

Between modern urbanism and 'rurban' realities

Rwanda's changing rural–urban interface and
the implications for inclusive development



Ine Cottyn

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Front cover picture: Ine Cottyn – Traffic on the main street in Nyamata centre

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Between modern urbanism and ‘rurban’ realities
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Tussen modern urbanisme en ‘rurbane’ realiteit
Een veranderend raakvlak tussen platteland en stad en
de implicaties voor inclusieve ontwikkeling in Rwanda
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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Ine Cottyn

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Promotor:

Prof. dr. E.B. Zoomers

Copromotor:

Dr. G. Nijenhuis

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Abbreviations

BDF	Business Development Fund
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EDPRS II	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy II
FGD	Focus group discussion
GDP	Gross domestic product
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINIJUST	Ministry of Justice
MININFRA	Ministry of Infrastructure
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
NST1	The National Strategy for Transformation
(Umurenge) SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TVET	Technical Vocation and Educational Training

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Preface

The findings in this research provides particularly relevant insights in the context of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, which outbreak was triggered in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan, in the Hubei province of China. Quickly spreading across the globe, this crisis has presented many governments with an important trade-off between ‘lives’ and ‘livelihoods’.¹

Many governments moved swiftly to adopt far-reaching measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, including the closure of international borders, movement restrictions, curfews and lockdowns severely disrupting global mobility. Although many reports have praised the effects of mobility restrictions in containing the spread of the virus in Africa, we should not ignore the devastating impact they have on the lives and livelihoods of populations relying on different patterns of mobility to make a living.

‘In search of income for the day-to-day livelihood of extended families, many Africans could be forced to ignore concerns about contracting COVID-19 and fend for their survival.’²

‘With the lockdown, I cannot travel out of Ouagadougou to sell the soap I manufacture in other towns and localities,’ said a migrant IOM interviewed in Burkina Faso. ‘It is like I have to start from scratch once more.’³

¹ UNECA.2020. “COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Strategies for Africa.” Addis Ababa: UNECA; Darko, M.L. 2020. “‘Lives versus Livelihoods’: The Narrative Behind Ghana’s Lockdown.” June 28, 2020. <https://religiousmatters.nl/lives-versus-livelihoods-the-narrative-behind-ghanas-lockdown>.

² Mehtar, S. W. Preiser, N.A. Lakhe et al. 2020. “Limiting the Spread of COVID-19 in Africa: One Size Mitigation Strategies do Not Fit all Countries.” *Lancet Global Health* 8 (7): E881-E883.

³ Africa Renewal. 2020. “Migration Flows Across West and Central Africa Nearly Halved by COVID-19. Mobile Populations Economically Impacted.” 18 June 2020. <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/news/coronavirus/migration-flows-across-west-and-central-africa-nearly-halved-covid-19-mobile-populations>.



Chapter 1

Introduction

'Africa is the fastest urbanizing place on the planet' and 'African cities will double in population by 2050.'⁴ Here are 4 ways to make sure they thrive' are the headings of two recent newspaper articles that illustrate the attention paid to the expansion of cities on the African continent.⁵

Africa – the world's least urbanised continent – is undergoing one of the world's fastest urbanisation rates (Locatelli and Nugent 2009): the rate increased from 15% in 1960 to 40% in 2010, and UN Habitat (2015: 2) predicts that it will reach 60% in 2050. The rapidity of sub-Saharan Africa's urban population and spatial growth makes Africa's cities a dominant part of the global urban narrative (Pieterse and Parnell 2014). Urbanisation is thus a critical feature of contemporary societal change in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore urbanisation, and the profound rural–urban transformations it implies at the local level, is at the centre of debate among policymakers, politicians, international donors and scholars, concerning both the development and the future of African urbanism (Locatelli and Nugent 2009: 1; Agergaard and Ortenbjerg 2017: 63).

In the late 1990s, urban scholars considered African cities not as engines of economic growth, as cities in the rest of the world have historically been regarded, but as 'part of the cause and a major symptom of the economic and social crises that have enveloped the continent' (Fay and Opal 2000: 130). In sub-Saharan Africa, unlike in other parts of the world, the scenario has often been called 'urbanisation without growth' (Fay and Opal 2000; Davis and Henderson 2003), which implies that the expansion of Africa's urban population is growing faster than the rate at which employment and livelihood opportunities are created, thus contributing to the urbanisation of poverty (Ravallion, Chen and Sangraula 2007). With the prospect of emerging megacities and urban areas growing out of control, African cities are often perceived as chaotic, dysfunctional or even dangerous. Within this discourse, scholars like Locatelli and Nugent (2009) and Pieterse (2010) pointed out how African cities are often compared with their Western counterparts, described as lacking all Western social, natural or material configurations of urbanism. This fuels the ongoing recognition of the need to reconceptualise African urban spaces and question the relevance of conventional Western urban theory (Mbembe 1992; Susan Parnell 1997; Watson 2003, 2018; Mbembe and Nuttal 2004; Myers 2011; Robinson 2011; Pieterse and Parnell 2014; Pieterse, Parnell, and Haysom 2015). Parnell and Pieterse (2014) and Myers (2011) emphasised that we should give Africa's urban transition the attention it deserves, without necessarily relating it to other cities in the world.

We see a current paradigm shift among policymakers towards the recognition of urbanisation in Africa as a solution instead of only a problem (Kariuki et al. 2013; UN-Habitat 2014, 2016; MacLennan and Stacey 2016). Urbanisation is considered inevitable, and debates focus on how cities can become potential solutions rather than catalysts for many of the challenges African countries are facing. Several African governments are re-visioning the role of their cities to become part of the solution for sustainable growth and poverty alleviation linked to their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, that is, to 'leave no one

⁴ <https://inforeport.co/africa-is-the-fastest-urbanizing-place-on-the-planet/>

⁵ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/06/Africa-urbanization-cities-double-population-2050-4%20ways-thrive/>

behind'. Following the contemporary rhetoric on urban sustainability and inclusiveness, cities and urban settlements play a critical role as drivers of sustainable development, provided they are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, as stipulated by SDG goal 11 and expressed in the New Urban Agenda (UN-Habitat 2017). When Watson (2014) discussed 'African urban fantasies', she illustrated how this is translated into the revision of urban agendas in Africa towards a focus on innovation, modernisation and the future, underpinned by the ideal that through these cities Africa can be 'modernised' (Watson 2014: 217). The spatial planning policies of African governments are intended to facilitate cities and towns to attract creative entrepreneurs and professionals who will make this ideal come true (McGranahan and Satterthwaite 2014). A well-planned urban centre is widely believed to be able to anticipate and withstand the negative outcomes of urbanisation and promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

This dissertation addresses two gaps in the debate on 'smart cities', 'new urbanism' and the future of African cities (Hollands 2008; McGranahan and Satterthwaite 2014; Watson 2014; Murray 2015; van Noorloos and Kloosterboer 2018; Côté-Roy and Moser 2019).⁶ First, the debate on urbanisation in Africa has mainly focused so far on the dynamics that are at play in major cities and metropolises, and little attention has been paid to small and intermediate urban centres where much of the urban transformation in sub-Saharan Africa is taking place (Pieterse 2011b; Titus and Hinderink 2002; McGranahan and Satterthwaite 2014; Cecilia Tacoli 2017). In studying and conceptualising urban change and urbanity, what happens in these smaller towns is often ignored or under-noticed (Bell and Jayne 2009). Being situated in the middle of the rural–urban interface, rather than experiencing clear-cut transitions, the drivers of change in small towns usually result from the interaction between rural systems, diverse flows of people and assets, and the influence of the urban system. The traditional divide between rural and urban is becoming increasingly blurred as more and more Africans live and make their living within a rural–urban interface made up of rural areas and smaller cities (Adesina, Gurría, and Clark 2016). In doing so, they reshape the relationship between the rural and the urban, essentially challenging the urban hierarchy and leaving their mark on the urban landscape. This brings us to the second gap: the rural and the urban are usually presented as dichotomous spheres, and there is little understanding of the way people use the rural–urban space. In fact, intensified rural–urban linkages and interactions play an increasingly significant role in small-town development and rural livelihood transformation (Cecilia Tacoli 2002, 2017; Agergaard et al. 2019). These linkages and interactions have become an important part of the daily reality of many rural and urban households, which generate income both on and off the farm, and access markets, work and specialised services in local and even distant regional towns (van Lindert and Steel 2017; Steel et al. 2019). There is increasing recognition that the idea of a clear division between the rural and the urban does not do justice to the reality of what rural, urban, peri-urban or 'rurban' areas are today (Agergaard and Ortenbjerg 2017; Mercandalli and Losch 2017).

⁶ See also Urban Studies special issue (2013) 'Planning "smart" city-regions in an age of market-driven fundamentalism', which critically engages with the new urban and its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

There are multiple ways of living, doing or experiencing the urban, which calls for looking at what is, rather than at what should be (Pieterse 2011a; Pieterse and Simone 2013). Urban life in Africa is not based on the same rationalities as it is in cities in other parts of the world, as Africa is urbanising under very different conditions (Locatelli and Nugent 2009; Pieterse 2010, 2011a). Such urban fantasies often clash with the lived reality of African cities since they do not take into account the ways in which different groups use, produce and reproduce the urban space (Simone 2004a; Banks, Lombard and Mitlin 2020). Following that argument, Pieterse (2010) and the African Centre for Cities have made a clear case that in order to understand Africa's urban future, we need to look at the dynamics of everyday life in African cities. This justifies the need to investigate the situation on the ground, namely the everyday reality of urbanisation in Africa and that of the 'urbanites'.

In this dissertation, I engage with this debate and contribute to an understanding of what the ideal of 'modern' urbanism in Africa's urban future means in terms of inclusive and sustainable development. Despite rapid urbanisation, sub-Saharan Africa remains a mostly rural part of the continent and its rural population continues to grow (Kariuki et al. 2013; Mercandalli and Losch 2017). It is with these rural households and individuals that the present research was concerned, gaining insights into the opportunities urban development can offer for livelihood improvement. The focus was on small towns, as they are the urban settlements that are most accessible to rural households.

When discussing processes of urbanisation, a lot of emphasis is often put on rural–urban migration, overlooking other forms of mobility, such as commuting and temporary and circular migration. These forms of non-permanent migration tend to be underreported (Cottyn et al. 2013; van Lindert and Steel 2017). Mobility was central to the present research, since local livelihoods are increasingly shaped by the physical movement of people bridging the rural–urban divide, leading to new, complex mobility patterns that, in addition to the traditional ones, shape rural life. When talking about Africa's urban future, youth is a particularly important group to take into account. With over 400 million people aged between 15 and 35, Africa has the youngest population in the world, and this figure is expected to double in the coming 25 years.⁷ Therefore, the positions and perceptions of youth in this process of change received specific attention in the present research.

This dissertation explores the case of Rwanda, where urbanisation is seen as the driving force behind the country's post-conflict agenda for economic and sustainable development. As part of the government's central strategy to stimulate economic growth and reduce poverty – as formulated in Vision 2020 and updated in Vision 2050 (the government's blueprint development strategy) – the aim is to achieve sustainable economic growth by creating urban areas that are centres of innovation and entrepreneurship and sources of socioeconomic services and

⁷ African Union, <https://au.int/en/youth-development>.

opportunities. Strongly guided by a public discourse that stresses 'modernity' and 'development', the urbanisation agenda forms part of a larger set of policies aimed at re-engineering the Rwanda's rural and urban space. However, the strong emphasis on the spatial expressions of its development goals, such as the urban ideal that is strived for through rigid master planning, can be seen as an important vehicle for this dominant narrative and as such is crucial toward supporting the regime's pursuit of security, control and legitimacy. This reveals an overriding purpose to form part of a broader, post-genocide state-building process.

While many African governments have been discouraging rural–urban migration, the Rwandan government is putting pressure on its population to become part of its urban ideal. Urbanisation in Rwanda is very much connected to the ideal of modernisation and progress, including the incorporation of rural sites into the urban sphere. From a modernisation perspective, small rural towns also play an important role in reaching national goals to replace rural with urban development ideology (see Chapter 2 or Cottyn 2018). The Rwandan case also shows the importance of investigating African urbanism and urbanisation in the rural context.

Setting the stage

Many states in post-colonial Africa are putting a renewed focus on the state as the primary agent of development, following their retreat as prescribed by the neoliberal agenda of the 1970s and 1980s.⁸ Questions concerning the state's capacity to engineer social and economic transformation, and the extent to which it can embed itself in society to achieve development goals, are fuelling discussions on the role of the African developmental state in the continent's development. What these countries have in common is a national vision for planned development with a focus on rapid urbanisation combined with profound state-led rural transformations. Informed by modernisation thinking, a strong state is seen as the central requirement. Rwanda is an example of such a strong state in Africa that has a high-modernist vision regarding development and progress (Newbury 2011; Huggins 2014; Mann and Berry 2015). The specific nature of Rwanda as a developmental state, whereby a state-centred developmental approach is combined with aspects of free-market neoliberalism, has been discussed by a number of authors (see Purdeková 2011; Straus and Waldorf 2011; Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012; Mann and Berry 2015; Honeyman 2016; van Noorloos and Kloosterboer 2018). Rwanda – a landlocked country known as 'the land of a thousand hills' – is one of the most densely populated countries in sub-Saharan Africa: the World Bank (2019) estimated that in 2018 there were 499 people per square km in Rwanda. In that year, the country had a population of over 12 million, of whom 83% were living in rural areas. Despite being one of Africa's least urbanised countries, both the pace and the manner of urbanisation since the current government took power after the 1994 genocide have been remarkable, with the urbanisation rate peaking

⁸ Botswana and Mauritius are commonly referred to as developmental states, while others – such as South Africa, Ethiopia and Rwanda – are often called aspirational developmental states (Seshamani and Ndhlova 2016; Dejene and Cochrane 2018; Hillbom 2019).

at 17.5% in 1996. Since then, urbanisation has increased at a slower pace: in 2018, the country's annual urban population growth was 3.1% (World Bank 2018a).

Agriculture has historically been the most important contributor to the Rwandan economy at both the national and the household level, in terms of its contribution to GDP and employment. In August 2018, agricultural employment remained predominant, accounting for 36.4% of the labour force (NISR 2018a). Despite efforts by the government to modernise the agricultural sector, the majority of the rural population are engaged in subsistence farming as a result of the historical challenge of land scarcity in Rwanda. While in 1960 the average land holding at the household level was 2 ha, this had dropped to less than 0.5 ha in 2001 (Musahara and Huggins 2004). Today, the sector still accounts for a 30% share of GDP, which makes it the second largest sector after services (47%). In 2018, the sector grew by 6%, contributing 1.8 percentage points to total GDP growth, mainly through food and export crops. Real GDP growth is projected to be 7.2% in 2019, in line with previous years (IMF 2018). It is expected to remain high, based on the growth of the tourism sector, the contribution of new mining operations, agricultural innovations and revenues from new infrastructural projects, such as the construction of a new airport in Bugesera district, about 40 kilometres south of the current Kigali International Airport.

Although the country is experiencing rapid and sustained growth in macroeconomic terms, this has not resulted in an equally rapid growth in employment. Official figures show that in 2017/18, a total of 206,190 jobs were created, 80.5% of which were non-farm based, mainly in construction and manufacturing (NISR 2018a). According to NISR statistics, in 2017 the unemployment rate was 17%, excluding the substantial number of self-subsistence farmers. This points to a larger issue the country is facing, namely the large number of people who are officially considered employed, but whose work does not necessarily provide an adequate let alone decent livelihood. Underemployment and unemployment are recognised as serious threats to the country's economic aspirations. This raises questions concerning how far macroeconomic growth is really accompanied by poverty reduction. According to the fifth Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (NISR 2018b), although extreme poverty is in decline, it is not declining at the same speed as the economic growth the country is experiencing. Poverty rates are highest in rural areas, where in 2016/17 they were as high as 43%.

Rwanda's changing rural–urban interface

Rwanda accomplished a remarkable post-conflict reconstruction and the country is now often showcased as a model for the African continent. The government's development ambitions are set out in Rwanda's medium-term plan for economic progress and poverty reduction (Vision 2020), the aim of which is to transform Rwanda from an agricultural and subsistence economy into a commercial and knowledge-based one. Rwanda has now integrated the Africa Agenda 2063 and the SDGs into an updated national development agenda (The National Strategy for Transformation; NST1) to function as the implementation instrument for the remainder of Vision

2020 and the first four years of the new Vision 2050 (MINECOFIN 2017). Vision 2050 is intended to elevate Rwanda to upper-middle-income status by 2035, and high-income status by 2050. The approach is characterised by business-centred thinking and a neoliberal approach, however with the state as the enabler of development (Mann and Berry 2015: 122). The government believes in private sector-led growth to reduce aid dependency and welcomes foreign investments in almost all sectors of the economy (Huggins 2014; Mann and Berry 2015). Singapore served as a model for its development planning – a model not imposed by institutions such as the World Bank or former colonial powers.⁹ Although there have been impressive achievements, inequality has been on the rise since 2000 as many Rwandans are excluded from the economic growth the country has experienced at the national level (Dawson 2018).¹⁰ With more than 90% of the poor living in rural areas, location appears to be an important source of inequality, pointing at a persistent rural–urban divide (Silva Leander 2012; Bundervoet, Lakner and Geli 2015).

Rwanda has a long history of ethnic conflict that culminated in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, which resulted in around 800,000 deaths, two million refugees, at least another million internally displaced persons and the country in complete ruin. The post-genocide government committed itself to restoring order and safety and embarked upon a range of transformation policies encompassing all sectors of society (Huggins and Musahara 2005; Ansoms 2009, 2011; Straus and Waldorf 2011; Purdeková 2012; Goodfellow and Smith 2013; Mann and Berry 2015). To enact these policies, the ruling party (the Rwandan Patriotic Front; RPF) puts great faith in technical expertise and strict planning. The invention of a ‘New Rwanda’ following the genocide is a good example of the reinvention or ‘re-imagining’ of the country, with an emphasis on a brighter future through the so-called makeability of society (Pottier 2002). Also, Newbury (2011) described the high-modernist ideology of development in Rwanda, which includes a strong belief in designing and planning human settlements. The history of violence and conflict forms a basis for legitimising the leadership’s conviction that a strong state is necessary for sustainable development and the maintenance of security. In an article investigating the motivations shaping Rwanda’s developmental state, Mann and Berry (2015: 120) argued that this goes beyond a focus on economic growth to encompass the articulation of ideologies, social spending, and the reordering of the country’s social and physical layout. Huggins (2014) illustrated this by pointing out how the emphasis on high-tech aspects of development, which are mainly expressed through the promotion of rapid and orderly urbanisation, is paralleled by a contempt for what is traditional or informal, particularly in rural areas. Newbury (2011: 226) explained how ‘state building that involves efforts to create legibility and standardisation of rural peasantries [...] have a long history in Rwanda [...]’. Official discourses have been characterised by disdain for the peasantry and ignorance of local knowledge, characteristics that seem to have become more salient in post-genocide politics. Unequal access to land and agrarian policies that led to the

⁹ Blair, E. and Uwiringiyimana, C. 2015. ‘Singapore’s visionary draws followers in Africa.’ Accessible online at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-singapore-lee-africa/singapores-visionary-draws-followers-in-africa-idUSKBN0MK1OQ20150324>

¹⁰ Despite small declines, the overall Gini ratio in Rwanda was still 0.504 in 2013 (World Bank 2019).

increased impoverishment of the rural population were important factors in Rwanda's history of violent conflict and the run-up to the 1994 genocide (Newbury 1999; Des Forges 2006). After the genocide, the Rwandan government had to provide homes for the thousands of old caseload refugees who returned to the country, and to deal with additional pressure from the new caseload returnees who had fled Rwanda in 1994 but had now returned and reclaimed their lands.¹¹ 'Villagisation' was launched in 1996 as a way to resettle the old caseload refugees. However, by 1999 it had evolved into a plan to resettle the entire scattered rural population in government-selected sites or model villages (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 1999; Pottier 2002). This policy, which is also called *imidugudu*, is central to the re-engineering of Rwandan society, whereby the population is reorganised in order to better promote security and to deal with land fragmentation and dispersed settlement, by bringing the people closer to infrastructure and services, encouraging the development of a non-farm sector and opening up arable land to agribusinesses.¹²

In the present research, the focus was on two main sets of policies that play an important role in rural transformation in Rwanda, that is, agricultural reform and urbanisation policy. Recognising agriculture as a key sector and a major driver of the structural transformation of Rwanda's economy, in 2005 the government embarked upon the implementation of its ambitious Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation (MINAGRI 2009), which includes policies on land consolidation and regional crop specialisation, and is underpinned by a land-law reform to encourage individuals and corporations to increase their investments in land. This reform is driven by the desire to intensify, modernise and commercialise agriculture, while simultaneously tackling land scarcity and fragmentation – at the expense of subsistence farming: the plan is to reduce the proportion of the population relying on agriculture from 90% in 2000 to 50% in 2020 (MINECOFIN 2000). This radical restructuring of the agricultural sector has been extensively studied from different angles (Pritchard 2013; Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2014), including its effects on the lives of peasants and their livelihoods (Musahara and Huggins 2004; Huggins 2009, 2014; Ansoms 2008, 2009, 2011). Studies show how, rather than responding to demands from below, these agricultural reforms are top-down, representing the ambitions of a ruling elite of highly educated urbanites who have lost touch with the countryside. So far, economic progress has been particularly limited in rural areas, where the real benefits of economic growth remain concentrated in the hands of a small class of agricultural entrepreneurs (Ansons 2013b).

The present research, however, looked at the urbanisation side of the process of rural transformation. The following excerpt from the keynote speech on sustainable urbanisation that Rwanda's president, Paul Kagame, gave at the UN Economic and Social Council meeting in May

¹¹ For more information on old and new caseload refugees see chapter 5.

¹² In 2006, this led to a full administrative restructuring of the country – a territorial reform that renamed and redrew the boundaries of provinces, districts, sectors and cells, and introduced a new administrative structure below the cell, namely *imidugudu*, the term that is also used for the villagisation policy (Ingelaere 2011).

2014, illustrates that urbanisation is seen as the driving force for economic and sustainable development.

Urbanization can help reduce poverty, sustainably, in ways that handouts never can. Growth without planned urbanization, in contrast, is a recipe for soaring inequality. [...] The issue is whether we manage it in such a way that we obtain, together with our citizens, the maximum benefits possible. [...] In addition, twenty years after a genocide that destroyed Rwanda’s social fabric, urbanization is part and parcel of our rebuilding and unity and reconciliation efforts. Rwanda’s most recent national development agenda gives high importance to organised settlement – from rural market centres to small towns and larger urban areas [...].

The aim is to achieve sustainable economic growth, whereby urban areas are centres of innovation and entrepreneurship and sources of socioeconomic services and opportunities. In this rapid demographic shift from rural to urban, ambitious urban management and planning policies have become the government’s central concerns. Before 2000, the management or planning of cities had not been addressed in Rwanda. Since then, however, a whole new framework of policies and new legislation enforcing urban order is now a priority (Goodfellow 2014). Urbanisation has thus become a planned and controlled process, strongly based on the Singaporean model. One of the most well-known and perhaps improbable examples of this new genre of urban plans is the master plan for Kigali, Rwanda’s capital. Urbanisation is also related to the ideal of modernisation and progress, including the incorporation of rural sites into the urban sphere. Its current urban trajectory emphasises the achievement of a harmonised hierarchical nationwide network (see Figure 1.1) of urban and rural centres that provide services and attract economic activities. Secondary cities, district centres and selected rural service centres are to become active development nodes. Within this framework, investments will be channelled into urban infrastructure and planning to accommodate urban growth in these specific settlements. Rural settlements will be upgraded and become integrated villages that will eventually form mixed-use trading centres and growth nodes that are part of the urban network.

Figure 1.1 Rwanda’s urban hierarchy (MININFRA 2013)¹³



¹³ This hierarchy is further explained in Chapter 3: *Conforming with the urban ideal? ‘New urbanites’ in Rwanda’s emerging towns.*

Small towns are central to the government's aim to transform the country's economic geography (MININFRA 2013). The majority of Rwanda's population still live in the countryside and depend on subsistence farming, and to absorb the labour surplus of people moving out of agriculture, small towns and rural service centres will function as bases for the development of an off-farm sector that can create the needed employment. Therefore, migration from the countryside is a movement explicitly sought by the government in order to achieve its target to accelerate urbanisation from 18.4% (2016/17) to 35% by 2024 (MINECOFIN 2017). People should be settled in urban areas, opening up the countryside to modern, large-scale farming. Also, in Vision 2050 an important priority is to develop modern infrastructure and livelihoods, which will be achieved in 'smart' cities and towns and in rural settlements.¹⁴

The phenomenon of migration is by no means new to Rwanda. The country's history is characterised by patterns of multiple displacements and voluntary mobility changing its social, cultural and economic landscapes. Various forms of both temporary and more permanent migratory movements, including displacement and enforced movements, have shaped and are still shaping life and livelihood trajectories in Rwandan society. Up to three million people were displaced both outside and inside the country following the 1994 genocide, and the 1996–98 civil war caused the displacement of many people in the northwest of the country. Regional differences within the country have always been important drivers of displacement, steering population movements in different directions. Rural-to-rural movements – the most common flow in the past – were motivated by the search for better land and more sustainable livelihoods. During colonial rule, migration took place towards smaller centres, and after independence these flows continued in the form of movements towards larger urban centres. This marked the beginning of increased movement from rural areas and intermediate cities towards Kigali. During the 1980s and 1990s, land shortages became a major challenge for the rural population (Charlery de la Masselière 1992, 1993; Cottyn et al. 2013). As a result, many households moved to less densely populated parts of the country as an alternative to continuous migration towards urban areas (Uwimbabazi and Lawrence 2011). According to the latest figures, 17% of the population now live in urban areas (World Bank 2018b). In recent years, urban-to-rural flows have also been noted. For example, Kosten (2013) reported that some Kigali residents retire to rural areas, while others are evicted from their homes in the city and relocate to surrounding rural regions. The latter is a consequence of increasing land prices and urban construction standards, as real estate investors are attracted by Kigali's rapid growth. The fourth Rwandan Population and Housing Census (NISR 2012) showed that urban areas were attracting the majority of the country's internal migrants. Important to note here is that this census only takes into account the stable stocks of migrants and does not measure patterns of temporary mobility, such as daily

¹⁴ The International Telecommunication Union defines a 'smart' city as: 'an innovative city that uses ICTs and other means to improve quality of life, efficiency of urban operation and services and competitiveness, while ensuring that it meets the needs of present and future generations with respect to economic, social and environmental aspects.' (Siba and Sow 2017).

commuting, which is believed to be a significant flow within the country. Today, mobility is still important and omnipresent in the lives and livelihoods of rural households in Rwanda.

Over the past decade, Rwanda's economic growth has been particularly impressive. Despite the potential for remarkable macroeconomic growth rates, a top-down developmentalist agenda often leaves little room for bottom-up mechanisms and rarely results in equitable trickle-down effects that benefit the poorest groups. Therefore, the visions as elaborated in Vision 2020 and now Vision 2050, which are underpinned by a developmentalist and modernisation ideology for both nation building and development, raise new questions concerning the makeability and/or plannability of society and development, and the inclusiveness of this development and growth. It has been widely acknowledged that the RPF's urban agenda has so far been disadvantageous to the poor, as have the policies steering the transformation of Rwanda's rural areas (Ansoms 2009; 2010b; Newbury 2011; Huggins 2012). Apart from macroeconomic analysis of the effects of these transformations, there is also a need to understand what interpretation is given to these transformations by the people affected, considering them as agents actively negotiating and shaping this newly emerging space. This dissertation makes an original contribution to the literature on Rwanda by explicitly focusing on the subaltern voices – voices that are often not heard in the bigger debates on rural transformation and urbanisation in Africa.

Research approach and methodology

The present research was part of the larger African Rural–City Connections (RurbanAfrica) research project, which was funded by the European Union under the 7th Research Framework Programme.¹⁵ The overall objective of the RurbanAfrica research was to explore the connections between rural transformations, mobility and urbanisation processes, and analyse how these contribute to an understanding of the scale, nature and location of poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. The research focused on four sub-Saharan African countries, namely Ghana, Cameroon, Rwanda and Tanzania. The aim of the present study, which was based on mixed-methods research conducted over 13 months of fieldwork in Rwanda, was to analyse the relations between small-town development, rural transformation and mobility, and how they manifest in the lives and livelihoods of rural Rwandans. While Rwandan households are caught up in the midst of processes of rural transformation, small towns are regarded as sites of opportunities for their socioeconomic improvement and the economic development of the country.

Rationale

To understand the role of small towns in the politics of urban management we should go back to its origins found in modernisation theory. As a model for development following different stages,

¹⁵ The RurbanAfrica consortium was a diverse and interdisciplinary group of institutions and researchers that built on well-established academic networks between the African and European partners. This project ran from April 2012 to March 2016, led by the University of Copenhagen. For more information: <http://rurbanfrica.ku.dk>.

it assumes the transition of developing countries from a traditional to a modern society (Rostow 1960). Concentrated in metropolitan centres, the benefits of development trickle down and spread across society. After these trickle-down effects neglected to manifest, the debate's focus moved to small towns as more appropriate spatial structures for economic growth. At the end of the 1970s, the role of small and intermediate centres thus entered the debate. The first dominant model was the growth pole theory as described by Perroux (1952) and Boudeville (1966), characterised by a strong top-down approach. This was followed with a plea for more bottom-up approaches (Stohr and Taylor 1981) and discussions on the nature of rural-urban interactions (Baker 1990). Policy makers and regional planners identified the main functions and benefits of small towns as instruments for modernisation and rural development: the de-concentration of urbanisation, increased access to basic social services and infrastructure to trigger the emergence of a local, off-farm sector as well as strengthening rural-urban linkages to enhance livelihoods and poverty reduction. Amongst academics, opinions are more divided on their contribution to the spread of modernisation and the impacts on regional development. Based on findings in a selected number of regions, Titus and Hinderink (2002) challenge the more optimistic assumptions by pointing out the inherent weakness of small town production and servicing functions, which seem not to be geared to the needs of the rural and urban lower income masses. They also point to the impact and relevance of the political economic structures guiding the role of and dynamics within small towns.

In many developing countries, a modernist approach to urban development is still prevalent. Associated with 'being modern' and a certain interpretation of development itself, it often leads to the rather coercive promotion of an urban ideal. Urban planning, or master planning, is then strongly linked to that idea as sets of policies, agendas, designs and strategies towards both the spatial and social reconfiguration of urban spaces (Watson 2009). While the image of urban and regional planning in Africa often prevails as disengaged, technical and apolitical, they are, as systems, inserted into particular political and institutional contexts and shaped by these (Tait and Jensen 2007; Watson and Agbola 2013). Watson (2009) explains how such plans aim to control rather than promote development; as grand visions of modernity are pursued, inequalities are often enforced that lead to the social and spatial marginalisation and exclusion of the poorer segments in society in particular. It is therefore important to understand and acknowledge the particular context of politics, economy and society that underpins and drives the development of such plans and policies as well as the dynamics of change taking place in urban centres.

Considering its central place in the rural–urban hierarchy, the development of small towns stands central to the processes of rural transformation as well. Policies of urbanisation and rural transformation entail a re-engineering of space and a reconfiguring of the livelihoods of both urban and rural households and individuals. The sharp economic, social, and cultural differences between rural and urban are gradually blurred which is expressed in different dimensions and manifestations (Ilbery 1998; Berdegué, Rosada, and Bebbington 2014). One way this is manifested is through different flows of people, goods, money, information, and patterns of

occupational diversification which affects the scope and nature of the linkages between towns and the countryside (Tacoli 2002; Tacoli and Vorley 2015). While both rural and urban households use different strategies and coping mechanisms to navigate through this space, not everyone can profit equally from its benefits. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, individuals and households straddle the rural-urban divide in the construction of their livelihoods (Agergaard and Ortenbjerg 2017). Rural-urban connections are therefore becoming increasingly complex which demands a better understanding of the impact on changing livelihoods both in rural and urban areas. This justifies the need to look at how different socio-economic, gender and generational groups – in both rural and urban areas – navigate and shape the changing rural-urban interface as a consequence of the policies guiding urbanisation and rural transformation.

Research questions

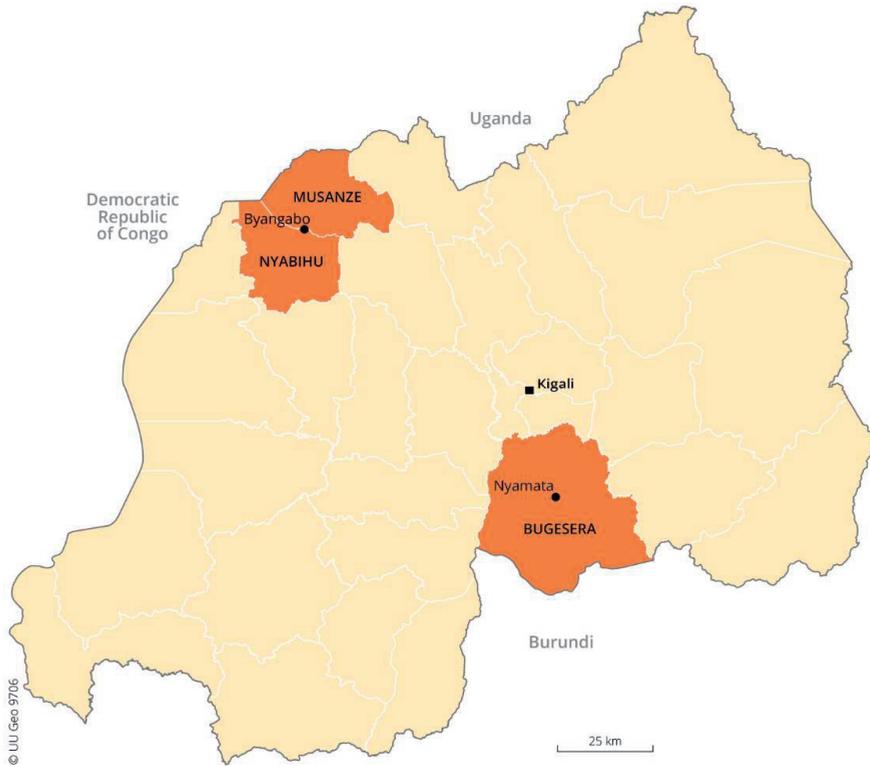
The central question was: *How can small towns provide rural people with new opportunities for livelihood improvement, and what does this mean for Rwanda's urban future?*

To address this question, five sub-questions were formulated; each is answered in the individual chapters of this dissertation.

- 1) *What are the characteristics of Rwanda's post-conflict urbanisation policy and the particularities of small-town development?*
- 2) *What are the consequences for people in the urban centres and how can new urbanites benefit?*
- 3) *Who are the people 'left behind' and what are the implications in terms of rural transformation?*
- 4) *What is the importance of 'mobilities' in shaping rural-urban livelihoods?*
- 5) *Looking at future generations: What are the ambitions of young Rwandan women and men and how do they negotiate their place in Rwanda's urbanising society?*

Research locations

Figure 1.2 Research districts



The first part of the research was conducted in Nyabihu and Musanze districts, in the northwest of Rwanda. This area was selected because of the different dynamics at play in terms of demographics and mobility patterns, agricultural transformations and options for economic diversification. The northwest of Rwanda is the country's most densely populated region (556–695 inhabitants per km²). Since the introduction of the villagisation policy (*imidugudu*), 80% of the total population have been resettled in grouped settlements. Some villages along the main road that connects the cities of Gisenyi and Musanze and links the area to the wider East African trade corridor, have been selected to become local development nodes. In consultation with the experts of a local research counterpart, four villages in this region in different places on the rural–urban continuum, in terms of function and accessibility, were selected for the present research. Within each district, two sites were selected, namely one rural trade centre and one more remote village.

In the second part of the research, the focus was on the development of two small towns. One had been selected during the first period of fieldwork; the second was selected because of its different position in Rwanda's rural–urban hierarchy.

