An Analysis of *Umuganda*: the Policy and Practice of Community Work in Rwanda

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the policy and traditional practice of *umuganda*, which is a Rwandan word for community work. Many authors have looked at *umuganda*, mainly focusing on the period from 1973 until the 1994 genocide - something which has fostered a lot of negativity regarding the essence and practice of *umuganda*. Rather than discussing *umuganda* for a specific period, a wide look at its origins until the present day is more informative. This study contributes to the body of knowledge on the nature and the evolution of *umuganda* in Rwanda, thereby deepening the discussion about its future prospects.

The main purpose of the thesis is to investigate how to enhance the efficiency of the policy and practice of *umuganda* in fostering development and peace in Rwanda. The study focuses on how the practice of *umuganda* has been understood and implemented throughout the historical period of Rwanda, namely, the pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial periods until the genocide and then the post-genocide period. The discussion leads to a more detailed empirical study of how the policy is understood and practised in two geographical settings: one urban, in Kigali City, and the other rural, in Western Province.

This thesis identifies the major transformation of the philosophy, organisation and purpose of *umuganda* throughout the four historical periods. It specifically highlights that despite the decentralisation of political and administration structures, the management of *umuganda* has remained hierarchical. This has resulted in the government takeover of *umuganda* while local people distance themselves from its practice. The thesis notes that, even though *umuganda* practice is regarded as beneficial for public and political interest, little benefit is seen for individuals in their communities.

This thesis attempts to shed more light on how *umuganda* could be in harmony with the principles of participation, development and community development. It argues that, even though cultural practises are sometimes seen as backward, transforming *umuganda* to be managed by local communities could contribute to either a traditional sense of socio-economic well-being or even to modern development strategies. The thesis investigates the potential for the policy and practice of *umuganda* to empower the poor in the community, thereby helping national development.

The recommendation is that *umuganda* be regarded as a local community initiative. Its practice should be organised in a way that responds to the immediate need of the people, its initial philosophy. This in turn would help the government to address the causes of poverty, division and other kind of harm to society. With efficient implementation and regulation of *umuganda,* a substantial part of service delivery to the community could be provided by the people themselves, while the government could intervene only in difficult situations.

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Supervisor: Prof. Ralph Lawrence

Declaration 2: Publication and Manuscripts

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Acknowledgements

Dedication

To the memory of my brother Paul, and my sister Angelina, thank you for your love and always believing in me. To my son Jordan, you departed so early.

To all Rwandans who died through the wrong use of *umuganda* practice during the 1994 genocide; this should never happen again.

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Abbreviations used in this study

EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
IRDP	Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINECOFIN	Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning)
MRND	Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (National Revolutionary Movement for Development)
GNP	Gross National Product
PARMEHUTU	Parties du Mouvement pour l'Emancipation Hutu (Movement Party for Hutu Emancipation)
REMA	Rwanda Environment Authority
RPF	Rwanda Patriotic Front
UNAR	Union National Rwandaise
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

Vernacular words used in this study

Akagari	Cell: Government administrative unit, a subdivision of a sector
Akarere	District: Government administrative unit, a subdivision of a province
Gacaca	Rwandan traditional judiciary system to resolve minor conflicts in the community
Imihigo	Performance contact
Shiku	Equivalent to *uburetwa*- forced labour
Ubudehe	Traditional, own and mutual assistance work
Uburetwa	Forced labour
Umudugudu	Village, Settlement: Smallest government administrative unity (*imidugudu* in plural), a subdivision of cell
Umuganda	Traditional self and mutual assistance work currently translated as community work
Umurenge	Sector: Government administrative unit, a subdivision of a district

Map of Rwanda

Legend

- Lake Kivu
- Western Province (Study Area-1)
- Southern Province
- Northern Province
- Kigali City (Study area-2)
- Eastern Province
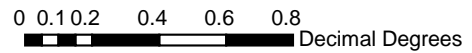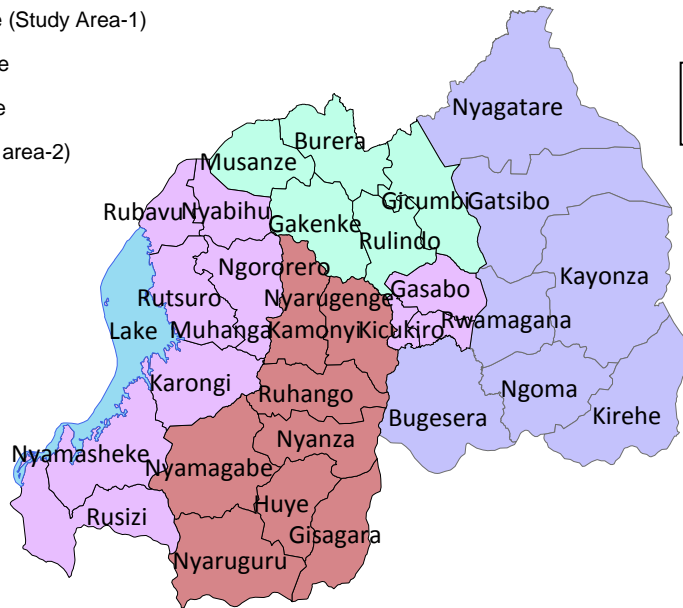
CHAPTER ONE

General Introduction

Introduction

This study seeks to investigate the current policy and practice of community work, *umuganda*, in Rwanda. *Umuganda* was an early traditional practice in Rwanda which has been used to meet post-genocide social, economic and political reconstruction challenges. The study questions whether borrowing from traditional practice does mean keeping to what was once traditional practice.

This chapter is a general introduction to the thesis. It is divided into four sections. Section One presents a general background and defines the study in relation to the main topic. Section Two outlines the research problem. Section Three indicates the scope of the study. Section Four explains the principal theories upon which this study is based. Section Five indicates the research methodologies used in this study and methods utilised to analyse the data. The chapter ends by indicating how the thesis is structured.

1.1 Background and definition

Community work is known as *umuganda* in *Kinyarwanda*, the local language spoken throughout Rwanda. Currently, *umuganda* is compulsory for everyone and is generally undertaken on the last Saturday of every month. However, there are informal *umuganda* activities that are organised in the middle of the month, either by the government or by civil society organisations. Consequently, beside the national policy of *umuganda* the study identifies what one can call *informal umuganda*. *Umuganda*, in general, is currently used as a platform to implement governmental programmes, such as those of decentralisation and economic development plans. Its practice is considered to be a significant element in the government's poverty eradication plans as well as in promoting unity and reconciliation in a society that has been devastated by conflict, genocide and poverty (with two-thirds of Rwandan households living below the poverty line) (UNDP: 2009).

In pre-colonial Rwanda, *umuganda* was a traditional practice and cultural value of working together to solve social and economic problems for mutual benefit. This practice was notably extended to those who were very poor or incapacitated to take part in collective action. The activities of the then *umuganda* included, for instance, farming for those who were unable to do so due to either physical handicap or old age, building houses for the poor and providing transportation to medical facilities to those who were in need (Mukarubuga 2006: 20). A group of households used to come together to share the burden of the work, making sure that everyone in the community had shelter and had their farms ready in time for the planting season. This played a significant role in protecting human security and increasing household income. However, this practice of *umuganda* was manipulated later on and used to strengthen and exercise power and control over ordinary people (Mukarubuga, 2006: 7).

Starting from the colonial era in the early 1900s, the function of *umuganda* changed from that of realizing social and economic benefits for the household to that of performing labour for the colonial administration (Midgley et al, 1986: 17). Based on historical factors, it is observed that

the essence, purpose, participation, and activities of *umuganda* changed during this period. In the 1970s, the post-colonial government tried to re-emphasise and revitalise *umuganda*, but in a way that took a different path. Learning from the previous colonial administration, *umuganda* became a compulsory policy in 1974. While the initial idea was to maintain Rwandan cohesion and security and to increase household income, such public benefits were dominated by political interests, thus undermining the well-being of households and leading to more control and exploitation by those in power (Pottier, 2006: 513).

Umuganda then turned into a means of promoting oppression and exclusion among Rwandans. This was done through colonial ethnic construction which will be explained in the following chapters. For instance, in 1994 the idea of *umuganda* was used and served as a means of mass mobilisation during the genocide, where more than one million people are recorded to have been killed within three months. Those in power argued then that only one particular group of people had the right to exist, and other groups were targeted for extermination in the name of *umuganda* (Verwimp 2004: 328-329). The meaning of collective action and togetherness then lost its original positive sense in Rwanda. This experience of *umuganda* during genocide has resulted in poor participation in the present monthly community work of *umuganda*. Despite these changes and distasteful experiences, *umuganda* has remained a type of collective action which is at the centre of government policy and practice (Ministry of Local Governance 2001: 9-10).

Umuganda, as a form of collective action, participation and belonging, can be compared to Russian peasant communal work, in the social unit called the *mir*[1] in the 1800s, before the socialist and communist revolution of 1917 in the Soviet Bloc countries of the USSR and Eastern Europe (Willis 2005: 75). Within the context of the African continent, *umuganda* is similar to the indigenous initiative of *harambee* (meaning `pulling together'), which is found in Kenya. The same forms of community work are present in many other post-independence African countries, notably, *ujamaa* in Tanzania or *humanism* in Zambia. However, in most cases,

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[1] The *mir* is a peasant commune established at the village level by Russian peasants (see Soviet Union, Formation of Soviet Society, www.county-dat.com

politicians have manipulated these indigenous initiatives for their own political interest.[2]Moreover, politicians have used the notion of 'development' as a slogan to make sense of their actions in the eyes of the ordinary people (Gibson, 1995: 69).

Explaining community work in the African context, Kinyinga (in Gibson, 1995: 69) points out that the alignment of development initiatives and organizations with the state is of the highest political importance. Similar to *umuganda*, *harambee* in Kenyawas originally a voluntary community development initiative which was considered to be uniquely autonomous and which played a significant role in social economic well-being. It was, however, later manipulated and used for political purposes. According to Kanyinga (in Gibson, 1995: 70), local development initiatives in Kenya were extensive and had a popular dimension; but state patronage and political influence strongly undermined them after *harambee* was made compulsory. A local development initiative then became a source of political competition.

The above example of *harambee* is similar to the case of *umuganda* in Rwanda as community initiatives, especially after independence, were geared towards political mobilization rather than community development. Looking at *umuganda's* outcome in the 1994 genocide, Verwimp (2000: 325) emphasizes that "*umuganda* is a top-down policy, with an appealing development image that was designed and used to exploit peasant labour, control the peasant population, humiliate Rwandan intellectuals, give politicians discretionary power over labour and indoctrinate Rwandans with the regime's ideology". Given this experience, Uvin (1997: 97) has named Rwanda an example of state-run, state-controlled, top-down development.

While the issue of trust, due to past experience, remains a serious challenge to development, the government views *umuganda* as an institution of social organisation for fighting poverty and for bringing prosperity to the country (Procedures Manual for Local Government in Rwanda

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[2] Njeri, S (n.d). Through the *harambee* movement in Kenya, ordinary Kenyans worked with the government in the provision of education and other social services, http://boleswa97.tripod.com/chieni.htm, accessed on 19/13/2010.

2007). Locating *umuganda* at the centre of community development policy, the government reasons that the policy is drawn from the traditions, rules and norms of how Rwandans relate to one another. The community development policy states that the three dimensions of community development are good governance, economic development and social development (Procedures Manual for Local Government in Rwanda, 2007).

Good governance is seen as an important factor for economic and social development as "it revolves around a number of significant policy considerations, such as the democratization and decentralization of governance processes and the promotion of a participatory-culture of the governed… [thus] empowering society in the decision-making process with regard to economic and social activities" (Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Local Government, 2008).

The government's community development policy aims at empowering the Rwandan community by involving them in the decision-making process. Decentralization and participation of the ordinary people are intended to bring positive changes in the social and economic development sectors. Therefore the policy and practice of *umuganda* are considered a means of expression to encourage good governance, while implementing community development and other government policies such as that of decentralisation. Moreover, *umuganda* is seen as an important policy in the process of unity and reconciliation (Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Local Government, 2008). Nevertheless, beside studies done on the influence of *umuganda* during the 1994 genocide, no previous studies have been conducted on *umuganda*, and on whether the policy statements correlate to the actual reality on the ground.

1.2 The research problem

Currently, the policy of *umuganda* is aimed not only at poverty reduction but also towards helping the government in its service delivery objectives, giving local people a chance to participate in public policy decision-making and putting into practice the idea of decentralization. It is also a tool for community mobilization, empowerment and confidence-

building (Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Local Government, 2008: 10). Arguments presented in this study question whether this noble sounding policy is being implemented to meet such aims.

The history of giving and receiving orders and of obedience to government officials presents more challenges, in terms of building trust, throughout the Rwandan society. This lack of trust makes the decision to reintroduce *umuganda* appears to be a top-down decision. *Umuganda* in Rwanda seems to be more about rhetoric, with no tangible work (Ansoms, 2007: 377). This is due to two reasons. Firstly, *umuganda* has been taken out of the hands of ordinary people and has become a state project. Secondly, not only is *umuganda* organised by government officials but the political objectives of *umuganda* and its activities serve politically-defined needs that are beyond those of ordinary community members (2007: 377-378). As a result, local people assume that *umuganda* is another law from the government. Consequently, the sense of voluntary participation is lost, as is the essence of *umuganda*.

Local people consider their leaders to be those who think for them and give them orders (Purdeková, 2011: 493-494). While communal participation was and still is a sense of belonging to Rwandan society, for one to feel a sense of belonging, one has to have the right to participate in a certain community activity. In Rwanda, belonging to community and community activities cover, for example, wedding costs, funerals or any other celebration. Despite pressures (from government officials for instance), community participation is still valued as a lifestyle for Rwandans, thus suggesting potential for *umuganda* in Rwanda.

Even though the fundamental nature of *umuganda* is felt by Rwandans, the lack of participation in planning has resulted in limitations in implementing the adopted policy as desired. While decentralisation structures are in place, there is a lack of full participation. This is manifested in the official attitude to involving community members in the planning and organisation of *umuganda*. On this note, Gwartney (2001: 164), and the African Development Report (2001) explains, in general, the challenges in the adoption of policies of decentralisation in Africa.

Gwartney (2001:163) notes that, despite the attempts of many governments to decentralize or devolve power, local government systems have not been very effective. The reason is that there is not enough interaction with the community nor are there shared decisions on what is to be done and how to do it. This is seen in the decentralized structure of government in Rwanda, which has not managed to eliminate the inherited political-administrative structure. The current political structure is seen as a top-down and authoritarian (Purdeková, 2011: 494).

The literature on community development emphasizes the empowerment of people at the grassroots level, social mobilization and bottom-up planning processes, especially in efforts to improve the quality of life of the poor (Swanepoel, 1992: 17). Although in theory, the policy of *umuganda* offers room for dialogue between the local authority and communities, some have found little interaction in practice, with the government mostly issuing top-down directives (Mukarubuga, 2006: 21). Scholars like Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002: 6) have already noted that designing and putting policies in place is relatively easy but managing their implementation is always challenging. This problem can be seen in how the policy of *umuganda* is being implemented. Good intentions for the policy of *umuganda* may have been adopted but good management and implementation are central to its success. Participation is seen to be central to the practice of *umuganda*, which, in turn, can be expected to offer the potential to challenge patterns of dominance.

Curran (2002: 197) suggests that, in general, no higher level of governance should take over the function of a lower level, since this obstructs ways of empowering local communities through their active participation and involvement. Responsibility should not be taken away from those affected by a decision, policy or situation; but it should rather be kept as close as possible to them. Many researchers, including Mamdani (2001), Verwimp (2000) and Des Forges (1999), have criticised the practice of *umuganda*, especially the way in which this policy was carried out from colonialism to post-independence, and specifically how it was used by the government during the 1994 genocide. With this history, local Rwandans do not expect much positively from this form of community work. While some consider *umuganda* as something constructive,

others look at it as a destructive activity. Being compulsory, the exercise of top-down authority undermines the original concept of *umuganda* as being a grassroots-level activity.

1.3 The aim of the study

The main aim of this study is to investigate the policy and practice of *umuganda* in fostering development and peace in Rwanda. This was done through the guidance of the following research objectives:

(1) To explore and gain a comprehensive understanding of how the policies of *umuganda* have been understood and interpreted throughout four historical periods of Rwanda.
(2) To examine different social and economic development activities associated with *umuganda.*
(3) To explain the structures and processes of governance and policy management relating to *umuganda.*
(4) To understand various communities' experience of *umuganda.*
(5) To investigate the potential for *umuganda* in helping to advance peace and development

To lay a foundation, the study explores the nature and the evolution of *umuganda*. Previous studies have neither given sufficient attention to, nor acknowledged, the possible role of *umuganda* in promoting social and economic change.

Recent researchers such as Mamdani (2001) Verwimp (2003, 2004 and 2006), Newbury (1998) and Pottier (2002), have examined the practice of *umuganda* in the post-colonial period, especially focusing upon how it was used during the genocide. Therefore this study has tried to fill the gaps found in the literature, not only on the nature of *umuganda* but also on its continuation, after the genocide of 1994, thereby contributing to the body of knowledge and widening the discussion about its future possibilities.

Therefore, the focus of this thesis is neither to study the internal processes and constraints of decision-making, nor to examine how governmental and administrative institutions work, nor to assess their effectiveness, but rather to examine how the policy of *umuganda*, already decided and formulated as a program, impacts Rwandan society.

1.4 Principal theories upon which the research is based

This study has been guided by theories of modern community development thinkers, such as Odieg, (1992); Ledwith (2005); Warburton (1998); and Mansour El-Houssein (2003), who emphasize that development, must come from within. Odiege (1992:128) stresses that development has to be engineered and sustained by the people themselves, through their full and active participation, and should not be undertaken on their behalf. Theories on policy design and management from different scholars, such as Taylor (2003), Sabatier (1998), Sen (1999), Theron (2008) and Swanepoel (2000), have been used to supplement accounts of community development in constructing a theoretical framework for analysing community work in Rwanda. Central to the study is the literature from scholars who had developed and analysed the design and implementation of policies, such as Taylor, (2003), John (1998), and Brinkerhoff and Crosby, (2002).

1.4.1 Policy design and management

The policy process can be explained as a rational scientific exercise (Taylor, 2003:106). It goes through a cyclical process, where the assessment of needs is followed by the identification of objectives, setting up agendas and then by the development and implementation of plans to meet those objectives and by systematic monitoring and evaluation (Taylor, 2003:106). Sabatier (1988: 33) cautions, however, that the relationship between agenda setting and the wider policy-making process is more complex and dynamic than a simple cyclical process.

Normally, agendas for development are passed down from the national and international level, but the agenda is often reinforced at the local level, where it may be set by the need to attract private investment (Taylor, 2003:123). This can mean that partnership workers and community representatives spend more time explaining the external world to the community, rather than putting community perspectives into programme design and planning (Taylor, 2003:123). Taylor states that "engaging communities as service users alongside professionals in the running and improvement of their services is not enough to empower them as citizens, and neither is the involvement of communities in running community project activities within programs designed by others" (Taylor, 2003: 123). Therefore, engaging communities in planning is crucial in helping to ensure the success of the policy or programme management and implementation.

Policies are adopted in order to make changes to an existing situation, but many researchers agree that the journey from intention to implementation is far from straightforward (Taylor, 2003:167). Policy-makers and practitioners argue that "bottom-up participation is a key to development and policy implementation" (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002:6; Taylor, 1992: 238). By bottom-up participation, communities gain self-assurance of ownership and therefore facilitate the process of implementation. Extensive participation should be applied throughout, from the emergence of a policy to its management and implementation.

While community participation has the potential to challenge patterns of dominance, this may also be the means by which existing power relations are entrenched and reproduced (White, 1996:14). There is the possibility, however, "that popular forms of participation can counter the top-down prescriptive and often arrogant knowledge transportation and communication style of policy design and management that tends to be imposed on communities by outsiders" (Theron, 2008: 7-8), either by donors or the government. Relying on the central government, or on top-down form of decision-making, not only denies citizens freedom, but also opens a gap between development initiatives and the local people as beneficiaries. The lack of involving

beneficiaries of the policy or project in designing and management stops people from taking ownership in any development programme that is planned and thus restricts participation.

1.4.2 Development

According to de Sardan (2005:23), development is just another form of social change and it cannot be understood in isolation. Theron (2008:7) adds that development acts as a vehicle for transformation towards a better life for people. Therefore development is about people, their needs and the `meaning-giving' context in which they make ends meet (Swanepoel, 2000:71). According to Theron (2008:7), the main goal to reach in development is 'humanness', which means striving towards social justice, participation in decision-making, alleviation of suffering and sustainable development. For this, community participation is central (Swanepoel, 2000:75).

Relating development to freedom, Sen (1999: 3) stresses that development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom, such as poverty, oppression, poor economic opportunities, social deprivation, neglected public facilities, and the intolerance or other activities of repressive states. Such unfreedom is linked closely to the lack of public facilities and social care and to effective institutions for the maintenance of local peace and order (Sen, 1999: 4). While the violation of one's freedom may be defined in different ways, Sen explains that violations of freedom result directly from a denial of political and civil liberties by authoritarian regimes and from restrictions imposed on the freedom to participate in the social political and economic life of the community. The relation between freedom and development is important to understand in the Rwandan context of *umuganda* after the genocide of 1994. Studying development and genocide in Rwanda, Uvin (1997) and Verwimp (2004) view development as an ideology of a political regime that has to do with fulfilling the regime's interests rather than those of the citizen. Julius Nyerere, the former president of the Republic of Tanzania, said that true development is the development of the people and is brought about by the people themselves (The Republic of Tanzania 1996, 2). In the same way, Theron (2008:

134) suggests that the government needs to play a supporting, rather than a leading, role in development activities.

1.4.3 Community development

A community is a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings (Bottomley, 2005:13). Such a group of people will strive for their common good, which is moving towards the full realization or development of the potential of individuals, as well as of the entire community (Nkulu, 2005:76). The principle of the common good emphasizes that we are custodians of one another as human beings. `The common good is the total of all those conditions of social living – economic, cultural – which make it possible for women and men readily and fully to achieve the perfection of their humanity' (Henriot, DeBerri and Schultheis, 1997:23). The principle of the common good can be understood in the concept of *ubuntu* in South Africa. According to the Centre for Concern (2008) *ubuntu* means that the good of each human person is intimately related to the good of the whole community.

In Rwanda, striving for the common good is connected with creating a sense of peace and responsibility in the community. Assefa (1993:4) understands peace as the transformation of conflict and destructive interactions into more co-operative and constructive relationships. Community development begins in the everyday lives of local people (Ledwith, 2005:1). Given the history of conflict and genocide that have long created hatred and division among Rwandans, there is still a need to create a strong community with values that are beyond the features that divided them. To restore a community is to embrace the idea of participation with the aim to harness more effectively the knowledge and energy of local people and give them more say in local services (Taylor, 2003: 24).

When groups of human beings balance the need for bonding and for autonomy, by nurturing one another and engaging in many co-operative activities, they create conditions for sustainable peace and development (Boulding, 2000:2). At the centre of any sustainable

development in post-conflict countries is the need to set in motion processes that can lead towards reconciliation. According to Peck, the most sustainable means of promoting sustainable development and peace within states is the development of good governance, which can address development issues, the root causes of conflict and meet basic human security needs. Good governance offers groups a voice in resolving grievances at an early stage, before they grow into major problems (1998:15).

In a sense, good governance requires community development, based on decentralization and public participation (the Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Local Government, 2008). The studies by Mansour El-Hussein (2003) and Boulding (2000) reveal that empowerment of people at community level is crucial. Moreover, community development is a learning process through which people progress towards self-sufficiency and self-reliance (Swanepoel, 1992:17). It is a process of encouraging and supporting community-based sustainable development as an essential method for development (Warburton, 1998:23). In many contexts, community development has several dimensions, such as free education, gender equality and infant and maternal mortality (Kularatne, 2009: 2). Although these are essential elements in community development, there are many broader social economic and political problems that are associated with them and that need to be considered.

According to Warburton, traditional community development always had two objectives, to tackle poverty and deprivation, and to increase the political participation of excluded groups. When top-down approaches to development were seen to have failed to solve problems, the emphasis shifted from developing imported technical professional solutions to community development, based on valuing the skills of the people living in poverty and making an effort to engage them in new and more participatory programs (1998:20). The emphasis is now more on the idea of improving the quality of people's lives and expanding their ability to shape their own futures through improving their access to opportunities (Kularatne, 2009: 2). In a broader sense, then, community development is integral to the social and economic well-being of humans.

The World Bank (1998:1) reveals that, in order to sustain community development, there has to be public participation, which is a "democratic process of engaging people in thinking, deciding, planning, and playing an active part in the development and operation of services that affect them and as an open, accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision-making" (Dollery and Dallinger, 2006:15). In the same way, Swanepoel adds several other principles for community development. These are: human orientation, participation, empowerment, ownership, learning, adaptiveness and simplicity (1997:13). These principles and other features that he identifies indicate how strong community values can be used to support and sustain development. Both state and society have extensive roles to play in strengthening and safeguarding human capabilities, with the state playing a support role, rather than one of ready-made delivery (Sen, 1999: 53).

There is a great deal of scholarly literature which is relevant to the proposed topic concerning community work. The theoretical framework for the study, though, focuses on policy design and management relating to community development, which will be shaped in order to understand the Rwandan context.

1.5   Research methods and methodology

This study was conducted in two communities: one in Kigali City (urban) and the other in Western Province (rural). The two communities helped the researcher to understand how people in the rural areas respond to *umuganda,* compared to people living in the city. For one to conduct research such as this in Rwanda, strong trust with local people must first be built. The researcher therefore spent eight months in Rwanda in preparation for this study. This helped to identify research areas - which were chosen according to their accessibility.

1.5.1 Data collection

In order to address the specific objectives of this research, primary and secondary data were collected. While secondary data were gathered from library materials such as books, journals, newspapers and articles as well as from unpublished sources and was used for all aspects of the research, primary data were gathered from documentary study and from the use of focus groups, interviews and observation. More details are given below.

Primary data: Documents

Official government documents, such as the Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda and those from the Ministry of Local Administration, Good Governance, Community Development and Social Affairs, were examined. Of particular importance, were documents concerning community development policy, decentralization policy and government poverty reduction strategies. The government's local newspaper, *The New Time,* was a helpful source, as it publishes monthly reports on *umuganda* activities.

Observation

The researcher conducted general participant-observation, over a period of eight months, in 2009 regarding how *umuganda* is practised in both Western Province and in Kigali City. A further month, two weeks in Kigali and two weeks in Western Province, was spent in 2010. The researcher then returned to Rwanda for the month of December 2011as part of the data collection process. (See Appendix Four for a check-list of what was observed).

1.5.2 Sample

During discussions conducted in May and June 2009, with randomly selected Rwandan community members participating in *umuganda* in Kigali and Western Province, it was found that approximately 80% of people thought that *umuganda* was not as efficient as it should be. To test this hypothesis at a 95% confidence level with a 10% margin of error and a power of 80%, a sample size of 108 participants was needed. Due to the possibility of no responses, this sample size could have been increased by 20% (convenient decision) to give 130. Therefore a

sample size of at least 130 respondents was considered to be adequate. The respondents were as follows:

Table 1.1: The total and categories of respondents

	Categories of respondents	Number of respondents
Focus Group		24
Open – ended interview		59
	Elders	16
	Government Officials	13
	Ordinary Community Member	30
Structured interview		56
Total		**139**

Focus groups

There were four groups involving twenty - four participants. Discussions were conducted among a small group of six people, using open-ended questions which allowed for detailed discussion (See Appendix Five for the list of questions). Two focus groups were organized from five different villages (*imidugudu*) of two districts in Kigali; one in Gasabo and the other in Kicukiro district. The cells in Kigali were chosen using random sampling and within this cell, five villages were randomly chosen. The researcher conducted one focus group of participants from three villages in Gasabo and one focus group from two villages in the Nyarugenge district.

In the same way, two cells from the District of Rusizi, in Western Province were selected using random sampling. Two villages were chosen from each of these cells and one focus group, composed of participants from two villages in each cell, was conducted. After identifying the groups a suitable date and time for discussion was chosen. This allowed the chosen groups to

have enough time for each participant to express his or her views and enabled the researcher to record all the required information.

Interviews

Individual semi-structured interviews were used to complement each focus group's discussion. Three groups of respondents were selected. One group of interviewees was a group of elders found in both Kigali and Western Province. Members from this group were over sixty years of age. Even though people from the age of sixty-five are exempted from performing *umuganda*, the researcher's intention was to capture their knowledge regarding how *umuganda* was viewed and carried out in earlier times. Eight interviewees were selected and conducted using random sampling, from both Kigali and Western Province, with a total of sixteen elders. (See Appendix Five for a list of questions).

A second group of interviews was with government officials at all levels in the Ministry of Local Administration, Good Governance, Community Development and Social Affairs. These administrative levels include those of national; district, sector, cell and village, all of which are involved in administering *umuganda* (See Appendix Five for a list of questions). Seven interviewees were chosen using random sampling and were interviewed in Kigali and other six were similarly chosen and interviewed in the rural Western Province.

The third group of interviewees was a group of thirty ordinary people from the same villages and cells, who did not participate in the focus groups. Of these thirty ordinary people, fifteen from Kigali were chosen using random sampling and interviewed and similarly, fifteen from Western Province.

Given the historical background of socio-political problems that Rwandan society has suffered for many years (see Chapter 2), the researcher was prepared for some respondents who may have felt uncomfortable about being interviewed. In order to accommodate this, a mixture of structured and open – ended questions was used, depending on the circumstances. Therefore

semi-structured questionnaires with similar questions to those for the individual interviews and focus groups were left (36 in Kigali and 20 in Western Province) with respondents who would feel comfortable answering them (see Table 1.1). This method was employed with the objective of ensuring that information received from both the individual interviews and focus groups was genuine. At the same time, it helped to provide balance and avoid issues related to bias.

1.5.3 Data analysis

The researcher used content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis was suitable for analysing the information from the focus groups and from the in-depth interviews. According to Ryan (2010: 288), content analysis is usually quantitative. It involves the tagging of a set of texts or other artefacts with codes that are delivered from theories or prior knowledge and then analysing the distribution of the codes, usually statistically. Thematic analysis was considered more suitable to help better understand the ideas which would emerge from the more conversational parts of the interviews (Babbie and Mouton 2001: 279 and 383).

Data was entered using EpiData 3.1. After entering data, the researcher performed a data-cleaning to correct mistakes that would have occurred during data-entry. Statistical analysis was done using STATA 11.1.

The following approaches were used to analyse data:

- Organizing the data
- Generating categories, similarities, differences, significance
- Finding themes and sub-themes
- Searching for meanings
- Writing the report.

1.5.4 Accessibility, reliability and validity

To conduct this research, authorisation was first sought from the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), in order to avoid any possible socio-political predicament (see Appendix 1, for a letter of authorisation). This authorisation allowed the research to be conducted smoothly and with confidence, from the perspective of both the researcher and the respondents.

Personal contact, e-mail and telephone were used to access the respondents required for interview. The feasibility of these arrangements was established during the researcher's stay in Rwanda during 2009, where the researcher spent eight months building relationships with local leaders in both Kigali and Western Province.

Data were collected to achieve specific objectives using the different methods of data-collection identified. Findings from different sources and written and oral information were substantiated by comparing and contrasting the data, thus enabling triangulation. These differing methods of data collection thus advanced the degree of reliability and validity of the data collected.

1.5.5 Ethical considerations:

Ethical considerations are very important in social science research. Therefore the objective of this research was to make sure that all ethical issues were confronted honestly and with a sense of moral obligation. According to the policies and guidelines set by the University of KwaZulu-Natal (University of KwaZulu-Natal Research policy[3] 2007: V), the following considerations were applied to all methods of data collection, that is interviews, focus groups and observation:

- All interviews included an explanation of the purposes of the research, expected duration and description of procedures to be followed.
- The informed consent of the participant was obtained prior to being interviewed.

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[3]University of KwaZulu-Natal 2007, Research Policy. http://research.ukzn.ac.za/EthicsPolicy12111.aspx.

- The confidentiality and anonymity of participants was protected.

- It was clearly explained that there would be no adverse consequences for the participant for declining or withdrawing from participation.

- It was made known to all participants that participation was voluntary and would not involve any incentive.

- Consent was sought from participants for the use of devices such as tape recorders. Where participants were uncomfortable with this, the researcher wrote down all information.

- Data collected would be used only for the purpose of the research and the processing and use of data would conform to pledges of confidentiality.

- Findings and interpretations of the research were presented honestly and objectively.

- All references to information sources were cited appropriately.

- Financial support for the research was fully acknowledged.

1.5.6 Challenges

Although, in general, challenges in conducting this study were insignificant, and not considered to have affected my fieldwork, at least two minor challenges are to be noted: one is a few incidents where some local leaders indirectly refused to be interviewed but instead kept on postponing our appointments until the last minute. Understanding how busy local leaders are, some were very kind, though, to make room for an interview after office hours. Interviews late at night were found to be useful as many people are usually done then with their daily activities, but this meant for me that motorcycle transport became the only means to get home.

A second challenge has to do with the current social and political situation in Rwanda, which is related to the experience of past violent conflict. Despite having presented both an introductory letter and an approval letter from the Ministry of Local Government to conduct my research, some people expressed suspicion about my research. They thought I was either sent by government or was working with people who are against the government. Questions

like 'are you sent to spy on us? Are you planning to be a politician after this?' or indirect questions that sound like 'I am on the side of those who are against the government' progressed to some names being identified, asking whether I know them. These were commonly asked by respondents. Knowing well who one is talking to, especially in this case where the research involves interviews, is a general concern in Rwanda. It required considerable time to explain and reassure participants that the information given is only for academic reasons.

1.5.7 Limitation of the study

Given the awful experience of 1994 genocide, ethnicity in Rwanda is a sensitive issue to discuss. It is an offence to identify someone by his/her ethnic group, due to the historical background which led to 1994 genocide. The use of ethnic identity, in any way, is measured as a genocide ideology which is taken by the current government as a serious crime. Moreover, given that there is no any geographical area located for any particular ethnic group[4], the researcher was not in any position to distinguish nor to try to identify who is who in terms of their ethnic group (United nations General Assembly, 2011: 7-11).

1.6 Structure of the argument

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. Chapter Two focuses on a review of the practice of *umuganda* throughout four historical periods in Rwanda. Chapter Three discusses the current national policy on *umuganda*. Chapters Four to Six present and analyse data on the general understanding of *umuganda*, how *umuganda* is organised, and on its effect on Rwandans society. Chapter Seven is an overall interpretation of all the preceding data. Chapter Eight examines the possible prospects of the policy and practice of *umuganda*, while Chapter Nine offers a general conclusion and recommendations.

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[4] All groups, always, live side by side throughout the country.

CHAPTER TWO

A Historical Review of the Practice of *Umuganda*

Introduction

Umuganda is a traditional Rwandan practice and cultural value of working together to solve problems in a shorter time than it would take for an individual to solve them. *Umuganda* embodies the ideas of mutual assistance, mutual social responsibility, social obligation, self-help and traditional strategies for development. This is an indigenous initiative that was and still is regarded as crucial for economic and social development.

This chapter reviews the practice of *umuganda* in Rwanda from its origins. The history of *umuganda* is understood better in the context of the different social obligations spawned by the institutions which formed pre-colonial Rwanda. Accordingly, the chapter begins with the philosophy and practice of *umuganda* before the arrival of colonial period. A second section reviews the practice of *umuganda* in the colonial phase. Section three discusses *umuganda* in the post-colonial until the genocide period.

2.1 Rwanda in the pre-colonial period

Different researchers agree that the Rwandan pre-colonial period was highly organized and that it had a centralized administration whereby the Kingdom was controlled by Kings[5] (Lemarchand

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[5]The king was assisted by three main chiefs; a military chief who was responsible for the army, ensuring territorial integrity and expansion. The second chief was the cattle chief who oversaw all matters pertaining to cattle keeping, grazing and settling related disputes. The third chief was the land chief who was responsible for agricultural land, produce and related affairs (see Lemarchand 170: 119).

1970: 120, Newbury 1988: 45). The Rwandan Kingdom was made up of three social groups: ba-Twa, ba-Hutu and ba-Tutsi (*ba- in plural and mu- in singular*). Before the arrival of Europeans, the Twa, Hutu and Tutsi[6] generally corresponded to occupational categories within a single differentiated group, the *banya-Rwanda* (Rwandans) (African Rights, 1995: 3; Lemarchand 1970). Banya-Rwanda came from two words: *Banya-* meaning 'those of' and Rwanda, for their homeland. Hence, banya-Rwanda meant People of Rwanda, if literally translated. They identified each other through clans.

Rwanda has 19 main clans with which everyone identifies – whether mu-Tutsi, mu-Hutu or mu-Twa. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, these clan identities were in fact more primordial than the Twa-Hutu-Tutsi (Newbury 1988; African Rights 1995: 4; Des Forges 1999). Although there have been diverse categorisation of Rwandan inhabitants - whether Hutu, Tutsi or Twa - the oral record suggests that the terms Hutu, Tutsi and Twa existed even before the arrival of colonialism. The cattle keepers were known as aba-Tutsi, the cultivators as aba-Hutu and the hunters as aba-Twa. Uvin (1997: 92) explains that the three terms were largely constructed as social categories representing different socio-economic positions within Rwandan society, rather than reflecting objective biological or cultural differences.

Pamphile (2000: 86) emphasizes that before colonization the Hutu tended to be farmers, the Tutsi, stockbreeders and the Twa, hunters or potters. Given the complex ancestral history, these were by no means exclusive categories (2000: 86). Hutu, Tutsi and Twa share common language, kinship and clan systems, practice the same religion and live interspersed throughout the same territory, thus sharing a common culture (Melvern, 2000: 8).

According to Melvern (2000: 9), pre-colonial Rwanda had administrative structures. People lived in hills, villages, known as *udusozi* (*agasozi* in singular) and districts. Each village and district was administered by chiefs appointed by the king. Melvern explains that each layer of

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[6] Scholars believe that the Twa were the first inhabitants of Rwanda, as hunter/gathers. Hutu who are farmers arrived next and are believed to be descended from Bantu tribes. Tutsi are believed to be the last, having entered the area in the 15th century from the northeast, in the horn of Africa (Newbury 1988, Fegley 1993).

hierarchy was linked in a relationship of mutual dependence, known as *ubuhake*, patron-clientship, based on reciprocal arrangements regarding goods and services. *Ubuhake* referred to a contractual service in which a more powerful person could provide protection in exchange for work.[7]

Historians believe that there was a degree of Tutsi opportunism because cattle were the main form of marketable wealth, which made the Tutsi to be seen as privileged (Newbury, 1988: 51; Mamdani, 2001: 60). Therefore, in the pre-colonial context, umu-Tutsi meant wealth. On the other hand, through the system of patron-clientship, social mobility was very common. Umu-Hutu could become umu-Tutsi and vice versa, depending upon how 'wealthy' one could become. Mamdani (2001: 65) explains that this system was the key social institution holding banya-Rwandan society together.

2.1.1 Main socio-economic activities in pre-colonial Rwanda

Like most other African countries, pre-colonial Rwanda lived in a community set-up of traditional practice. People lived in patron/client relationships, *ubuhake,* for their daily survival (Gravel 1967: 325, Fegley 1993: xx). They lived similar lifestyles, mostly keeping cattle and cultivating their fields in a dual agrarian economy that would survive the shocks of either of the agricultural activities: whenever there was a cattle problem, herders survived with cultivators; a poor harvest or crop disaster made the cultivators dependent upon cattle-keepers. Both groups exchanged their produce on a continual basis.

Mukarubuga (2006: 5-6) explains that pre-colonial society was strong, with a hierarchical structure of top-down leadership which permitted vertical and horizontal consultations in areas of socio-economic interest. Society was organized on the basis of national interests such as defence, agriculture, livestock and the arts and crafts industry (The Republic of Rwanda 2001: 9,

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[7] Although often the patron was Tutsi, this was not always so, as Hutu who were wealthy or held a high rank could be a patron of someone with a lower status (Melvern, 2000: 9).

Mukarubuga 2006: 6). According to Mukarubuga there also existed various forms of collective gatherings such as livestock gatherings, patronage and welfare assistance (2006: 7).

With livestock gatherings, cattle owners used to meet around the well (where the cows were given water and a salt-lick). While watering their cattle, the owners discussed issues related to their assets and gave assistance to those who did not have milk, especially the children (Muakrubuga, 2006: 6). This was therefore not only a forum related to production but was also an opportunity to review general and individual welfare and to find a collective solution towards alleviating poverty. Through the patronage system, one could work for a wealthier family in exchange for livestock or land to start one's own economic activities.

Cattle keepers had a system called *umuheto*; a client-ship which involved client lineage donating cattle, herding and participation in other activities regarding cattle keeping. The cultivators' equivalent of *umuheto* was known as *ubukonde,* which involved the donation of agricultural production (African Right 1995: 4). Considering that Rwanda's economy was agro-based, members of *ubukonde* managed a field collectively, harvesting together and sharing the produce.

The institutions of patron-client relationships were shaped by both pastoralists and cultivators (Des Forges 1999: 32). This was the key social institution holding Rwandan society together, since it made for a structure in which everyone but the king was the client of someone else (Mamdani 2001: 65). Under this system, a patron gave a cow to his client.

Therefore the client performed various services for the patron, in return not only for the cow but also for protection.[8] Moreover, the transfer of cows as an institution was a mechanism for recording relationships between the various corporate groups normally represented by individuals (Grave 1967: 325). Beyond that, in early times, most people in the region were

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[8] The relationship between Hutu and Tutsi developed into a patron client-ship, donating and receiving from each other.

cultivators who also raised small-stock and occasionally a few cattle for their livelihood (Des Forges 1999: 31).

At the end of the nineteenth century, 1894-1895[9], under king Rwabugiri, the patron-client system was extended and was made obligatory. In most parts of the kingdom everyone who was poor (in a sense, those who had no cattle – mostly Hutu) was bound by *ubuhake* (Pottier 2002: 9). However in other areas, such as in the western regions, many Hutu owned cattle and relatively few had acquired them through *ubuhake* (Newbury 1981: 139).

