the land, more work could be done on it and more could be harvested. It had become a lot of work to bring the harvest back home and to bring manure to the fields and the fields could not be watched for theft or harm by wild animals (see also Gilad, forthcoming).

Land distribution and use

The *Préfecture* of Kibungo, including Gisenyi, was the first one to start procedures for land redistribution in favour of the land-less (*Préfecture* of Kibungo, 1998:19). Before the war, most of the fertile land in the area was in cultivation. Most people were living in the *paysannat*, where they availed of two hectares of land each. After the war, the minimum amount of land that had to be available to a family was set at one hectare. This meant that sharing arrangements were made between New Case returnees and the Old Case repatriates occupying the land. Some Old Case returnees who were not able to find a partner to share land had to leave. The same for those Old Case returnees that were sharing plots among themselves, prior to the return of the owners of the property. New Case returnees who lost their land were not entitled to share with other New Case returnees. Consider the following case of a New Case returnee:

> A woman living in Bukora III who originated from Gisenyi told that her husband had two wives. Before the war the two households shared his two-hectare plot in the *paysannat*. After return they had to offer one hectare to an Old Case returnee and the remainder was too small for the two families, so one had to quit.

Two issues regarding land distribution were locally controversial. The first concerned those people whose land was used for *Imidugudu* settlements. The second concerned a fertile floodplain South of the Gisenyi sites. After the war, this floodplain became a military zone and the former inhabitants were not allowed to return, and had to move to an NGO settlement. According to people in Gisenyi, the area may have been a military zone for some time, but by now it had been

distributed to a number of military officers. These used the land for cultivation of sorghum (a highly valued cash crop in the area). Arrangements for tenancy were made with the local population, and some people found employment as wage labourers on the estates of the military. The idea that the land had not been returned to the former 'owners' but given to military instead, that moreover resided in other areas, was a source of resentment.

Despite the scarcity of land, some people were able to expand the amount of land available to them for cultivation. Part of the land in hands of the military was leased to the local population. In some areas land for cultivation could be rented or borrowed, although this was officially forbidden. Renting out of a few parcels could result from distress or money needed for emergency situations, or from the simple fact that the owners were not able to cultivate themselves (e.g. old widows). Consider the following account, for example:

> Apart from the land in a former *paysannat*, a New Case returnee tried to grow potatoes in the marshland North of the Gisenyi sites. He rented the land of people who got their land allocated over there. As in the rainy season there was too much water in the marshland, it could only be cultivated in the dry season. "The people who got their hectare over there are not lucky in the rainy season, but a little bit in the dry season", he said. Therefore, in the dry season the people tried to rent land somewhere else. "People from other areas like to cultivate in the marshland as you can grow potatoes over there, which give a lot of money in the market. However, you need some money to make some system for drainage". The person himself rented out part of his land in order to be able to rent land in the marshland. Not all the land in the marshland had been allocated, a part was left for associations but as they were not there it was freely available to everybody. However, all that land was taken into use already by other individuals, therefore he had to rent.

Due to the departure of people to NGO sites outside the area or elsewhere, everybody in Gisenyi had access to land. Nevertheless, it was questionable whether this would remain so in the near future. Even the one-hectare policy would not solve the land shortage in the area. Although some land was still available, many people talked about the difficulty to find land for their children. Moreover, land could not be left as heritage as it was the *commune* who decides about allocation. It was unclear how the local authorities were going to face these issues.

> A widow, living in her house from before the war in Gisenyi, owned one hectare. Both her sons were married but to one of them no land had been allocated, as he had constructed his house and married only after the allocation in 1997. She had asked the *conseiller* already for land, but he had told her that there was nothing available. For the time being, her son cultivated on a plot in the marshland, owned by the military, and borrowed a part of the land of his mother. The woman did not know if she could leave the land for her sons to inherit: "it is the government who is the owner and who will have to decide"

The issue of cattle

No specific arrangements had been made for cattle. Before the war, there were hardly any cows in the area. Since the influx of Old Case returnees, this situation

changed considerably. Most cattle keepers brought their flock from Burundi and Tanzania, only a few left their cows behind. No land was reserved for grazing. Cattle keepers started to herd their cows in fields that were lying fallow, but the absence of formal arrangements posed a serious problem later on. The local authorities were considering an education campaign to convince farmers to breed special cows that can be kept at home and fed with fodder.