This first small town is a prioritised trading centre in the district of Musanze. The centre is located along the Rubavu–Musanze road, which is part of an important regional trade corridor. Agriculture is the most important economic sector, as many of the local households strongly depend on it for their livelihoods; in addition, there is also small-scale entrepreneurship focused on the marketing of agricultural produce. In 2012, the population density of the sector in which the town is located was 893 inhabitants per km². In the same year, the population of the centre was estimated at 6,315 inhabitants. During the 1994 genocide, many local residents fled to DR Congo to seek refuge, and returned to their homes in later years. Since 1999, the centre has mainly undergone natural growth due to its function as a biweekly market town. ‘Le plan d’aménagement local du center de négoce Byangabo’ was drawn up in 2013, providing the documents that guide the further planning and development of the trading centre for the period 2013–28 (District of Musanze 2012). The District Development Plan ‘assigned’ urban status to this trade centre. It is thought that implementation of the plan will lead to new patterns of in-migration, which in the most optimistic scenario will lead to an estimated population increase from 6,315 inhabitants in 2012 to 17,423 by 2028. The plan further includes the selection of extension areas for both commercial and residential use. Parcels of 600 m² (20 x 30 m) will be created as standard residential plots for the anticipated medium-cost housing that is recommended for such centres.¹⁶ According to the plan, in the long term some 231 ha will have to be added to the urban area to provide all households with a standard residential plot.

The second town is Nyamata, the district capital of Bugesera. It is a rapidly developing nodal town about 35 km south of Kigali. The district has a rather low population density of 280 inhabitants per km². The southern districts suffered a great loss of human life during the genocide (linked to the high proportion of Tutsi amongst the population at the time, a result of their resettlement following the 1959–61 revolution) and the years immediately after the genocide, when the level of security was very low. New settlers began to be drawn to the area again only after 1998, when security started to improve. Nyamata sector is now estimated to have around 30,000 inhabitants, while the urban centre, which consists of 13 villages, had 8,899 inhabitants in 2015 (cell coordinator in Nyamata, interviewed by author 2015). The government plans to implement large infrastructural and economic development projects in Bugesera District, including a proposed new international airport and a provincial industrial park. These planned developments, the town’s location close to Kigali and the completion in 2007/8 of the asphalt road crossing the district to Burundi has attracted new residents. To guide this process of urban growth, a new local urban development plan for Nyamata town, which includes a layout plan for the incorporation of three surrounding sectors into the urban sphere, was drawn up (Gistech Consultants Ltd. 2013).¹⁷

¹⁶ The development of a suitable and modern physical infrastructure is one of the key pillars of Vision 2020 – a pillar that the Rwandan Housing Policy is materialising. The policy prescribes model designs for high-, medium- and low-cost housing (MININFRA 2010).

¹⁷ In 2006, the RPF government introduced a territorial reform that abolished the old administrative structure and replaced it with a new one. The number of provinces was reduced to five (including the city of Kigali), and now 30 districts (*Akarere*) make up the basic political-administrative unit. Districts are divided into sectors (*Umurenge*), which are

Figures 1.3. and 1.4 Local trade centres



Data collection

While part of the data collection for this dissertation took place under the framework of the RurbanAfrica project, an own methodology was designed for this study, as further explained in the section below. Empirical data were collected during two 6-month periods of fieldwork in 2014 and 2015. In 2014, the focus was on the four locations in the northwest region of Rwanda, while in 2015 the two small towns were central to the fieldwork. In this section, an overview is given of the research approach and methods used.

subdivided into cells (*Akagali*). Below the cell, the village (*Umudugudu*) was introduced as a new administrative entity (Ingelaere 2011).

Table 1.1 Overview of quantitative and qualitative data collection

		Northwest (Nyabihu and Musanze Districts)	Nyamata (Bugesera District)	Total
Quantitative				
No of rural households surveyed		86	–	86
No of SMEs surveyed in small towns		60	127	187
Qualitative				
Focus group discussions (FGDs)¹⁸	Heads of households (no. of FGDs)	8	4	12
	Youths (no. of FGDs)	5	2	7
No of livelihood–mobility histories conducted with heads of households		49	11	60
No of interviews with youths		5	5	10

Data were collected through both quantitative and qualitative methods. In the first phase of the research, a rural household survey was conducted in the research locations in the northwest of the country. Eighty-six households were randomly selected to participate in the survey, which was used to obtain baseline data on local households' characteristics, daily activities, farming practices, non-farm employment and mobility (see Appendix 1). The data thus obtained were subjected to SPSS basic statistical analysis, while the answers to the open-ended questions were analysed in a qualitative interpretive way. The rural household survey served as a baseline study for the qualitative data that were collected on rural livelihood transformation and mobility.

In the four research locations in Nyabihu and Musanze districts, the qualitative phase of the fieldwork started with the organisation of three focus group discussions (FGDs) in each of the research locations, namely one with female heads of households, one with male heads of households and one with youths. The participants were selected from the rural household survey based on their generation, gender and socioeconomic status, with the addition of new, randomly selected respondents. In selecting the youths, we used the official Rwandan definition of 'youth' as persons aged between 16 and 30 years.¹⁹ It was decided not to include married men and women in this age range, following cultural and societal understandings of youth in Rwanda. FGDs were used to ascertain the community's perspective on processes of change and to explore the meaning of some of the survey findings. The participants were asked to reflect on processes of rural change and the relation of such change to mobility and migration. Specific attention was paid to the major mobility patterns in and outside their villages and how these relate to recent social, economic and spatial transformations. When talking with youths, a conversation was

¹⁸ A total of 156 respondents participated in the FGDs (59 female heads of households, 35 male heads of households and 62 youths).

¹⁹ By November 2015, the government of Rwanda had officially changed the definition of 'youth' from people aged 14–35 years to people aged 16–30 years (National Youth Council 2015).

initiated on the changes young people were experiencing and how those changes affected their lives. Their place in society was explored in relation to other generational categories and the local community of which they were part. The participants were asked to draw individual mobility maps, indicating the various places and activities included in their daily lives over a one-week period. This complementary tool was introduced to help understand and visualise the respondents' perceptions of movement patterns and the reasons for them. The analysis of this tool is discussed in Chapter 6. While the FGDs formed the main basis for the analysis presented in Chapter 6, 10 individual interviews were conducted with youths selected from the focus groups, to gain a more in-depth understanding of their mobility practices and experiences.

Figure 1.5 Drawing community mobility maps during FGDs



Forty-nine households were selected from both the survey and the focus groups to conduct livelihood–mobility histories. This method is an adaptation of the classic life history, but with a specific focus on how the livelihoods of the households have changed over time in terms of activities and mobilities. A life history approach has proven to be a fitting method when social change and social mobility are under investigation, and the impact of political and economic change or development on the lives of individuals and households is investigated (Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Ingelaere 2014). The approach explores people's decisions across different geographical, historical, socioeconomic and temporal contexts and focusses on matters of access and power relations. This methodology is particularly relevant when studying the dynamic character of people's livelihood trajectories and mobility narratives by considering both social and geographical mobility. It allows for the analysis of livelihoods beyond one specific location. During the interviews, mobility maps were drawn depicting the most important mobility patterns of each member of the household (see Figure 1.3). In each case, the map shows whether the

In the second fieldwork period (2015), data collection was done in two small towns in Musanze and Nyamata districts. In both towns, the owners of SMEs completed questionnaires concerning their businesses, including their perceptions of the business environment in their particular towns (see Appendix 2); 60 questionnaires were completed in Byangabo, 127 in Nyamata. FGDs were conducted with men, women and youths on the dynamics of change and modernisation that have been at play in the towns, as well as their implications for the households affected. Through social mapping, the social structure and institutions in the area were made visible, while a timeline was drawn of important events and changes and their consequences for the area. This first exercise was an entry point for discussions on the inclusive and exclusive nature of the urban developments at play, perceptions of wealth differences and inequalities in the community, and the future of the areas in which people lived, including the place of the next generation (youth). Livelihood–mobility histories with local households and interviews with youths were also conducted.

Reflection on fieldwork and data collection experiences

As several researchers have observed (see e.g. Thomson 2010; Thomson, Ansoms and Murison 2013; Ingelaere 2007, 2015) and as Ansoms (2013a: 45) accurately articulated: ‘Doing research in Rwanda is somehow comparable with operating in a minefield’. Conducting fieldwork in Rwanda can be a tedious operation starting from acquiring the right permits, dealing with authorities at every level, getting close to people’s everyday experiences, and protecting both yourself and your respondents from potential risks. I therefore deem it necessary to place the research and data collection in a broader context and reflect more upon doing research in the highly politicised setting that is Rwanda; upon how to present a bottom-up perspective and go beyond ‘politically correct’ and ‘socially desirable’ answers by respondents in a context where a strong government narrative dominates; and on my position as a researcher in the field.

Working ‘with’ authorities

Before I could even go to my research locations, I had to struggle through the paperwork and bureaucracy related to acquiring a research permit in Rwanda. To say that researchers are not overly welcome in Rwanda is an understatement: the government aims to keep a high degree of control over the topics that can and cannot be researched and, as part of both the permit application and the permit extension process, research locations and even crude data must be provided. Refusal to work through the government or stick to government-approved topics has on several occasions led to the closure of research projects and even the deportation of the researcher – I know of several examples through personal conversations with other researchers, and also Thomson (2010) described this.

The degree of social control is high in local communities and there were always local people informing authorities about my presence and asking whether they had their permission

to talk to me. I therefore opted to obtain all necessary permits and get the required signatures at all levels of authority from the national through the district to the local level. I chose this open approach since the consequences of not having a permit could have meant the end of my research in Rwanda and possibly affected the position of my research assistants within Rwandan society. I took great care to ensure that all relevant authorities were aware of my presence in the field and of my permissions, and I made them feel involved by discussing my research topic, though in vague terms. I managed to gain their trust so they would let me do my work in the field uninterrupted and unsupervised. One way I managed to do so was by sharing intermediate analyses based on anonymised data and maps I had made of the area, which they themselves at the local level did not have access to. At the same time, however, this required extra effort to reach a level of openness during FGDs and interviews. As Ingelaere (2007: 12) described, and I encountered in the field: ‘Direct questions of this kind by foreign researchers are not only “unwanted” by the Rwandan political establishment and administrative authorities, they would also mainly trigger “politically correct” answers by respondents.’

Beyond the public transcript

The ways in which the identity of a researcher and the research project itself are codified and interpreted by various actors at the local level, ultimately determines the kind of information people are willing to share (Ansoms 2013a). In a country like Rwanda, where getting people to speak openly is not a given, not every interview or FGD delivered the same level of depth and openness, which depended on the respondents. However, in a context where the government exercises a great deal of control over political and social discourses, as well as what people can and cannot say about its policies, I considered it important to gain an understanding of the bottom-up perspective and people’s real everyday experiences. In order to do so, a long-term engagement with research subjects and research sites is crucial to build the necessary rapport and trust. For several months at a time I spent whole days and even weeks in the research locations, sometimes staying at a local hostel or renting a room for continuity, so that people would become used to seeing me every day. Revisiting households and people on several occasions (also outside interviews or focus groups) and giving them space to ask me questions or discuss topics of their interest, allowed people to increasingly speak more openly about the issues that concerned them and dare to more critically engage with the topics of discussion. This was invaluable, especially when it came to discussing the different government policies that affected their daily lives, such as agricultural policies, urbanisation policies, etc. I must mention here that my local research assistants were very helpful in translating not only the literal words spoken by my respondents but also reading between the lines, as well creating a relationship of trust with them. As the months went by, I could clearly see that trust had been built, as people began to talk more openly about their experiences rather than sticking to the public transcript. In the small towns where I conducted my research, people would approach me personally after an FGD, saying that they wanted to further explain or nuance what had been said or to share the

story of their own struggles. While researchers are often unable to control the image that a local population has of their presence, it appeared to me that the time I spent in the field changed the image that existed of me as a researcher amongst the local community. At the same time, the process of building trust in combination with the stories people shared of their everyday struggles left a deep impression on me both as a person and as a researcher.

Methodological challenges and positionality

To manage fieldwork challenges, the concerns above were considered in the research design from the very beginning. I took a multi-method approach whereby different research tools are used during different research phases and multiple field visits. As a result, many of the respondents participated throughout the various stages of the research; this not only built rapport between myself and the respondents but also created ample opportunities for data triangulation. In many cases, every specific methodology applied lifted an extra layer of the veil. During the first phase of fieldwork, I used a long survey with random sampling, a method of research local Rwandans are very familiar with because the government conducts a Population and Housing Census every four years. Although this method was understood and many had previously participated, this method posed different challenges especially in terms of participant understanding and interpretation of the position and identity of the researcher. First, many participants associated me with a government employee conducting a national survey or as a representative of an NGO making an inventory for a new development program. Many questions related to household assets, livelihood activities, and income and agricultural assets which says something about their socio-economic status and wellbeing. However, to be able to benefit from social and development programs such as 'one cow per family' or *mutuel de santé*, households are classified into different categories based on either income/consumption or household assets (Ubudehe categories). This incentivised many respondents to participate, however, it also compelled some to hide assets and lie about wellbeing in the survey in hopes of benefitting from the program my research was going to inform. To prevent a participation bias influenced by these dynamics, we applied a pre-determined random sampling method where the survey was administered at every fifth household along the streets. This first phase started with a lot of trial and error in order to find a way to inform people about my intentions, the purpose of the research and getting accurate information. As a result, some of the first surveys never made it through the final quality assurance check. Second, this phase also proved valuable toward passing the first vetting process of the local population and some authorities about my intentions. Spending many days walking through those towns and villages with my survey, people became used to having me around, participating in daily life in the village, and making small talk. At the same time, it also provided me with helpful insights into the power dynamics and issues at play in the different research locations.

The second phase of the research involved qualitative methods and therefore more active engagement. Respondents talked about their lives through livelihood histories, drew up

household mobility maps and participated in focus group discussions. As a consequence, participants were in charge of leading the discussion towards issues they perceived were at stake in the changing environment they lived in. The open-ended questions and semi-structured focus groups were set up in such a way so that negative expressions of the processes of changes induced by policies of rural transformation and urbanisation were not unduly provoked. Such a confrontational approach would not work in a context where people are careful to avoid open criticisms of the government or government policies and where people are especially cautious towards alleged ‘spies’ who are the eyes and ears of the regime. Rather, these methods aimed to find out how the dynamics of change were experienced at the local level and how these rural and urban households navigated their way through this changing space to unveil the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. While a certain amount of caution remained present for some, my returning presence and increasing familiarity with many of my respondents slowly peeled away the levels of distrust. A growing familiarity made people express their grievances more openly, sometimes involving statements of resentment revealing some hidden transcripts (Scott 1990). In the repressive context of Rwanda, ethical considerations were extremely important; ensuring participant welfare based upon the principle of informed consent and voluntary participation, while confidentiality and ensuring the anonymity of the respondents, was crucial to avoid harm during data collection as well as in the presentation of the findings. The identities of the respondents and research participants are known to the researcher, but in this dissertation all names have been changed.

Structure of this dissertation

This dissertation is based on five articles that discuss the relations between small-town development, rural transformation and mobility, and how these relations are manifested in the lives and livelihoods of rural Rwandans. Three of the articles have been published in peer-reviewed journals, one is under revision and another has been submitted.

Chapter 2 – *Small towns and rural growth centres as strategic spaces of control in Rwanda’s post-conflict trajectory* – illustrates how an ideal of modern urbanism is sought through policies that entail both spatial and economic reconfigurations. It analyses the politics of urbanisation in the post-conflict context of Rwandan society and the significance of rapidly growing small towns as part of the urban agenda. The chapter provides the policy context in which urbanisation is taking place in Rwanda, highlighting the issue of urban planning in debates on post-conflict reconstruction. With a central focus on the promotion of planned and controlled urbanisation as the driving force for its post-conflict development agenda, the process of urban governance is crucial to the regime’s pursuit of security, control and legitimacy. Presenting small towns and rural growth centres as strategic spaces of control, the chapter argues how the process of rural urbanisation in Rwanda can be understood as a potentially contested arena of change.

The subsequent chapters analyse the processes of urbanisation and rural transformation from the perspective of the affected population and explore what these dynamics mean for the people on the ground. They investigate how this space is created not only by policy and the state's coercive implementation, but also by the agency of both rural and urban actors.

Chapter 3 – *Conforming with the urban ideal? 'New urbanites' in Rwanda's emerging towns* – takes a look at the urban side of this story, taking a bottom-up approach regarding the households on 'the urban margins' that are trying to make it in Rwanda's emerging towns. The Rwandan government is taking a very directive approach to the process of urbanisation, based on an urban model that is strongly influenced by modernist discourses and guided by neoliberal policies. Its pursuit of an ideal of 'modern urbanity' in rapidly growing small towns implies an ideal type of modern urbanite; however, not everyone fits this ideal. Nevertheless, it is the practices of these people that constitute and define the flexible and mobile nature of the lived reality of small-town life that forms an essential part of urbanisation and small-town development today.

Urbanisation can no longer be considered the outcome of a unidirectional movement from rural to urban areas: it is shaped by a chain of connections in which rural and urban livelihoods interact on a movement continuum in which small towns have become an important reference point (Steel et al. 2019). Since I was looking at the implications for both rural and urban households, Chapter 4 – *Making a living between places: The role of mobility in livelihood practices in rural Rwanda* – concerns the experience of rural households, who in this context of rapid urbanisation are often regarded as 'left behind' with regard to these dynamics of change. This chapter responds to the need to pay attention to rural areas in order to understand current urbanisation and to do justice to the reality of those African households that are caught between processes of urbanisation and rural transformation. It considers the impact that the government's transformative policies to reconfigure the rural space and economy has had on rural livelihoods, and on mobility patterns in particular, and shows that in response to these processes of change, more and more rural households are complementing agricultural activities with off-farm activities and multi-locality. While rural–urban migration is often emphasised as the main response to rural transformation, other forms of mobility, such as commuting and temporary and circular migration, are overlooked. The dynamics of change do not benefit everyone equally and do not necessarily result in people escaping poverty, so who are the winners and losers from these transformations?

Chapter 5 – *Livelihood trajectories in a context of repeated displacement: Empirical evidence from Rwanda* – places the current mobility patterns described in Chapter 4 in the broader perspective of Rwanda's post-conflict reality. Due to the country's violent past, the life trajectories of many Rwandans are characterised by different mobilities, for example multiple experiences of displacement and involuntary migration. The aim of this chapter is to give agency to the experience and practice of mobility today by taking a look at its constellations in the past. The chapter presents an analysis of the effects of repeated displacement on the livelihoods and

adaptive capacity of households in Rwanda, based on empirical evidence from a case study in Rwanda's northwest region.

Chapter 6 – *Rural youth navigating Rwanda's changing countryside* – presents an analysis of how rural youth are navigating Rwanda's changing society, thus providing a view from below. A large cohort of unemployed or underemployed youth is generally perceived as a threat to economic development, and also as leading to political instability. Many youths in Rwanda are 'stuck' in a non-adult state since they cannot attain the markers of social adulthood. Contrary to the persistent image of a rural youth exodus, however, many young people remain 'at home' in the countryside. Engaging in a multitude of circular movements with different spatial and temporal patterns connecting them to both rural and urban locations, forms a core aspect of their search for sustainable livelihoods and potential pathways out of poverty.

The final chapter (Chapter 7) discusses the most important findings and conclusions of the research and reflects upon the main research question. As well presenting a synthesis of the main findings, the conclusion discusses the implications for Rwanda's urban future and what the pursuit of an ideal of 'modern' urbanism means in terms of inclusive and sustainable development.

Brief note on the structure of this dissertation

Each chapter is connected to the overarching theme of the PhD project, but also stands on its own. As a result, the chapters in this dissertation do not have an overarching conceptual framework. Instead, each refers to the literature that is relevant to the particular topic looked at in the chapter. Likewise, the chapters do not share a single methodology.

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Chapter 2

Small towns and rural growth centres as strategic spaces of control in Rwanda's post-conflict trajectory

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Introduction

Many African countries have undergone spectacular urban growth in the wake of war or violent conflict, which has led to cities taking centre stage in discourses on post-conflict reconstruction. The intersection between the city, conflict and the state is particularly important as cities are increasingly crucial arenas of post-conflict political engagement and state building (Moxham 2008; Badiey and Doll 2018; Mathys and Büscher 2018).²⁰ In responding to and reducing conflict, cities have the potential to become symbols of progress, opportunity and state presence, making urbanisation a mechanism and strategy of power, control and legitimacy of the state (Yiftachel 1998; Esser 2009; Goodfellow and Smith 2013). Brenner (2004) also reflected upon the spatial articulation of state power, arguing that subnational units such as urban regions can represent strategic arenas of state spatiality, with processes of urban governance serving as a key mechanism in the rescaling of state space. Goodfellow (2013) went further in describing cities as the spatial embodiment of state power. It is the city-specific factors – land, real estate and the city as a site of developmental progress and prestige – that form the main source of power. Because urban areas are strategic political locations in post-conflict societies, gaining and retaining control over them is a critical concern of post-conflict states, which in turn draws attention to the role of urban governance in the process of post-conflict transition. Here, urban governance refers to both the legal and the administrative framework for ‘managing’ the policies related to urbanisation as well as the organisation of urban public service provision beyond the framework of the state (Büscher 2018). In essence, it deals with the power relationships among different actors and stakeholders in cities (Devas 2004; Lindell 2008).

The Rwandan case exemplifies the processes by which the state tries to capitalise on the potential that cities can offer as spaces to overcome conflict, and as symbols of progress, stability and state presence (Goodfellow and Smith 2013). Twenty-one years after the devastating genocide, urbanisation is an important strategy of the government in rebuilding and reconstructing the country. In its commitment to restore order and safety, the government has a top-down developmentalist agenda with large-scale forms of social engineering, of which the spatial reconfiguration of society forms a central part. In its commitment to restore order and safety, the government is managing its urban trajectory through rigid master planning, functioning as a crucial strategy of the regime’s aim to achieve control, power, legitimacy and security.

In debates on urbanisation and post-conflict reconstruction, the focus tends to be on major cities, disregarding the small towns and emerging urban centres that absorb most of the urban growth in Africa (Satterthwaite 2006; Satterthwaite and Tacoli 2006). In Rwanda, attention has largely been paid to Kigali and its remarkable transformation into a post-conflict ‘model’ city (Beall, Goodfellow, and Rodgers 2011; Goodfellow and Smith 2013; Beall and Goodfellow 2014). However, between 2002 and 2012, Rwanda experienced its highest urban growth, largely due

²⁰ Here, state building is defined as the ‘inter-related processes of building political legitimacy, guarantee economic growth and control’.

to the emergence and development of urban settlements of fewer than 30,000 inhabitants. According to the 2012 census, Rwanda's urban population was distributed over 64 settlements, with 65% of this urban population spread over settlements of fewer than 10,000 inhabitants (Möhlman and Gibert 2015: 6). The dynamics at play in these urbanising rural centres have hardly been addressed, even though these often very dynamic and hybrid peri-urban (or 'rurban') spaces can be considered critical resources in the process of post-conflict reconstruction. Being 'in the periphery of the centre yet at the centre of the periphery' (Büscher 2011), small towns draw both regional and national attention by challenging the urban hierarchy and recomposing the urban landscape (see also Piermay 1997; Satterthwaite and Tacoli 2006). This chapter investigates the politics of urbanisation in rapidly growing small towns in post-genocide Rwanda by analysing two specific cases of emerging urban centres. Presenting small towns and rural growth centres as strategic spaces of control, the chapter argues that the process of rural urbanisation in Rwanda can be understood as a potentially contested arena of change. In this, the chapter highlights the issue of urban planning in debates on post-conflict reconstruction. Urban planning is about more than governing urban growth and urban security: it is, I argue, also an important strategy or tool in the pursuit of state legitimacy and the retention of state control after conflict (Beall and Fox 2011). The chapter also shows how the process of urbanisation in itself can become a crucial feature in shaping post-conflict reconstruction. The findings presented in this chapter are based on data collected during two periods of fieldwork in 2014 and 2015 in two small Rwandan towns. Data were obtained through both qualitative and quantitative methods, including FGDs, livelihood–mobility histories and a survey.

Urban planning: managing security, control and state legitimacy

Although conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa are perceived to be mainly rural based, they have also transformed cities and towns (Beall and Goodfellow 2014). This complex relation and dynamic interaction between urbanisation and conflict is often not recognised and there is a need for scholars to bring these two dynamics together.

Whereas cities are major targets during warfare, they are also spaces of refuge both during and after conflict, and rapid urban growth often continues after conflict. When states are unable or unwilling to provide urban security or deliver the necessary urban services, this has implications for renewed violence or civic unrest (Beall, Goodfellow and Rodgers 2011). Even though scholars and policymakers alike have long looked with great pessimism at the process of urbanisation, reinforcing the assumption that African cities are hubs of conflict and insecurity, more and more researchers and governments are exploring the potentially positive role of urban areas in relation to post-conflict reconstruction (Brenner 2004; Beall and Fox 2011). Given their symbolic and key place in post-conflict transition, cities and city governance offer an opportunity as new 'state spaces' (Esser 2009). Because urban spaces are political locations in post-conflict settings that are critical to the promotion of development, modernity and state legitimacy, controlling them is crucial.

In the last decade, under the guidance of UN-Habitat, spatial planning has been put back on the agenda as a crucial tool in post-conflict areas to help reintegrate displaced communities into cities (Watson 2009). To cope with the negative manifestations of urbanisation and shape safe and inclusive urban settlements, a stronger role for the state was suggested through urban planning as a central tool for governing this process (Watson 2009; Beall and Fox 2011; UN-Habitat 2015). Urban planning, or master planning, is the set of policies, agendas, designs and strategies for both the social and the physical form of urban development (Watson 2009). Together with modernist development regulations, they form what Neuman (1998) called 'urban development control'. Although it can bring about positive outcomes, urban planning can be viewed as a double-edged sword (Yiftachel 1998; Watson 2009). More than governing solely growth, urban and regional planning are also important strategies of oppression, control and the pursuit of state legitimacy.

The urbanisation process itself, with its spatial and administrative techniques of planning, appropriation, location and relocation, is a crucial political mechanism that is applied in times of both conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. Processes of urbanisation in Uganda, South Sudan and Rwanda demonstrate how the territorial politics of spatial control are not only used by, for example, armed groups in their strategies of power; they are also reproduced in post-conflict periods by regimes in order to establish their legitimacy and control (Badiey and Doll 2018).

Rwanda's post-conflict state building

Although discussions on post-conflict reconstruction and state building in sub-Saharan Africa typically refer to the weakness of the state or its inability to extend its authority, a counter to this generally held perspective is provided by Rwanda, where a strong coercive and security state has been central to the country's post-conflict recovery (Purdeková 2011; Straus and Waldorf 2011). While urban governance in African cities has often been described by scholars (e.g. Simone 2002 and Lindell 2008) as being extremely fragmented in the context of institutional pluralism, and as arenas of competing power groups, in Rwanda the central state takes a strong role in controlling the urban space.

After the 1994 genocide, which followed years of instability, Rwandan society was in complete disorder. Around 800,000 people had been killed and more than one million had been internally or externally displaced. This history of violence and conflict forms the basis for legitimising the belief of the current government (which is dominated by the Rwandan Patriotic Front; RPF) that a strong state is necessary for sustainable development and the maintenance of security. As the RPF is led by foreign-born returnees, it has little natural legitimacy to draw on among the Rwandan population (Goodfellow 2013: 16). The government's commitment to a tightly controlled development project forms the core of the state's constant desire to achieve security and legitimacy, using its developmental infrastructure to extend the state's reach and expand political control. Purdeková (2011: 475) described Rwanda as a strong state with various

apparatuses and mechanisms in place through which the central state power reaches the Rwandan people. The government's decentralisation policy, which was implemented in 2000 and followed six years later by a territorial reform, is argued to facilitate the deeper penetration of state power into society. There is a clear administrative hierarchy from the national level all the way down to the lowest administrative unit, the *Umudugudu* (village) that is governed through both direct and indirect mechanisms of control through a chainlike administrative system. Different strategies and mechanisms of control serve the government's aim to transform the basis of state power from power over society into an infrastructural power that runs throughout society (Purdeková 2011). A very visible way of demonstrating this is through urban development control.

Rwanda's politics of urbanisation

In the years following the genocide, urban security became a critical focal point for the new government, as annual urban population growth rates increased to as high as 17.5% as a consequence of the return of both new and old caseload refugees (Goodfellow 2013). The trend continues today but at a slower pace, with an annual urban population growth rate of 3.1% (World Bank 2018). Facing a vacuum of urban regulation, in the mid-2000s the Rwandan government adopted a series of policies and legal instruments aimed at governing urban development, focusing on urban land-use planning, land allocation and land transformation (Goodfellow 2014). Since then, urbanisation has become a process that is planned and controlled through rigid master planning, based on Western urban planning theory (Newbury 2011; MININFRA 2013). There are sets of binding policies for the development of local urban development plans (also called master plans) as blueprints directing the development of the main urban centre or urban priority areas in a district.

Rwanda's human settlement policy originated in the country's villagisation programme, a measure introduced in 1996 to provide shelter for returnees and to foster national security. Later, the policy was extended to cover all settlements to promote economic development and a more efficient use of land resources. This *Umujyi* policy envisions an urban order paralleling its broader social engineering goals (Newbury 2011; MINECOFIN 2013; MININFRA 2013; Möhlman and Gibert 2015).²¹ It emphasises achieving a hierarchical network of urban and rural centres, from the capital to six secondary cities, each connected to a chain of district centres and *Imidugudu*. A selection of these villages are clustered into market towns bringing people closer to infrastructure and services and stimulating the development of a non-farm sector. This administrative urbanisation of villages gives shape to patterns of peri-urbanisation (or rural urbanisation), creating hybrid spaces at the interface between town and country (Webster and Muller 2009). This 'urban' space has distinct characteristics where urban and rural uses mix and

²¹ Berlanda (2012) describes how traditionally the term *Umujyi* stood for more than a rather specific location, but was also used to refer to the different modes of life that represented the city and the countryside as two opposites. Today the word is used to refer to the city centre, or describe an area where economic activities are concentrated.

often clash (Mendras, Bauer and Roux 1976; Delgado-Campos, Ruiz and Naxhelli 2009). These places are shaped by the process of urbanisation both in a social sense – involving lifestyle adjustments for rural dwellers when they become absorbed into the urban sphere – and through more physical modifications, such as the conversion of agricultural land to urban areas (Seto, Parnell and Elmqvist 2013). It is here that these centres become potentially contested arenas of change, and at the same time strategic spaces of control.

Spatial reconfigurations: Land as a critical resource

Spatial processes are at the core of urbanisation. The implementation of local urban development plans entails a profound spatial reconfiguration of the targeted area. To govern these emerging and growing towns, the urbanisation agenda is underpinned by spatial mechanisms to control land allocation, such as zoning and land use regulations, policies on the aesthetic appearance of towns, settlement upgrading through housing standards, and services and infrastructural development. Land is a central issue when analysing the process of urbanisation in a post-conflict setting, certainly when it has historically been a vital aspect of identity and livelihoods (Büscher 2018).

In an evaluation of the consequences of the town development programme in Israel during the 1950s, Yiftachel (1998) elaborated four key dimensions of planning control, namely a territorial, a procedural, a socioeconomic and a cultural dimension. A territorial dimension is expressed through policies affecting the control over land, such as the aesthetic appearance of cities, zoning, land use and housing regulations. Together with policies to attract new investors and the play of market forces following the logic of real estate and land speculation, these are generally disadvantageous to low-income households, causing them to be forced out to less favourable locations (Durand-Lasserv 2007). Yiftachel showed the impacts of such spatial policies in areas seriously affected by inter-ethnic conflicts. Territory becomes a key resource for asserting ‘ethnic control’, a collective identity and economic superiority. The issue of land and land rights is also crucial in post-conflict urban planning in Rwanda, because inequitable distribution of land and tenure insecurity have been key drivers of conflict in Rwandan history and remain a sensitive issue along ethnic, intra-ethnic and class lines (Musahara and Huggins 2004: 273). After the conflict of 1959–63, land was employed as a political tool, as abandoned plots were redistributed to members of the political elite. Also after the 1994 genocide, the current ruling party understood the economic and the symbolic value of territorial development.

According to the Rwandan Organic Land Law, the right to land is granted by the state through emphyteutic leases or freehold titles (MINIJUST 2013).²² The latter are granted for specific projects and are strictly limited to the area of land necessary to support the authorised developments. The state is entitled to take back the land if the freeholder/leaseholder fails to

²² An emphyteutic lease is a type of real estate contract specifying that the lessee must improve the property by building on it. These sorts of leases are usually associated with government properties.

develop the land within five years in accordance with the function and construction standards assigned to it, or for purposes of public interest. As article 5 of the 2007 expropriation law stipulates, activities to implement land use and development master plans are included in the concept of public interest. This allows projects that actually serve the private interests of a small number of affluent individuals to qualify as acts of public interest (MINIJUST 2015). Expropriations in the public interest or justified for safety reasons are often considered a phenomenon intrinsic to the master plan, as illustrated by the following extract from the Nyamata master plan:

There will be displacement of some of the local communities from their current locations to other different locations when the [implementation of the local urban development plan] starts. The solution to this will be by first sensitizing the people that will be affected so that it is not a surprise to them. This will prepare them psychologically so that it will be easy to resettle them. There will also be compensations to those who will lose a lot of their property or want to go to their preferred areas. So, meetings together with the community leaders or authorities will be organized to come to an agreement with those who will be affected in advance (Gistech Consultants Ltd. 2013).

Although expropriation mainly affects the most vulnerable groups within the urban arena, it is justified under the banner of development. Its implications are further downplayed by claiming informed consent and the promise of compensation, when such is necessary. Although some people in the affected areas indicated that they had been informed about the plans, the fairness and the amount of compensation were hotly debated. In many cases, however, people were left in the dark about the amount of compensation they would receive, or they were given low quality land further away from basic services and infrastructure. In one case where a new road was to pass through people's lands and houses, compensation in the form of money and alternative lands was promised. When the construction was about to take off, however, people were told that they would receive compensation only once the project was finished (coordinator overseeing the administrative level of the cell, interviewed by author 2015). In both towns, officials and inhabitants alike often engaged in the narrative of mutual benefit when talking about being or becoming incorporated into the urban sphere and benefitting from the infrastructural improvements. Even though they were part of the integrated rural development plan, some public infrastructural works were partly financed with funds from the *Ubudehe* ('self-help' or 'mutual assistance') scheme and executed using *Umuganda* (mandatory community service) labour, and were strategically used to promote a sense of collective progress.²³ For example, electricity is connected at the level of the smallest administrative unit, paying the Water and Sanitation Corporation with a combination of *Ubudehe* money and contributions collected from the residents. Apart from the multiple levels and branches of government

²³ *Umuganda* in traditional Rwandan culture was the practice of calling upon family or friends to help out with a difficult task. Today it is a mandatory community service that takes place on the last Saturday of every month.

institutions, restored ‘traditional’ institutions are also internalised by the state when constituting public authority and political control. The Ubudehe scheme is one example of allocating small funds at the administrative level of the cell to be used for projects, usually public infrastructure projects, that need to be complemented with own resources. This is mostly in the form of Umuganda labour, which is also one of these ‘restored’ institutions. The practices of these institutions are interwoven into the urban planning agenda, bolstering social control and the replacement of rural with urban development ideology, drawing upon people’s sense of belonging and citizenship. Mann and Berry (2015: 10) further pointed at the government’s strategy of social spending, or ‘wealth sharing’, through policies such as *Girinka* (one cow per family) or free education, helping to legitimise state control by encouraging a sense of collective progress.

Controlling land use and the ideal of ‘modern urbanism’

The territorial dimension includes tools and policies for the spatial and economic reconfiguration of towns. The governing of emerging and growing urban areas relates to the production and commodification of space, propagated by spatial tools such as zoning and land-use plans, housing regulations and efforts to improve the aesthetic appearance (beautification) (MININFRA 2015). These tools are eagerly adopted by the middle, upper and commercial classes, as they adhere to the ideal of ‘modern urbanity’ by maintaining property prices and preventing the influx of less desirable low-income residents. The transformation towards this urban ideal involves a strong focus on the city’s aesthetic appeal; that is, it should be efficient, ordered and clean and accommodate certain types of buildings. Zoning plans divide the land use into monofunctional areas assigned to specific functions, such as residential, commercial, service or industrial use, and provide a clear picture of what can and cannot be developed on a particular plot. Residential areas are subdivided into sites of different standing. The development of a suitable and modern physical infrastructure is one of the key pillars of Vision 2020 and Vision 2050 – a pillar that the Rwandan Housing Policy is materialising. The policy prescribes model designs for high-, medium- and low-cost housing (Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

The construction costs of the houses shown in Figure 2.2 were estimated to be around RWF 24 million, which clearly presents a mismatch between these construction norms and standards and the pressing need for low- and medium-cost housing provision.²⁴ Many residents said they felt pressured to upgrade their homes according to the standards, and they feared what might happen if they could not comply (FGD 2015). Elisabeth, a 44-year-old single mother of three, settled in Nyamata after her land in Kigali was expropriated. The compensation she received was insufficient to buy another plot in the capital. She explained how the local authorities had recently informed her about the master plan for and extensions to Nyamata town. Her village would soon be incorporated into the urban area and she would have to upgrade her house in

²⁴ 24 million Rwandan francs equals around US\$ 26,165. From here on, monetary amounts are given in US\$, as calculated at the current exchange rate.

accordance with the standards set. As she did not have the means to do so, she feared having her land expropriated again. She had already heard stories about compensation not being paid out by the authorities, and she feared that she would have to move to an even more remote location and thus lose her access to electricity and other services and infrastructure. She would have to start again from scratch to make a livelihood.