Social obligation began to be used whenever the king or chief felt the need. According to oral information, people felt exploited and as a result, whenever asked to work for the king/chief, the work was called *uburetwa*, a forced labour. According to Lemarchand (1970: 122), *uburetwa* was done one day out of five.

Despite the harsh-sounding conditions which King Rwabugiri imposed, perhaps some kind of harmonious co-existence had evolved by the turn of the century, since the districts subjected to central rule were headed by two officials, one Hutu and one Tutsi, who worked independently of one another (Newbury 1988: 46; Lemarchand 1970: 72). The land chief, generally Hutu, acted as arbitrator in land disputes and organised agricultural tribute and dues in labour. The Tutsi cattle chief was responsible for collecting taxes on cattle and other cattle-related matters (Lemarchand, 1970: 73). Scholars such as Newbury (1988), Des Forges (1999), Sefa Dei (2000) and Mamdani (2001: 96) suggest that during the pre-colonial period, people lived in harmony with one another.

Through pre-colonial organisation, people had their own sense of community development and how to attain that goal. This will be seen later in section 2.1.2, where social solidarity and mutual help, such as *umuganda* and *ubudehe,* were crucial for community and household enhancement and one of the African social values was that of indigenous community-solidarity.

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[9] It is believed that in 1894, when the first European arrived in Rwanda, a German count, Gustav Adolf von Götzen, was received at the court by King Rwabugiri (Melvern, 2000: 7).

The communal activities in pre-colonial Rwanda were similar to those which Russian peasants called *mir*, before the communist revolution of 1917. The experiences from many places show that production in the past was organized on the philosophy that people who work alone rarely achieve optimal productivity. Groups were formed to work together, mainly agricultural work. This principle has underlined the basis of Rwandan cultural values throughout the country's history. Communal productivity was seen as synergistic, with individualism strongly discouraged. Traditional social groupings, such as lineage, age sets and grades, acted as corporate bodies, protecting the integrity of critical resources like land, cattle and craft. Such social groupings acted as workforces for tasks requiring larger labour pools than individual families could provide (Sefa Dei, 2000: 74). According to Sefa Dei, this was of most value to the early Rwandan communities (2000: 74-75).

Rwanda's pre-colonial interaction with outsiders was limited (Sefa Dei, 2000: 74). Thus people based their development strategies on exploitation of locally-available resources, using various collective methods of solving the economic problems which they faced. Looking at African cultural practice in general, Wangoola (2000: 266) argues that people sustained themselves through, and drew their strength from, the free, friendly, collaborative, and reciprocal flow of energy among themselves, their family, their clan and their community.

2.1.2 *Umuganda* in the pre-colonial period

Besides patron-client practice in Rwanda, those who shared common production activities normally came together and acted in a collective manner in order to achieve quality and timely production. While patron-client ties were used to increase individuals' wealth and social standing, solidarity or communal work was more significant between occupational groups for mutual and communal benefit. According to oral information, the most inclusive and beneficial was community agricultural work, which was divided into two categories: one was known as *ubudehe* and the other as *umuganda*.

Literally, *ubudehe* describes the practice of communal digging of a field before the rains come and the planting season arrives (Kigabo 2008: 12). *Umuganda* involved more the building of houses. However, to some extent it could be performed for agricultural activities as well, like *ubudehe*. Although *umuganda* and *ubudehe* appear to be similar, Mukarubuga (2006: 7) explains that the difference between *ubudehe* and *umuganda* is that the latter was used for agricultural purposes when there was an emergency. The benefits were mainly labour-saving in order to be ready for the farming season. A successful harvest was then celebrated with *Umuganura* (sorghum festival), made from collecting donations from everyone's first harvest (African Human Rights 1995: 11-12; Mukarubuga 2006: 6).

While in some respects *ubudehe* could only be seen as beneficial to those who were part of the cultivation activity group and therefore ignored by those from the cattle-breeding group, *umuganda* was an inclusive activity in response to an emergency that involved all groups. For example, *umuganda* could be invoked to work in the field or farm of someone who had been sick or had other reasons for incapacity, such as a death in the family (Mukarubuga, 2006: 6). It was also extended to those who were too poor or incapacitated to take part in the collective action of, for example, digging fields, building houses and so on.

To some extent, *umuganda* was understood as a social obligation. It bridged the gaps between pastoralist and agrarian communities, blending Rwandan society into one social fabric. It was a sophisticated form of *ubudehe*, an approach to life and socio-economic well-being driven by communal values (African Human Rights, 1995, 11).

Umuganda activities, in a similar fashion to those of *ubudehe,* were based on solidarity and generalized reciprocity; thus those not available to participate had to send a representative (Mukarubuga, 2006: 7). In exchange for the services of a household, one would provide drinks that were taken after work, and as people drank they would discuss the next activity and where it was to be performed. Their discussions also included views about governance,

neighbourhood relationships and community-individuals' behaviour (African Human Rights, 1995: 4).[10]

Shimamungu (1998) explains that when neighbours were building, each person, in the neighbourhood would bring a piece of timber to assist in building and in that mutual self-help context, the term '*gutanga/gutiza umuganda*' arose: 'meant to offer or lend/provide communal strength towards house-building for the need', if literally translated. *Umuganda* was also a social gathering where people had an opportunity to socialize during or after work. Since community gatherings could be regarded as serving as a means of social control, it was easy to know everyone who had participated and who had not. It was the responsibility of the community leader to investigate and discover the reasons which prevented someone from participating in social activities. The main reason for this control may be seen as a way of knowing who needs support in the community and collectively mobilizing to support that household's social livelihood. Since *umuganda* was made for social well-being and economic intervention, anyone in the community could report to the community leaders any matter related to individuals or families who were incapacitated and who would require assistance (Malvern, 2000: 10. From these reports, a community leader or a household could request *umuganda* at any time. Although community participation formed an integral part of the decision-making process it was not formalized as part of the state structure (Melvern, 2000: 10-11). This changed under colonial rule.

2.2 Rwanda in the colonial and post-colonial periods

German colonialists and missionaries arrived in Rwanda in the 1880s. During this period, they occupied Rwanda and Burundi, termed Rwanda-Urundi (Selltröm, 1996: 21; Mamdani, 2001: 20, Chrétien 2003). As in many other African colonies, the Germans ruled indirectly through the

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[10]Those considered to have behaved unacceptably, including not participating in social activities such as *umuganda*, would be called to the community wise-men council, *inyangamugayo*, for advice.

kings of Rwanda and Burundi. The region was divided at the 1890 conference in Brussels, which gave Rwanda and Burundi to the German Empire (Selltröm, 1996: 23).

As was the trend in many African territories, colonizers sought to use the existing chiefs as agents of their rule (Selltröm, 1996: 23). Therefore, Germany controlled the area by using a section of Rwandan and Burundian chiefs to act on their behalf. After the defeat of Germany in World War One (WWI), Rwanda became a colony under Belgium. In the same way as the Germans, Belgium established a political system of indirect administration with the Rwandan King.

Melvern (2000: 10) argues that after the Second World War (WWII), Belgians interfered with the local administration and divided the kingdom into chiefdoms with Belgian administrators involved at every level of society. According to Lemarchand, the impact of indirect rule was "to destroy the old balance of forces between cattle chiefs, land chiefs and army chiefs, which in previous times had served to protect the Hutu peasantry" (1970: 119).

According to Des Forges (1999: 33-34), in the 1920s Rwandan administration under colonialism was effective, with the intention of keeping the essential elements of the system intact. Des Forges explains that:

> Both Germans and Belgians sought to rule Rwanda with the least cost and the most profit. Making use of the impressive indigenous state was the obvious way to do so… Belgians eliminated the competing hierarchies and re-grouped the units of administration into chiefdoms and sub-chiefdoms of the same size. They used force to install state officials in the autonomous enclaves, destroying the power of heads of lineages and of local small states (1999:34).

Under the Belgian dispensation, the systems that mediated the relationship of Rwandans, such as patron/client-ship, *ubudehe* and *umuganda,* were used forcefully for economic activities (Sellström, 1996: 25). The Belgians sought to limit the King's power and to modify the patron-client system. Encouragement for development in health, education, infrastructure and natural resources was emphasized. While in pre-colonial times responsibility could be shared by both Hutu and Tutsi chiefs, Des Forges (1999: 35) explains that, the Belgians systematically removed Hutu from positions of power and excluded them from higher education.[11] Des Forge notes that women were also excluded from positions and access to education (1999: 35-36).

As a consequence of indirect rule and also through the colonial rulers lacking a proper understanding of how the traditional system worked, chiefs were expected to impose heavy demands on their people, such as working in the mines in Zaire (the currently Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC), supplying porters and food to Europeans and carrying out forced cultivation and road building (Newbury 1998: 18). Traditional structures of client-ship, especially that of *ubudehe* and *umuganda* were further extended (African Rights 1995: 5) and the colonial officials demanded more from the people, especially the ba-Hutu (Des Forges, 1999: 35). Looking at how "impressively Rwandan communities were organized; it was easy for the colonizers to use this spirit for their governance" (Des Forges, 1999: 34).

While the pre-colonial systems accommodated the aspirations of wealth for all, the colonial system abolished that chance. The Belgians transformed the indigenous socio-economic structure and introduced supervised development based on the establishment of socio-economic infrastructure which focused mainly on foreign interests supported by forced labour.

Scholars believe that colonialists exploited the local governance structure in order to implement policies that served mainly foreign interests. These policies were supported by forced labour in activities such as growing cash crops for export, building schools, churches, administrative buildings and roads (Sellström, 1996: 24, Ministry of Local Governance 2001: 9-

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[11]"Higher education was meant mostly as preparation for careers in the colonial administration" (Des Forges 1999: 35).

10). Based on the social occupation groups discussed earlier, the agrarian (Hutu), pastoralist (Tutsi), and hunters (Twa), the differences between Rwandans were highlighted in order to achieve the colonialists' goals.

The colonisers used these social groups by classifying Tutsi, who are cattle keepers, as superior. They emphasized that Tutsi were Hamites and supposedly Caucasian in origin, which explained their superiority to other non-Caucasian races (Senders 1969: 530, Des Forges 1999: 36-37). Accordingly, colonial leaders differentiated Rwandans into ethnic groups: Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. This division helped them to maximise the labour force required and it is this policy that has had so much impact on Rwandan society today.

According to Selltröm (1996: 25), during this period many Europeans had become obsessed with the study of race and this had an impact on life in Rwanda. According to Baines (2003: 481), the colonizer found a sophisticated kingdom in Rwanda, where a king known to be a "*Tutsi* held high-level rank in military and political life, drew on the Hamitic hypothesis to explain socio-economic relations in the country" (2003: 481).The colonisers highlighted the marginalised status of the Hutu group, by claiming that Hutu were made for farming and for servant labour and were therefore to be manipulated, especially for heavy activities such as working on the farms and mines and building roads.

According to Pamphile (1999: 87), the system of *ubuhake* was confused with the feudality of Europe in the Middle-Ages and patron-client relations, which were not a segregating aspect of Rwandan social structure, gave the Belgians the basic means for a new ethnic vision of Hutu and Tutsi identities.[12] Reflecting on their own experience in Belgium, the colonialists maintained that the Tutsi group was made to rule.[13] Many researchers believe that the divisions

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[12] By the end of the 1920s, the logic of rule through ethnic division culminated in the Reform which discriminated against Hutu in the eyes of the colonial administration. Since then, all Hutu have been associated with inferior status (Des Forges, 1999: 37).

[13] The Twa group, as hunters, were and still are more marginalised, and therefore do not appear much in the Rwandan scenario.

introduced by the colonial administration became not only ethnic but led to racial distinctions, whereby some became known as native and others as outsiders (Newbury 1998 15-16, Reyntjens 1985, Selltröm, 1996:34, Mamdani, 2001: 22). In the face of this complexity, the Belgians came to define Hutu, Tutsi and Twa as three distinct ethnic groups which then became a source and means of division (Sanders, 1996: 251).

Although Pottier (2002: 14-15) believes that ethnic labels were crafted by King Rwabugiri on the basis of cattle ownership, he also highlights that, "by the abolishment of local structures in 1926, the Belgian administration sharply accentuated, indeed radicalized, the Hutu-Tutsi ethnic division" (Pottier, 2002: 15). Having constructed a spirit of superiority and inferiority within a once homogenous community brought contradictions and hatred among the banya-Rwanda (Shiva 2000: vii).

The patron-client system of the pre-colonial period, which was described as performing an integrative role between the haves and have-nots, changed under the colonial rule to a unidirectional system, which lessened reciprocity, increasing exploitation and thus transformed the nature of the patron-client relationship (Newbury, 1998: 16).

2.2.1 The practice of *umuganda* during the colonial era

According to Midgley et al (1986: 17), the Belgians created a climate in which community development was to take shape by relying on the local tradition of community work in achieving these development goals. The twofold mandate to civilize whilst exploiting the use of free forced labour, under the pretext that it was an indigenous institution, facilitated the evolution of early forms of community development (1986: 18-19). The pre-colonial forms of mutual help, *ubudehe* and *umuganda,* were transformed into a form of compulsory communal work which was imposed upon any native belonging to a particular local community (IRDP, 2005). Although this practice continued during the colonial period, with the arrival of missionaries and colonialism, the mutual relationship became highly exploitative and the term used was not *umuganda* but described as forced labour, *uburetwa*.

From *uburetwa* being performed in some parts of the country, the policy became adopted officially by the colonial administration in the 1940s (IRDP, 2005). Thereafter every family had to provide compulsory communal work for 60 days of the year. This was divided into several blocks of twelve days per month and was meant for the construction of roads and schools, working in coffee and tea plantations and in the mines in the Congo (IRDP, 2005). According to Newbury (1991: 142) and Pottier (2006: 513), it was only adult males who were obliged to carry out *uburetwa*. Lemarchand (1970: 22) adds that under the Belgian administration, *uburetwa* was set by the local chiefs to require two or even three days labour out of six. This meant that people had little time to work for their own survival. Pottier (2002: 9) notes that *uburetwa* undermined the security of the majority and made survival more difficult.

Under Belgian rule in the 1930s, coffee and tea were introduced as two cash crops which eventually dominated the economy and remain a key export crop for Rwanda today (IRDP 2005). The colonial administration forced chiefs to become coffee entrepreneurs. Besides coffee and tea, cassava and sweet potatoes were also introduced as both cash and subsistence crops (Mukarubuga, 2006: 5-7).

Although cultivating cassava and sweet potatoes, for example, was beneficial in fighting famine, people felt they were being forced into *uburetwa*. In particular, they were obliged to cultivate food and finally the obligations extended to afforestation and fighting soil-erosion (IRDP, 2005: 27). Failure to complete cultivation on time resulted in punishment, usually corporal punishment.[14] The punishment was both very painful and shameful and was dreaded by all Rwandans, as the victim had to undress in public and be flogged naked (Mukarubuga, 2006: 5). Those who were taken to work in mines in the Congo and on coffee and tea plantations were uprooted from their families and lived in labour camps. Some were designated to work on constructing roads and building schools, administrative blocks and churches in those areas (2006:5-6).

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14 Corporal punishment consisted of 8 strokes of *ikiboko*: 'a long cylindrical piece of dried hippopotamus hide' (see Mukarubuga 2006).

According to Des Forges (1999: 34), under the old system of multiple officials, power-holders ordinarily limited demands on subordinates, knowing that those who felt unreasonably exploited could seek protection from rivals or could move elsewhere. But the Belgians made it far harder for the weak to escape repressive officials; not only did they eliminate the multiple hierarchies but they also restricted changes in residence from one region to another and they prohibited new settlement in the forests (Des Forges, 1999: 35). The one avenue of escape that was still possible was emigration, especially to Uganda and Zaire. Thousands took that route beginning in the 1920s. But those who preferred not to leave Rwanda had little choice but to submit to increased exploitation.

The migration of many Rwandans to Uganda escaping forced labour, the recruitment of men for mining in the Congo and the inability to have enough time to work for their own survival, meant more food shortages in the country. Then due to the food shortages, community labour intensified. Researchers such as Mamdani (2001: 144) and Newbery (1995: 13) believe that the fall of coffee prices in this period contributed to further attention being paid to more forced work for more production. People did not have time to care for their own lives and, in consequence, Rwanda expressed an enormous food crisis (Newbery, 1995: 13).

Although the colonial administration exposed Rwanda to the global system and contributed to the promotion of the economy, many negative consequences arose, as has been discussed. In brief:

a) Rwandans were divided by the colonial rulers not only according to assumed ethnic groups but into two racial groups, where some were labelled native and others foreign.

b) Much time (three days out of six) was spent doing compulsory community work, suggesting that people had little time to fend for themselves.

c) Compulsory communal work caused emigration, especially to Uganda and Zaire.

d) Hatred between social groups became well established as forced labour affected mainly on one particular social group (see Mamdani 2001, Des Forges, 1999, Newbury, 1998).

e) A culture of obedience to leaders developed, which did not allow the local people to think and take decisions for themselves.

Even though forced labour caused hardship, at some point it became an effective system for fighting famine. However, *uburetwa* was not owned by the people and, in reality, poverty continued to mount with little access to medical facilities, shelter and education (IRDP, 2005: 28).

All public work projects were compulsory and peasants were often doubtful of their social utility, more so as time went by (Mamdani, 2001: 147). Furthermore, with the formation of these development projects, Hutu were compelled to perform more manual labour (Pottier, 2006: 513). The imposition of heavy labour on Hutus, supervised by mostly Tutsi chiefs, slowly damaged the earlier cohesion that had existed among Banya-Rwanda (Pottier, 2006: 514).

With this experience, Baines (2003: 481 - 482) argues that the mass movement towards independence, beginning in the 1950s, challenged Tutsi privilege and colonial power. Hutus sought retributive policies by striving for access to economic, political and social power. By the 1950s, local institutions like the patron-client system had been gradually phased out and policies were emerging with different understandings of social and economic development. Subsequently, *umuganda* became recognized by the people to amount to little more than a slogan, which brought few tangible benefits to them and held no future for their children (Midgley, 1986: 17).

2.2.2 The Rwandan revolution towards independence

The history and the circumstances which shaped colonial Rwanda on the path to independence were not only a struggle over legitimate claims to the state but were also over citizenship (Baines 2003: 481). It is a tragedy that racial theory formed by colonial rule - the alien and the native - came to be accepted and disseminated by a number of Rwandans, especially the young generation. Mamdani (2001: 147) argues that the Rwandan revolution of 1958 was a social revolution that pitted one social group of its people against another. This was fuelled by two different bodies of knowledge. One view was that ba-Tutsi, as Hamitic foreigners, should go back to where they came from; the other was that, the ba-Tutsi claimed to be banya-Rwanda, the same as the ba-Hutu.

These two differing views took expression in rival political parties. One was the Hutu Social Movement, which was formed in 1957 and later became the Party of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Hutu (*Parties du Movement de l'Emancipation Hutu* [PARMEHUTU]) in October 1959. The other one was the Tutsi party called National Rwandese Union, (*Union National Rwandaise* [UNAR]). UNAR emphasized a history of harmonious, integrated pre-colonial Rwanda, while PARMEHUTU insisted that Tutsi were foreign invaders (Mamdani, 2001: 103). The Hamitic theory was now a threat to the Tutsi and was recognized as the basis for Hutu leaders to reject the Tutsi as foreign invaders (African Rights, 1995: 10).

PARMEHUTU was established not only in opposition to the Tutsi monarchy but against the Tutsi at large. Thus instead of transforming the political world created by colonialism, the world of natives and settlers was confirmed (Mamdani, 2001: 105). The Hutus came to see the Tutsis as settlers who came to rule them, which meant that the latter were no different from colonizers.

PARMEHUTU claimed to restore the country to its Hutu 'owners' and invited the Tutsi to return to 'Abyssinia' (Chrétien, 2000 304). However, it is largely believed that the revolution of 1959-1962 led to the abolition of the monarchy[15] and caused the removal of the political

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[15] The monarchy, which had ruled Rwanda since the advent of the Abanyiginya, some 400 years before, marked the death of the long-established pre-colonial Rwandan state and this demise can be attributed to colonialism.

administration that was indirectly based on Belgian colonial policy, through the domination of one group by the other. Many observers agree that the revolutionary transition, from the Tutsi monarchy to the first Hutu-led republic, culminated in the proclamation of independence of 1 July 1962 (Reyntjens, 1985, Mamdani, 2001, Newbury 1998: 77, Selltröm, 1996: 27). This period marked the first Republic of Rwanda, under President Kayibanda.

Another interpretation is that the social and political system established by PARMEHUTU was republican, which simply replaced one set of hierarchical, Tutsi-dominated institutions with another set of Hutu-dominated ones (Chretién, 2000: 302). An example is the *umuheto* and *ubuhake,* patron-client systems based on cattle which were abolished, with the emphasis instead being put on *ubukonde*, patron-client ties related to cultivation (African Human Rights, 1995: 12). The ethnically and racially conscious PARMEHUTU claimed to restore the country to its 'owners', the Ba-hutu[16] (Chrétien, 2000: 304). Even though colonialism had changed the social structure, political and economic systems and the cultural norms in many respects, the legacy of these changes continued in post-independence Rwanda (Willis, 2005: 20).

The introduction of independence in Rwanda led by Hutus was interpreted as legitimating their revenge against the Tutsi population, who were treated as foreigners (Mamdani, 2001: 105). This had a major impact on Rwanda and was a turning point towards the conflict and divisions within Rwandan society. It is recorded that during 1959-1960 nearly 10,000 Tutsi were killed and that about 150,000 were forced to flee to neighbouring countries (Mamdani, 2001: 106).

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[16] It should be stressed here that the colonial migration theory which was advanced as a basis for explaining the different peoples of Rwanda, was not based on concrete historical evidence but suffered from methodological flaws and epistemological short-sightedness. Yet it was emphasized to justify both alliances and counter-alliances which served the colonial interest.

2.3 Rwanda in the post-independence period

Rwanda gained independence in 1962. What followed was that more Tutsi were killed and mass emigration ensued, with Tutsis crossing borders mostly into Burundi, Uganda, Zaire - currently DRC and Tanzania. After gaining independence, Rwanda inherited a governance structure that was very hierarchical, centralized and authoritarian (Mamdani, 2001, The Republic of Rwanda 2001: 9-10). The population was controlled by a new party, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND). Every Rwandan citizen was considered part of the MRND (Des Forges, 1999: 56), a movement that promoted solidarity and socialism. Since the state president was also the only political party leader, all decision-making was limited to the top leadership and the whole country had to follow the MRND vision and decisions.

Rwandan's first republic remained centralized. According to Melven (2000: 20), President Kayibanda, "had total control, making appointments and nominations from the highest to the lowest level." He ruled through a small group of politicians who came from his hometown in the southern part of Rwanda. There was favouritism and corruption and censorship, which made other Hutus from the North unhappy. Among them was the army chief, Major Juvenal Habyarimana.[17] Although Melvern (2000: 40) explains that Habyarimana's power started with development, Verwimp calls MRND a "truly totalitarian political party" (2003: 163). Habyarimana ruled the country as both the head of the MRND and as state president.

Even though most of the institutions related to cattle-breeding were demolished and cultivators' institutions were emphasized, African Human Right (1995) notes that the reason for demolishing the cattle-breeder institutions was because, ideologically, it was for the benefit of the Tutsis and not the Hutus. Despite being a nation driven by development ideas, from independence in 1962 to early 1994, Rwanda has either been unable or unwilling to perform its

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[17] For years northern Hutu had been complaining that the southern-led government was excluding them. This had brought division among the Northern and the Southern Hutu, but scholars have failed to see this because of the often spoken Hutu-Tutsi divide that blinds all realities in post-colonial Rwanda.

productive and protective functions. There was a failure to put sustainable development policies in place and to maintain the unity of its citizens (Willis, 2005: 88).

After independence, it was generally believed by many newly independent countries that they could transform and reconstruct institutional arrangements inherited from the colonial state, by means of a proper constitution which provided a new dispensation based on the values and aspirations of the indigenous peoples (Mbaku, 2004: 45). The newly independent Rwandan government thought as much too, but they ended up following their predecessors, the colonial masters, in many ways. Straus argues that, "Just as European authorities based their rule on the monarchy's legitimacy and governing patterns, so too Rwanda's independence leaders based their authority on the pre-existing political culture" (2006: 216). Straus's study shows the continuity between the colonial and post-colonial regimes in how the authorities acted. One specific post-colonial institution that bears a resemblance to those of pre-colonial and colonial times is the *umuganda* programme (Straus, 2006: 217).

By 1963, these people of the diaspora attempted to return to Rwanda by means of invasion but with no success (Melven, 2000; 16). However, this invasion made Kayibanda, the president of the first republic of Rwanda, react immediately. Melven explains that Kayibanda took measures, "eliminating the internal opposition and murder of the most prominent political opponents". Melven explains:

> In 1963, the emergency territories were set in which the country was divided into nine prefectures, the name given to the former provinces. Each government minister worked with local prefects, sub-prefects and elected *bourgmestres* [commune leader] and there were roadblocks everywhere, manned by civilians. Kayibanda organized self-defence groups and the Kigali radio broadcast emergency warnings that the Tutsi were coming back to enslave the Hutu… The first republic president, Kayibanda,

believed that the murder would mark the end of the role of Tutsi

in public life (2000: 17).

This suggests that many people were killed (an estimated 10,000 people were killed by the local population, according to Melven (2000: 17) and many others were forced to leave the country). Vuillemin, cited by Melven (2000: 18), considers the first republican government racist and blames it for encouraging racial hatred rather than organising development programmes.

With the discontent and internal violence that was raging in the country, some PARPEHUTU members, especially military officials, separated themselves, preparing to overthrow the Southern government. The military coup was successfully executed in 1973. This marked the end of the first republic and the beginning of the second Republic, under president Habyarimana.

2.3.1 *Umuganda* in the post-colonial phase, 1974-1994

After independence from Belgium and the monarchy, the traditional philosophy of *umuganda* turned into a political philosophy. While there is no record found on the practice of *umuganda* in the first republic, between 1962 and the 1973, it is well documented that the policy of *umuganda* was formally launched by President Habyarimana in February 1974 (Mamdani, 2001: 146), and it was often explained in the literature as co-operative communal labour (2001:146).Driven by the developmental ideology of the MRND, the policy aimed to boost the development and the economy of the country. In similar fashion to the colonial era, coffee and tea continued to be cash crops and people were required to work in the plantations (Des Forges, 1999: 57-58).

In order to translate political aspirations into tangible benefits, the government initiated measures for economic development by the people. Under the banner of development, fields were expropriated from local people for the sake of development projects such as tea and coffee plantations (Des Forges, 1999: 57). Newbury (1995: 13) explains that the expansion of

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the coffee industry, along with forced labour, contributed to the general good economic growth rates, especially during the 1960s and 1970s.

However, as under colonial rule, *umuganda* became compulsory and was used to marshal unpaid labour for public projects such as planting trees, constructing terraces, fighting erosion, building bridges, apart from working in coffee and tea plantations (Mamdani, 2001: 146). The difference from the colonial forms of punishment, meted out to those who failed to perform community work, was that the post-independence government instituted punishment in the way of fines instead of corporal punishment. Days of performing *umuganda* were also reduced to one day a week.

According to Verwimp (2000: 329), *umuganda* was one of President Habyarimana's favourite topics in his speeches and it was one of the regime's most influential policies, both in economic and in ideological terms. Verwimp recorded this speech by Habyarimana, in August 1975:

> The doctrine of our movement [MRND] is that Rwanda will only be developed
> by the sum of the efforts of its people. That is why it has judged the collective
> work for development a necessary obligation for all inhabitants of the county
> (cited in Verwimp, 2000: 346).

Forced labour for the state became an institution, a part of the 'custom' initiated by the revolution (Mamdani, 2001: 146). Mamdani explains that community labour was a program of forced investment by farmers, along the lines of the coercive colonial era's conservation policy. Since each public works project was a compulsory, "peasants were often doubtful of its social benefit, especially as time went by and because it was mandatory, it was resented" (2001: 147). In the later 1980s, people became reluctant to undertake *umuganda* and to pay taxes. According to Des Forges, "in places where the land-hungry cultivators had been obliged by the state to cede fields to development projects that brought no visible improvement to their lives,

they took back the land by force and began to refuse to go for one day a week of labour" (Des Forges, 1999: 57).

Verwimp (2005: 320) explains how the post-colonial government of Habyarimana declared the purpose of *umuganda* as beneficial for economic development and in providing state-services to the community. Nevertheless, Verwimp (2005: 321)notes that *umuganda* really served the elite's economic and political interests, by fulfilling their political goals and garnering greater political power for them, rather than attending to the needs of the entire population (Barnhart, 2011: 4).

According to Newbury (1995: 13), by the mid- to late-1980s the country's economic situation had begun to deteriorate and by the early 1990s it had become dire. Newbury reports that the government's authority declined, not only because of politics but also because of the 1989 famine. Due to the issue of further food shortages and the regime's general inability to meet the needs of rural society, people's living conditions continued to deteriorate while the MRND party continued to strengthen its ideology across the country (Newbury, 1995: 13; Thomson 2009: 270). As the years went by, *umuganda* could be called upon more frequently than one day per week, depending upon the government's need. Generally, *umuganda* was used for political mobilisation and to pass on the government and MRND's messages. The days allocated to *umuganda* increased as political instability increased (Thomson, 2009: 270).

Although in the early 1960s and 1970s *umuganda* included building schools, repairing roads, constructing bridges, digging anti-erosion ditches and other community projects, people were consistently taught about citizenship (Straus, 2006: 23).People were always reminded of their heritage as cultivators, that they should be proud of it and show this by using their skills. According to Lemarchand (1970: 94-95), this ideology grew from the type of social hierarchy of *ubukonde*; traditional lineage who owned land and their patron-client relations.[18]

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[18] With the coming of Europeans, a genuine identity eventually developed between the *ubukonde* cultivation system and *umuheto,* the cattle system (Lemarchand, 1970: 95).

Verwimp (2000: 347) argues that the expression of President Habyarimana: "Our job is to cultivate, all the rest is good luck", explains *umuganda* as not only a goal for development but also for citizenship. This expression also reminded Rwandan of their peasantry status. Keeping the ancestral practice that grew through *ubukonde*, the president wanted Rwanda to be an agricultural society. "He glorified the peasantry and pictured himself as a peasant. In his ideology, only the Hutu were the real peasants of Rwanda" (Verwimp, 2000: 326). This ideology also explained who was a true munya-Rwandan. This propaganda was in turn used against the Tutsi, who were not known as cultivators (Verwimp, 2000: 343). Hatred and divisions were increasingly planted under the stream of development during *umuganda*.

Although the post-colonial regime claimed to introduce *umuganda* as a traditional practice, it actually retained many aspects of the Belgian colonial model (Schaefer, 2001). For example, the government emphasized the colonial concept of Rwandan identity. The practice of *umuganda* made efforts to distinguish 'indigenous' ba-Hutu from 'non indigenous' ba-Tutsi (Mamdani, 2001: 193-194). *Umuganda* in the post-colonial period is best understood in the context of the mythical peasant.

It seems that *umuganda* was a liberation tool, not only from colonialism but also from anything related to the Kingdom and which was termed 'Tutsi-practice'. In order to translate the political aspirations of the population, the philosophy of *umuganda* was emphasized as a way of giving voice and recognition to the majority, the Hutu natives (Verwimp, 2003: 12). Justifying his *coupd'etat*, in his speech, cited by Verwimp, President Habyarimana said, "we want to fight this form of intellectual bourgeoisie and give all kinds of physical labour its value back" (Verwimp, 2003: 12). He considered Rwanda to be a "peasant economy and that it should remain one" (Verwimp, 2005: 298). In this context, Verwimp calls the national policy of *umuganda* "a regime with a development ideology" (2005: 298).

It was understood that the policy of *umuganda* was the people's contribution to the country's development. Highlighting the Hutu liberation as farmers, who have to cherish their cultivating

activities, sounded logical to the majority, the Hutu.[19] Des Forge explains that the mobilization of the population aimed first at building the economic infrastructure and improving conditions for agriculture. However, the aim of Habyarimana's policy on *umuganda* did not change much for agriculture nor for the economy of the country (Newburry, 1995: 13-14). Agricultural production remained limited and peasants' standards of living did not improve but MRND became popular and powerful across the country.

Mamdani (2001: 145) examines the organisation and practice of *umuganda* during this time and explains that the practice of *umuganda* was directed at political rather than community development and thus excluded the participation of the population in the management process of their affairs (Ministry of Local Government and Social Affairs, 2001: 7). *Umuganda* then fell into the category of manipulative participation. Within this particular context, participation signifies involvement of the people only in terms of their contributing labour and resources as well as making a firm commitment to the state's political ideology (Hall 1986: 97). According to Hall, this kind of participation has little to do with freedom of decision-making or the encouragement of independent initiatives by autonomous groups (1986: 97).

Mamdani explains that development in Rwanda was conceived more in terms of economic growth than in terms of social development (Mamdani, 2001: 146). He argues that *umuganda* operated in parallel with the peasantry. Mamdani notes the resemblance of *umuganda* to *paysannat*, both of which were justified as developmental initiatives. Mamdani explains that while *umuganda* directed unpaid labour towards public works projects, *paysannat* was akin to the compulsory villagisation that had become standard practice in 'radical' states in the region, such as Tanzania and Ethiopia (2001: 147).

Looking at *umuganda* policy and its organisation, Uvin (1997: 97) cites Rwanda as an example of state-run, state-controlled, top-down development. In the same way, Verwimp's research

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[19]Approximately 84 percent of Rwandan said they were Hutu, and the remaining 1 percent said they were Twa (see Newburry 1986, 1996 and Mamdani 1996). However, from the 1920s, there were no other statistics compiled, certainly none of current relevance [own assessment].

emphasizes that *umuganda* is a top-down policy, "with an appealing development image that was designed and used to exploit peasant labour, to control the peasant population, to humiliate the Rwandan intellectuals, to give politicians discretionary power over labour and to indoctrinate Rwandans with the regime's ideology" (2005: 24).

Although *umuganda* was economically beneficial for the country, in the sense of providing unpaid labour, Verwimp (2000: 346) stresses its importance in political and ideological terms. He says that, "*umuganda* was explicitly designed to make sure that all Rwandans do manual labour. The local politicians and administrators were responsible for the organisation of the weekly *umuganda*, which gave the officials great discretionary power to decide who did and who did not have to participate" (2000: 349). According to Des Forges, *umuganda* was supervised by the *nyumbakumi*, a neighbourhood leader in charge of a group of ten households. The *nyumbakumi* had power to fine those who failed to appear for the communal work session (Des Forges, 1999: 42). Mobilization and control was implemented, not just by the high ratio of officials to ordinary people, but also by regulations governing population registration and movement (Des Forges, 1999: 42).

Verwimp (2000: 345) argues that the question of whether or not *umuganda* helped in the development of the country depends to a large extent on the definition of development one is using. Verwimp explains that:

> In order to understand the actions of dictatorial regimes, one should not only look at their 'developmental' outcomes but also at the intentions of the regime. What particular kind of development did they want to achieve for their country? In order to discover the intentions of the regime, 'development' in Rwanda is studied as an ideology with particular emphasis on agriculture and on the restrictions of movement imposed by the regime (2000: 325-361).

According to Verwimp (2000:346-347), "when dictatorial political power is legitimized with a peasant ideology, genocide becomes a political option because a peasant society does not tolerate the existence of non-peasants, in the same way as a communist society does not tolerate the existence of a capitalist class". Comparing it to other institutions of mobilisation, Straus (2006: 219) argues that the post-colonial practice of *umuganda* resembled its practises during colonial times. Thus the colonial image of the Tutsi has been transformed from that of a noble aristocracy to one of laziness (Hitjens, 1999: 255).

2.3.2 The role of *umuganda* during the 1994 genocide

Although local people did show a lack of interest in participating in *umuganda*, MRND shifted the idea of community development to that of patriotism. In the early 1990s, the propaganda for MRND gave no choice to Rwandans other than to attend *umuganda* for political mobilisation. Those who could not attend were regarded as enemies of the country who ran the risk of being brutalised and killed (Thomson, 2009: 119).

The situation became yet more tense when a group of Rwandans who were in exile invaded Rwanda from Uganda, on 1st September 1990. This attack provided the perfect pretext for President Habyarimana to propagate the idea that Tutsis were preparing to 'enslave' Hutus again (Chrétien, 2000: 331). The ideology was not new to Rwandans. They had known it since the late 1920s when the ethnic identity card (*indanga-muntu*) was introduced and *umuganda* was performed weekly under post-colonial government. The government then sponsored the creation of youth militias, known as *Interahamwe* (those who attack together, those who act together) to counter the threat. The increasingly tense climate in the country was reflected in the political arena, and from 1990 to early 1994 negotiation was unsuccessful (2000: 332).

On the night of April 6, 1994, a plane returning President Habyarimana from signing a peace agreement in Da-es-Salaam was shot down at Kigali airport. In this atmosphere, patrols and barriers were set up immediately. An order from the government was given to all Hutu and *interahamwe* through a National Radio broadcast, to kill all Tutsi, men, women and children.

According to the actual meaning of '*interahamwe'*, the killings were instructed to be done in the form of "acting together as communal work" (Chrétien, 2000: 332). Through Radio Rwanda, extremists started a program that was, "calling upon *Bene-Sebahinzi*", the children of cultivators/children of the soil or peasants, for emancipation and protection of their hard-won power following the downing of the aircraft. The actual killing started on 7 April 1994 (Chrétien, 2000: 332). More than one million Tutsi and a few moderate Hutu are estimated to have been killed, in less than three month (Thomson, 2009: 119).

Examining the reasons why perpetrators committed genocide, Straus (2006: 109) found that 88% took part in weekly *umuganda*. The author is not suggesting that participating in *umuganda* predisposed people to commit genocide, but the finding indicates that with *umuganda* the state had mobilized a significant proportion of perpetrators before the genocide (2006: 110). "This is the pattern that was reproduced during the genocide" (Straus, 2006: 150). Learning from the peasant ideology of colonialism and post-colonialism, Hintjens (1999: 245) argues that the bonds within civil society were completely broken. The everyday propaganda during *umuganda* had also motivated people to see their fellow ba-Tutsi as enemies.

During the genocide, *umuganda* did not involve planting trees but 'clearing out the weeds' – a phrase used by the *genocidaires* to mean the killing of Tutsis. Chopping up men was referred to as 'bush clearing' and slaughtering women and children as 'pulling out the roots of the bad weeds' (Prunier, 1995: 138-142, Mamdani, 2001: 194). The slogan, 'clearing bushes and removing bad weeds', were familiar terms used in the course of ordinary agricultural labour undertaken in *umuganda*. Moreover, Des Forges argues that authorities summoned people for *umuganda* which consisted of stuffing bodies down latrines, tossing them in pits, throwing them into rivers or lakes or digging mass graves in which to bury them (Des Forges, 1999: 241). This labour involved songs of praise for the regime and the MRND.

People, who for generations were used to obeying orders passed down from above (and who were exposed to racist and ethnic propaganda), in many cases did not question instructions to

kill (Hintjens, 1999: 241). Moreover, Straus (2006: 203) emphasises that the centralised, hierarchical and extensive structure of the state had added to the culture of obedience to leaders, which in turn facilitated the implementation of genocide.

Between 1974 and 2000, Rwanda had five levels of administration: central government, prefectures, communes, sectors and cells. A cell had a sub-cellular stratum called *nyumbakumi* (responsible for ten houses). *Umuganda* was supervised by the *nyumbakumi*, who in turn had the power to fine those who failed to appear for communal work (Des Forges, 1999: 42). Local officials in the cells, sectors and communes directed the early massacres. They told the people that participating in the attacks was their requirement for *umuganda*. (1999: 89). Administrators were responsible for informing their superiors about all important developments within their jurisdictions (Des Forges, 1999: 233). Under the pretext of Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invasion from exile[20], the government distributed guns to every tenth household (Pottier, 2002: 135). The term, 'to work', referred to killing; most of the local leaders told their people that their welfare depended on killing. They were told to come with every possible tool to work with (tools that are used for *umuganda*), including machetes, hoes and firearms (Diamond, 2005: 313). The officials determined the end as well as the start of *umuganda*, the slaughter.

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[20]The majority of those in the RPF were the Tutsi Diasporas who fled the country in the 1959.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined Rwanda's traditional concept and practice of mutual support known as *umuganda,* from the pre-colonial period until the genocide of 1994. This is encapsulated in Table 2.1.

Table2.1: How the practice of *umuganda* in Rwanda has evolved

Period	Form of political rule	*Umuganda* practice/characteristic
Pre-colonial: until the late 19th century	Hierarchy and centralized kingdom (monarchy)	Social institution: - mutual obligation - community self-reliance - household food security - individual social security - local community enforced compliance
Colonial rule: 1880s until 1962	Centralized and authoritarian state	Mandatory: - forced, unpaid collective labour - mandatory coffee and tea cultivation - enforcement compliance was colonial and local - accountability was to the colonial master not the community
Post-colonial: 1962 until 1994	Centralized and authoritarian government	Mandatory work: - controlling people - mobilizing people for political gain - continuation about cash crop growing
Genocide: 1994	Anarchy: no state control	Mandatory: - mass mobilizing for genocide - mobilization for equipment for genocide - use of modern mass media - no formal accountability - shift from economic mobilization to non-economic purpose

Source: *Extracted from Newbury (1988), Newbury (1991, Mamdani, (1996); Hintjens (1999); Verwimp (2004)*

Mobilisation for *umuganda* was highly dependent upon the form of rule and the purpose. It can be understood from the table that, while in pre-colonial times *umuganda* was used to improve social-well-being by mutual interdependency with no state control and comparisons, the colonial state changed this into a form of labour for producing cash crops, thus destroying the centuries-old practice and the socio-economic basis of *umuganda*.

Equally, the post-colonial regimes not only continued with the colonial distortion of *umuganda* but also used it for political mobilisation and for manifesting an ethnic ideology that led to genocide. The post-colonial version of *umuganda* was less exploitative. It required less time and its beneficiaries were usually collectives for public good, not specifically for chiefs or the colonial administration. Nevertheless, the failure of the post-independence government to return *umuganda* to its initial philosophy and practice has been evident. The development of the practice of *umuganda* after independence is related to transformation in the growth of state power and in social relations of production.