Beneficiaries as strategizing actors

Confronted by the *Imidugudu* programme, returnees explore their room for manoeuvre and strategize whether and how they will act. In the foregoing we have seen that the Gisenyi *secteur* had to face an immense number of returnees, a resulting land shortage, and a serious security problem. How did the returnees interpret the situation and how did they situate *Imidugudu* in their livelihoods? The following case shows how moving to an *Umudugudu* was shaped by local interpretations and strategies:

> When P., a New Case returnee, and his family returned from Tanzania in the end of 1996, they found their house in the *paysannat* occupied by an Old Case returnee and his family. The occupant refused to move out, so P. and his family were lodged temporarily in a make shift village, close by. P. explained to us: "The authorities did not let us return to our old houses, to prevent problems between originals and repatriates". P. used to have a good banana plantation on fertile ground but the occupant was not willing to share the harvest. According to P., the problem was not in the first place with the occupants, but with the local authorities: "The *conseiller*, also an Old Case returnee, was occupying a house himself in the same *paysannat*. It was him who decided that the Old Case returnees could stay and that the New Case returnees had to be lodged somewhere else, for the time being. It was in the whole *secteur* that the originals were not allowed to return to their old houses".
>
> In the summer of 1997, both Old and New Case returnees had to move to the area where the new site was to be constructed. When they moved they took their make shift accommodations with them. This movement happened within a period of one week only. According to P. the contents of his house (furniture, kitchen equipment) was taken away by the occupying Old Case returnee. This happened during the night, to prevent somebody from seeing it: "It was common that the repatriates took the contents of the house. They just told they had found the house empty. This was also the reason that the originals were not allowed to re-enter their houses". The occupant had told him: I am not your guardian, you were not there. Despite the problem regarding the contents of the house, the relation between P. and the occupant family evolved without problems and actually they were sharing the land without any difficulties.
>
> When everybody moved to an *Umudugudu*, P. removed the roof, doors and windows of his house. He re-used the materials for construction of a kitchen and toilet next to his new house in the settlement site. He received a roofing kit from UNHCR. When living in the make shift accommodation, they had given his family some pans, dishes and blankets already. It took P. and his family until November before the house was finished. After moving to the newly constructed site the land was redistributed. "Until that moment we were not allowed to work on the land

and we survived with food aid given by UNHCR".

Discussing his present living situation, P. told that his problem was that his land was very far away. "The *paysannat* was comparable to a village: over there we had good houses, however. We were close to our land. The houses over here are bad and our bananas are stolen from the field. The roofs we got are not sustainable". If he would be told that he could return to his old house he would return immediately, even if he would have to live in a miserable house, he said. "It is my land only which makes my living", he explained, "If an old woman is sick she might not be able to reach her land, while there is food in it". According to him, relationships between people did not change as a result of living in the village: "in the *paysannat* people also lived a little bit together. It is only the law that says that we have to live together. In Rusumo [an adjacent commune] and further to the north, people were allowed to stay in their old house. My old house was close to a road, but it had to be destroyed". According to P. the difference was made by the personalities of the different *conseillers*. It was the *conseiller* who decided that the people had to move. For security reasons, military were staying in the area, with the *conseiller* in charge. The people were afraid and felt they could not refuse, P. said. "I have no hope for the future that I will be able to return".

The case of P. shows us a man who did what had to be done and tried to make the best of the situation he found himself in. It was also obvious that he had his own ideas and interpretations about the resettlement. He did not see the need to move away from the road and his land, and he resented living away from his fields. Many New Case returnees displayed similar sentiments. Old Case returnees were quite neutral about what the programme changed in their situation. Many of them were happy to have found a house and land. For some New Case returnees, resettlement also meant an improvement. However, a number of New Case returnees, such as P., experienced a sense of loss and felt their situation had deteriorated because of the resettlement. These people did not understand why their move had to be permanent, instead of a temporary measure until the security situation had improved. Quite a few people assured us, that if there were a possibility, many people would return to their old houses. As somebody said:

"For the people in the *paysannat*, *Imidugudu* was absolutely not necessary", a man in one of the seven sites in Gisenyi told. If his former house had been far away in the hills, he would have accepted that he had had to move. "When the *paysannat* were started, it was said that it was good for development to live close to the road. Before the war, people in the hills were already told to move to the road".