As Nyamata is a district capital that is close to Kigali and the future home of a highly prestigious new airport, the implementation of the master plan with its beautification measures is more rigid there. The town is growing considerably faster than Byangabo and has more ‘undeveloped’ areas due to its population of mainly post-genocide newcomers. Even though the pressure on long-term residents to upgrade their houses is less strong in Byangabo, many expressed their concerns. Florence (55), for example, said she had seen the town change, with many new residents moving in. As her basic mudbrick house was now surrounded by the large houses of rich newcomers, she said she felt that she no longer belonged in the same community: ‘You can be lonely when surrounded by these, as you are no longer part of a community of people who help each other.’ She expressed what many more were feeling, namely the erosion of social relationships, as modernisation is only for those who can afford it. As elaborated in the implementation strategy of Bugesera’s local urban development plan concerning settlement upgrading, inhabitants are encouraged to upgrade their dwellings in a regulated manner, a target included in both cells’ and households’ *Imihigo* (‘performance contracts’).

Figure 2.1 Mixed land use in one of the extension areas for Nyamata (photo by author)



Figure 2.2 Example of model house design (Gistech Consultants Ltd. 2013)



In Rwanda, power flows from the top down with mechanisms of control starting at the very lowest levels (Purdeková 2011; Ingelaere 2011; Goodfellow and Smith 2013; Mann and Berry 2015). This is epitomised by the practice of *Imihigo*, a mechanism to incorporate the family and the individual into state structures. Signed at all administrative levels, they form part of a system of upward accountability whereby annual performance pledges are made to match the developmental agenda of the state and are evaluated on a regular basis (Purdeková 2011, 2012). This institution leads to increased coercion through fines, public shaming or even detention when certain targets are not reached. Bosco, a 56-year-old father of nine, said during an interview that some of his goats had been confiscated by the local authorities because he had failed to provide proof that he had made contributions to a *mutuelle de santé* (mutual health insurance scheme) for all members of his family. Upon proof of paying the contributions, he was allowed to retrieve his goats.

The envisioned urban expansion areas (the incorporation of areas surrounding the current town) delineated in the local urban development plans are also subject to these zoning specifications. Urban boundaries are redrawn, giving surrounding rural areas and villages an urban status. For the inhabitants of these villages, this mainly entails the transformation of rural land into urban land, which now has to comply with urban land use and zoning schemes, adjusting both their functional and their physical composition to accommodate further urban development. Master plans were prepared after people had registered their land following the implementation of the National Land Policy in 2004 and the Organic Land Law in 2005. It is therefore possible that in many cases, land owners in these urban areas had wanted to use their land for purposes other than those prescribed in the master plans. However, as a growing town, the physical boundaries between rural and urban are not as strict in reality as the clear-cut

demarcations found in the plan. The urban growth taking place in Byangabo is mainly fuelled by new residents arriving from all over the country. Although the local development plan sees a need for extension areas to accommodate the predicted patterns of in-migration, at the time of the field research no sites were specifically dedicated to this use. The urban status of this town, however, was 'assigned' following the District Development Plan, which transformed many long-term residents from rural into urban dwellers.

As for Nyamata, three surrounding sectors are to become an administrative part of the urban agglomeration. In the market centre of Byangabo, people voiced their concerns about agricultural land that had been transformed into a residential area (FGD 2014). Farmers often own multiple smaller plots of farmland and do not have the means to build the required house on every one of them. In such situations, farmers are 'encouraged' to sell these plots. Settlement regulations are not mere guidelines, and local authorities often take coercive action to enforce them. The following excerpt from an interview in Nyamata exemplifies this:

I own a plot of [agricultural] land near the site where the new international airport will be built. This land has now been transformed into development land where they wish to have big hotels. I don't have the money to construct anything on that land, so local officers came to me insisting it would be better for me to sell the land, considering the fact that I cannot afford the standards set for that area. They already had a buyer for the land. Investors and speculators go to the local authorities asking to buy lands. (Respondent in Nyamata, interviewed by author 2015)

This context leads to the accumulation of land by local elites. The buying of residential land in order to build rental housing on it has become a thriving business for entrepreneurs from Kigali, as well as for wealthier locals as an additional smaller scale economic activity. The required compliance with particular standards, which are strongly enforced, is unaffordable to lower-income households. Middle- and upper-middle-class people seeking more space at an affordable price purchase and live in residences in peri-urban areas even though they do not work there. This is more common in Nyamata than in Byangabo, due to the former's proximity to Kigali, enabling richer households to commute to their work in Kigali. There are also less affluent households moving down the urban hierarchy, like Elisabeth's. Relatively wealthy Kigalians also invest in places like Byangabo; however, these are often investments in commercial buildings to rent out or in second homes used only at weekends. Because of its proximity to the secondary city of Musanze and its function as a nodal town, Byangabo has mainly been attracting newcomers from areas closer by.

Both processes lead to long-term locals moving out, selling their land because they are offered high prices or because they are pushed out. It causes what Durand-Lasserve described as market-driven displacements, which are mostly not recorded as such (Durand-Lasserv 2007). There is no visible use of force and some form of compensation is paid. As one of the land officers told me: 'For people living here, there are no challenges caused by these changes, because they have the right to sell their land and go and live somewhere else. If you can afford

to stay, there're only benefits' (local land officer, interviewed by author 2015). However, Faustin (58), whose family had lived for generations in what is now Byangabo, explained it this way:

The ones who can profit are the ones from Kigali. People moving in are making land very expensive here. Many locals cannot follow this pace, that's why many people move on. Banks are coming here, but many cannot get credit or even an account. Electricity is here, but many cannot afford it (Faustin, interviewed by author 2014).

The top-down upgrading of these settlements through these spatial policies is putting pressure on low-income urban households. The implementation of regulations or the consequences in terms of increasing land prices induce processes of gentrification, which lead to social and spatial marginalisation and exclusion, forcing people to move out. A large number of people who have been left landless believe that a small minority are consolidating the land – and that is particularly perilous in Rwanda's post-conflict context.

Shaping the economic landscape

Economic reconfigurations, which are a prominent part of the developmental goals set for these towns to become regional hubs of urbanity, also play a role in the government's agenda for state control and legitimisation in emerging towns. As part of the territorial dimension of planning control, economic mechanisms essentially revolve around control over land. Goodfellow (2014: 314) pointed out how the factors specific to the city form sources of power, showing how urban development control essentially revolves around the bigger picture of access to resources. When implementing the local master plans, rural resources are transformed into urban resources with economic, material and symbolic value. This includes the metaphorical depiction of the city as a site of progress and prestige, as well as of economic assets such as land and real estate. It is the most powerful group that makes the political decisions about people's access to and benefits from these resources. This authority exercised by the state is bound up with its claims to legitimacy and the exercise of power (Sikor and Lund 2009: 1). As indicated, the government relies on the provision of progress and development to support its legitimacy, and this is where control over land comes to the fore as a crucial aspect. Land allocation and taxation are critical economic ways to control and finance these emerging towns' economic development.

The national land policy and programme of land registration provide opportunities for land allocation to promote investments of labour and capital in land and to attract private investors to finance urban infrastructures and services. An increase in land speculation is a rather common phenomenon in booming towns; however, both the direct and the indirect consequences of the master plan and its regulations have accelerated a process of the production and commodification of space in Byangabo and Nyamata (Webster and Muller 2009).²⁵ The creation

²⁵ See also Mathys and Büscher 2018.

of an official land market for high-value residential plots has led to a boom in real estate development and land speculation, creating an opportunity for local authorities to generate the much-needed revenue to manage the growing demand for urban services and develop urban infrastructure.

Taxation in rural areas has long been a problematic issue related to the mainly subsistence-based livelihoods of many households. However, by incorporating them into the urban sphere and implementing spatial upgrading policies, small towns come under an urban taxation scheme that extends the national tax base into the countryside. To quote the Rwanda Revenue Authority: 'Taxation is central to the building of our state capacity in different sectors as it is always considered as the price to pay if you are to live in an organized society' (Rwanda Revenue Authority 2013). Three classes of tax have been decentralised to the local authorities, namely property taxes, rental income taxes and trading license taxes. There are two types of tax on urban land: freeholders pay property taxes, while lessees pay fees that depend on the market value and size of the land. Tax revenues at the local level remain low, however, due to a culture of not paying or paying only low taxes, the structure of the local economy and the prevalence of a large informal sector (tax officer in Nyamata, interviewed by author 2015). This is partly resolved by alternative forms of non-monetary taxation. Multiple kinds of exactions in the form of both money and other resources are demanded by the state, such as monetary contributions to the Agaciro Development fund or people's labour during Umuganda.²⁶

Although infrastructural improvements and the provision of basic services (e.g. electricity and water) function as important catalysts for the development of various types of businesses and jobs, many residents said that they could not escape the informal sector. In the towns of Byangabo, respondents identified as a main constraint the fact that many people cannot keep up with the pace of growth and modernisation (interviews and FGDs in 2014). Informal activities, however, do not fit the picture of a secure and orderly town, and they are therefore suppressed by the authorities. The formalisation of economic activities is pursued through concrete mechanisms in order to be able to tax them and to control the increasingly diverse and multifunctional space that these small towns have become. One mechanism is mandatory *patentes* (trading licences), which need to be renewed every year. The making of bricks and tiles is a controversial example (see Ansoms 2011): a trading license now costs US\$ 55. Furthermore, all trading activities need to take place in commercial buildings (shops) or at the formal market in town, for which rental fees have to be paid. Commercial buildings and businesses must also respect the aesthetics, as they face being closed down if they do not meet cleanliness and building standards. Even though the number of registered businesses continued to increase, many have had to close their doors and had simply not deregistered. Many entrepreneurs said that since they had started, business had either stagnated or was waning.

The present research identified various challenges, for example a lack of financial resources and access to credit, unaffordable commercial property (average monthly rents range from US\$

²⁶ The Agaciro Development Fund was set up by the GoR as a solidarity fund to which Rwandan citizens are urged to make donations. The aim is to raise domestic resources to help national economic development (www.agaciro.org).

55 to as much as US\$ 436), high tax pressures and even security concerns. Small business owners did not feel supported by the state, due to expensive patents and high taxes, which many found unreasonable.²⁷ Several respondents also mentioned the pressure on businesses to contribute to various governmental programmes, such as the Agaciro Fund, and even the ruling RPF party. In Byangabo, concerns about security were frequently voiced, as there had been an increase in minor crimes, like theft and drug abuse, and fingers were often pointed at increasing poverty and unemployed youths with nothing to do. In Nyamata, insecurity was also linked to the perceived hostility towards newcomers and outsiders. One respondent explained this as *Ikimenyane*, a term originating from the Kinyawanda word *kumenyana* ('to know each other'). It refers to when things are not perceived as fair because people get opportunities only if they are known or know each other. One older woman reported that she was threatened multiple times when she started her business here. 'People threatened to kill me many times. Finally, my business failed when thieves stole all my supplies' (respondent in Nyamata, interviewed by author 2015).

Expanding state control through the spatial reconfiguration of the countryside

The Rwandan government is clearly capitalising on the potential that cities can offer as spaces to overcome conflict, but also as symbols of progress, stability and state presence. In Rwanda, the process of urbanisation appears to be a crucial mechanism applied in post-conflict reconstruction. It demonstrates how the politics of spatial control is used by the ruling regime to establish its legitimacy and control after conflict. With a central focus on the promotion of planned and controlled urbanisation as the driving force for its post-conflict development agenda, the process of urban governance is crucial to the regime's pursuit of security, control and legitimacy. Rwanda's system of urban development control is a very visible demonstration of what Mann and Berry (2015) described as the efforts the Rwandan state has made to create an infrastructure of power that is decentralised and embedded in everyday life.

The way Kigali has developed, recovering as a space of post-conflict trauma and instability in the years following the 1994 genocide, is exemplary of a post-conflict city in the wider region. As Goodfellow (2013) argued, its orderly and secure development was central to the process of reconstruction and Kigali has long borne the weight of the country's development aspirations. With increasing population pressure and land a scarce and critical resource, control over the process of urbanisation is crucial to the post-conflict government. Through a top-down and rather technocratic approach, the selection and active promotion of small towns and rural service centres is a central policy that forms part of Rwanda's urban agenda. As rapidly growing hybrid spaces between the rural and the urban, however, the resulting diversity within and between these towns makes them difficult to govern (Ros-Tonen, Pouw and Bavinck 2015). The planning of these towns is rationalised in the same terms of security and orderly development

²⁷ A *patente* is a trading licence that needs to be bought annually by every company. A *patente* is bought at the sector level, the cost of which depends on the type of business and the annual turnover.

in which the state finds its legitimation. Master plans for secondary cities and small towns are made to mirror Kigali's development. The formulation and implementation of the plans and policies, or the procedural dimension of planning control, are the responsibility of local authorities under the decentralisation act and are hardly participative or inclusive in nature. Plans are drawn up by foreign consultants and kept under tight control by the central state through the institution of performance contracts.

The Kigali master plan has often been criticised for being an elite-driven project with little clear relevance for poverty reduction, and this also becomes apparent in these smaller towns as we start to unpick the tensions between the rhetoric of development and the negative effect of the same on the lowest strata of the population. Ruling elites and an emerging middle class support the idea of urban modernism, as they can take advantage of the delivered profits; a consequence of this, however, is the spatial and economic exclusion of those who are unable to enjoy the same fruits. Ansoms (2009b: 308) indicated how policies affecting rural Rwanda are closely related to the position of the post-1994 political elite and its relation to the countryside and way of living. She pointed out how the current Rwandan elite is mostly Tutsi and urban-based, whereas most rural Rwandans are Hutu. The current focus on urbanisation is a clear break with the Habyarimana regime (1973–94), which had a strong focus on preserving rural culture and glorifying the peasantry. The incorporation of rural sites into the urban sphere forms part of a strategy to produce a collective identity matching the government's urban and modernist development ideology. From a modernisation perspective, these development towns also play an important role in fulfilling national goals to replace rural with urban development ideology (Newbury 2011; Straus and Waldorf 2011; Möhlman and Gibert 2015). Here, the production of a collective or national identity – an essential component of state and nation building – is reflected in the cultural dimension of planning control. An investigation of the motivations behind the shaping of Rwanda's developmental state should go beyond a focus on economic growth and encompasses the articulation of ideologies, social spending and the reordering of its social and physical layout, as Mann and Berry (2015) argued and Yiftachel (2000) described in his work on Israel as an ethnic state.

The socioeconomic dimension of planning control refers to the implications for social and economic relations in the long term, or the redistribution mechanisms of urban and regional planning. Although these effects have often been regarded as the mere unintended consequences of either the incorrect or the poor implementation of planning systems, a growing body of literature is stressing that the underlying framework of power and control in which they are embedded is manipulating and shaping these outcomes (Yiftachel 1998; Njoh 2009). In the context of these growing towns in Rwanda, the multitude of factors and actors driving urban growth in these transitional sites is leading to some unanticipated consequences, whereby the urban form pursued does not match the lived realities of the majority of its inhabitants. The urban planning, which is based on Western models, operates with a strong urban–rural dichotomy, ignoring hybrid spaces such as these. This creates a conflict that will determine both the spatial and the social configuration of the specific settlement, and raises concerns about a

widening of the gap between a rural and an urban class. While presenting small towns and rural growth centres as strategic spaces of control, these redistribution mechanisms of urban and regional planning emphasise the understanding of these sites as potentially contested arenas of change.

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Chapter 3

Conforming with the urban ideal? ‘New urbanites’ in Rwanda’s emerging towns

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Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Rwandan government takes a very directive approach to the process of urbanisation, which includes the intention to transform urban and rural centres into nodes of innovation and entrepreneurship and sources of socioeconomic services and opportunities (MININFRA 2015; Somma 2015). Those who move to these urban areas are to become part of an ideal of secure and orderly towns, planned and controlled through policies at the national level and through district and master plans at the local level (Goodfellow and Smith 2013; MININFRA 2013). The role of cities is described in the 'Urbanization and Rural Settlement Sector. Strategic Plan 2012/13-17/18' as follows:

Cities play an important role in shaping attitudes about the desired quality of life and provide the prism through which world culture and information come to rural areas. In this sense, they can be viewed as secondary multipliers of modernisation and innovation. (MININFRA 2013: 38)

Rwanda's urban approach, and in particular the transformation of Kigali, is a well-known example of the new urban utopia that is spreading across the African continent. Examples of such 'smart' city efforts are Ghana's Hope City project, a technological hub that was to function as a completely new city but has not materialised; Sèmè city in Benin, which is to be a hub for education, research and business incubation; Lagos's Yabacon Valley, which is Nigeria's start-up hub; and a US\$ 3bn internet of things (IoT) connected city to be built in Ethiopia (Siba and Sow 2017; van Leynseele and Bontje 2019). These new 'neoliberal urban utopias' (van Noorloos and Leung 2017), or 'African urban fantasies' (Watson 2014), are in line with a paradigm shift towards the recognition of urbanisation as an asset rather than only a problem (Kessides 2007; African Union 2015; Förster 2013). Several African governments are re-visioning the role of their cities to become part of the solution for sustainable growth and poverty alleviation by linking visions of innovation to the contemporary rhetoric on urban sustainability and inclusiveness, as stipulated by SDG goal 11 in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In order to realise these utopian visions of cities and towns that reflect the images of Dubai, Singapore or Shanghai, master planning has re-emerged on the agenda (Watson 2014; UNECA 2015; van Noorloos and Leung 2017). These new urban models are strongly influenced by modernist discourses and guided by neoliberal policies – with a focus on attracting private enterprises and financial capital in the development of urban housing, infrastructure and services – and place the state in an enabling role (Hilgers 2013; van Noorloos and Leung 2017; McGranahan and Satterthwaite 2014; Watson 2014). This implies an ideal type of modern urbanite, which in Rwanda's urban vision translates into what Honeyman (2016) called 'orderly entrepreneurs'.

The Rwandan government's approach to the urban question remains a controversial one, both abroad and within the country (Goodfellow 2014). In Chapter 2, where I discussed the politics of urbanisation in post-genocide Rwanda, I showed how the ruling regime is using both

spatial and economic tools and policies in the pursuit of an ideal of ‘modern urbanity’ in rapidly growing small towns (see Cottyn, 2018). Watson (2009) pointed out how in large African cities, these plans, which are based on a modernist conception of urban development, can easily become elite projects, leading to the economic and social exclusion of those who are unable to reap the projects’ benefits.

Chapter 2 also showed how in small towns rigid master planning is putting excessive pressure on low-income households, making it apparent that not everyone conforms with the ideal of the modern urbanite that the Rwandan government is envisioning. It is these urban inhabitants, who are often considered to be ‘on the urban margins’ (Aceska, Heer and Kaiser-Grolimund 2019), who are the focus of this chapter. This is because, as Simone (2004a) and Aceska et al. (2019) argued, the urbanites living on a city’s margins are innovative in negotiating their daily lives in the urban area and are the ones who constitute and define the city. Who are these urbanites on the margins who do not conform with the ideal that is pursued, and how do they use the town? And what does this mean for inclusive urbanity, particularly in small towns?

By answering these questions, this chapter contributes to the call to pay more attention to the human and social dimensions of urbanisation to feed the debates in the field of urban studies, where the spatial has long taken central stage (Simone 2004a; Hollands 2008; Pieterse 2011). Second, since mainstream urban development policy frameworks often fail to account for the specificity of particular cities and places, a better understanding of the dynamics of everyday life in African cities and towns allows us to argue for more innovation and creativity in urban policy itself, providing more space to react to local dimensions. Finally, the chapter contributes to the literature on urbanisation and urbanity in Rwanda, which has largely focused on the transformation of Kigali and paid little attention to smaller towns.

After a brief literature review on African urbanism and urban informality and a methodology section, the chapter focuses on three groups of urbanites on the margins of the small-town urban growth project and their potential place in the government’s ideal of modern urbanism. The empirical section explores the urban realities of these urban dwellers who do not conform with the urban ideal, and identifies the potential ‘winners’, the ‘in-betweeners’ and the ‘losers’, who are being pushed out by top-down visionary planning.

African urbanism and urban informality

In broad terms, urban planning and management systems in sub-Saharan Africa are characterised by two forms of production of space, namely unregulated growth and highly planned urbanisation with a fixation on the quest for order (van Leynseele and Bontje 2019; Kamete 2013). This concept of the urban is strongly inspired by the ideals of modernist thinking (van Leynseele and Bontje 2019; Förster 2013). Robinson (2004) wrote that modernity and development have long been central concepts in the analysis of city life and the future of cities. Urban modernity, she further elaborated (2004: 710):

[...] is often based on western theories and associated with western cities and fails to capture the inventiveness and creativity of people in poor cities, more often tied to the heroic (tragic?) resilience of urban dwellers in the face of extraordinary difficulties, rather than to the creative potential of city life.

However, it has been recognised that the rules and policies set in master plans to achieve an urban ideal do not take into account the ways different groups, in particular the less advantaged ones, use, produce and reproduce the urban space (Simone, 2004a; Banks, Lombard and Mitlin, 2020). Such awareness is fuelling the need to reconceptualise African urban spaces (Mbembe 1992; Susan Parnell 1997; Watson 2009; Myers 2011; Förster 2013; Pieterse, Parnell, and Haysom 2015). Parnell and Pieterse (2014) and Myers (2011) emphasised the need to give Africa's urban transition the attention it deserves, and called for a better balance between policy-oriented research and examination of the nature of African urban life – or 'African urbanism'. In order not to ignore such dimensions, Pieterse (2011) made a plea to look at the dynamics of everyday life in African cities.

We see a divergence in urban studies from an approach focusing on the city as a physical space to be designed and shaped, towards more consideration of the human and social dimensions of urbanisation (Simone 2004a, 2004b; R. Hollands 2008; Förster 2013), which have long been ignored. Simone (2004b) elaborated how urbanisation as prescribed by urban planning in African cities neglects people's practices, activities, resources and networks, which can 'act as a platform for the creation of a very different kind of sustainable urban configuration'. It is the work of such scholars working on urbanisation in Africa that ignited the debate on urban agency and moved the 'urban margins' more to the centre of interest, rejecting static notions of margins–centre duality (Aceska, Heer and Kaiser-Grolimund 2019; Thieme, Lancione and Rosa 2017; Lancione 2016). Aceska, Heer and Kaiser-Grolimund (2019: 2) argued that the city is constituted and defined not by 'the centre' – which has always been taken as the norm by urban planners, politicians and academics – but by those on the urban margins.

In this debate on urban agency and urban marginality, there is a move towards a perspective that sees the urban margins as a space of change, by critically engaging with the perceptions and experiences of the people navigating the uncertainties and insecurities associated with urban life (Lancione 2016; Aceska, Heer, and Kaiser-Grolimund 2019). This perspective stems from a long history of work on urban informality, a concept that has long been well covered within urban studies (Hart 1973; Meagher 1995; Banks, Lombard, and Mitlin 2020). In the 1970s and 1980s, urban informality was mainly approached within a dualist framework, whereby the formal was regarded as the norm and the informal was seen as a problematic, unregulated and unplanned reality to be addressed through regulation (Hart 1973), a perspective that lives on today amongst policymakers and underpins repressive policies. In their obsession with urban modernity, African authorities have deliberately marginalised informality in urban policy and planning practices as, for example, Kamete (2013) illustrates in Southern Africa.

Critics of a dualist view demanded more consideration of the social and cultural contexts, which placed the concept in a more positive light and shifted the focus to the agency of marginalised groups whose actions are often criminalised or delegitimised (Portes, Castells, and Benton 1989; Meagher 1995, 2010; Simone 2014). It has been surmised that informality currently accounts for the majority of basic needs and jobs in African cities (Simone 2014; I. Lindell 2008, 2010; Okyere and Kita 2015).

Methodology

The data presented in this chapter stem from a total of nine FGDs, 187 interviews with people running SMEs, and livelihood–mobility histories collected from a sample of newcomers in two small Rwandan towns, Byangabo and Nyamata (see Figure 1.2), in 2014 and 2015. When collecting the livelihood–mobility histories, the focus was on the mobility patterns of the respondents and their households and how they engaged with the changing environment in which they made a living. The ways in which respondents made use of the town and how they connected to other localities was given particular attention. Furthermore, secondary data sources such as national policy documents, district development plans, and the zoning and master plans of the selected locations were consulted. In addition, interviews were held with key informants such as local officers holding positions ranging from the village to the district level, entrepreneurs and community representatives, and people living in and on the edges of the urban centres.

Figure 3.1 Focus groups female heads of households, community social mapping



On the margins: Three ways to negotiate urbanity

The two urbanising areas central to this research are growing fast and attracting new people. In the first three months of 2014 alone, the largest village in Byangabo received 15 new households (village coordinator, interviewed by author 2014), making a total of 384 officially registered households (1,832 people).²⁸ Nyamata also experienced a large influx of people. In one village, for example, 78 new households arrived in 2014, and by February 2015 the village had received another 35 newcomers (village coordinator in Nyamata, interviewed by author, 2015). These numbers added up to a total of 185 households (1,975 people) in the village in 2015. In reality, as the coordinator explained, there were 285 households if one also counted the smaller rental places and annexes often temporarily rented by newcomers. An annexe is a small, often one-person dwelling built next to the main house in a compound with the aim of renting it out (village coordinator of Nyamata II, interviewed by author 2015).

Rwanda's urban strategy is an important part of both its national economic strategy and its larger development agenda. Rwanda takes its own approach to structural transformation. Vision 2020 prescribes the transformation of the country's agriculture-based economy into one that is based on industries and services, in line with 'classical' examples of state-driven paths to structural transformation taken by countries such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan (Tull 2019; Behuria and Goodfellow 2019; MINECOFIN 2000). In practice, however, the main driver of transformation in Rwanda is services rather than industry, as Behuria and Goodfellow (2019) noted. Although both agriculture and industry have undergone some growth, service sectors have been growing the fastest.

Honeyman (2016: 6) accurately captured how the current government 'places an ethos of regulated self-reliance at its core'. By taking a very directive approach to the process of urbanisation, the government hopes to concentrate investments in urban centres (MININFRA 2015; Somma 2015). The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy II (EDPRS II) and the National Urbanization Strategy 2017–2024 of the Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA) prescribe how well-planned and regulated urbanisation is seen as a main contributor to economic growth, through master plans reflecting the aim to transform urban areas into modern cities and towns (MININFRA, 2015; MINECOFIN, 2017). Considering the government's notion of development as a fast and forward moving modernist transformation, Purdeková (2012) rightly asked: what is the 'ideal development subject' that is to be created in contemporary Rwanda? When applied to its urban context, the ideal of modern urbanism goes hand in hand with an ideal type of urbanite who comes close to what Honeyman (2106) described as the government's ideal citizen, namely a sort of orderly entrepreneur. People are attracted to these towns for different reasons. Some want to benefit from the availability of basic services, such as hospitals, schools

²⁸ The RPF government introduced a territorial reform in 2006, abolishing the old administrative structure and replacing it with a new one. The number of provinces was reduced to five (including the city of Kigali), and 30 districts (Akarere) now make up the basic political-administrative unit. Districts are divided into sectors (Umurenge), which are subdivided into cells (Akagali). Below the cell, the village or *Umudugudu* was introduced as a new administrative unit (Ingelaere 2011).

and electricity, while others are attracted by the potential for non-farm employment and business opportunities. Thus, even though the Rwandan state plays a powerful role in managing and directing urban development, more actors are part of this urban growth than anticipated by the rigid and static blueprint planning.

In this chapter I distinguish three types of new urbanites who, considering the specific Rwandan context, are particularly relevant to look at. It is important to note that these categories are not a comprehensive typology of all urbanites ‘on the urban margins’; rather, I use them to take a more nuanced look at the variety of people who use the town in different ways. A first group are the newcomers who have settled in these towns and make a living as entrepreneurs. Who are these entrepreneurs and what are the characteristics of their businesses? Are they the ideal type of ‘Schumpeterian innovative entrepreneurs’ (Vivarelli 2013: 1454) who will contribute to transforming these towns into modern hubs of innovation?

A second group are ‘part-time’ urbanites, as opposed to individuals who settle permanently in these towns. These individuals and their households connect themselves to these centres through patterns of temporary mobility, ties that are central to the development of livelihood strategies, which increasingly rely on both rural and urban resources.

A third group does not so much come to these towns, as these towns come to them. These are the individuals and their households in the surrounding villages that are being incorporated into the expanding urban area. Following the master plan for each of the towns, urbanisation is pushed further into the countryside by administratively ‘urbanising’ surrounding villages. I call this group the ‘incorporated’ urbanites.

By focusing on these groups on the urban margins, this analysis considers informality a concept that Watson (2009: 157) described as containing ‘forms of income generation, forms of settlement and housing, and forms of negotiating life in the city’ and looks beyond the urban ideal of innovation and creativity. As Förster (2013) noted, in order to understand urban creativity, one must analyse when, where and under what circumstances creativity emerges in urban life, and more specifically the practices that generate something new.

The winners? Entrepreneurial newcomers

As mentioned, the ideal of modern urbanism goes hand in hand with a strong belief in entrepreneurship as a driver of economic growth (Vivarelli 2013; Dolan and Rajak 2016; Honeyman 2016). In Rwanda, the pursuit of modern and orderly urbanisation is a project that is strongly driven by neoliberal policies and builds upon the ideal of self-sufficient citizens who drive economic progress through entrepreneurial innovation and initiative, creating their own businesses and thus also creating employment. This section looks at entrepreneurs as the group that has the potential to fulfil this role of ‘ideal urbanite’.

A variety of entrepreneurs are attracted by the opportunities the two towns offer. Affluent investors seek to profit from increasing land prices, a booming housing market and trade opportunities. Most of these investors do not live in the two towns; many of the commercial

buildings, petrol stations and hotels are owned by investors from Kigali. As part of the local master plan, this type of investor is sought to, for example, finance urban infrastructures and services. While these investors are present in these towns, they are a small minority.

Most of the entrepreneurs in these towns started out with little capital and they mainly run micro-enterprises. The majority (54%) of the 187 entrepreneurs we interviewed in these towns had moved there in the previous 10 years, and 94% had started their business in the previous five years. Alongside the roads, we found market vendors, small shops selling a variety of goods, various repair services, carpenters, hairdressers, a growing number of small restaurants and bars, and various informal activities. These enterprises can be classified as micro- or small enterprises and they generate few employment opportunities. Although it is commonly accepted that in developing countries smaller businesses and enterprises dominate economic life and thus play an important role in economic development (Eijdenberg, Paas and Masurel 2015), not much is known about such entrepreneurs and how they experience the urban business environment in which they try to make a living.

Not all the entrepreneurs I talked to had moved to these towns with the intention of becoming entrepreneurs: 26.5% came in pursuit of jobs (many mentioned survival as both a pull and a push factor); 43% moved in the first instance for other reasons, such as family reunion, marriage or education; and 30.5% came with the specific aim of starting businesses. This is in line with findings in larger cities such as Kigali, where an estimated 63% of recent migrants identified seeking business opportunities or paid employment as one of the main reasons they moved to the city (Hitayezu, Rajashekar and Stoelinga 2018:10).

Interestingly, many interviewees said that they had moved to these smaller towns because their businesses were no longer profitable in the larger cities in which they used to live, due to high rents, expensive supplies and high urban taxes. For example, Pascal, a 40-year-old man with a wife and four children to support, had moved from Kigali where he used to work as a street vender. Due to the high level of competition and the high cost of living in the capital, he saw better opportunities for his business to grow in Nyamata. The vast majority had started their businesses with earnings from previous or other occupations. Only 10 respondents had received a bank loan to start a business. People moved into business from a range of other occupations, having saved money as employees or from previous self-employment. Around 23% said that they had been unemployed or doing casual wage labour before they started their businesses, while another 16% had left farming to start enterprises. For many entrepreneurs, starting a small business did not necessarily mean a move away from farming, but rather an additional activity to spread risks and earn enough household income. In Byangabo, which has fertile land and more rural features, farming remained an important income-generating activity for most entrepreneurs, while in Nyamata this was less the case.

The government promotes entrepreneurship in urban areas by promising to create an enabling business environment with strong support for entrepreneurs and start-ups (MININFRA 2013, 2015). While registering a business is a relatively easy process in Rwanda, keeping it viable or growing it was often seen as a challenge. In these two towns, many companies had failed and

were never deregistered. Even though the number of registered businesses kept rising, not all enterprises were successful and both towns have seen a large number of failures (local business promotion and cooperatives officer, interviewed by author 2015).

This issue has various explanations. First, there is a high risk of underemployment in towns and cities, as Tull (2019) mentioned in his review of urbanisation and employment in Rwanda. Hityezu et al. (2018) found that in Kigali also self-employed professionals have an increased risk of being underemployed. Second, although Rwanda ranks 38th on the World Bank's 'Doing Business' list (World Bank 2019), the doing business indicators have been criticised for not taking into account the political economy behind such processes (Kar et al. 2019). While setting up a company is facilitated, keeping it running proves much more difficult for many under a neoliberal–developmental approach, which brings to light an underlying paradox whereby this self-reliance and creativity is burdened by increased governmental regulation and controls, since entrepreneurial efforts must be orderly, regulated and to some extent strategised and planned from above (Honeyman 2016: 7).

Honeyman (2016) showed how in Rwanda entrepreneurs are faced with tightening government regulations and high taxation, making it increasingly hard to start small-scale businesses. While embracing urbanisation and promoting entrepreneurship, the policies to improve the business climate are clearly made for large-scale and capital-intensive projects in the formal economy. All businesses have to register, get a license and become part of the tax system. Also Behria and Goodfellow (2019) pointed at a major shortcoming in Rwanda's development strategy, namely that it pays only limited attention to what small businesses need to grow. When asked to rate the business environment in their towns on a scale of one to ten, 62% of the entrepreneurs interviewed gave it less than a five. The overall sentiment was that the prosperity that is expected to accompany the growth of the towns has not materialised. According to these small entrepreneurs, this was due to the challenges they faced, which included no access to credit and a lack of financial means to make a proper investment or to grow; increasing prices and rents; high tax pressure combined with the various fees to be paid; and a lack of customers. The rents paid by the interviewees ranged from US\$ 1 to US\$ 436 per month, with the majority paying between US\$ 22 and US\$ 44 – which is a lot, considering what most of their businesses generate each month (63% of these newcomers take less than US\$ 110 per month in revenue). Many also complained about landlords being able to quadruple the rent or put the premises back on the market for the highest bidder, and about having to pay cleaning and security fees.

Tax pressure was also regarded as unfair to start-ups. Businesses are liable to a wide range of taxes, which are paid either to the sector office or to the Rwanda Revenue Authority. These include fixed asset taxes (on e.g. land), trading licenses (*patente*), rental income taxes, accreditation tax, tax on the transport of materials (e.g. timber or charcoal), tax on profit, tax on salaries, etc. As one business owner reported:

Tax rates are the same for us as they are for large established firms. It does not stop with taxes, though: there is high pressure to contribute to various governmental programmes, such as the Agaciro fund and the party [RPF], and a variety of obligatory cleaning and security fees. (Business owner in Byangabo, interviewed by author 2015)

Finally, many entrepreneurs said that they were disappointed with the number of customers they get in these towns. Due to an increasing number of market towns in the vicinity and an improved transport network, people visited larger towns, where goods are cheaper. In Nyamata, the proximity to Kigali meant that customers are unwilling to pay extra to cover the transport costs of the goods on offer in town, as everything can be found in the capital, which is only a bus ride away.