The colonial and post-colonial administrations misused the practice of *umuganda* to mobilise for terror and genocide. The mismanagement of *umuganda* served the interests of the political regime rather than those of the people. The significant continuation of this modified practice of *umuganda* can still be seen after the genocide. The following chapter discusses the practice and policy of *umuganda* in the post-genocidal phase, by focusing on how it is currently structured and organized and on the range of activities associated with political and socio-economic development.

CHAPTER THREE

The Policy of *Umuganda* After the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda: structure, process and activities associated with social and economic development

Introduction

Beginning with the colonial period, *umuganda* was often used to exploit ordinary people and became a tool used in the tragedy of the 1994 genocide. Despite being negatively manipulated and corrupted during previous regimes, the local traditional practises (*umuganda* as *ubudehe*) are currently considered to be crucial in dealing with post-genocide challenges and as integral to the national development of Rwanda.

This chapter aims at understanding the policy and practice of *umuganda* in post-genocide Rwanda. The objective of this policy, its organisation and the different activities associated with social and economic development are addressed here. The chapter is divided into five sections. Firstly, the chapter gives an overview of the current policy of *umuganda*. The second section discusses the more specific objectives of *umuganda.* Thirdly, the chapter looks at the structure and organisation of *umuganda*. The fourth section reviews different activities associated with *umuganda*, and last section of the chapter is a concluding remark.

3.1 The policy of *umuganda* in post-genocide Rwanda

After the genocide, Rwanda faced many challenges, ranging from human security to infrastructure and a lack of public and private sector professionals. Political leaders believed that returning to their traditional norms and values could help solve socio-economic problems. *Umuganda* was then re-established in 2001 by the government through the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) and institutionalised as a government policy, Law No. 53/2007, in 2008, under the administration of the Ministry of Local Government, Good Governance, Community Development and Social Affairs (MINALOC).

With so much to do, especially regarding poverty reduction and the reconciliation process, the government of Rwanda has emphasised *umuganda* as a common development and national rebuilding strategy. *Umuganda* falls into a more general policy framework of community development, which was designed by drawing on the tradition, rules, and norms of how Rwandans relate to one another in order to promote good governance and the rebuilding of Rwandan society(Straus, 2006: 109; MINALOC - Procedures Manual for Local Government in Rwanda, 2007). *Umuganda* is carried out once a month countrywide and involves the participation of all, including the president and other government officials (The New Times, 2006). *Umuganda* programs are initiated by bringing all members of the community together so as to assess their socio-economic conditions, define their priorities and decide what to do in order to improve their well-being (MINALOC, 2008).

Currently *umuganda* is combined with *ubudehe* in the policy of community development, which has three pillars: good governance, economic development and social development (MINALOC, 2008). This is portrayed in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Pillars of community development
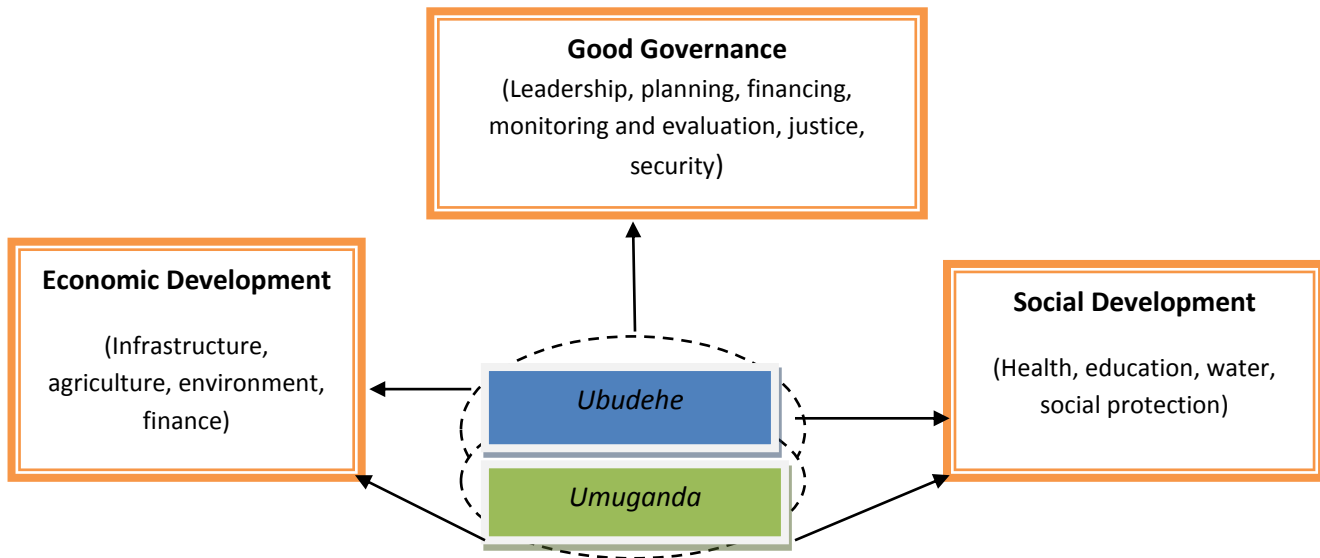
Source: Extracted from the Community Development Policy (MINALOC 2008)

As traditionally established, *ubudehe* and *umuganda* are both the core of collective action. However, these practices are currently not carried out according to their initial traditional conception (Mkarubuga, 2066: 6). While *ubudehe* is monetized in its practice, *umuganda* is officially voluntary (See the law establishing *umuganda*, No. 53/2007). Nevertheless the question remains as to *umuganda's* practical implementation and the extent to which its practice is considered to be voluntary. *Umuganda* is currently used as a platform to implement government service delivery programmes and plans by the community. Therefore, other policies and strategies, especially those of the national Decentralization and Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), are expected to take advantage of the practice of *umuganda* to deal with poverty in the country.

For the government, *umuganda* is not only a policy that facilitates the government in service delivery but also enables interaction between leaders and ordinary community

members.[21]Traditional principles (such as mutual assistance) are used to address community and national needs. Thus *umuganda* facilitates multiple development objectives which are regarded as integral to general policy on community development (MINALOC, 2008). *Umuganda* is seen as, "combining the efforts of many people in order for them to carry out a general public-interest activity, with the aim of promoting development activities". It is one of the current forms of the economic forums (Mukarubuga, 2006: 24), though using traditional norms.

3.2 Specific objectives of the policy of *umuganda*

The policy document of *umuganda* states clearly that it aims to promote development activities in the framework of "supporting national budget and to provide an opportunity for conviviality among people" (Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda, No. 53/2007, 2008: 6).According to this government policy as well as the policy of community development, the policy and practice of *umuganda* aim at facilitating the implementation of poverty reduction and giving effect to the policy of decentralisation (Ministry of Local Government, 2007: 8).

3.2.1 *Umuganda* for poverty eradication and economic growth

As part of the national reconstruction process, economic growth, through poverty eradication, is currently a concern for Rwanda. Rwanda is taking advantage of the free labour force of *umuganda* as one of the means of achieving its developmental goal. This is seen in the government's first major planning document, Vision 2020. Currently all Rwandan policies revolve around vision 2020, which is the government's overall conception of the future (Uwimbabazi and Lawrence, 2011: 19). The government declared its intention to capitalize on the 'supply of cheap labour for building infrastructure' (MINECOFIN, 2002: 12). *Umuganda* was "touted as one of several institutions of traditional social organization…harnessed for the struggle against poverty" (Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper [PRSP], 2002: 8). As a reporter in

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[21] The New Vision: Uganda's leading Newspaper. *Umuganda*, a platform for poverty reduction, www.enteruganda.

The New Times states, the policy is a source for soliciting important ideas in the formulation of the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) (Gahindiro, in the *New Times*, 2008).[22]

According to the government, one way of fighting poverty and meeting economic development goals is to reduce the burden of public expenditure on services. The practice of *umuganda* is ideally meant to do that (Kwizera in the *New Times*, 2010; Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda No. 53/2007). An example of reducing government expenditure is repairing existing buildings and constructing new ones, such as school classrooms. An example given by Gahene (in the *New Times*, 2010) is the 92 classrooms and 44 school toilets that have been already constructed through the practice of *umuganda*, in Gicumbi district, in Northern Province, for the nine year basic education programme. Interviewed by *The New Times*, the district director, Mwanafunzi, commented that, "all residents in 21 sectors [that form the Gicumbi district] have been sensitized to participate in *umuganda* to clear ground for the construction of more class rooms". He added that the Ministry of Education had offered to supply iron sheets, cement and nails so that the classes and toilets would be ready for the 2011 students' intake (The New Times June, 2010).

Residents participating in umuganda clear the ground for school construction (Photo: The New Times 2010).

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[22]Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) is a five-year medium plan that is expected to guide Rwanda in its economic development and in its fight against poverty, up to the year 2012 (The New Times 2006).

However, a question can be raised, at this point, as to how such labour reduces state expenditure. *The African News* reports that the public sector has estimated the economic value of community labour through *umuganda* to be9 billion Rwandan francs, which is about 15million US dollars (The African News, 2006a).How can this be translated in terms of the economic growth of the country? And what does it mean to the poor? According to the African Economic Outlook:

> The EDPRS first redefines the country's growth and development priorities to emphasise accelerating growth of GDP and exports to create employment. Second, it aims to consolidate and extend the decentralisation of public spending, accompanied by robust accountability mechanisms. It also recognises the key role of private sector in accelerating growth in order to reduce poverty (2008: 524).

While economic growth accelerated to 4.2% and 4.6% in 2006 and 2007 respectively, agriculture in GDP decreased by 35.3% (African Economic Outlook, 2006: 431 – 431). The African Economic Outlook of 2008, reports that the continued weakness in the agricultural sector presents a further decline in real GDP growth to 4% in 2008 (2008: 524).Having development activities as the aim of the policy of *umuganda*, and bearing in mind that 80% of the Rwandan population depend on agricultural basis activities for their daily survival, the question remains as to the extent to which *umuganda* has impact on social economic life of the people, especially the poor. Should *umuganda* focus on constructing class rooms or should it be directed into the agricultural sector, since the majority of Rwandans depends on this sector for their livelihood?

As already identified, the practice of *umuganda* is seen as a significant driving force for the EDPRS, providing for everyone's participation to build ownership through implementing the

strategy. Nevertheless, the issue is how useful is *umuganda* to EDERS programs and how the poor benefit from this practice.

Criticism still surrounds the practice of *umuganda*. For example, seeing the practice of *umuganda* as forced labour, an article in *The African News* (2006) reported that people resisted the compulsory labour, and human rights organisations criticize *umuganda* as forced labour (Human Right Watch, 2011: 85). Although in theory the policy of *umuganda* offers room for dialogue between local authorities and communities, some have found little interaction in practice, with the government mostly issuing top-down directives (Mukarubuga, 2006: 21).

Nevertheless, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) recognises the potential for *umuganda*, as community gatherings to promote dialogue and service delivery alongside infrastructure development (Kakimba, 2006).[23] NEPAD and the World Bank have commended *umuganda* as "an effective way of promoting self-sustaining development and ownership of the development agenda" (NEPAD, 2005: 117, Rwandan Research Group, 2008: 12).

Moreover, in a recent article in *The New Times*, the Minister of Finance announced that *umuganda* is a way of enhancing the effective participation and contribution of all citizens to the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategic process which, in the long run, contributes and strengthens the culture of free debate at the grassroots level (Gahindiro, in the *New Times*, 2008). Thus *umuganda* is regarded as an effective tool in the implementation process of the policy of decentralisation in Rwanda (Ministry of Local Government, 2007: 8).

3.2.1 Implementation of decentralisation through *umuganda*

According to the Rwandan Decentralisation Strategic Framework (2007: 7) the framework has five main objectives:

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[23]Poverty to be discussed during *Umuganda*. The New Times, 29 September, 2006.

a) To enable and encourage local people to participate in initiating, devising, implementing and monitoring decisions and plans that consider their local needs, priorities, capacities and resources by transferring power, authority and resources from central to local government and lower levels.

b) To strengthen accountability and transparency in Rwanda by making local leaders directly accountable to the communities they serve and by establishing a clear linkage between the taxes people pay and the service financed through these taxes.

c) To enhance the sensitivity and responsiveness of public administration to the local environment by placing the planning, financing, management and control of service provision at the point where services are provided and by enabling local leadership to develop organisation structures and capacities that take into consideration the local environment and needs.

d) To develop sustainable economic planning and management capacity at local levels that will serve as the driving motor for planning, mobilisation and implementation of social, political and economic development to alleviate poverty.

e) To enhance effectiveness and efficiency in the planning, monitoring and delivering of services by reducing the burden from central government officials who are distanced from the point where needs are felt and services delivered (2007: 7).

According to Thomas, "decentralisation is intended to give the power to the people enable them to execute their will for development" (2008: 11). The Law No. 29/2005 specifying the administrative entities of the country was gazetted on 31 December 2005. This in turn

determines how the policy of *umuganda* will be implemented in the decentralised state structures. Although *umuganda* operates under the authority of the central government, particularly the Ministry of Local Administration, Good Governance, Community Development and Social Affairs (MINALOC), the planning of its activities are carried out by lower administrative units, the *umudugudu* (village).

3.3 Structure and organization of *umuganda*

The structure and organisation of *umuganda* can be understood in terms of the structure of national decentralisation, which goes down to the smallest administrative unit.

3.3.1 Structure of *umuganda*

The figure below shows the government structure, from the central government to the province (*intara*), the district (*akarere*), the sector (*umurenge*), the cell (*akagari*) and the village (*umudugudu*).

Figure 3.2: Structure of the government of Rwanda
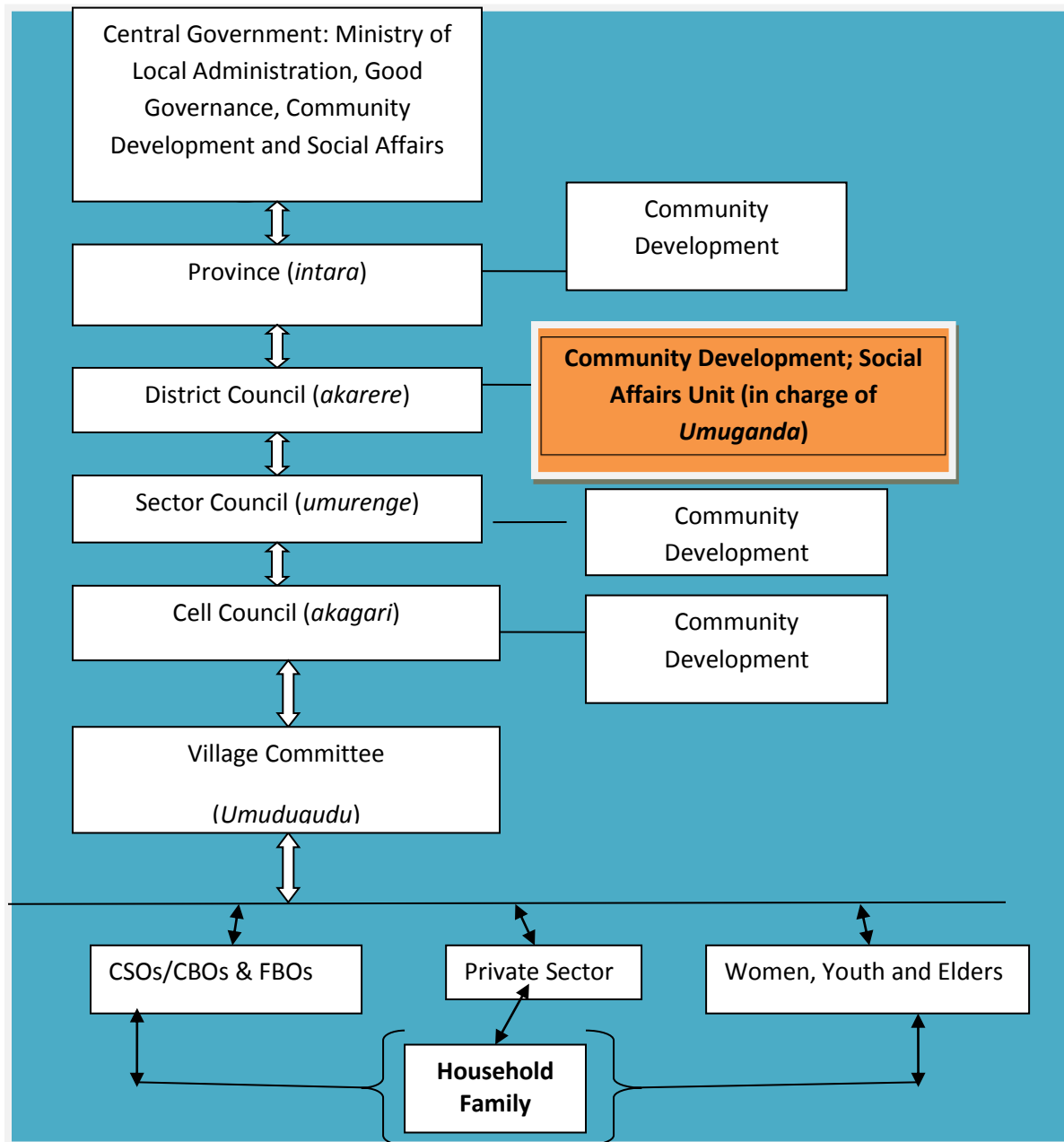
Source: Procedures Manual for Local Government in Rwanda 2007

The Republic of Rwanda is divided into four provinces: Eastern, Southern, Western and Northern Provinces. Each province is in turn divided into districts, sectors, cells and villages. The central government is responsible for formulating national policy, ensuring national security and creating an enabling environment for civil society and the private sector (Bugingo, in the *New Times* 2002). According to Bugingo (in the *New Times*, 2002), local government is responsible for identifying community needs, deciding priorities, making and formulating local policy, implementing national policies and using resources effectively.

Districts are charged with local economic development and planning and co-ordinating the delivery of public services. A sector is the focal point for delivering services to the population. Sectors are also charged with co-ordinating community participatory development as well as collecting data and information. A cell is responsible for needs assessment and prioritisation and mobilizing community action. Finally, the *umudugudu*, or village, which is the smallest administrative unit, is responsible for building co-operation, collaboration and solidarity among members of the community (MINALOC, 2008: 18-19).

Although the office in charge of the practice of *umuganda* is indicated to be under community development and social affairs at the District level (see Figure 3.2), the government identifies the village (*umudugudu*) as the core formal community and focus of *umuganda*, since all activities start from the *umudugudu* (MINALOC, 2008: 19).

3.3.2 Organisation of *umuganda*

Article 7 of the law establishing *umuganda*, No. 53/2007, creates the committees in charge of the organisation of the work. The village is administered by the executive committee which comprises five personnel: (1) the village coordinator, (2) the in-charge of social affairs, (3) the in-charge of security, immigration and migration in the village, (4) the in-charge of information and education and (5) the in-charge of development. According to government policy, it is the

responsibility of the executive committee to plan and lead *umuganda* at the cell and village (*umudugudu*) level (MINALOC, 2007: 35). In addition, presidential order No. 57/01 of 15/10/2006 designates *umudugudu* as the location for *umuganda* activities, which also entails gatherings after the work. *Umuganda* activities are usually supervised by the village co-ordinator. The latter oversees a group of households, usually between 50 and 70.The main responsibilities of the supervising committee of *umuganda* at each level are to:

- Organise the plan of the *umuganda* work

- Organise and supervise the *umuganda* work

- Carry out the evaluation of *umuganda* work and making a report thereon (Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda, No. 53/2007, 2008: 8).

Article 3 of No.53/2007 requires that every Rwandan between 18 and 65 years of age who is physically able is obliged to perform *umuganda* (Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda, 2008: 6).

Despite having these structures, Ryan (2010: 22) notes that projects related to *umuganda* activities seemingly flow from the top level downwards, as national leaders set development targets that reach down to *umudugudu*. During *umuganda* gatherings, one or two of the executive committee members, from either *umudugudu* or *umurenge*, communicate a message from the government, usually from the Ministry. A message might inform people about security, education, family planning or it might concern mobilising people to form and join associations or that arise from the government program (Presidential order No. 57/01 2006: 12-14).

Veale (2000: 237) argues that, traditionally, state and civil society are closely linked in Rwandan society. Studying the characteristics of social organisation in Rwanda, Veale (2000: 238) reveals that in the 1990s the government structures were tightly organised and intrinsically embedded in community structures. However, the author stresses that in the mid-1990s there was little

experience of spontaneous community organisation. He observes that local authorities mobilize the population to engage in voluntary community action such as *umuganda*. Although most activities are organised at the district level and are passed down to be implemented at the lower level of *umudugudu*, the mobilisation is usually done at the lower level.

Stakeholders in the policy of *umuganda* benefit from the mobilisation of members of communities to accept their ideas. For example, the Ministry of Finance (MINECOFIN) suggests that poverty be discussed during *umuganda*, with the aim of sensitizing people on EDPRS (Kakimba, in the *New Times*, 2006). This discussion in *umuganda* includes participating in national and international agencies involved in poverty reduction and economic development (Kakimba in the New Times, 2006). Reporting in the local newspaper, *The New Times*, the official in charge of *umuganda* in the Ministry of Local Government explains that among other things, "*umuganda* is also one way of putting more emphasis on performance contract implementation (*imihigo*)"[24] by the mayors and members of parliament, as part of service delivery. It is believed that through the practice of *umuganda*, social services such as local trade, small-scale industries, co-operatives and associations, local government, roads, tourism and environmental protection will be easily provided (Kigabo, 2008: 11).

3.4 Participation and activities associated with the policy of *umuganda*

Article3 and4 of the law establishing *umuganda*, Law No. 53/2007, indicates persons who should perform the activities of *umuganda* as well as days and hours these activities should take (2008: 6-7). The law states clearly that every last Saturday of every month is dedicated to *umuganda* from 8: 00 A.M and lasts for three hours. During *umuganda,* businesses close and no public transportation operates until *umuganda* activity ends, usually in the afternoons. According to the policy document, anyone who fails to participate without any valid notification is charged a fine of 5000 Rwandan francs (RWF) (close to $11) (2008: 7). For a middle class citizen in Rwanda, RWF 5000 is a lot of money that one would not wish to give

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[24]The New Times, www.newtimes.co.rw: Local government rewards top *umuganda* achievements.

away. Whilst *umuganda* is explained by the government as a way of life and a traditional means of organising the population for collective self-help[25], in reality, the question is if the majority cannot afford to pay the fine of FRW. 5000, how voluntary is the nature of *umuganda*.

This raises another question as to whether the policy is compatible with international human rights that prohibit forced labour. Nevertheless, Article 9 of the law establishing *umuganda* instructs that "at each level where *umuganda* activities have been carried out, the population shall, in collaboration with the supervising committee, identify those who participated in *umuganda* and those who did not participate and the reasons thereof" (Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda, 2008:9 – 10). This suggests that such mechanisms are used to assist in identifying those liable for fines. However, this raises also the question of the transparency of such mechanisms.

After the activities of *umuganda* are over, the whole community meets in a designated big hall or under a tree and local leaders address the community members, talking about various issues such as the importance of family planning, health insurance schemes and hygiene. Moreover, although the idea from article 4 of the law of *umuganda* may be debatable, these talks could be interpreted as governmental ideology for democracy and/or development. But they could also be counter-productive (in terms of disrupting people's business) or perhaps people regard them as purely a matter of routine.

Different activities are performed during *umuganda*. Most of the work carried out includes building roads, bridges, schools, hospitals and houses for the needy (Kwizera, in the *New Times*, June 2010). Although there may be different views on the practice of *umuganda*, both positive and negative, environmental protection, security provision, unity and reconciliation, and community development, could be regarded as beneficial to community, and to the government. Each will be discussed briefly.

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[25]Rwandan Governance Board, 30th April 2012. Fostering Good governance for Sustainable Development, www.rgb.rwa accessed on 01 May 2012.

3.4.1 *Umuganda* for environmental protection

To a great extent, most activities of *umuganda* countrywide are linked with environmental protection strategies. Generally, most people participate in cleaning streets, cutting grass, trimming bushes alongside the roads, planting trees and repairing public buildings (Rwanda Environment Authority, REMA, 2009).

Through the practice of *umuganda*, reforestation and erosion control have been successful in many communities (Rwanda Research Group, 2008: 6). Government Institutions such as REMA urge people to take care of environmental and water resources and mobilizes people to plant trees, for example, to protect river banks (REMA, 2009).[26]

Officials join hands in cleaning river banks (Photo: The New Times 2010)

As the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame explains, the concept of *umuganda* is a good idea to maintain a clean society and this has helped the country to gain its new face (Edmund, in the New Times, 2009). He adds that the concept does not only propagate a clean society but also

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[26]REMA, Community work (*Umuganda rusange*) of 30/05/2009 in Gisagara District, http/rema.gov.rw.

presents an opportunity for people to join hands to achieve set objectives, on top of fostering harmony among residents (Edmund, 2009).

On her visit to Rwanda, Malawi's Minister of Industry and Trade commended *umuganda* and recommend this practice in other countries. In an article published in the Nyasa Times, she notes, "This is something all African countries need to do because wherever we go in Africa now, there is environmental degradation and the only way to resolve the issue is to have every person involved in curbing it."[27] (Nyasa Times, 1 Nov 2010). To have everyone involved will alternatively require the adoption of the spirit of working together as that found in *umuganda*.

3.4.2 *Umuganda* for security provision

According to the UNDP Report on Human Development (1994: 23), human security is concerned with how people live in a society, how freely they exercise their choices, how much access they have to market and social opportunities and whether they live in conflict or peace. With the challenges of social division that marked the country in the past and the risk of internal and external rebel forces creating discord, community gatherings[28] for *umuganda* have been able to form community policing bodies which monitor inappropriate behaviour in the community, such as theft. Community policing involves a group of people in the *umudugudu* which works closely (when necessary) with national police regarding matters related to instability. Small cases are taken care of at the *umudugudu* leadership level. The police are only called when it is beyond the *umudugudu* leadership's control. Everyone is expected to be vigilant in their respective areas and in each community (umudugudu) there are designated people who do night patrols. Community members are required to contribute monetarily for compensation to those who perform these patrols. The night patrols and money contribution is decided and explained during *umuganda* gatherings (Edmund, in the New Times, 2009).

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[27]Malawi Minister admires Rwanda's '*umuganda*', Nyasa Times, November, 1, 2010, www.nyansatimes.com
[28]Case and Cara's blog describe *umuganda* gathering as a town hall/public announcement venue that covers everything from the security situation in the neighborhood to informing the community that a disabled person has moved into the *umudugudu* and everyone needs to keep a look out for her/him. Htt://caseyancara.wordpress.com

Moreover, any suspicions of inappropriate behaviour or strangers in the *umudugudu* are discussed during *umuganda* gatherings. This discussion can be seen as contributing to three objectives: firstly, making the community aware of what is going on in their area; secondly, mobilising the community to be vigilant for the sake of their own security and; thirdly, it may be a way of controlling people. More relating to this will be discussed in the following chapters.

3.4.3 *Umuganda* for unity and reconciliation

Taking peace as a prerequisite for sustainable poverty reduction, the policy document explains that *umuganda* aims to "provide an opportunity for conviviality among people" (Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda, 2008: 6). It is therefore meant to forge unity and reconciliation among Rwandans (Kakiba, in the *New Times*, 2006, Kwizera, in the *New Times*, 2010).[29] *Umuganda* activities allow and motivate all Rwandan groups to be together and to act together for both public and community interests. For reconciliation to take place requires not only talking to each other but having a common vision as well. It is believed that during *umuganda,* people in *umudugudu* are given a chance to mutually envision what they would like to see happening in their community (Rwandan Government Board, 2011). Participating in *umuganda* is seen as enhancing social cohesion and encouraging a sense of civic duty to participate in community and national development plans.

3.4.4*Umuganda* for community development

While the term 'community development' may have different meanings to different people and organisations, the government of Rwanda recognises Resohazy's theory of community development as "a co-ordinated and systematic policy whose aim is to organise the global progress of a specific region, within the participation of the concerned population" (from the Rwandan community development policy, 2001: 12). A coordinated and systematic policy refers to "an action which pursues specific objectives determined within a given time, provides means and tools arranges measures to be taken in a successive manner, conceived, elaborated,

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[29]The New Times in www.rwandagateway.org.

and implemented under the guidance of qualified people" (from the Rwandan community development policy 2001: 12). To organise the global progress means "to be in charge of transformation of all important aspects of the social-economic life" (from the Rwandan community development policy, 2001: 12).

In community development, *umuganda* aims not only at poverty reduction but also at community mobilisation, empowerment and confidence building (Ministry of Local Government, 2008: 7). Recall that the policy of *umuganda* motivates citizens to participate in self-development rather than waiting for the government to deliver. Taylor (1992: 255) explains that the main role of government is to provide a sustainable social, economic and political environment in which local initiatives and local self-development can flourish. In the same way, *umuganda* policy intends to empower people to be active in the decision-making which affects their lives. Although activities involved in *umuganda* are regarded more as for public interest, cleaning neighbourhood streets and building roads and schools for the children, *umuganda* provides opportunities for local leaders to engage in civic education and to foster dialogue on topics related to public interest (Brown 2008: 52).Through self-help projects like planting trees, building schools and performing other developmental work, community development is promoted (Nyasa Times, 1 Nov 2010).

While in the past, citizens depended on the government to deliver, *umuganda* contributes to a sense of community and a shared responsibility for the community and nation at large whereby people contribute to their *umudugudu* needs instead of waiting for the government (Kigabo, 2008: 11). This in turn builds a confident society. For example, in gatherings which occur after the activities of *umuganda*, mobilisation of the people at grassroots level is undertaken. Kakimba (in the *New Times*, 2006) has noticed that through such gathering after work, *umuganda* has raised awareness about, for example, gender-based violence, AIDS, and poverty. *Umuganda* always concludes with speeches delivered by central appointed leaders of the government. Nevertheless, all these activities have somehow instilled a higher degree of censorship among the Rwandan peasant population (Ingelaere, 2010: 11).

Mukarubuga's (2006: 24) study reveals that there are three different types of *umuganda*:

- First is a small group of friends who decide to contribute assistance to a member of the community, in terms of housing improvement or cultivation. Any member may request assistance from the others. This does not require a well-organized structure.

- Second are the *umuganda* activities initiated by communities to complement government or church initiatives; for example, when parents build or extend school premises, they provide local material and labour while the government provides specialized labour and imported material.

- Third is the *umuganda* organized by the local authority to maintain public infrastructure or to clean public spaces.

While there is little information on how planned and structured these three types of *umuganda* are, what is understood is that the second and third types are more organized by government leaders and people are required by the policy, and mobilized to undertake the planned activities. This matter is dealt with in detail in Chapters Four and Five.

Mukarubuga (2006:24) notes that with the two last types of *umuganda*, people feel forced to undertake the labour and do not see a direct benefit to their families. People also feel that the maintenance of public infrastructure should be the government's responsibility, as they pay taxes for this purpose. According to Mutara (2006) a large percentage of Rwandans view *umuganda* as a burden. Although *umuganda* is very influential in Rwandan society, Mutara (2006) expresses his concerns in these words: "*Umuganda* is abused; if 'abuse' can be used to mean people's failure to thoroughly exploit the rich resources and potential that is embedded in them in achieving effects". Mugarura (in the *New Times*, 2005) also argues that *umuganda* has lost its meaning. While in the old days, Rwandan communities derived a sense of unity and

togetherness from the voluntary community work, today it is viewed more as mandatory work involving punitive sanctions.

3.5 Conclusion

The old traditional communal development practice of *umuganda* has survived and is currently regarded as a practice to be relied upon to meet the modern development needs of Rwanda. Post-genocide Rwanda regards *umuganda* as a system where public, private and civil society sectors join forces for the common good of their communities.

Although some have seen the practice of *umuganda* as a form of forced labour and are therefore against it, the activities performed during *umuganda* by communities can still be regarded as directly or indirectly beneficial to them. The organisation of *umuganda* itself creates social responsibility, as everyone is required to perform *umuganda* activities. The practice of *umuganda* does not only involve cleaning up streets and other activities for the public good; it also empowers people by motivating them to participate in dialogue, especially during gatherings after the work of *umuganda* has been completed.

Discussing issues related to security, poverty eradication, education and elections allow people to see the need for working together as a community, which in turn can help to foster social unity. Nevertheless, people feel forced to undertake *umuganda*. This is a cause of concern, leading one to question the policy of *umuganda* and its implementation. Such issues will be explored in the following chapter, which investigate the understanding of the practice of *umuganda* in both an urban context, Kigali city, as well as in a rural setting, Western Province.

CHAPTER FOUR

A General Understanding of *Umuganda*

Introduction

We shall in this chapter examine how *umuganda* is understood by local people in urban and rural spaces, with Kigali and Western Province as case studies. The study was carried out by means of semi-structured interviews, including focus group discussions, and questionnaires, which were administered by the researcher from early December 2010 to early January 2011. There were three groups of respondents. These were: ordinary community members; elders; and local leaders who administer *umuganda*. A method of random sampling was used to select respondents. Except for the targeted group of local leaders in this study, both interviewees and focus groups were chosen irrespective of gender or occupation.

Given the historical background of socio-political problems that Rwandan society has suffered for many years, the researcher was aware that not all respondents were going to be comfortable being interviewed. Therefore the questionnaire was left with 36 respondents in Kigali and20 in Western Province. Another 40 people in Kigali and 35 in Western Province were included in focus group discussions and in individual interviews (see details in Chapter 1). This method in turn helped to balance sources and avoid issues related to bias as well as maximising the probability of genuine information being received from respondents. After data collection all responses, from interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires were compiled and categories generated with main themes and sub-themes for data presentation and analysis. Moreover, excerpts from interviews will also be used hereafter for illustrative purposes.

For ethical considerations, names, places and leadership positions were not mentioned, in order to protect a respondent's identity. Letters and numbers are used here instead. For example, a local leader is LL, an elder is EL, an ordinary community member is OCM and a focus-group discussion is FGD. LL-3, for example, indicates an interview with local leader (Interview number 3) and LL-3a represents interview number 3 in Kigali, and LL-3b identifies interview number 3 in Western Province.

The chapter is divided into four sections. Section one presents some demographic information pertaining to Kigali and Western Province. Section two offers different accounts of *umuganda*. Section three discusses a range of questions related to the formation and adoption of the practice of *umuganda* throughout the historical period. Section four describes how the population understands *umuganda*, and the final section is the conclusion.

4.1 Demographic information

The study was conducted in two communities: one in Kigali (urban) and the other in Western Province (rural). In Kigali, data were collected from two districts, those of Gasabo and Kicukiro. In Western Province, data were collected from one district, Rusizi. Only one district in Western Province was chosen after learning that there is uniformity in performing *umuganda* in the rural provinces. Activities of *umuganda* may be different on a particular day, but planning and organisation, number of days and hours are all done in a similar way in rural Rwanda. For example, all rural provinces perform *umuganda* once a week, in addition to the monthly *umuganda*. Another reason for choosing a single district is due to the poor accessibility owing to the lack of transport in the rural areas. Below are maps showing the location of the districts that were investigated.

Map of Kigali and Western Province: study areas 1 and 2
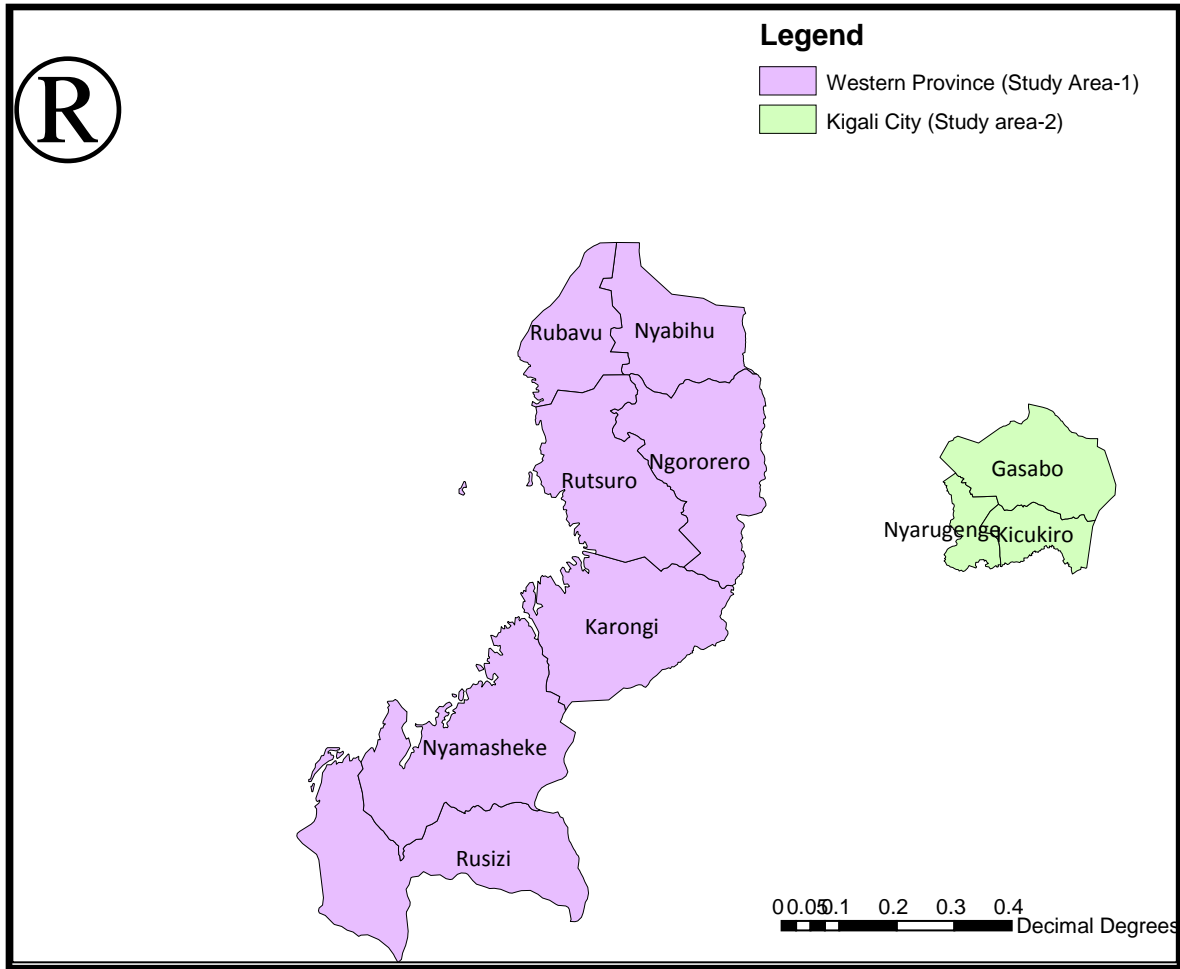
Source: Created from Geographic Information System (GIS)

Table 4.1: Personal information

Kigali	n	%		Western Province	N	%
Gender	**76**	**100**		**Gender**	**63**	**100**
Female	27	36		Female	26	41
Male	49	64		Male	37	49
Age range (years)	**76**	**100**		**Age range (years)**	**63**	**100**
18-20	4	5		18-20	1	2
21-30	25	33		21-30	14	22
31-40	17	22		31-40	14	22
41-50	19	25		41-50	16	25
51-60	6	8		51-60	8	13
61-70	3	4		61-70	5	8
71-80	1	1		71-80	4	6
Over 80	0	0		over 80	1	2
documented	1	1				
Education level	**76**	**100**		**Education level**	**63**	**100**
None	2	3		None	3	5
Primary school	8	11		Primary school	15	24
Secondary school	23	30		Secondary school	13	21
Post-secondary school	34	45		Post-secondary school	22	35
Not documented	9	12		Graduate degree	10	16
Marital status	**76**	**100**		**Marital status**	**61**	**97**
Single	40	53		Single	17	27
Married	30	39		Married	37	59
Divorced	1	1		Divorce	0	0
Widowed	5	7		Widowed	7	11
Employment status	**76**	**100**		**Employment status**	**63**	**100**
Not employed	11	14		Not employed	13	21
Student	18	24		Student	14	22
Casual worker	4	5		Casual worker	7	11
Self-employed/business	6	8		Self-employed/business	6	10
Employed but not in a leadership position	27	36		Employed but not in a leadership position	17	27
Employed and a leader	7	9		Employed and a leader	1	2
Retired or elder	3	4		Retired or elder	4	6
Not documented	0	0		Not documented	1	2

The number of participants in the study is 139. Table 4.1 indicates personal information: province, gender, and age-range, level of education, marital status and employment status of participants. Of the 76 participants in Kigali, (49) 64% were male while 27 (36%) were female[30], and out of 63 respondents from Western Province 37 (49%) were male, while 26 (41%) were female.

The majority of participants were from Kigali 76 (55%) with Western Province having 63 (45%). Respondents who were in the age range of 18 to 60 years are 70 (92%) in Kigali, and 53 (84%) in western Province. Those who were above 60 years of age are 4 (5%) with one percent 'not documented' in Kigali and 10 (16%) in the Western Province. The majority of respondents, 57 (43%) in Kigali, and 56 respondents (35%) in Western Province had at least secondary school level education. Only 3% of respondents in Kigali had no education while in Western Province the figure is 5%.

The majority of respondents in Kigali were single (53%) with 39% married. The majority of respondents in Western Province were married (59%) with single people comprising 27% of respondents. Divorce is a rare event - only 1% of respondents in Kigali. 7% of respondents in Kigali were widowed compared to 11% in Western Province.

The employment status of respondents was predominantly that of non-leadership positions, 36% in Kigali and 27% in Western Province. Many participants were employed either in the government or private sectors but did not hold any leadership position in their communities. This was followed by students (24% in Kigali and 22% in Western Province). Casual workers accounted for 5% in Kigali and 11% in Western Province. Among the casual workers were vendors, domestic workers and construction labourers. 14% were not employed in Kigali and 21% in Western Province. However, most of the latter were involved in subsistence farming, but did not consider farming activities as employment since it is only for subsistence food

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[30] This disproportion is due to the fact that female participants were often involved in domestic duties, which did not allow then time to participate in this study, and on some occasions participants withdrew from being interviewed.

production, which is sometimes not considered enough for their family. Table 4.2 provides information on employment positions in the two locations.