These New Case returnees had moreover a strong sense of political deprivation. They felt that the *Imidugudu* programme, as it was implemented in Gisenyi, was meant to serve the interests of 'others', *i.e.* the Old Case returnees. The remark that "power is with the repatriates", expressed this feeling very well. At first site, these sentiments seemed to hint at a generalised ethnic tension. This was, among others, apparent in the derogatory labels people used for Old Case returnees. However, the case of P. and other interviewees told us the issue was more complicated. The resentment of New Case returnees was not directed to those Old Case repatriates with whom they had to share their land, or even in the case of P. who took their house utensils. In fact, remarkably few stories circulated

about problems between cultivators sharing land. Complaints and resentment were directed to officials. The case of P. shows that his major problem was not with the family he shared the land with, but with the *conseiller*, who to his mind had treated him badly and only served his own interests. In a similar vein, people complained about the military officers that had taken the land.

It turns out that the more problematic relation was not simply between people from a different ethnic background, but was concentrated in the interface of cultivators and authorities. This interface contained indeed an ethnic dimension. It concerned the sense of deprivation of New Case returnees by mainly Old Case authorities. However, the incidents leading to this sense of deprivation originated with the treatment that ordinary cultivators perceived from authorities. Problems at the interface between cultivators and authorities also became manifest in the difficulties authorities had with the population. Due to security problems, there was a lot of suspicion that people had been supportive of *Interahamwe*. In such an environment, a policy like *Imidugudu* was likely to be interpreted as another instance of political deprivation.

Concluding

In certain respects, Gisenyi *secteur* was maybe quite an exceptional case. The extraordinary huge amounts of returnees, the security problems and specific political climate put a particular stamp on the developments in the area. Nevertheless, some observations can be distilled from the previous story, which have a relevance beyond this specific case.

Like in Kanzenze, it appears that the problematic issue of land is not fully addressed by the *Imidugudu* programme. For the time being it might be adequate, but problems similar to those in the past threaten in the future. The same goes for cattle.

Again we have seen that the extent to which the programme is actually implemented depends largely on the efforts and persistence of the local authorities. They presented and continue to present *Imidugudu* as a necessity for development and security. Nevertheless, although people accepted the rationale of security in the past, they no longer see the grounds for living far away from their lands with the improvement of the security situation. Some even plan to return back to their previous accommodations in the future if possible.

One important finding from this case is that people tend to interpret the programme in political and ethnical terms and this has consequences for their intentions, strategies and everyday practises. This does not tell us much about the 'real' properties of the *Imidugudu* policy. The policy may be based on equity, or non-discrimination, the point is that ordinary people perceive it differently. This finding should be taken serious. People's perceptions are important, because they determine their responses. Besides, looking at the incidents that trigger these ethnically coloured perceptions, it may be important to evaluate and possibly improve the interface between authorities and cultivators.

5.   Conclusion

When we talked to officers in Kigali, after we had completed the fieldwork, the first question often was: "And, what have you found, are you in favour or against *Imidugudu*?" Our answer was never a simple yes or no. As we noticed, *Imidugudu* gets interpreted by different actors, and evokes different responses. Besides, there is a large diversity in the conditions in the regions and localities where it is implemented. As a result, *Imidugudu* evolves in different ways. In some areas it works well, in others it does not. Our major question was: why, given these diversities, a blueprint solution was adopted for the settlement problem? Can regrouping of the rural population in *Imidugudu* settlements be a single solution for the entire countryside? We believe not. Eventually, what is needed is a case-to-case approach where policies for settlement get integrated with approaches for land distribution and land use, services and livelihoods.

Imidugudu was meant to address the housing problem, to alleviate the security situation, to contribute to reconciliation and to lead to better land use. Although we can not assess the impact of *Imidugudu* for the whole country, let us briefly review these objectives for the two cases we studied, taking into account the conditions and practices of implementation, and the responses of the actors involved.

It is clear that *Imidugudu* has substantially contributed to solve the housing problem. Although we have not assessed *Imidugudu* in the light of technical aspects of construction, and although we reiterate that the provision of houses does not have to imply per se the formation of standardised settlements, a fact is that many families have received a house through the programme. There is appreciation for the houses of those who were homeless. More problematic is the policy where it concerns people who had to abandon their own house in order to rebuild a house in an *Umudugudu*. Whether people appreciate living in a settlement instead of having dispersed houses seems to vary and is difficult to assess. A number of people have left, such as Old Case repatriates who decided to go back to their former country of exile. Some others hope for an opportunity to move elsewhere, or to eventually move back to their fields. The non-delivery of services that were promised in order to entice people to move to the settlements is an important factor in people's appreciation of the *Umudugudu*.