To understand these entrepreneurs and how their businesses develop it is important to know their entrepreneurial motivation, if they have one, that is (Eijdenberg, Paas, and Masurel 2015). A focus on entrepreneurship should consider that entrepreneurship is driven not only by innovation, as Schumpeter argued as long ago as 1934. 'Opportunity' entrepreneurs, who are motivated by market opportunities and innovative ideas, coexist with 'necessity' (or 'survival') entrepreneurs, who start businesses because they lack other options (Acs 2006; Vivarelli 2013). The pressure to start a business can result from unfavourable circumstances, such as poverty, rather than potential opportunities. Although 'necessity' entrepreneurs seem not to fit the usual definition of 'innovative' associated with the ideal of modern urbanism, Rosa et al. (2006) and Langevang et al. (2012) criticised the necessity versus opportunity dichotomy, countering the assumption that necessity entrepreneurs have little to no effect on economic development. First, the purpose of starting a business is not always profit maximisation; it can also be related to family support and other social purposes and goals. Second, while the business environment is tailored to capital-intensive investment projects, many entrepreneurs are not able to escape the informal sector and the reality is that most new employment is created within the informal sector.

Informality does not fit the picture of a secure and orderly town in Rwanda, and is therefore suppressed by the authorities. Here, the story of Bosco and his family can again function as a case in point. Bosco was not able to afford school fees for all his children, and some of them supported the household income by selling potatoes and his daughter sold small quantities of soap and salt from a stall in front of their house. These were not registered enterprises. Bosco said that they were always vigilant since measures against informal activities include fines and sometimes even imprisonment.

Finn (2018) also showed how work in the informal economy in Kigali is disincentivised and even criminalised rather than supported and encouraged. This is no different in the smaller urban centres. Even though informality is internationally recognised as an intrinsic feature of urbanisation, planning rationales in Rwanda aim at minimising or even eradicating informality as a negative manifestation of urbanism (Ansoms and Murison 2013). Despite this, entrepreneurs find informal solutions to urban problems that they are unable to solve within the formal sphere,

in order to cope with the process of urbanisation and exploit the opportunities it offers. As mentioned, people build small annexes next to their homes to rent to temporary migrants, and they sell small goods from home or offer other non-registered services. When I asked Faustin, whose family has a long history in Byangabo, why people engage in informal activities in town despite the local authorities' efforts to ban them, he told me that was a silly question:

It is obvious. If I want to survive, I need to make do with what is available to me. I go to the road and sell some goods, I ask around for some wage labour opportunities or I go to the forest, buy some trees, and sell planks. (Faustin, interviewed by author 2014)

They are often denigrated and seen as the 'left behind', the ones who cannot keep up. Informal systems allow some to make the urban their own, even though not all activities fit the usual definition of 'innovative'. Therefore, the informal economy, which so many urban dwellers and workers depend upon, should be recognised as an urban reality and be decriminalised. Under Rwanda's contemporary aesthetic of entrepreneurship, and in line with its vision of national progress, distinctions are made between what Dolan and Rajak (2016: 26) called the professionals and the hustlers – namely the 'ideal urbanites' – and those ones who do not fit the picture, creating 'a paradox [...] that the experience of entrepreneurship may deliver precisely the opposite of what inclusive business implies, reinforcing the fissures between [Africa's] redundant urban proletariat and the new swathe of bootstrap capitalists.'

The in-betweeners: 'Part-time' urbanites

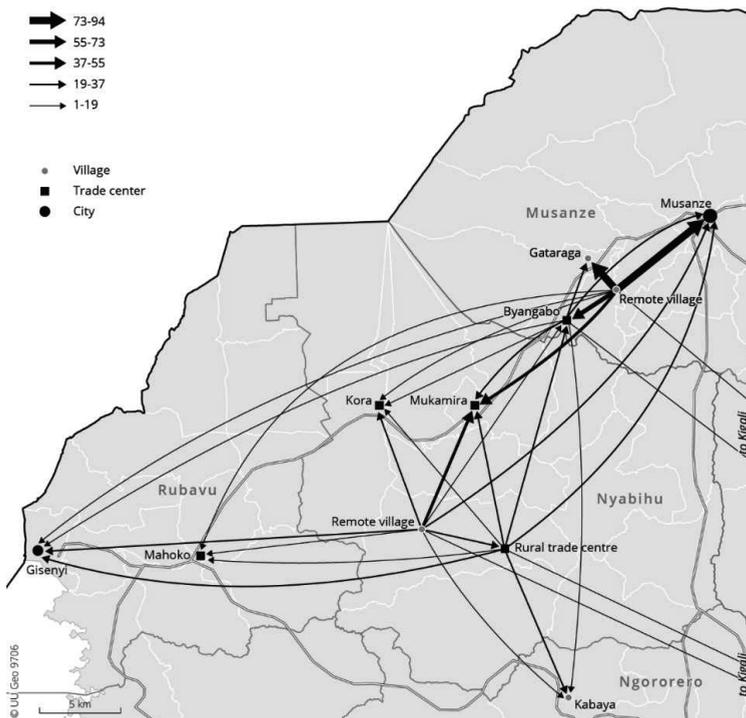
Urbanisation and rural–urban transformations are central features of contemporary societal change in sub-Saharan Africa (Agergaard and Ortenbjerg 2017). The traditional divide between rural and urban becomes increasingly blurred as more and more people live and make their living within a rural–urban interface (Adesina, Clark and Gurría 2016). While the study of urban development is often focused on winners and losers, it frequently fails to look at the different ways that groups use, produce and reproduce the urban space. This section looks at what I call the 'in-betweeners', that is, those who negotiate urbanity through mobility.

Mobility is used as a livelihood strategy to carve out a space in everyday life in cities. As such, these small towns in Rwanda are also becoming nodes in spatially dispersed livelihood strategies, as people include different locations along the rural–urban continuum to find income-generating activities. Part-time urbanites move in and out of these towns to perform various livelihood activities and to access services and infrastructure. Figure 3.1 depicts the circular and temporary movements that many rural residents made between villages, trade centres and small towns as part of their livelihood strategy.

These livelihood strategies can take different forms. For example, in the case of Modeste, a 44-year-old construction worker originally from Huye, it entailed the physical separation of household members to make optimal use of livelihood opportunities in different

localities. In 2011, Modeste and his wife got a US\$ 218 loan from Umurenge SACCO (a government initiative aimed at increasing the financial inclusion of Rwandan citizens) and decided to invest it in the wife’s farming activities in Huye, where the family has their house, while he moved to Nyamata to work as a construction worker. During the week, he lived in a rented annex in Nyamata, and at weekends he returned to his family, who were still living in Huye.

Figure 3.2 Domestic mobility flows of the three research locations, namely Byangabo, the remote village and the rural trade centre (author’s map based on respondents’ mobility maps)



Despite not being residents of these towns, such actors are important agents in the urbanisation of these towns and contribute to their dynamics. As part-time urbanites, they create a growing interconnectivity between urban centres, towns, service centres and the countryside through multidirectional mobility flows, while using these towns as anchor points for their more locally embedded livelihood practices. They bridge the rural–urban divide, creating an opportunity to bring innovation to the countryside.

Exploring the relationship between mobility and the urban space forces us to look beyond the perception of a city or town as a bounded space and draws attention to the making and remaking of place through networks of flows (Piscitelli 2015). Small towns in Rwanda are often settlements with blurred rather than distinct borders in the middle of the rural–urban interface. The drivers of change usually result from the interactions among rural systems, diverse

flows of people and assets, and the influence of the urban system. While these newcomers do not have a fixed place in these towns, there is a growing recognition that their mobile livelihood strategies are becoming increasingly common. The demographic composition of these centres is characterised by temporality, which puts them at the intersection of multiple identities, spaces and networks.

Until 2014, village coordinators in Rwanda recorded all resident households in a book. Now, they have two books: one for the resident households and one for the temporary residents. Upon arrival in a village, people are asked how long they expect to be staying, which is registered in the 'migration book'. In one cell of Nyamata, for example, 130 households were registered in 2015; however, upon a closer reading only 60 of these were permanent residents (village coordinator of Nyamata I, interviewed by author 2015). It is clear that the growth of these towns is driven not only by rural to urban migration, but also by flexible, mobile and temporary urbanites. An increasing number of people engage in multidirectional and multipurpose patterns of mobility, creating a space to make optimal use of the opportunities that cities and urban locations can offer.

The losers: 'Incorporated' urbanites

A third group comprises those who find themselves literally on the margins of the town and perforce become urbanites. Many 'locals' have been involuntarily incorporated into the urban sphere as a result of the administrative expansion of town boundaries. As elaborated in Chapter 2, in both towns long-term residents had been transformed from rural into urban dwellers because their sector or village had been administratively assigned an urban status. As a spatial policy, such areas are equipped with urban infrastructure and services, creating a hybrid space, including new forms of habitat or the transformation of agricultural land for urban purposes. It furthermore divides the land into monofunctional areas for residential, commercial, services or industrial use (see Cottyn 2018). Even though the boundaries between rural and urban are strictly drawn on paper, such clear-cut physical demarcations do not necessarily turn the people affected into 'modern urbanites'. Even though their urbanisation is passive, people are now incorporated into the urban sphere and need to find ways to fit in.

Being part of the town, voluntarily or otherwise, brings both benefits and challenges. Positive changes are increased access to services and investments in infrastructure. These issues were addressed in many of the FGDs. In Nyamata, for example, the women participating in the FGD painted a picture that was not all negative:

Many of us 'native' people only get jobs through those newcomers, while others earn some money by selling plots or parts of their land to them. We use the money to update our houses to urban standards and invest in small businesses. If you do not have any land to sell, you can try wage labour opportunities in construction, the businesses of the newcomers, in transport, night guards, etc. (FGD 2015)

Those who had been incorporated into the urban sphere said that they felt that they did not benefit from the opportunities it offers. For example, many new commercial buildings were being built in both towns, but local people could not afford to shop in them. A case in point is the new Providence House in Nyamata – a shiny, three-storey shopping complex completed in 2014. This building can be regarded as a metaphor for the dual feeling that many of the newly urbanised struggled with in both towns, having become part of the urban sphere. Although it gave them a certain sense of pride, as urbanisation in Rwanda is very much connected to the ideal of modernisation and progress, many wondered whether they were truly part of this modern urbanism. This type of complex radiates a certain feeling of modernisation that can strengthen urban development, and the construction of such buildings creates many jobs. However, most of the units inside the complex remained vacant because, as we were told during the FGDs in Nyamata, their rents were simply unaffordable. On top of that, there is also a social aspect to it, as Nadia, a woman who sold maize at the market, pointed out: ‘Locals are afraid to go there, because it is much better than the shops we are used to. We can never afford the products that are sold inside, so I would feel a fool entering there.’ (FGD 2015)

Figure 3.3 Providence House



Florence (55), who in 1994, after many years in DR Congo, moved to one of the villages that now form part of Byangabo, said she had seen the town change and many new residents move in. The centre was growing economically and living standards were rising, but she said she felt lost amongst all those around her who were improving. Modernisation is only for those who can afford it. She also said she felt that she did not belong in the same community as the rich people in the big houses that now surrounded her mudbrick house. ‘You can be lonely when surrounded

by these, as you are no longer in a community of people who help each other.’ (Florence, interviewed by author 2014).

The livelihoods of these formerly rural households were also affected by these transformations, forcing the households to change or diversify their activities. Reverien (65) and Beatrice (59), who lived in one of the extension areas on the edge of Nyamata town, stressed their concern about finding new employment opportunities. They owned several farming plots not far from the house they lived in with their eight children, who in recent years had been the household’s main source of income. They had already been told by local officials that their land would be zoned as a residential area and thus they would become part of the town. As the family did not have the means to build a house, they were debating whether they should sell their plots. Their main concern was how the family would meet its needs without their plots.

In her research on the impact on local livelihoods of large-scale foreign and local elite-led land acquisitions, Ansoms (2013) showed how in the countryside many people become part of a rural ‘proletariat’. People who do not manage to profit from agrarian growth at the macroeconomic level, are pushed into simple agricultural wage labour in temporary, poorly paid jobs. The situation does not seem to be different in these small towns. For many of these incorporated urbanites, only a few alternatives were available in the non-farm sector, meaning that many smallholders would most likely end up swelling the class of unskilled labourers. In an oversupplied informal labour market, the bargaining power of this group is extremely low.

It is, however, not only smallholders who were struggling to keep up with the growth of the town, as Protogene (42), a hairdresser with his own salon, explained. Since the announcement that his village was to become part of the urban area, rents had shot up and he could no longer afford the services he needed, leading to the closure of his salon. He then started working as a hairdresser in someone else’s salon. To help make ends meet in his household of eight, his wife bought tomatoes from farmers at the market and resold them at the same market at a small profit. Protogene said that incoming entrepreneurs attracted by the potential of these towns were killing local businesses:

I could have got a loan and invested, let’s say, 200,000 francs in my business, but the next day a newcomer could arrive and start the same business with a much bigger investment. That would put me out of business. Now I work as a wage labourer, as many do. Here in Nyamata we do not like wage labour in farming, because it pays very little money compared to construction, cleaning, transport, etc. In farming I could make 800 francs a day, while in construction it could be 1500 to 2000 francs. (FGD 2015)

These stories raise issues of inclusion and exclusion, as the newly urbanised struggle between embracing their newly acquired urban ‘identity’ and feeling accepted as urbanites.

Conclusion

This chapter considered three types of urbanites who move about on the margins of emerging towns that the Rwandan government is envisioning and pursuing as centres of innovation and

entrepreneurship. The focus was on the inherent challenges that a top-down master planning approach poses for these groups, and recognised the agency of these groups and their innovative ways of making the town work for them.

A first group comprises small business owners and entrepreneurs – the group that has the potential to fulfil the role of ideal urbanite. However, while a few larger investors are attracted to the opportunities these fast-growing towns offer in terms of real estate and land speculation, most of the new entrepreneurs are mainly driven by push rather than pull factors and run only small or micro-businesses. While the business environment is tailored to capital-intensive investment projects, in reality more employment is created in the informal sector and through small-scale investment initiatives. As Watson (2009) and Banks et al. (2020) indicated, forms of economic and spatial informality are often met with repressive measures, further disadvantaging the groups that struggle to make ends meet. In promoting entrepreneurship, informality should therefore be recognised as an urban reality and be decriminalised, and the different needs of informal workers should be addressed.

A second group comprises what I called the ‘in-betweeners’. While mobility and multilocality are becoming an increasingly important part of the urban development of small towns, with rural–urban linkages and interactions playing a significant role in households’ livelihood transformation, these part-time urbanites seem to be falling between two stools. Although they are not considered capable of fulfilling the role of innovative urbanites, they bring the urban to the countryside and create strong rural–urban ties, providing opportunities to promote pro-poor processes of rural innovation through rural–urban linkages, and thus opening up ways for a more reciprocal relationship between rural and urban development. It is therefore clear that the rural–urban dichotomy is by no means a valid way of analysing African urbanisation (Agergaard and Ortenbjerg 2017; Tacoli and Agergaard 2017). These part-time urbanites with their strong rural–urban connections are at the core of small-town urbanism.

A third group, which is literally on the spatial margins of these towns, comprises the ‘incorporated urbanites’, that is, rural dwellers living in areas that have been incorporated into the urban sphere and who thus have become administratively urbanised. While exploring their new urban identity, many of these newly urbanised people are confronted by the paradox between the opportunities a town can offer and the exclusionary nature of the urban transition. These people became urbanites for better or for worse, as the city came to them, rather than the other way round. The upgrading of these towns excludes some low-income households, either directly through expropriation or more indirectly through market-driven displacement²⁹ mechanisms of social and spatial marginalisation and exclusion. Although many of these people would like to become fully integrated into the town, they feel misplaced and in no position to fit in.

²⁹ For more on market-driven displacement, see Durand-Lasserve, Alain. ‘Market-driven eviction processes in developing

The question for urban planning in Rwanda seems to be how people can work to make the urban ideal happen. However, when one looks at the diversity of actors coming to these towns, making use of these towns and living in them, one realises that the question should be: how can these towns work for these people? It seems, though, that top-down planning does not provide room for bottom-up urbanisation, feeding the perception that urban areas in Rwanda are elite spaces. It is the specific political economy underlying Rwanda's urban planning rules that defines the winners and the losers. Its elitist nature and standards are forcing the urban poor to adopt survival strategies that provide only low and irregular incomes under extremely poor working conditions. In the Rwandan case, by rigidly sticking to the implementation of blueprint planning to accomplish the ideal of modern urbanism, both local and national authorities fail to recognise the social infrastructure that defines its lived, small-town urbanism (Simone 2004a; Aceska, Heer and Kaiser-Grolimund 2019). Moreover, the very place-based focus of such planning does not recognise let alone consider the very flexible and mobile nature of the lived reality of small-town life. I thus concur with Simone (2004a) and Aceska et al. (2019) that it is these practices of everyday life in the city that form an essential part of African urbanisation and small-town development. Therefore, prescriptive policies should make way for policies that allow space to react to local dimensions. For these urban spaces to become thriving hubs of creativity and innovation, creativity and innovation should be allowed at the level of policy development and implementation.

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Chapter 4

Making a living between places: The role of mobility in livelihood practices in rural Rwanda

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Introduction

Notwithstanding a context of unprecedented urban growth (OECD 2019; Kariuki et al. 2013), most Africans still live in rural areas. For Africa as a whole, 57.5% of the population can be considered rural; for Kenya, the figure is 73%, for Uganda 76.2% and for Ethiopia 79.2% (UN-DESA 2018). Without devaluing the attention paid to urbanisation in Africa, we argue that it is necessary to pay attention to rural areas in order to understand current urbanisation and to do justice to the reality of African households in rural areas, which often live at the intersection of the rural and the urban. Two arguments underpin our call to address rural areas.

First, we can only understand the implications of current urbanisation processes by looking at the backgrounds of the new urbanites and at the drivers of urbanisation. Rural Africa is undergoing rapid transformation, experiencing the commercialisation and modernisation of the agricultural sector, an influx of foreign direct investment, and the increased importance of rural–urban connections to the lives and livelihoods of rural dwellers. While subsistence farming and agriculture remain the dominant features of rural livelihood strategies, many households diversify their portfolios with non-farm activities and off-farm employment. In its turn, livelihood transformation contributes to the process of rural transformation in sub-Saharan Africa. Rural households are increasingly engaging in economic activities outside their places of residence, and new connections within and between rural and urban areas are becoming part and parcel of their daily realities (Steel et al. 2019).

This brings us to a second reason to pay specific attention to rural areas. When focusing on urbanisation, we tend to emphasise rural–urban migration as the main response to rural transformation, and might overlook other forms of mobility, such as commuting and temporary and circular migration. This emphasis on rural–urban migration reinforces the dominant idea of a sharp dichotomy between ‘the urban’ and ‘the rural’, and overlooks the fact that nowadays many households pursue different strategies to generate their incomes, producing highly dynamic spatial and temporal patterns of mobility (Steel et al. 2019; van Lindert and Steel 2017; Cecilia Tacoli 2002; Cecilia Tacoli and Mabala 2010; Steel, Cottyn and Lindert 2017). These patterns involve different geographical areas and represent different urban hierarchies: from the rural countryside, to small towns, to intermediate cities and large cities.

This chapter advances the debate on how multi-activity and multi-locality have contributed to rural development and poverty reduction processes in sub-Saharan Africa. It also adds to our understanding of urbanisation in Africa, nuancing the image of Africa as one large urban hub, by focusing on the households that remain in the countryside and find themselves caught between processes of urbanisation and rural transformation. What does this mean for rural livelihoods, and for mobility patterns in particular? Who are the winners and losers of these transformations?

We answer these questions by taking the case of households in northwest Rwanda. Rwanda presents an excellent case for studying processes of livelihood transformation in relation to rural changes, as the country is undergoing a rapid transformation that affects all aspects of its society (Straus and Waldorf 2011; Ggombe and Newfarmer 2017; Jones 2006; Ansoms 2009).

As explained in the introduction chapter, Rwanda's approach to economic development and poverty reduction includes agricultural reforms and spatial redistribution policies with a strong focus on urbanisation. The National Agricultural Policy and Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation (2004, 2009) prescribes regional crop specialisation through a mono-cropping policy, land tenure reform and land consolidation, and the adoption of modern production techniques to reduce the share of the population that is dependent on agriculture, mostly in the form of subsistence farming. In realising the transformation of its economic geography, Rwanda is actively promoting urbanisation by equipping smaller towns and local trade centres with the infrastructure and services they need to become poles of economic growth (MINECOFIN 2013: 31). The government hopes that this set of policies will trigger the growth of a non-farm sector in these small towns with increasing demand for diverse goods and services. As these policies reconfigure the rural space and economy, they have a profound impact on the livelihoods of rural households (Ansoms 2009b, 2013b, 2010b; Huggins 2009, 2013). While both agricultural and settlement policies are meant to lead to the development of a non-farm sector, few local alternatives have emerged that can provide alternative incomes for those rural households that struggle to live from farming alone. Households in more remote villages are having a particularly hard time, although as I illustrated in Chapters 2 and 3, also households in rural trade centres face difficulties such as the decreasing availability of farmland, which is being transformed into settlement land.

We now present our conceptual framework, which is based on the findings of the empirical fieldwork conducted by the first author in Rwanda in 2013–17. We then describe our data collection methodology. Next, we present our analysis of the changes in livelihoods experienced by the households in the sample, followed by the resulting mobility patterns in relation to the urban system. We end the chapter with a discussion of the findings and some concluding remarks.

Rural transformation, changing livelihoods and mobility: A quick scan of the literature

Rural transformation is the process of change whereby rural economies are diversified and reliance on agriculture is reduced (Berdegué, Rosada and Bebbington 2014). Rural people are becoming more dependent on multiple sources of income and distant places in constructing their livelihoods, for example by moving from villages to towns or small or medium-sized cities. They thus develop characteristics that are a mix of rural and urban, gradually blurring the differences between the two contexts (Ilbery 1998). This change is manifested through different flows of people, goods, money and information, and through patterns of occupational diversification, all of which affect the scope and nature of the linkages between towns and countryside (Cecilia Tacoli 2002; Cecilia Tacoli and Vorley 2015).

Two key processes are driving rural transformations in sub-Saharan Africa: agricultural reforms and urbanisation, which can be conceptualised and researched as connected processes

(Lazaro et al. 2017: 26). Increasingly scarce agricultural land – along with land fragmentation, land concentration, land grabs and new forms of agricultural production as a consequence of agricultural policies – is forcing many rural households to diversify their livelihoods. This is further facilitated by the urbanisation of the countryside and the transformation of villages into emerging towns (Agergaard et al. 2019). Christiansen and Todo (2014) called those households that move out of agriculture into non-farm activities the ‘missing middle’, indicating the growing importance of the rural non-farm economy and small-town expansion, which have potential benefits for poverty reduction. However, non-farm activities do not automatically lead people to pathways out of poverty (Haggblade et al. 2010).

With increasing access to both rural and urban networks, rural dwellers expand their areas of operation by including different locations along the rural–urban continuum through individual mobility and by employing spatially dispersed livelihood strategies (Berdegué, Proctor and Cazzuffi 2014). Mobility appears to be an important outcome of the effects that these transformations have on rural livelihood strategies (Bah et al. 2003). The common interpretation of mobility is based on three premises. First, mobility is depicted as an inherent feature of modernity, of development and progress; mobility is the norm, while immobility signals stagnation and disconnectedness. Second, being mobile is often regarded as a positive act, driven by endless opportunities and pull factors. The idea that mobility could also imply being pushed out of a certain situation is not often mentioned, except in the literature on forced migration and refugees. Third, mobility is often considered a means to which everyone has a more or less similar degree of access (Skeggs 2004; Massey 1994; Cresswell 2010). According to Massey (Massey 1994: 149), ‘some are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement; some are more on the receiving end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it.’ Increased opportunities and pressure to become mobile have led to changing livelihood systems all over the world, not least in the global South.

Within the livelihoods approach, increased attention has been paid to the dynamics and multidimensional nature of mobility, through the recognition that households construct their livelihoods within a broader socioeconomic and physical context and by using all sorts of social and material assets (Diana Carney 1998; Ellis 2000). Therefore, the livelihood approach offers a useful lens through which to examine mobility processes, its selectivity (i.e. who moves versus who stays) as well as possible outcomes in terms of social mobility. The approach helps to gain an insight into the diversity, temporality and circularity of mobility patterns in rural livelihood strategies and goes beyond the household as a social unit residing in a specific place. In our literature review on patterns, processes and policies of mobility in sub-Saharan Africa (Cottyn et al. 2013: 23), we identified three main trends in African domestic mobility: 1) diversified spatial patterns and increasing circulation; 2) connectivity and temporality; and 3) changes in selectivity regarding the role of gender and generation.

Methodology

This chapter draws upon data collected in three villages in the rural northwest region of Rwanda. The villages are at different places on the rural–urban continuum in terms of function and accessibility/remoteness and at different levels in the urban hierarchy; that is, they are an emerging small town, a rural trade centre on the paved road and a more remote village. The data used were derived from a survey conducted among 86 rural households, 8 FGDs and 49 in-depth interviews. Forty-nine households were selected from both the survey and the FGDs to conduct livelihood–mobility histories and draw mobility maps depicting the most important mobility of each member of the household.

Three categories of livelihood strategies

While 80% of households in Rwanda depend on land and agriculture for their livelihoods (NISR 2018b), the process of rural transformation has led to profound changes in the assets of rural households and thus also in their livelihood strategies. This section explores how rural households have adapted to this situation and discusses three categories of livelihood strategies that were discerned during the research.

Land is a crucial asset in the livelihoods of rural households; however, agricultural and land policies aimed at increasing productivity in the agricultural sector have forced many subsistence farmers to sell their land (Ansoms et al. 2018). Rural households own on average only 0.75 ha of land, which for many of them makes it hard or impossible to live from farming alone (Huggins 2013). When a household loses access to land, farming is either abandoned or the household members cultivate rented land or work as daily wage labourers in other people’s fields (NISR 2018a). During this research, I met households that had only a small amount of land, or no land at all, struggling to make ends meet through subsistence farming or casual wage labour, while others saw opportunities to diversify their livelihoods and engaged in non-farm activities to complement farming. In general, amongst the households that participated in this research, we detected an increasing diversification of livelihood activities in all three research locations; however, in 73.3% of the cases, this did not mean a move away from farming. Most of the households employed livelihood strategies as a means of survival or risk spreading, while only a few were able to specialise and combine farming and non-farm self-employment as a profitable activity. Importantly, while there were few opportunities at the village level, urbanisation was reaching deeper into the countryside and providing alternative opportunities. Table 4.1 presents the three categories of livelihood strategies based on the data on 86 households.

We found the first strategy – survival – in all three locations. We mainly saw what Ansoms (2011, 2013) described as the arising of a rural proletariat, as small-scale farmers cannot secure their land rights in an increasingly competitive land market and are now working as unskilled wage labourers in temporary, badly paid jobs. This was the situation of the majority of the households in the remote village. After they had been resettled to make way for the rehabilitation of Gishwati forest, in 2009 their plots of farmland were handed over to the

government, which four years later redistributed them among the affected population (for more details, see Chapter 5 or Cottyn 2018). In the meantime, most of these households earned their income from casual labour activities such as terracing, cow herding, or selling milk and cheese. After 2013, many had to continue doing so as the plots of land they were given are so small (often only 2 x 8 m) that they can only be used for self-subsistence farming.

Table 4.1 Three categories of livelihood strategies

N = 86 households	Survival 41.8% N=36	Diversification 55.7% N=48	Specialisation 2.5% N=2
Main activity	Self-subsistence farming or casual wage labour in farm and non-farm sectors	Farming Casual wage labour Non-farm self-employment Salaried job	Farming or non-farm self-employment
Characteristics	Landless poor Unskilled labour Low to very low wages Insecure and often seasonal	Small plots of land Petty trade Micro-businesses Revenue from separate activities is low	Large plots of land Small to medium-sized businesses Trade Profits are often reinvested in both farming and business
Strategy	Survival	Risk aversion (N=37) and sometimes accumulation (N =11)	Accumulation

Many households in the small town had seen their agricultural land transformed into residential areas, due to new zoning plans. As most households did not have the means to build the required houses on these plots, they were forced to sell their plots. Others said they had lost their farmland due to flooding, which had made their land unusable, or they had sold their land in order to take care of other household needs. Some residents of the trade centre were surviving on consecutive seasonal jobs on tea plantations or building terraces. A few households depended on subsistence farming only, since the size of their plots could not provide them with any surplus to sell. These households often struggled to make ends meet, having suffered a deterioration of their income in recent years.

The most common category was diversification through additional farm or non-farm activities. The newly introduced policies of mono-cropping and land consolidation, which only allow one crop per season per plot, was making it difficult for many smallholder households to make a living from farming alone. Marceline – a mother of eight who lived with her husband in the growing town in Musanze district – told us that ‘Farming is not the same anymore.’ The household owned eight plots of land, ranging in size from 200 to 2000 square metres, and farming used to be their main income-generating activity. The new agricultural policies had forced them to look for additional activities to diversify their livelihood:

Today we have to use a lot of fertiliser, which is deteriorating the soil. Therefore a lot of inputs are needed and they are expensive. I used to grow five different crops per season, but with the land consolidation policy I am left with only one. To be able to diversify my diet, I need to buy other food crops at the market. Many people don't have enough money, so this means a period of hunger (Marceline, interviewed by author 2014).

As Koster (2008: 304) found during her research on rural livelihoods in post-genocide Rwanda: 'In an environment where labour-intensive subsistence agriculture on small family holdings in the absence of non-farm employment is the norm, household asset portfolios increasingly depend on multiple earners.'

We also found that 77% of the households that had diversified their livelihoods had done so as a means of survival and that the income earned from each activity, including farming, was usually very low. Here again I will use the story of Bosco and his wife (and their nine children) to provide an example. Every morning Bosco went to 'the living tree' in the hope that there would be people looking for day labourers. He worked as a transporter and his wife performed wage labour in farming. Both activities are subject to seasonal variations, as during the rainy season their labour is not in much demand. For example, Bosco mainly fetched water for people around the village, which during the dry season earned him US\$ 0.05–0.10 per jerrycan, while in the rainy season people paid only about US\$ 0.02. These activities could not sustain his household, so all able members helped out in one way or another. Two of the young children sold potatoes around the village and the oldest daughter still living at home started running a small business from home. She earned around US\$ 1 per day, which made her the household's main income earner.

The other 23% of households in this category had been able to improve their economic situation through a combination of different income sources. These were mainly households in which one of the members had managed to secure a salaried job and was able to invest part of their salary in land or starting a small business. In such cases, this was combined with other activities, for example renting out houses, commercial activities or farming.

Very few households in our sample belonged to the third category, namely households that specialise rather than diversify, and most of them were in expanding towns and trade centres. These households combined agriculture and business as profitable enterprises, reinvesting their surpluses in both activities. How this was combined can be illustrated by the case of Adorathe. When I first met her in 2014, she was a 46-year-old mother of seven whose husband was usually away, working. She told me that she took pride in having set up a successful trade in potatoes and a sorghum beer business with the income from her farming activities. She had used the money she made from potatoes and beer to buy plots of land to increase her farming activities, and now owned one hectare spread over various villages and also rented another hectare of land. She said that she always re-invested her income from agriculture in land, labour and agro-inputs. Additionally, she bought livestock to provide manure for her fields and when she resells them, she makes a profit of US\$ 22–33. When we visited the household again in 2015, Adorathe had moved her sorghum business from a rented house to a shop she owned.

The livelihood strategies of the households described above are the outcome of how rural households in Rwanda are negotiating a changing context, affected by the different transformation policies mentioned earlier. More than 60% of the households in the survey had changed their income-generating activities in the previous 10 years. In addition to changes in the portfolio of income-generating activities, also the income of households had changed considerably in the previous 10 years, with an overall tendency towards income deterioration. A strong correlation (Cramer's V of 0.76) was found between change in activity and change in income. A striking finding is that 65% of the households that had changed their livelihood portfolios had also suffered decreasing incomes. Only 23% had managed to improve their incomes after changing or adjusting their income-generating activities. In general, there was an overall sense of income loss, which was strongest in livelihood categories 1 and 2. In the remote village, for example, where local livelihoods used to be strongly dependent on agricultural activities, 80% of the respondents had suffered a decline in their income.

Current mobility patterns among rural households

The quantitative analysis does not allow statements to be made about the causal relationship between change in income-generating activities and changes in mobility. However, an analysis of the livelihood–mobility histories and FGD shows that the different scenarios of occupational change and diversification go hand in hand with changing patterns of mobility within households. These patterns vary among households and have changed over time.

A vast majority of the households that had changed their livelihood activities also reported changes in their household mobility. Of the households that reported being more mobile compared to 10 years previously, 36% said that this was due to being in a better economic situation. However, 25% attributed their increased mobility to a worsened economic situation. Interestingly, 77% ascribed a decrease in mobility to a deteriorated economic situation in their households. While mobility for the purpose of farming had decreased, in many cases this had been replaced by mobility to facilitate the additional business activities, such as small trade and transport, they engaged in to diversify their livelihoods. One female respondent said that until the government took over all plots of farmland in 2009, they had been farmers, only commuting to their fields. However, after they lost the land, she and her husband added to their livelihood by transporting goods to surrounding service centres and from these centres to the village.

Other households had become more mobile and moved more frequently than before out of necessity. The newly introduced agricultural policies – for example, allowing only one crop per season per plot and requiring the intensive use of agricultural inputs such as fertiliser and expensive seedlings – caused small-scale farmers to struggle to make a living from farming alone. At the same time, we found that people tended to make fewer movements for social purposes and had become more selective in their mobility. One woman said that she used to travel about four times a month to visit family members in Kigali, Musanze and Rubavu; however, she had

reduced these visits to one a month, since she could no longer afford to take a bus four times a month.

These examples show how patterns of mobility are an integral part of the livelihood arrangements of the households in each of the three livelihood categories. Although our findings show that mobility is an important asset in the lives and livelihoods of rural households in Rwanda, 'mobility' does not have the same meaning to all households in our research area. In the following, we describe and analyse the documented mobility patterns from 74 mobility maps drawn by the households who participated in the survey, the FGD and the in-depth interviews. The main mobility flows at the research locations are shown in Figure 3.1.

Households were asked to list the most important movements of each household member and the purpose of those movements, distinguishing between income-generating activities and other purposes, such as education. We regarded the three research locations as the starting point of each movement. The arrows show the direction and the number of times we encountered the same movement in the total sample.

The map illustrates how people engaged in a combination of movements to both rural and urban destinations as part of their livelihood strategies. A few observations can be made on the basis of this map.

First, most movements tended to take place within the region, with 39 movements to the capital, Kigali, registered. While roads and public transport are being extended towards the various corners of Rwanda, public transport was too expensive for many people, limiting their movement to destinations within walking distance. In our sample, 50% of the respondents made all their movements on foot, while 40% used the bus as their main transport mode. Only 10% used a motorbike, bicycle or car as a means of transport. For example, all arrows leaving the remote village represent mobility on foot, since this location is not accessible by vehicle. This means that people sometimes walked for up to three or four hours to reach a destination such as the secondary city of Musanze. Also rural destinations are usually reachable only by walking. For the purpose of this map, the rural destinations are grouped per region, representing the different plots of farmland the households possessed or where traders went to buy livestock and agricultural produce. For example, in Nyabihu many of the rural destinations are located in the southern part of the district, and on this map they are grouped under the location of Kabaya.

Second, the map shows the importance to rural households of secondary cities and smaller urban centres. These towns are important destinations for income-generating activities, as elaborated below, as well as for access to services such as markets, electricity and water.

When we dig deeper into the findings, our data show that these mobile household members are almost as likely to be women as men. In general, women are considered to face more constraints on their movement, as their responsibilities as the caretakers of household and children often confine them to their homes. However, our data show that both men and women of various ages shared the responsibility to contribute to the household income and thus also the need to find income-generating activities in more distant locations. Urban centres provided more wage opportunities for girls, for example as house girls or shopkeepers, in comparison with rural

areas. Moreover, individual mobility behaviour is determined not only by individual needs, but also by the household context. One example is the gendered differences we encountered. The findings show that women were more mobile than men for farming purposes and moved shorter distances on a daily basis, in order to stay closer to their families. For men, daily income-generating activities were more diverse, and they travelled relatively longer distances than women. Age is also a differentiating factor, as parents do not usually allow their daughters to travel alone because they are afraid that they will come home pregnant. Despite this, it was often the girls who were sent out to access services such as water, electricity or other amenities on a weekly basis.