Table 4.2 Employment positions in Kigali and Western Province

Kigali	n=73	%		Western Province	n=63	%
Employment position	24	32		Employment position	22	35
Umudugudu leader	3	4		Administrative assistant (sector level)	2	3
Accountant	1	1		*Akagari* (cell) committee adviser	1	1
Administrative assistant	1	1		Assistant manager	1	1
Assistant auditor	1	1		Business	1	1
Child development work	1	1		*Umudugudu* leader	3	4
Umuganda and community mobilization	2	3		Committee leader at Cell level	1	1
Lecturer	1	1		Financial officer	1	1
Department coordinator	1	1		Gender at *umudugudu* level	1	1
Human rights officer	1	1		In charge of Civil Society Organisations	1	1
Umudugudu secretary	1	1		Advisor in *gacaca*	2	3
Lawyer	1	1		Social affairs at the cell level	2	3
Logistic officer	1	1		Statistician	1	1
Teacher	8	11		*Ubudehe* leader	1	1
Training coordinator	1	1		*Umudugudu* committee advisor	1	1
Umudugudu committee advisor	1	1		In charge of *umuganda* and community mobilization	2	3
				Umudugudu general secretary	1	1
				Cultivators	41	65

While the majority of the respondents 11% in Kigali were teachers, 65% in Western Province were cultivators. It was, however, understood that among the employment positions indicated some are voluntary and these people also rely on subsistence agriculture. Such is the case, for example, with the *umudugudu* (village) and *akagari* (cell) committee leaders and their advisors, and leaders and advisors in *gacaca* and *ubudehe,* including gender and social affairs leaders at the village and cell level. The only person who received a salary is the Executive secretary at the cell level. Despite all local administration units being government structures and not traditional ones, it was learned that most of the workers in them have no monthly salary.

4. 2 General description of *umuganda*

Given that *umuganda* is an ancient practice, all participants were asked to convey their understanding of *umuganda,* such as its root meaning and what it entails. Figure 4.1 indicates that out of all 137 respondents, 83(61%) perceive that the term '*umuganda*' initially meant a form of voluntary work initiated by community members while 30 respondents(22%) perceive the term to mean community work initiated by leaders.

Figure 4.1: The root meaning of *umuganda*
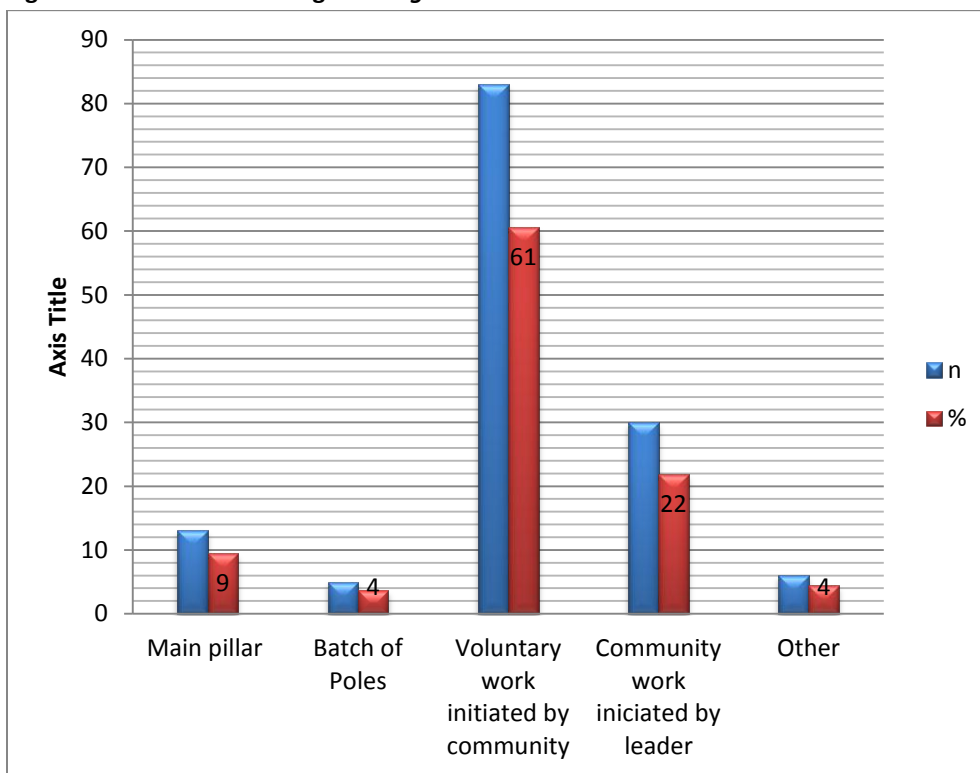
Different understandings and descriptions of the term '*umuganda'* are affected by different generations' perspectives and historical knowledge. The above 61%, who understand *umuganda* as a form of voluntary work initiated by community members, refer to its origins, in the pre-colonial period, while the 22% identify the current concept of *umuganda*, mostly from the post-colonial period to date.

Elders narrates that "initially *umuganda* was initiated and organised by community members until the reign of King Rwabugiri, [1885–1919] and the arrival of the first missionaries" (EL-1b 27 Dec 2010). It is believed that before this period, the king and chiefs could call upon *umuganda* activities that were of benefit to the king, such as working in the fields of the king or chiefs or building shelters for livestock. However, there were still *umuganda* and other social activities organised by the community without any interference from the king or chiefs (EL- 3b 26 Dec 2010). Its concept, however, started to change increasingly, as the colonial masters were gaining control over the social organisation of the banya-Rwanda. Ordinary community members believe that, "it is from this time that the spirit of a community social responsibility started fading away from the hands of the community to the state-led organisation" (OCM 14-b 16 Dec 2010).

According to other oral information received while preparing for this study, the idea of *umuganda* was actually drawn from a type of strong tree that is usually used for building houses. It is a support for the house. "Each house had *umuganda* otherwise it would fall down". Figuratively, society was seen as dependent upon this support of a unifying practice, like the pillars of a house. Therefore pre-Rwandan communities referred to the intervention activities of *umuganda* as strong and as useful as the pillar of the house (EL-1a 12 June 2009). Nevertheless, the results that explain the root meaning of *umuganda* here show a different understanding from that of Verwimp (2000) who describes *umuganda* as a type of strong tree that is used to build houses (see Chapter 2).

Seeing that Rwanda shares geographical borders with Uganda and that in some areas there is linguistic overlap, Verwimp's term may have its origin in Uganda's Kitara/Rift Valley region, where *Omuganda*[31] is understood as one of the woods used for constructing a house (see Childs, in Vogel 2000: 218). However, it figuratively highlights the description of *umuganda* as a main pillar of the house, by referring to the similarity of strength that the pillar has to that of the philosophy of *umuganda*. Elders' explanations are that in building houses, the term

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[31]*Omuganda* means a bunch or bunches, or collection of things added together in Buganda-Uganda.

'*gushinga umuganda winzu*' - to fix the pillar of a house, if literally translated was used, as each traditional house had a pillar (EL-2a 14 Dec 20110 and 3 & 6b 2011).

Moreover, the practice was understood by everyone going to join hands in building a house as, "to offer/give *umuganda*, *gutanga umuganda*", which was not limited to other mutual assistance work such as agricultural activities. It could therefore be said that the earlier banya-Rwanda linguists used '*umuganda*' metaphorically, to describe people's joint efforts which implies a pillar or a unifying factor (EL 10-a 15 Dec 2010, OCM 6-b 24 Dec 2010). One of the respondents gave an insight into the original meaning of *umuganda*:

> Whenever there was someone in need of a shelter, people would come with different materials [that were then used to build a house], mostly, timber. There will be someone from the community who is believed to be expert in fixing a pillar of a house and they will call it *gushinga umuganda winzu* - to fix the *umuganda* of the house [a pillar], [in the soil]. But in reality, the pillar was not *umuganda*, but rather the work done or the assistance rendered and the spirit behind it (EL 2-b 21 Dec 2010).

Another elderly person explained that the current *umuganda* is not the same as that of earlier times. He explained:

> I was there during King Musing and I can remember how *umuganda* was done. First of all we were not saying 'to perform *umuganda*', rather we used to say 'to offer *umuganda*', (*tugiye gutanga/gutiza umuganda kwakanaka*), (we are going to lend / to offer *umuganda* to so and so). The terms 'give', 'offer' and 'lend' where used inter-changeably, meaning that you need me as much as I need you. Whoever was in need, the community were

informed by *abamotsi*[32] and everyone was expected *kujya gutanga umuganda*, to go offer *umuganda* (Interview: EL 6-b 31 Dec 2010).

People explain that, "when neighbours were building, each person would bring a piece of wood to assist in building and in that mutual self-help context, the term '*gutanga/gutiza umuganda*' meant to offer or lend/provide communal strength towards house-building for the needy. This was done in a communal spirit of solidarity, mindful that tomorrow you or your child may be in need of *umuganda* in the same way or the other" (OCM 16-a 2 Jan 2011). Therefore, pre-colonial Rwandan society referred to the intervention activities of *umuganda* as strong and as useful as this type of tree/pillar (EL 4-a 14 Dec 2010).

Although at the end of the twentieth century many activities were organised by the chiefs, social life involved everyone in the community and everyone was obliged to take part in *umuganda*-organized activities, be they mu-Hut or mu-Tutsi. Participants in the focus group discussions explain that those who could not take part in the above activities were disregarded by society and could not seek help from the community in time of need (FGD-2a 17 Dec 2010 and EL-8a 18 Dec 2011).

In general, *umuganda* was described by respondents as both mutual assistance work in the community and as public work organized by the state (39%) (see Figure 4.2). Examples given are when government leaders ask local people to contribute in building houses for survivors of the genocide, in building schools or in constructing streets.

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[32]*Abamotsi* are those who are in charge of passing information around. Although with technology communication has become easier using the media and telecommunication, in rural areas, individual (*abamotsi*) are still used for passing information, especially for *umuganda*.

Figure 4.2: General description of *umuganda*

Description of Umuganda (N= 137)

- Both 39%
- Mutual assistance work in community 30%
- Public work organized by state 31%
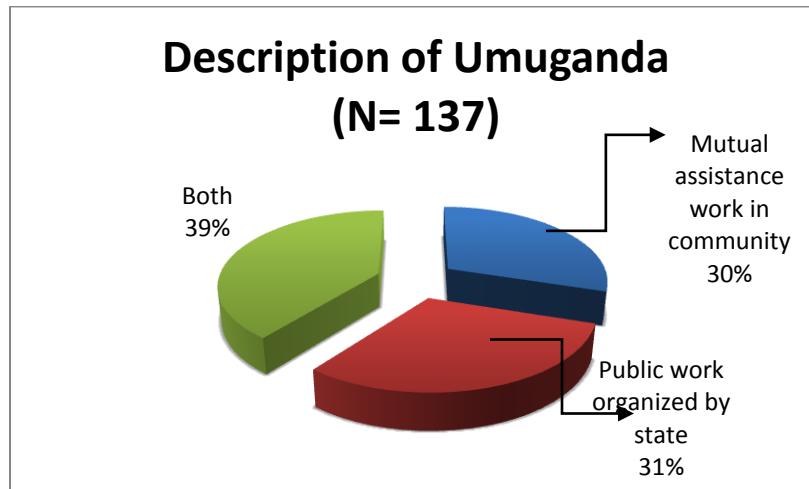
It was explained that *umuganda* is a form of mutual assistance when looked at in terms of its original meaning, application and practice; whereas the modern understanding is that *umuganda* refers to public community work (FGD- 1b 27Dec 2010). Nevertheless, many elders, especially14 of the 16 interviewed (86%), think that *umuganda* has lost its actual meaning and content. One of the elders explained that currently *umuganda* cannot really be identified with the past, given its distortion and/or changed application. He said:

> The term *umuganda* should not be used because what is currently done is not *umuganda* as we knew it in the traditional notion. Nowadays it is what we can call *travoux communoutaire,* [community work] influenced by political motivation, which is different from voluntary and mutual assistance (Interview: EL 2-b 30 Dec 2010).

While the original conception of *umuganda* was community centred and its practice organised according to the needs of individual people, *travoux communoutaire* is based on the needs of the state.

Moreover, in a focus group discussion, one participant notes that the loss of *umuganda's* original content and intent is due to what he termed, "***development***, meaning that the world we are living in dictates how we should live" (FGD 1-b 27 Dec 2011). In other words, people

have become controlled by a global developmental conception which may not necessarily mean development of and for people and, as a result, "the indigenous concepts and practice of development are outdated" (FGD 2-b 20 Dec 2010).

From the focus group discussion, it was understood that *umuganda* as a traditional philosophy is well known, although not in much detail by the younger generation, who, on many occasions, were surprised and argued that there was no *umuganda* in the colonial period although they were aware that there was *uburetwa* - forced labour. They are correct in a sense, as there is a historical break in *umuganda*. On the other hand, *umuganda* as a government policy is widely known. The paradox, though, is that there is little information about the administration of *umuganda*. Almost every ordinary community member, including those who administer *umuganda* at the *umudugudu* level, has never seen the public policy document on *umuganda* and does not know what it entails.

4.3 Different accounts of *umuganda*

General questions on *umuganda* were asked referring to the four historical periods that the study has classified. The four periods are: (1) the pre-colonial period, before the arrival of missionaries, in 1895; (2) the colonial period, from 1895 to 1960; (3) the post-colonial period, until the genocide, 1962 to 1994; and (4) the post-genocide period, from 1995 until the present. Participants were asked to give their perceptions on: what the purpose of *umuganda* was/is; what was/is the main reason for establishing *umuganda*; and who initiated the idea of establishing *umuganda*. Details are given in the sub-sections below.

4.3.1 The main reason for establishing *umuganda*
Results from Kigali and Western Province, presented in Table 4.3, indicate reasons given for establishing *umuganda* in the four historical periods. In the pre-colonial period, and especially during the colonial period as well as in the post-colonial period up until the genocide, the

perceived main reason for its establishment was to obtain cheap labour (39%, 70% and 42% respectively, in Kigali and 52%, 76% and 48% respectively, in Western Province).

Table 4.3: The main reason for establishing *umuganda*

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
Kigali	Main reason for establishing *umuganda*	65	86	67	88	73	96	76	100
	Cheap labour force	30	39	52	70	32	42	9	12
	To train the population for Self-solving problems	16	21	6	8	8	11	26	34
	Maintain unity	12	16	3	4	13	17	8	11
	To create a channel of communication	3	4	4	5	19	25	31	41
	Other responses	4	5	2	3	1	1	2	3
Western Province		n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
	Main reason for establishing *umuganda*	60	95	61	97	62	98	63	100
	To obtain a cheap labour force	33	52	48	76	30	48	16	25
	To train the population for self- solving problem[33]	9	14	3	5	6	10	17	27
	To maintain unity of the population	11	17	5	8	12	19	9	14
	To create a channel of communication	3	5	4	6	12	19	20	32
	Other responses	4	6	1	2	2	3	1	2

Respondents stated that after the genocide, the reason for establishing *umuganda* is to create a channel for communication (41% in Kigali, 32% in Western Province). One of the respondents explained that:

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[33]During the meeting after *umuganda*, local people are encouraged to form and join group associations that will facilitate in reducing any social and economic challenges.

The reason for establishing *umuganda* is for the government to implement their plans easily through citizens because that is how they can control and make a follow-up of what they have told them to do (OCM - 2a 17 Dec 2010).

An *umudugudu* leader in Western Province shared his view on the reason for establishing *umuganda* in the post-colonial and post-genocide periods. He pointed out that "the main reason is to get to the people easily because *umuganda* helps to mobilise people to make them understand and implement government's plans" (LL- 2b 24 Dec 2010). Although he condemned this, the local leader explains this phenomenon by giving an example of the post-colonial government's achievement in using *umuganda* to divide the people and to bring about the genocide in 1994 (LL-2b 24 Dec 2010). What is seen here is the state using citizens to serve its purpose as well as requiring citizens to meet their obligations to the state. This raises issues about the implications for state-society relations, community development, and the continuity of social practices; for example, how does the community relate to the policy and practice of *umuganda*?

Moreover, 34% in Kigali and 27% in Western Province responded that the reason for pursuing *umuganda* in the post-genocide era is to train people for self-solving problems, such as encouraging them to form or join small income generation groups. While 12% participants in Kigali and 25% in Western Province believed that the reason for establishing *umuganda* is to obtain cheap labour, 11% in Kigali and in Western Province 14% thought that the main reason is to maintain unity of the population. A few other responses in Western Province indicated that the aim of *umuganda* is to control people.

It is however, noted that twice as many in Western Province 25% compare to 12% in Kigali view *umuganda* as a source of cheap labour. This is perhaps due to the overwhelming days of *umuganda* (weekly and sometimes twice a week) and activities involved. This is different from Kigali where *umuganda* is done by many once a month, and possibly where it is easy to avoid *umuganda* in the city than in the rural areas. This will be discussed further in the following

chapter. Nevertheless, the majority response both Kigali and Western Province is the view that *umuganda* is primarily a means of communication.

4.3.2 The initiators of the idea of *umuganda*

Table 4.4 indicates that most respondents perceive that, in the pre-colonial period, the idea of *umuganda* emerged from community members (47% for Kigali and 62% for Western Province). As one of our respondents explained, "[in the early days], if anyone had a problem in the community, local people could meet and say *kwakanaka*, to so and so, there is a problem, what can we do to help? Sometimes they would ask a person in need and sometimes they would just decide what they could do for that person or household" (EL- 7a 14 Dec 2010). Activities to be done depended on many factors, such as the status and need of that family. Activities were also based on the type of problem that had occurred in that family; whether it was death-related, sickness or other issues (EL- 7a 14 Dec 2010). Many others indicated that *umuganda* was initiated by political leaders, 36% in Kigali and 33% in Western Province.

Table 4.4: Initiators of *umuganda* during historical periods

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Kigali	Who initiated *umuganda*?	66	87	66	87	73	96	76	100
	Political leaders[34]	27	36	60	79	63	83	43	57
	Community request	36	47	3	4	1	1	7	9
	Policy-makers suggestion	3	4	2	3	9	12	26	34
	Other	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Western Province	Who initiated *umuganda*?	61	97	62	98	63	100	63	100
	Political leaders	21	33	55	87	59	94	46	73
	Community request	39	62	1	2	2	3	5	8
	Policy-makers suggestion	1	2	5	8	2	3	12	19
	Other	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0

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[34] Political leaders are variously the King at the time of the arrival of missionaries, colonial rulers, and post-colonial as well as post-genocide government leaders.

In the colonial and post-colonial periods as well as after the genocide, respondents reported that the idea of establishing *umuganda* came from political leaders (79%, 83%, and 57% respectively for each historical period in Kigali, and 87%, 94% and 73% respectively for each period in Western Province). As the results show, while the whole population thought that political leaders have a large say in the initiation of *umuganda,* 34% of respondents in Kigali and 19% in Western Province state that *umuganda* is suggested by policy-makers in the post-genocide period. The higher percentage of the population in Kigali, who think that *umuganda* was suggested by policy-makers is probably because those in the city may have a different perspective, either due to the availability of media sources or other educational facilities compared to those in the rural areas.

In addition, in one focus group discussion conducted in Kigali, participants gave their opinions regarding the initiators of *umuganda*:

> We cannot say the colonial masters initiated *umuganda* because they found indigenous people practicing *umuganda* and they saw that it was a good practice from which they could benefit. Instead of learning how it was done, they transformed it. People were misled slowly, until when one could go to *umuganda* after a beating with *ikiboko*, a big stick. [One explains] I don't know what their initial plan was but I guess they thought that they were more civilized than the locals and transformed the ideas of solidarity into forced labour, including corporal punishment (FGD 1-a 17 Dec 2010).

An elder explained that not only were people beaten but they were given heavy work beyond their strength:

> A person could be given like five *imiringoti* - plots, and hours or days to finish, if not finished in the time allocated, *ikiboko* will be your meal! But when you

look closely, you find that you are beating me but you don't teach me, I am

hurt but I don't know why, do you understand me! (EL 7-b 20 Dec 2010).

Likewise, another participant from the above focus group added that, "we cannot say that it was *umuganda* anymore. Actually there was no *umuganda* in the colonial period, instead there was *uburetwa*, that's how it was called" (FGD 4-a 17 December, 2010).

We find similar perceptions and understandings from both the urban and the rural populations regarding the initiators of *umuganda* during colonialism, and the question is, "why did people think that it was not *umuganda* anymore?" It was called *uburetwa*, a forced labour.

Results from Table 4.4 indicate that from the colonial period to the current regime, local people felt excluded from the role of initiating the program. As one respondent said, "we are not part of the idea of *umuganda* any more" (EL-8a 02 Jan 2011).Respondents in the focus group discussion believed that the sense of exclusion was because, firstly, the practice was different from the indigenous system in so far as ordinary people had no role to play in planning and organising activities. Secondly, it was coercive and accompanied by corporal punishment, and thirdly, it did not directly benefit individuals in the community and if there was some benefit, local people had little or no awareness of it(FGD 1b 27 Dec 2010). *Umuganda* was thus different from traditional mutual assistance, as it had been originally. Why does *umuganda* still portray the same picture now as it did during colonial time? Has *umuganda* changed from being coercive? How beneficial is it to the ordinary people? These are some of the questions that this study will seek to address in the following chapters.

4.3.3 The purpose of *umuganda*

Table 4.5 below indicates that respondents have significantly varying opinions regarding the purpose of *umuganda* over the historical period. More specifically, respondents from both Kigali and Western Province stated that in the pre-colonial period, the purpose of *umuganda* was to improve the welfare of the population (76% in Kigali and 87% in Western Province). One

of the respondents said, "in the early days it was good, because no one lived in isolation (*ubwigunge*) or had a stressful life wondering how you will survive tomorrow. Neighbours were always there watching, and whenever needed, people came and helped you out" (OCM 16 03 Jan 2011). Respondents also believed that, "depending on each other's labour contribution was what mainly unified the early banya-Rwanda" (FGD 2-a 20 Dec 2010).

An elderly person appreciated the *umuganda* of the pre-colonial period, saying that *umuganda* had the purpose of maintaining the balance of socio-economic equality, especially among the agrarian and pastoralist communities. He gave as an example:

> When someone was in need of a shelter, for example, it did not matter
> whether one is agriculturalist or pastoralist (Hutu or Tutsi); everyone
> was required to offer and to benefit from *umuganda* (Interview: EL 5-a
> 02 Jan 2011).

One elder shared his experience: when he was growing up in 1918, some households were using other people, *abaja* (domestic workers/servants), to cultivate their fields but this did not stop *umuganda* from happening. He says that, "it did not matter if one was wealthy and used *abaja* or not, participating in *umuganda* was still a social and self-obligation because the purpose was not only to increase the well-being to the household but to forge a union that formed a community life" (EL 9-b 24 Dec 2010). One of the participants said:

> Today we do not see this type of social responsibility toward each
> other. Communities have become detached from it (*umuganda*)
> and it is increasingly becoming a state-led organisation (OCM 17-a
> 1 Jan 2011).

From this understanding, *umuganda* served as a social function of unity and responsibility. This social function was, however, destroyed between the beginning of the colonial period and

the time of genocide, where *umuganda,* as other work, was aimed at one particular group (see Chapter 3).

Participants from Kigali thought that during the colonial and post-colonial periods until the genocide the purpose of *umuganda* was to create a forum to communicate the decisions of leaders to the population (51% and 35% respectively). Furthermore, participants from Western Province had two equal responses for the purpose of *umuganda* in the colonial period, which are to improve the welfare of the community (35%) and a forum to communicate the decisions of leaders to the population (35%).

Table 4.5: The purpose of *umuganda*

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Kigali	**The purpose of *umuganda***	**65**	**86**	**65**	**86**	**71**	**93**	**76**	**100**
	Improve the welfare of the community	58	76	21	28	7	9	12	16
	Communicate the decisions of leaders to the population	2	3	33	51	47	62	23	30
	A forum to give the population an opportunity to express their ideas	1	1	0	0	3	4	14	18
	All the above statements met the purpose	2	3	1	2	10	13	27	36
	Other responses	2	3	10	15	4	5	0	0
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Western Province	**The purpose of *umuganda***	**62**	**98**	**63**	**100**	**62**	**98**	**63**	**100**
	Improve the welfare of the community	55	87	22	35	9	14	13	21
	Communicate the decisions of leaders to the population	4	6	22	35	27	43	18	29
	A forum to give the population an opportunity to express their ideas	3	5	1	2	9	14	9	14
	All the above statements met the purpose	0	0	2	3	8	13	22	35
	Other responses	0	0	16	25	9	14	1	2

Moreover, a non-negligible percentage of respondents from Kigali (15%) asserted the following as reasons for *umuganda* during the colonial period: "Divide and rule"; "Obtain cheap labour force"; and "Serve interests of colonial administration". There were also other opinions from Western Province which suggested that the purpose of *umuganda* in the colonial period was to divide Rwandans and to increase the colonial economy. One participant narrated:

> *Umuganda* in the colonial period had two main objectives. One was to divide Rwandans so that they could rule them easily. They [colonial masters] thought that Hutus are strong and therefore could be used more and cruelly for all hard work. Second, was to increase their economy (Interview: OCM 1-b 23 Dec 2010).

Nevertheless, participants from both Kigali and Western Province expressed appreciation for the work, such as main roads and some public buildings, done during the colonial period which Rwandans are still benefiting from, despite other consequences (see also Chapter 3).

Participants from both Kigali and Western Province responded that in the post-colonial period, *umuganda*'s purpose was and still is to communicate leader's decision to the population (62% and 43% respectively).In the group discussion, participants shared experiences of the post-colonial period where *umuganda* was used for the government propaganda, using hate speech that divides people. They said that "a*ba-tutsi* would not dare participate in *umuganda* because songs and all propaganda were based on humiliating them" (FGD 1-b 20 December 2010).

Participants from both Kigali and Western Province responded that after 1994, *umuganda*'s purpose was to improve the welfare of the community, to communicate the decision of leaders to the population, as well as to serve as a forum to give the population an opportunity to express their ideas (36% and 35% respectively).

From the data presented, other responses from both Kigali and Western Province suggested that in the post-colonial period and until the genocide, as well as in the post-genocide period, the purpose of *umuganda* was and still is for political gain; to control the population and to implement the government's programs.

4.4 The population's understanding of *umuganda*

Responses regarding the understanding of *umuganda* vary significantly across the two communities and across historical periods. Table 4.6 indicates that in the pre-colonial period, *umuganda* was regarded as a voluntary and beneficial public work (54% from Kigali and 68% from Western Province). During colonialism, post-colonialism until the genocide, as well as in the post-genocide period, *umuganda* was and still is understood as a forced but beneficial public work (53% and 28% respectively in Kigali, and 56% and 70% respectively in Western Province). The question that can be asked from this finding, though, is how beneficial is *umuganda* if it is imposed by the state.

Those in Kigali think that in the post-genocide period *umuganda* is voluntary and beneficial public work (46%), whereas 43% regard it as forced but beneficial. This beneficial version of *umuganda* is to be distinguished from the colonially-imposed forced labour where the state diverted *umuganda* to obtain labour on plantations.

Although the current practice of *umuganda* is certainly different from that of the colonial period, an elder from Western Province doesn't see much difference. He noted:

> They [Rwandans] asked for independence but they did not know
> what they were doing because if you look closely, you find that
> colonial masters have gone nowhere. They have chased them but
> they have not gone. They have left every single side of their mind
> and behaviour. I mean in the early days, *umuganda* was for the

community self-solving its problems but now it is for solving

political problems" (EL 9-b 22 Dec 2010).

The current practice of *umuganda* does not compel people to work on tea or coffee plantations but they are, in effect, 'forced', for example, to build additional classrooms and to build and maintain roads. This will be explained more in the following chapter.

Table 4. 6: How the population understands *umuganda*

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide		
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	P-value
Kigali	**How the populations understand *umuganda***	**68**	**89**	**68**	**89**	**43**	**57**	**76**	**100**	<0.001
	A forced and non-beneficial labour	7	9	20	26	13	17	4	5	
	A forced but beneficial public work	17	22	40	53	21	28	33	43	
	A voluntary and beneficial public work	41	54	2	3	2	3	35	46	
	A tool of oppression by leaders	3	4	6	8	6	8	1	1	
	Other	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	4	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Western Province	**How the population understand *umuganda***	**62**	**98**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	
	A forced and non-beneficial labour	3	5	16	25	8	13	7	11	
	A forced but beneficial public work	13	21	35	56	44	70	35	56	
	A voluntary and beneficial public work	43	68	3	5	5	8	18	29	
	A tool of oppression by leaders	1	2	8	13	6	10	3	5	
	Other	2	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	

The population currently attend *umuganda* because they are forced to. "For example, if you take five people from one family and ask them to attend *umuganda*, it is forced because the household has their own way of sharing responsibility if they have the power. It is also found to

be a feasible way for government to communicate to citizens, either for the sake of informing them or to enforce them to do something" (OCM 23-a 02 Jan 2011). This was explained by one respondent who said that in the *umuganda* gathering, "we can't address to the people what is not on the program (kuri gahunda), we speak according to the theme that the government has sent to us" (OCM 26-b 01 Jan 2011).

Leaders thought that *umuganda* is beneficial as it helps people to perform activities that help themselves. "When one is given a water tap without one's own effort, one doesn't look after it" (LL 1-a 21 Dec 2010). Therefore the government believed *umuganda* is a good idea for people to help themselves.

Participants felt that *umuganda* has become a project for nation building instead of community building. Nonetheless, one respondent from the elders association[35]did not think that it is beneficial for national building either. He explained:

> Currently, *umuganda* is more a socialising event than working. I always see people putting their hands in their pockets from the beginning to the end of *umuganda*. How can more than thirty people spend three hours in one place and not see any tangible work? You can see that people are not ready for *umuganda* because many come with no tools to use for *umuganda*. I see others coming in white tracksuits as if you are going for sports or a meeting! (EL 4-a 15 Dec 2010).

From this observation, the very presence of people seems more meaningful and important than actual work. Some come so as to avoid being accused of avoiding *umuganda* which might be interpreted as being anti-government.

Although not joining others for *umuganda* was not illegal in the early days, it was regarded by the community members as self-isolation from the rest of the community, which could result in

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[35] Elders refer to their association as *inteko izilikana*, with has the aim of preserving Rwandan culture.

not receiving any assistance from neighbours when needed. But from the colonial period onward *umuganda* is required by law and it is regarded as a crime not to participate. According to the present policy of *umuganda*, as has been noted, a person who does not carry out *umuganda* can be fined FRW, 5000 (almost $10). Currently, people are required to have an attendance card which has to be signed every time *umuganda* is performed. Cards are organised by the government and people are required to buy them for FRW.100.Below is an example of such a card. This card also has to be presented whenever the bearer needs services from local government.

Picture 4.1: *Umuganda*: attendance card

In essence, *umuganda* today is a living traditional philosophy which in practice reflects the legacy of forced labour from the colonial and post-colonial periods.

This raises questions regarding the people's autonomy when it comes to the practice of *umuganda*. *Umuganda* may be understood as forced labour, even though this could be beneficial. A participant in Kigali thinks that viewing *umuganda* as a mandatory action, beneficial or not beneficial, is a matter of understanding. She explained:

> Everywhere people perform *umuganda* for national building, for example, *umuganda* in the United State of America pay tax and the tax goes toward national building, and they probably call it a different name (OCM 02 Jan 2011).

Even though taxes are paid even in Rwanda, the respondents believe that one can understand *umuganda* either through offering labour or by paying money. Both forms of contribution are considered as integral to *umuganda*. More details are given in the following chapter.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented data from the fieldwork. The chapter outlined the original meaning and philosophy of *umuganda,* its purpose and the main reason for establishing *umuganda* throughout the four historical periods, namely pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial until genocide and post-genocide periods. Focusing on how *umuganda* evolved from traditional practice, those from Kigali and Western Province provided general information and questions relating to the values and practice of *umuganda*. Results indicate that local people understand the rationale, term and practice of *umuganda* variously in terms of the four periods, although there is little variation in responses between the urban and rural contexts.

The different understandings of *umuganda* are due to the transformations that took place throughout these four historical periods. The most significant factor is the change from the sense that *umuganda* had in the pre-colonial era to its current interpretation. Notably, *umuganda,* which was originally understood as voluntary work initiated by a local community, turned into forced labour, which is understood by locals as state-led public work. The findings point towards a concern regarding the robbing of an indigenous initiative by the state. These concerns become even more evident when it is seen how *umuganda* is organised and the different activities that are required. These are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Organization of Activities Associated with *Umuganda*

Introduction

This chapter explains the different activities associated with *umuganda*. This includes how *umuganda* activities are planned and organised and assesses participation in them. Section one focuses on the different activities. Section two explains how *umuganda* is organised. Section three discusses the role of government leaders in administering *umuganda*. Section four presents the reason why people participate in *umuganda*. Section five explains sanctions or punishments that were and still are given to those who do not participate in *umuganda*.

5.1 The main activities of *umuganda*

Table 5.1 indicates that those in both Kigali and Western Province have different understandings of what *umuganda* involved in the four historical periods. In the pre-colonial era, participants thought that the main activities of *umuganda* were building houses and shelters for domestic animals, and helping in domestic tasks (49% in Kigali and 67% in Western Province). *Umuganda* could also be called upon for any activities which were necessary to provide emergency requirements for individuals or households in the community (LL 8-b 23 Dec 2010). According to community member:

> Working in the field was not a common case, it only happened in
> a time for example of sickness or death, which can result in the
> person or a household being behind with the planting season. In

this case, members of the community would come to offer

umuganda to that person/household (OCM- 12a 01 Jan 2011).

Table 5.1: Main activities of *umuganda*

Location	Main activities of *umuganda*	Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide		P-value
Kigali		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
		65	**86**	**66**	**87**	**72**	**95**	**76**	**100**	<0.001
	Building houses and helping in domestic tasks	37	49	4	5	2	3	3	4	
	Working in the fields (farms)&public places	17	22	25	33	24	32	23	30	
	Taking care of sick, disabled and older people	3	4	2	3	3	4	2	3	
	Public labour such as construction	6	8	21	28	34	45	39	51	
	Following speeches and directive of leaders	1	1	12	16	8	11	8	11	
	Other	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	
Western Province		**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	
	Building house and helping in domestic task	42	67	2	3	1	2	5	8	
	Working in the fields (farms) & public places	17	27	24	38	6	10	3	5	
	Taking care of sick, disabled and older people	2	3	2	3	5	8	42	67	
	Public labour such as construction	1	2	27	43	46	73	11	17	
	Following speeches and directives of leaders	1	2	7	11	4	6	2	3	
	Other	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	

Another community member in the Western Province added that:

> We did not have watches but everything was done on time. If for some reason you found yourself behind with the season, like planting season, other members would offer you *umuganda* (*baza kuguha umuganda*) so that you would not lack food to sustain you when others are harvesting (OCM 16-b 28 Dec 2011).

A high number in Kigali believed that the main activities of *umuganda* during colonial times were related to agricultural production (33%). Furthermore, participants from both Kigali and Western Province thought that *umuganda* was only related to public labour such as in construction (28% in Kigali and 43% in Western Province). In addition, participants in the focus group discussion agreed that both agriculture and public construction work were the main activities performed in the colonial period (FGD 2-a 20 Dec 2010).

While people in the pre-colonial period benefited from *umuganda* by having their fields farmed on time, especially in times of incapacity, the colonial system benefited from such agriculturally based economic activities. It was noted that, currently, farm activities are individual household matters except in the cases of the few farm associations, which are not common (OCM 17b 28 Dec 2011). Results raise serious questions for the rural population, as almost everyone relies on small scale agricultural production for family and community well-being. It also shows how narrow and detached *umuganda* practice has become and this is a concern as far as providing the basic elements for individual and rural community safety in terms of food provision are concerned.

Equally, communities from Kigali and Western Province responded that in the post-colonial period until genocide, as well as in post-genocide period, activities of *umuganda* were and still are more of a public labour nature, examples being construction and the maintenance of public places (45% and 51% for Kigali, and 73% and 67% respectively for Western Province).We see

similar results from Kigali where the main activities in post-colonial and post-genocide eras were identified as working on farms (32% and 30%).Interestingly the rural population depends on agricultural activities for survival, yet only 5% thought that *umuganda* entails working in the fields.

From focus group discussions, it emerged that most of the activities done during *umuganda* are: cleaning streets, cutting grass, trimming bushes along the roadsides, slashing weeds, picking up rubbish, planting trees and cleaning water drainage furrows.

Source: Igihe.come. *[President Kagame joins Kicukiro District residents in umuganda, on 26 May 2012]*

While participants in the focus group discussion in Kigali identified main activities as cleaning streets, those in the Western Province explained that *umuganda* activities involve: planting trees, trimming banana trees, working in coffee and tea plantations, constructing roads, cleaning public places like hospitals as well as constructing bridges that connect, for example, one cell to another (FGD- 1a 17 Dec 2010; 1b 27 Dec 2010). From the interviews and focus group discussions, the main activities of *umuganda* in the post-genocide period have been divided into three categories, namely, cleaning streets, building houses and constructing roads.

5.1.1 Cleaning streets

Appreciating the activity of street cleaning during *umuganda*, a leader of *umuganda* and community mobilization at the sector level explained: "Rwanda has earned a very good reputation in Africa for its cleanliness and this is because of the local people's commitment to participate in *umuganda"* (LL 13-a Kigali 14 Dec 2010).

Not only by picking up litter at the end of the month but also during *umuganda* meetings, people are mobilised to take care of their surroundings by not littering. The same leader explained that, initially, the local defence force had to be involved in apprehending whoever littered or tried to jeopardise the government's cleanliness plan but that, currently, people have come to understand what is required and the local defence force is no longer necessary for that purpose (LL 13-a 14 Dec 2010). This suggests state order and effective state control over the population.

It is, however, worth noting, that in some areas *umuganda* has helped some community members to organise themselves for their own good, to tackle issues which the state could not address. For example, in the researcher's own community, Kigali (Kimironko), community members have come together, contributed money and managed to bring water and electricity to their areas. On the other hand, this can only be done successfully if people residing in an area are all able to afford the cost of those services. In other words, people who have no income are subjected to government orders and routines in maintaining the already existing infrastructure of their area, as financial constraints prevent them from acting independently. Individual limitations were identified in one of the Kigali suburbs, where a participant from the focus group explained:

> During the rainy season, water comes with all sorts of rubbish
> which blocks the water from flowing well[36], so we usually remove
> the rubbish and mud so that water will not destroy our streets by

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[36] Geographically the country is hilly which causes a lot of soil degradation, especially during the rain season.

overflowing. Almost every day of *umuganda* [when the water has

pooled], each *umudugudu* works along the streets near their area

(FGD - 1a 27 Dec 2010).

Because of the geographical nature of the country and the poorly constructed roads, Western Province is not isolated from rain and water damage to roads. As a result, much focus has been onroad and street maintenance. However, one of the respondents complained:

Although we do *umuganda* and fill these holes with brick and

stone, this solution works for only a few days. Then, in the

following *umuganda*, we go back to work on the same old venue.

It takes much time and we don't see the results. The government

must bring a machine that will help to put concrete on this road

(OCM- 12b 29 Dec 2010).

The population also thought that the work of cleaning streets can be done by a few people and not the whole community (OCM- 12b 29 2010).

5.1.2 Building houses

According to the focus group discussion, in the pre-colonial period houses that were built were mostly for habitation and domestic animals, but ever since the colonial period mainly public facilities such as hospitals, school and churches have been constructed (FGD- 2a 27 Dec 2010).

What is different however is that besides public facilities like additional classrooms for 9YEB[37]that have been built since 1994, people are building houses for survivors of genocide and families who are in need. However, these initiatives depend on high ranking official leaders (OCM- 20a Dec 2011). An elder explained that:

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[37] Nine years of basic education (9YEB) is a government policy started in 2008 to promote free and accessible education for each child in Rwanda.

Ordinary people are not motivated to start an initiative of building a house for a poor person in their community. Only when the government announces, or when they [local people] see President Kagame or mayors coming out to build, will they then go and help and that is all (EL - 7a 20 Dec 2010).

Despite *umuganda* having become a state-driven initiative, it is worth noting that the government has used traditional practice to implement its post-genocide reconstruction initiatives. A local leader explained:

We use *umuganda* to build additional classes for the 9 year basic education. Community members will do everything from the preparation of the ground to the *finissage* (finalising) of the building and then the Ministry of Education will only come in to provide *amabati* (the iron-sheet*)*, windows and doors. This not only reduces expenditure on the government budget but also makes people proud of their capacity (LL - 8a 16 Dec 2010).

Umuganda is also supposed to make people have a sense of owning and taking care of what they have produced. However, local people felt that there is so much more that *umuganda* could do, especially for the poor, if it had maintained its original purpose. One of the participants in the focus group discussion explained:

We have many community members who are poor, not necessarily survivors of genocide, who need our help. Our leaders should help us organise *umuganda* to help those people in the same way that we are building for survivors of genocide. That would give more value to *umuganda* (FGD - 1a 17 Dec 2010).

It is ironic that there are people who are so poor as to need *umuganda* but the state retains it for establishing institutions which do not directly improve the lives of those who are in need of it. For example, it was reported by the mayor of Kigali that there are, "1 380 grass-thatched houses which Kigali City Centre (KCC) have to destroy in less than three months" (The *NewTimes* 28 Dec 2010). These are very poor families who could have benefited from new housing through *umuganda*.

Matters were reported slightly differently in the Western Province, where participants explained that, when someone's house is destroyed because of an unexpected natural disaster[38], "the community don't wait for the government to intervene, members go there and build a shelter for that person" (OCM - 3b 26 Dec 2010). Although it was noted that the intervention is reported to the head of *umudugudu* before it is done, at this point *umuganda* retains its original purpose of coming to the rescue of those in dire need of help.

Nevertheless, in general, directly or indirectly, Rwandans benefit from *umuganda* by having access to public facilities which were provided by this labour. For example, building sufficient classrooms is beneficial for the community, as their children come to have adequate facilities for their learning. However, respondents report that construction for the public good happens only occasionally (FGD - 1a 17 Dec 2010). This gives credence to the opinions of participants who thought that in their area cleaning streets has been the only activity for the monthly *umuganda,* and this is not useful to them. This gives rise to the issue of how much power the community has in the management of *umuganda*. Could a community decide on what is to be done and actually change the planned activities to something tangible and beneficial for them?

