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The Local Market in Kigali as Controlled Public Space: Adaptation and Resistance by Local People to “Modern City Life”

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**The local market in Kigali as controlled public space:
adaptation and resistance by local people to “modern city life”ⁱ**

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“Some inhabitants of this city had never even set foot in the “Trois-Cents” neighbourhood and they were amazed by what they saw. They wondered how people could possibly live perfectly happily in the midst of all this refuse, the pools of water, the carcasses of dead pets, the burnt-out vehicles, the mud, the sewage, the gaping holes in the roads and the houses that looked as if they would collapse at any moment.”

Verre cassé, Alain Mabanckouⁱⁱ

Public spaces are manifestations of urban life and provide us with a means of grasping urbanisation processes and, more generally, the interactions between spatial changes and social changes. Studying them makes it possible to gain a better understanding not only the socio-spatial effects of urbanisation but also of just what is at stake in the urbanisation process of African cities and in particular their disadvantaged neighbourhoods where most of the population lives.

This study of a public market (one of the essential public spaces of urban life) in Kigali, where urbanisation is taking place at a rapid pace in a climate of national reconciliation, provides an interesting entry point to look at the problems of urban change that is currently affecting Rwandan society as a whole, and the capital and its disadvantaged neighbourhoods in particular. This paper focuses on the example of Biryogo local market in order to analyse the ways in which city-dwellers appropriate their neighbourhoods and define their identities. It is essential to grasp two different dimensions - individual and collective practices on the one hand, and the organisation and use of public space on the other - in order to understand local issues and articulate a vision that is helpful for defining sustainable development policies. This process would involve collective discussion of and agreement on future choices, and would also need to specify the means that are necessary to achieve this stage of development.

We shall therefore observe the current process of urban modernisation in the Rwandan capital as part of this definition of public policy and study its consequences for people's sense of social belonging and how particular neighbourhoods are configured spatially. Does this leave any room for traditional

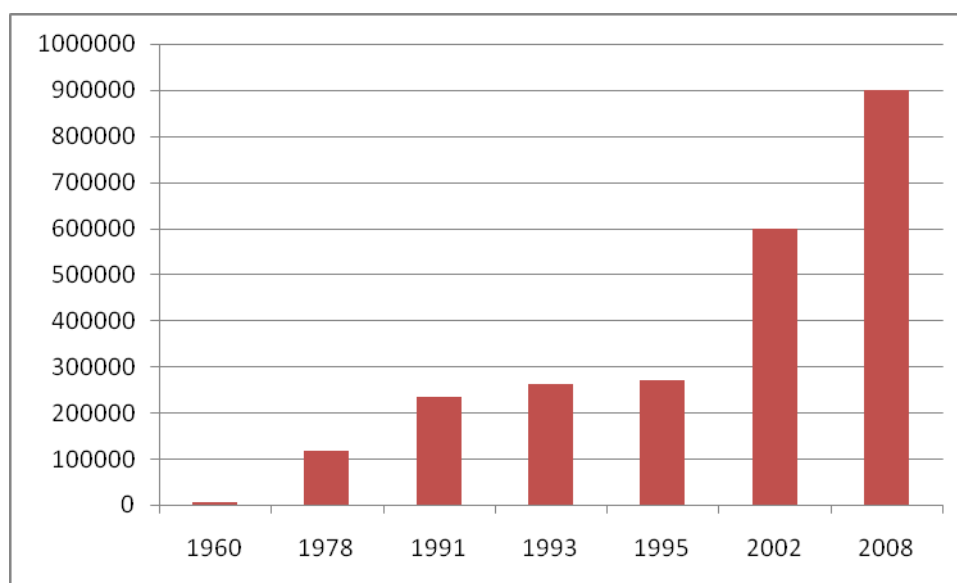
Rwandan social relations or, does it on the contrary lead to the assertion of a new and clearly “urban” individualism? Ultimately, the question is whether it leaves spaces for dialogue and expression to allow the implementation of processes of national reconciliation and the construction of a form of urban life that is modern and appropriate to 20th century Rwanda.

1. Kigali, a city with a recent past

At the beginning of 1994, Kigali was still only a very small capital city. In April that year, the Hutu president was assassinated by an explosion that destroyed the plane in which he was returning from negotiations with the Tutsi rebels, precipitating the start of the Rwandan genocide against the Tutsis that lasted until July. This dark chapter, in which the international community stood passively by, claimed about 800,000 lives in four months. It came to an end with the Tutsi’s return to power, lead by Paul Kagame, who is still the country’s president today.

These events led to a turning point in how people thought about the city. Many houses in Kigali lay in ruins and there had been a great number of murders. When the new government took office, it had to deal with reconstruction as well as mass migration to the city.

Figure 1: Changes in Kigali’s population



Source: 1960, 1978, and 2002 census and local estimations (1991, 1995 and 2008)

Fifteen years on from this troubled period, the city is undergoing a complete metamorphosis. The population of Kigali more than doubled, from 235,000 to more than 603,049 inhabitantsⁱⁱⁱ, in the space of 11 years (1991 - 2002), representing an increase of 158% and an average annual growth rate of 9% over this period.