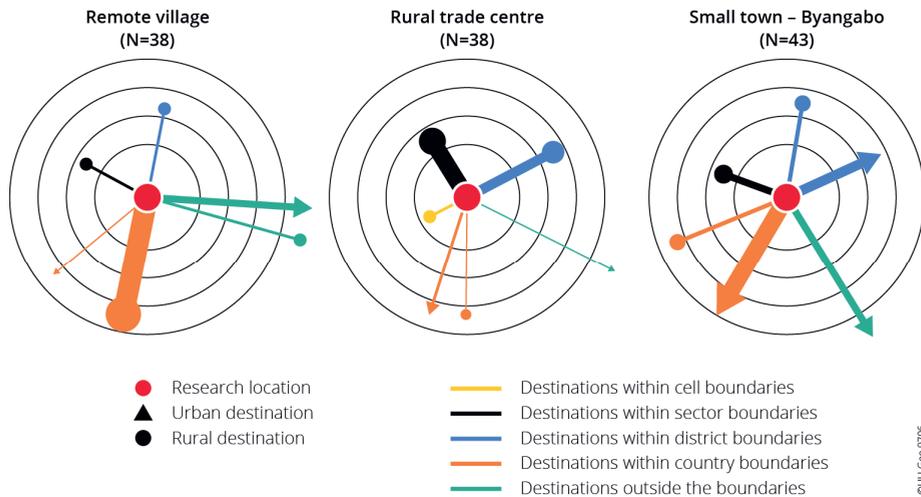
Thus, individual mobility behaviour influences the mobility patterns of other members of the household. Different members can engage in a variety of movements with different purposes, together constructing the household livelihood strategy. In addition, there were also household members who were not mobile at all. Apart from the obvious group of underaged children, the option of moving is not available to or necessary for all household members. Of the non-mobile household members older than 16 in our sample, 39% lived in the small town, 25% in the local trade centre and 36% in the remote village. Some people in this category might be considered as 'not needing' mobility due to either their socioeconomic position or the local availability of what they needed; however, in the more remote areas, the non-mobile household members were mainly those individuals who are 'stuck', namely people who lacked social safety or family networks and did not have the means or strength to be physically mobile.

Mobility and livelihoods

In this section the mobility patterns at the household and the individual level are analysed in further detail, connecting these to livelihood transformation. This is done at the level of each research location, since each is at a different position in the urban hierarchy, resulting in different degrees of accessibility, access to services, and availability of both farm and non-farm income-generating activities. As mentioned, the livelihood strategies of many of the households were a combination of diverse activities and various patterns of mobility.

Our sample of 86 households comprised 455 individuals between the ages of 0 and 94 years. A total of 165 individual household members in 71 households were mobile for reasons such as work, education, services, or visiting friends and relatives, meaning that only 15 households did not have mobile household members; that is, no-one in these households moved outside their places of residence for any of the abovementioned purposes. Because we were investigating mobility patterns related to people's livelihoods, we selected all the mobile household members who were above the minimum working age (which is 16 in Rwanda) and who contributed to their household's livelihood. This left us with a sample of 119 individuals divided over three villages, representing 44% of all household members aged over 16. The mobility patterns for each of the three research locations are depicted in the circles in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1 Main mobility patterns per location



Of the mobile household members in this sample, 36% lived in the small town. This town brings together parts of three villages and is administratively defined as an urban area. As explained in Chapter 2, this gives rise to a rather hybrid space at the interface between town and countryside that has both rural and urban characteristics. For example, in this location we found many households that combined employment in the urban sector with their original farming activities, on either a small or a larger scale. The examples in this emerging town are shown on the right-hand side of Table 4.2, illustrating urban–rural and urban–urban mobility patterns.

As the legend indicates, the centre represents the location and the circles indicate the administrative boundaries that are crossed, being (starting from the centre) the cell, the sector, the district and the country boundary. It is important to note that this does not necessarily represent the physical distance of the movements in kilometres. While many movements took place within district boundaries towards rural destinations, for many households this meant several hours of walking. The destinations are further specified as either rural or urban, indicated by a circle for a rural destination and a triangle for an urban destination at the end of every line that represents these grouped movements.³⁰ The thickness of the lines represents the number of cases counted in relative terms (percentage). These maps are complemented by Table 4.2, which presents a typology distinguishing both temporal and spatial patterns. For each category of spatial pattern (i.e. rural–rural, rural–urban, urban–rural and urban–urban), the patterns are labelled as daily, periodic or seasonal depending on the subject and reason for mobility, which is elaborated for each type. By including aspects of functional differentiation – for example, by distinguishing between the remote village, the rural trade centre and the small town – this

³⁰ For this research, the distinction between rural and urban locations was made according to the administrative status they are officially assigned in the Rwandan urban hierarchy.

typology can serve as an analytical framework for empirical studies on domestic mobility. The percentages given in the table are all relative to the total sample of 119 mobile household members.

Table 4.2 Typology of domestic mobility patterns and purpose of mobility

	Remote village (N=38)		Trade centre (N=38)		Small town (N=43)		
	Rural-rural	Rural-urban	Rural-rural	Rural-urban	Urban-rural	Urban-urban	
Daily commuting 37.7%	N=16 (13.5%) Daily mobility to farm, wage labourers, livestock herders to nearby fields, petty traders selling and transporting milk	N=2 (1.7%) Daily mobility to trade centres and market towns to sell milk and livestock	N=20 (16.8%) Daily mobility of wage labourers, farmers to their fields, small business collecting firewood, teachers to work	N=1 (0.8%) Daily mobility of petty traders to small towns and trade centres	N=4 (3.4%) Daily mobility of farm workers, famers to their fields and wage labourers	N=3 (2.5%) Daily mobility of people owning small businesses, for example selling agricultural inputs	N= 46 (38.6%)
Weekly or monthly basis 53.8%	N=15 (12.6%) Farming on far-away plots, transporting and selling agro-produce, cheese and milk, wage labourers to the fields.	N=5 (4.2%) Small business, sell milk and cheese in trade centres, towns and cities, searching for employment in urban areas	N=6 (5%) Agricultural wage labourers, traders in agricultural produce	N=4 (3.4%) Wage labourers, traders in agricultural produce, to other trade centres and urban markets	N=11 (9.2%) Agricultural wage labourers, farmers to their fields, local traders to buy agro-produce like sorghum and vegetables from rural markets.	N=23 (19.3%) Shop and market vendors to buy supplies, jobs in transport, construction workers, government clerks and salaried employees in public sector.	N=64 (53.8%)

Seasonal 7.6%	N=0	N=0	N=7 (5.9%) Mobility to terracing projects and tea plantation	N=0	N= 2 (1.7%) Farmer to work on the land in the season.	N= 0	N=9 (7.6%)
	N=31 (26%)	N=7 (5.9%)	N=33 (27.8%)	N=5 (4.2%)	N=17 (14.3%)	N=26 (21.8%)	N=119 (100%)

The main destination of people's movements from this town was urban, with over half of the mobile people in this sample moving to other urban centres or cities on a weekly or monthly basis. Due to its location near the main road, many small entrepreneurs, for example, made these movements by bus for business and trade purposes. A lot of these movements were to Musanze, the district capital, where food and other goods are cheaper. Others hoped to find wage labour opportunities in these urban areas. Kigali was another important destination for these purposes. People in the small town also moved to rural destinations, as an FGD revealed a trend whereby people moved to Uganda on a seasonal basis for extended periods of time to work as wage labourers in farming. Others moved to rural destinations within the sector to perform agricultural wage labour or to work on their own land.

Daily commuting formed a much smaller segment of the mobility patterns we encountered in this town, either for farming purposes or people moving to nearby centres and towns as ambulant vendors. Of the household members in this location above the age of 16, 59% did not use mobility to facilitate their income-generating activities. They owned small shops or worked as wage labourers, domestic workers or in the local construction sector, for example as *aides maçon* (bricklayer's assistants), or made a living by renting out residential or commercial property.

In the local trade centre, the main direction of people's movements was rural. Just over half of the respondents who were mobile for income-generating purposes were involved in rural-rural daily commuting. They were mobile for their contracted jobs, almost all of which were as teachers in nearby boarding schools. For many of the inhabitants (44% of all mobile respondents), however, farming was still their main income-generating activity. They moved to their fields on a daily basis, sometimes having to walk for two hours each way. Those who had diversified their livelihoods more, moved to their fields on a weekly or monthly basis or had moved to the countryside to purchase agricultural produce to sell in the centre. As for urban destinations, some shop vendors got their urban supplies on a weekly or sometimes monthly basis from Musanze or Gisenyi in the bordering districts, or from Kigali. Because of the proximity to the Congolese border, a small number of traders travelled to Goma for their supplies. Another important mobility in the village was seasonal labour movements for terracing projects and picking tea for the Nyabihu Tea Estate. Mobility was an important livelihood practice for many in this village. As

one woman said: 'For people who do wage labour activities and farmers, in general they don't stop their travels, because when the agricultural season finishes the other one starts and they have to follow' (FGD 2014). In this location, 49.4% of the sample were not mobile for livelihood purposes. Also here we found domestic workers, small shop owners and construction workers, as well as people engaged in small-scale local commerce and handicrafts.

In the remote village, there was no electricity and no market, which made mobility a necessity both to access services and to make a living. As in the trade centre, the majority of the villagers moved between rural locations on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. The people who commuted on a daily basis moved to rural destinations in bordering districts to farm or herd livestock. However, since the farmlands of the people in this village were often far away from the household and small in size, for many it did not pay off to go there every day. People moved on a weekly or monthly basis as ambulant vendors of wood, milk or cheese, to sell cows at market places, in search of wage labour or to farm. A smaller number also transported milk and cheese to sell in surrounding urban centres or took casual wage labour jobs in addition to self-subsistence farming activities. For the residents of this village, local trade centres were an important destination, because there they could access markets, buy and sell their goods or seek other non-farm income-generating opportunities. Many indicated that while mobility was crucial to their livelihoods, the main constraint on mobility was the lack of proper infrastructure, like a road. Since the village was not accessible by bus, and motorbikes were rather expensive, only a few moved long distances and many did so on foot, walking for up to 2–3 hours a day (FGD 2014). We found that 57.3% of the household members in the sample did not move around in order to make a living. They farmed small plots around their houses, sold milk within the village, or owned a small tea and *amandazi* (fried dough) shop.

To summarise our findings, while a lot of research focuses on urbanisation in Africa and movements from rural to urban areas, we found rural to rural mobility to be the most common spatial pattern, performed by 53.8% of our sample. This is a pattern with a long history in Africa, but it has often been overlooked (see Cottyn et al. 2013). Patterns that have gradually been introduced or enforced throughout history are still prevalent in people's livelihoods; for many, however, the patterns have become more complex with an increasing diversification of destinations and the involvement of different household members. The most common patterns we observed were the daily commuting of wage labourers or farmers to their fields and the circular movements of small traders, who covered relatively short distances. At the same time, with the emergence of medium- to large-sized cities in recent years, circular movements to urban areas had intensified.

Mobility from rural areas remained limited and was mainly performed by small traders and people seeking jobs in urban sectors. Moving up the urban hierarchy, we saw an increase in urban destinations, often facilitated by access to better roads and transport. Here, we mainly found shop and market vendors or traders moving on a weekly or monthly basis to access larger markets and urban suppliers. Although daily commuting was an important temporal pattern for

many, mainly in rural areas (32.8%), we mostly encountered people engaging in a combination of several weekly or monthly movements.

Concluding remarks

Households in Rwanda's countryside are caught between processes of rural urbanisation and agricultural transformation. We assessed the impact of urbanisation and rural transformation policies on rural households through a livelihood lens.

In line with Ilbery (1998) and Berdegué, Proctor and Cazzuffi (2014), our study revealed that changes in livelihood strategies are manifested along two main lines, namely people's increasing dependence on multiple sources of income and an increase in their mobility to distant places in constructing their livelihoods, and that these two lines are often combined. While we observed a growing number of people moving out of agriculture into rural non-farm activities and informal jobs in small towns – the 'missing middle' (Christiaensen and Todo 2014) – we also clearly observed that the dynamics of change have not benefitted everyone equally and do not necessarily result in people escaping poverty, as also noted by Haggblade et al. (2010).

We discerned three categories of livelihood strategies (i.e. survival, diversification and specialisation) employed by households in the region in reaction to the changing context, and found that only a minority (15%) of households had managed to improve their economic situation through either specialisation or diversification. The availability of and access to land seems to be a determining factor. Just as Frequin-Gresh, White and Losch (2012) found in their research on rural transformation and structural change in rural agricultural-based regions in Africa and Meso-America, we found a strong relationship between livelihood strategies and the income of rural households. This relationship is characterised by an inverted U-pattern, showing that poorer households are forced to diversify in order to mitigate risks, while more well-off households with more capital at their disposition begin to specialise.

Mobility is a significant asset that people use to benefit from opportunities in different localities by constructing spatially dispersed ties and connections. As we have noted elsewhere (Cottyn et al. 2013; Cottyn and Nijenhuis 2016; Steel et al. 2019; Steel, Cottyn and Lindert 2017), mobility flows have become more complex due to increasing diversification in terms of spatiality, temporality and variety of actors. Countering the persistent idea that rural–urban migration is the main response to rural transformation, in spatial terms, rural–rural movements appear to be the most important mobility patterns, since many households remain involved in farming or farm-related work. That being said, the increased multi-locality and multi-activity of rural households' livelihoods have contributed to the consolidation of small towns. For many rural households, rural–urban linkages, whether short or long term, are part of the daily reality, as household members travel to small towns and service centres to access consumer goods, services and labour opportunities – patterns that illustrate the impact and importance of the new urban hierarchy the government of Rwanda is actively promoting.

These findings stress the need to pay attention to rural areas in order to understand current urbanisation processes and to do justice to the reality of those households that remain in rural areas by including other forms of mobility, such as commuting and temporary and circular migration (see also Steel et al. 2019, where we looked into mobility and small-town development in four countries in sub-Saharan Africa).

In addition to adding to the understanding of urbanisation in small towns and the role these towns play in the livelihoods of rural households, we have also shown the importance of connectivity in shaping rural livelihoods and potential pathways out of poverty. However, while mobility is an important asset, in analysing its role we need to recognise that it is a resource that not everyone has an equal relationship with (Skeggs 2004: 49). Some people are able to be mobile, some are forced to be mobile, while others would like to be mobile but cannot. This issue is related to the politics of mobility (Cresswell 2010), since mobility is constrained by power inequalities and social relations. This also means that economic returns differ, as shown in Table 4.1: limited economic opportunities limit the options an individual has, and hence limit the economic returns from their activities.

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Chapter 5

Livelihood trajectories in a context of repeated displacement: Empirical evidence from Rwanda

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Introduction

Africa is a continent on the move. It experiences all possible migratory configurations, from labour migration to refugee flows and displacements. While international political and policy attention is mainly focused on the flows of migrants and refugees into Europe, far more people move within the continent, and even within the own country as a result of forced displacement. Africa has more countries affected by displacement than any other continent or region: in 2016, more than 3.9 million new displacements resulting from conflict, violence and disasters were recorded (IDMC 2017). Displacement, forced migration and resettlement in Africa have been attributed to violent conflict, land and agrarian reforms, forced resettlement, environmental hazards and conservation measures (Zoomers 2011). Displacement disrupts all aspects of people's lives, breaking social, cultural and economic networks that are critical to sustaining livelihoods, income, land ownership and household income. Although those who are affected by these forces are generally considered victims, this does not mean that they lack the agency to react to them. The specificities of each context affect the conditions of possibility for lives and livelihoods, and for patterns of inclusion and exclusion (Hammar 2014). Many studies of displacement and resettlement have adopted a livelihood approach, from both an academic and a practitioner's viewpoint. Livelihood studies have been undertaken in response to conflict (Lischer 2007; Corbin and Hall 2019), state-implemented resettlement schemes (Potts 2008; Wayessa and Nygren 2016) and natural hazards and climate change adaptation (Arnall et al. 2013; Wayessa and Nygren 2016). However, studies typically look at only one displacement or at an event attributed to only one cause, and less is known about the effects on people's livelihoods of multiple and repeated displacements over time.

Rwanda's history is characterised by patterns of both voluntary mobility and multiple displacements, resulting from the many episodes of violent conflicts the country has faced in the past, and more recently from its post-conflict human settlement policies and environment-related policies. Consequently, the life trajectories of many Rwandans are characterised by multiple experiences of displacement and involuntary migration. Instead of treating each displacement separately, this chapter analyses the effects of repeated displacement on people's livelihoods and adaptive capacities. As Chapter 4 illustrated, mobility is an important expression of Rwandan households' strategies to bridge the rural–urban divide. This chapter recognises the importance of historical patterns in understanding the present, as it is continuities in the past that give meaning to those mobilities today. In order to do so, the chapter provides empirical evidence from a case study in Rwanda's northwest region where people share experiences of repeated displacement and resettlement over time caused by conflict, settlement/resettlement policies, and environmental and climate change adaptation policies.

The following section first presents an overview of the methodology used to collect the data, and then a brief review of the literature on displacement and livelihoods. Section 4 provides the context of this chapter by discussing the historical patterns of voluntary mobility and multiple displacements that have affected Rwandan society. Sections 5–7 tell the stories of three local households to illustrate the shared experiences of displacements and resettlements in the

village, as well as the varied trajectories in terms of livelihood reconstruction and resilience. Section 8 presents some conclusions.

Methodology

The empirical data presented in this chapter were collected in one location in the northwest of Rwanda in 2014 by means of a household livelihood survey, household livelihood and mobility histories, and FGDs. The data from the survey and the FGDs provided an insight into the general picture of the village, revealing the history of multiple displacements that the households in this village shared. The main source of data for this chapter, however, was the livelihood–mobility histories. Table 5.1 outlines the demographic characteristics of the 10 respondents who participated in the livelihood–mobility histories, as well as their shared displacement history.

Table 5.1 Household characteristics and history of displacement and resettlement.

	Year of birth	Number of household members	Female-headed households	Moved to DRC ³¹	Moved back to Rwanda	Moved to Gishwati	Resettled in the research location	Current sources of income
1	1953	6		1941	1996	1999	2000	Herding livestock Farming Selling milk Remittances
2	1953	3	X	1959	1994 ³²	-	1998	Farm wage labour
3	1951	9		1960	1995	1998	2000	Farming Small business
4	1926	4		1959	1994	1998	2003	Herding livestock Wage labour
5	1975	5		1959	1996	1998	2002	Farming Herding livestock
6	1976	5	X	1994 ³³	1994	-	2003	Farming Wage labour Cleaner at health centre
7	1944	6		1946	1994	1995	2000	Milk business

³¹ Respondents 5, 8 and 9 were born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), after their parents fled there in 1950 and 1959.

³² Some villagers moved directly to the Gishwati area after returning to Rwanda in 1994 (for example, respondents 2 and 6).

³³ Respondent 6 fled with her parents to the DRC during the 1994 genocide, but they returned to Rwanda a month later.

								Farming
8	1970	5	X	1959	1994	1994	2008	Farming Herding livestock Remittances
9	1953	4	X	1950	1996	1998	1999	Farming Small trade Sorghum business
10	1930	2		1950	1995	1998	2000	Farming Remittances

Displacement, resettlement and adaptive capacity

The operational concept of displacement was developed after World War II to refer exclusively to refugees. The focus on refugees meant that the much wider range of forms of and people affected by displacement – such as forced resettlements by government policies, projects of states and private corporations, natural hazards, etc. – were overlooked. In her book on displacement economies in Africa, Hammar (2014) pointed to the paradoxes of displacement, as it entails experiences of dislocation and movement and of confinement and ‘stuckness’, as well as opportunities, impossibility, destruction and creativity. These are unevenly experienced by the affected actors and produce or reproduce social, economic and physical spaces, relations and practices. As a relational concept, Hammar (2014: 9) defined displacement as ‘enforced changes in interweaving spatial, social and symbolic conditions and relations’.

A livelihood approach is a useful concept when considering the impacts of a disaster or disruptive event, since it helps to describe how people draw on and transform assets or resources to cope with these sources of stress (Arnall et al. 2013). Households construct their livelihoods within a broader socioeconomic and physical context using various sorts of social and material assets (Carney 1998; Scoones 1998). Five types of capital assets (natural, human, social, physical and financial capital) stand central to the livelihood approach, and households combine and transform these assets in different ways in order to build livelihoods for themselves (Potts 2008). These strategies and their outcomes are in turn influenced by policies and institutions that define the context in which people create and recreate their livelihoods. The effects of displacement on people’s livelihoods and livelihood resilience have been studied in a variety of contexts and locations, looking at violent conflict, development-induced displacement and the effects of climate change (Lischer 2007; Potts 2008; Jaysawal and Saha 2018; Rowan 2017). These studies saw displacement as a shock to households’ livelihood capital stock, which the displaced households counter by adopting new capital accumulation strategies. Without resettlement and livelihood planning aid, this usually leads to an overall decline in living conditions and wellbeing (Potts 2008; Arnall et al. 2013; O’Reilly 2015; Hong, Singh and Ramic 2009). Many of these studies focused on the importance of access to assets, such as natural capital, the deprivation of which more often greatly affects poorer and vulnerable households, which mainly rely on common

property resources like forests, rivers, fields and grazing grounds for their livelihoods (Jaysawal and Saha 2018). Others stressed the dimension of involuntary displacement as a removal from social capital, for example in the form of kinship links or associations (Potts 2008; Newbury 2005; Kiboro 2017). Most of these studies, however, looked at the effects of one particular displacement or event. While some researchers have investigated the impacts of protracted displacement on the livelihood resilience of the displaced, for example caused by sustained conflict in the Great Lakes Region (Kesmaecker-Wissing and Pagot 2015; Beytrison and Kalis 2013), less has been done to analyse the effects of multiple and repeated displacements over time on people's livelihoods.

The way people cope with and recover from disruptive events depends on what compelled the changes, and who is affected by them and in what ways. The specificities of each context affect the conditions of and possibilities for livelihood restoration, and the adaptive strategies of those affected (Hammar 2014; Kabra 2018). The adaptive capacity of the individuals and households affected is determined by the pool of assets and resources they can mobilise to diversify their incomes (DFID 2011; Speranza, Wiesmann and Rist 2014). The term 'adaptive capacity' is often used interchangeably with the term 'resilience', and in relation to livelihoods it refers to the ability to cope with and recover from such pressures, and to maintain or even enhance assets and income under adverse conditions (Smith, Huq and Klein 2003; Speranza, Wiesmann and Rist 2014). Some households possess more adaptive capacity given their better access to capital, while others remain vulnerable because they are constrained in accessing resources (Thulstrup 2015).

In order to identify and understand the risk and protective factors that affect the ability to overcome adversity, the focus should be on strengths rather than deficits. Risk factors are conditions that lead to decreased livelihood outcomes, while protective factors are the skills, resources, support and coping strategies that increase the chances of positive livelihood outcomes and of dealing more effectively with stressful or disruptive events (Hammar 2014: 4). Linking livelihood approaches to resilience thinking can enhance the understanding of livelihood dynamics, by putting people and their capabilities to cope with shocks and improve their adaptive capacity at the centre of analysis (Speranza, Wiesmann and Rist 2014).

Mobility and displacement: The Rwandan context

Rwanda's history is characterised by patterns of both voluntary mobility and multiple displacements, which changed and are still changing the country's social, cultural and economic landscape. In response to forced labour movements during colonial times and the ethnic violence at the end of the 1950s – when the country made the transition from a Belgian colony with a Tutsi monarchy to a Hutu-dominated republic – many Rwandans fled to neighbouring countries.³⁴ Refugees who left Rwanda between 1959 and 1973 are generally referred to as 'old caseload

³⁴ Also referred to as the 'Rwandan Revolution' or 'Social Revolution'.

refugees'. Protracted outbreaks of violence led to further displacements until 1994, when the genocide left up to two million people displaced both outside and inside the country. After the genocide, Rwanda continued to suffer repeated waves of displacement and resettlement. Old caseload refugees started returning to Rwanda, often after more than 30 years of exile, just as 'new caseload refugees' fled the country.³⁵

In the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, around one million old caseload refugees returned to Rwanda and had to be given somewhere to settle.³⁶ At first, there was no housing problem for these returnees, as by the end of the genocide many new caseload refugees had fled the country, leaving behind abandoned houses and land. After 1996, these refugees were repatriated and land had to be shared out. As mentioned in the introduction, the *imidugudu* ('villagisation') programme was introduced to relocate new and old caseload refugees. It was then used as a security measure to cope with an insurgency in Rwanda's northwest region in 1997/8. In the end, it became the country's guiding spatial planning policy. The policy still regulates people's settlement options, relocating all Rwandans living in scattered homesteads to government-created villages. The effects of this resettlement policy have been commented on both positively – claiming higher levels of security – and negatively, pointing at the level of coercion that was applied by the government and the effects on people's access to land and basic services, which was promised but often not delivered (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 1999). Displacement in Rwanda is not only a thing of the past: although the impact of past displacements continues to be felt in society, Rwandans are still subject to various forms of relocation. These relocations often remain invisible, since they are officially not regarded as involuntary.

The process of relocation described above is seen by some as a new phase of displacement, while others (e.g., the UNHCR) regard it as permanent resettlement, which ends these people's status as being displaced (Norwegian Refugee Council 2005). Although many rural households who moved because of the resettlement policy are no longer counted as displaced, they remain a particularly vulnerable group as new drivers of displacement emerge, such as environmental concerns. Natural hazards and the consequences of climate change are threatening rural people's lives and livelihoods, especially in the hilly landscape in the northwest of the country, forcing many to move. In 2018, landslides caused by heavy rains killed 200 people in Rwanda's northern and western provinces (BBC 2018). Climate change and the environment are considered crucial issues in the government's Vision 2020 development programme and its successor Vision 2050, which has led to their prominence on the political agenda (Gebauer and Doevenspeck 2015). The government's environmental concerns were translated into environmental and climate change adaptation policies, leading to the resettlement of many rural households in affected areas. The Gishwati forest area was one of the places selected for the resettlement of returnees, and a large part of the forest was cleared for this purpose. Many of the people who settled there were Tutsi refugees who had left the country during the previous 40 years. They

³⁵ 'New caseload refugees' refers to those refugees who fled Rwanda in 1994.

³⁶ As declared by the Arusha Peace Agreement, returnees whose mother tongue was Kinyarwanda were granted citizenship and a place to settle (Gebauer and Doevenspeck 2015: 99).

had returned to Rwanda in 1994 and were assigned a plot of land. The rapid clearing of the forest area and the resulting environmental hazards led the government to introduce policies that forced people out of the forest to conserve and reforest the area (Gebauer and Doevenspeck 2015). People had to move into grouped settlements assigned by the villagisation programme.

As this short historical account illustrates, the life trajectories of many Rwandans are characterised by multiple experiences of displacement. The empirical part of this chapter looks at one particular case study where households have experienced different, repeated displacements and resettlements.

A shared history of displacement and enforced resettlement

The case study in this chapter concerns a village bordering Gishwati forest in the hills of Nyabihu district. It is a fairly remote village that is accessible only by motorbike or 4 × 4 from the surrounding main service centres. Around the village are very large grazing fields and small plots of farmland. There are also some small shops, and people produce and sell milk and cheese (there is a *fromagerie* – a cheese factory). The stories of Gaspard, Celestin and Mary³⁷ in the boxes below illustrate the experiences in terms of displacements that many households in the village share. In many cases, rapid adaptive strategies were needed to cope with these repeated relocations that entailed a changing social, economic and even political environment.

Box 5.1 Gaspard

Gaspard was born in 1926 in Rwanda's western province. His parents were farmers and had a large herd of cows. In 1959, at the start of the Rwandan Revolution, the family left everything behind and moved to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to start over. In Congo, Gaspard met Verène, and they married in 1973. She, too, was born in the western province, in 1950. Her parents were also born there; they were coffee farmers, at a time when there was no monetary economy and people bartered goods. They also kept livestock. When Verène was nine, she and her family had migrated to the DRC, leaving all their cows behind in Rwanda. In Congo, Gaspard and Verène lived in a house belonging to their employer, a farmer; the women worked in the fields and the men herded his cows as wage labourers. Later on, they got some plots of land in lease–lend, on which they farmed. By then, Gaspard had also bought some cows of his own. In 1994, they returned to Rwanda and again had to leave behind everything they had. They lived in Musanze for two months and then moved on to the eastern province, where many plots of land and houses were unused because their owners had fled to Tanzania. The sector officer told them they could use these properties until the owners came back. According to Verène, they never felt they were considered refugees when they lived in the eastern province. They spent almost four years there, until the owners returned in 1998. First the houses were shared by the owners and the occupants, and the latter had to share the land

³⁷ All names in this chapter have been changed to guarantee anonymity.

and the harvest with the former. This situation was not sustainable and again they had to leave the land behind and move, this time to the refugee camp near Bigogwe, western province. Since they did not own any land or have any money or a business, they and other refugees decided to move closer to Gishwati forest. They cleared plots of land and grew potatoes, which proved to be a very profitable activity and they were thus able to buy many cows. In 2001, however, the *bourgemestre* (mayor under the previous administrative system) told them they had to leave the forest. To make people leave their fields, they were told that if they continued farming there, they would suffer many diseases. By 2003, all the land had been officially reclaimed by the state. This is when they moved to the village. The redistribution of arable and grazing land did not happen until 2013, so again Gaspard and Verène had to depend on wage labour for their survival. They had to sell many cows to survive that period. When I met them, the household income could barely cover their basic needs. Gaspard was now too old to help in the household, while Verène was disabled and could only take care of some household duties. Of their six children, only two were not yet married and contributed to the household income. The daughter who still lived at home moved around looking for wage labour, digging terraces or selling milk for richer households in the village. Their unmarried son had decided to move to Kigali and was currently living there. Although he did not have a permanent job, he sent money home whenever he could.

(Gaspar, interviewed by author 2014)

Box 5.2 Celestin

Celestin was born in 1953 in Congo. His parents, who were born in Nyabihu district, fled there in 1941. In 1976, Celestin married Floride, a Rwandan who was also born in the DRC, in 1958. In Congo, they farmed large plots of land and kept livestock. They owned around 30 cows. In 1996, Celestin and Floride were repatriated to Rwanda, which resulted in the loss of all their cows. They took up residence in a small settlement in Nyabihu district in the house of a new caseload refugee. They used the land for farming and bought five new cows. During the 1996–1998 civil war, however, most of their cows were killed and the house was burned down by the FDLR (Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, an armed Hutu rebel group). As a consequence, the household moved to the Mukamira trade centre. They could not farm there, so they set up a beer-selling business. As old caseload refugees, in 1999 the government assigned them farmland in Gishwati forest and they started to farm again. Their relative prosperity was short lived, however, as the combination of Imidugudu and environmental policies forced them to move away again in 2000. Floride and the children moved to the new village bordering the forest, while Celestin stayed behind to take care of their livestock and farmland. More cases are documented of people circumventing the government's prohibition of land use during this period, for example by tending their fields at night (Gebauer and Doevenspeck 2015: 101). In 2009, Celestin joined his family after the government confiscated the plots of land to redistribute them amongst the community. Until they got some plots back in 2014, Celestin and his family had to find wage labour opportunities to sustain their

livelihood. During those years, Celestin sold many of his cows and when we spoke, he had only three left. Apart from selling the calves he got from his three cows, he farmed the eight small plots he had been given, which were a two-hour walk from his current house. He said he had seen his household income decrease drastically. They used to grow Irish potatoes and beans that they sold at the market and used as subsistence, but now they had to grow crops prescribed under the new National Agricultural Policy (2004) on a much smaller plot of land. Celestin said he could not be bothered to walk the two hours to his land, since there was so little of it. He sent wage workers there, but had stopped considering farming as a real activity for himself. Of his seven children, one helped him to take care of the livestock, and his daughter, Alliance, took milk to Rubavu to sell. They sometimes received remittances in the form of food from friends and family to supplement the household income.
(Celestin, interviewed by author 2014)

Box 5.3 Mary

Mary was born in the Masisi refugee camp in Congo in 1970. Her parents were also born in Congo. Her father worked at a tea company and her mother farmed, kept livestock (including a lot of cows) and had her own sorghum beer business. When we spoke, her father still had plots of land in Congo, but she could no longer use them since they were located in an insecure area. Mary left her parents' household in 1985 when she got married. She followed in the entrepreneurial footsteps of her mother and a year later started her own sorghum beer and agricultural produce business. Her husband kept cows. In Congo, they owned a lot of plots and livestock, but they had to leave everything behind when they were chased back to Rwanda in 1994. Mary recounted how it was very hard to start a new life from nothing. They struggled to adapt to the miserable conditions they had ended up in, but little by little they had recovered through the sorghum beer business she had started with the help of her sister. Then, the 1998 war came along. Mary's house was burned down and for two years she had no income, which she said was the worst period of her life. These repeated outbreaks of violence destroyed the economic status of her household. After she got about 15 plots of land in Gishwati forest, the household income recovered again. Her luck was short lived, however, as in 2008 she had to move out of the forest as a consequence of the government's resettlement scheme. Again, her livelihood was disrupted, until she got some plots back in 2013. However, the plots were a lot smaller than the ones she used to have. Yet again she managed to recover through the income of her sorghum beer business. She bought a plot of land and built a house, and now cultivated a tiny plot of land, owned two cows and continued to run her small sorghum beer business. She managed to get a US\$ 346 loan from a Umurenge SACCO (savings and credit cooperative) that she intended to invest in her agricultural activities. Mary was a single mother: she separated from her first husband and her second husband had passed away. Of her six children, two sons had moved to Congo to start a business selling clothes. The other children were either studying or helping their mother with domestic work and the

sorghum business. The main income in the household came from Mary's activities. It was supplemented by occasional remittances from her sons.
(Mary, interviewed by author 2014)

Reconstructing livelihoods after multiple displacements

The lives of people in this village have been impacted by repeated displacements caused by Rwanda's conflict history, its resettlement policy and more recently the government's environmental conservation policies. Each time they have been uprooted from their productive environment. The survey and the FGDs revealed that most households in this village were old caseload refugees who had returned from the DRC. They share a history of displacement and enforced resettlements, for some dating back to 1959 as the stories above illustrate. The household survey shows that apart from younger children who were born in the village, all the respondents had moved there from elsewhere.

All 10 respondents had spent most of their childhood and early adulthood in the DRC, as their parents had fled there with their households in the 1950s. In the DRC, many had managed to build sustainable livelihoods thanks to the abundance of farmland. Six of the ten respondents reported that their households owned large herds of cows – an animal that has a very symbolic role in Rwandan history and culture. Despite their position as refugees having fled violent conflict, and many living in refugee camps, their access to natural capital enabled households to accumulate financial capital and increase the wellbeing of their families. In 1994, these old caseload refugees returned to Rwanda, re-entering the country in the footsteps of the RPF (the current ruling political party in Rwanda). People left all their possessions behind to rebuild a life in Rwanda. Some opted to settle in small trading centres, while others occupied the houses of people who had fled the country during the genocide. Others were temporarily accommodated in refugee camps. In the northwest region, the 1996–1998 civil war again disrupted their fragile livelihoods. Livestock were killed and houses were burned down, and the feeling of great insecurity prevented people from farming their plots of land or seeking income-generating activities. Coming 'home' to a situation of unsafety and uncertainty restricted people's ability to reaccumulate capital and rebuild their livelihoods to their previous state.

After this period of protracted displacement, the households in this village were given plots of land in the Gishwati area, where they were allowed to live and farm, due to their status as old caseload refugees. This process of post-conflict resettlement planning again gave people access to natural capital in the form of land, which has been central to their livelihood strategies. Households were able to reconstruct their livelihoods and accumulate different types of capital. The very fertile plots allowed many to build a very profitable livelihood based on farming, and the stability of their situation allowed them to build stronger social networks. As the stories illustrate, this is a time that all respondents associated with increasing incomes and wellbeing. Yet again, because the government prohibited farming in the Gishwati area as one of its 'climate change adaptation interventions', people lost the productive resources crucial to their

livelihoods, and they were forcibly resettled under the villagisation policy. As part of this intervention, the surrounding plots of land were confiscated for redistribution among the residents. This lengthy process caused many to lose their main source of income for up to 10 years, and forced people to use and deplete the assets they had accumulated during the previous years and become more inventive in their livelihood strategies. As a consequence, people had to turn to the uncertainty of wage labour or even move to refugee camps in Huye, Nyamagabe, Gicyumbe or Karongi, or go back to the DRC. People were asked to choose between grazing land or arable land, which determined their future livelihoods. As people in the village reported, those who had 10 or more cows could get a large plot of grazing land; if not, they had to settle for arable land (FGD 2014). Celestin had lost almost all his cows, and so he could only make a claim on arable land. When I met him, he had three cows and could not have any more because he did not have enough grazing land. Cows are very symbolic assets in Rwanda, and having to sell his to survive this period was a particularly sensitive issue for Gaspard. Since many lost their cattle as a consequence of these repeated events dispossessing them of their assets, the majority of people had to opt for arable land. This led to people owning very small plots, often terraces of barely eight by two metres.