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[38] Western Province is vulnerable to natural disasters like earthquakes and storms.

5.1.3 Constructing roads

Maintaining existing infrastructure is very common in Kigali. One of the participants in the focus group shared experiences on the advantage of the current *umuganda*:

> In the past, during the rainy season, you could not pass through this road because of water flooding everywhere but now we have organized ourselves to make and keep on cleaning water drainage furrows. Now neither cars nor pedestrians have problems with the rainy season (FGD - 2a 20 Dec 2010).

To be able to do what this respondent says requires good organisation, either by community members themselves or by local leaders.

Although those interviewed from Western Province pointed out that, currently, there is not much construction of new roads[39],due to the demographic nature of the country, "the maintenance of these roads is very crucial and that's what *umuganda* in the post-genocide era does" (LL - 7b 23 Dec 2010). According to the correspondence letters and notices for *umuganda* provided from Western Province, there are a number of secondary roads that are constructed in the rural areas using *umuganda*. Roads that connect, for example, sectors, cells or *umudugudu* to one another are made and maintained by *umuganda*.[40] However, these surfaces of these roads are not sealed, meaning that during the rainy season these roads are not useful. This disadvantage was expressed both in the interviews and in focus group discussions, where it was suggested that government should provide stones (OCM - 7b and 12b 30 Dec 2010, FGD 1-b Dec 2010). The main road from Rusizi district to Kigali has been referred as one of the benefits of *umuganda*, although this was built decades ago during the colonial period.

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[39] Many main roads especially are built during colonial period using *uburetwa*.
[40] District Rusizi, cell Kamembe. A summary of the monthly *umuganda* activities of 28/08/2010, No. 0508/0306/2010.

5.2 The general organization of *umuganda*

Table 5.2 shows that there are significant differences in responses as to how *umuganda* is perceived to have been organised across the historical periods. In the pre-colonial era, the respondents stated that *umuganda* was organised at the village level (46% in Kigali and 51% in Western Province). In the colonial period, it was thought to have been organised at the district level (39% in Kigali and 40% in Western Province).

There were two equal responses from Kigali as to where *umuganda* was organised in the post-colonial period until the genocide. One response was that *umuganda* was organised at the district level (33%) and the other response was that *umuganda* was organised at the sector level (33%). The responses from Western Province were very similar, with 32% responding that *umuganda* was organised at the sector level and 30% saying that it was organised at the district level.

Table 5.2: The organisation of *umuganda*

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide		
Kigali		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	P-value
	Where the activities of *umuganda* were/are planned	**61**	**80**	**62**	82	**72**	**95**	**76**	**100**	<0.001
	At leaders' (King, President, etc.) palace	16	21	22	29	12	16	10	13	
	At district level	3	4	30	39	25	33	13	17	
	At sector level	1	1	3	4	25	33	7	9	
	At sell level	0	0	1	1	5	7	5	7	
	At village level	35	46	5	7	4	5	39	51	
	Other	6	8	1	1	1	1	2	3	
Western Province	**Organization of *umganda***	**61**	**97**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	
	At leaders' (King, President, etc.) palace	14	22	19	30	13	21	8	13	
	At district level	8	13	25	40	19	30	13	21	
	At sector level	1	2	7	11	20	32	17	27	
	At cell level	2	3	4	6	5	8	1	2	
	At village level	32	51	5	8	2	3	22	35	
	Other	4	6	3	5	4	6	2	3	

Participants responded that in the post-genocide period, *umuganda* is organised at the village level (51% for Kigali and 35% for Western Province). What is been identified is that currently citizens lack a sense of shared information in relation to when and where *umuganda* is organised. Evidence from letters provided from government authorities in Western Province, between district and sector levels, as well as from local leaders' interviews, explains that *umuganda* activities are organised normally at the sector level. Then information will be passed down to the cell leader, who will in turn pass this on down to the level of *umudugu*. There are also cases where *umuganda* is organised at national level, especially when there are, for example, important occasions such as the International Day of the Environment. In this case the message is passed to the provincial leaders who will then forward it. *Umudugudu* leaders and community mobilisation leaders at the cell level made it clear that:

> We are given instructions on what to do for *umuganda* by the sector authority. If there is no one coming from the sector to conduct meetings after *umuganda*, we will then be given notice on what needs to be discussed after *umuganda*. We receive a letter from the government with a theme and explanations, for example, 'sensitizing people about family planning'. We will then use this same letter to sensitize people in our *umudugudu* to act according to the government plan[my emphasis]. However, the *umuganda* meeting is open to other discussions as well. People are free to present their problems if any and we find solutions together as a community (EL 3-a 15 Dec 2010; LL 2-b 24 Dec 2010).

This indicates the state's role in directing *umuganda*. It also shows the purpose of the state's communication or what could be termed 'ideological indoctrination', which has been a general theme ever since the pre-colonial era.

Moreover, it was learned that there are different types of *umuganda*, which dictates where and how *umuganda* can be organised. The various types of *umuganda* in the urban areas are different to those of the rural areas. The three types of *umuganda* in Kigali are:

(1) *Umuganda wigihugu*, the formal national *umuganda* which is done on a monthly basis

(2) Unscheduled *umuganda,* which can be organised by state or any institution (ministries, banks, churches, civil society organisations, military or police and so on)

(3) *Umuganda* that is done in terms of money contributions.

Each will be explained.

5.2.1 Formal *umuganda*

National *umuganda* is identified here as formal. Chapter Three identified it as a state policy that requires all citizens to participate in monthly activities that are organised on the last Saturday of each month. Because of the different religions, some are exempted from attending *umuganda* on Saturdays. As was explained:

> Believers from for example, the church of the Seventh Day (Adventist) are excused from the Saturday national *umuganda*. Instead they do their *umuganda* on Sunday (FGD - 2b 20 Dec 2010).

Interestingly, the discussants admired the Sunday *umuganda* activities:

> The Sunday *umuganda* is impressive. They do their work from their heart (with commitment). I think it is because no one forces them to go and no one supervises them but when you compare the work done by *umuganda* of Saturday, theirs is much bigger (FGD- 2b 20 Dec 2010).

Although no one supervises the Sunday *umuganda* and no one actually controls who participated and who did not, people feel obliged to go. Given this view, there is then the possibility that people would prefer and be willing to undertake *umuganda* without any state intervention.

Those interviewed equally appreciated *umuganda* which is organized and carried out by military and police personnel. One respondent said:

> *Umuganda wabasirikare urashimishije*, *umuganda* done by military
> personnel is impressive. Even if they are ten, they do work that even a
> hundred people cannot do, their commitment and passion to the work
> is so pleasing (EL - 5a 20 Dec 2011).

Below is a picture of *umuganda* organised by military personnel and the national police service, preparing ground to build houses for the poor.

Photo© Ihihe.com (*Kinyarwanda newspaper: www.igihe.com. Accessed on 02 Feb 2011*)

By contrast, the general monthly *umuganda* of Saturday was widely criticized in focus groups discussions in both Kigali and Western Province. As already identified in Chapter Four, participants in focus group discussion explained that the general monthly activities are not valued much by communities: "people come late others come with no tools to use" (FGD- 1a 17 Dec 2010). One participant in the group discussion in Kigali explained:

> In reality there is often nothing to do in *umuganda*. You can't tell
> people to work up early in the morning just to clean streets for
> example. That is why people come very late. Many of them come
> only for *inama yumuganda*, the meeting after *umuganda* (FGD 2-a
> 27 Dec 2010).

Most of the respondents from the Western Province find difficult to tell if there is 'the monthly *umuganda*', which is identified here as formal. This is due to the fact that each week, usually on Thursday for Western Province, there is *umuganda*.

5.2.2 Informal *umuganda*

Beside the formal or monthly *umuganda*, there is informal *umuganda* which is unspecific in terms of its days and organisation. This means that some people can perform *umuganda* more than once per month. In the Western Province the informal *umuganda* are activities undertaken once a week and are known as *umuganda wumudugudu, umuganda* of the *umudugudu,* if translated literally. Why and when *umuganda* is organised in Kigali is unpredictable.

The organisation of these types of *umuganda* actually confuses local people as to who does what kind of *umuganda* in practice. While in the urban setting we learned that there are different types of *umuganda*, in the rural areas the population identified only one type - the weekly *umuganda*. This is because they do *umuganda* every week; every Thursday for Western Province. Therefore, as is the case with Kigali, the national *umuganda* is identified as formal and

the *umuganda wumudugudu* as informal. This is illustrated in Figure 5.1. Each category is discussed below.

Figure 5.1: Informal *umuganda* in Kigali and Western Province
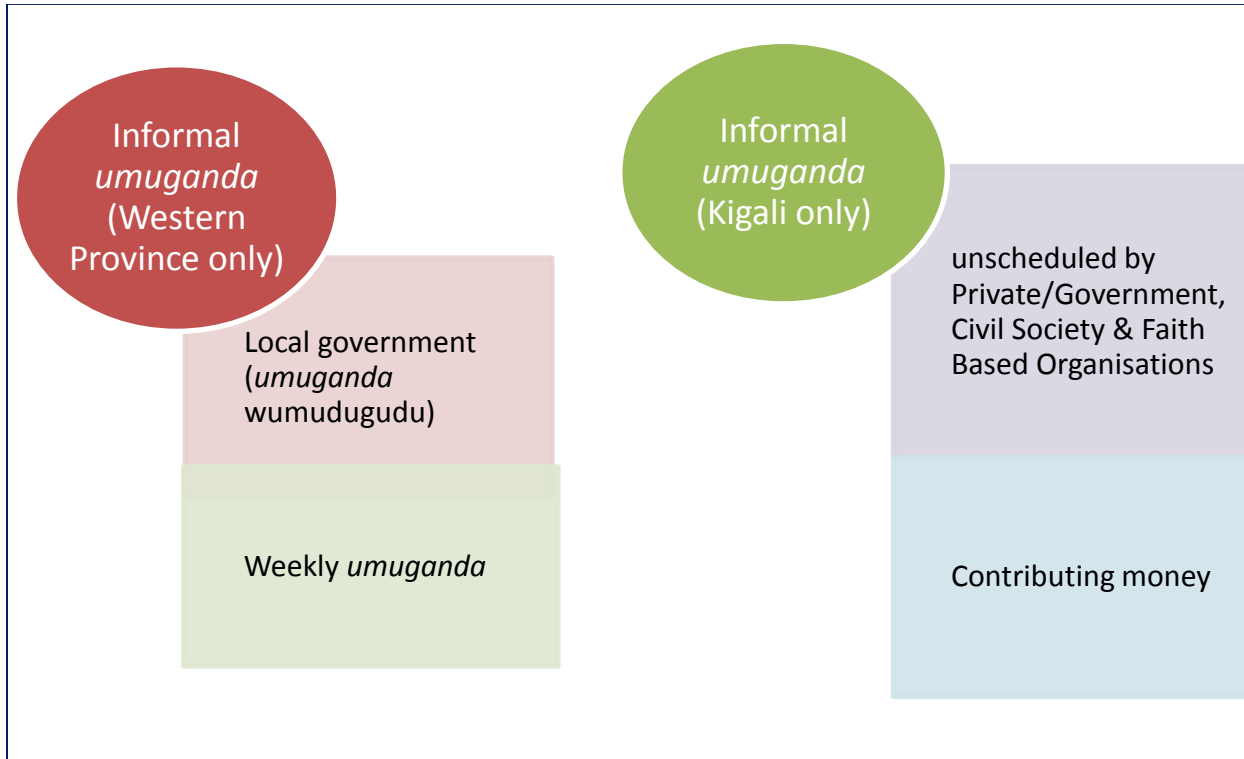
Umuganda by government institutions and civil society organisations

Informal *umuganda* in Kigali is organised by companies such as banks and organisations in civil society. For example, the *Banque Commercial du Rwanda* (BCR) may organise *umuganda* to clean its surroundings, or the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) may organise *umuganda* to clean river banks for environmental protection.

Government workers from the Ministry of Labour organise *umuganda* on an irregular basis. However, it was observed that there is confusion of who is a government worker. While everyone who works in the government could be considered as such, including teachers in the government schools, the interviewees thought that *umuganda wabakozi ba leta*, *umuganda* for government workers is for government leaders, like those working in the parliament and

different ministries. For example, on a recent visit to Rwanda, on Thursday 4[th]December 2011, we boarded a bus for town, but the driver hesitated to start the vehicle, because he had just heard on the radio, that this time, Thursday 08:30 AM, had been declared as *umuganda* for people who work in the government. He said 'police are everywhere. They will arrest me if I drive you to town'. The passengers became unhappy, disagreeing as to whether *umuganda* was required. One passenger told the driver, 'we are not working in the government, no one does here and no one has an identity card indicating that we work in the government, please take us. We will explain ourselves to the police'. Eventually the driver did so and fortunately was not stopped by police. The town was quiet, very few shops were open. How many times do business people have to close their shops because of different types of *umuganda*? A shopkeeper explained to me: "it is frustrating. Beside the monthly *umuganda* that we all know, you never know when and for what reason *umuganda* is going to be organised" (Interview: 4th Dec2011).

Trying to understand why on that particular day there was only '*umuganda* for those working in government', a local *umuganda* leader explains that "I am not sure, but maybe there is a special message that need to be specifically direct to them, may be the government need that all people who work in the government connect and know each other" (LL-2a December 2011).

Faith-based and other civil society organisations also organise *umuganda* at any time, depending on the circumstances. For example, during an informal discussion with a motor-bike rider in Kigali, the researcher was told that on the following day (the 19th December, 2010) the cyclists' association had organised *umuganda* in order to clean river banks in one of the suburbs and that consequently there would be no transport service until the afternoon, after the completion of *umuganda*. He noted, "it is not about the job done during *umuganda* but rather it is the gathering, connecting and the discussion thereafter" (OCM 18 Dec 2010).

Umuganda by contributing money

In some instances, public servants are doing more than just physical labour and do additional *umuganda* in terms of contributing a little money from their monthly income. *Umuganda* which is levied in the form of financial contributions is done with the agreement of community members. Depending on a community's needs, a fixed amount will be decided by members at an *umuganda* meeting. One community member in Kigali related an incidence of how this works:

> Every month we contribute FRW. 2000 for security reasons because this place was full of robbery including house-breaking. This is due to so much construction going on around here. It was hard to trace who was stealing or breaking into houses. So in the *umuganda* meeting, we decided to ask people who could do patrols at night - mostly the casual workers from the construction sites. Therefore, each household in the *umudugudu* was asked to pay FRW. 2000 which goes towards the salary of the community night-watch (Interview: OCM 4-a 14 Dec 2010).

This is 'security beyond the state', where people's readiness to develop their own security system in the face of persistent insecurity, instead of relying on government, was put into practice. In the group discussion, it emerged that another FRW. 1500 goes towards collecting rubbish bins from local households.[41] This means that every month each household contributes Fr. 3500.[42]

While the same provision of security was found in Western Province, there was no money involved. Thus in rural areas, communities provide or maintain security voluntarily. One of the community members explains:

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[41] Local households keep rubbish in their yards and it is collected fortnightly on Saturdays.
[42] To put this cost in perspective, aprimary school teacher earns FRW 50 000 monthly.

> We have no money to give and our government is poor but we use our
> strength to prepare, for example, bricks and the ground to be built upon
> and we start building until our strength ends. At the end of community
> strength is where the intervention of the government occurs, which
> comes with the *finissage,* final touch (OCM- 6b, Giheke 30 Dec 2010).

Informal weekly umuganda in Western Province

Different weekly informal activities of *umuganda* are organised at the village level. These include building houses for the needy, planting trees for the *umudugudu*[43], occasionally helping in small farming activities, building roads to connect villages, cells or sectors to each other and constructing water drainage furrows along streets.

A leader in charge of *umuganda* and community mobilisation at the cell-level noted:

> Most activities organised at the sector level are like planting trees, making
> roads or streets or building classrooms, which is different from the *umuganda*
> *wumudugudu*. At the village level, people do *umuganda* according to the
> needs that have been identified by the *umudugudu* council (Interview: LL- 2b
> 24 Dec 2010).

However, it was learned that projects are determined by districts and sectors have been transferred to the *umudugudu* for implementation. This is the case, for example, in using the community's weekly labour in order to build classrooms for the basic education programs (9YE). According to the correspondence received by communities, they are ordered to plant trees so that each *umudugudu* can have its own reserved forest. This is done on the last Saturday of the month, as in other parts of the country. However, the rural areas do not have a great deal of experience of monthly *umuganda* because it is usually combined with the weekly informal *umuganda*. The only difference is that, while the monthly *umuganda* requires every adult in a

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[43] Each *umudugudu* is ordered by the government to have its own artificial forest - *ishyamba ryumudugudu* in local language – which is planted by community members.

family to attend, at *umudugudu* level the requirement is that only one person is needed to represent a family (OCM- 11b 26 Dec 2010). One of the community members explained:

> We like this because when one person in the family represents others, it gives other family members an opportunity to do their own domestic activities (OCM - 11b 26 Dec 2010).

According to the focus group discussion, during the weekly *umuganda* community members work with no supervision. When the task is over or when people are tired, they are free to go home as there are usually no meetings after *umuganda*. There are also no attendance cards for signing as it is expected that people will come voluntarily (FGD- 1b 27 Dec 2010).

It was also observed that, while in Kigali a community organisation and *umuganda* leaders can be any person, in the rural areas a leader is the *agronome* (a person in charge of agronomy). The reason is the assumption that, since *umuganda* involves, for example, planting trees and trimming banana trees, an ordinary person without expertise will not perform the duty well. Ordinary community members indicated that assisting in small farming activities is only done by a few people, usually friends or family. Government leaders are not involved in the organisation of domestic farming activities but may intervene in other activities like those related to building houses and road construction. Between the national *umuganda* and the *umuganda* of *umudugudu* (weekly *umuganda*), which one is more favoured by the local people? Those from both Kigali and Western Province (53% in Kigali and 63% in Western Province) favour informal *umuganda*.

Comments from the focus group discussion explained that this is because "the informal version has retained the traditional meaning rather than the formal form of *umuganda*, which has become state-centric" (FGD- 1a 17 Dec 2010). In a similar way, those in the Western Province believe that the informal *umuganda* responds to their problems more that the formal one. An *umudugudu* leader explains how these activities are planned:

Every week the village council sits and we discuss issues related to our village. From that discussion we get to identify what needs to be done and we often act according to the needs that are in *umudugudu*. If there is a person who needs a shelter, we will go there and build for that person or if there is any other need we will attend to that as *umudugudu* members (interview: LL- 1b 26 Dec 2010).

According to a person responsible for social affairs at the *umudugudu* level in the Western Province "the informal *umuganda* is where many activities are and that is where community find themselves because they solve problems that are directly affecting them" (LL 5-b 29 Dec 2010). Another reason for preferring the informal *umuganda* is that whereas the state's formal requirement is mandatory and supervised by government leaders, the informal type is organised by the communities themselves. One respondent narrated:

> *Umuganda* is good and many people are dedicated to participate in its activities but when leaders make it forceful, many people resist. I don't like going to *umuganda* because leaders have said we must go or else we will pay a fine! No, leaders must understand that Rwandans are still having the team-working spirit; anytime there is a need we can be asked to come out and contribute without using force (OCM- 4b 26 Dec 2010).

One elder criticised the current government law on *umuganda*. He said: "making *umuganda* a government law is not progress at all. It is like taking us back to *Ikiboko,* a stick used for corporal punishment, of the colonial period and that is not good for the current time that we are living in, I think this is backward" (EL - 3b 27 Dec 2010). The preference for informal *umuganda* may also be because people think that government has usurped it and turned it into

a state function, instead of *umuganda* remaining a community service organised and managed by people themselves.

5.3 The role of political leaders in administering *umuganda*

Table 5.3 indicates that there were different opinions regarding the role of government leaders in administering *umuganda* throughout the different historical periods. In the pre-colonial era, respondents submitted that political leaders played no role in administering *umuganda* (58% in Kigali, and 63% in Western Province). Nonetheless, 18% in Kigali and 25% in the Western Province advised that political leaders helped in planning activities.

While 17% from Kigali and 22% from Western Province thought that government leaders only planned activities in the colonial period, the majority from both Kigali and Western Province indicated that government leaders not only planned activities but also supervised and reported on how it was done (39% in Kigali and 48% in Western Province). Nonetheless, 16% in Kigali and 17% in the Western Province reported that government leaders only supervised and reported on activities of *umuganda*, and some 8% in Kigali and 10% in the Western Province thought that leaders only perform monitoring and evaluation of *umuganda* activities.

In the post-colonial era until the genocide, government leaders played the role of planning activities, supervising and reporting on *umuganda* (according to 41% in Kigali and 59% in Western Province). While some 25% in Kigali and 13% in the Western Province thought that government leaders only planned activities, others reported that such leaders supervised and reported on *umuganda* (21% in Kigali and 17% in Western Province). But 9% in Kigali and 10% Western Province thought that government leaders only do monitoring and evaluation for *umuganda*.

Table 5.3: The role of government leaders in administering *umuganda*

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide		
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Kigali	**The role of government leaders**	**64**	**84**	**65**	**86**	**74**	**97**	**76**	**100**	**P-value**
	None	44	58	4	5	1	1	3	4	<0.001
	Planning activities	14	18	13	17	19	25	32	42	
	Monitoring and evaluation	1	1	6	8	7	9	13	17	
	Supervising and reporting	4	5	12	16	16	21	6	8	
	Planning, supervising & reporting	1	1	30	39	31	41	22	29	
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Western Province		**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	
	None	40	63	2	3	1	2	2	3	
	Planning activities	16	25	14	22	8	13	18	29	
	Monitoring and evaluation	1	2	6	10	6	10	3	5	
	Supervising and reporting	5	8	11	17	11	17	12	19	
	Planning, supervising & reporting	1	2	30	48	37	59	27	43	
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	

The post-genocide period reveals diverse opinions on the role of government leaders in administering *umuganda*. While 42% of participants from Kigali thought that post-genocide government leaders play a role in planning activities, 29% responded that government leaders not only plan but also supervise and report on activities, compared with 43% in Western Province. Results from Western Province indicate that 29% reported that government leader only plan activities. 17% from Kigali thought that government leaders only do monitoring and evaluation for *umuganda,* and 19% of those in Western Province suggested that leaders only supervise and report on *umuganda*. Seeking to know how and what government leaders report, a local leader at *umudugudu* level said that they give reports to the *akagari* regarding whether *umuganda* was done and what was done, as well as the estimated cost of what was carried out

(see Appendix 6, for an example of the evaluation sheet). This also shows the temptation of higher levels of government to intervene.

Additional views which emerged during the focus group discussion in Western Province relating to the role of government leaders in administering *umuganda* after the genocide are as follows:

- If *umuganda* is for everyone, leaders should not only supervise *umuganda*, they need to work as well, otherwise it would look like it is for lower class people only
- Leaders need to involve local people in planning activities
- *Umuganda* should be separated from political party's propaganda
- Leaders should not control people's lives using *umuganda*

(FGD - 1b, FGD 2 17 Dec 2010).

One participant commented:

> I can say that leaders only inform us about what the government wants us to do instead of us presenting our will to the government. It is also hard listening to the speech after *umuganda,* which sometimes is a repetition of what we know already. Speeches take longer than the time we spend working because they try to make us understand and act according to what they [government leaders] have already decided to do" (FGD - 1b 27 Dec 2011).

Most add spontaneously that *umuganda* is not well planned or organized. More insight about this will be given in the following chapter.

5. 3.1 Supervision of *umuganda*

Table 5.4 indicates that there are significantly different opinions regarding who involved in supervising *umuganda* across the four historical periods. In the pre-colonial period, respondents reported that *umuganda* was supervised by the chief of the village (38% for Kigali

and 33% in Western Province).Nevertheless 22% in Kigali and 17% in Western Province thought that *umuganda* was supervised by the head of the household.

It was asserted that in the colonial period *umuganda* was supervised by the state representative (63% in Kigali, and 62% in Western Province). It was also learned that in the colonial period, the *souch-chefs* played a big role in helping colonial masters to implement the *uburetwa,* as they were the ones who were supervising most of the activities. Thus, as mentioned 14% from Western Province thought that *umuganda* was supervised by the chief of the village.

In the post-colonial period *umuganda* was supervised by a state representative (53% in Kigali and 33% in Western Province. Further results indicate a mixture of responses. These include 22% both in Kigali and Western Province who reported that *umuganda* was supervised by a chief of the village, and 17% in Kigali and 25% in Western Province who thought that *umuganda* was supervised by a nominated individual. Some participants also believed that *umuganda* was supervised by either the *nyumbakumi* (the head of ten households) or the responsible (similar to the cell leader) (17%). These results show either confusion or a lack of knowledge as to who supervised *umuganda* then. Nevertheless this could be because in the late 1980s and during the early 1990s *umuganda* was supervised by the ruling party, MRND. Since all government leaders were part of MRND, a representative of MRND could be a chief of a village, or any person nominated by the party, either from the local area or from anywhere else (OCM - 19b 31 Dec 2010).

Table 5.4: The supervision of *umuganda*

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Kigali	**The supervision of *umuganda***	**65**	**86**	**66**	**87**	**73**	**96**	**76**	**100**
	A state representative	14	18	48	63	40	53	4	5
	Chief of the village	25	38	4	5	17	22	47	62
	Nominated individual	8	11	11	14	13	17	10	13
	Head of household	17	22	1	1	2	3	3	4
	Everyone	1	1	2	3	1	1	3	4
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Western Province		**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**
	A state representative	16	25	39	62	21	33	12	19
	Chief of the village	21	33	9	14	14	22	37	59
	Nominated individual	8	13	3	5	16	25	13	21
	Head of household	11	17	1	2	11	17	0	0
	Everyone	2	3	2	3	0	0	1	2
	Other	4	6	9	14	11	17	0	0

Currently, respondents said that *umuganda* is supervised by the chief of the village, *chef wumudugudu* (62% in Kigali and 59% in Western Province). However, there is general uncertainty. This was also reflected in the interviews, where leaders from both Kigali and Western Province responded that the monthly *umuganda* is supervised by a sector representative, if it was planned at the sector level or by a cell leader if it was organised at the cell level. Leaders from the Western Province made clear that the chief of the village only supervises the weekly *umuganda* (LL- 8 24 Dec 2010). It could be that people only identify the chief of the village as the overseer of *umuganda* because when a representative from their

sector or cell arrives, he is regarded by ordinary community members as just another government leader who is only coming to deliver a message from the government.

There is little precise information on who does what in planning, organising, or even in supervising the activities of *umuganda*.

5.3.2 Who participates in *umuganda*

An understanding of who participated in *umuganda* during the four historical periods was sought from participants. Table 5.5 indicates that in the pre-colonial period as well as in the colonial period, respondents perceived that all adult males only were required to participate in *umuganda* (57% and 64% respectively in Kigali, and 75% and 76% in Western Province). Responding to gender equality in *umuganda* participation, one of the participants explained:

> Even though ladies are not mentioned to have participated in *umuganda*, they did participate in other different ways. They were the ones who were preparing drinks, for example, for those who were doing *umuganda* and for that reason they were part of the activities because they knew about everything; the venue, the time and the number of those who were in the *umuganda* fields (EL- 6a 14 Dec 2010).

The general sense was that *umuganda* was for everyone in the community, with different assigned duties. Some participants from the focus group pointed out that in the pre-colonial time only those who were married were required to participate in *umuganda*. Unmarried people could only participate if the task was, for example, building a house for a young male who was about to get married (FGD - 1a 17 Dec 2010).

Table 5.5: Who was/is required to participate in *umuganda*

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide	
Kigali		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
	Who was/is required to participate?	**66**	**87**	**66**	**87**	**73**	**96**	**76**	**100**
	One male adult in the household	14	18	8	11	10	13	11	14
	One female adult in the household	1	1	1	1	5	7	1	1
	One person in the household	1	1	7	9	0	0	0	0
	All adult males only	43	57	49	64	1	1	4	5
	All adult females only	5	7	1	1	0	0	0	0
	Adults of both sexes	1	1	0	0	57	75	60	79
	All people irrespective of age and sex	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Western Province	**Who was/is required to participate?**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**
	One adult male	6	10	3	5	7	11	8	13
	One person in household	3	5	4	6	4	6	2	3
	All adult males	47	75	48	76	6	10	2	3
	Adults of both sex	5	8	5	8	43	68	45	71
	All people irrespective of age and sex	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	3
	Other	1	2	2	3	1	2	4	6

In the post-colonial period until genocide as well as thereafter, all adults of both sexes were and still are required to participate in *umuganda* (according to 75% and 79% respectively in Kigali and 68% and 71% in the Western Province), except elders above 65 years old and those younger than 18. The focus group discussions suggested that before the genocide, those who participated in *umuganda* were seen mainly as low-class people. According to the discussants, those who were friends of or related to supervisors did not have to participate (FGD- 2a 20 Dec 2010).

Currently, it seems that local ordinary community members are involved in the monthly *umuganda* but the president, diplomats and other high level officials also participate, as mentioned in Chapter Three. Can this be regarded as a political trick by government, in seeking loyalty from citizens by being seen to work with them and mostly talking to them, or is their participation a reflection of a communitarian spirit? After *umuganda* is over, a whole community will meet in the woods or in the open air and local politicians will talk about the importance of, for example, family planning and hygiene. All public life activity stops, shops are not allowed to open and public as well as private transportation is not allowed to operate until *umuganda* is over.

During the time of data collection, a number of poor households in different provinces, including the suburbs of Kigali, lost their shelters as the government's plan to eliminate thatched houses, known as *nyakatsi,* were underway. Although this created huge restlessness among local people, some very poor families who were affected have benefited from *umuganda* by having houses built for them, with the governments supplying iron sheets for construction.

President Kagame takes a break during
 umuganda in Gahanga District,
 27 June 2009

President Kagame joins in building houses for poor people in Nyaruguguru district, 27 March 2011

Foreign diplomats and other officials have been encouraged to join local people in *umuganda*. In the above photograph on the right, is a member of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) joining President Kagame to construct houses for the poor during *umuganda*. What is so apparent from this intervention, though, is high officials taking the initiative to do what was once done by ordinary people. Is *umuganda* still community-centred? How much power and control do ordinary people have over *umuganda*?

In the case of the government's plan to eliminate thatched houses, it was the government leaders themselves who showed up prepared to build houses after long inaction from neighbouring community members. Ordinary people's reluctance to contribute may have stemmed from having limited power over the initiation of *umuganda* activities. It was understood that there is general reluctance to participate in *umuganda*, despite it being compulsory. Participants from Kigali, in a discussion group said:

> Elite people (business and public servants) stay in their homes during *umuganda* and instead send their domestic workers to do *umuganda* on their behalf. We need them to show a good example and also their contribution in terms of ideas (FGD 1-a 17 Dec 2010).

This reveals both a lack of interest by people in the practice of *umuganda* and the government's weakness in the implementation of its policy.

5.3.3 The frequency of *umuganda*

Table 5.6 indicates that there are significant differences regarding how often *umuganda* was perceived to have been carried out. Many people were not sure how frequently *umuganda* was done in the pre-colonial period. However, in Kigali, the general sense is that it was done once every two months (29%), while only 19% in Western Province perceived that it was done once a week. Conversely, 49%, in Western Province suggested that in the pre-colonial and colonial period *umuganda* was only called upon when there is need. One of the participants commented:

Umuganda was done only when there was a need. You see, in the past *umuganda* was announced by people called *abamotsi* (*umumotsi* in singular).Every hill or two hills [currently seen as *umudugudu*] had a *Sous-chef* so if anything happened, anyone could report to the *Sous-chef* who in turn had to inform the *abamotsi* to go around informing people. Only when there was an emergency like taking someone to the hospital (*guheka*) or during the time of loss (*gutabara*), *abamotsi* passed around the hills or household telling people *kujya gutanga umuganda kwakanaka*, to go give *umuganda* to so and so (EL- 6b 21 Dec 2010).

The offer of *umuganda* could be to build or to repair (gusana) houses or to work in the fields. Moreover, the above interviewee indicated the weakness of the king (Musinga) in coming to allow what he called 'home-made' (*umwimerere*) to be controlled by outside leaders, starting from the colonial period. He said: "It was towards the end of the kingdom administration and in the very early coming of the missionaries and colonial masters that things started changing" (EL- 6b 21 Dec 2010).

Some participants from Kigali (26%) responded that in the colonial period *umuganda* was performed every day but this could depend on the need of that particular season. For example, if it was a farming season, *umuganda* could be done even more than twice a week (EL- 1b 28 Dec 2010).

Table 5.6: Frequency of *umuganda* activities

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide		
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	p-value
Kigali	**How often was/is *umuganda* done?**	**44**	**58**	**49**	**64**	73	96	**76**	**100**	
	Every day	7	9	20	26	4	5	2	3	0<001
	Once a week	12	16	7	9	54	71	1	1	
	Once every two weeks	2	3	2	3	4	5	1	1	
	Once a month	1	1	5	7	9	12	72	95	
	Once every two months	22	29	15	20	2	3	0	0	
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Western Province	**How often was/is *umuganda* done?**	**54**	**86**	**55**	**87**	63	100	63	100	
	Every day	9	14	17	27	1	2	1	2	
	Once a week	12	19	12	19	55	87	49	78	
	Once every two weeks	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	
	Once a month	2	3	3	5	6	10	13	21	
	Once every two months		0	1	2	0	0	0	0	
	Other	31	49	22	35	0	0	0	0	

Participants from both Kigali and Western Province responded that in the post-colonial until the genocide period, *umuganda* was carried out once a week (71% in Kigali and 87% in Western Province). Regarding the post-genocide era, participants from Kigali thought that *umuganda* is done once a month (95%) but those in Western Province thought that it is done once a week (78%). This confusion may well be understood from the practice of formal and informal *umuganda* discussed previously. It was learned that in the week of the last Saturday of the month (a national *umuganda*), people of Western Province are forced to attend *umuganda* twice; on Thursday and Saturday for that particular week.

State-organised *umuganda* has swamped other *umuganda* activities. Thus the above results from Kigali reflect only the formal monthly *umuganda.* There may be, as has already been explained, unplanned *umuganda* held anytime throughout the month. Informal *umuganda*,

especially in urban areas, is planned by local organisers as and when the need arises.[44] In Western Province, the weekly *umuganda* has become fixed and has subsumed or incorporated the monthly *umuganda,* making the latter less able to be organised as a separate requirement.

5.3.4 Hours of *umuganda* per day

Table 5.7 indicates that in the pre-colonial period as well as in the colonial period, people thought that *umuganda* took more than six hours (33% and 42% respectively in Kigali, and 49% and 62% in Western Province).

Table 5.7: Hours that *umuganda* activities take

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide		
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	P-value
Kigali	**How many hours activities take**	**52**	**68**	**55**	72	**70**	**92**	**76**	**100**	
	Less than two hours	2	4	1	1	4	5	2	3	<0.001
	Two to three hours	3	6	4	1	12	16	14	18	
	Three to four hours	1	2	1	1	29	38	35	46	
	Four to five hours	2	4	4	5	22	29	21	28	
	Five to six hours	12	23	8	11	2	3	4	5	
	More than six hours	17	33	32	42	1	1	0	0	
	Other responses	15	29	5	7	0	0	0	0	
Western Province	**How many hours activities take**	**59**	**94**	**61**	**97**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	
	Less than two hours	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Two to three hours	1	2	3	5	10	16	11	17	
	Three to four hours	3	5	2	3	12	19	30	48	
	Four to five hours	2	3	1	2	21	33	21	33	
	Five to six hours	7	11	10	16	16	25	1	2	
	More than six hours	31	49	39	62	4	6	0	0	
	Other responses	12	19	6	10	0	0	0	0	

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[44]These needs may not necessarily reflect those of local people.

Nonetheless, other opinions (29% and 7% respective from Kigali and 19% and 10% from Western Province) suggested that it was difficult to calculate precisely because the hours of activities were dependent upon the task performed. An elderly in an elders association in Kigali explained:

> Hours for *umuganda* depended on the type of activities that were to be performed, sometimes if the work is too big, the work could be postponed to another day until the work is done. For example, if they have to build a house and people are tired before the house is finished, they could come on the following day or suggest another day that they could come to finish the task. People were free to suggest anything. The most important thing was to accomplish the work (EL - 5a 16 Dec 2010).

He added that, while in the pre-colonial era people were working together (communal), in the colonial era, people were given *ikigwate* - a plot, to work on and whoever finished could be given another one or if it is late one could go home (EL- 5a 16 Dec. 2010).

While respondents from Kigali stated that in the post-colonial period until genocide as well as in the post-genocide period *umuganda* took three to four hours (38% and 46%), others indicated that it lasted for four to five hours (29% and 28% respectively). Furthermore, those in the Western Province suggested that in the post-colonial period *umuganda* took four to five hours (33%) while some (25%) thought that it took five to six hours. These respondents noted that *umuganda* lasts for three to four hours (48%) in the post-genocide period, but some (33%) indicated that it takes four to five hours.

5.4 Why people participate in *umuganda*

Table 5.8 indicates that there are differences in what has been motivating people to participate in *umuganda* throughout the historical period. According to those from both Kigali and Western Province, in the pre-colonial era people were motivated by mutual help (74% in Kigali and 83% in Western Province). Elsewhere it was learnt that those who did not participate isolated themselves from their community (OCM 6-a 19 Dec 2010).

In the colonial period people participated in *umuganda* only because of the fear of punishment or prosecution, as *umuganda* was obligatory by law (67%in Kigali and 71% in Western Province). While some respondents from Kigali (39%) indicated that during the post-colonial era, people participated in *umuganda* for fear of being fined or prosecuted, 29% reported that they attended *umuganda* only to get information about the government's plans. 60% from Western Province said that they were motivated to participate in *umuganda* to get information about government plans.

Other respondents pointed out that in the 1970s and early 1980s, people were being mobilised for *umuganda,* terming it "to work and build the nation". These plans apparently included propaganda which helped to promote genocide (Interview: OCM- 14b 22 Dec 2011). Participants in the focus group, in Kigali sang a song that was used for that sensitisation:

> *Nzatanga   umuganda   wo-kubaka   uRwanda,   bavandimwe,*
> *nzatanga umuganda wo kubaka urwanda…*
> I will offer *umuganda* to build Rwanda, my brethren, I will offer
> *umuganda* to build my nation… (FGD 2-a 20 Dec 2010).

Discussants thought that the term 'to work or build a nation' was just a government slogan since no development transpired. In their estimation, the population became poorer as the national economy declined, especially in the 1980s and 1990s.

Table 5.8: Motivation to participate in *umuganda*

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide		
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	P-value
Kigali	**Motivation to participate in *umuganda***	**66**	**87**	**67**	**88**	**73**	**96**	**76**	**100**	<0.001
	Mutual help	56	74	7	9	4	5	9	12	
	Meet friends, neighbours and socialize	2	3	5	7	2	3	8	11	
	Please leaders	1	1	3	4	4	5	1	1	
	Get information about government's plans	2	3	1	1	22	29	18	24	
	Fear of fine or prosecution	4	5	51	67	30	39	9	12	
	All the above assertions are valid	1	1	0	0	11	14	30	39	
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Western Province	**Motivations to participate in *umuganda***	**62**	**98**	**62**	**98**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	
	Mutual help	52	83	4	6	4	6	5	8	
	Meet friends, neighbour and socialise with	1	2	1	2	6	10	10	16	
	Please leaders	1	2	6	10	8	13	2	3	
	Get information about government's plans	2	3	2	3	38	60	12	19	
	Fear of fine or prosecution	2	3	45	71	6	10	13	21	
	All the above assertions are valid	3	5	4	6	1	2	20	32	
	Other	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	

Both in the interviews and in the focus group discussions, respondents highlighted that increasingly throughout 1980s and early 1990s "*umuganda* became a tool for the ruling party MRND to implant its ideology into the population, even to implement genocide" (OCM 14-b 30 Dec 2010). The implications of this were experienced in the 1994 genocide itself. An interviewee said:

> We used to go there, dance and sing songs praising the MRND. It was time-wasting but we had to go otherwise we would be not only punished but be called anti-government and you know what that means!! You will be put in the same box as those who were fighting

against the government, the (*inyenzi*) RPF. We had to go for the sake of

our safety" (OCM 11-a 20 Dec 2010).

According to Table 5.8, after the genocide people are motivated to participate in *umuganda* for various reasons: mutual help; meeting friends; neighbours and socialising; pleasing leaders; getting information about the government's plans; and because of the fear of punishment or prosecution (39% in Kigali and 32% in Western Province).Another 24% from Kigali indicated that obtaining information about government's plans is their main motivation. By contrast, 21% from Western Province were concerned about being fined or prosecuted, whereas 19% suggested that they attend *umuganda* just to get information about the government's plans. 11% in Kigali and 16% in Western Province attend *umuganda* in order to meet friends, neighbours and socialise. One of the respondents explained:

I go to *umuganda* to meet people, to get to know new people in my

community and to make myself known in the neighbourhood (OCM 14-a

01 Jan 2011).

Interestingly, among the 2% from Western Province who participated in *umuganda* for different reasons altogether, they said that they are motivated by a feeling of ownership and mutual help. More generally, what emerged was that, "currently the feeling of ownership and mutual help was what drove most pre-colonial *umuganda* practices but ownership has given way to insecurity, sociality, and the need for belonging (OCM- 29a 16 Dec 2011).

From the post-colonial period until the present, *umuganda* was used as an avenue for government to communicate with the people. *Umuganda* provided an assembly-point that government functionaries used and still use to communicate its policies, programs, decrees and demands. People were and are still being forced to attend *umuganda*.

We have seen that everyone is required to buy an attendance card that people have to keep on themselves, and have it signed as proof of attendance. It was also learned that some people

attend *umuganda* merely to have their card signed so as to avoid problems when needing any government service. Moreover, serious complaints of prejudice were heard since, apparently, some people are asked to present their *umuganda* card and others are not. A young lady wanting to apply to register her *marriage civille*[45], discovered that the executive secretary at the sector office required her first to produce her *umuganda* card in order to see whether she has performed *umuganda*. Someone else who happened to be present commented "this is not fair, why didn't he [executive] ask the other person a card? *Mhuuu*! This people look at you, and they know how to respond to your request depending on how you appear to them. It is not every one that they ask to present *umuganda* card" (OCM 15-a 15 Dec. 2010).