Kigali has also sprawled. Population migration has contributed greatly to the city becoming denser and spreading to cover the slopes of the capital's hills. A genuine urban revolution is taking place. In 2008, it is estimated (using a growth rate of 12%) that the population of the city lies somewhere between 850,000 (according to an informal census) and 1,000,000 people.

Due to this rapid urbanisation and the long absence of any city planning policy, 65 - 80% of the city's inhabitants are judged to live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, of which there are many, accounting for a large proportion of the city's total area.

Successive subdivisions and building site developments have led to people being forcibly expelled from their newly built homes and having to set up again in areas that are less well suited to construction. People have begun to build scattered homes in areas on the steep slopes of the central plateau on the edge of the city centre, on the slopes of other hills or even in marshland, and new, improvised neighbourhoods have sprung up. At the same time, the development of infrastructure, industry and public facilities in the city centre have attracted workers looking for jobs and for real "social progress". This urban development has therefore led to a certain degree of rural exodus. The city attracts many young people who are being gradually and inexorably driven away from their native hills through a combination of overpopulation and the dwindling size of farms. This steep increase in the urban population has produced denser fringe neighbourhoods, which are starting to become urban centres in their own right. Workers have come here to set up home close to job opportunities.

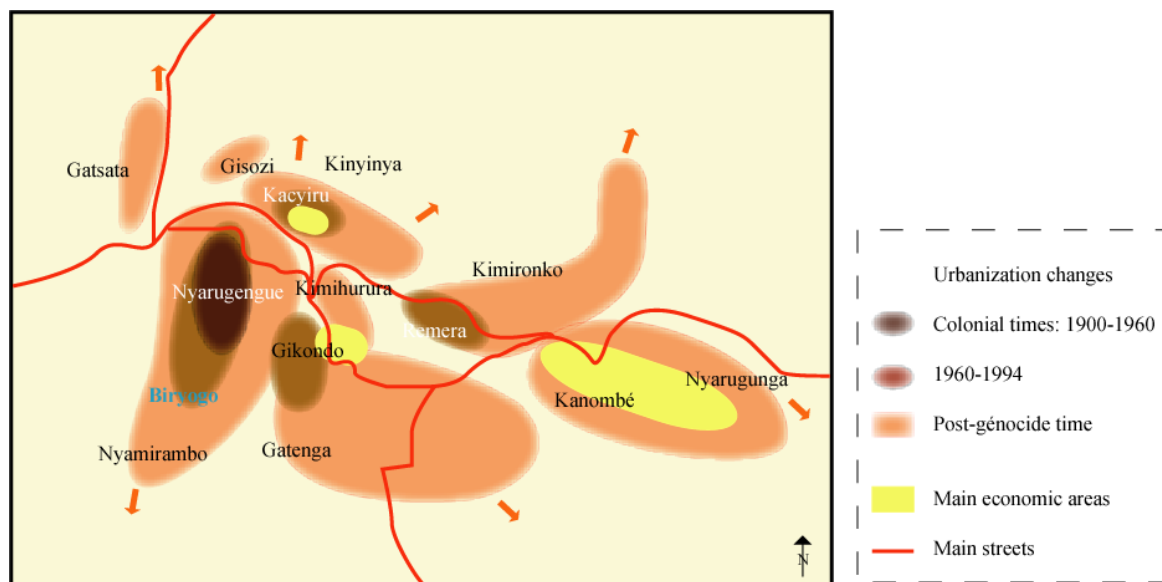
Rwandans have given these settlements the pejorative name of "akajagari" (which literally means 'a mess' in the national language). This term covers various different socio-economic situations, types of property and levels of access to services, and these neighbourhoods are generally disadvantaged. Their inhabitants live in constant hope that tomorrow will be better.

Living conditions are difficult in these areas, mainly due to their high population density and the steepness of the slopes on which they have grown up. It has been noted that population density here is 260 people per hectare on average whereas it is 100 people per hectare in structured areas.^{iv}

The socio-economic situation of the people living in these areas is generally insecure. The "Poverty Alleviation Strategy"^v paper of June 2002 announced that 60% of the population was living below the poverty line. Even though there is less poverty (in terms of income and access to services) in urban areas than in the countryside, there is a widening gulf between the various population groups within the capital itself. Economic difficulties that pre-dated the genocide have not been resolved and are now concentrated in cities. In the words of a Caritas^{vi} report on the improvised settlements from 2002: "in

Kigali, there is a growing gap between poor and rich, there being many of the former and a minority of the latter”, even if there is less poverty in Kigali than in the rest of the country.^{vii}