Figure 5.1 Local woman on her farming plot. Behind her is grazing land. (picture by Paul van Lindert)



To recover one's livelihood in the wake of exposure to shocks and stresses, it is crucial to own and have access to resources. The stories illustrate the crucial role of access to natural capital for these households' livelihoods, as well as its importance in Rwanda's post-conflict reconstruction. The stories show that as long as people had access to land, this protective factor enabled them to cope and to recover their livelihood activities of pastoralism and farming. Since the last forced

displacement from Gishwati forest deprived them of their productive resources, people have had to be more creative and versatile to reconstruct their livelihoods. Although the livelihood activities of the households in this village have historically been based on farming or livestock activities, the livelihood histories of the respondents showed increasingly diversified livelihood strategies; for example, they engaged in extra activities, such as wage labour or small businesses. Historical livelihood trajectories, in which rapid adaptive strategies were often needed to cope with repeated relocations, can affect the ability to quickly adapt and recover. For some, it was just another ordeal they had to endure, as they have done so many times before. Eliphace, a 63-year-old father of 10 children whose story shows many similarities to that of Gaspard, put it this way: 'Even the poor people here can adopt and survive. We all barely survived during the last five years, without land and job opportunities' (Eliphace, interviewed by author 2014). He had always been a farmer, but since the plots they had received in 2014 were too small to produce enough food for his family, he had been forced to diversify his income-generating activities and engage in some minor business activities, such as selling milk and cheese, to survive. For others, such protective factors as entrepreneurial skills had made them more resilient, enhancing their adaptive capacity; an example is Mary, the woman with a sorghum beer business. At the same time, these historical trajectories also influenced people's adaptive capacity in a more negative way. When discussing the livelihood opportunities available to people today during the FGD, the women pointed out that because most of the men in the village were generally only used to taking care of livestock, there was little else that they could do. Natural assets needed to be substituted with other assets, mainly social or human capital, to which not everyone had equal access.

The stories in the three boxes above show that experiences of displacement can induce varied trajectories in terms of livelihood reconstruction. It is often not just the spatial dislocation that poses a big challenge to people's adaptive capacity. The analysis revealed that age also plays a role in people's ability to get back on their feet and construct or reconstruct sustainable livelihoods, while also having to adjust to a rapidly transforming society in terms of economic, spatial and social configurations. Households with younger members showed more creativity and capacity to combine different capitals into new viable livelihood strategies. The story of Gaspard illustrates that at a certain age people lack the physical capacity (or human capital) to rebuild what they had and they have to rely more on their social capital. At the other end of the spectrum, the younger generation have their own way of dealing with adverse circumstances. In one of the discussions, male and female youths reflected on the activities that were available to them in order to start building their own lives and families. Since some of them had been working for a government terracing project, upcoming development projects often formed the basis of their hopes for employment. There were rumours of village upgrading programmes and the reforestation of Gishwati forest. 'If the situation stays the same as today, this village cannot provide a future for young people. We need a new infrastructural project or a market, otherwise young people will leave.' (FGD youth 2014).

Local wage labour was often not given to them, as many did not consider youths to be serious workers. Since their parents already struggled with land scarcity, many had given up hope of ever possessing their own land for farming in or around this village. As the above quotation suggests, many youngsters considered looking for opportunities elsewhere and moving to places closer to the main road, trade centres or even the capital, Kigali. Others indicated that they would rather move to Congo, Uganda or Tanzania, where land is still available.

It is clear that some households had limited access to capital in comparison with others, and hence less adaptive capacity. The livelihood–mobility histories showed that for all households, this latest displacement had severely altered their livelihoods and their economic situation. Being deprived of their familiar productive resources, they struggled to rebuild sustainable and satisfying livelihoods. More access to human or social capital, having resident children of working age and/or an extra skillset, slightly increased a household’s adaptive capacity.

‘You may not have money, but you have legs to move’³⁸

In the present research, specific attention was paid to the mobility patterns of households. In addition to being forced to move to new places, these displacements also generate other forms of mobility. In this village, not only livelihood activities and income but also the mobility patterns of the households had changed, as revealed interviews and the FGD. The main reason given for this change was a deteriorating economic situation. The loss of land was the most important cause of a reduced income. When they were physically isolated from their previous livelihoods and productive resources, many respondents felt the need for mobility. The men saw the biggest change in mobility when they replaced the walks to their plots in Gishwati forest with trips to the small centres of Kora and Jenda in pursuit of alternative sources of income, because their farmland, productivity and income had decreased (FGD 2014). As one woman said: ‘When you are ready to die, you go away to look for wage labour.’ (FGD 2014). In this context, by ‘ready to die’ she meant when you do not have food for several days and do not own land or any other property, you have no choice. Looking at the baseline survey, most of the movements were circular in character with people moving on a daily or weekly basis. This was further confirmed by the more in-depth household mobility histories, as many mobile household members moved to other rural destinations where they farmed, traded milk and cheese or found casual wage labour. Although mobility can also be viewed as a strategy for accumulation, in this village it was clear that in most cases it was a way spreading risks or a survival mechanism when other opportunities were not locally available. Human capital, in the form of mobile household members, proved important to the adaptive capacity of households when coping with a vulnerability context of displacement or resettlement.

Despite what the title of this section suggests, not all household members had ‘legs to move’.³⁹ Often the mobility of household members put an extra burden on those who were less

³⁸ Quotation from FGD with male heads of households, 2014.

³⁹ Quotation from FGD with male heads of households, 2014.

mobile, because of their labour and social responsibilities. During the FGD, some women said that they used to move around working for temporary construction projects, such as health centres or terracing. However, others said that as they were widows and the heads of households, they could not move that easily as they are responsible for both household duties and providing an income. Furthermore, the elderly and the sick were not able to move around in search of work, and they often had to depend on their children. Gaspard's household is an example of this, as illustrated above. These households often organised themselves in such a way as to benefit from opportunities that were available in different locations along the rural–urban continuum, pooling their income, as I addressed in previous publications on rural livelihoods and mobility in Rwanda (Cottyn and Nijenhuis 2016; Steel, Cottyn and Lindert 2017). As the story of Gaspard suggests, several households had expanded their areas of operation by engaging in livelihood activities and social relations outside their places of residence. Furthermore, Celestin had a son who lived in Kigali and a daughter who spent extensive periods of time staying with relatives in Musanze. Having a social network or relatives extending over the rural–urban continuum is often crucial for this type of arrangement. When discussing multi-local strategies during the FGD, one woman pointed out that also here their history of displacement played a role. She did not have any family members in Rwanda to whom she could send her daughter, which is a problem that many of the 1959 returnees were facing. Nevertheless, it was obvious that physical mobility formed an important part of the lives and livelihoods of many households in this village. As part of the historical livelihood trajectories of these households, intensified mobility flows and circulations are shaping this village and its possible development path. Real articulations of social and material relations between various spatial scales at the household level are interactions through which place and space are constantly constructed, and local development can no longer be regarded in the context of one fixed setting (Zoomers, Leung and Westen 2016).

Conclusions

The present research investigated how repeated displacement and resettlement has affected people's lives and livelihood trajectories in Rwanda and the importance of the various capitals they employ when adapting to adverse circumstances. To this purpose, an analysis was made of the effects of multiple and repeated displacements on rural households' adaptive capacity in one particular case study in the northwest region of Rwanda. These households have faced forced displacements dating back to 1959, caused by outbreaks of violent conflict, resettlement policies, and environmental hazards or conservation measures. Although the problem explored here is very local in terms of lived experience, the findings can have a broader relevance for studies on the impact of involuntary displacement on livelihoods. A longitudinal study following these households throughout the experiences of displacement could establish the exact assets and capitals of the households, how they have been employed towards reconstructing their livelihoods, and their livelihood outcomes. However, since this is a practical challenge that would

be difficult to overcome, a qualitative approach focusing on the historical livelihood trajectories of the households affected proves to be a valuable method. This could be further explored and developed in future research on the effects of displacement on people's livelihood and adaptive capacity.

The households in this case study were operating in a context of vulnerability characterised by repeated displacements, within which they did or did not have access to certain assets or capitals. Depending on the prevailing social, institutional and policy environment, these assets gained or lost value and weight, shaping the strategies employed by the households to repeatedly reconstruct their livelihoods. The findings show that although the households in this case study shared a specific history of repeated displacements, the historical livelihood trajectories of individual households seemed to matter when looking at the capacity of households to deal with or recover from these situations of stress and shock. While they all had to cope with similar risk factors – namely being deprived of their productive resources, such as land and livestock – protective factors at the individual household level often determined people's adaptive capacity.

The literature on the effects of displacement on people's livelihoods have shown how deprivation of crucial assets, such as natural capital and social capital, lead to an overall decline in living conditions and wellbeing (Potts 2008; Carney 1998; O'Reilly 2015; Hong, Singh and Ramic 2009). This suggests that in the case of multiple or repeated displacement, affected households and individuals might end up caught in a downward spiral, having to continuously reaccumulate capital and reconstruct their livelihoods. The empirical evidence shows that the livelihood outcomes of an event of displacement or resettlement depend on the vulnerability context, as well as the structure determining access to crucial resources. In line with previous studies on the effects of displacement on livelihoods in the developing world (Jaysawal and Saha 2018), the findings in this case study show that the ability of the displaced to adjust to their new surroundings is largely influenced by their access to natural capital. However, not all displacements that the households in this case study had experienced necessarily had a negative livelihood outcome. Where one capital – in this case, natural capital like land and livestock – was abundant, households managed to reconstruct their livelihoods with outcomes often surpassing the previous state. Land and other natural resources are an important asset in the historical livelihood trajectories of the households in this case study. It is a crucial and symbolic issue in Rwanda's post-conflict reconstruction, as land governance has become a challenging issue in the context of multiple groups of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons with different claims to the land. The policies that manage the distribution of land, which are central to the Rwandan government's post-conflict agenda, are important processes that influence and manage people's access to natural capital.

Looking at the interplay between the various livelihood capitals that substitute for the lost natural resources, two types were found to be crucial to people's adaptive capacity: social capital in the form of horizontal connections, family support through remittances and community solidarity; and human capital, in the form of entrepreneurial skills and household members able

to work. Even though these two capitals prove important to the capacity of the households to adapt, the successive loss of the productive resources in combination with the changing social and economic conditions in which they have to secure an income, diminishes the ability of many households to keep employing these capitals to reconstruct a sustainable livelihood. Being unable to rise above the level of survival often forces them to become increasingly creative and flexible in their coping strategies. This is another interpretation and illustration of what Hammar (2014) called the paradox of displacement, which entails experiences of dislocation and movement, destruction and creativity. In this case study, the use of mobility as an extra asset is one of the main expressions of such creativity. Although mobility can also be viewed as a strategy for accumulation, in this case study it is clear that for the majority it was a way of spreading risks or a survival mechanism when other opportunities were not locally available. Some had attempted to resolve their problematic positioning through multi-local livelihoods, which combined access to nonlocal income through temporary migration. It was often the younger household members who engaged in these different patterns of mobility. Through mobile and multi-local livelihood strategies, many households in this village relied on geographically stretched social networks as an important asset. The stories of many respondents showed that having connections in other places was vital, as they relied on the help they got from children who lived elsewhere. It is mainly youths who engaged in the various patterns of mobility and migration that have become part of households' livelihoods.

Government responses to repeated displacements and involuntary resettlements, paired with the successive loss of productive resources, need to acknowledge that the reconstruction of livelihoods does not always take place in fixed settings, but is shaped by the way people are attached to and participate in networks. When access to natural capital cannot be guaranteed or is insufficient, supporting structures to facilitate the employment of other capitals and assets to promote diversification are crucial.

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Chapter 6

Rural youth navigating Rwanda's changing countryside

Introduction

Africa is currently considered the youngest continent, as over 200 million of its population are aged between 15 and 24, a number that is expected to double by 2050 (Ighobor 2013). Youth are at the centre of the dynamic imagination of the African social landscape (Durham 2000: 114). Today, young people are perceived as key actors in many important processes of economic and social change in Africa, particularly when looking at processes of urbanisation, de-agrarianisation and spatial mobility (Naafs and White 2012; Sumberg and Hunt 2019). At the same time, however, 60% of unemployed Africans are youths. With access to secure jobs continuing to be problematic, this demographic trend is particularly challenging for many African nations (ILO 2017; Honwana 2012a; The African Outlook 2016; Wobst and Schwebel 2017; Zuelhke 2009).

A large cohort of unemployed or underemployed youths is generally perceived as a threat to economic development, and also as leading to political instability. They are believed to fall into crime, join armed groups or start migrating en masse towards greener pastures. Over the past decades, the needs of youth have been the focus of much research and many projects. However, such research and projects tend to mainly target the needs of urban youths, often neglecting their rural counterparts (Losch 2016) – and in Africa, this neglect implies disregarding a large share of its young citizens. Despite increasing rural to urban migration on the continent, more than 70% of African youths live in rural areas and will continue to do so. The ‘average’ young person in Africa is not an urban migrant, but a school drop-out living in a rural area (World Bank 2009; Filmer and Fox 2014). In addition, 60% of unemployed Africans are youths, and their unemployment rates are much higher in rural than in urban areas (Zuelhke 2009).

Even though agriculture is the largest employer in rural areas, and the importance of the agri-food sector is on the rise, there is increasing evidence that the current generation of rural youths are losing interest in farming (White 2012a, 2012b; Berckmoes and White 2016; IFAD 2016). One reason is access to land, which for young rural people is increasingly difficult because older generations keep control of land resources and are reluctant to transfer this control to them (White 2012a; Quan 2007). Based on these two observations, this article takes a particular interest in the young men and women who remain living in the countryside.

In the African context, being young is often perceived as being disadvantaged, vulnerable, and economically and politically excluded. Nonetheless, there is increasing recognition among scholars of the diversity of experiences, agency and creativity of young people that counters this image of a ‘lost’ generation, an image that was dominant in the 1990s (Cruise O’Brien 1996; Durham 2000; Honwana 2012b; Honwana and De Boeck 2005; Tranberg Hansen 2005). In response, we see a policy shift at the international and the national level from a discourse on providing jobs towards an emphasis on promoting entrepreneurship, namely the idea that youths should ‘create their own jobs’ (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi 2010; Chigunta et al. 2005; Dolan and Rajak 2016; Langevang, Namatovu and Dawa 2012; Langevang and Gough 2012; Honeyman 2016). In Rwanda, for example, the responsibility for solving youth unemployment rests with individual young men and women, who have to become entrepreneurial citizens who understand the value of hard work and take the initiative to create their own jobs. Honeyman

(2016) described how Rwanda's entrepreneurship education policy and technical and vocational education is preparing the country's youth to become a generation of 'orderly entrepreneurs', but that the reality of economic life is preventing them from acquiring enough capital to start formalised businesses. Many youths in Rwanda are 'stuck' in a non-adult state since they cannot attain the markers of social adulthood, as Sommers (2012) contended. Sommers further explored how these youngsters use mobility, especially to urban centres, as a way of creating livelihoods for themselves and thus avoid the shame of their non-adult condition. In this article, we look beyond such linear patterns of mobility and pay attention to how rural youths straddle multiple localities through connections forged by multidirectional and multipurpose patterns of mobility, which forms a core aspect of their pursuit of a sustainable livelihood and a potential pathway out of poverty. Contrary to the persistent image of a rural youth exodus, many young people remain 'at home' in the countryside, while engaging in a multitude of circular movements with different spatial and temporal patterns that connect them to both rural and urban locations. Using the stories of individual young men and women, we give an insight into their struggle to negotiate their place in a context of both increasing uncertainty and insecurity, and opportunities brought by a rapidly transforming society. As such, we aim to answer the following questions: What are the ambitions of young Rwandan women and men, and how do they negotiate their place in Rwanda's urbanising society? This article, which is based on empirical fieldwork carried out in 2014 and 2015, aims to contribute to a better understanding of how the rural youth are navigating Rwanda's changing society, by providing a view from below.

Youth, mobility and intergenerational frictions in Africa

In Africa, youths figure centrally in debates among both policymakers and researchers (Honwana and De Boeck 2005; FAO 2018; Sumberg and Hunt 2019; UNFPA 2014; World Bank 2009). The definition of 'youth' can be based on the precedence of different dimensions of 'youth': it can be demographically defined in terms of age categories, biological as the reaching of puberty, cultural in relation to the notion of adulthood, social as the attainment of a certain maturity or marriageability, or economic when young women and men achieve the economic independence to support themselves (Durham 2000; Honwana and De Boeck 2005; Naafs and White 2012; Honwana 2012b; Hansen 2005; Cruise O'Brien 1996; Wyn and White 1997). While different societies define and demarcate youth differently, age-based definitions of youth continue to dominate policy discourse as an easy way to disaggregate youth in statistical or economic analysis. However, defining youth in this way is not helpful to understand youth as a socially constructed category, since the meaning of age is given by the prevailing social, political and economic relations of the wider society (Durham 2000; Sumberg and Hunt 2019; Wyn and White 1997).

In examining the lives of young Africans who are struggling with unemployment in a context of unfavourable economic conditions, a lot of research refers to what Honwana (2012b) called 'waithood', a term first used by Navtej and Yousef (2009) and Singerman (2007), referring

to the involuntary prolongation of adolescence and delay in reaching socially and culturally recognised adulthood. Hansen (2005: 4), for example, pointed out that many African youths will never become adults in a social and cultural sense; also Sommers (2012) described this issue in his book *Stuck*. Many youths are in a very precarious situation whereby they are constantly searching for an income but have no long-term prospects. However, when examining this experience of waitthood, it is important to consider this stage not as a failed transition, but as a period of experimentation, improvisation and great creativity, as young Africans adopt a range of survival strategies to negotiate their futures (Honwana 2012a; Maira and Soep 2005). This is why White (2012a) referred to a new category of ‘working unemployed’: young people who are compelled to become creative in finding opportunities to build their own livelihoods, venturing into a range of income-generating activities, including self-employment or micro-entrepreneurship, both legal and illegal, formal and informal.

One important strategy employed by young people in negotiating transition is mobility. While it has long been a research gap, mobility and immobility are now considered key factors shaping young people’s experiences, future chances and life trajectories in sub-Saharan Africa (Porter et al. 2010, 2012; Porter, Blaufuss and Acheampong 2008). Young people straddle multiple spaces and places through connections forged by patterns of mobility, and various studies have emphasised the increasingly important role played by the mobile phone, adding another dimension of virtual mobility (de Bruijn 2014; Worth 2015; Steel, Cottyn and Lindert 2017; Thulin and Vilhelmson 2007). When exploring how young people engage with a world of flows and movements, the concept of social navigation developed by Vigh (2010) and Christiansen et al. (2006) and further elaborated by Langevang and Gough (2009) offers a useful perspective. These scholars examined how movement through space is associated with the fulfilment of social and material needs in the present, and also substantiates young people’s physical and social movements into the imagined future. As young Africans manoeuvre their lives through changing and challenging social, economic and political environments, social navigation is a form of agency that enables actions in relation to constraints and possibilities, and also involves an evaluation of the changing social environment, one’s own ability to move through it, and its effect on one’s planned and actual movement (Langevang and Gough 2009).

Youth in Rwanda

Today, youth are at the centre of the societal transformations envisioned by the Rwandan government. Youth comprise almost 80% of the country’s population, and Rwanda sees this demographic dividend as an economic asset and an important part of their theory of change (UNFPA 2014; Sumberg and Hunt 2019: 130).

Most of today’s Rwandan youths grew up in the decade after the 1994 genocide, experiencing not only a new ideology and various policy changes, but also a rapid economic recovery. Macroeconomic growth as a result of the policies set out in Vision 2020 (the government’s blueprint development strategy) averaged around 8% from 2000 to 2013, but did

not result in the predicted trickle-down effects or the creation of sufficient employment, particularly to meet the growing needs of the youth cohort aged between 14 and 35 years, which in 2012 represented almost 40% of the total population (NISR 2014).⁴⁰ An estimated 125,000 first-time job seekers enter the labour market each year, but a shortage of formal employment opportunities means that many of these young Rwandans cannot benefit from the national-level macroeconomic achievements (Finn 2018: 206; National Youth Council 2015). It is against this background that in 2015 the government introduced the National Youth Policy, which focusses on the provision of technical and vocational training to promote effective entrepreneurship and business development as one of the key strategies for the creation of off-farm jobs (National Youth Council 2015; Honeyman 2016). Vision 2050, which is to replace Vision 2020, continues to prioritise job creation and self-employment for youths through entrepreneurship and access to finance (MINECOFIN 2017). The Ministry of Youth and Culture, which was established in 2017, set a target in 2019 to create 100,000 jobs for youths in the year 2020.

In line with the Rwandan government's approach to entrepreneurship and national development, a trajectory towards self-reliance under strong state regulation, Rwandan youths are expected to become what Honeyman (2016) calls 'orderly entrepreneurs'. Just like the policy priorities underlying Vision 2020, this policy discourse is not only technical and developmental, but also highly political (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2014; Williams 2016). The government believes that through a well-designed policy, social transformation can be produced and a nationwide educational effort can systematically cultivate certain Rwandan values in its younger generations. Rapid economic and social progress can create a new generation of Rwandans who fully assume a new national identity in opposition to what divided them in the past. This is also illustrated by the National Youth Policy (2015: 15) and the NST1 (MINECOFIN 2017: 34), which emphasise that the government should teach youth about Rwandan culture, identity and language, and instil in them values of integrity, patriotism, self-reliance and volunteerism, for example through the operationalisation of *Itorero*.⁴¹ This shows an important dimension of the understanding and construction of youth in Rwanda, as it includes statements and claims about their characteristics, qualities, motivations and abilities. Thus, the general approach to the challenges faced by youth leads to highly instrumental policies and programmes, which as several researchers have shown are very much at odds with the priorities of most Rwandan youths (Sommers 2006, 2012; Goodfellow and Smith 2013; Honeyman 2016; Finn 2018).

The threat of failure to attain adulthood for male and female youths emerges as a recurrent research theme in Rwanda, whereby national policies are found to significantly exacerbate the already intense adulthood pressure. As Sommers and Uvin (2011) and Sommers

⁴⁰ See the Fourth Population and Housing Census, Rwanda, 2012. The data collection for this population and housing census was carried out in 2012, when the former definition of youth was still in place (i.e. 14–35 years old).

⁴¹ *Itorero* or *itorero ry'Igihugu* means traditional 'schools'. As Purdekova (2012: 16) described, this forms part of the strategy of the Rwandan government to use hybridised processes combining local, traditional activities with Western approaches as tools for large-scale social transformation. These 'schools' include political education, military training, patriotism, family planning, combatting genocide ideology, etc. For more information on *Itorero*, see Dahlmans (2015), Sundberg (2016) and Nzahabwanayo (2018).

(2012) explained, in Rwanda adulthood for men is defined by marriage and the ability to provide for a family. Yet, unrealistic building standards and development plans restrict their ability to construct their own houses, which they must do before they can get married (Sommers 2012; Finn 2018). Failing to attain this delays adulthood not only for men but also for women, since marriage and giving birth to children are prerequisites of socially acceptable womanhood. Honeyman (2016), Rollason (2017) and Finn (2018), however, looked more into how youths need to find their way between development programmes in Rwanda that focus on economic formalisation and modernisation, and their own economic and social needs 'within the context of autocratic efficiency and individual responsibility' (Finn 2018: 5). Honeyman (2016) drew attention to this paradox, which arises from competing priorities of promoting creativity and control, by illustrating how youths who try to put their entrepreneurial skills into practice encounter challenges in the form of high levels of taxation and tightening regulations. As such, young people are 'stuck' in a non-adult state, primarily because they cannot, as a result of government policy, attain the markers of social adulthood (Sommers 2012). At the same time, social, economic and cultural changes in Rwandan society are altering the ways young people negotiate their transitions to adulthood, and how youths are perceived as a category in society.

Methodology

The data presented in this article were collected through in-depth interviews and FGDs conducted in the northwest and southern parts of Rwanda in 2014 and 2015. A part of the data collection for this article took place under the framework of the RurbanAfrica project, whose aim was to explore the connections between rural transformations, mobility and urbanisation processes. However, a particular methodology was designed for this study in Rwanda.

Respondents were selected by the researcher in three settlements on the rural side of the rural–urban hierarchy, ranging from a remote rural village to locations closer to a local trade centre and an emerging small town. In selecting the respondents, youths were considered to people aged between 16 and 30 years, in accordance with the official Rwandan definition of 'youth'.⁴² Within this age range, the decision was made not to include married men and women, following cultural and societal definitions of youth in Rwanda. This was done to be able to tell the stories of those in Rwandan society who were not yet considered adults, according to either official or social standards. Youths do not necessarily see themselves in the same way as society or their parents see them, and the actual experience of this group is often overlooked, making their actions and imaginations rather secondary to those of 'adults' (Maira and Soep 2005: xv).

Of the 56 young participants in the research, 36 were male and 20 were female. They were aged between 16 and 28, with the majority older than 20. For the FGDs, people who fitted

⁴² It should be noted that the category 'youth' did not have any legal reference before 2006: a person was either underaged and dependant, or an adult responsible for his or her own actions. By 2006, youth was mainly an age-based category of persons aged between 14 and 35, and by in November 2015, the government had officially changed this definition of 'youth' from people aged 14–35 years to people aged 16–30 years (National Youth Council 2015; NISR 2018d).

the age requirements were randomly selected. The participants drew individual mobility and livelihood maps, indicating the various places and activities included in their day-to-day activities over a period of one week. This is a complementary visual tool that represents the respondents' perception of movement patterns and the reasons for them. They depict the locations and activities they perceive as most important to them on a day-to-day basis. The maps were then used as the basis for a semi-structured discussion and, later, in more in-depth interviews with the individual respondents. During these discussions, a conversation was initiated on the changes young people were experiencing, how these changes affected their lives, and their place in society in relation to other generational categories and the local community of which they were part. In addition, FGDs and in-depth interviews were also held with male and female heads of rural households, representing the 'adult generation'.

Young livelihoods in Rwanda's changing countryside

In its pursuit of a new economic geography for Rwanda, the government has implemented various policies that affect the social and economic configurations of the countryside. Agricultural reforms are aimed at replacing subsistence farming with a more commercial and modern agricultural sector. Agricultural transformation is associated with the development of a non-agricultural sector that will find an entry point through a system of grouped settlements based on economic activity, restructuring selected rural trade centres into active development nodes and thus promoting a transition towards a more urban society (MINECOFIN 2000). It is this context of rapid transformations that Rwandan rural youths must navigate in seeking economic independence.

Agriculture remains the main economic sector in the Rwandan countryside, providing jobs for around 73% of the population (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2014). However, having no means to buy their own land and no longer being able to claim part of the land of their parents, in combination with new ambitions outside this sector, leads rural youths away from farming.⁴³ This became apparent when discussed in the various focus groups: even in the more remote villages, the participants could not name a single young person who was working in agriculture, apart from the unpaid household labour they performed on their parents' land. This being said, an alternative non-farm sector within the formal labour market large enough to employ the increasing number of rural job-seekers has not materialised. In the particular research locations, FGDs revealed that this was also a concern for many of the older generation. One female head of household complained about the lack of opportunities for youths, as three of her children had graduated as far back as 2008, but none of them had managed to find a job and they were all still living at home. These constraints and challenges confine many youths to a prolonged state of

⁴³ Under the previous succession law (1999), parents were legally obliged to subdivide the family land and distribute plots to their children, usually when they reached either maturity (18) or marriageable age (21). In 2016, a new law brought to an end children's legal rights to their parents' properties. This was done to end intergenerational conflicts and foster self-reliance amongst the youth (MINIJUST 2016).

perceived dependence on the parental generation. Even though they did not necessarily live at home with their parents, they had not gained the social status of adulthood, as the young men and women explained in the FGD in all three research locations. While they felt the pressure to attain adulthood, many youngsters said there was little understanding of the challenges they faced in comparison to their parents' generation. As one young girl said: 'Back in the days, there were plenty of resources and things were not really expensive. Today, because of the new developments, resources are limited and expensive' (FGD 2015). The main resource that youngsters said they lacked was financial capital, namely an income of their own.

Table 6.1 presents an overview of the 56 respondents according to research location and what the respondents indicated to be their main economic activity. A third of the respondents said that they did not have any form of income of their own, either because they were doing unpaid domestic or farm work for their parents' household, or because they defined themselves as unemployed. In locations closer to small-town centres, we encountered more young respondents who identified themselves as unemployed or jobless. By reporting themselves as unemployed they referred to official, formal jobs, as in the more tightly governed urbanising centres informality is suppressed and often met with repressive measures imposed by the authorities. They were engaging in odd jobs while continuing to look for what they saw as an appropriate job – they were what White (2012b) referred to as a new category of 'working unemployed'. As the table shows, however, we should see these rural youths not as a homogeneous group of 'left behinds', but as youths who are actively seeking and negotiating their futures. Even though in order to marry, young men traditionally need an income to build houses for their future households and to sustain their families, young women are also independently involved in the same range of activities. Despite statistics showing a higher level of unemployment amongst women, the female respondents were as active in seeking economic independence as their male counterparts. When we stratify by age, we also see that there is no clear division of labour among the respondents.

Table 6.1 Main activity of the respondents

N=56		Location 1 N = 18	Location 2 N = 18	Location 3 N = 20
Age	Range	19–25	16–28	18–27
Gender	Male	9	13	14
	Female	9	5	6
Main activity	Self-employed	3	7	3
	Casual wage labour	9	9	5
	Paid/contracted employment	0	0	1
	Unpaid household work	6	0	1
	Unemployed	0	2	10

The main income-generating activity of the remaining respondents was casual wage labour, which as one boy said often brought in ‘just enough money to buy tea’ (FGD 2015). These activities were sought on a day-to-day basis and ranged from farm-related labour, being paid to transport milk and other goods from one village to another, to working as a technician. In finding this kind of work they faced challenges, as the image of youths as ‘not being serious’ sometimes excluded them from these opportunities or made them vulnerable to exploitation. Although many engaged in multiple activities to earn a daily living, they said they faced a difficult situation of constantly seeking an income and having no long-term prospects. Formal contracted wage opportunities were limited, and only one respondent had a long-term contracted job, working for Tigo (a mobile phone provider), selling their services on the street.

Closer to urbanising centres, there were more opportunities for income generation, as these rapidly expanding and developing centres offered a lot of daily and short-term casual jobs and a space for new, small-scale initiatives to grow. Here, we found self-employment to be the second main source of income. Young men and women worked as mobile vendors or owned small shops, salons or boutiques, while others were more inventive in the businesses they tried to establish.⁴⁴ One respondent, for example, had started a little cinema in a room he rented near the urban centre, where he would screen some pirated copies of films and people paid a small amount of money to watch them.

Figure 6.1 *Umutaka*, or umbrella, selling sim cards and registering airtime for phone providers



⁴⁴ A *boutique* is a small café where people go to drink tea and soft drinks and eat small snacks like *mandazi* (a local beignet).

'Being your own boss': The ideal of self-reliance

Despite the diversity of activities young rural Rwandans engage in and the barriers they face to entering the formal labour market, the ideal of self-reliance promoted by the government has caught on among many rural young people, just as Honeyman (2016) found amongst Kigalian youths. Even though the security of a salaried job was appreciated, when asked about their aspirations and future plans, the young respondents all said that they dreamt of economic independence through a form of self-employment, namely owning their own business. 'Being your own boss' is an ideal that many strive for. Nadine, a girl of 19, expressed the general feeling well:

I want to work for myself, not for others. I want to invest in something profitable, something that can help me not only today but also in the future. For now it is still a dream, but I am sure, I think I will make it sooner or later. (Nadine, interviewed by author, 2015).

Nadine's dream was to have a business in agricultural or livestock products. She said that most of the young people she talked to wanted to become business owners. 'Even those who have jobs in public or private services, they all want to have their own activities, to get their own income, not to work for someone and get a salary.' Being your own boss was romanticised through perceptions of freedom and independence; however, many were less aware of the bureaucratic and financial obstacles one has to overcome when running a business. As Honeyman (2016) described, these youngsters have to navigate their way to economic independence in a context where many small-scale and informal forms of enterprise are forbidden and made illegal, and in which government oversight of business registration and tax paying is increasingly far-reaching and effective (Honeyman 2016: 6). As such, for many this dream of owning their own business becomes a frustrated aspiration.

Apart from the entrepreneurship curriculum that forms part of the Nine Years Basic Education, the Rwandan government prescribes in EDPRS II (MINECOFIN 2013b) and the 2015 youth policy (National Youth Council 2015) various initiatives to promote entrepreneurship and counts on the private sector to create the needed jobs.⁴⁵ One initiative aimed at the creation of the 200,000 jobs laid down in EDPRS II is the 'Hanga Umurimo' programme, which provides loans to small-scale entrepreneurs and start-ups from the BDF (Business Development Fund), and technical vocation and educational training (TVET).⁴⁶ When discussing these programmes, the young respondents seemed sceptical. While the BDF was often mentioned by the young respondents and during the FGDs, many said that they had heard about these programmes on the radio but had not seen them materialise, whereas others complained about promises about funding and business plan feedback that were not kept. Some respondents had been selected for

⁴⁵ The Nine Year Basic Education policy was introduced in Rwanda in 2008 to extend free education to lower secondary school (MINEDUC 2008). For more information on this system and entrepreneurship education in Rwanda, see Honeyman, 2016 and Williams, 2016.

⁴⁶ For more information on the BDF, see <https://www.bdf.rw> and Malunda (2011).

participation the previous year, but were still waiting for the funding and feedback promised by the BDF. One girl compared the process to *imihigo*, the practice of performance contracts whereby annual performance pledges are made by citizens to match the state's developmental agenda and are evaluated on a regular basis.⁴⁷ 'It's like setting performance agreements and then not achieving them. I'm still waiting for them since last year. They told us to cultivate vegetables and they will give us the fertilisers we need. But did they do it? No!' (FGD 2015). Other projects, for example *imyuga* (the training of vocational skills), did not meet their needs as they felt they had either already surpassed that level or the skills would not benefit them as they would not be trained in how to use them in a professional way. As early as 2010, an ILO report called for the expansion of the TVET system to ensure accessibility and relevance to women and students in rural areas (Ronnås, Backéus and Scheja 2010).

Ntambwa ijya aho batabaze: A dog cannot go where there is no meat

As illustrated above, young people in Rwanda perform a diverse set of income-generating activities, and they do not restrict themselves to the rural areas in which they live. Instead, they expand their search for an income across spatial boundaries, seeking their own economic independence. The opportunities that are available to them, as compared to the older generation, are ascribed to their strength and their ability to move around. Sommers (2012) pointed at the importance of rural–urban migration for youths to escape humiliation in their villages and as a way to try and forge their own livelihoods. Our research dived deeper into mobility forms as an ingredient of young people's trajectories towards managing their future, while recognising it is not equally accessible to all. Rural youths are creating new network opportunities that enable them to move beyond their parents' sphere of influence and navigate their way using different patterns of mobility and rural–urban connections. In this section, the argument is guided by the stories of three respondents, which are illustrative of the different experiences and situations of the young respondents in this research.