It emerged from the interviews that people also complied with the requirement of *umuganda* in their anxiety to avoid being seen as suspicious members of the community who could be regarded as a source of insecurity and then become isolated. In other words, the motivation to carryout *umuganda* is mixed with fear which can be conveyed in questions such as: 'How can people hear that I have remained home while others are doing *umuganda*? Would I be regarded as a rebel or a criminal or anti-social?'

Finally on being asked 'if they would like *umuganda* to continue', one of my respondents told me humorously that: "Of course I would like *umuganda* to continue, what other response you expect from me?" She asked if anyone has spoken against *umuganda*. On being told that some had, she replied, "mmh no! Whoever said no to the continuation of *umuganda* is *inyanga-Rwanda*, dislike Rwanda; he or she is against government" (EL 8-b 02 Jan 2011).

Is there any relationship between participating in *umuganda* and a sense of nationalism? The need for belonging and the fear of government sanctions have a security dimension which could emanate from the violence, conflict and the legacy of the genocide. However, the question is if *umuganda* is made entirely voluntary, would people still participate in it as much as they do now.

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[45] A civil wedding in Rwanda is officiated by the executive secretary of the sector at the local sector office.

5.5 Sanctions for not participating in *umuganda*

Table 5.9 indicates that in the pre-colonial period, respondents reported that there was no punishment given to those who did not participate in *umuganda* (45% for Kigali and 57% in Western Province). However, the elders noted that not participating amounted to self-isolation, which meant that whoever did not participate did not receive help from neighbours in return. An elder explained:

> There was no punishment but the consequences were worse than just being punished because if you got sick, no one would visit you. If someone died in your family, no one would come to help or visit and if there was a wedding in the neighbourhood, the person was not invited" (EL 9-b 25 Dec 2010).

This explains how valuable *umuganda* and other social activities were in the early days.

By contrast, in the colonial period, corporal punishment was very evident, which was then called *shiku* or *uburetwa* (61% in Kigali and 92% in Western Province). People were beaten for not attending *umuganda* or for failing to finish the work assigned to them (see Chapter Three).

Respondents thought that in the post-colonial period those who did not attend *umuganda* were fined (71% in Kigali and 62% in Western Province). Other opinions from Western Province indicate that in the post-colonial period people who were not able to pay the fine could receive corporal punishment or be sent to jail instead (OCM 14-b 30 Dec 2010).

Table 5.9: Punishment for not participating

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Kigali	**Punishment given to non-participants**	**66**	**87**	**70**	**92**	**74**	**97**	**76**	**100**
	No punishment	34	45	2	3	2	3	19	25
	Verbal reprimand	17	22	2	3	4	5	8	11
	Pay fine	4	5	4	5	54	71	44	58
	Corporal punishment	4	5	61	80	10	13	2	3
	Go to jail	7	9	1	1	4	5	3	4
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Western Province	**Punishment given to non-participants**	**62**	**98**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**
	No punishment	36	57	3	5	1	2	25	40
	Verbal reprimand	12	19	0	0	4	6	8	13
	Pay fine	0	0	1	2	39	62	26	41
	Corporal punishment	5	8	58	92	7	11	1	2
	Go to jail	0	0	1	2	10	16	1	2
	Other	9	14	0	0	2	3	2	3

There are various opinions in relation to the punishment that is given to those who do not participate in *umuganda* in the post-genocide period. While both participants in Kigali (58%) and Western Province (41%) thought that people are fined, 25% in Kigali and 40% in Western Province reported that there is no punishment for those who do not attend. Even though the current policy of *umuganda* states clearly that those who do not participate in *umuganda* will be fined with a fixed amount of FRW. 5000, this has not been implemented in many places, especially in relation to the monthly *umuganda*. Although there was no reason given to why the policy is not implemented, in practice it would be difficult for residents in rural areas who have little income.

However, leaders of informal *umuganda* in Kigali are strict about attendance. The transport association in Kigali is one example. On a further visit to Rwanda, in December 2011, the researcher used a motor bike as a means of transport from home to the local suburban market

in Kigali. As we arrived, the rider was warned by his other taxis that he was going to be in trouble since he did not go to *umuganda* and have his *umuganda* card signed. Security guards in the areas were enquiring. Curiously I asked him what he would do. His answer is that he would have no choice but to pay a fine. Continuing the conversation, the researcher asked the motor rider what activities they had to perform for *umuganda* that day. With on unhappy face one of them responded:"*Imirimoyihe – se! ko arukudutesha umwanya gusa*""What activities! It is only wasting our time".

Why then go to *umuganda* if it is a waste of time? Do leaders know that people feel it is a waste of time? Some participants mentioned that there are instances in rural areas where the local defence force arrests people, beat them and put them to jail for not participating in *umuganda*. Disagreeing with the idea of punishing people who do not attend *umuganda*, a community member argued:

> Normally, *umuganda's* main objectives are for the community to volunteer their time to the country and also to bring together people living in the same community, as it is in our culture to help, share and socialize. But this is done as law and order, which one has to follow or otherwise be punished or pay a fine. Charging or punishing people for not attending *umuganda* sounds like looking for too much from people rather than sensitizing them to do it willingly. This makes *umuganda* turn from its primary definition and it becomes a mandatory forceful activity (Intervew: OCM 14-a 02 Jan 2011).

Because of seeing *umuganda* as mandatory, some people have resented participating. One respondent said:

> This is why I don't go to *umuganda*, because I don't like to do something just because I am forced to it. Even that card; I have not

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bought it and I don't carry it. I like to help and I like the idea of *umuganda* but I don't like the way it is being brought to us (OCM 15-b 26 Dec 2010).

With such mixed reactions from participants in the focus group discussion one gave her opinion of what this means:

> To be denied services means that, 'I cried for help you did not show up, when you cry for help I am not going to show up'. When the government does not see your hand when it needs it, you shouldn't expect its (government's) hand when you need it (FGD- 1a 17 Dec 2010).

Both in Kigali and Western Province participants insisted that they do not agree with punishment by law for not participating in *umuganda*. However, one of the respondents explained:

> I believe in the FRW 5,000 fine charged for missing *umuganda* but only as long as that fine is paid in the context of correcting someone. This will be like an act of discrediting someone for not socializing with others and not volunteering for the good of your country but not really a crime when put in the proper context (OCM 7-b 30 Dec 2010).

A local leader in charge of *umuganda* and community mobilization explained that, "When we find that the person does not participate in *umuganda,* we ask the person to pay the fine before we give him or her a requested document because if we don't do that, people will take *umuganda* lightly" (LL 8-a 17 Dec 2010).

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the different activities associated with *umuganda* and how they are organised. The activities ranged from cleaning streets to building houses and public amenities. The planning and organisation of these activities nowadays appear to be directed by government. *Umuganda* has become a state-owned project with the threat of sanctions used to impose its implementation. The lack of ordinary local people's participation in planning *umuganda* and organising its activities, not knowing when and where *umuganda* will take place, and what activities will be done; all indicate an overwhelming form of state management in how it is practised.

Local communities were found to participate in activities for *umuganda* that they neither plan nor supervise themselves. This questions whether *umuganda*is people-centred and based on a voluntary sense of obligation. With *umuganda* becoming increasingly state-organised and supervised, it was seen that people have different motivations for participating init. These include a feeling of insecurity and the fear of punishment. This perpetuates the continuation of the mentality of mandatory labour that started with the arrival of colonial rule, thus making it distasteful to the local community. From this understanding, *umuganda* is becoming increasingly used for state monitoring and control and as an efficient way of mobilising public participation. Corporal punishment might have been abandoned but other sanctions have been introduced, such as presenting a signed card of attendance for *umuganda* when needing government documents or the refusal by government to grant documents to those who do not attend *umuganda*. The fear of being fined FRW 5000 for avoiding *umuganda* also drives people to participate, even if unwillingly. Given all this, what role can *umuganda* play in realising development in Rwanda?

CHAPTER SIX

The Outcome of *Umuganda*

Introduction

This chapter will focus on the effect that *umuganda* has had. Based on the participants' experiences, the chapter identifies current challenges of administering *umuganda*. The chapter has four sections. Section one investigates the perceived benefits of *umuganda*. Section two examines views on how *umuganda* is practised today. Section three assesses the success of the current policy and practice of *umuganda*. Section four focuses on discussed improvements to *umuganda*.

6.1 Effects and beneficiaries

Based on their experiences, participants were asked to share what they thought were the effects of *umuganda.* Table 6.1 shows a similarity of responses: participants report that in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods, *umuganda*'s major impact was to reduce poverty (63%, 62% and 49% respectively in Kigali, and 75%, 76% and 71% in Western Province). It is interesting to note that in pre-colonial Rwanda, when the state's control over, and influence on, *umuganda* was at its lowest people believed that it was important for poverty reduction. It is believed that people's own initiatives enabled them to help improve their conditions. Compared to other periods, results from Kigali indicates a low percentage (49%) of those who though that *umuganda* helped to reduce poverty in the post-colonial period.

After the genocide, the effect of *umuganda* on the population is less decisive, as indicated under the heading 'all the above' (55% in Kigali, and 52% in Western Province). These effects are primarily identified as: (1) poverty eradication (8% in Kigali, and 19% in Western Province); (2) good governance and accountability (17% in Kigali, and 16% in Western Province); and (3) unity and reconciliation (18% in Kigali, and 10% in Western Province). Significantly, *umuganda's* role in poverty eradication is now seen to be greatly reduced in comparison with all the earlier periods. For example, the responses were distributed between good governance and accountability (17%) and unity and reconciliation (18%) in Kigali with only 8% identifying poverty eradication. By contrast in the Western Province a relatively high percent (19%) thought that *umuganda* helps in poverty eradication, while 16% indicated that it contributes to good governance and accountability and10% who thought that it has resulted in unity and reconciliation.

Table 6.1: The effects of *umuganda*

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Kigali	**Effect that *umuganda* has on the population**	**64**	**84**	**66**	**87**	**70**	**92**	**76**	**100**
	Poverty eradication	48	63	47	62	37	49	6	8
	Good governance and accountability	5	7	10	13	12	16	13	17
	Unity and reconciliation	4	5	1	1	6	8	14	18
	All the above	6	8	5	7	13	17	42	55
	Other	1	1	3	4	2	3	1	1
Western Province	**Effect that *umuganda* has on the population**	62	98	63	100	63	100	63	100
	Poverty eradication	47	75	48	76	45	71	12	19
	Good governance and accountability	4	6	1	2	4	6	10	16
	Unity and reconciliation	9	14	7	11	11	17	6	10
	All the above	2	3	3	5	3	5	33	52
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3

The focus group discussions in Kigali added more detail to these findings. In the pre-colonial period, *umuganda* contributed apparently to national building. In the colonial era, the impact that *umuganda* had on the population was to increase the colonial economy, while also dividing the population so they could be more easily ruled. Thereafter until the genocide, *umuganda* had the effect of dividing and controlling the people, of acting as a channel of communication, and serving to empower the ruling party (MRND). After the genocide, *umuganda* is seen to have made the population responsible for public facilities, helped them to live in clean surroundings, but also controlled citizens. From an interview with a leader in charge of *umuganda* and community mobilisation at sector level, it was heard that:

> Rwanda is acclaimed to be a clean country in Africa and worldwide. This
> is because of the commitment of the population towards *umuganda* (LL
> 11-a 16 Dec 2010).

It is hard to believe, though, that the practice of *umuganda* itself has made the country clean. There must be other explanations besides. Recalling that *umuganda* is only done once a month, it cannot be given full credit for the cleanliness that is seen in Kigali. For example, Kigali City employs dedicated cleaners who are not working in terms of *umuganda*.

Statements regarding cleanliness in Rwanda are not new. Often after *umuganda*, President Kagame reminds the participants that 'the monthly *umuganda* practice has contributed to Rwanda's worldwide reputation for cleanliness'.[46]Such statements are intended to motivate the people to have a positive attitude toward the maintenance of a clean environment, even in their own villages and homes.

Although *umuganda* has supposedly helped to foster cleanliness, other opinions from Western Province (3%) in Table 6.1 include the view that currently *umuganda* has the effect of controlling the Rwandan population. While *umuganda* has been spoken of as an institution to

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[46] From the Office of the President: President Kagame joins Nyarugenge [Kigali district] residents for *umuganda*. Kigali, 28 March 2009.

be relied on for poverty reduction, it has been expected to facilitate other government programs that are in line with the developmental goals of the country. The poverty reduction function, which has long historical roots, remains an important consideration in understanding the impact of *umuganda* on peoples' livelihoods.

6.1.1 Beneficiaries of *umuganda*

Who benefits from *umuganda*? More especially, participants were asked to indicate whether individuals within the community, political leaders or both, benefit most from *umuganda*. Table 6.2 indicates that there are different opinions regarding the benefits of *umuganda* over the historical periods. In the pre-colonial era, *umuganda* is believed to have been beneficial to each person in the community (54% in Kigali, and 62% in Western Province), while in the colonial era it was believed to have been beneficial only to leaders (39% in Kigali, and 48% in Western Province). These were either colonial masters or the king or chiefs representing the colonial state. In the colonial period, a different ideology had been conceived about *umuganda*. The state converted *umuganda* into an institution of government service. Respondents believe that in the post-colonial period until the genocide, as well as currently, *umuganda* was and is beneficial to both individuals and leaders (46% and 53% respectively in Kigali, and 49% and 54% in Western Province), but of little benefit for leaders only (8% in Kigali and 11% in Western Province).

Table 6.2: Who benefits the most from *umuganda*?

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Kigali	**Who gets more benefit from *umuganda*?**	**69**	**91**	**70**	**92**	**75**	**99**	**76**	**100**
	Each person in the community	41	54	19	25	18	24	29	38
	Only leaders	5	7	30	39	20	26	6	8
	Both individuals and leaders	22	29	20	26	35	46	40	53
	Others	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	1
Western Province	**Who gets more benefit from *umuganda*?**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**
	Each person in the community	39	62	20	32	17	27	22	35
	Only leaders	6	10	30	48	15	24	7	11
	Both individuals and leaders	18	29	13	21	31	49	34	54
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

More details about the benefits of *umuganda* for individuals, the community, for leaders and for the country were sought from respondents.

6.1.2 The level of benefits for each person in the community

As can be seen in Table 6.3, respondents in Kigali thought that in the pre-colonial period and, currently, in the post-genocide *umuganda* was and is very beneficial to each individual (53% and 41% respectively). However, there is a very close and significant 39% who think that now it is beneficial. While in Kigali respondents thought that only in the colonial and post-colonial periods until genocide, was *umuganda* beneficial (33% and 47%), those in Western Province believe that *umuganda* was beneficial throughout the four periods (49%, 37%, 56%, and 49% respectively).

Table 6.3: Level of benefit: Individual

Location	Level of benefit	Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Kigali	**Local individuals**	**69**	**91**	**71**	**93**	**75**	**99**	**76**	**100**
	Very beneficial	40	53	13	17	15	20	31	41
	Beneficial	21	28	25	33	36	47	30	39
	Less beneficial	3	4	21	28	20	26	13	17
	Not beneficial at all	5	7	12	16	4	5	2	3
Western Province	**Local individuals**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**
	Very beneficial	27	43	10	16	5	8	16	25
	Beneficial	31	49	23	37	35	56	31	49
	Less beneficial	5	8	14	22	16	25	9	14
	Not beneficial at all	0	0	16	25	7	11	7	11

Nevertheless, there are those who hold the opinion that *umuganda* is not beneficial (11%, 44%, 31% and 20% respectively in Kigali, and 8%, 47%, 36% and 25% in Western Province - opinions range from less beneficial to not beneficial at all). The latter percentages look at the benefit of *umuganda* beyond state control and for public benefit. Here *umuganda* might be seen as a purely state-imposed service. Although the percentages are low, the non-beneficial aspect of *umuganda* started during colonial rule and has never been reversed, implying that the role of the state since colonialism has been to rob *umuganda* of its original social purpose and meaning.

6.1.3 Level of benefits for the entire local community

Table 6.4 indicates that while respondents from Kigali specified that in the pre-colonial period *umuganda* was very beneficial for the entire local community (42%), people from Western Province think that it was just beneficial for local community (56%). Both communities (Kigali and Western Province) believe that in the colonial and post-colonial eras until the genocide, as well as in the current post-genocide era, *umuganda* was and still is beneficial to the local

community (37 %, 51%, and 51% respectively in Kigali, and 56%, 46%, 59% and 52% in Western Province).

Table 6.4: Level of benefit: local community

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Kigali	**Entire community**	**69**	**91**	**71**	**93**	**74**	**97**	**76**	**100**
	Very beneficial	32	42	12	16	11	14	21	28
	Beneficial	26	34	28	37	39	51	39	51
	Less beneficial	6	8	20	26	22	29	13	17
	Not beneficial at all	5	7	11	14	2	3	3	4
Western Province	**Local community**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**
	Very beneficial	20	32	11	17	4	6	13	21
	Beneficial	35	56	29	46	37	59	33	52
	Less beneficial	7	11	10	16	17	27	14	22
	Not beneficial at all	1	2	13	21	5	8	3	5

While respondents were very conscious of the benefits of *umuganda* in terms of schools and roads built, there are those(21% in Kigali and 27% in Western Province), who maintain that *umuganda* is not beneficial to the local community, these opinions ranging from 'less beneficial' to 'not beneficial at all'. Surely roads at least are beneficial? However, some rural inhabitants think that roads and public buildings add little or no value to their well-being. This is the case in Western Province, where people survive on their small plots. One participant elaborated:

> We cannot say *umuganda* has been very beneficial because it will be an
> exaggeration and we also cannot also say that it has been less beneficial
> because that will be to overlook some of its activities. We have visible
> results of *umuganda* such as extra classrooms or houses that are built
> for survivors of genocide and other poor families but having a shelter to
> live in or classrooms is not enough (OCM 11-b 28 Dec 2010).

This opinion is related to the idea that nowadays *umuganda* is not left to people's initiative. The practice of *umuganda* has become distant and an individual community member cannot ask for help in times of need from fellow community members but only when a government leader orders an *umuganda* activity to take place. This shows a continuation of the state's usurping of *umuganda* to impose what it believes to be beneficial on the population.

6.1.4 The level of benefit to political leaders

Table 6.5 shows a significant similarity of *umuganda'*s perceived benefit to political leaders across the historical periods. In the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras until genocide as well as post-genocide, *umuganda* is seen generally to have been, and to be, very beneficial to political leaders (37%, 58%, 51% and 50% respectively in Kigali, and 38%, 59%, 48% and 55% in Western Province).

Table 6.5: Level of benefit: political leaders

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Kigali	**Political leaders**	**68**	**89**	**70**	**92**	**74**	**97**	**76**	**100**
	Very beneficial	28	37	44	58	39	51	38	50
	Beneficial	22	29	19	25	29	38	28	37
	Less beneficial	7	9	4	5	4	5	8	11
	Not beneficial at all	11	14	3	4	2	3	2	3
Western Province	**Political leaders**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**
	Very beneficial	24	38	37	59	30	48	35	56
	Beneficial	22	35	19	30	28	44	21	33
	Less beneficial	7	11	7	11	4	6	6	10
	Not beneficial at all	10	16	4	6	1	2	1	2

As the findings indicate, political leaders and other state agents largely benefit from *umuganda*. This goes beyond just using people to implement their decisions; *umuganda* also increased the popularity of political leaders and sustained their politico-ideological hold on power.

An elder commented:

> *Umuganda* makes a political leader's work easy because for anything
> that they want to achieve, they can use *umuganda* to get it. Also
> activities done like public buildings and infrastructure present the
> quality of leadership. You see, they go to their employers and say this is
> what we have achieved and it gives them credit. Another thing is that it
> is easy to pass a message when everyone is around and no one will say 'I
> did not know' because it was announced during *umuganda*, which
> everyone is required to attend (EL 8-b 31 Dec 2010).

The practice of *umuganda* serves to fulfil the annual performance contract (*imihigo*[47]) promised
to the President by mayors and district leaders, both in Kigali and in rural areas. The mayor on
his own is able to raise 20% to 30% of his budget; the rest comes from the ministries. This
means that he will pay close attention to the priorities of the ministries, and will persuade his
people accordingly (Purdeková, 2011: 490).

Thus *umuganda* seems to be regarded more as a service to the government leaders than a
benefit to ordinary people. This shows a high level of detachment between the traditional
understandings of the practice of *umuganda* and the current state-led version.

6.1.5 The level of benefit to the country as a whole

Table 6.6 indicates that in the pre-colonial era, people from Kigali thought that *umuganda* was
very beneficial to the country as a whole (45%), while respondents from Western Province
thought that is was just beneficial (51%). In the colonial and post-colonial periods until the
genocide, *umuganda* was seen as just beneficial to the county as a whole (36% and 49%
respectively in Kigali, and 48%, 57%, in Western Province). While participants from Kigali

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[47] Imihigo (umuhigo, in a singular sense) is a traditional accountability mechanism which has been institutionalized
as a means of enhancing local government reform and stimulating development. Failure to meet this public
commitment leads to dishonour (see UNIFEM: *Imihigo*: Adapting a traditional accountability mechanism to
improve response to gender-based violence, www.uniferm.org , accessed on 16 June 2011.

thought that *umuganda* after the genocide is very beneficial to the country (49%), Western Province respondents thought that it is just beneficial (52%). Of significance, though, is the 41% from Kigali, who responded that in the post-genocide period, *umuganda* is just beneficial. In general, few perceive that *umuganda* is not beneficial (11% in Kigali and 14% in Western Province), opinions ranging from beneficial to not beneficial at all.

Table 6.6: Level of benefit: country as a whole

Location		Pre-colonial		Colonial		Post-colonial		Post-genocide	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Kigali	**Country as a whole**	**68**	**89**	**70**	**92**	**74**	**97**	**76**	**100**
	Very beneficial	34	45	22	29	20	26	37	49
	Beneficial	24	32	27	36	37	49	31	41
	Less beneficial	6	8	15	20	14	18	6	8
	Not beneficial at all	4	5	6	8	3	4	2	3
Western Province	**Country as whole**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**63**	**100**
	Very beneficial	24	38	18	29	12	19	21	33
	Beneficial	32	51	30	48	36	57	33	52
	Less beneficial	4	6	11	17	13	21	9	14
	Not beneficial at all	3	5	4	6	2	3	0	0

Despite the findings discussed on the benefits of *umuganda,* there was no clarity on how advantageous *umuganda* is to the country as a whole. This might be due to some conceptual confusion, whereby some respondents understand the notion 'country as a whole' to mean a state or government, while a few others interpret 'country as a whole' to mean government and people. This then could explain why the results appear mixed; those in Kigali are divided between assessing *umuganda* as very beneficial (49%) and just beneficial (41%) for the country as a state.

As evidence of the benefit of *umuganda* to the country as a whole, ordinarily community members, government leaders and elders referred to various roads, principally main roads,

which were built in the colonial period using *umuganda*. Participants cherish the continuing benefits for individuals, communities, political leaders and the country as a whole. For example, in Western Province, the most visible benefit of *umuganda* that was identified was the main road that connects with the border of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) - Cyangungu to Kigali- despite its being built with forced labour, which is different from the original conception and interpretation of *umuganda*. Herbst notes that road construction is an important instrument of state control (2000: 3).

Other visible benefits that were mentioned are coffee and tea plantations that are still contributing the bulk of the national economy. However, considering the examples and evidence given, one still questions how *umuganda* has benefited the poor, bearing the philosophy of *umuganda* in mind. What is the extent of state control over the practice of *umuganda*?

6.2 *Umuganda* as it is practised today

Has the practice of *umuganda* improved, remained unchanged or worsened? As Figure 6.1 indicates, the overall results from both communities, Kigali and Western Province, indicate that 58% of participants think that *umuganda* has improved, while 30% responded that it has remained unchanged and 12% think that *umuganda* has worsened.

Figure 6. 1: Improvement of *umuganda* since colonialism
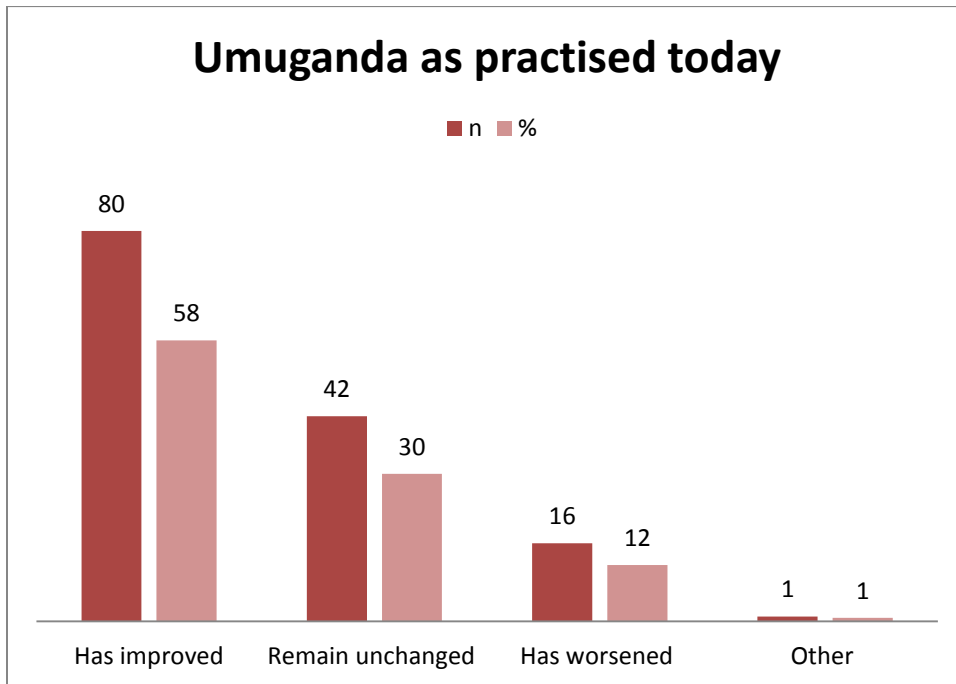
Seeking evidence of how *umuganda* has improved, one elder explained:

> Nowadays leaders come down and work with local people. People can present their problems or ask questions of leaders. If there has been a problem in the community, the solution has to be found and a follow up made and the outcome will be presented in the next *umuganda*. Currently, low class-peoples' voices are easily heard which was not there before (EL 5-b 30 Dec 2010).

Some evidence given in the Kigali focus group discussion, regarding the improvement of *umuganda,* was noted as follows:

- Now leaders come to *umuganda* and we are able work together
- People are able to sit after *umuganda* and present or discuss what is not going well in their community and thereafter find solutions

- Local people can organise themselves to do something that is good for themselves

- People get to know each other through *umuganda* (FGD 17-a Dec 2010).

A local leader explained that *umuganda* has also improved in terms of hours and days of performing it:

> For example, in the colonial period *umuganda* was called upon as much as three days a week, in the post-colonial era it was done once a week, and currently, post-genocide, it is done once a month, so maybe it will end up being done once a year (LL 6-b 24 Dec 2010).

In general, currently the practice of *umuganda* is believed to have restored pride in Rwandans. Addressing the population who participated in *umuganda*, in Kicukiro District, President Kagame argued:

> The difference between Rwandan and other people is that we have decided to find solutions to our own problems. When people decide to work together for their common good, there is nothing they cannot achieve. Let us mobilise energy and embrace these home-grown initiatives so that we can rapidly transform our nations[48] [Speech by President Kagame, 26 May 2012].

Specific views as to whether the current policy of *umuganda* is successful or not, was also sought.

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[48]Kagame Joins Kicukiro Residents in *umuganda*. *The Sunday Times*, 27 May 2012.

6.3 The success of the current policy of *umuganda*

The question of the success of the current policy of *umuganda* elicited different responses from the two communities. While in Kigali the majority (62%) of respondents reported that the current policy of *umuganda* is successful, 57% in Western Province responded that it is not successful. Overall, the policy of *umuganda*was regarded as moderately unsuccessful (53%).

While it is not easy to ascertain what success means, some clarity emerged in responses to aditional specific qustions: Firstly, has the practice of *umuganda*improved your socio-economic standing? Secondly, does the current form of *umuganda* help to make the communities more governable – to rule, to control them? Thirdly, have communities, because of *umuganda*, become better informed about political circumstances – that is, improved political maturity? The results are presented in Table 6.7.

Respondents thought that *umuganda* has not helped in increasing their household income (70% in Kigali, and 64% in Western Province). This is despite one of the themes of *umuganda* meetings which are designed to motivate people to form and join associations for income-generating activities, which are supported by both government and private agents. Discussants expressed reservations about these associations.

The complaint is that, "it is not anyone who can join an asossiation for income generation because to become a member requires money (a membership deposit) which the majority cannot afford" (FGD- 1b 27 Dec 2010, OCM- 22a 02 Jan 2011). It also believed that *umuganda* takes more time for the rural population than could otherwise be used for their livelhoods (FGD- 1b 27 Dec 2010).

Table 6.7: *Umuganda*: perceptions of success

Location		N	%
Kigali	**Improvement of household income**	**47**	**100**
	No	33	70
	Yes	14	30
Western Province	**Improvement of household income**	**28**	**100**
	No	18	64
	Yes	10	36
Kigali	**More governable**[49]	**47**	**100**
	No	19	40
	Yes	28	60
Western Province	**More governable**	**28**	**100**
	No	15	54
	Yes	13	46
Kigali	**More politically mature**[50]	**47**	**100**
	No	18	38
	Yes	32	68
Western Province	**More politically mature**	**28**	**100**
	No	12	43
	Yes	16	57

While respondentsin Kigali believed that the government has moulded a more easily governable population because of *umuganda* (60%), those in Western Province do not think so (54%). *Umuganda* has turned into a state-led ideology, which isused as a form of easy mobilisation, monitoring, communication and control.

Finally, respondents perceived that *umuganda* has brought aboutgreater political maturity (68% in Kigali and 57% in Western Province). This has come about through engagement with leaders and gaining accessto government, as leaders work with ordinary people during *umuganda*.

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[49] A more governable population is taken to mean easy to direct/ to rule or a population that obeys their leaders.
[50] Political maturity is taken to mean a population that understandsthe nature of political change in the country.

Other opinions from local leaders were taken as evidence of the success of *umuganda*. These are as follows:

- *Umuganda* has kept the country consistently clean

- People are able to take responsibility for the mantainance of public facilities

- People present and find solutions for individual or community problems during *umuganda*

- Maintenance of security of communities

- Taking care of the environment (LL 7a 01 Jan 2011).

Recalling that a slim overall majority regarded the current policy of *umuganda* as unsuccessful, what was seen as problematic?

6.3.1 Challenges in administering *umuganda*

The communities in Kigali and Western Province identified two major challenges in administering *umuganda.* As Table 6.8 indicates, these are: (1) attendance (62% in Kigali, and 84% in Western Province); and (2) A lack of necessary tools (80% in Kigali, and 86% in Western Province). Additionally, Western Province identified the challenge of *umuganda* interrupting people at the weekend (51%).

Table 6.8: Challenges in administering *umuganda*

Location			n	%
Kigali	**Participation of the people**		**76**	**100**
		Yes	47	62
		No	29	38
Western Province			**63**	**100**
		Yes	53	84
		No	10	16
Kigali	**Lack of necessary tools to carry out the work**		**76**	**100**
		Yes	61	80
		No	15	20
Western Province			**63**	**100**
		Yes	54	86
		No	9	14
Kigali	**Interrupting people at the weekend**		**76**	**100**
		Yes	29	38
		No	47	62
Western Province			**63**	**100**
		Yes	32	51
		No	31	49

As much as *umuganda* is regarded as beneficial, the majority admitted that they do not attend *umuganda* often, if at all. Table 6.9 indicates the level of participation for each community.

Table 6.9: Level of participation

		n	**100**
Kigali	**How often do you go to *umuganda*?**	76	100
	All the time	3	4
	Some time	37	49
	Never	36	47
Western Province	**How often do you go to *umuganda*?**	63	100
	All the time	26	41
	Some time	28	44
	Never	9	14

Of the 76 participants in Kigali, only 4% indicated that they attend the monthly *umuganda* all the time, while 49% in Kigali and 44% in Western Province said that they undertake *umuganda* some of the time. However, 47% in Kigali and 14% in Western Province admitted that they never go to *umuganda*. While few people 14% revealed never attending *umuganda* in Western Province, in Kigali a substantially higher number of 47% did not. This could be because it is more difficult to control people in the city than in the rural settings. Various reasons were mentioned for not participating in *umuganda.* Most revolve around its poor management.

First, there is the problem of a lack of necessary tools. Activities performed during *umuganda* extended from picking up rubbish to building houses. Different tools are therefore needed but most people do not have them or access to them. Such tools can be found at a reasonable price. Why is there a lack of equipment? Does it have to do with people not preparing themselves for *umuganda* or not valuing the activities much? Are the tools unaffordable? Do people avoid these tools because of the traumatic experiences of their usage as weapons during the genocide? While all these questions may be relevant, the clear general answer is that this is indicative of the little value given to *umuganda*. According to an interviewee:

> In Kigali city for instance, it is not easy to find people owning, for example, hoes, machetes and so on. Many people come with no tools at all, expecting to share with someone who probably has one. Others will bring tools that are not matching or not useful to the kind of activities to be done on that day because that is all they have (Interview OCM- 13a 02 Jan 2011).

An ordinary community member explained that the lack of necessary tools is part of what discourages many people from participating in *umuganda* activities, as some will arrive and then return home without having done anything because there were not enough tools to share (OCM- 13a 02 January 2011). Even though the policy document on *umuganda* indicates that tools will be provided by each relevant administration unit (*umudugudu*) for the activities of

umuganda this has not yet been implemented. One can see, perhaps, the failure of the government to provide tools, as well as the lack of awareness or inability of ordinary people to buy them.

But in rural areas like Western Province some tools for *umuganda* activities should not be a problem, since almost everyone is involved in at least small-scale farming activities. A community member explained that people arrive with the wrong tools, possibly because they did not hear the government announcement for the day or because they do not have the proper tools for that particular activity. One participant reported:

> Instead of going empty handed, we just take whatever we have to be
>
> safe in case the local defence forces see you. They won't think that you
>
> are escaping *umuganda* (OCM 5-b 29 Dec 2010).

Note the element of fear in this response. Has *umuganda* become forced labour where people participate out of fear?

Another issue that was identified is organising and performing *umuganda* during the weekend. This is due to the fact that many social functions like weddings are organised on Saturdays. The focus group discussions in both Kigali and Western Province indicated that it is not easy to finish *umuganda* at twelve or in the afternoon and be able to attend a funeral, for example (FGD-2 17 Dec 2010). Other challenges like wrongly informing people about time, venue and the kind of activities that will be taking place were identified during focus group discussions. It was also noted that sometimes people can spend time looking for the place where *umuganda* is meant to be carried out, resulting in them arriving at the venue late or giving up.

6.3.2 What can be done to help improve the efficiency of *umuganda*

Based on the challenges to the practice of *umuganda* that have just been discussed, what can be done to improve the efficiency of *umuganda?* Table 6.10 reveals six areas that respondents felt need to be considered. These are as follows:

(a) There is a need to increase the number of participants in *umuganda* (71% in Kigali, and 93% in Western Province), despite its being compulsory. This suggests a failure by government to implement and enforce its policy, even though there are formal sanctions for non-attendance.

(b) Only participants in Kigali (78%) indicated that there is a need to improve the quality of management in *umuganda*. Learning earlier that *umuganda* is organised by government leaders, one of the issues that came up every time was the suggestion that there should be an accurate selection of activities planned in time and also activities that are beneficial to the community. A community member explain:

> Even though we know that every last Saturday of the month there is *umuganda*, we don't know what will be done and we are told of what to do and where to go for *umuganda* on Friday evening before the day (or few hours) of *umuganda* and sometimes they don't say anything until the day of *umuganda*. Sometimes I don't go because I don't know what is going on (OCM 10-a 14 Dec 2010).

Table 6.10: What can be done to improve the efficiency of *umuganda*?

Location		n	%
Kigali	**Motivate people to increase the number of attendance**	**76**	**100**
	Yes	71	93
	No	5	7
Western Province		**63**	**100**
	Yes	58	92
	No	5	8
Kigali	**Improve the quality of management**	**76**	**100**
	Yes	59	78
	No	17	22
Western Province		**63**	**100**
	Yes	11	17
	No	52	83
Kigali	**Increase the number of working hours**	**76**	**100**
	Yes	5	7
	No	71	93
Western Province		**63**	**100**
	Yes	4	6
	No	59	94
Kigali	**Reduce the number of working hours**	**76**	**100**
	Yes	63	83
	No	13	17
Western Province		**63**	**100**
	Yes	26	41
	No	37	59
Kigali	**Make an accurate selected of activities**	**76**	**100**
	Yes	70	92
	No	6	8
Western Province		**63**	**100**
	Yes	60	95
	No	3	5
Kigali	**Restructure decision-making policy**	**76**	**100**
	Yes	56	74
	No	20	26
Western Province		**63**	**100**
	Yes	41	65
	No	22	35

What is discouraging here is that a community activity which should be managed by the people themselves depend son communication from above, which keeps people in total ignorance. This signifies how *umuganda* has become less people-centred.

(c) Both in Kigali and Western Province it was thought that the number of working hours in *umuganda* should not be increased (93% in Kigali and 94% in Western Province).

(d) Participants in Western Province (83%) indicated that there is a need to reduce the number of working hours. The hours for *umuganda* are indicated in the policy. Although this was not viewed as an issue in Kigali, the reduction of working hours indicates a concern for rural people who count on maximizing their time, especially for their food security. Taking one day off per week and sometimes two days is felt to be too much and it is therefore logical for the rural population to ask for a reduction in hours, especially when one takes into account that most rural households are "headed by a child, a widow, or a prisoner's wife" (Mutebi, Stone, and Thin, 2003: 255), as a legacy of the genocide.

(e) The need to plan activities properly (92% in Kigali, and 95% in Western Province). Apparently inadequate advance warning is given. Respondents say that they are often informed on the night before what activities are to be done and sometimes they are even informed on the morning itself. This partly explains the reluctance of those who do not attend *umuganda*.

(f) Restructure the decision-making policy is the view of 74% in Kigali, and 65% in Western Province. This could mean reconsidering whether *umuganda* should be compulsory. Alternatively, a local leader in Western Province advocated reducing the fines that are imposed on those who do not participate, in order to make them more affordable.

One of the discussants said that making *umuganda* more relevant to the people by choosing activities that are directly beneficial to them is more important. "Government leaders should be avoiding making *umuganda* a forceful practice. This includes long speeches that are given after *umuganda*. They [government officials] need to prepare activities and speeches that have

direct benefit, *intérêt direct,* to the people" (OCM 15-a 17 Dec 2010). Participants suggested that the government should involve them in planning the activities of *umuganda*, and in the long run leaving themselves to manage *umuganda* on their own without state involvement.

6.4 Prepare for improvement

Participants think that both training communities in order for them to solve problems themselves and that leaders should motivate people to participate are crucial in order to improve the efficiency of *umuganda* (64% in Kigali, and60% in Western Province) See Table 6.11. In a short discussion with those in charge of *umuganda* and community mobilization in the Ministry of Local Government, the lack of good organisation of *umuganda* was acknowledged and it was stated that there was already a plan to arrange training for local leaders (LL 1 14 Dec 2010).

Elsewhere it was suggested that there should be less *umuganda* activities devoted to state projects and rather an increase in those that benefit the poor in the community, for example, in building houses for the needy in their midst, or even helping in other domestic activities (OCM 16-b 29 Dec 2010).

Table 6.11: Improvements that need to be made

Location		n	%
Kigali	**What improvements can be made?**	**76**	**100**
	Train communities in order to solve problems themselves	21	28
	Leaders should motivate people to participation in *umuganda*	5	7
	Both of the above	49	64
	Other preparation	1	1
Western Province	**What improvements can be made?**	**62**	**100**
	Train communities in order to solve problems themselves	20	32
	Leaders should motivate people to participation in *umuganda*	6	10
	Both of the above	38	60

According to the interviewees, local people need to be given a chance in planning and organizing activities of *umuganda*, which they believe will help selecting activities that directly benefit local communities (OCM- 26b 01 January 2011).

6.4.1 Prospects: what future is there for *umuganda*?

Based on their knowledge, participants were asked to predict the future of *umuganda*. Table 6.12 indicates that the population thought that *umuganda* would continue to be practised in the future but that it would be ineffectively done (71% in Kigali, and 52% in Western Province). The population did not think that at a certain point *umuganda* will be discontinued (91% in Kigali, and 89% in Western Province), or that it will be replaced by forced labour (87% in Kigali, and 79% in Western Province).

Table 6.12: The future of *umuganda*

Location			n	%
Kigali	**Will continue and will be effectively done**		**76**	**100**
		Yes	22	29
		No	54	71
Western Province			**63**	100
		Yes	30	48
		No	33	52
Kigali	**Will be discontinued**		**76**	**100**
		Yes	7	9
		No	69	91
Western Province			63	**100**
		Yes	7	11
		No	56	89
Kigali	**Will be replaced by forced labour**		**76**	**100**
		Yes	10	13
		No	66	87
Western Province			**63**	**100**
		Yes	13	21
		No	50	79
Kigali	**Other prospects**		36	47
Western Province			0	0

Moreover, 47% of the participants from Kigali had other views concerning the future of *umuganda*. The main issue raised was that *umuganda* should not be used for political purposes.

According to the participants, *umuganda* is a specifically Rwandan philosophy, which is rooted in indigenous values. Despite that it has been manipulated by political leaders and now serves more the regime's ideology than ordinary local people, it is still considered to be an important practice for Rwandans.   However, one elder notes that for *umuganda* to develop, transformation is necessary. What is required, he said, is:

> *Umuganda* - that will bring a good harvest. This is *umuganda* that is not based on inequality; *umuganda* which does not involve force or any kind of terrorism; *umuganda* that is built on co-operation and mutual assistance, that can benefit all citizens and the country as a whole (EL 9-a 25 Dec 2010).

Given the divisiveness of Rwanda's past, this is the type of *umuganda* that is envisaged to rebuild and re-unite the nation. On this note, a local community member commented that "to predict the future of *umuganda* will depend on the future changes of the regimes. Just as colonial masters and post-colonial governments had changed the original meaning and practice of *umuganda*, the future regime can also change it into anything that we cannot predict for now" (OCM 16-a 03 Jan 2011).