Figure 2: Changes in Kigali’s surface area

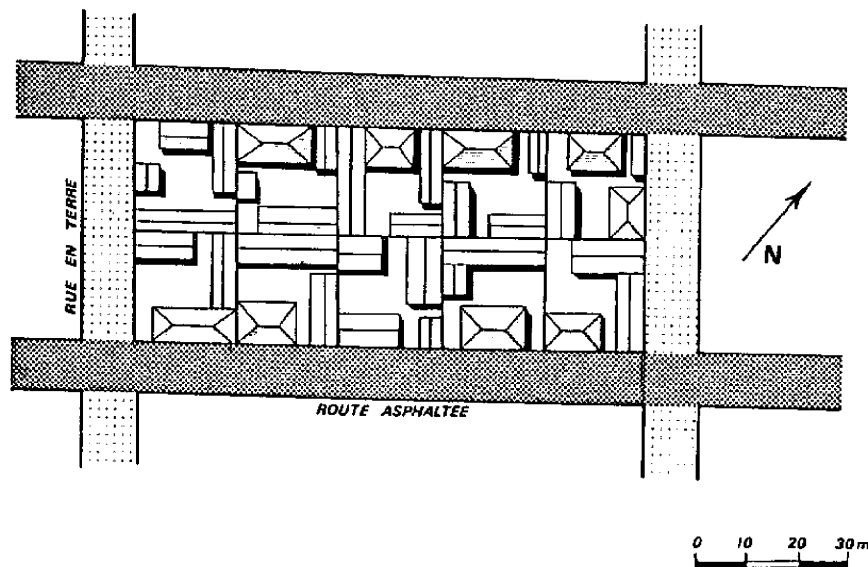


Source: B. Michelon

2. Biryogo market: changes in use and practices

Built during colonial times, Biryogo is one of the oldest parts of the city, and this largely explains its morphology. It is made up of two parts with very distinct urban characteristics. The first is based on the former “Swahili camp” checkerboard system devised by the German colonial administration. At the time, this was known as the “black town”, in contrast to the “white town” where the colonial population lived. The buildings housed translators, cooks and other Muslim staff from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Sudan who had joined the German army. This “checkerboard” was extended under the Belgian colonial administration. In this area of town, the dense urban fabric is clearly subdivided by the roads and the residential islands are sandwiched between the city’s primary and secondary streets.

Figure 3: Map of an island in Biryogo

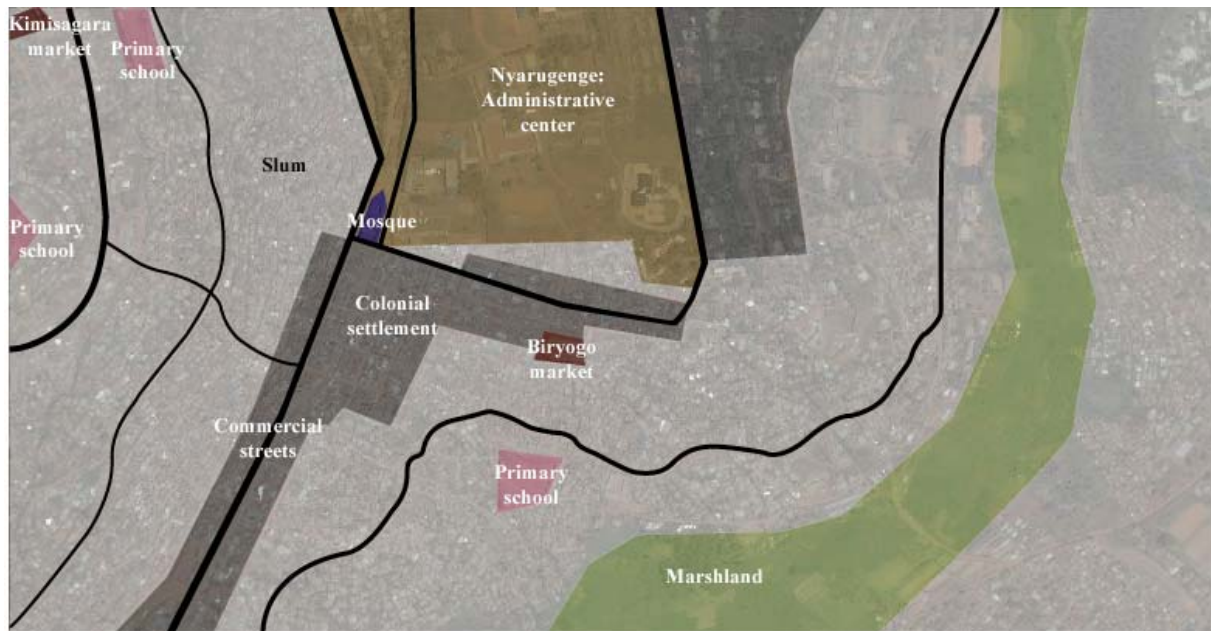


Source: Sirven, 1984

A second area has developed since this first period of building work. The Biryogo neighbourhood has spread out over the hillsides and down into the marshland to form a separate part of the neighbourhood with a considerable amount of makeshift housing. The density of population and the arrival of large numbers of migrants in this central area of the city have meant that houses have been erected without any planning on the steep slopes of the hill where there are few real building sites. The only roads are tracks that are prone to flooding. Ravines make it difficult to build roads along the contour lines. The quality of life in the areas of the neighbourhood with the steepest slopes is very low.

Biryogo is highly structured and show great social cohesion, mainly because it is a largely Muslim neighbourhood, one of the few existing in Rwanda, where religious solidarity plays an important role in people's lives (indeed, a mosque marks the entrance to the neighbourhood)^{viii}. Muslim shop-owners are always busy in the main streets of the neighbourhood, and this intense commercial activity ensures that there is a lot going on both night and day. The shops are mainly located at the top of the hill where the network of streets is dense and in good condition, at the edge of the formal and makeshift towns. Biryogo market is not far from this area of small shops.