According to the Rwanda government, the security situation necessitated the concentration of the population in settlements. In the case of Kibungo, the security situation was indeed an important factor in the establishment of settlement sites. In the case of Kanzenze, security did not play a significant role, except in the discourse of the local authorities to explain the policy in line with the national rhetoric. Security considerations thus vary in different areas of the country and it can be expected that if the security situation in an area improves, the local population no longer sees it as a rationale for staying in the villages and would like to go back to their former residences.

The aspect of reconciliation depends very much on the particular situation in the localities. In our case studies it was more prominent in the case of Gisenyi. This area used to be a predominantly Hutu area. After the war, its population doubled when a large number of Tutsi repatriates settled in this area. Land had to be shared between the 'originals' as they called themselves and the repatriates.

Since houses could not be shared, the decision that everybody had to move represented a certain equity, a kind of judgement of Solomon, in which nobody was favoured with the entitlement of the old houses, and everybody was equally burdened by the hassles of constructing and moving places. On the other hand, there was much resentment about alleged diversions from this general guideline, and many of the Hutu population perceived of the policy as a means to deprive and control them.

In this respect, it has to be remembered that ethnicity is not the only source of social tension. One particular question we want to address is the top-down property of the policy. Rwanda is a country, where top-down development has been adamant and may even be blamed for contributing to past atrocities, considering the organisation of the genocide and other outbreaks of ethnic cleansing. Relentless adoption of this top-down policy regime by local authorities may lead to a ruthless pursuing of national policies. This is exemplified by the case of Kanzenze *commune*, where the local authorities take the 'deadline' for the complete regrouping of the population as a very serious matter, resulting in the hasty implementation of a complete transformation of the rural landscape. The compulsory nature of the policy breeds resentment, that finds no expression in open political protest but nonetheless may contribute to long term social tension. A possible bias of the urban-based political elite against the rural population may exacerbate this tension.

A central rationale of the *Imidugudu* policy is its belief in planning for a more scientific approach to settlement and land use. This remains problematic. Our case studies were conducted in areas where the land pressure is less than the average for the country. Nevertheless, the availability of land was a problem, in some of the settlements land is scarce. People feel insecure about their entitlements, given that the land question is not resolved. Furthermore, people report that living away from the fields hampers agricultural activities. The effect for the yields may have to be established through further research. The case studies make clear that *Imidugudu* so far has not been implemented in the integrated way it was envisaged. Houses have been built, but these have not been accompanied by substantive measures addressing land, cattle and other livelihood resources.

The case of *Imidugudu* confirms the recent finding that when refugees come home this is the start of a long process of reintegration and development, rather than an end-good-all-good closure of a period of exile. The housing problem is being addressed, but other pressing problems remain before the use of land can be improved and livelihood ensured. There are presently hundreds of *Imidugudu* settlements in Rwanda. The challenge for the near future is to improve life and livelihoods in these settlements. Given the variety in local conditions, an integrated case-to-case approach is called for.

This also means, to our mind, that a settlement policy should be developed with more flexibility to respond to local diversity as well as to future habitation needs. Present policies focus on *Imidugudu* as a standardised settlement pattern for the whole country, except for those areas that have already been urbanised. Considering that local people in search for their livelihood might see their residence in an *Umudugudu* as a temporary affair, and considering the pressure on the settlements that will be posed by the next generation, it seems important to

have a more flexible policy that incorporates a certain freedom of migration and settlement as well as the possible growth of urban areas.

The third chapter ended with a note of caution regarding 'emergency development', *i.e.* those cases where under pressure of an emergency, programmes are started with far-stretching consequences for future development. Certain conditions are not met in these situations, such as thorough research, feasibility studies and the exploration of alternatives. Besides, as we contended, following Roe (1991), a result of these situations is that policy makers and programme officers, in order to address the magnitude of ambiguities involved, tend to resort to blueprint solutions.

Our findings in Kanzenze and Kibungo confirm the caution against emergency development. Without claiming that *Imidugudu* should not have been done, we do contend that an integrated application on a case-to-case basis would lead to better results. In the same vein, we caution against blueprint solutions for the problem that now pressures policy makers in Rwanda, namely the issue of the land. Although indeed the land question seems urgent, blueprint solutions may not be the answer. This is especially so, considering the vast variety in informal arrangements and practices that surround access to land and practices of land use.

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