Even though the majority of the discussants wished that *umuganda* continues, a significant number, 43% from Kigali and 39% from Western province disagreed, for reasons discussed previously, namely, that *umuganda* has become a state project, which is detached from ordinary people and of little benefit to them.

6.5 Conclusion

The chapter began by examining the outcome of *umuganda* from the view point of government leaders as well as that of the local population. The analysis indicates that the influence of government leaders on *umuganda* has resulted in it being viewed as less beneficial to local people and instead becoming more and more a means of implementing the government's plans and activities. Challenges in administering *umuganda* mostly revolve around poor planning and organisation, as well as the failure of government to implement its own policy. The practice of *umuganda* is under state control, whereas community members are distanced from it.

Those who saw prospects in a reformed version of *umuganda* suggested several avenues of improvements, mostly involving local community members in planning and deciding their own priorities for such labour. This would entail ordinary people reclaiming the ownership of *umuganda.* Hence, there is a need to re-examine the current policy and practice of *umuganda.* This is the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Overall Interpretation of *Umuganda*

Introduction

This chapter aims at further interpreting and understanding the empirical data presented in the previous chapters. The evidence presented suggests several lines of enquiry. Firstly, the chapter discusses changes in understanding the current practice of *umuganda*. Secondly, the alteration of the purpose of *umuganda* over time is assessed, thirdly, the organisation of *umuganda* and, fourthly, the overall activities associated with it. Fifthly, is the outcome of the practice of *umuganda*. Table 7.1 encapsulates these considerations according to the various historical periods; each will be explained in turn, drawing on the evidence from the interviews and focus group discussions held in Kigali and in Western Province.

Table 7.1: Evolution of *umuganda*

Umuganda	Pre-colonial (-1895)	Colonial (1890s–1962)	Post-colonial (1962-1994)	Post-genocide (1995-2011)
1. Idea	Community's idea: Mutual assistance work	Colonial and King's idea: Forced labour for public work	Government idea: Voluntary and forced labour for public work	Government idea: Voluntary and forced labour for public and individual work
2. Purpose	Maintain individual and unifying community well-being	Mobilise economic activities for economic growth while sowing division	Nation building by popularizing one political party	Communicating government decisions and implementing government plans
3. Organisation	At the grassroots: mutual assistance	Hierarchy, with a top-down chain of command (colonial administration)	Hierarchy, with a top-down chain of command (Government administration)	Mix of hierarchy with a top-down chain of command (Government administration)
4. Overall activities	Communal socio-economic activities	State economic activities	Non-economic activities; purpose is to mobilise the people	Non-economic activities: purpose is to mobilise the people
5. Outcomes of practice	Community and social well-being	Colonial economy and building colonial administration	Ruling party's ideology and strategy to remain in power	Government ideology to implement its programs

7.1 *Umuganda*: from traditional philosophy to government policy

We learned previously of *umuganda* as a traditional philosophy and practice of people working together to solve household and community problems. The idea was influenced by the understanding that individual belonging and the well-being of society were central to the practice of *umuganda* in the early days. The concept is related to the idea of solidarity and a communal sense of living, which can in turn be related to the South African philosophy of *ubuntu*, 'I am because you are'. According to data presented earlier, the spirit of *umuganda* may also be interpreted as: 'if a neighbour is hungry I am also hungry, if s/he is homeless I am homeless'. It is an idea that emphasises the essence of human togetherness.

Interviewees thought that this understanding drove Banya-Rwanda in the early days to join efforts to identify and solve their neighbour's problems whenever required. Until the arrival of missionaries (toward the end of the 1880s during the reign of King Rwabugiri), *umuganda* grew from being a household and community initiative to one that incorporated the entire system under the kingdom's administration. It was also learned that the King or chief could call upon community members to contribute by working on any identified need. Moreover, the needs were confined to that of the community and did not affect *umuganda* as practised within households.

Therefore, even though occasionally *umuganda* could be organised in a hierarchical way, notably by the King, *umuganda* continued to be regarded as an integral part of social life in the early banya-Rwanda community. From the early practice of *umuganda,* the notion of community occupied a very important place in people's livelihoods. This intertwined community life with the practice of *umuganda* in a support system for people and their communities.

Each member of the community felt intrinsically and ethically socially obliged to participate in *umuganda* and other social activities since that embodied life in the community. With this ethos, it is clear that the idea and practice of *umuganda* in the early days was in essence a communal practice for each community member's well-being. This understanding suggests a relational mapping of *umuganda* conveying how it is tied to people's social well-being. The spirit of caring and serving each other in the community embodies what may be called 'social well-being', meaning a centre of nurturing harmony and development. This is illustrated in Figure 7.1. People knew what was needed and how to respond to poverty or other social problems in the community.

Figure 7.1: Relational mapping of the practice of *umuganda* and people's well-being

An understanding of the relationship between *umuganda* and social well-being points to its nature and evolution, as well as to its contextual and periodic responses to institutions (such as those of government responses at various historical junctures). The understanding of this relationship also sheds light on *umuganda's* outcome in current post-genocide society. Equally important is the possibility that social change can actually be achieved through *umuganda* initiatives, whose values transcend historical, social, cultural and politico-economic circumstances, while at the same time evolving in response to them.

The fieldwork indicated, however, that this traditional understanding of *umuganda* has been overpowered by an alternative general political idea of what a community needs for its well-being. This was learnt from the colonial regime. Informants said that the colonial system either ignored or did not recognise that *umuganda* was not purely a matter of labour but was more importantly, in its original form, a spirit of care and togetherness. The colonial masters were fortunate to find a society where collective labour was a norm of life. With colonial regulation, *umuganda* lost its moral force to become coercive labour which was enforced by corporal punishment. According to interviewees, *umuganda* was then understood to be *uburetwa* or *shiku*, that is, forced labour initiated by colonial masters.

Evidence from interviews and focus group discussions show that since the post-colonial period until now, the idea of *umuganda* has shifted from a sense of social well-being through community endeavour to being used for purposes of the state. This has entailed public work initiated and organised by the state. According to Article Two of the current policy document of *umuganda,* No 53/2007 of 17/11/2007, the post-genocide definition of *umuganda* is: "the gathering efforts of many people in order for them to carry out a general public-interest activity" (Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda, 2008: 5). Thus ever since independence various regimes have perpetuated the colonial transformation of *umuganda*, subverting its original purpose and what its practice could contribute and for whom. It was discovered that *umuganda* became and remains an instrument of state policy and control, which is used essentially for government ends.

7.2 The purpose of *umuganda*

The initial purpose of *umuganda* had two elements. Firstly, *umuganda* was for poverty eradication. As was learnt from informants, *umuganda* balanced out inequality amongst community members. Even though there could be those who were regarded as more affluent, notably the cattle keepers, there was a mutual responsibility to ensure that everyone had shelter and food. Secondly, people being dependent on one another in the community

automatically created a spirit of union. People focused more on the value that each person had in the community rather than on what could divide them (FGD-1b 27 December 2010). Discussants noted that participation then in *umuganda* was more of an ethical obligation based on a measure of reciprocity. This reciprocity was not immediate and was not specified as a condition of involvement in *umuganda*. But a moral sense of duty was felt since it was expected that community members had to take part in whatever activities were organised, especially as those benefiting from the practice were part of the same community.

Umuganda was believed to have had great value for household well-being[51] until the arrival of colonialism. According to the informants, *umuganda* as a moral force was weakened by the regulations of the colonial system, becoming forced labour that only benefited colonial masters and the King. This explains why some respondents reported that there was no *umuganda* in the colonial period, but only *uburetwa* (force labour). The motive behind *umuganda* had changed, when it was organised by outsiders (non-community members). The original purpose of *umuganda* became blurred when it was defined by and directly benefited the colonial masters. Forced labour under the colonial administration aimed at mobilising economic activities for the state of the colonial economy, while sowing division among banya-Rwanda.[52]

The post-colonial regime did not change this state of affairs. Instead governments replaced colonial forced labour with new forms of organized collective labour. *Umuganda* continued to be viewed from the perspective of state development and economic growth. Hence, scholars such as Straus (2006: 109) and Verwimp (2003: 13) identify the post-colonial regime as a state imbued with a developmental ideology, based on its own understanding of development.

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[51] Respondents defined the well-being of households and community in terms of poverty reduction and the unification of people in the community.
[52] Recall the ethnic identities initiated by the colonial system, which identified ba-Hutu as agrarian and best for forced labour, while ba-Tutsi - pastoralists - were identified as leaders (See Chapter Two).

Some respondents noted that *umuganda* was directed towards nation–building. This is confirmed in promotional documents issued by the government.[53] As quoted in Verwimp, "*Umuganda* must be planned in order to reach its objective, developing our country by building the necessary infrastructure for its economy and allowing the new Rwandan to engage in his work" (2006: 20). Scholars have criticised this development ideology for increasing divisions between Rwandans that were created during colonial rule (Mamdani, 2001). This division is understood in the ethical orientation of *umuganda*, as the practice of agrarians, the sons of the soil/ the bahutu.

The idea of 'national building' is problematic, since it was seen as promoting a nation built on ethnic exclusion where one ethnic group was favoured at the expense of the other (OCM – 01 January, 2011). *Umuganda* was then regarded as the institution of the true Rwandan - meaning agrarian - while pastoralists were regarded as non-Rwandan (Verwimp, 2003, Mamdani, 2001). Some of the respondents confirmed these arguments: that *umuganda* turned out to be an aba-Hutu movement, with which other Rwandan groups could not identify. As they said, aba-Tutsi were scared of attending *umuganda* because this divisiveness was being propagated through songs, for instance, thus preparing the way for genocide. A great deal has been written on how *umuganda* was used to implement the genocide policy (See the sources listed in Chapter Two).

Current reports indicate that Rwanda is still a very poor, unequal society, characterised by a sharp disparity between urban and rural areas (Uwimbabazi & Lawrence, 2011: 12). More than 80% of the population rely on subsistence (UNDP, 2010: 11). According to Mamdani (2001: 146), development in Rwanda was conceived more in terms of economic growth than in terms of social development. He argued that this resulted in development projects that were inappropriate and have left no sustainable positive effects on people's lives (Mamdani, 2001: 147). This may mean that, even where citizens participated in activities, they were not involved in the planning stages and hence did not understand why particular activities were undertaken. The lack of participation in planning leads to people identifying themselves with government or

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[53] L'Umuganda dans le développement National, (1990). Présidence du M.RN.D., service des affaires économiques, Kigali.

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privately planned projects and to "perceive these development projects as state/private-owned rather than their own" (Mukarubuga, 2006: 10). This in turn was replicated in how *umuganda* was conceived and practised.

Both scholars[54] and participants in the focus group discussions speak out about the continuing misinterpretation of *umuganda*. The definition and objective of *umuganda*, as indicated in the law of establishing *umuganda* No. 53/2007, is indicative of how the current purpose of *umuganda* has not changed from that of the post-colonial government (Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda, 2008). The current law states that the establishment of the policy of *umuganda* aims at "promoting development activities in the framework of supporting the national budget and provides an opportunity for cordiality among people."

The discussants identified two main purposes which underlie the present policy of *umuganda*. The first is to re-unite the people of Rwanda. It is hoped that through collective action performed through *umuganda* people will be able to socialize and thereby reconcile. The second is poverty reduction. The post-genocide government hopes to attain its developmental goals through taking advantage of the free labour provided by *umuganda*.

Moreover, evidence presented from the field indicated that from independence onwards, *umuganda* has also served the purpose of communicating government decisions to the population. Through its communication style people have been sensitised to government programs. In the period leading up to the genocide, propaganda popularised the ruling political party and fuelled the genocide itself. Nowadays during *umuganda* the aim is to communicate government plans and decisions to the population so that they can be implemented.

Nevertheless, the kind of order and control which is evident in the current practice of *umuganda* contradicts the language of the government policy document which promotes unifying all Rwandans and aims to eradicate poverty. From the interviews and the focus group

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[54]Mamdani 1996 and 2001; Verwimp, 2005.

discussions, it was learned that in the *umuganda* gatherings government leaders present speeches based on themes that the central government has identified and transmitted to local leaders. Local leaders, in turn, are expected to make sure that people respond to the programs. Thus participants in *umuganda* in this way are reduced to a passive audience.

Policy-makers, scholars and practitioners agree that participation is a process in which communities not only provide labour but also plan, take decisions and accept responsibility for the maintenance of projects (Swanepoel and Beer, 1998: 22). On the other hand, White (1996: 14) warns that while participation has the potential to challenge patterns of dominance, this may also be the means through which existing power relations are entrenched and reproduced. Can it be that in the case of *umuganda* in the current Rwanda that ordinary people or government officials do not know the essence of participation?

Community involvement in the implementation of government programs can hardly be considered to be community participation, unless there is at least some degree of decision-making which brings together authorities and the community. *Umuganda* is a type of popular participation, as internal regulations and modes of operation have been pre-determined by government officials without local people's consent. Although government policy claims to always respect the communities' right to decide on their own affairs, it is unlikely that local officials will seek to have their own views adopted. This has been widely noted in gatherings of *umuganda*, where people merely follow instructions from their leaders.

Participation in the practice of *umuganda* is specified in the performance contract signed by leaders of the provinces. This is noted in Letter No. 02323/0306 of 21/10/2010.[55] For example, in the Western Province, instructions directing different activities that need to be performed at the *umudugudu* level clearly stress that local communities are compelled to carry out *umuganda*. Although the performance contract includes Kigali city, it was found that the rural

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[55]Western Province, a letter from the District of Rusizi to the Executive Secretary of Sector Giheke, 30 October 2010.

population is pressured to carry out *umuganda* weekly*,* whereas the latter is only done monthly in Kigali city.

From the fieldwork, it was discovered that the ideology of community participation underpinning *umuganda* has been rendered meaningless by the belief that the power of the state has extended so far that it has diminished the possibility that ordinary people can become properly involved in order to address matters crucial to them. *Umuganda,* which is understood as a state-led practice, runs contrary to the civic inclusiveness of the original idea. Government leaders are the ones who decide what to do and who supervise what is being done, which gives little meaning and actual value to participation in *umuganda* by local people.

7.3 From traditional to institutional organisation of *umuganda*

Respondents indicated that originally *umuganda* was organized at the local level. Individual households could raise a concern about an individual or family, and then community members were obliged to participate in an attempt to solve the issue. Chiefs could also organise *umuganda* but they would have to take into account the existing arrangements. For example, "if the chief organised *umuganda* on a particular day that clashes with another social organization, community members informed the chief to reschedule his *umuganda* until they had finished theirs" (EL 7-a 16 Dec 2011). Sharing information and compromising in decision-making was commonplace in the pre-colonial era, where the role of ordinary people was significant in shaping *umuganda*.

In the colonial period, as we have seen, *umuganda* was organized by the central colonial administration, in which Rwandan chiefs and the King played a key role. Local social organization was then given little value in this hierarchical chain of decision-making. *Umuganda* then became detached from individual ordinary community members. *Umuganda* was transformed into *uburetwa,* based on compulsion which was enforced by the imposition of corporal punishment.

Since independence, *umuganda* has remained a government and state program. Post-colonial governments, especially under the MRND, decided which public works/projects were to be undertaken, as well as who might be excluded from participating in *umuganda* (Barnhart, 2011: 5). *Umuganda* was a medium of communication and propaganda, especially in the times leading up to genocide, where many were mobilised to attend *umuganda*. But propagandas then excluded the ba-Tutsi so that they would not know government plans (FGD b-1 20 Dec 2010).

Although the current government also decides what projects are to be worked on during *umuganda*, it is done through the decentralisation structures, which reach down to the smallest unit in the community (see Chapter Four for the government structure of *umuganda*). However, data presented indicates that, despite having decentralisation structures in place, the organisation of *umuganda* activities is still not at the local level. Therefore, it can be argued that relying on the central government or on top-down forms of decision-making not only denies citizens freedom but also opens a gap between development initiatives and the local people as beneficiaries. This empirical study suggests that not involving beneficiaries of the policy or project in its design and management stops people from taking ownership of any planned development programme and thus restricts their participation.

Secondly, ordinary people are still required to perform *umuganda*, which is overseen by local government officials. However, the evidence presented indicates that some aspects of administering *umuganda* have changed since the mid-1990s. For example, the frequency of participation in *umuganda* has changed from weekly, in the post-colonial era, to monthly in the urban areas. While the policy document specifies that *umuganda* should be performed once a month, those in rural areas are still subjected to the weekly *umuganda.* This facts show disparity in the requirements of the practice of *umuganda* in urban and rural areas.

Data from this research indicate that local community members cannot or are not motivated to organize *umuganda* for any community member's need in their midst. This makes the state and the society (as the people) function separately, because people still think that *umuganda* is state-driven.[56]

The organisation of *umuganda* serves state and political leaders and addresses concerns that do not improve the conditions of the very poor in the community. In general, *umuganda* has consistently been understood to have shifted from being a traditional philosophy to a state and government policy. It is ironic that what was once used in the service of people has turned into being at the service of the leadership of the state. The implication of this change is again seen in the activities performed for *umuganda*, most of which do not meet local communities' needs. The rationale of *umuganda* activities includes the eradication of poverty but this is not evident in practice.

From the data presented already, it appears that *umuganda* activities and gatherings are organised at the sector level. The activities planned are passed on to the cell leader in charge of *umuganda* and community mobilisation, and from the cell level it is relayed downwards to the village (*umudugudu*). Then, a village leader is expected to announce to the community members of the *umudugudu* details concerning their participation and the activities to be implemented. This hierarchical arrangement is depicted in Figure 7.2.

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[56] Jennings (2000: 2) comments that it is not participation if the purpose is to engage an indigenous population to convince them of the wisdom of a program which they took no part in forming, or if contact with the local population is used to confirm the integrity of a preconceived idea.

Figure 7.2: Organisation of the practice of *umuganda*

As the diagram shows, the sector is somewhat at a remove from the local people. There are times, though, when *umuganda* can be organised at the *umudugudu* level, for instance, the case of the Western Province's weekly *umuganda*. Even then, ordinary local people are either not motivated or not allowed to initiate *umuganda* without permission from the *umudugudu* leader. Most activities are planned from the *umurenge,* cell council and are often directed by the district level to the *umudugudu*. Beside some informal *umuganda*, organised by private or civic institutions, it was learned that even the weekly *umuganda* in the Western Province is sometimes organised at the district level. Although occasionally activities will be planned at *umudugudu* level, the general understanding is that an *umudugudu* leader acts on instructions from the district council. The government's interpretation of decentralisation is a chain of command from upper to lower levels. This has had the effect of disempowering local people.

There seems to be little encouragement for the people to make decisions themselves concerning *umuganda* and to instil in them the confidence to take concerted action in a manner they consider most appropriate to their circumstances.

7.4 Overall activities of *umuganda*

Focus group discussions and interviews revealed that the forms of *umuganda* during the pre-colonial period were domestic. It entailed building shelters for those in need but it also extended to food production. The reasoning was clear: 'as a shelter was important to have, so are other basic needs'. *Umuganda* was a mechanism of social welfare which sought to prevent starvation and homelessness in the community. It was said that even though there was no modern transport community members made sure that a sick person was transported to a possible health-care facility. Interviews and focus group discussions pointed out that *umuganda* was always called upon urgently (*guheka*) to carry the sick. *Umuganda* was the means of responding to any social emergency in the community.

The colonial system deliberately missed or ignored this social functionality of *umuganda*. Rather, economic activities came to be at the centre of the practice of *umuganda*, ignoring or suppressing the social and cultural dimension. Intensive labour in, for example, planting tea, coffee, trees and building main roads and public buildings, was forcefully introduced by colonial rule, with less attention to the already-existing social and cultural values and practice that had fundamentally maintained the well-being of the pre-colonial Rwandan society. Respondents also reported that some men were taken to work in the mines in Zaire (currently DRC), leaving their families behind for years. This distorted and destroyed, to a certain extent, the nuclear and large families, and subsequently societal relationships.

As noted earlier, colonial intensive labour impelled many Rwandans to flee to neighbouring countries. Those who remained had little choice but to be forced to provide free labour. However, participants in this study indicated that the colonial forced labour contributed to building key infrastructure, such as the main roads that are still in good condition, both in urban and rural areas. This economic development (infrastructure for instance) was however achieved at the expense of certain fundamental social and cultural values of Rwandan society.

The post-colonial government did not significantly change the colonial forced labour activities. Although people were spared from some intensive labour, certain activities, like working in the coffee and tea plantations, continued. Mostly people were required to dig terraces and plant trees. As we saw, under the Habyarimana regime, *umuganda* came to be dominated by songs and dances praising the President and the ruling party rather than doing physical work for development.[57] The ruling MRND party monopolised power in national affairs, including social activities. Therefore, mobilisation by MRND amounted to a state directive. The ability to do this proved to be fundamental to the subsequent genocide (Barnhart 2011: 6). According to respondents in this study, the mobilisation undertaken by MRND was one of the strongest contributing factors in the acts of systematic violence in Rwanda.[58] Mobilisation through *umuganda* laid an important foundation for leaders being able to exercise their power and for citizens to prove their patriotic duty by participating in the government's organised '*umuganda*'. According to informants, this was proved in the government call for all *benesbahinzi*, the children of the soil/the ba-Hutu to act together 'attend *umuganda*' in the hunting and killing of the alien/ba-Tutsi, in 1994.

Government after the genocide was faced with reuniting the Rwandan people and rebuilding the nation. *Umuganda,* as a strong traditional practice, had an appeal in carrying out the new vision for the nation. This can be understood in the policy document on *umuganda,* which aims at "promoting development activities and opportunity for friendliness among people" (Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda 2008: 6). After the experience of the genocide this was a worthwhile policy.

Besides activities that are mobilised by the state, other forms of *umuganda* have emerged, which go beyond providing free physical labour. These reintroduce a sense of communal spirit

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[57]In the National Development promotional documents noted by Verwimp, there is this statement: "in order to increase the development projects in the *umuganda* framework, the mobilisation and sensitization of the popular masses is necessary and the MRND offers the appropriate way to do this" (2006: 20).
[58]National and local MRND officials used the word '*umuganda*' in describing the genocide killings to be performed; both in organisational meetings within the government and in public forums, including on the radio (Verwimp 2006).

and self-determination. In Kigali, for example, through *umuganda* meetings, *umudugudu* members will come together to contribute money to improve streets in their areas or to pay for security (night patrols).[59] Although this is also called *umuganda* or done in the name of *umuganda*, it may be argued that it is not, simply because it involves only those who have money to contribute, which devalues the strength of inclusive participation. This will be further discussed in the following section.

Government has applied *umuganda* in different areas, such as incorporating the managerial responsibility for *umuganda* in the performance contracts of officials in the provinces, which in turn emanate from the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategic plan. At the time of data collection, the researcher was informed that schools that are built during *umuganda* are part of the developmental vision of the government, for which mayors of the province have to meet targets by a certain date. This is part of the government's general vision for 2020. Local communities are required to participate by contributing their free labour toward any activities planned for local development. The evidence from data collection shows that the activities and organisation of *umuganda* have not changed much since the pre-genocide. Currently projects focus more on cleaning streets, especially in Kigali, which was not common before.

Being identified as a good means for community mobilisation, *umuganda* has helped the government to realise some of its plans and programs. For example, one of the most successful government programs that has been pursued in this way is the Rwanda's National Health plan (medical insurance scheme, *mutuelle de santé),* which now covers at least 98% of Rwandans.[60] During *umuganda* meetings, communities are sensitized and told about the importance of having *mutuelle de santé*, for which each household is asked to pay RWF 1000 - about $2 per

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[59] Casual workers are identified and given the task to do patrols at night, which, according to community members, has reduced theft.

[60] McNeil, Donald (2010). A Poor Nation with a Health Plan, *The New York Times*, 14 June 2010, accessed on 06 June 2011.

year[61] - for all family members. In this case *umuganda* can be seen as a means of regulating society.

This overview of the *umuganda* activities from pre-colonial to the current Rwanda shows that *umuganda* has evolved gradually from an idea that was initiated and organised by the household for community well-being into a national idea that serves the state's political purpose. This is shown in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3: The transformation of *umuganda*
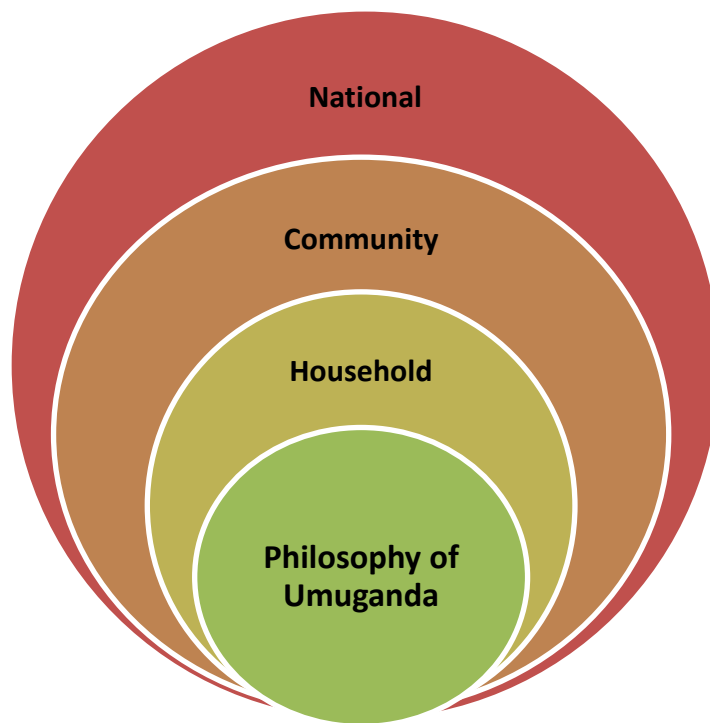
The transformation of *umuganda* has modified the original intention of its sense of welfare. This interpretation shows clearly that people now cannot rely on *umuganda* as a source of food security and community well-being as it was the case in the pre-colonial days. Nowadays an ordinary munya-Rwanda cannot expect to get help from *umuganda* when s/he lacks food,

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[61] Names of all members of a family who are under the age of 18 years oldare included on the medical insurance card.

shelter or when a community member is delayed in a planting/harvesting season due to sickness, for example. Farm activities are now individual household matters.

The implications for the rural population are serious as almost everyone relies on small-scale agricultural production for family and community well-being. The findings reveal also how detached the practice of *umuganda* has become from helping to meet the basic need for food security and community safety. Still, people continue to participate in *umuganda* in order to comply with the government interpretations of people's needs. More generally, then, what is the outcome of *umuganda*?

7.5 General outcome of the policy and practice of *umuganda*

The outcomes of the transformation of *umuganda* depend on many factors. Its transformation from its initial purpose has already been discussed as well as its organisation and activities. The present government's terminology in its policy on *umuganda* draws on an understanding of *umuganda's* traditional practice. In learning of the evolution of *umuganda*, from a voluntary household activity to a national state program, we see not only a considerable change in the original purpose of *umuganda* but also a change in understanding what the needs of the people are. Instead of the people defining their own needs, they are now being defined by the state. How are they so defined and what strategies are used for meeting people's needs?

The state's definition of the needs of the population has led to confusion in understanding the current nature of *umuganda*. As we have seen, some viewed *umuganda* as a voluntary practice whereas others regarded it as forced labour. It was learned that part of what motivates people to participate in *umuganda* is a fear of the punitive sanctions for not participating.

7.5.1 *Umuganda* as voluntary activity

The researcher observed that at the moment some activities of *umuganda* are done without any authority's involvement. When community residents decide to contribute money to build

or improve their roads, they need not appeal to government. When people jointly see the need for such action, they plan and act accordingly. This gives meaning to participation. However, this practice is mostly seen in Kigali. Moreover, only wealthy households and *imidugudu* are able to contribute money for jobs to be done by experts.

While they are done in the name of *umuganda*, these local initiatives and their organisation differ from *umuganda*, which should entail inclusive communal labour and reflect a sense of togetherness among residents. These local initiatives are exclusive, since they belong to those who are able to give their time and money, which is contrary to the original ethos of *umuganda.* Some of these activities have also been termed *umuganda* – in fact, it is as if anything undertaken by a group of community members is *umuganda*. These activities involve members of a rich neighbourhood organising and paying for the services of an expert or some knowledgeable practitioner. Here the service is, again, not voluntary but capitalist – give and take. This has made some services accessible exclusively to those who can pay. It is assumed that services secured with money from individual pockets - even if they might benefit other members of the community – should also be included in the concept and understanding of *umuganda*. Treating *umuganda* as a monetary commodity, however, erodes its voluntary nature.

In general, a common understanding of the concept 'voluntary' refers more to a communal social obligation than to an institutional civic obligation. To understand the nature of voluntary activities, we need to understand the relationship between the participants. As Robinson (2001: 60) notes, for an action to be considered voluntary, choice and options must exist.

### 7.5.2 *Umuganda* as compulsory activity

Even though activities done may be viewed as beneficial to the communities involved in *umuganda,* its whole organisation clouds the quality of choice. *Umuganda* is perceived by local people as mandatory work for public benefit. The policy states that those who do not participate are expected to pay a fine of Fr. 5 000. In contrast, as we saw, if punishment was

decided by ordinary people participating in *umuganda*, it would be based on local realities and the financial capacity of the person to be fined.

Accordingly, the current law on *umuganda* is detached from reality. It is misleading to expect a practice which entails punitive sanctions to remain called by the very name that used to herald voluntary activity. Government imposes fines which are affordable for the rich, yet the poor who cannot afford them will continue supplying their labour. It is noteworthy that the rich will pay for what they need while the poor have to work for it using their own labour. Thus, it is possible that in time, rich Rwandans will pay for others to substitute for them in the usual *umuganda*, which will further erode its substance and philosophy. Now *umuganda* is neither voluntary nor people-controlled. This furthers the aspect of compulsion, making sanctions and government control central to the nature of *umuganda* today. This can be portrayed as follows:

Figure 7.4: The nature of *umuganda* today
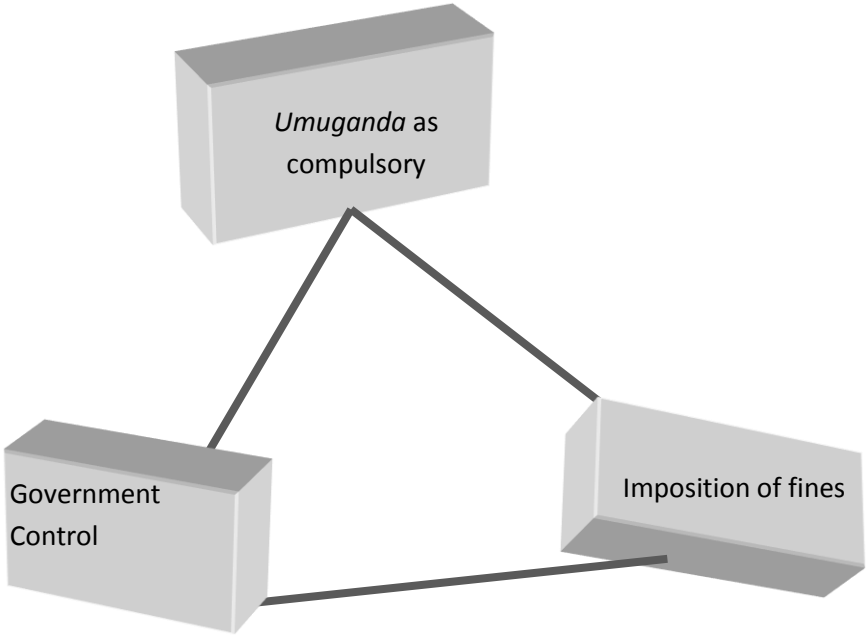
In the pre-colonial era, those who did not attend *umuganda* were regarded as socially irresponsible, which could result in their social isolation. However, nowadays those who do not go to *umuganda* are regarded as anti-government, as persons who oppose government plans and strategies for 'development'. This is the continuation of the colonial policy of exploiting citizens' free labour. The post-genocide state has failed to transform such compulsory exploitative practices which are now pursued in the name of development.

Compulsion in development practice, however, is problematic. Nonetheless, *umuganda* could contribute significantly to build a socio-culturally ingrained Rwandan social and economic development program. As one respondent believes, 'Rwandans are good learners'. Meaning that with some sensitization, people can do what is needed and they will do it without the threat of punishment. Restoring people's ability to embark upon initiatives that are responding to their needs and not fearing state-imposed sanctions is perhaps where the future of *umuganda* may lie.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter further interpreted the empirical data emanated from the fieldwork. The evolution of *umuganda* has reflected Rwanda's experience of political and social change since pre-colonial times. The transformation of *umuganda* has been in the shift in its original idea, purpose, organisation and practice, from a community initiative to state policy. In so doing, *umuganda* has changed from a voluntary social obligation to a forced, legalistic undertaking, backed by sanctions, in which participation is mechanical (state-led) not organic (socially-generated).It was found that the notion of community participation is deeply ideological in that it reflects beliefs derived from social and political assumptions about how societies should be organized.

Despite structures of decentralisation being in place and believed to be implemented, the governance of *umuganda* indicates that a high degree of centralization of planning and organisation of activities is still seen in many instances. This judgement is based on the influence of the state and the involvement of punitive sanctions in the governance and practice of *umuganda*. Given the current nature and practice of *umuganda*, what are its prospects as a means of well-being and development?

CHAPTER EIGHT

Analysing *Umuganda* after the Genocide

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the future of *umuganda,* both as a policy and as a practice. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section one explains the practice of *umuganda* in the post-genocide political context. Section two considers the management and administration of how *umuganda* is practised currently as a national policy. Section three relates the relationship of the practice of *umuganda* to theories of development.

8.1 The practice of *umuganda* in the post-genocide political context

We have learned that the practice of *umuganda* in Rwanda has changed throughout history as a consequence of political regime change, often with bloodshed. Despite government being decentralised, in reality power has remained largely at the centre. This is reflected in how local official activities, such as *umuganda*, are perceived and what is achieved by them (Purdeková, 2011: 476).

Learning from respondents in this study as well as from observation, the current politics of power and development in general carries the legacy of the state and nation building that emerged under colonial rule and continued in post-colonial administration. This is evident from the policy of *umuganda* and other traditional institutions, such as *ubudehe* or *gacaca* that have

become government owned projects. In the fifty years since independence, successive Rwandan government have not eradicated the colonial practice of *umuganda*.

Moreover, post-genocide Rwanda is built not only on the colonial political - identity construction[62], but also on traditional values of social, political and economic development. The political context of post-genocide Rwanda is not only a product of tension born from colonial ethnicity and political construction, but also reflects the failure of post-colonial government to build one nation. More specifically, one of the challenges identified in this study is the lack of trust between government and the people as a result of control[63]exercised through government policies and social organisation, as is evident in the practice of *umuganda*.

Since the genocide, the Rwandan government has sought to restore peace and security within the country. But being surrounded by neighbouring countries that are still struggling to maintain peace is a major issue for the Rwandan government. Many of those suspected of perpetrating the genocide are in those countries and are known to have been caused incidents of violence in Rwanda.[64]

A lack of trust is also seen among ordinary citizens. The experience of the ideology behind the genocide has shaped people's understanding of participation in government planned projects. Chapter Six indicated that there are suspicions about those who do not show full 'participation', as not participating means being anti-government, which can also mean being regarded as an 'enemy' of the government. This lack of trust not only affects social organisation and life in general but also how government functions. The results of this past political-identity tension and the legacy of genocide have been a challenge for the implementation of policies in Rwanda.

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[62] Colonial political-identity construction is understood in this study as the politics of ethnicity construction (see Mamdani, 1996).
[63] The government is closely associated with the ruling party that maintains control for variety of reasons.
[64] See BBC News Africa (13 January 2012), Rwanda Grenade Case: Men with FDLR links found guilty, www.bbc.co.uk.

It is also important to note that polices in Rwanda are not only influenced by past experience, but also in terms of the government's Vision 2020, which aims at poverty reduction, which is especially dependent on unity and reconciliation. The practice of *umuganda* is seen in government policy to be integral to poverty reduction, reconciliation and good governance. From observation and data collected, participation is a key to achieving all these. The following figure displays how this is so.

Figure 8.1: Key issues in relation to national policy

Good governance

8.1.1 Reconciliation

Reconciliation is part of Rwandan culture. The term used is *ubwiyunge* which refers to repairing a broken bond.[65] The study has already identified that the government searches for past elements of traditionalism in order to help build a more harmonious and peaceful society. Besides the practice of *umuganda*, there is the traditional court, known as *gacaca,* which government considers useful in the process of unity and reconciliation for Rwandans. Despite

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[65]In Rwandan cultural values it was believed that society offers protection against evil (Richters, et al, 2005:213).

these different cultural practices in place, the biggest challenge after the genocide has been how to restore trust in a society which has suffered betrayal, where neighbour turned against neighbour, friends against friends and even family members against their own family. Unity and reconciliation remain fundamental to any development in Rwanda.

Although the post-genocide government defines the Rwandan community as 'Rwandan', avoiding any possible system that specifies identification of Hutu and Tutsi, most scholars use these ethnic categories and so do many Rwandans. It is hard to change an ideology of ethnicity that has been set in people's mind for many centuries. The Hutu-Tutsi divide is a reality constructed and difficult to overcome, even if the government considers this part of the ideology of genocide, a crime with zero tolerance (Walker, 2010). Hence, reconciliation in Rwanda is still sensitive and remains important.

Many in Rwanda prefer to regard reconciliation as a political programme to be implemented rather than a personal issue that needs confronting. This makes reconciliation in Rwanda especially problematic. Richters*et al,* view reconciliation in Rwanda as part of a set of deeply interrelated issues, such as individual and social suffering, remembering and forgiveness, justice, trauma, healing, human right and development (2005: 204). *Gacaca* which is being promoted as a tradition-based initiative that will support reconciliation more effectively than modern justice, remains one-sided and closely controlled by the government (Richters, et al 2005: 203). Reconciliation is grounded in local traditions and practices, but implemented through a mixture of internationally oriented programmes and cultural approaches. Thus, *Gacaca* is viewed by Borland, 2003 and Karekezi, et al, 2004 as neither restorative nor retributive justice but as a combination of both, which has not forged trust and personal security.

Studies like those of Richters (2005), Institute for Dialogue for Peace (2002). Longman et al(2004) reveal that survivors and witnesses who testified in the Gacaca court have no protection. Their lives were often threatened after exposing the truth. As a result, people have

decided to keep quiet and so the events of the genocide and its consequences have become taboo.

Another problem is that the reconciliation process depends on confession and forgiveness, which people are encouraged to do, rather than a matter of moral conscience. By contrast, reconciliation should concentrate on building relationships in everyday life. But in Rwanda the main idea is that confession by the perpetrator must lead to an apology. Yet forgiveness is experienced as an obligation for survivors, just as the sincerity of confession by perpetrators is questionable (Wolters, 2005: 11). While reconciliation is associated with justice, observers in Richter's study note that *Gacaca* had puts too much emphasis on punishing people in the local community rather than on addressing the need for local communities to reconcile (Richters, et al 2005: 204).

According to the United Nation Development Program (2010, 10), the government of Rwanda has little confidence in the capability of its society to organise itself. This is due to the government's approach to the process of reconciliation, which has not built trust among the population. Commenting on the reconciliation process in Rwanda, the report states that:

> Due to the imminent allegations of 'divisionism', there is no open
> debate in which different feelings are expressed. This in turn, has
> generated a latent danger and hinders substantial reconciliation
> on an individual and societal level (UNDP, 2010: 10-11).

Mugarura (2005) explains that in the early days the Rwandan community would derive a sense of unity and togetherness from *umuganda*, but this seems not to be the case anymore. Instead the practice of *umuganda* may create further fear and mistrust as some attempt to avoid being seen as *igipinga* (the enemy/ the one who oppose), meaning those who do not participate in state-led activities such as those of *umuganda*. This is the fear that was conveyed by some participants in this study who thought that 'if they don't go to *umuganda* or other state-led

programmes they will be regarded as anti-government'. These terms denoting anti-government, *igipinga*, *umwanziw'igihugu* arose before the genocide[66] and thereafter developed to identify those who oppose government 'plans'. In a country that is trying to recover from the devastation of genocide, these words have destructive force which people try to evade.

Fear and mistrust still pervade Rwandan society, preventing the type of togetherness that forged social bonds known from earlier times (Richters, et al, 2005:213). As a respondent in the Rutagegwa's study explain '*we can't speak freely, only in whispers'*. It is this fear that remains in people's hearts (Richters, et al, 2005:213), and which prevents them from speaking out and challenging the system when they are not comfortable with it.

Because of Rwanda's political history, reconciliation is a key element of nation-building and development. *Umuganda* does not appear to contribute much to the reconciliation process. This is because people participate in *umuganda* to implement government instructions and after performing the labour have to sit and listen to officials' speeches on government plans. Therefore, this disempowerment of the people prohibits *umuganda* from being a channel for reconciliation and nation-building.

Government policy on *umuganda* regards it as crucial to the process of reconciliation in Rwanda. However, it was found that not only are topics like forgiveness or reconciliation not discussed in gatherings for *umuganda*, but also that the organisation of *umuganda* gives little sense of nurturing the process of unity and reconciliation, because people are forced to go to *umuganda*, and some attend out of fear in order to avoid being seen as anti-government. This slows down or undermines community development, as well as state political and economic development more generally, and does not build relationships between the state and its people.

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[66]Before the genocide, the term 'anti-government' referred to those who could not do manual work; only peasant – Hutus were good citizens while Tutsis were regarded as non-peasants and therefore anti-government. As the genocide approached, the term meant those whose ideas oppose a government politics. See also Mamdani 2001.

8.1.2 Poverty eradication

Poverty eradication is another objective of the policy of *umuganda* as well as being central to community development policy and the strategy of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction (EDPRS). The government of Rwanda lists six areas of priority. These are: rural development and agricultural transformation, human development, economic infrastructure, governance, private sector development and institutional capacity building (Government of Rwanda, 2002:6 -7). Even though these priorities are important for poverty reduction, Ansoms (2007: 376) explains that much depends on how policy measures are formulated and which public they target. As Taylor and Francis note, many strategies focus on achieving maximum economic growth but little attention is given to the distribution of growth. Ansoms suggest that the pro – poor character of Rwandan development policies has increased; "many people identified as 'poor' have a high productive capacity but are confronted with institutional constraints that prevent them from taking part in possible profitable income generating opportunities" (2007: 377). Local communities' efforts are focused more on public benefits rather than on addressing the direct needs of their people.