Figure 4: Location of Biryogo market within the city



Source: B. Michelin. Background: Google Earth.

Biryogo is a local market located on the edge of the hill and set slightly back from a major ring road around the plateau of the city centre. It is also on the border between the plateau and the steep slopes where makeshift houses are pressed up one against the other. Architecturally, it looks just like any other building in the neighbourhood; Biryogo market was built of brick and corrugated iron, probably in the 1980s, and materialises the changes that are taking place in the city of Kigali today.

It is easy to get to the market, but what is surprising once inside is that it contains very few stalls and shops. Inside, the space has been divided up according to a business logic dictating that each type of product has its own section. In the middle of the space is a central platform with stalls selling basic goods (fruit and vegetables) as well as wooden cubicles for women selling manufactured goods.

Around the edge of this platform are aisles for pedestrians to move about among the various stalls. There are also stalls selling meat, a large number of closed shops and a covered space for apprentice tailors who have come here to be trained and to earn a bit of money.

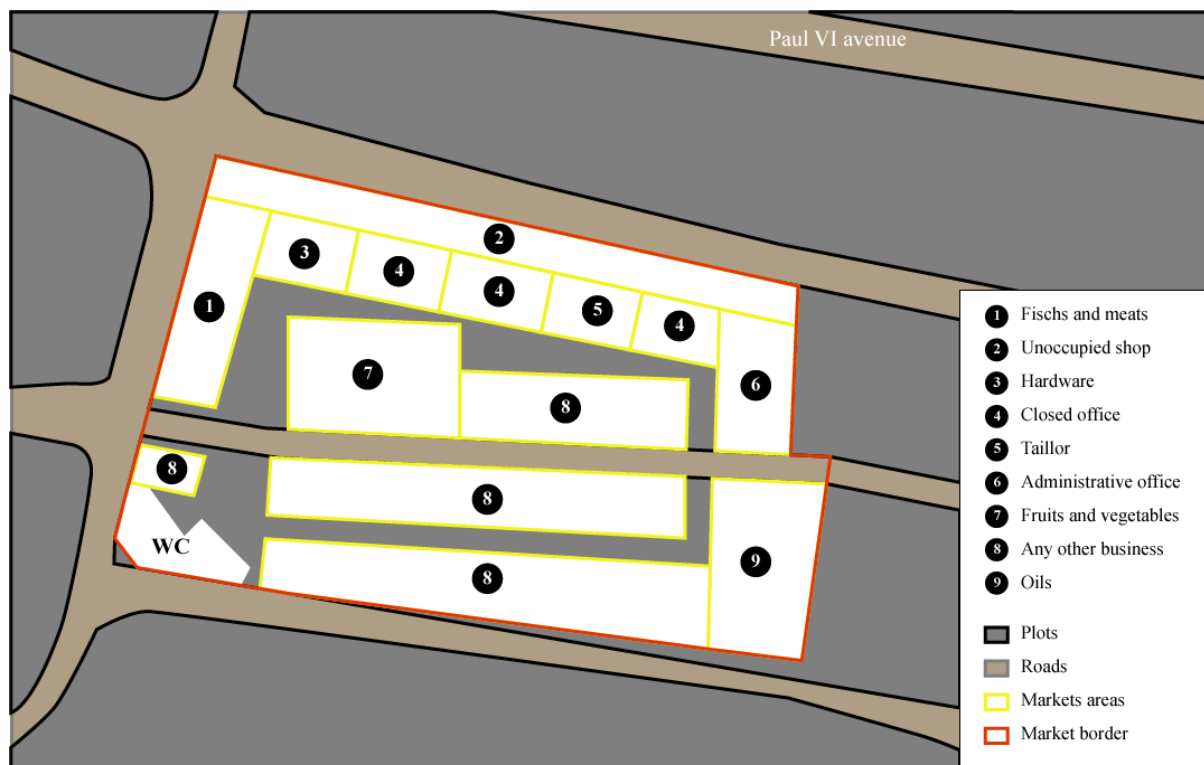
The market also has a second area, which is separated off from the first by a fenced wall with two entrances. This space is now completely empty and is used as a warehouse. Beyond this, around the outside of the market are unoccupied shops with doors leading out into the neighbouring streets.

Although one will often bump into the same people who have either come here for a walk or to do their shopping (like any very local market), the market doesn't seem to attract very many customers. It

doesn't really match the idea one usually has of this type of public space located close to a city centre. In most African cities, the market is a noisy public forum. It is above all a place that defines city life, a place where the different population groups of the city can meet and do business: "In Africa, you can find a market without a town, but never a town without a market."^{ix}

Biryogo is quiet, and this impression is only reinforced by the fact that the noise of the city reaches the very gates of the market. There are many shops in the adjacent street and there is a lot of traffic on the nearby ring road around the plateau of the city centre (Paul VI Avenue).

Figure 5: Spatial organisation of Biryogo market



Source: B. Michelin. Background: Google Earth

There is, however, one place that attracts a lot of people to come and meet - the local office of the executive members of the cell, a local administrative body that is responsible for running the neighbourhood. This office has a meeting room and an another one where the local council can work. It organises a lot of meetings and community activities designed to bring local people together.