Not only do young people increasingly make decisions independently of their parents' household, but they also move independently and even start living on their own away from the household that they, socially speaking, still form part of, in pursuit of a sustainable source of income. An example of such a case is Emmanuel (27), whose family moved to Byangabo in 2011 after their home in Kigali was expropriated. He said he preferred not to hang around and be a burden on his mother's household. To pursue his dream of going to university, he started working at a company that organises events, until his boss relocated the business and Emmanuel started to freelance. The amount of work he could get did not provide him with a satisfactory livelihood, however, so he started to move around:

I travel even more than my brothers and I have been to every district of Rwanda to find jobs.
After a wage-labour job where I get, for example, around 30,000 [Rwandan] francs [34

⁴⁷ See: Purdeková (2011), Ingelaere (2011) and Mann and Berry (2015).

euros], I use the money to travel to another place to find a new job. I always use the money I earn to look for new jobs. When I can't find work, I come back to Byangabo. (Emmanuel, interviewed by author 2015)

This lack of local opportunities was also discussed during FGD with heads of households (parents). A participant in one of the villages said: 'If the situation stays the same as it is today, this place cannot provide a future for young people. If nothing changes, young people will leave.' Some children in the village were sent by their parents to live with friends or relatives in other places where they might find jobs, but many children themselves took the decision to move. As Bernadette (Gahanga, 39) told me:

My 20-year-old son left for Kigali last month without even informing me. He only called me once he'd arrived. He feared I would refuse his wish. I expected him to work and help out in the household, but he wanted to earn more money and seek better opportunities than the ones that are found here. Before he used to help out with the school fees for his siblings, however so far he has not sent anything. (FGD 2014)

The city appeals to many, but remains a faraway dream for most. Contrary to the findings of Sommers and Uvin (2011), who found that Rwandan youths do not necessarily view rural–urban migration as a way out of impoverishment, in our research many of the youths did mention pull factors, such as the perceived abundance of opportunities that a city can offer. However, the youths who remained in the countryside did not regard themselves as just 'left-behind'. Contrary to the persistent image of a rural youth exodus, many young people remain 'at home' in the countryside, while engaging in a multitude of circular movements with different spatial and temporal patterns. This is confirmed by the personal mobility maps the participants drew during the FGD. An analysis of the maps revealed the spatial reality of rural youths' daily lives.

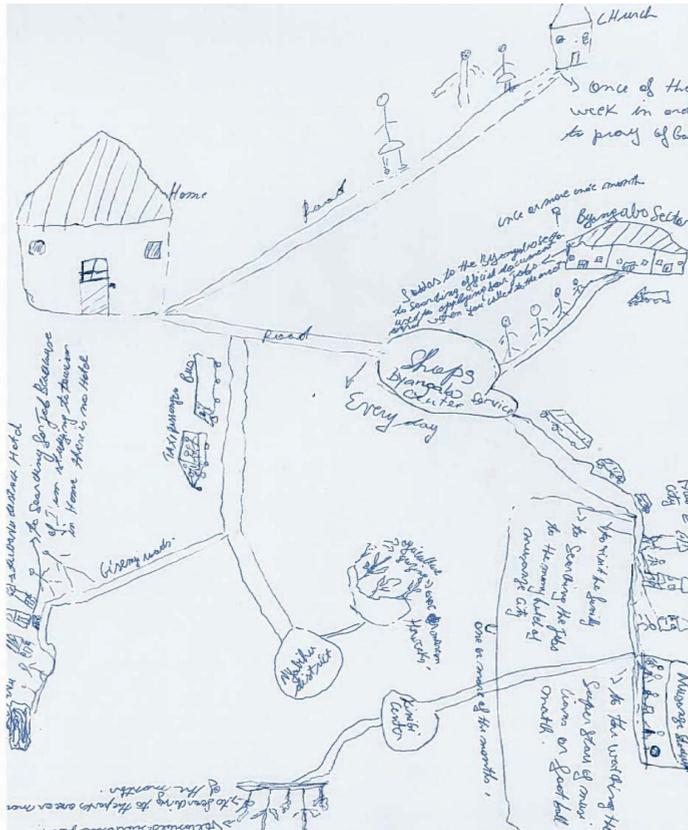
All the mobility maps show a grid of villages, service towns and cities tied into the networks and livelihoods of the young respondents. The purpose of the mobility flows was related to income-generation use of services and social visits. The mobility patterns varied from daily, weekly or monthly movements to temporary stays in other places, all circular in nature and with a fixed notion of 'home'. Being mobile required youngsters to have the means to pay for transport and/or accommodation, meaning that some of them could not move whenever or wherever they wanted and were very much 'stuck' or limited to the places they could access on foot. Responsibilities in the home community/household can also keep young Rwandans immobile. This came to the fore when we compared the maps drawn by the respondents. Whereas some included relatively distant destinations, others were confined or restricted to the community, where most of their activities took place (see Figures 6.2 and 6.3). We can distinguish two main groups, namely mobile and rather immobile young rural Rwandans, according to their relative ability or freedom to move. The young respondents in both groups, however, said that it was essential to connect with and/or move to other places in their pursuit of a decent livelihood.

The mobile group was comprised of those who are relatively free to move around. A typical member of this group (Figure 6.2) was Janvier, a young male who had finished his secondary education and lived near a rapidly developing trade centre. Despite still forming part of his mother's household, in his efforts to construct his own livelihood he acted quite independently of it. The proximity to transport infrastructure connected his 'home' to other major urban centres and through his education he felt more connected to the urban, 'modern' mind-set.

Janvier's mobility map (Figure 6.2) shows how different movements, including different means of transport, connected him to a variety of locations to access services, seek employment or visit friends or family. When his parents moved back to Rwanda after the 1994 genocide, they encountered many difficulties settling down. They were forced to move multiple times due to land disputes and the expropriation of property, and they finally settled in Nyabihu district in the northwest of Rwanda. After finishing secondary school, Janvier started moving to different places to seek work as he no longer wanted to stay near his fathers' family due to past land issues. He said he preferred to stay with his brother and friends in Byangabo service centre, which he considered home. He specialised in tourism in his final years at secondary school and hoped to find a job in this sector, hence his movements to the cities of Musanze and Gisenyi, where he applied for jobs at hotels. The year before the interview, he had taken a wage labour job with Tigo (selling sim cards and registering Tigo cash) for about two months in Musanze and in the business centres along the way to Nyabihu. He had recently applied for a job at the Rwanda Development Board and was waiting to hear whether he had got it. The story of Janvier (and that of Emmanuel mentioned earlier) illustrates that a certain freedom to move is informed by their search for employment and facilitated by the availability of transport infrastructure.

Members of this mobile group included young Rwandans in more remote villages for whom the ability to move around is even more important – and also even more difficult to have. When asked during the FGD in these villages where they would be moving to in pursuit of an income, a short discussion would usually conclude 'any place near the main road where there is electricity or more development infrastructure', characteristics that often imply more opportunities to make money. In one group, a few mentioned Uganda, Goma (DRC) or Tanzania, as they perceive these places as offering more opportunities than Rwanda. Very few, however, included destinations abroad as part of their mobility map. In general, the number of locations young people were connected to decreased as we moved up the rural–urban ladder; however, the freedom and ease of movement was greater in service centres or towns.

Figure 6.2 Janvier's mobility map

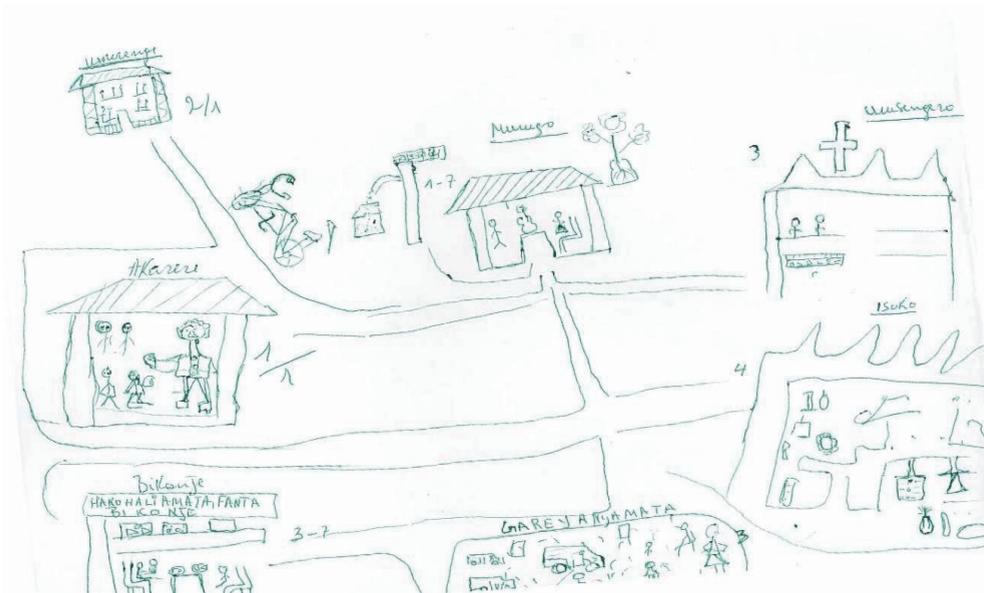


The mobility patterns did not necessarily imply a detachment from family or ‘home’. A discussion between two young men during the focus group meeting in Nyamata illustrates how this is often a struggle. One of the young men said he would move away to seek capital, but wanted to invest it in his own village/town: ‘How can I invest elsewhere when there are other people developing my home area? If I am here, I will get more customers than those newcomers because I was born here and know the place.’ (FGD youth 2015). The other young man said he saw it as less of a choice: if he were to find an opportunity elsewhere, he would invest there. With the small amount of money he earned in Nyamata, he would not stand a chance, as the competition was too fierce: ‘I could move to cheaper areas, invest in land and commercial houses and become a real boss there.’ However, he added: ‘When it gets better, I can bring a part of my business to my home village.’

Although being mobile and flexible was highly valued by young people, not everyone could engage in any form of movement to any destination at any time. The second group we distinguish here is the one that was mostly confined within a small radius of their home village. Young people’s mobility is associated with opportunities to achieve personal freedom and escape

‘surveillance’, but it is constrained by three issues. A first issue is gendered bias in mobility. Young men could move more freely even to places where they had no connections or knowledge, whereas young women tended to be more cautious and moved only to places where they had relatives or connections who could support them. Several parents reported that they would never allow their daughters to move because it is too dangerous and also because they were required to help out in the household. The story of Nadine illustrates this. As the household’s main income earner and the mother of two young children, she was not free to move away from her mother’s house (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3 Nadine’s mobility map, Nyamata.



A second issue mentioned by some respondents as preventing them from moving to a city, was a ‘rural’ mentality rooted in customary practices. As they put it: ‘Our village mentality does not fit in the city. We don’t have the right education and the city is too expensive for our living standards.’ A third issue was the need for a network and access to information. As well as being real constraints, these issues demonstrate the power relations shaping both the aspirations and the actual patterns of individual mobility or immobility. Young people make informed movements; they navigate their way even if this means they are not physically mobile at all (Langevang and Gough 2009).

The individual mobility maps show the diverse micro-geographies of rural young Rwandans who are both struggling and shaping their way towards economic and social independence. These movements are influenced by the social position people hold as well as by the relationships and networks they are involved in or seek to create. These realities have

become globalised through the appropriation of new technologies and the ‘ability to connect’ (de Bruijn 2014). Growing up in a digital age, youths in Africa are better connected than earlier generations. Increasing access to mobile telecommunications, email, internet, Facebook etc, enables them to overcome social and cultural factors that would once have limited their access to information in places beyond their own locality (Herrera 2012; Honwana 2012b). New technology especially appeals to the youths – as confirmed by our respondents, all of whom had a mobile phone, or at least their own SIM card that they could use in the phones of relatives and friends. When asked what the use of mobile phones meant to them, respondents in one of the research locations pointed at its obvious purpose for communication; however, they also mentioned its crucial importance in finding job opportunities. Or as one respondent said: ‘You can’t have food without a mobile phone.’ (FGD youth 2015). Emmanuel and Janvier also stressed the crucial importance of their mobile phone to get information about job opportunities: both had got all their previous jobs through their mobile phone contacts. Emmanuel also said that he would not have travelled across the country as he did, had it not been for his mobile phone. He would not have gone had he not known about certain opportunities, after which he referred to the Rwandan expression quoted in the title of this section (‘A dog cannot go where there is no meat’).

Navigating towards socially recognised adulthood

Due to a postponed or delayed entry into the labour force, or the inability to find an adequate income that can provide economic independence, young people are marrying later, prolonging their social status as ‘youth’ (Naafs and White 2012; Honwana 2012b). A prolonged state of perceived dependence on the parental generation leaves people in a situation whereby they are biologically mature but facing a postponed social adulthood. Youth is a social category characterised by particular cultural perceptions of roles, rights and responsibilities; however, youths do not necessarily see themselves in the same way as the government, society or their parents do (Durham 2000; Honwana and De Boeck 2005). As Maira and Soep (2005) indicated, the actual experience of youth is, in such a perspective, often overlooked and under-considered, making it rather secondary to the actions and imaginations of adults. Young people construct a meaningful identity for themselves through the movements and actions they engage in to fulfil both their immediate and their future social and material needs. Understanding young people’s lives requires looking both at how youth is ‘constructed’ and how it is actually experienced by the young (Wyn and White 1997). Although young people might not be regarded as adults by society, they are increasingly forced to take on adult roles and responsibilities.

For example, Nadine (19, Nyamata) was the main income generator of her mother’s household. In the Nadine’s third year at secondary school, her mother found that she could no longer afford the fees and Nadine had to drop out. Since then, Nadine had given birth to two children. As her mother was struggling to support the household, she started looking for work. When we spoke to her, she was working on short-term contracts at the local Red Cross office and

was co-owner of a *boutique*. Many others had a similar story, whereby at a certain moment the funds to pay school fees had run out and they left school and started looking for ways to support themselves. As many parents did not have the necessary resources for their children to finish school or have any cash or anything in kind to give their children a head start in farming or a small business, young people like Nadine had to rely mainly on themselves to fulfil both their own aspirations and the societal requirements for becoming an 'adult'. When Nadine was asked whether she was already an adult, she responded: 'I lack two things: a husband and money' (Nadine, interviewed by author 2015). Male respondents referred to the notion of having certain responsibilities that would make them become 'real men'. In general, being an adult was associated with no longer doing 'stupid things' and planning for the future by, for example, saving up (FGD youth 2015).

Self-reliance through entrepreneurship is strongly promoted by the government as central to Rwanda's economic growth plan, and the young generation of today is identified as the driver of this economic growth. However, rural youths face many constraints in their constant struggle between social expectations and their own aspirations, and they find themselves stuck with the label 'youth', a position of perceived dependence on the older, working generations. Being stuck in such a position has strong implications for the Rwandan economy and the country's social fabric, which still bears scars of the 1994 genocide. As the transfer of resources between generations is limited, youths can no longer be presented as a group 'taken care of by their parents'; instead, they have to take care of themselves while increasingly making their own decisions independently of their parents or the household they still belong to. Even though family ties did not necessarily dissolve, mutual responsibilities between parents and their children were fading by almost mutual consent. This changing nature of family relations and increasing individualisation, which is often informed by poverty, highly influences the process of youth transition and the place young people achieve and are ascribed within society. Networks of friends and acquaintances are taking over as the social context of youth transition, chipping away at the role of family and kin as the main organising principle of social regulations and relations in society. This interaction with the social institutions and structures that surround them in their day-to-day lives, such as their parents, peers, community and society, plays a role in influencing the lives and livelihoods of young men and women, as well as the way society experiences and thinks about the concept of youth. As a process of becoming and belonging, young people seek to inhabit, escape or move within their ascribed position in various ways, challenging long-standing assumptions about intergenerational relations in society and the 'traditional' understanding of youths and their role within society. The average age at marriage increases as men cannot achieve the socially required status to be able to start a family, such as a certain economic independence, and being considered a youth in rural Rwanda becomes prolonged. The story of Bernadette's son leaving for Kigali illustrates one way in which children and parents start taking independent decisions, even while still forming part of the same household. Sonia (24) also saw it that way, as she explained:

Compared with a long time ago, as Rwanda is developing, things are changing. Before, children could not make decisions by themselves. Today, parents can often not provide enough for their children, so when you can help yourself and reduce the burden on your parents you take the decision yourself. It's no longer considered a parents' decision. (Sonia, interviewed by author 2015).

When discussing with heads of households whether children should help to support their parents' household, it was recognised that for previous generations that had been the norm, but was no longer the case. Some participants argued that it is only proper for children to help their parents once they have grown up. Others' contributions were a little more nuanced, saying that parents should not expect to be taken care of by their children if the children cannot even take care of themselves.

As to their movements, control over physical mobility has long reflected and reinforced power in diverse contexts, with the inter-generational dimension of this power dynamic being highly significant (Sheller and Urry 2006). In their study on mobility and inter-generational tensions in three African cities, Porter and al. (2010) illustrated the connection between the way young people's mobility is regarded in the local community, in either positive or negative terms, and inter-generational frictions and negotiations. In constructing their identity, young people attempt to locate themselves in relation to the wider set of public narratives that are available to them. So there is a relation between the ways in which individuals understand their own lives and the public narratives that circulate through social networks or institutions. Another aspect of the negotiation is that rural youths' social navigation concerns their position on the margins of this changing society, where they confront both dilemmas and expectations concerning tradition versus modernisation. It is also there that their 'in-betweenness' is emphasised.

There was a swirl of new and modern trends, fashions, ideas and technologies that attracted the youths we spoke with. Tradition was seen as a space occupied and dominated by elders. While they were more attracted to the foreign cultural expressions to which they were exposed through social media and television, parents and elders expected and pushed them to preserve Rwandan culture.

The expectation that parents or others have is to preserve Rwandan culture. When, for example, a girl adopts foreign culture, like clothing style, older people will never agree. So we mix Rwandan culture with foreign culture. To mix also brings positive changes, like access to new developments, which would be difficult if we only stick to Rwandan culture. 50/50 is a good mix. (FGD youth 2015).

The rural youths in this research said that they felt they were in a constant struggle between social expectations and their own aspirations.

Conclusion

This article showed how in response to the ideal of self-reliance promoted by the government to address the issue of youth unemployment, rural youths seek economic independence through forms of self-employment. They try to forge their own livelihoods through practices of multi-activity that include multiple locations through mobility, deploying agency mainly in the form of mobility in pursuit of employment. For men in Rwanda, reaching adulthood traditionally revolves around their ability to be in charge of a household, including building a house, providing an income, etc. For women, the focus is traditionally more on childbearing and less on marriage or economic independence (Hansen 2005; Sommers 2012; Honwana 2012a). Limited farm and non-farm income opportunities in the countryside to absorb the growing youth cohort entering the labour market, leave many young rural Rwandans 'stuck' (Sommers 2012), that is, trapped in this social category of perceived dependence and immaturity. However, rapid social and economic transformations are having important consequences for the position of youths in Rwandan society. New expectations as well as aspirations are changing the ways young people negotiate their transition to adulthood, and also changing people's experience of youth. Rwanda's rural youths are forced to negotiate their place in a context that is uncertain and insecure, although it is also progressively globalising and interconnecting. Both male and female youths are demanding more economic access and social space, and challenging long-standing assumptions about gender roles, intergenerational relations and their position within the wider society (Hansen 2005: 14).

The results of this research show that youth are increasingly taking their own decisions independently of their parents or the household they still belong to. As the transfer of resources from the older to the younger generations is limited, both male and female youths feel less obliged to make financial contributions. Even though family ties do not necessarily dissolve, responsibilities between the generation of parents and their children are fading almost in mutual consent. Many heads of households said that it is no longer taken for granted that children will send money home or make financial contributions. As one man explained: 'Our culture has changed since 1994. Today, unmarried youths are no longer expected to send money home and take care of their parents. Many youths go away to build their own lives.' (FGD 2015). And youths said that although they would of course like to help their parents out if needed, it should not be expected of them since they are struggling to get by themselves.

This changing nature of family relations and increasing individualisation, often informed by poverty, highly influences the process of youth transition and the place young people achieve and are ascribed within society. Networks of friends and acquaintances are taking over as the social context of youth transition, chipping away at the role of family and kin as the main organising principle of social regulations and relations in society.

Through the concept of social navigation, the agency of young Rwandans is stressed as creators and social shifters (Durham 2000; Vigh 2010). The problems that young rural Rwandans face compel them to be innovative and flexible, to earn their livelihoods by performing a diverse set of formal and informal income-generating activities, and mobility is a very important

ingredient of young people's trajectories towards managing their futures. While migration is often assumed to be the 'inevitable' solution, whereby rural youths leave for the city or international destinations to escape poverty and find better employment opportunities, we found different patterns of mobility, varying in spatiality and temporality, featuring the daily realities of many rural youngsters. It is clear that rural youths have a strong interest in multi-locality, as in Rwanda's rapidly changing countryside, rural-urban connections appear to be not merely an asset, but a precondition for a decent livelihood.

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Chapter 7
Conclusion

The present research explored the combined processes of urbanisation and rural transformation as manifested by small-town development in Rwanda. Engaging with the current debate on urbanisation in sub-Saharan Africa, it addressed two biases within the study of urbanisation. First, the focus of this debate has so far been mainly on the dynamics that are at play in major cities and metropolises, whereas it is small towns or emerging urban centres that are absorbing most of the urban growth in Africa. This dissertation therefore turns the gaze towards small towns, the dynamics of which I consider to be at the crux of understanding African urbanism. In Africa, cities and towns are increasingly seen as the solution to poverty reduction, and when managed in the right way urbanisation can be a driver of sustainable and inclusive development. To manage the growth and development of these urban centres, master planning – that is, plans that are modelled on a Western and modernist conception of urban development (Watson 2014) – has reappeared on the agenda. The pursuit of such ‘modern urbanism’ based on Western debates and examples has, however, proven unfit for African urban realities, often leading to the economic and social exclusion of those who are unable to keep up. This brings us to the second bias: a focus on spatial developments and planning, and a failure to account for the human and social dimensions of urbanisation and to understand the dynamics of everyday life in African cities. Therefore, people were central to my analysis. The largest part of this dissertation is about experiences on the ground, namely how the relations between small-town development, rural transformation and mobility manifest themselves in the lives and livelihoods of the Rwandans who experience, live and shape these processes of change.

The aim of this final chapter is to discuss the findings presented in the previous chapters and answer the main research question – How can small towns provide rural people with new opportunities for livelihood improvement, and what does it mean for Rwanda’s urban future? – and to reflect upon what the ideal of ‘modern’ urbanism in Africa’s urban future means in terms of inclusive and sustainable development.

Spatial reconfigurations and shaping the economic landscape: Towards the ideal of ‘modern urbanism’

In Rwanda, the government is pursuing an urban ideal through a specific set of policies, designs and strategies for both the social and the physical form of urban development. It uses both spatial and economic tools and policies in the pursuit of an ideal of ‘modern urbanity’ in rapidly growing small towns. In Chapter 2, I discussed how Rwanda is an example of a country that aims to capitalise on the potential that cities can offer as spaces for development, but also as spaces to overcome conflict, and as symbols of progress, stability and state presence. In that chapter, I reviewed the specific political and socioeconomic context in which the development of small towns is taking place as well as the characteristics of Rwanda’s urban policy, including its spatial characteristics. The government’s strategy for urban development was developed in the context of Rwanda’s reconstruction after the 1994 genocide, with urban population growth rates rocketing following the return of both new and old caseload refugees, and urban security

becoming a critical focal point. The government is thus taking a very active role in planning and managing its urban trajectory to bring about secure and orderly development. I illustrated how cities and towns are critical sites in the context of post-conflict reconstruction and securitisation, specifically focusing on the role and significance of rapidly growing small towns and emerging urban centres in the debate on the politics of urbanisation in Rwanda. In this setting, urban spaces are political locations that are critical to the promotion of development, modernity and state legitimacy, and therefore controlling them is crucial. This is done through rigid master planning, based on Western urban planning theory, that includes a set of binding policies for the development of local urban development plans (also called master plans) as blueprints directing the development of the towns. As part of the territorial dimension of planning control (Yiftachel 1998), tools and policies for the spatial and economic reconfiguration of the towns are designed to achieve an ideal of ‘modern urbanism’. Central to these plans is the promotion of a diversified pool of labour to boost the economy and an environment that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship. In spatial terms, these plans entail profound reconfigurations, including mechanisms to control land allocation, such as zoning and land-use regulations, policies on the aesthetic appearance of towns, settlement upgrading through housing standards, and services and infrastructural development. Under these conditions, small towns in Rwanda can be understood as a potentially contested arena of change, since ruling elites and an emerging middle class support the idea of urban modernism so that they can take advantage of the delivered profits; however, it also implies the spatial and economic exclusion of those who are unable to enjoy the same benefits. Focusing heavily on spatial, top-down planning models in Rwanda has a detrimental impact in terms of urban inequality and exclusion and does not seem to provide room for bottom-up urbanisation.

‘Winners’ and ‘losers’?

Modern urbanism does not necessarily mean inclusive urbanism: the human and social dimensions of urbanisation are often ignored and people who do not match this ideal are often excluded. While the urban form pursued might offer opportunities, it does not match the lived realities on the ground. As Pieterse (2010) and the African Centre for Cities have advocated, in order to understand Africa’s urban future, we need to look at the experiences on the ground, that is, at the dynamics of everyday urban life.

Chapter 3 looked at the people who are central to the process of urbanisation, at who the new urbanites in Rwanda’s small towns are and what their urban lives look like. The pursuit of an ideal of ‘modern urbanity’ in rapidly growing small towns implies an ideal type of modern urbanite. This ideal urbanite matches what Honeyman (2016) called an orderly entrepreneur. As mentioned, not everyone fits this ideal or can keep up with modernisation and progress. While urbanisation is intended to be a controlled process, the rapid growth of these towns attracts a wide range of actors. To take a more nuanced look at the variety of people who use the city in different ways, I distinguished three types of new urbanites with a specific focus on those who

are considered to be 'on the urban margins'. A first group are entrepreneurs, the potential 'winners', who have the capacity to fulfil the intended role of modern urbanite. While the business environment in these towns is tailored to capital-intensive investment projects, in reality more employment is created in the informal sector and through small-scale investment initiatives. A second group of urbanites are the 'in-betweeners' or 'part-time' urbanites, who live and make a living within a rural–urban interface. While not fully resident in these towns, these actors bring the city to the countryside, and vice versa, through their strong rural–urban connections. A last group are incorporated urbanites, namely people who originally lived in rural areas that were incorporated into the urban sphere and thus became administratively urbanised. For this group it is clear that spatial mechanisms of urban planning control function as mechanisms of social and spatial marginalisation and exclusion; they are therefore the 'losers'. Talking of winners and losers exemplifies the political economy underlying Rwanda's urban planning rules, which are based on a strong modernist premise of incompatible dualisms between traditionality and modernity and rural and urban. However, these urban margins can be seen as a transformational space, if one recognises the agency of these groups and their innovative ways of making towns work for them. It is the practices of these people that constitute and define the flexible and mobile nature of the lived reality of small-town life that forms an essential part of African urbanisation and small-town development today.

Many households in the Rwandan countryside are caught between processes of urbanisation and rural transformation. I therefore argue that it is necessary to pay attention to the rural side of this story in order to understand current urbanisation and to do justice to the reality of rural households, which – as I illustrated – often live at the intersection of the rural and the urban. These households, which are generally regarded as 'staying behind', and the implications for their livelihoods were the focus of Chapter 4. In that chapter, the importance of mobility as a vital livelihood asset came to the fore when analysing the impact on rural livelihoods of the government's transformative policies to reconfigure the rural space and economy. First of all, more and more rural households are diversifying their livelihood portfolios with non-farm activities and off-farm employment. I distinguished three livelihood strategies that I called survival, diversification and accumulation. It is mainly the poorer households that are forced to diversify in order to mitigate risks, while the more well-off households with more financial capital at their disposal begin to specialise in order to capitalise on their assets. More importantly, these different scenarios of occupational change and diversification go hand in hand with changing patterns of mobility as an important asset supporting households' strategies. While rural to rural movements appear to be the most important mobility patterns, the increased multi-locality and multi-activity of rural households' livelihoods have also contributed to the consolidation of small towns. That being said, while there is a general tendency to emphasise rural–urban migration as the main response to rural transformation, other forms of mobility – such as commuting and temporary and circular migration – seem to be of greater importance to many of the rural households in Rwanda. While mobility is a significant asset that enables people to benefit from opportunities in different localities by constructing spatially dispersed ties and connections, not

everyone has an equal relationship with it. The data show that the dynamics of change do not benefit everyone equally and do not necessarily result in people escaping poverty.

Looking back and looking forward

Current livelihood decisions are informed by continuities with the past and will inform the future. Chapter 5 pointed at the importance of historical patterns for understanding the present by looking at the effects of repeated displacements in the past on the livelihoods and the adaptive capacity of households in Rwanda. Displacement, forced migration and resettlement have been attributed to a variety of causes and disrupt all aspects of people's lives, breaking social, cultural and economic networks that are critical to sustaining livelihoods. Rwanda is one of the countries in Africa that have long histories of multiple displacements, and the life trajectories of many Rwandans are characterised by multiple experiences of displacement and involuntary migration. Although much research has focussed on the effects of displacement on people's livelihoods from both an academic and a practitioner's viewpoint, less is known about the effects of multiple and repeated displacements on people's livelihoods over time. Instead of treating each displacement separately, I analysed the impacts of repeated displacements on the livelihoods and adaptive capacities of households in Rwanda. The research highlights the crucial importance of social and human capital to people's resilience. However, the successive loss of natural capital in combination with changing social and economic conditions reduces the ability of many households to continue to employ these capitals to reconstruct sustainable livelihoods. Forced to become increasingly creative and flexible in their coping strategies, many households employ mobility as a survival mechanism to spread their risks.

In the debate on Africa's future social and economic landscape in the context of the SDG of 'leaving no one behind', youth have taken centre stage. Chapter 6 contributes to a better understanding of how rural youths are navigating Rwanda's changing society, providing a view from below. Rapid social and economic transformations have important consequences for the position of youths within Rwandan society, and paired with new expectations as well as aspirations they are changing the ways that young people negotiate their transition to adulthood. Young people are 'stuck' in a non-adult state, primarily because government policy prevents them from attaining the markers of social adulthood. Forced to negotiate their place in a context that is uncertain and insecure, rural youths are compelled to be innovative and flexible, to earn their livelihoods by performing a diverse set of formal and informal income-generating activities, mobility and connections in their trajectories towards managing their futures. When they talked about their dreams and ambitions, they appeared to be particularly keen on the government's discourse on self-reliance and entrepreneurship. Rural youths are seeking economic independence through practices of multi-activity, including multi-activities in multiple locations through mobility, deploying their agency mainly in the form of mobility in search of employment. Facing limited income-generating opportunities in the countryside to absorb the growing youth cohort entering the labour market, the research showed how rural-city connections have

become a crucial factor in the livelihoods of Rwanda's rural youths. Stressing the agency of young Rwandans as creators and social shifters (Durham 2000), they are important actors in processes of urbanisation and will be for a crucial part of Africa's urban future.

An inclusive urban future?

Cities and urban settlement can play a critical role as drivers of sustainable development in Africa, provided they are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, as stipulated by SDG goal 11 and expressed in the New Urban Agenda (UN-Habitat 2017). Under this assertion, this dissertation engaged with the debate on urbanisation in Africa, contributing to an understanding of what the ideal of 'modern' urbanism as pursued in urban settlements in Rwanda means in terms of inclusive and sustainable development.

The various chapters in this dissertation illustrated how Rwanda's urban agenda does not stand for inclusive urbanism, but is rather an elite project that is widening the gap between urban and rural households in socioeconomic terms. This applies not only to grand projects like Kigali, but also to smaller urban settlements where a strong focus on 'fixing' and territorial planning is leaving many households behind or 'in-between'. However, the urban ideal that is strived for is not just about leveraging urbanisation for development; it is part of a state-building project that is to include the whole of society. I have argued that spatial control is used by the ruling regime to establish its legitimacy and control post-genocide, and that therefore the urban agenda should be seen in the light of the invention of a 'new Rwanda'. In reinventing, or 're-imagining', the country, the Rwandan government holds a modernist vision with a strong belief in the so-called makeability of society. Moreover, central to this vision of modern urbanism, which is based on Western concepts and theories, is a strong dichotomy between urban and rural, whereby the former equals progress and modernity and the latter anything that is traditional or informal. Conceptualising rural and urban as separate spaces no longer has any analytical value, since it ignores the hybridity and 'rurban' nature of spaces – such as small towns and growing rural trade centres – and the flexible, mobile and temporary urbanites who are at the heart of their development. Despite this observation, and while processes of rural transformation by definition gradually lead to the blurring of sharp economic, social and cultural differences between rural and urban, in Rwanda this process in combination with the country's urbanisation policy seems to be reinforcing the rural–urban dichotomy and creating a new class difference between the rural and the urban.

This raises concerns regarding inclusive development, but also of political stability. Prior to 1994, agrarian policies that led to the increased impoverishment of the rural population, the increasing scarcity of land, and growing inequalities were important factors leading to civil unrest. They were part of the multiple and complex processes that led to the 1994 genocide (Uvin 1998; Newbury 1999; Des Forges 2006; Koster 2008). This context is important in terms of the new inequalities and patterns of exclusion created by current urban and rural policies. As such, chapter two illustrates the key role of both urbanisation and urban centres in Rwanda's post-

conflict dynamics. The history of violence and conflict continues to underpin the governments' post-genocide development and urbanisation discourse. Cities are strategic political locations and symbolic bases of state control and public authority, emphasising how these sites are potentially contested arenas of change. While urban planning, able to anticipate and withstand the negative outcomes of urbanisation and promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth, forms an important mechanism bolstering state legitimacy, frustrations and grievances about not feeling included in this larger project and a sense of "being left behind" have adverse effects. Although Rwanda is considered a stable post-conflict regime, other examples, such as the post-electoral violence in Kenya or Burundi in the past years, demonstrate that issues of inequality in access to rights, land and the benefits of economic development, if not resolved, can be triggers for violence and instability (Büscher 2018: 194).

A rurban future

This research has shown that Western models and theories applied in the African context do not fit the bottom-up reality of everyday urban life. It has also emphasised the importance of mobility in households' strategies to bridge the rural–urban divide and as such is a central aspect of Africa's urban future.

Intensified rural–urban linkages and interactions are playing an increasingly significant role in small-town development and rural livelihood transformation: households that successfully negotiate the rural–urban transition are often engaged in both rural and urban activities and tend to be multilocal. However, urban planning and governance systems often fail to address the social and spatial consequences of such shifting rural–urban connections (Agergaard and Ortenbjerg 2017: 65). In Rwanda, small towns clearly bring people closer to infrastructure and services, give them access to regional markets, and for many households function as stepping stones between the rural and the urban. However, this research found that for many, small towns are not necessarily places to settle. Between the rural and the urban as separate spheres, there is a larger space where the bulk of contemporary rural societies place themselves; this larger space is comprised of rural–urban territories that are bound together by flows of people. Many households manoeuvre through this space by adopting 'rurban' livelihood practices, using different patterns of mobility as a vital livelihood asset. In essence, Africa's urban future is rurban. In the past, the concept was used to capture rural–urban transformations in spatial terms, as well as the social, cultural and political dimensions of rural-to-urban transformation. Here, I refer to 'rurban' as in the special issue 'Urban Transformation and Rural–City Connections in Africa' by Agergaard and Ortenbjergs (2017), and in the RurbanAfrica project (see <http://www.rurban.ku.dk>) of which this research was part, namely as a descriptive concept of how rural–urban territories are bound together by flows of people that is used to explore the importance of multi-activity and multi-locality in households' livelihood transformation.

Finally, my conclusion is supported by Steinbrink and Niedenführ (2020: 90), whose latest book – *Africa on the Move: Migration, Translocal Livelihoods and Rural Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* – contains the following words:

[...] contrary to the classical models of ‘urban transition’ and ‘mobility transition’, circular forms of migration and intensive rural–urban interconnections are not temporary but rather enduring phenomena in Africa. Urbanization in Africa can therefore only be adequately described in terms of translocality and its strong structuring effect. Politics, planning, and development cooperation must recognize the fact that urbanization and translocalization are parallel processes in Africa and that African urbanity cannot be conceived without translocality.

Rural households are squeezed between agricultural reforms and urbanisation, forcing them to navigate a rapidly changing society towards becoming the modern ideal of entrepreneurial urbanites. This is at odds with the reality of how most Rwandan households organise their lives and livelihoods, to which rural–urban connections are increasingly important, as I have shown in this dissertation.

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Appendix 1. Household survey



RurbanAfrica Agricultural and rural livelihood survey

University of Dschang (Cameroon), University of Ghana, University of Rwanda, Sokoine University of Agriculture (Tanzania), University of Copenhagen (Denmark), Loughborough University (United Kingdom), International Institute for Environment and Development (United Kingdom), Université Toulouse II Le Mirail (France), Utrecht University (Netherlands)

This household questionnaire collects information on the daily activities, farming practices, non-farm employment and mobility of rural households in this village. With your consent this interview will last about 40-45 minutes. The information provided by you shall be confidentially used for research purposes only. You will not be identifiable in any datasets or publications.