Figure 6: Stalls selling basic goods



Photo: B. Michelin

This social and community use of neighbourhood space marks a change in usage, understood as “practices that have been confirmed over time and conventions that have become a society’s ‘customs’”.^x

In order to understand this change, we have to first acknowledge that there are two things at stake for the authorities in rebuilding Kigali: they have to fulfil their ambition to modernise the capital while also encouraging national reconciliation. Secondly, we need to understand how the residents of the city have adjusted to this new urban situation.

3. Biryogo market, a victim of the modernisation of the city’s business framework

Due to rapid urban growth, the authorities have had to completely change their discourse since the end of the genocide. Their new doctrine is a dual one; they have to put in place a process of national reconstruction after the genocide and pursue a determined policy to rapidly modernise the capital.^{xi}

The main national strategy document, “Vision 2020”^{xii}, emphasises the speed and inevitability of this urbanisation process and insists on the need, in this context, to strengthen government and local authority planning capacity. Furthermore, the main objectives of Kigali’s economic development strategy^{xiii} reaffirm the free market economic policies outlined in national policy and present them in more detail. As the government’s finances are so limited, there is an emphasis on the possibilities for public-private partnerships and on the role the private sector can play in city planning and construction. These objectives are also presented in the “Kigali Conceptual Master Plan” that the authorities passed on June 2008. As a certain number of political leaders have said, the development models adopted are ones imported from Western capitals. Urbanisation is to turn Kigali into a modern city that erases the traces left by the bloody, rural past and allows the city’s residents to start a process of mourning and reconciliation.

In this context, the authorities see networks of shops as being an effective means of city planning. The changes observed at Biryogo market are symptomatic of the development of a new business structure involving the creation of a large number of modern shops built by rich foreign investors that cover almost all of the capital’s hills. Councillors would like to develop a multi-storey shopping mall in the city centre on the site of the former traditional market that was destroyed in 2004. The new “Mall Union Trade Centre”, which was inaugurated in 2006, has become a city landmark and the symbol of a new consumer lifestyle that is clearly targeted at wealthier sections of the population. Since then, other multi-storey supermarkets have appeared in the city, a further mall is planned in Gisozi, another upcoming area of town, and South African and Kenyan investors are currently discussing new commercial areas with the authorities.

All the shop-owners from Kigali’s old central market (located on the central Nyarugenge plateau) have been forced to move to covered markets on the outskirts (Kimisagara, Kimironko, Nyamirambo and Kicukiro) so that these projects can be realised. These changes give some idea of the new commercial framework the authorities have in mind. Two types of structure are to survive alongside a large, modern shopping mall in the oldest part of town: large covered markets on the outskirts of the city, and small local markets, which will become “satellites” of the city’s main trading places. This is what is planned for Biryogo.

The number of shop-owners has decreased as a result of this reorganisation. The site has become far less attractive to business due to competition from other city shopping centres. Although it is close to the city centre, there are fewer customers and not many shop-owners. The disaffection is even greater due to the fact that the shop rents have become expensive, “between 80,000 (100 euros) and 150,000 Rwandan francs (260 euros) per month, depending on the location”.

The authorities' logic is to develop large shopping centres rather than planning for a more balanced city. These changes in the retail offering are leading to the emergence of new centres on the edge of Kigali. It can nevertheless be expected that this trend will increase inequality among the population. Some rich and mobile shop-owners and consumers will have access to a wider range of sales outlets around the city. The majority of the population, who are poor and less mobile, are condemned to greater financial uncertainty and will only have a limited choice of places to do their shopping.

4. Biryogo market: a controlled public space

The manner in which the authorities have run the city's shopping areas is mirrored inside Biryogo market. It is a genuine public space that can be defined as "a space common to a wide range of actors, whose access and usage (in varying forms) is guaranteed by an authority (state, president, ministries, councils, ethnic communities)."^{xiv}

It has long been the case in Rwanda that successive oligarchies in power have put in place a political organisation with the aim of controlling social relations and the workings of the economy. Nowadays, even though the new government has implemented a process of reconciliation, the administration is still an important instrument of social control and a means of staying in power. There is a pyramidal system which ensures that information can circulate quickly and orders from the highest level of the hierarchy can be carried out immediately (the 'district' is subdivided into 'sectors', which are subdivided into 'cells' and then 'villages' (*umudugudus*))^{xv}.

The existence of a local council office at Biryogo market is therefore a way of making the state's presence felt. Alongside the basic administrative services provided by the local council, it is also possible to observe the socialisation rituals that have been put in place as part of the process of reconciliation.

One example of this in everyday life is the practice of neighbourhood *umuganda* (community work), whose aim is to re-establish a sense of community life and to allow people to re-appropriate public spaces. These collective activities, which were first initiated in 1974 and then reintroduced by the current government following the genocide, take place on the first Saturday of every month. Everyone is required to take part, including the highest state officials. Local residents organise themselves to clean their homes and their neighbourhoods between 7 am and midday. The whole population is expected to take this activity for the common good seriously, and anyone who wishes to leave his or her neighbourhood must have a permit from the authorities.

Another important social event is the *gacaca*, which takes place at the market. These popular courts inspired by old village councils have the authority to judge anyone who is presumed to have taken part

in the genocide, with the exception of those who planned it or rapists, who are judged by normal courts. *Gacaca* are not chaired by professional magistrates but instead by people who are elected by the community on the basis of their “integrity”. The aim of these *gacaca* is to reconcile people by looking back over the country’s recent history together and to thereby rebuild mutual trust and re-establish social ties. They allow people to tell their stories, to relieve their suffering, and to be heard, looking for some justice.

Figure 7: Neighbourhood Sunday morning meeting: *gacaca* and social organisation.



Photo: B. Michelon

However, these “community events” are strongly supervised by the local authorities. The law stipulates that it is a legal obligation for every Rwandan to take part in the activities of the *gacaca* courts.”^{xvi} These events are therefore something of a social ritual, “a device with a symbolic purpose, which constructs relative identities through mediating identities”^{xvii}. They contain all the elements that constitute a rite: a dedicated place, a regular time, an assembly, a defined ceremony, a shared symbolism. Organised by the state, “this ritualised creativity seems to be one of the ways, in societies undergoing constant change, in which individuals try to re-appropriate their lives, and to imagine at the same time themselves, others and the world they share. These rites, whether linked to birth, adolescence or death, confirm people’s desire to put down their roots in an intergenerational chain.”^{xviii}

Under the aegis of the state, this reparative justice aims to help people forge a new relationship with themselves and with others by including and developing positive identities (national, religious, professional, etc.) that enable people to free themselves from the antagonism of ethnic identity.

The Biryogo market has changed from a public and essentially commercial space that helped to shape urban life in what was one of the world's smallest capital cities into a controlled socio-political space. The state implements a strict policy of social control here by preaching reconciliation and persuading people to have faith in the modernisation of the state and of social relations. The city is gradually becoming a place where the government asserts its power. Rwandan members of parliament and councillors "who have generally been born as foreign cysts and looked upon as islands of European modernity in a hostile environment, have gradually re-appropriated the embryo of the city."^{xix}

All local residents are emerging from the trauma of the genocide and they are themselves searching for another way and means besides the "readymade model" provided by the state to appropriate their space, their social ties and their identity in a constantly changing city. They are trying to learn the lessons of the past and participate in a process of redefining their identities and managing the tension between on the one hand finding their place in the modern, urban imaginary world produced by this wave of rapid urban growth, and on the other accepting that they are members of a group with its own traditional identity within Rwandan society.

5. The difficulty of public management of multiple and complex networks

This social and political control appears to be a major element of identity and social cohesion, but it does nevertheless mask the complexities of social life in Kigali's various neighbourhoods. In this new urban environment, there is a re-emergence of the "multiple personality". Each of the city's inhabitants in this phase of reconstruction has "plural commitments" that overlap and ensure, like different "layers", "the multiple continuities of the individual"^{xx}, meaning that they are members of various different groups that are sometimes in conflict with each other. The communitarian discourse therefore conceals fractures and references to issues that go beyond simply planning the neighbourhood and the social relations within it. They refer to urban issues that are relevant to everyone living in Kigali.

Whereas the genocide was conditioned by the view that there were two ethnic groups (Hutus against Tutsis), new city-dwellers now have to construct their own identity by drawing on their membership of various networks that sometimes stretch beyond their neighbourhood. Religion (Catholic, Muslim or one of the new religions that have recently gained ground in Africa such as the Pentecostal church), geography (referring to where the new city-dwellers have originally migrated from), sex (showing the changes in the position of women and of gender relations) and age (in a country where the memories

of elder people are buried under the weight of the genocide) are all factors that greatly influence social relations.

In Rwanda in particular, constructing urban identities is closely bound up with an individual's ethnic origins. This is not restricted to a simple dichotomy (Hutus against Tutsis); the genocide has led to a multiplication of forms of belonging within each ethnic "family" in a country where people no longer wish to talk about an aspect of their personality that was invented during the colonial period.

Peace and national reconciliation have encouraged a large number of members of the Rwandan diaspora to return home, and they have mainly settled in the towns, especially Kigali. The relative safety of the cities has also attracted some of the rural population. After the exactions committed during the genocide, people living in the hills in the centre of the country, generally Tutsis, felt the need for greater safety. This need to be closer to other people and to make new social ties has led to mass migration to urban areas. At the same time, the anonymous nature of the city has encouraged a movement of new city-dwellers, mainly Hutus, who are looking for an anonymity that the village with its closer relations could no longer provide them with.

Although the government's policies ideally seek to encourage people to overcome this ethnic ideology, the scars of this "fracture" persist in people's heads, and this is becoming harder and harder to manage. In Biryogo, as well as the neighbouring area of Nyamirambo, a considerable number of Tutsis were hidden and saved during the 1994 genocide with the help of the close-knit Muslim community.^{xxi} Biryogo is therefore relatively peaceful in ethnic terms. Nevertheless the neighbourhood bears witness – as indeed does the rest of the city – to an implicit fault line between "Tutsis" from inside the country who survived the massacre and who live with state support, and those from the diaspora - English-speaking and often well-off - who govern the country.