Country	
Region/ Province	
Division/Sector	
Ward/Cell	
Village	
if possible: GPS latitude, longitude and altitude	Longitude: Latitude: Altitude:

Date (DD/MM/YY)	
Name interviewer	
Full name Respondent	
Household Code	

Since when (year) has the household been resident in this house?	
--	--

Use always codes 00 or 99 for:	Code
Don't know/ no answer	00
Not applicable	99

A-2: For those HH members who are mostly or permanently away (“usually absent” code 2 from previous question)

HH member ID	Reason for leaving 1. Education 2. Work 3. Other Specify all	Current location 1. Nearby village 2. Village in same district 3. Town/ city 4. Abroad Specify the name of the place (District, town, village...)	Duration since leaving Years and months	How many times do they visit this household and for what reason?

A-3: Information on economic activities of the resident household members

HH member ID	Main income generating activity (occupation) Specify	Additional economic activities Specify	Labour position 1. Self-employed 2. Employer 3. Permanent wage labour 4. Long term contract (one year and above) 5. Short term contract (less than one year) 6. casual wage labour 7. Family workers without pay	Place of non-agricultural employment (geographical) Specify the name of the place and distance in time and/or km		Employer If applicable
				Name of place	time km	
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

A-4: Compared to 10 years ago, are there any changes in activity and/or income in the household?

Main activity	Changed (specify change and reason(s); explain)	Income (tick appropriate box)		Why? (explain)	Purchasing power - Can your current income buy:	
		Deteriorated	Improved		Less goods	More goods
same						

FORM B: Migration and Mobility of Economically Active Resident Household Members

ID	Describe the main destination of work-related shorter periods of migration (less than 3 months) District name, settlement name, rural (r) or urban (u)	Frequency of trips away from your home location 1. daily commuting 2. every week 3. every month 4. a few times a year 5. seasonal 6. occasionally	Most used means of transport 1. bus 2. car 3. truck 4. motorcycle 5. bicycle 6. other: specify	Main purpose of these trips (specify)	% of the time spent in rural and urban locations (over past 12 months)	
					rural	urban
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

Explain how this mobility has changed compared to 10 years ago

- 1. Higher frequency
- 2. Same frequency
- 3. Decreasing frequency

Specify why:

FORM C: Agriculture and Livestock

C-1: General information on plots of the household (on plot level; specify per plot)

Plots	Estimated area (Specify units)	Land use 1. Cultivated (specify crops) 2. Fallow 3. Pasture 4. Forest 5. Other (specify)	Perceived location of plots specify distance in km time Km	Ownership/tenure 1. Owned by household 2. Rented 3. Borrowed 4. Community land 5. State land 6. Other (specify)	Inputs 1. bought seeds 2. Inorganic fertilizer 3. Organic fertilizer 3. Pest -/herbicides 4. irrigation water 5. other (specify) (for each plot list all inputs)	Labour 1. Hired 2. Family 3. Combination of 1 and 2	Livestock 1. Oxen 2. Cattle 3. Pigs 4. Sheep 5. Goats 6. Chickens 7. Other (specify)	Amount	Use of animal products (such as milk, meat, manure...) specify Subsistence sale both
1							Oxen		
2							Cattle		
3							Pigs		
4							Sheep		
5							Goats		
6							Chickens		
7							Other		
8									

C-4: Changes in crops, inputs and outputs compared to 10 years ago (tick appropriate box)

Crop name (5 main crops)	Land allocated			Use of input			Buyer			Crop output						
				Labour			Non-labour (agro- inputs)			consumption			sale			
	less	same	more	less	same	more	less	same	more	less	same	more	less	same	more	

What are the main changes in crops, inputs and outputs over the past 10 years?

Are there any crops that have been abandoned over the past 10 years, and if so, why?

Have there been any changes in the composition and size of your livestock over the past 10 years, and if so why?

C-5: Production assets

Item	No. owned	Access to (specify) <small>(if not owned, does the household have access to these items ? in what way/ from whom?)</small>
(Ox-) Plough		
Tractor		
Cart		
Milling machine		
Other (specify)		

C-6: Common pool resources

Does your household have access to communal land (common pool resources): such as communal grazing land, forest land, bush land, marshland	If yes, what do you use this land for?	How important is access to this land for your household?
1. Yes 2. no	1. agriculture 2. livestock 3. collecting firewood 4. making charcoal 5. collecting food/ natural resources 6. other: specify	1. very important 2. important 3. not important 4. insignificant 5. other

FORM D: Financial and Physical Assets

D-1: Use of credit and loans during the past 5 years

From whom/ which institution specify	Purpose of credit/loan	Which household member(s) received this credit or loan? HH member ID(s)	HH member ID	Make use of mobile phone for banking/savings: Yes (explain purpose)	No
			1		
			2		
			3		
			4		
			5		
			6		
			7		
			8		
			9		
			10		

D-2: Composition of household incomes (over the last year)

Amount total household earnings from	Total amount (per year)	Which household members contribute to this item? Indicate HH members IDs (several members may contribute to an item)
Agricultural production		
livestock		
Self-employed work		
Salaried employment		
Casual wage work		
Pension		
Remittances		
Other (specify)		
total		

D-3 Remittances (from family members)

Received national remittances (cash or kind) at the HH level (over the last year)			
Amount/Type	From whom? (indicate HH member ID)	How often	How received
		1. Sometimes 2. Once a year 3. Regularly	Informal channel (by hand) Formal channel (formal financial institutions) Mobile money

Received international remittances (cash or kind) at the HH level (over the last year)			
Amount/Type	From whom? (indicate HH member ID)	How often	How received
		1. Sometimes 2. Once a year 3. Regularly	Informal channel (by hand) Formal channel (formal financial institutions) Mobile money

Use of received remittances during the past 5 years (cash and kind) – e.g. housing, agriculture, business, etc. -

D-4: Information on money and goods sent by the household

To whom?	Money (amount)	Goods (Specify)	How often 1. Sometimes 2. Once a year 3. Regularly	How sent Informal channel (by hand)	Formal channel (formal financial institutions)	Mobile money

D-5: Physical assets at the household level

Size of the main house (floor surface in m ²)	Ownership status 1. Own property 2. Rented 3. Free lodging 4. Other	Construction materials specify		Number of rooms
		Floor	walls roofing	

Services:

Does the HH have access to (specify):	
Electricity	Drinking water
connection 1. No electricity 2. Generator 3. Solar 4. Electricity (grid connection) 5. Other (specify)	source 1. Public Network 2. Borehole or protected well 3. Unprotected well 4. Other (specify)
	Sanitation 1. no toilet /latrine 2. private flush toilet 3. private latrine 4. public/shared latrine 5. other (specify)

	Total annual expenditure of the Household:
--	--

HH head: Who in your household decides on expenditures?		
	Yes	No
Does the household manage to save money each year? If so, how much (on average):		

Would you be willing to receive us again for a follow-up interview?	Yes	No
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Length of interview	Start:	End:	Total time (in minutes):

Appendix 2. Survey entrepreneurs

RurbanAfrica Questionnaire (SME) Entrepreneurs

88	No answer/ don't know
99	Not applicable
District	
Sector	
Cell	
Village	

Date (DD/MM/YY)	
Full name of respondent	
Name of the business (if applicable)	
Type of business	

1. Market vendor (agricultural produce)
2. Ambulant vendor (agricultural produce)
3. Shop vendor (specify)
4. Repair services (specify)
5. Firewood and charcoal
6. Hairdresser
7. Hospitality (restaurant, bar)
8. Carpenter
9. Electrician
10. Baker
11. Tailor/dressmaker
12. Painter
13. Transport/distribution
14. Other (please specify)

What is your position in this business

1. Sole owner
 2. One of the owners
 3. Contracted manager
 4. Other: specify
-
-

1. General data:

Age	gender	Marital status	Number of household members	Birthplace	Highest level of education completed	Ubudehe category
	1. Male 2. Female	1. Single 2. Married 3. Divorced 4. Widowed		Specify location (district and village)		

Since when (year) have you lived in this village/town?

Reason for moving here:

2. Livelihood activities and business characteristics

a. Livelihood and income

What is the daily occupation of your household members?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

What are the main sources of income in your household?

All income comes from the main enterprise

Main enterprise is main contributor to income

Main enterprise and other activities earn equally

Other activities earn more than the main enterprise

b. Business characteristics

When did you start this business (year)?

Is this a formal or an informal business?

formal

informal

**

** : formal means it is an official, registered business which as such pays taxes; informal is when the business is not registered and so the owner does not pay taxes.

Number of employees?			
How many family members work in the business?			
Since you started this business, has the number of employees	decreased	Stayed the same	increased

Indicate the business premises (where does the business operate from?)	owned	rented
Work from home (home-based)		
Market stand		
Shop in commercial building		
Other (specify)		

How much rent do you pay per month?
--

Is this the first business you have owned?	NO	YES
If not, please indicate what happened to the previous business owned		
Failed		
Still own the business		
Sold the business		
Other (specify)		

If the business is no longer operational (closed), what is the reasons for closure? (you may choose more than one option)	
High tax burden	
Decreasing number of clients	
No money for new investment	
Type of business was not profitable	
Personal/family problems	
Closed down by the government (indicate why!)	
Other (specify):	

Indicate your past experience prior to this self-employment (occupational background)

Unemployed	
Farming	
Casual Wage labour	
Self-employed (owned other small business)	
Contracted employee	
Government employee (teacher, nurse, police service)	
Other (Specify):	

REASON TO START A BUSINESS:

To what extent did the statements below influence your decision to start a business?

Statement: I started this business because	Totally disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Totally agree
To provide jobs for family members					
To survive, because I had no job					
My other occupation(s) do(es) not earn enough money					
It earns more money than other activities					
I continue my family's business					
Owning a business increases your status in the community					
There was no such business yet in this village/town					
I see other people improving their lives because of their business					

Where do you buy your supplies? Describe the main locations:		How often do you go there?
(country, district, sector, village/town)		1. Daily 2. At least once a week 3. At least once a month 4. Once a year 5. Occasionally 6. Supplier comes to me
1		
2		
3		
4		

If you buy your supplies elsewhere than this village/town, why is that?

Where are your customers from?

Only from this village (local market)	
From the whole sector	
From the whole district	
from the whole country	
International	
Other (specify)	

Number of mobile phones owned (in the HH)

Mobile phone usage related to business activities (more answers possible)

Gathering (market) information	
Placing orders (with suppliers)	
Mobile money: receiving money from clients	
Mobile money: paying suppliers	
Banking	
Other (specify)	

Benefit of using mobile phones (more answers possible)

Access to more suppliers	
Increased number of customers	
Better market information	
Enlarged business operations	
Increased profit	
Less need to travel	
Other (specify)	

3. Finance and savings**Where did you get the investment to start this business?**

Money earned from farming activities	
Money earned from previous activities/occupation	
Remittances	
Loan from bank	
Loan from cooperative	
Loan from friends or family	
Donation from friend or family specifically for this business	
Other (specify)	

Use of credit and loans

From whom/which institution specify	How much was this loan (in RWF)?	Purpose of credit/loan	Which household member(s) received this credit or loan? HH member ID(s)

How much does your business generate per month?**Can you save money at the end of the month/year?**

How do you use the profit you make from your business?

Reinvest in the business	
Reinvest in agricultural activities	
Buy land	
Spend on basic household needs	
Pay off loan	
Pay school fees	
Other (specify)	

4. Business environment

What government-provided services do you have access to?

Are these services important for your business?

Service	Access to it?	Not important	Neutral	Important	Very important	WHY?
	1. Yes 2. No					
Electricity						
Water						
Roads						
Commercial housing						
Security						
Transport						
Financial services (bank, ...)						
Cooperative						
Modern market						
Cleaning service						

My business experienced growth (increased income) over the past years	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Stayed the same	Slightly agree	Strongly agree

The main challenges for your business since you started are:

	Totally disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Totally agree
Lack of sufficient financial resources					
Difficult to get a loan					
High rent (for business premise)					
Lack of suitable business location/premises					
Insufficient provision or access to basic infrastructure (electricity, water and road networks)					
Increased competition					
Too much competition from big businesses					
High tax pressure					
Lack of state support for small businesses					
Declining number of customers					
Rising prices of supplies					
Safety issues					
Other (specify)					

How would you grade the business environment here? (How easy is it to start a business here and keep it successful? 1 = not easy; 10: very easy)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Please explain why?

Murakoze Cyane!

Summary

This dissertation analyses the combined processes of urbanisation and rural transformation as manifested by small-town development in Rwanda. It engages with the current debate on urbanisation in sub-Saharan Africa and contributes to an understanding of what the ideal of 'modern' urbanism in Africa's urban future means in terms of inclusive and sustainable development. Urbanisation, and the profound rural–urban transformations it implies at the local level, is at the centre of the debate on the future of African urbanism. The pursuit of modern urbanism based on Western debates and examples has, however, proven unfit for African urban realities, which pleads for a reconceptualization of African urban spaces and questions the relevance of conventional Western urban theory.

This dissertation addresses two gaps in the debate on 'smart cities', 'new urbanism' and the future of African cities. These gaps are due to the focus being mainly on the dynamics that are at play in major cities and metropolises – whereas it is small towns or emerging urban centres that are absorbing most of the urban growth in Africa – and on spatial developments and planning, rather than on accounting for the human and social dimensions of urbanisation and understanding the dynamics of everyday life in African cities.

In Rwanda, an urban ideal is pursued through a specific set of policies, designs and strategies for both the social and the physical form of urban development. The ruling regime is using both spatial and economic tools and policies in the pursuit of an ideal of 'modern urbanity' in rapidly growing small towns. In this book, I turn the gaze towards small towns and their development, the dynamics of which I consider to be the crux of understanding African urbanism. I do so in order to answer the following research question:

How can small towns provide rural people with new opportunities for livelihood improvement, and what does this mean for Rwanda's urban future?

I answer this question in several steps.

In Chapter 2, I first review the specific political and socioeconomic context in which the development of small towns is taking place and the characteristics of Rwanda's urban policy, including its spatial characteristics. The chapter illustrates how an ideal of modern urbanism is sought through policies that entail both spatial and economic reconfigurations. Whereas the growth of Kigali has often been studied as a critical site in the context of post-conflict reconstruction and securitisation, the dynamics at play in small towns and urbanising centres have been less in the picture. With a central focus on the promotion of planned and controlled urbanisation as the driving force for its post-conflict development agenda, the process of urban governance is crucial to the regimes' pursuit of security, control and legitimacy. Presenting small towns and rural growth centres as strategic spaces of control, the chapter argues how the process of rural urbanisation in Rwanda can be understood as a potentially contested arena of change. Ruling elites and an emerging middle class support the idea of urban modernism as they can take

advantage of the delivered profits; however, it also implies the spatial and economic exclusion of those who are unable to enjoy the same benefits. In Rwanda, the strong focus on top-down spatial planning models has a detrimental impact in terms of urban inequality and exclusion and does not seem to provide room for bottom-up urbanisation.

The subsequent chapters – the largest part of this dissertation – are about experiences on the ground, and how these transformations affect the lives and livelihoods of Rwandans who experience, live and shape these processes of change. As Pieterse (2010) and the African Centre for Cities have advocated, in order to understand Africa's urban future, we need to look at the experiences on the ground, the dynamics of everyday urban life. The present research investigated how this space is created not only by policy and the state's coercive implementation, but also by the agency of both rural and urban actors. As such, this research makes an original contribution to the literature on Rwanda by explicitly focusing on the subaltern voices – voices that are often not heard in the bigger debates on rural transformation and urbanisation in Africa.

In Chapter 3, I look at the people who are central to the process of urbanisation, namely the new urbanites in Rwanda's small towns, and what their urban lives look like. The pursuit of an ideal of modern urbanity in rapid growing small towns implies an ideal type of modern urbanite. In an attempt to take a more nuanced look at the variety of people who use the city in different ways, I distinguish three types of new urbanites with a specific focus on those who are considered to be on the urban margins. I argue that it is the practices of these people that constitute and define the flexible and mobile nature of the lived reality of small-town life that forms an essential part of African urbanisation and small-town development today. In the Rwandan case, sticking rigidly to the implementation of blueprint planning fails to recognise this bottom-up urbanisation, feeding the perception that urban areas are becoming an elite space. At the same time, the urban margins should be seen as a transformational space, recognising the agency of more marginalised groups and their innovative ways of making the town work for them.

Many households in the Rwandan countryside are caught between processes of urbanisation and rural transformation. It is necessary to pay attention to the rural side of this story in order to understand current urbanisation and to do justice to the reality of rural households, which – as I illustrate – often live at the intersection of the rural and the urban. Urbanisation can no longer be considered an outcome of a unidirectional movement from rural to urban areas; instead, it is shaped by a chain of connections in which rural and urban livelihoods interact on a movement continuum along which small towns have become important reference points. In response to the government's transformative policies to reconfigure the rural space and economy, more and more rural households are complementing agricultural activities with off-farm activities and multi-locality. Mobility is a significant asset that enables people to benefit from opportunities in different localities by constructing spatially dispersed ties and connections; however, it does not benefit everyone equally and does not necessarily result in people escaping poverty.

Chapters 5 and 6 take a look at the past and cast a look into the future, respectively. The current mobility patterns described in Chapter 4 are put in the broader perspective of Rwanda's post-conflict reality. Displacement, forced migration and resettlement, which have been attributed to a variety of causes, disrupt all aspects of people's lives, breaking the social, cultural and economic networks that are critical to sustaining livelihoods. Due to the country's violent past, the life trajectories of many Rwandans are characterised by different 'mobilities', for example multiple experiences of displacement and involuntary migration. While the effects of displacement on people's livelihoods have been studied before, in this chapter I look specifically at the impacts of multiple and repeated displacements on people's livelihoods over time. Successive losses of natural capital combined with changing social and economic conditions reduce the ability of many households to keep employing their social and human capital to reconstruct sustainable livelihoods, which has led people to become increasingly creative and flexible in their coping strategies, employing mobility as a survival mechanism to spread their risks.

In the debate on Africa's future social and economic landscape in the context of the SDG of 'leave no one behind', youth have taken centre stage. Rapid social and economic transformations are having important consequences for the position of youths within Rwandan society, and paired with new expectations as well as aspirations, they are changing the ways that young people negotiate their transition to adulthood. Young people are 'stuck' in a non-adult state, primarily because as a result of government policy they cannot attain the markers of social adulthood. Forced to negotiate their place in a context that is uncertain and insecure, rural youths are compelled to be innovative and flexible, to earn their livelihoods by performing a diverse set of formal and informal income-generating activities, mobilities and connections in their trajectories towards managing their futures. Here, rural-city connections are a crucial factor.

Finally, Chapter 7 engages with the debate on urbanisation in Africa, contributing to an understanding of what the ideal of 'modern' urbanism as pursued in urban settlements in Rwanda means in terms of inclusive and sustainable development. Throughout the book, I illustrate how Rwanda's urban agenda does not stand for inclusive urbanism, but is rather an elite project that is widening the gap between urban and rural households in socioeconomic terms. Talking of winners and losers exemplifies the political economy underlying Rwanda's urban planning rules, which is based on a strong modernist premise of incompatible dualisms between traditionality and modernity and rural and urban. I argue that conceptualising rural and urban as separate spaces no longer has any analytical value, since doing so ignores the hybridity and 'rurban' nature of spaces such as small towns and growing rural trade centres, and the flexible, mobile and temporary urbanites who are at the heart of their development. This process in combination with the country's urbanisation policy seems to be reinforcing the rural-urban dichotomy and creating a new class difference between the rural and the urban. This raises concerns regarding both inclusive development and political stability. The concluding section pays specific attention to mobility, which was central to this research. It emphasises the

importance of mobility in households' strategies to bridge the rural–urban divide and as such is a central aspect of Africa's urban future. Africa's urban future is 'rurban'. Households that successfully negotiate the rural urban transition are often engaged in both rural and urban activities and tend to be multilocal, using different patterns of mobility as a vital livelihood asset. However, urban planning and governance systems often fail to address the social and spatial consequences of such shifting rural–urban connections.

Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift analyseert de gecombineerde processen van verstedelijking en rurale transformatie in de vorm van de ontwikkeling van kleine steden in Rwanda. Het houdt zich bezig met het huidige debat over verstedelijking in sub-Saharisch Afrika, en draagt bij aan een begrip van wat het ideaal van modern urbanisme betekent voor de Afrikaanse stedelijke toekomst in termen van inclusieve en duurzame ontwikkeling. Verstedelijking en de ingrijpende plattelandsstedelijke veranderingen die dit op lokaal niveau met zich meebrengt staan centraal in het debat over de toekomst van Afrikaanse urbanisme. Het streven naar moderne stedenbouw op basis van westerse debatten en voorbeelden is echter ongeschikt gebleken voor de Afrikaanse stedelijke realiteit. Deze realiteit dringt aan op een herconceptualisering van de Afrikaanse stedelijke gebieden en trekt de relevantie van de conventionele westerse stadstheorie in twijfel.

Dit proefschrift behandelt twee hiaten in het debat over 'smart cities', 'new urbanism' en de toekomst van Afrikaanse steden. Ten eerste gaat de aandacht vooral uit naar de dynamiek in de grote steden en metropolen, terwijl het de kleine steden of opkomende stedelijke centra zijn die verantwoordelijk zijn voor het grootste deel van de stedelijke groei in Afrika. Ten tweede ligt de nadruk op ruimtelijke ontwikkeling en planning, in plaats van de menselijke en sociale dimensies van verstedelijking en het begrijpen van de dynamiek van het dagelijks leven in Afrikaanse steden.

In Rwanda wordt een stedelijk ideaal nagestreefd door middel van een specifieke set van beleid, ontwerpen en strategieën voor zowel de sociale als de fysieke vorm van stedelijke ontwikkeling. In het streven naar een ideaal van 'moderne stedelijkheid' in snelgroeiende kleine steden gebruikt het heersende regime zowel ruimtelijk en economisch beleid en instrumenten. In dit boek richt ik de blik op deze kleine steden en hun ontwikkeling, waarvan ik de dynamiek beschouw als de essentie tot het begrijpen van Afrikaans urbanisme. Ik doe dit om de volgende onderzoeksvraag te beantwoorden:

Hoe kunnen kleine steden de mensen op het platteland nieuwe mogelijkheden bieden om in hun levensonderhoud te voorzien en wat betekent dit voor de stedelijke toekomst van Rwanda?

Het beantwoorden van deze vraag doe ik in verschillende stappen.

Eerst ga ik in op de specifieke politieke en socio-economische context waarin de ontwikkeling van kleine steden plaatsvindt. Hierbij analyseer ik de kenmerken van stedelijke beleid in Rwanda, waaronder de ruimtelijke kenmerken. Ik illustreert hoe een ideaal van modern urbanisme wordt nagestreefd via een beleid dat zowel ruimtelijke als economische herconfiguraties met zich meebrengt. Terwijl de groei van Kigali vaak is bestudeerd als een kritieke plaats in het kader van post-conflict wederopbouw en beveiliging, is de dynamiek in kleine steden en verstedelijkende centra minder in beeld geweest. De Rwandese overheid ziet het bevorderen van geplande en gecontroleerde verstedelijking als een drijvende kracht achter

hun post-conflict ontwikkelingsagenda. Het proces van stedelijk bestuur is hierbij van cruciaal belang voor het streven van het regime naar veiligheid, controle en legitimiteit

Door kleine steden en rurale groeicentra te presenteren als strategische ruimtes van controle, beargumenteert het hoofdstuk hoe het proces van rurale verstedelijking in Rwanda kan worden opgevat als een potentieel omstreden arena van verandering. De heersende elite en een opkomende middenklasse steunen het idee van stedelijke modernisering, aangezien zij kunnen profiteren van de geleverde winsten; het impliceert echter ook de ruimtelijke en economische uitsluiting van degenen die niet van diezelfde voordelen kunnen genieten. De sterke focus in Rwanda op top-down modellen op het gebied van ruimtelijke ordening heeft een nadelige invloed op de stedelijke ongelijkheid en uitsluiting en lijkt geen ruimte te laten voor bottom-up verstedelijking.

De volgende hoofdstukken gaan over ervaringen uit de praktijk; over hoe deze veranderingsprocessen het leven en het levensonderhoud (*livelihoods*) van Rwandezers beïnvloeden. Om de stedelijke toekomst van Afrika te begrijpen, moeten we zoals Pieterse (2010) en het African Centre for Cities hebben bepleit, kijken naar zowel deze ervaringen ter plaatse en de dynamiek van het dagelijkse stadsleven. Dit onderzoek toont aan hoe stedelijke ruimten niet enkel worden gecreëerd door het beleid en de dwangmatige uitvoering hiervan door de staat, maar ook door de *agency* van zowel plattelands- als stedelijke actoren. Het zijn de handelingen en acties van deze mensen die op hun eigen manier gebruik maken van deze stedelijke ruimtes, die mee de aard en realiteit van kleinstedelijk ontwikkeling bepalen. Door zich expliciet te richten op de ondergeschikte stemmen – stemmen die vaak niet gehoord worden in de grotere debatten over rurale transformatie en verstedelijking in Afrika – levert dit onderzoek een originele bijdrage aan de literatuur over Rwanda.

In hoofdstuk 3 kijk ik naar de mensen die centraal staan in het proces van verstedelijking. Met andere woorden, naar de nieuwe stedelingen in Rwandas kleine steden en hoe hun stedelijk leven eruitziet. Het streven naar een ideaal van 'moderne stedelijkheid' in snelgroeïende kleine steden impliceert een ideaal type moderne stedeling. In een poging om een meer genuanceerde blik te werpen op de verscheidenheid aan mensen die de stad op verschillende manieren gebruiken, onderscheid ik drie soorten nieuwe stedelingen. Hierbij leg ik de focus op degenen die worden beschouwd als 'levend in de marges van de stad'. Ik argumenteer dat het de handelingen van deze mensen zijn die het flexibele en mobiele karakter van de werkelijkheid van het leven in een kleine stad definiëren. Hiermee vormen zij een essentieel onderdeel van de huidige Afrikaanse verstedelijking en kleinstedelijke ontwikkeling. In Rwanda wordt deze bottom-up verstedelijking niet herkend en wordt de perceptie gevoed dat stedelijke gebieden een elitaire ruimte aan het worden zijn. Tegelijkertijd moeten de stedelijke marges worden gezien als een ruimte van verandering, waarbij de *agency* moet worden erkend van meer gemarginaliseerde groepen en hun innovatieve manieren om de stad voor hen te laten werken.

Veel huishoudens op het Rwandese platteland zitten gevangen tussen processen van verstedelijking en plattelandsvernieuwing. Om de huidige verstedelijking te begrijpen en om recht te doen aan de realiteit van plattelandshuishoudens is het nodig om aandacht te besteden

aan de rurale kant van dit verhaal. Hoofdstuk 4 toont aan dat verstedelijking niet langer kan worden beschouwd als het resultaat van een eenrichtingsverkeer van het platteland naar de stad. Het wordt gevormd door een keten van verbindingen waarin plattelands- en stadsleven op elkaar inwerken in een continuüm waarlangs kleine steden een belangrijk referentiepunt zijn geworden. Als reactie op het transformatiebeleid van de overheid om de rurale ruimte en economie te herconfigureren, vullen steeds meer plattelandshuishoudens hun landbouwactiviteiten aan met werkzaamheden buiten de landbouw en op verschillende plaatsen. Mobiliteit is een belangrijke troef die mensen in staat stelt te profiteren van kansen op verschillende plaatsen door het opbouwen van ruimtelijk verspreide banden en verbindingen. Deze troef komt echter niet iedereen in gelijke mate ten goede en leidt er niet noodzakelijkerwijs toe dat mensen aan de armoede kunnen ontsnappen.

Hoofdstukken 5 en 6 nemen respectievelijk een kijkje in het verleden en werpen een blik in de toekomst. De huidige mobiliteitspatronen die in hoofdstuk 4 worden beschreven, worden in het bredere perspectief van de post-conflictrealiteit van Rwanda geplaatst. Ontheemding, gedwongen migratie en hervestiging, welke allemaal aan verschillende oorzaken worden toegeschreven, verstoren alle aspecten van het leven van mensen. Sociale, culturele en economische netwerken die cruciaal zijn voor het behoud van het levensonderhoud worden hierdoor verbroken. Door het gewelddadige verleden van het land worden de levenstrajecten van veel Rwandezes gekenmerkt door verschillende 'mobiliteiten', bijvoorbeeld meerdere ervaringen met ontheemding en onvrijwillige migratie. Hoewel de effecten van ontheemding op het levensonderhoud van mensen al eerder zijn onderzocht, kijk ik in hoofdstuk 5 specifiek naar de effecten van meervoudige en herhaalde ontheemding op het levensonderhoud van mensen in de loop van de tijd. Opeenvolgende verliezen van natuurlijk kapitaal in combinatie met veranderende sociale en economische omstandigheden verminderen het vermogen van veel huishoudens om hun sociaal en menselijk kapitaal te blijven inzetten voor de wederopbouw van een duurzaam levensonderhoud. Hierdoor worden mensen steeds creatiever en flexibeler in hun overlevingsstrategieën, waarbij mobiliteit wordt ingezet als een overlevingsmechanisme om risico's te spreiden.

Jongeren staan in het middelpunt in het debat over het toekomstige sociale en economische landschap van Afrika in de context van de Duurzame Ontwikkelingsdoelstelling 'Laat niemand achter'. Snelle sociale en economische transformaties hebben belangrijke gevolgen voor de positie van jongeren in de Rwandese samenleving. Gekoppeld aan nieuwe verwachtingen en aspiraties veranderen zij de manier waarop jongeren onderhandelen over hun overgang naar volwassenheid. Jongeren zitten 'vast' in een niet-volwassen staat, vooral omdat ze door het overheidsbeleid niet de markers van sociale volwassenheid kunnen bereiken. Gedwongen om te onderhandelen over hun plaats in een onzekere en instabiele context, worden plattelandsjongeren gedwongen om innovatief en flexibel te zijn om in hun levensonderhoud te voorzien. In het traject naar het managen van hun toekomst creëren ze een gevarieerde set van formele en informele inkomen genererende activiteiten, mobiliteiten en verbinding. De verbindingen tussen het platteland en de stad zijn hier een cruciale factor.

Tot slot gaat hoofdstuk 7 in op het debat over de verstedelijking in Afrika en draagt het bij tot een beter begrip van wat het ideaal van de 'moderne' stedelijkheid betekent in termen van inclusieve en duurzame ontwikkeling. Door het boek heen illustreer ik hoe Rwandas stedelijke agenda niet staat voor inclusief urbanisme, maar eerder een eliteproject is dat de kloof tussen stedelijke en rurale huishoudens in sociaaleconomische termen vergroot. Het spreken over winnaars en verliezers in deze context is een voorbeeld van de politieke economie die ten grondslag ligt aan Rwandas stedenbouwkundige regels, gebaseerd op een sterk modernistisch uitgangspunt van onvereenigbare dualismen tussen traditie en moderniteit en tussen platteland en stad. Ik stel dat het conceptualiseren van het platteland en de stad als gescheiden ruimtes geen analytische waarde meer heeft. Het gaat voorbij aan de hybriditeit en het 'rurbane' karakter van ruimtes zoals kleine steden en groeiende handelscentra op het platteland, en aan de flexibele, mobiele en tijdelijke stedelingen die aan de basis liggen van de hun ontwikkeling van deze ruimtes. In combinatie met het verstedelijkingsbeleid van het land, lijkt dit proces de dichotomie tussen platteland en stad te versterken. Hierdoor ontstaat bezorgdheid over zowel inclusieve ontwikkeling als de politieke stabiliteit, aangezien de versterking van deze dichotomie spanningen veroorzaakt die voortkomen uit wat in wezen een nieuw klassenverschil tussen stad en platteland aan het worden is. In het afsluitende deel wordt specifiek aandacht besteed aan de mobiliteit, die centraal staat in dit onderzoek. Het benadrukt het belang van mobiliteit in de strategieën van huishoudens om de kloof tussen stad en platteland te overbruggen en is als zodanig een centraal aspect van de stedelijke toekomst van Afrika. De stedelijke toekomst van Afrika is 'rurbaan'. Huishoudens die met succes de ruraal-urbane transitie verwerken, zijn vaak betrokken bij zowel rurale als stedelijke activiteiten en hebben de neiging multilokaal te zijn, waarbij verschillende mobiliteitspatronen worden gebruikt als een vitale troef om in hun levensonderhoud te voorzien. De systemen voor stadsplanning en -bestuur gaan echter vaak voorbij aan de sociale en ruimtelijke gevolgen van dergelijke verschuivende verbindingen tussen het platteland en de stad.

Curriculum Vitae

Ine Cottyn is a researcher in the field of international development with a special interest in grassroots agency and the strength of local actors in pursuing inclusive and sustainable development. She has over eight years of experience researching sustainable development, sub-Saharan Africa, rural transformation, migration and mobility, gender, youth, land governance and conflict dynamics. Her field experience includes Rwanda, South Africa, Cameroon, Senegal, Kenya, Niger and Burkina Faso.

Ine was born and raised in Belgium. In 2006, she moved to Utrecht (the Netherlands) to pursue a Bachelor's in Cultural Anthropology & Development Sociology at Utrecht University (2006–10). During her time as a Bachelor student, she spent six months at the Universidad de Granada (Spain) under an Erasmus Exchange programme and conducted four months of fieldwork in Senegal. During her Master's in International Development Studies (2010–11) at Utrecht University, Ine conducted fieldwork, this time in South Africa as a visiting researcher at Stellenbosch University.

After graduating, Ine worked as a project assistant at Fairfood and FIAN Netherlands, two organisations that align with her personal interests and ambitions. In 2012, she worked as a researcher at Utrecht University in a project investigating the responsible business practices of Dutch agribusinesses in Africa. A year later, she started her PhD within the framework of the RurbanAfrica programme. During her PhD, she participated in various courses and summer schools, gave tutorials on qualitative research methods and tools, and presented her findings at international conferences and in various publications (see list below of publications related to the research presented in this book).

In 2017, Ine continued her work as a researcher in an action research programme at LandAc, focusing on women's land rights in Africa. Action research and working together with grassroots organisations strengthened her interest in making a difference and having an impact through research, and she started taking an interest in the policy side of research work. As a consequence, in 2019 she worked as a 'Business and Peace in the Sahel' research fellow at the Conflict Research Unit at the Clingendael Institute (the Netherlands).

Publications related to the research presented in this book:

Cottyn, I. (forthcoming). 'Conforming with the Urban Ideal? 'New Urbanites' in Rwanda's Emerging Towns.' *International Development Planning Review*.
<https://doi.org/10.3828/idpr.2020.16>.

Steel, G., T. Birch-Thomsen, T., I. Cottyn, E.A. Lazaro, H. Mainet, F.J. Mishili, and P. van Lindert. 2019. 'Multi-activity, Multi-locality and Small-Town Development in Cameroon, Ghana, Rwanda and Tanzania.' *Eur J Dev Res* 31: 12-33. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-018-0183-y>.

Cottyn, I. 2018. 'Livelihood Trajectories in a Context of Repeated Displacement: Empirical

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- Steel, G., I. Cottyn, and P. van Lindert. 2017. 'New Connections—New Dependencies: Spatial and Digital Flows in Sub-Saharan African Livelihoods.' In *Livelihoods and Development: New Perspectives*, edited by L. de Haan, 148–167. Leiden: Brill.
- Cottyn, I. 2016. 'Top-down masterplanning in Rwanda.' *Geografie*, 25 (9): 10 – 12.
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- Cottyn, I., J. Schapendonk, P. van Lindert, F. Bart, T. Birch-Thomsen, B. Charlery de la Masselière, E.A. Lazaro, N. Lemoigne, F.J. Mishili, G. Nijenhuis, G., T. Niyonzima, M. Nuijen, G. Owusu, J. Pasini, S. Racaud, N. Tofte Hansen, M. Tsalefac, and L. Uwizeyimana. 2013. 'Mobility in Sub-Saharan Africa - Patterns, Processes, and Policies.' *RurbanAfrica State of the Art Report 2*. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen.

Urbanisation is a critical feature of contemporary societal change in sub-Saharan Africa. This book considers the profound rural–urban transformations this implies at the local level, which is at the centre of the debate on the future of African urbanism. It analyses the combined processes of urbanisation and rural transformation as manifested by small-town development in Rwanda, contributing to an understanding of what the ideal of ‘modern’ urbanism in Africa’s urban future means in terms of inclusive and sustainable development. Drawing on extensive mixed-methods research conducted over two years in Rwanda, it presents how the country’s urbanisation project – focused on smaller urban settlements as part of a state-building project – affects the livelihoods of ordinary Rwandans. The book explores how this process implies a spatial and social re-engineering of space, and how different socio-economic groups and generations navigate their way through this changing landscape.