The ties between these two groups are clear and natural. However, dialogue is often difficult between the Tutsi survivors with their desire for justice and revenge, having been forced to accept the past, and the governing Tutsis from the diaspora with their modernising, elitist views and an occasionally condescending attitude towards the victims of a drama that they did not experience themselves. The former have great difficulty going back to a normal life and coming to terms with what has happened (some people say that they go on with their lives like "ghosts"). The current policy is to offer them financial help so that they can escape from the situation of insecurity in which they live.^{xxii} However, this does not necessarily resolve the psychological problems, and the physical and moral scars that they have to face on a daily basis. This occasionally leads to frustration and resentment, although people do not normally express this publicly given the authorities' doctrine of forced modernisation.

6. Urbanisation on the margins: the role of the inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods

People's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and their ability to reconstruct their identities also expresses itself through the way they occupy space and manage it. It is the resident's role, as a "city maker"^{xxiii}, to tell the story of the place where he lives. Local people adapt to the state's attempts to seize hold of public spaces.

In effect, Rwandans agree to obey the state's rites while also developing new reference points within their neighbourhoods that allow them to have a better life in their city and to compensate for the absence of real "public" spaces where free expression is possible. Although there is no real resistance and community organising to promote a self-development model to speak of, local people seek refuge in spaces that hark back on the one hand to the country's rural past (their traditional habitat), and on the other hand in fluid public spaces that allow them to steer a path between different territories and groups and find some solution to their search for identity and social structures.

Some people's lack of urban heritage still demonstrates itself through a great mistrust of the city and its excesses. Rwandans have long been extremely attached to the land and shown their distrust of towns. Local people in the neighbourhoods have therefore retained a close attachment to their living environment in a context of globalisation and its corollary, urbanisation, which they see as a "repository of their identity". As Frampton has stated, "the short, narrow streets of the slums often succeed where a renovated area with no density to ill often fails"^{xxiv}. Even the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods are built with old ways of living in mind: "In earlier times, the daytime social life of a Rwandan family took place within the family enclosure, which was made up of an *inzu* (the house itself), the *urugo* (the most important outside space), the *igikari* (outside courtyard found behind the house), barns in the case of rich families, and a boundary of living hedges, or hedges of ficus and euphorbias, or even palisades of reeds."^{xxv} The house is even more important today given that quite a number of people have suffered "domicide"^{xxvi}, i.e. the destruction and looting of their homes during the genocide, which is the spatial equivalent of the destruction and appropriation of possessions of the victims of crimes and persecution. They also attempt to resist the coercive methods of the state and the laws of the market, which allow investors muscle, expropriating and evicting the poorest groups in increasing numbers.^{xxvii}

These investors are also getting their hands on the few other public spaces available in order to convert them for their various different projects. High unemployment leads to inactivity and encourages people to occupy the streets, a fluid space where networks operate and whose uses are multidimensional, unclassifiable and the stage for many different social representations. It is a place where informal business takes place (unauthorised street peddling) as does sport (local streets are often turned into football pitches) and various events (protests, violence, traffic, etc.). The street also leads

to places on the margins of society that act as an escape valve. For example, in Biryogo neighbourhood there is a cabaret bar where men come to drink *urwagwa*. Not far from this bar, women wait for clients who have a few centimes to spare, even though prostitution is officially banned.

7. Learning how to make public spaces hybrid again: survival in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Taking the Biryogo local market as the focus of our research, we have looked at the notion of identity of the inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods by carrying out cross-analysis of how the space is used and the social relations this creates. This we did in order to understand the territorial dynamics, the spatial changes and the social dynamics of the people who live in these disadvantaged neighbourhoods in a city that had long been under-urbanised.

This study of the social and spatial changes of a small market situated between a neighbourhood and the city show how the tensions between the government on the one hand and local people on the other crystallise out around a public space.

The government wants to gain control of urban space and of how its inhabitants are organised. Those in power seize hold of public spaces and turn them into a powerful political vehicle to spread a voluntarist national policy at local level. It uses this as a means to combine its modernising vision for the city with its ambition to bring about national reconciliation, flouting in the process the inherent contradiction of attempting to tackle these two issues at the same time.

As for local people, they find methods to appropriate, represent spatially and create social ties that express city dwellers' new identities and social constructions. Those living in the neighbourhoods, who are often resigned and sometimes crushed by the terrible ordeal that they have suffered, accept how the state manages the urban space while at the same time creating – more individually than collectively – ways of making the city and of living in it by attempting to appropriate and set down roots in the places where their everyday lives take place.

Given these tensions, it would be good if the state could learn to create more hybrid public spaces again by allowing a greater intermingling of the visible (seizure by the authorities and social control as currently exerted) and the invisible (the anonymity of places for socialising in the city, the ordinary, how the people who make the city tell stories about it and imagine it). The wide range of different uses and groups could thus be recognised, and this would allow better integration and appropriation by residents.

The hybridisation of public space would also allow the current government to pursue its two stated objectives better. Care should be taken that modernisation does not take place too quickly at the cost of reconciliation. This would mean allowing more people to participate in the current project to modernise the city of Kigali, or even to re-orientate it and involve all residents in determining a vision of how society should be and how their local public space is to be shaped and used.

It is possible for people to construct this space together. Such projects are still few and far between, but they do exist. One example is an initiative by an association in Kimironko^{xxviii}, another area of Kigali, to build a “neighbourhood centre” run by women. The collective process, which allows this untypical center to work, reflects the long path towards rebuilding a shared sense of belonging. It allows local people to try to close the chapter of the genocide together and to rejoin the community of the living.

ⁱ This article is part of an ongoing PhD thesis about identity and disadvantaged neighbourhoods in African cities (focussing on two case studies, Douala and Kigali) through the study of a local public space, the local market.

ⁱⁱ Alain Mabanckou, *Verre cassé* (Seuil Point, Paris, 2006) 248 pages.

ⁱⁱⁱ According to the 2002 census. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 3rd general census of the population and living environment of Rwanda on August 15, 2002. Kigali, February 2005.

^{iv} The average population density of the city is 104 people per hectare if one counts all residential, administrative, industrial and business districts together.

^v Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. National Poverty Reduction Programme (Rwanda: Poverty Alleviation Strategy” June 2002) 185 pages.

^{vi} Caritas, Diocese of Kigali, The phenomenon of poverty in Kigali (Cahiers du Bureau Social, N° 136, June 2002) 33 pages.

^{vii} MINECOFIN, Statistics Department. Comprehensive Survey about Household Living Conditions. 2001

^{viii} Actually, according to a survey, only 5 percent of the Rwandan population was Muslim in 2004. Even if the number has increased the last years, the proportion of Muslims in the Rwandan population is very low in comparison with the Christian one and mainly concentrate in the cities.

^{ix} Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Ville coloniale et histoire des Africains, XXe siècle* (Revue d'Histoire n° 20, October-December 1988) pp. 49-73.

^x Daniel Pinson, *Usages et architectures* (L'Harmattan, Paris, 1993) 189 pages.

^{xi} Benjamin Michelon. Kigali: une urbanisation entre modernisation et réconciliation (Urbanisme, 363, 2008) pp. 33-38.

^{xii} Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Finances and Economic Planning. Vision 2020, November 2002, 60 pages. A document that defines, among other things, the major national strategic objectives for 2020, especially questions of town, country and infrastructure planning.

^{xiii} Republic of Rwanda, City of Kigali. Kigali Economic Development Strategy, August 2002, 95 pages. Document presented as both a methodology and an action plan for the city's development.

^{xiv} François Leimdorfer, “Enjeux et imaginaires de l'espace public à Abidjan” (in Emile Le Bris (ed.), ‘Dossier : Espaces municipaux’, Politique Africaine, n° 74, June 1999) pp. 51-75

^{xv} Republic of Rwanda, Law n° 08/2006 of February 24, 2006 on how districts are organised and function.

^{xvi} Organic law 16/2004 of 19.06.2004, supra note 20 to article 29. Organic law on the organisation, jurisdiction and functioning of the gacaca courts charged with prosecuting and sentencing offences related to the crime of genocide and other crimes against humanity committed between October 1st 1990 and December 31st 1994.

^{xvii} Marc Augé, *Non-Lieux*. Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité (Le Seuil, 1992) 156 pp.

^{xviii} Michèle Fellous, *A la recherche de nouveaux rites : rites de passage et modernité avancée* (Editions L'Harmattan, Collection ‘Logiques sociales’, February 2001) 246 pages.

^{xix} Jean-Luc Piermay, *L'apprentissage de la ville en Afrique subsaharienne* (Le Mouvement social, 2003-3, n° 204) pp. 35-46.

^{xx} Laurent Thévenot, *L'action au pluriel. Sociologie des régimes d'engagement* (Paris, La Découverte, 2006) 311 pages.

Laurent Thévenot, "Pragmatique de la connaissance" (in A. Borzeis, A. Bouvier and p.Pharo. *Sociologie et connaissance. Nouvelles approches cognitives*. Paris, CNRS éditions, 1998) pp. 101-285.

^{xxi} Tharcisse Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises, 1990-1994* (OCMS, 2005) 282 pages.

^{xxii} Law n° 02/98 of 22nd January 1998 created a National Fund to Assist Genocide Survivors for the poorest (FARG). This Fund is financed through the state's own revenues (5%), contributions from employees in both the public and the private sectors, and with the help of the international community.

^{xxiii} Jean-Claude Bolay, Yves Pedrazzini, and Michel Bassand, *Habitat créatif, éloge des faiseurs de ville : habitants et architectes d'Amérique latine et d'Europe* (Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer pour le progrès de l'homme (FPH), 1996).

^{xxiv} Kenneth Frampton. *Histoire critique de l'architecture moderne* (Philippe Sers, Paris, 1985).

^{xxv} Ministry of Infrastructure. *Rwandan National Habitat Policy*, July 2004, 45 pages.

^{xxvi} J. Douglas Porteous [with Sandra Smith], *Domicide: The Global Destruction of Home*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001. 268 pages.

^{xxvii} Alain Durand-Lasserve, *Market-Driven Eviction Processes in Developing Countries' Cities: the cases of Kigali in Rwanda and Phnom Penh in Cambodia* (Global Union Development Vol. 3, Issue 1, May 2007).

^{xxviii} Florence Prudhomme. *La Maison de quartier de Kimironko (Kigali): une expérience collective de reconstruction de soi*, (International Research Conference, Tutsi Genocide and Reconstruction of Knowledge. Kigali, July 22-25, 2008).