Findings in this study identified activities of *umuganda* that have the effect of lowering state costs through the use of compulsory labour. However, there is a sense that the practice of *umuganda* exacerbates poverty instead of reducing it, especially for those living in rural areas. This point will be discussed later. The hours and days in carrying out scheduled and unscheduled *umuganda* do not seem to directly benefit the people. This brings us to participation.

8.1.3 Participation

The concept of participation has been promoted in general as a way of giving local people greater decision-making power and influence. Participation can be understood as empowerment for people, a means of listening to them, taking them into account in the design of projects and programs and relying on them for the implementation process. Participation can allow freedom of decision-making and control over internal activities for those taking part in the development process (Hall, 1986: 99).

While participation is seen to be central to the practice of *umuganda*, which could offer the potential to challenge patterns of dominance, White (1996: 14) warns that this may also be the means through which existing power relations are entrenched and reproduced. Ryan (2010: 14) notes that control of Rwanda's peasant labour has become a global affair. In contemporary Rwanda, President Kagame directs compulsory communal labour in concert with organizational actors as diverse as the United Nations, the Netherlands, local bureaucracies, and citizen groups (2010: 14). Most of these international actors are development aid agents which make it difficult to retain the traditional practice of *umuganda* while at the same time serving the wishes of the state and international development agencies. Ryan finds *umuganda* to be a complex cultural phenomenon and a complex international activity too. She argues that *umuganda* is no longer just a state-controlled exercise but it is also an international instrument of political experimentation (Ryan, 2010: 15). The collaboration involved in *umuganda* allows the involvement of different international and national organisations including UN agencies, the MDG and NEPAD (2010: 21). See the following figure.

Figure 8.2: Key players in the implementation of *umuganda*

┌─────────────────────┐
│ The Netherlands   │
│ (LIPW Pilot)   │
└─────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐
│ MINALOC,   │
│ MINECOFIN, MINADEF │
└─────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐
│ UNDP, UNIFEM,   │
│ UN-Habitant   │
└─────────────────────┘

Central ministries   **Bilateral Partner organisations**   **UN Agencies**

┌─────────────────────┐
│ B peace &   │
│ Action aid   │
└─────────────────────┘

Umuganda

┌─────────────────────┐
│ The NationalUniversity │
│ of Rwanda UNR   │
└─────────────────────┘

NGOS

Academic Institutions

┌─────────────────────┐
│ REMA, RNR,   │
│ EDPRS   │
└─────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐
│ Churches   │
└─────────────────────┘

Government institutions   **Faith based organizations**

┌─────────────────────┐
│ Parent, teachers   │
│ association, local │
│ business, etc.   │
└─────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐
│ NEPAD Mission   │
│ Transparence   │
│ International   │
└─────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐
│ Mayors and Deputies │
│ *Imihigo* contracts │
│ (Performance contract) │
└─────────────────────┘

Local grassroots organisation   **External assessment organisations**   **Local governments**

**Source*: Extracted from different sources, including Ryan (2010: 5 - 12)*

Although international projects, like the Netherlands' Labour Intensive Public Work Pilot (LIWP), have supported a number of bilateral and multilateral rural development initiatives (Rwandan Research Group, 2008: 13), they have also benefited from *umuganda*. Article Four of Law No. 53/2007 encourages expatriates residing in Rwanda to participate in *umuganda*. Although private and civil society organisations in Rwanda assist with the administration of *umuganda* to

some extent, international organisations are involved and may have influence over the organisation of *umuganda* activity, especially that relating to their funding. These international agencies mostly support funding activities for improving infrastructure (Rwandan Research Group, 2008: 12).

In theories of development, participation often means dismantling the top-down, prescriptive knowledge transportation and communication style that tends to be imposed upon communities by outsiders (Theron, 2008: 7-8). This is difficult, though, when civil society is weak and where there are no strong institutions that can defend people's rights. In general, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002: 53) explain that public participation can be instrumental to responsive and effective policy implementation but unstructured and unmanaged participation leads to disharmony and confusion and does not necessarily lead to good policy results (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002: 59).

Realising such conceptions, participation is problematic in Rwanda, especially when the notion of participation has been hijacked by the state and interpreted differently. While the traditional understanding of participation in Rwanda is taken to be assisting those in need, the modern form of participation has become structured and compulsory, and enforced by punitive sanctions. Non-state organisations such as churches have their own understanding of participation, but they are overshadowed by the demands of the state (Purdeková, 2011: 483). The state has penetrated non-state institutions in order to facilitate the implementation of government programs. Reconciliation, poverty reduction and participation in Rwanda are all related to government. *Umuganda* must be comprehended in this context too.

8.1.4 Good governance
Peck (1998: 15) argues that the best means of promoting sustainable development within states is the development of good governance, which can address development issues - the root causes of conflict - and meet basic human security needs. Good governance offers groups

a voice in resolving grievances at an early stage before they grow into major problems (Grindle, 2004:526). Grindle explains that

> Getting good governance calls for improvements that touch virtually all aspects of the public sector. From institutions that set the rules of the game for economic and political interaction, to decision-making structures that determine priorities among public problems and allocate resources to respond to them; to organisations that manage administrative systems and deliver goods and services to citizens; to human resources that staff government bureaucracies, to the interface of officials and citizens in political and bureaucratic arenas (2004: 526).

The current role of government in the policy of *umuganda* has been questioned throughout this study. Does the future success of *umuganda* need less government involvement in the management and functions of *umuganda* or not? Respondents have clearly indicated their desire to be given an opportunity to plan and organize *umuganda* activities, to recover its original values.

As much as good governance is advocated in Rwanda, its institutions are weak. This will be discussed in the context of the management and administration of *umuganda*.

8.2 Management and administration of *umuganda* as a national policy

The original practice of *umuganda* can be associated with the theory of 'development from within'. Hypothetically, *umuganda* reflects the kind of development that is started and owned by indigenous communities, but as time passed, it became a state controlled initiative. It has been difficult to reconcile the traditional philosophy of *umuganda* with government institutionalization, but also in terms of the values and vision of Rwanda's post-genocide

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government. In this sense, government uses *umuganda* for its own political interest, which contradicts the original and philosophy of *umuganda*. Nonetheless, debate remains as to whether the government has been aware of this or simply has taken *umuganda* as a mechanism of exercising power. The major challenge is the extent to which the traditional philosophy of *umuganda* can be accommodated with modern conceptions and the practice of development, and whether there is the potential for the traditional and the modern to be mutually reinforcing.

Beswick (2010: 227) notes that there is a range of factors that affect ways in which policies develop after conflict. In the case of Rwanda, there has been a lack of trust which affects the space in which different actors can operate and the methods of political actions in place (2010: 226-227). Fear and lack of trust are found not only among ordinary people but also among government officials who fear the reoccurrence of divisions and genocide ideology (2010: 237). Having the policy and practice of *umuganda* as a mechanism that brings many people together is an opportunity both to enforce what the government needs from people, while at the same time controlling any possible negative movements in the communities. This has led to criticism of government leadership.

Although people might feel a moral obligation to contribute to state and community building, Rwandans are often mobilised to support government programmes. While it can be hard to monitor who has contributed to 'nation building', the government has re-introduced another pre-colonial system known as *imihigo* (performance contracts), which make it easier to conduct control and surveillance. Everyone is expected to fulfil what is specified in the national performance contract. At first *imihigo* was applied to mayors and officials in districts, but now the state targets all possible non-state sphere, including the family[67] and the private sector as well as religious organisations (Purdeková, 2011: 493-494). This control is able to be extended through the state's decentralised structures, which reaches every village and helps the government to closely follow what is going on countrywide.

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[67] For example, families are obliged to meet the terms of performance contracts by sending all their children to school or by having a medical scheme for each person in the family.

8.2.1 The practice of *umuganda* in a decentralised state

Reflecting on the genocide, researchers noted that the strength and complexity of the political administration in Rwanda in reaching the lowest levels contributed to the effectiveness and mass nature of the 1994 genocide (Purdeková, 2011: 476). Political power is still exercised through a decentralised system of administration. Hence, Purdeková's observation (2011: 475) on the increase of state power in terms of surveillance through different state-led local activities such as *umuganda* and *imihigo*.

Purdeková (2011: 477) argues that the Rwandan state is characterised by clear hierarchies and an intricate organisation not only leading from state (*igihugu*) to village (*umudugudu*) but also informally, lower than the level of *umudugudu*. The lowest administration unit after independence until 2006 was the *nyumbakumi*, a grouping of ten houses. Thereafter this unit was replaced by the comparatively large unit known as village, or *umudugudu* (Purdeková, 2011: 477). The *umudugudu* is composed of a committee of ten people: the coordinator, secretary, and persons in charge of education, health, security, development, finance training, women and youth who are elected by the population. In addition, all citizens aged eighteen years old and above are part of district council known as *jyanama*. This makes almost every person responsible and accountable for some area. However, Purdeková's study indicates that the district council hardly makes any decisions (2011: 477). But, importantly, the structure has the effect of people keeping watch over one another.

While directives and power emanate from the highest level of government, surveillance and control begin at the lowest, most intimate levels, with reports and requests trickling up the hierarchy. All these administrative levels are significant in the chain of command, but it is at the lowest level where surveillance really matter. "If you don't pay your taxes, they know. If you are a drunkard, they know... they are the one who identify who are good citizens [in the community]" (Purdeková, 2011: 479).

Beside feelings of responsibility, everyone in Rwanda should feel a sense of belonging. The ruling party describes itself as not a political party but rather a family of Rwandans FPR,

umuryango w'abanya-Rwanda, thus, giving reasons why everyone should be part of it (Speech by representative of *umudugudu* in Kimironko on 28 June 2009). While these expressions are used as strategies of recruiting more people into the party, it also explains why everyone should feel obliged to participate in any government organised activities without question, and why those who do not participate become suspect.[68]

Moreover, Purdeková (2011: 487) and Crawford and Hartmann (2008: 228) argue that decentralisation and the accompanying attempt toward good governance in Rwanda have directly strengthened authoritarian rule and have contributed to order. Crawford and Hartmann (2008: 228) explain that the participation of local population in its own development has certainly had a stabilising effect in developing social cohesion, if not social capital, and has reduced the chances of returning to political turmoil.

Decentralisation has not transferred authority to the local level of government, though; rather it has facilitated managing the country, by having structures to transmit information more directly to the people in order for them to understand what government wants. The consequence is that local administration, which should be close to the people and theoretically should be able to decide quickly and best manage its tasks, becomes paralysed and ineffective because it waits for vital information to reach it (Purdeková, 2011: 488).(See also Chapter Seven).

Purdeková (2011: 482 – 483) notes that the state achieves control through co-optation of many people into official political and administrative positions. For example, at the *umudugudu* level, which has about 230 households, there are three people in charge of *mutuelle de santé*; five on the official committee; three in charge of community policing; three on the gender based violence committee; five on the *imihigo* committee; five education officers; two *gacaca*; and five to eight *abunzi* or responsible for resolving local conflicts. There is also the *ubudehe*

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[68]Purdekova notes that the ruling party is more powerful than the state; it controls the state (2011: 480).

committee, with about five to ten people and others responsible for hygiene and community mobilisation (Government of Rwanda, 2007: 34-35).

While decentralization is seen as a mechanism of achieving the government vision through different policies and programs, Purdeková (2011: 488) notes that the sprawling administration with multiple responsibilities does not indicate decentralisation of power, but rather makes central power more effective and increases compliance. Recall also that the only member who is paid is the executive secretary at the cell level; the rest of the staff in the decentralised structures along with all the village administrators are volunteers (Ingelare, 2010). These obligations are more imposed than truly voluntary. The duties are numerous and time consuming, which may perhaps lead to corruption if people are not left with sufficient time to provide for themselves.

Since human security is a big issue in Rwanda this system of active engagement is a way of ensuring that people have no openings to create opposition. One of the respondents said "everyone has an eye on his fellow you even get self-suspicious" (OCM 16a 04 January 2011). Nevertheless, "decentralisation has contributed to improved service provision, to poverty reduction, and indirectly to political stability" (Van Tilburg: 229).This is seen in the schools which have been built to accommodate every child, in the system of nine year basic education, and in the introduction of universal medical aid.

The post-genocide government is consistent in its developmental vision, which pursues through a combination of traditional and modern strategies. As one local leader explains, "people will never be satisfied and will never stop complaining, our mission is to use whatever it takes to achieve the state vision" (LL: 17 Dec. 2011). In Vision 2020, the government of Rwanda has expressed the aim of attaining the per capital income of a middle income country as part of its development strategy. This requires significant investment in infrastructure, education, technology and development (Beswick, 2010: 230). While admittedly reliant on donor aid and

international investment (Government of Rwanda, 2002: 24), local free labour – notably through *umuganda* - is considered important.

Whereas modern strategies are always given a priority, the current government has drawn on traditional practices, which seems to be a political style that attempts to attract people to embrace and implement government plans. But in using the global discourses of development, practices have become mystified, and what was originally community development with the emphasis on people has become 'national political development'.

8.3 *Umuganda* as development

Like other sub-Saharan African countries, Rwanda had been drawn into the emerging world economy since colonial rule, where the relationship between the state and the people was shaped by the changing world of economic development. As we have seen, this affected the traditional practice of *umuganda*, which became transformed for the sake of national development. The current president, Kagame, and other government high officials actively promote *umuganda* as a mechanism for development. They are seen in monthly sessions of *umuganda,* for instance, in helping to build schools. Despite this, activities for development are hardly evident during times of *umuganda*. While there is evidence of public schools, roads and the often mentioned 'cleanest country', the issue is whether *umuganda* has helped to reduce poverty. Over 60% of Rwandans live in poverty and 42% in absolute poverty, while57% live below the poverty line and the country ranks 161 out of the 177 listed in the 2008 Human Development Index (UNDP, 2009).

Although a household survey on the living conditions of Rwandan in general, published by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda indicates that those live in poverty are 45% in 2010/11[69], there is a concern that economic growth in Rwanda is not reaching beyond the educated urban elites. The recent Millenium Development Goal (MDG) progress report (2010:

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[69](National Institute of Statistics 2012: 5). The Evolution of Poverty in Rwanda from 2000 to 2011.

11) notes that "if the recent growth in inequality is not addressed it will prove increasingly difficult to reduce the poverty rate further". The implication is that economic growth is bypassing rural households where more than 90% of the population live and are involved in small farming activities.[70] What has *umuganda* contributed to development there?

As noted previously, only government officials identify what needs to be performed for *umuganda*. Most activities are undertaken for public benefit, like building schools and roads. Issues of food security, for example, are not considered a priority in planning activities for *umuganda*. This is a concern for rural people who rely on agricultural production for their livelihood (Uwimbabazi and Lawrence, 2011: 21 - 22).

Local people in their villages in Rwanda know each other, and know what their own needs are, better than anyone else. Even though the structures of decentralisation may have advantages, government is finding difficulty in trusting people and giving them power to deal with issues without government intervention. This is very evident in the practice of *umuganda*, which has been taken out of the hands of ordinary community members, even though people are still forced to participate. Before we try to understand *umuganda*'s potential for the future, it is necessary to investigate the contribution of *umuganda* to economic development.

8.3.1 *Umuganda*: outcome of economic development

As discussed, *umuganda* allows government through the decentralised structures to engage in civic education related to any government plan and to sensitize people to regard government needs as their own. The use of *umuganda* in public projects reduces costs through the use of free, compulsory labour. The government might not be able to afford to pay for such work. In this way *umuganda* has contributed to the development of the country.

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[70]See Ansoms, A. (2009). Re-engineering Society: the visions and ambitions of the Rwandan elite.*African Affairs*, 108 (431).pp. 289-309.

Verwimp (2006) defines *umuganda* as a program that takes advantage of its citizens by using them to improve infrastructure. What is best for local communities is overlooked so as to exploit their ability to advance the state's well-being. In this respect, the post-colonial governments failed to change and manage the colonial legacy for the people's good. In general, Willis (2005:121) argues that post-colonialism in Africa should address not only the observable legacies of colonialism, but also the ideas or discourses about development which were introduced as part of the colonial process. Thus, post-colonial approaches to development have been criticized for playing a political game, rather than dealing with the day-to-day problems that poorest people face (2005: 121-122). The same can be said for Rwanda.

After the 1994 genocide, Rwanda experienced an economic tragedy as GDP decreased by almost 60% (Brandt, 2009:33). In 1996-2002 the average economic growth rate was 10, 7% (World Bank 2009). In 2008 Rwanda had a GDP growth rate of 11, 2% (CIA World Fact book 2009). Although this reflected an exceptionally high growth rate, it is not yet an indicator of sustainable development. The praise from the recent United Nation Annual Development Report that the "economy of Rwanda is doing well rising from 143 to 67" (UNDP 2009), does not change the fact that over half of all Rwandan citizens still live below the poverty line. Hintjens (2008: 20) observes that the benefits of this growth appear to bypass most rural areas.

Brandt's analysis of the composition of GDP in Rwanda is that almost 42% is due to the agricultural sector (2009: 33). Despite the government's ambition to be self-sufficient in food production, it is still a challenge to maintain food security for the country.[71] The CIA World Fact book (2009) explains that 22, 3% of GDP is the result of industry: "the industries sector in Rwanda is mainly food and beverages (41%), mining (26%) and small chemical and construction materials" (Government of Rwanda, 2005 in Brandt 2009, 34). The vision of Rwanda's government for development is to transform rural society from subsistence agriculture to a modern, commercial and diversified economy. This means increasing productivity in the

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[71] Food production is made difficult by scarcity of land combined with a high population growth. (See Uwimbabazi and Lawrence (2011: 22), Compelling Factors of Urbanization and Rural-urban Migration in Rwanda. *Rwandan Journal,* Volume 22,Series B. pp. 9 – 26.

agricultural sector and professionalizing it (Amsoms, 2009; Brandt, 2009:36).Transforming agriculture remains a distant goal as currently the focus is on the development of infrastructure, especially in Kigali city (Uwimbabazi and Lawrence, 2011: 21).

Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002: 6) maintain that the best technical solutions to policy-making and implementation for development cannot be achieved unless there is co-operation, which means making modifications to accommodate the views and needs of the various parties involved. More focus needs to be given to how a policy is implemented. The success of any policy outcome depends not simply on designing good policies but upon how to manage their implementation (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002: 6). Given this, there are two ways of understanding economic development in Rwanda: either in terms of national development or as community (local people') development. Both will be discussed.

8.3.1.1 The notion of national development

In the 19th century, the idea of how to achieve development based on socialism[72] or communism[73] gained rapid acceptance greatly influenced by the philosopher Karl Marx's social writings. His argument was that development, as modernization, could be achieved more effectively under a socialist/communist system than under that of capitalism.[74] This ideology was also embraced by a number of countries in Africa such as Tanzania, Ghana, Algeria, Mali, and Guinea (Willis, 2005: 87).

In the decades that followed World War II, the concept of development came to be understood as national development, the plans of which were seen as a route to economic progress, especially in developing countries. Looking at the African context, Kanyinga, in Gibbon (ed 1995: 69), argues that the alignment of development initiatives and organizations with the state is politically important, since the construction and defence of basic political identities and

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[72]Communal ownership of means of production by state or the people (Willis, 2005: 63).
[73] Communism is a form of socialism.
[74] Capitalism is a system where the society is divided into those who own the means of production and those who donot (Willis, 2005: 63).

loyalties, as well as national political hegemony and legitimacy, take place in the development arena. Kanyinga's statement makes sense in the context of how *umuganda* has been practised by post-colonial governments of Rwanda.

Moreover, developing countries were influenced by the view that economies need more state intervention. Their confidence in the state was further reinforced by the emergence of structuralist economics (Repley, 2007: 4).Political and economic self-interest remained a key component in defining the desire of Western industrial nations to transform the 'Third World' countries. Even political leaders of the post-colonial countries used the concept of development to rationalize policies and programs that served narrow sets of interests (Packard, 1997: 93). This is reflected in this study in how the post-colonial government of Rwanda defined and implemented the idea of national development. Nation - building since the genocide of 1994 has entailed restructuring the state which affects everything in state administration.

From this research on *umuganda*, one learns that development is not wholly a modern concept as is often understood, but an ancient idea that has been transformed through globalization. What has changed over time is how development is organized, practised and who benefits from development initiatives or activities. Understanding processes of development is crucial for policy formation to promote national development and economic growth.

Economists, politicians and development planners have typically measured average per capita income to chart annual progress or decline within a country. As a result, a great deal of national development activity was focused on economic growth, often neglecting the human dimension of development (Gail,1992: 532). This may be the dilemma that Rwanda is facing today, as its economy has grown even though poverty has increased in rural areas.

Most people in Rwanda live in subsistence conditions and are vulnerable. The UNDP reports that poverty has increased in one province and deepened in two other provinces in Rwanda

due to increasing inequality[75] (UNDP, 2007: 17). Ansoms (2007: 374) notes that the impact of economic growth on poverty reduction has been weak. This is where the intervention of *umuganda* could help to meet local people's needs to reduce poverty and inequality.

Rwanda is held to be progressing well in nation-building after the recent past experience of violence and genocide. While nation-building is usually referred to as increasing the capacity of the state, including development infrastructure, in the recent Great Lakes summit meeting on peace and stability, President Kagame explained that 'there is no magic formula or one size fits all' when it comes to nation building. Different strategies need to be applied. Depending on the context, Kagame identified different strategies, including traditional values and practices that are required to contribute to building a country (Schubert, Jun 2011). The progress of Rwanda as a nation-state is visible, especially its infrastructure. With the whole society torn apart by genocide, people coming together in order to undertake *umuganda* is noteworthy.

Sen examines development as freedom, which entails not only political participation but also promotes economic security and social opportunity, in the form of equal access to public facilities. Sen believes that different kinds of freedom can strengthen one another (1999: 4-11).While the violation of one's freedom may be defined in different ways, Sen explains that violations of freedom result directly from a denial of political and civil liberties by authoritarian regimes and from restrictions imposed upon the freedom to participate in the social, political and economic life of the community. The relation between freedom and development is important to understand in the Rwandan context of *umuganda* before and after the genocide of 1994. In the previous chapter, concerns relating to the lack of participation in planning and organising *umuganda* were addressed. This can be interpreted as a lack of freedom in Sen's terms.

In analysing the poverty reduction strategic plan in Rwanda, Mutebi, Stone, and Thin (2003: 253), comment that participation, consultation and planning are vital but difficult in a country

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[75]Rwanda is placed among the top 15% unequal countries in the world (UNDP 2007, 17).

whose government has for many years been authoritarian and non-participatory. Citizens are often characterised as obedient and there are few policy-oriented civil society organisations. As a result, scholars like Uvin (1997) and Verwimp (2003) view development in Rwanda as an ideology of the regime.

State and society have extensive roles in strengthening and safeguarding human capabilities. These are supporting roles, rather than ready-made delivery (Sen, 1999: 53). People have to be seen as being actively involved, and given the opportunity, to shape their own destiny and not just as "passive recipients of the fruits of cunning development programs" (Sen, 1999: 53). Therefore Gay (2003: 7) describes the requirements for development as an individual's ability to participate freely in the political process, and the capacity to seek economic well-being, to build the networks and connections which make social integration possible, to have free access to reliable information sources and the structures which allow personal safety.

Thus, although many definitions of development focus on economic aspects, it is crucial to recognize the social and cultural elements as well. The values, interests and knowledge of indigenous peoples should be accepted as the starting point for developing meaningful social analysis and the knowledge-systems they possess must be the means of achieving that end (Mcissac, 2000: 89). Considering development as not just focusing upon income makes a significant difference to how one evaluates it. This means taking into account a sense of community and human development.

8.3.1.2 The notion of community development in Rwanda

Community development means improving the quality of people's lives and expanding their ability to shape their own futures through improving their access to opportunities (Kularatne 2009: 2). MacQueen et al (2001) and Bottomley (2005: 13) explain *community* as a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings. The endeavours of a group of people who share these characteristics strive for the common good of the entire group. The

common good is a full realization or development of the potential of individuals as well as of the entire community (Nkulu, 2005: 76). Furthermore, the principle of the common good emphasizes that we are custodians of one another as human beings. "The common good is the total of all those conditions of social living – economic, cultural – which make it possible for women and men readily and fully to achieve the perfection of their humanity" (Henriot, DeBerri and Schultheis, 1997: 23).

The principle of the common good can be understood in the concept of *ubuntu* in South Africa, or *umuntun'abantu* in Rwanda, which indicates that a person is a person because of others and therefore can only flourish in the community. The Centre for Concern (2008) explains that *ubuntu* means that the good of each human person is intimately related to the good of the whole community. In Rwanda, striving for the common good is connected with creating a sense of peace and responsibility in the community. Assefa (1993: 4) understands peace as the transformation of conflict and destructive interactions into more co-operative and constructive relationships. When groups of humans hold the need for bonding and autonomy in balance, nurturing one another and engaging in many co-operative activities, it allows for realising conditions for sustainable peace and development (Boulding, 2000: 2).

Veale (2000: 238) reflects on how Rwandan policy-makers externally define communities and how communities internally define themselves. She argues that '"externally in academic and popular writings, community in Rwanda is defined in binary terms like a Hutu-Tutsi dichotomy".[76] Veale stresses that internally it is the government policy of nationhood (instead of ethnicity) that is the basis for identity. "This is expressed politically and socially through the slogan 'we are all Rwandan' "[77] (2000: 239). Nationhood is an attempt to find common ground in order to ignite and develop a sense of pride. Given the history of conflict and genocide that have long created hatred and division among Rwandans, there is still a need to create a strong

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[76] The third minority group, the ba-Twa, is generally marginalized and to some extent excluded from the general discourse.

[77] In research and in practice in Rwanda there is a general silence about ethnicity in communities.

community with values that are beyond the features which divided them. *Umuganda* is a perfect example of a framework that can create that, once it is well managed.

Traditional community development always had two objectives: to tackle poverty and deprivation and to increase the political participation of excluded groups (Warburton, 1998: 20). In a broader sense, then, community development is integral to the social and economic well-being of humans. It is a learning process through which people progress towards self-sufficiency and self-reliance (Swanepoel, 1992: 17). It is a process of encouraging and supporting community-based sustainable development as an essential method for sustainable development (Warburton 1998: 23). In many contexts, community development takes several dimensions, such as free education, gender equality, reducing infant and maternal mortality (Kularatne, 2009: 3).

Although these are essential elements in community development, there are many socio-economic and political problems that confront the society at large. In the case of Rwanda, there is food security and the need to deal carefully with the legacy of the genocide. The ideology associated with the genocide is still very evident. This was expressed in focus group discussions, where a participant expressed the view that *umuganda* as it is practised today is not helping in the reconciliation process (FGD 2-a 20 December and 27 Dec 2010).

Taylor (2003: 167) argues that engaging communities as service users alongside professionals, in running and improving their services, is not enough to empower them as citizens and neither is the involvement of communities in administering community programs designed by others. Consequently, relying on central government, and on top-down forms of policy and decision-making, not only denies citizens autonomy and legitimacy but also disempowers local people when they do not decide initiatives for themselves. Thus the current practice of *umuganda*, which is planned and directed by government, undermines key features of community development.

Community development is said to result in "the fulfilment of people's aspirations for personal achievement and happiness, to promote a proper adjustment between individuals and their communities, to foster freedom and security and to engender a sense of belonging and social purpose" (Midgley, et al 1986: 2). Community development depends on people's capacity and the resources at their disposal. Equally important are the values which are able to build social relationships and unify a community. The early practice of *umuganda* revolved around a community in which those who lived together benefited from helping one another. This was rooted in everyone's knowledge and norms regarding the meaning of social life in the community.

The concept of *umuganda* does not only propagate clean cities but also presents an opportunity for people to join hands to achieve set objectives as well as fostering harmony among residents. By building roads, schools or even cleaning streets, people contribute to state and public well-being while also building bonds among the participants. Ideally, such schools would benefit the children of these communities and the roads would be useful for everyone. But *umuganda* entails more than the work alone. It is also about connecting and socialising. As already seen in Chapter Six, some people enjoy *umuganda* just to meet their neighbours and new members in the community. This motivates them. Community development refers to connections among individuals, and to the possibility of norms and trustworthiness that can arise from them. This is very important for Rwandans. When this cordiality happens, people are able to know what is important for themselves and their community.

Capitalist economic development and globalisation have shaped the Rwandan state, with the emphasis on industrialisation and economic growth. This has affected how Rwanda as a state for many years has confused or missed what the practice of *umuganda* could do for Rwandan community development. One can imagine how the traditional values of *umuganda* could have wiped out the wrongs of Hutu/Tutsi hatred. Instead of *umuganda* being a strong tool for indigenous unification and the fight against poverty, the state has exploited the people's cheap labour and turned *umuganda* into a communication mechanism and a means of ideological

propaganda by state functionaries for conveying state policies and programs. While, as has been discussed, mobilisation through *umuganda* has led to improved infrastructure and to medical insurance, a great deal of poverty and insecurity remains.

Two broad conclusions about economic development emerge from this research on *umuganda*. Firstly, social development in Rwanda is sensitive, as it is historically constructed around ethnic ideology. Relationships between Hutu and Tutsi point to cultural and historical commonalities, whereas successive regimes have contributed to the fixation of these identities. As already seen, one of the practices of *umuganda* from the early days was to unify ba-Rwanda people. Under President Habyarimana, post-colonial rhetoric spoke of *umuganda* as a means of unifying Rwandan through participatory labour (Barnhart, 2011:4 - 7). However, his political role, leading to the 1994 genocide, revealed the exact opposite, with the nation conceived of as an exclusive single socio-ethnic group.

In the same way, the current government's policy on *umuganda* retains much the same institutional characteristics, although the purpose has changed to reflect the new regime's values, with unity and reconciliation as well as development as the key themes. While the belief is that when people participate in *umuganda* in working towards a shared development vision they will be able to reconcile and thereby neutralize ethnicity and unify the nation, findings from this study suggest otherwise. Moreover, the organization and form of compulsory participation in *umuganda* has brought about another sense of 'ethnic' mentality, a divide between participants who are seen as pro-government and those who fear being regarded as 'ant-government', and therefore comply with the requirements for *umuganda*.

Secondly, even though much has been done in terms of state reconstruction, the Rwandan government has not sufficiently involved people in decision-making processes. This has led people to regard the state as not only the service provider but also the decision-maker. Given the history of giving and receiving orders that have characterized the past governance of Rwanda, considerable challenges in building trust between the government and its citizens are

still seen at all levels of Rwandan society. The practice of *umuganda* is essentially state-owned, since local people are still relying on their leaders to think for them and want to be given orders on what to do during *umuganda*. Furthermore, evidence from the planning and organisation of *umuganda* suggests that despite decentralisation, most people are not empowered participants and are not actively involved in making decisions about matters that affect them and their communities.

From the pre-colonial period until the present, the practice of *umuganda* is characterised as development which is based on widespread participation. Both philosophically, and theoretically, participation has been and is still regarded as central to the practice of *umuganda,* even though this is largely not the case. Relying on the central government to plan and organise *umuganda* not only denies citizens freedom, but also opens a gap between development initiatives and local people as beneficiaries. Not involving the potential beneficiaries of the policy in designing and managing them prevents people from taking ownership of *umuganda* and thus restricts genuine participation. It is now important to identify weaknesses in the practice of *umuganda*.

8.3.2 Weaknesses of *umuganda*

Umuganda can be seen as a communitarian ideology operating in a market regime; thus the mixture indicates different interests for the community and the state.

Figure 8.3: Characteristics of the current practice of *umuganda*
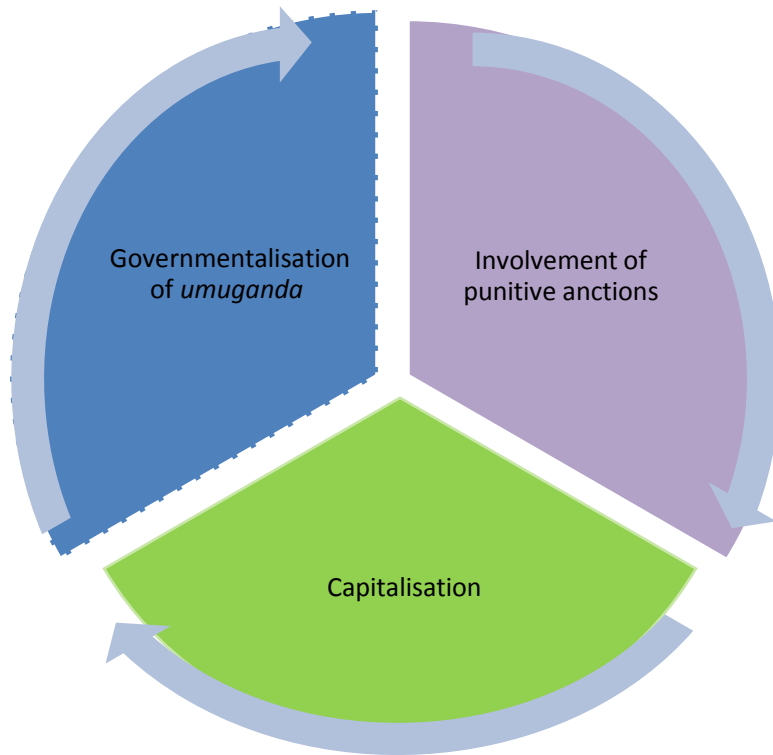
The diagram in Figure 8.3 indicates three elements which have turned the current policy and practice of *umuganda* from a voluntary to a non-voluntary activity. There are: the governmentalisation of *umuganda*; involvement of punitive sanctions; and capitalisation. These three elements combined have assured the overwhelming influence of the state and money in the practice of *umuganda*. Government itself exploited and still exploits *umuganda* through various methods and channels, as already pointed out.

8.3.2.1 Governmentalisation of *umuganda*

It is believed that policies are meant to improve the lives of the people and solve social problems. They are crucial to any government and civil society plans and programs. However the successful implementation of any policy can be affected by the absence of the full participation of those especially who should benefit from these policies. The current practice of *umuganda* indicates the isolation of community members from participating in the planning

and organizing of *umuganda* activities. Thus, the question remains as to how communities can be expected to implement the policy while being blind to its organization.

Explaining the state-imposed projects of change, Scott (1999: 3) notes that the state creates administrative orderings that grossly simplify nature and society to make complex issues more manageable. The system imposed in the governance of *umuganda* is clearly seen in its organization and supervision by state functionaries, which in essence ensures that the state is able to enforce *umuganda*, yet it is not supposed to be enforced by any authority. *Umuganda* has thus been eroded of its non-authoritative component to become a signaller of state authority and to control functions which are embodied in governmental agencies.

8.3.2.2 *Umuganda* as social control

Scholars believe that Rwanda came to have a culture of extreme obedience which in turn became a necessary prerequisite for society's survival (Bhavnani, 2006: 653-654, Douma, 2000: 29). Rwanda is currently a so-called free society. However some traditional institutions that have been maintained in the current modern system have not retained their initial value but have rather become lodged in a capitalist system which does not always favour indigenous knowledge and epistemology. The narrowing of the philosophical value of *umuganda* is the consequence of the failure of the post-colonial regime, including post-genocide leaders, to change the colonial logic in the administration of *umuganda*.

Arguably, the government and political leaders have not stopped indigenous peoples from organising themselves for their own *umuganda* but their self-esteem has been swallowed by the consistent understanding that political leaders know what best is for the people. Thus, people sit and wait for the government leaders to identify and organise solutions for their problems and then claim government-generated and imposed solutions to be *umuganda*. This is not *umuganda* but is a means of social control, for society is no longer the organiser, initiator and implementer. The higher authority of the state is now able to sustain its control over society through organising *umuganda*.

It was learned that since the post-colonial period, *umuganda* has served politicians, as a tool and as a means for propaganda to popularize themselves and to earn loyalty to stay in power, rather than being used for development and to improve the well-being of the population. Those who did not participate were considered anti-government and enemies of the country. This study identified this dimension of social control of *umuganda* in Rwanda, which is rooted in the past experience of colonial injustice and misdeeds which culminated in genocide. Communities have proven to be neither autonomous nor resourceful enough to resist the government's imposition of *umuganda* as an instrument of statehood.

As the study has identified earlier, the occurrence of a spirit of suspicion among and within community members is transmitted into searching for identity and belonging. Hence, currently there is both a sense of a combined consciousness of nation –building (governance) and genocide ideology. The two allow people to look at things differently, to live in fear, to participate even when they might not wish to, in order to escape punishment that might lead to more increases in state surveillance and yet more punishment. Living and acting out of fear has huge consequences for people's development. Such fear and mistrust still pervade Rwandan society, preventing the types of togetherness that forged the social bonds known from former times (Richters*et al,* 2005: 209).

8.4 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the outcome of the practice of *umuganda* in post-genocide political context. Focussing on the main aim of the policy of *umuganda*, which is poverty eradication and unity and reconciliation, the practice of *umuganda* has been affected greatly by both colonial administration and the experience of the genocide in 1994. The current government has used *umuganda* as an instrument of power to control the Rwandan people, building on the precedent of the colonial period. The chapter has indicated that although the extensive structures of decentralisation in place, central power is strongly visible. With this experience,

the management and administration of *umuganda* is politically defined to respond to many various challenges that are facing post-genocide government. Among these are poverty reduction as well as unity and reconciliation. Nevertheless, the practice of *umuganda* is hardly meeting any of these challenges.

The chapter identified the weakness of the practice of *umuganda* in the post-genocide regime, focusing on the governance of *umuganda* and the punitive sanctions associated with its practice. These weaknesses are seen as stumbling blocks to community development in Rwanda, since a community does not grow because of government control but it grows by itself. This depends on the degree to which members of the community share values, especially the idea that they belong to a common entity that supersedes the interests of its individual members.

What, then, are the prospects for *umuganda*?

CHAPTER NINE

The Prospects for *Umuganda*

Introduction

This study has assessed critically the policy and practice of *umuganda* in fostering development and peace in Rwanda. The study was conducted in two different communities, one in urban Kigali and the other in rural Western Province. Through different methods of research it was possible to understand the evolution of the practice of *umuganda* from its initial conception in traditional Rwanda. This approach has helped in identifying what *umuganda* means currently to local people and its outcome for government, for the state and for ordinary people of Rwanda after the genocide.

This chapter has three sections. Section one summarises the general shortcomings of the policy and practice of *umuganda*. Section two focuses on its potential, whereas section three presents a philosophical understanding of the current practice of *umuganda*.

9.1 Shortcomings of the current policy and practice of *umuganda*

Acquiring a full understanding of the transformation of the purpose as well as the impact of the practice of *umuganda* was important in order to discover whether the government policy has met its objectives. Findings from Kigali and Western Province showed that the role of the community was central to the original conception and practice of *umuganda*. Community members were supported and benefited from its norms. While *umuganda* in its traditional form responded directly to the needs of the people, this study established that from the colonial

period to the present *umuganda* has been and is used by government(s) to respond to political interests that are not necessarily beneficial to the ordinary people. Starting from the colonial period, *umuganda* was converted not only into a form of forced labour but also became a divisive tool that identified those who had to do extensive labour and were subjected to sanctions. This transformation of *umuganda* made life difficult for Rwandan society.

Currently, ordinary community members hardly initiate *umuganda*. The state has usurped *umuganda*, turning it into mandatory work, whether it benefits the population or not. The study has demonstrated how post-colonial regimes, including during the period after the genocide, have not restored *umuganda* to its original cultural value and practice. Instead, the study shows that post-independence governments have enjoyed exercising their power and earning loyalty by maintaining the colonial structures of governing free labour practice. This has led to three general problems.

➢ The first problem is with the governance of *umuganda* as it has become a state-owned and controlled program.

According to findings in this study, *umuganda* has been state policy since the period of colonial rule. It was re-established in 1974, almost a decade after independence with different objectives, which continued until the period of genocide in 1994. After the genocide, *umuganda* was adopted by government once again in 2007 as a different policy with different objectives. It is currently found to be a system whereby the government propagates its different strategies to be implemented by locals.

Although some activities which are required for *umuganda* are found to be positive for the state's well-being, less attention is given to individuals' and communities' well-being. This is especially so for the rural population who are required to perform many hours of *umuganda* while having little time for their own activities. Respondents in this study, both from Kigali and

Western Province, made it clear that ordinary people play a limited role in planning, organising and supervising *umuganda*.

The study indicated that the government of Rwanda has a history of intruding deeply into people's lives. It was learned that under colonial and post-colonial governments citizens had only limited freedom to speak, to challenge authority, to build a new and different life. The post-genocide government is still struggling with the same issues. This failure to deal with the legacy of the past has resulted in both leaders and ordinary citizens coming to live under fear, suspicion and mistrust.

The study shows that the control of the practice of *umuganda* is more related to the state's own insecurity which, in turn, is rooted in past social and political instability. One cannot ignore the impact of colonialism and now globalisation on how the policies, especially for development, are conceived and implemented. While *umuganda* is expected to offer opportunities to the local people to interact with the authorities and to pose questions on matters that affect the local community and nation as a whole, this can mean the opposite as well. The study has identified that government has used *umuganda* as a quick and efficient way to exert control. *Umuganda* has been used to sound out new laws and policies such as the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), and then to force local people to implement them.

➢ The second problem is that *umuganda* is compulsory, with little benefit to ordinary people.

The compulsory nature of *umuganda* is evident in how it is organised and supervised, as well as in the use of sanctions to enforce participation. Most of the activities performed during *umuganda* are defined by government as community needs, which is not necessarily the case. While set objectives for any policy need to be respected, should not government officials listen to the community in order to assess the community's needs instead of making assumptions

about what these needs are? Local leaders in the Western Province have explained their attempts to make assessments before organising their weekly *umuganda*. However, this has often been ignored by district officials who have other plans to be implemented by locals in the villages, in order to meet their signed performance contract. The way in which the practice of *umuganda* is governed gives the supposed beneficiaries the sense of being forced to carry out government orders. This has resulted in local people's reluctance to participate as much as they might.

The practice of *umuganda* is a law-enforced policy. Even though the policy of *umuganda* is formulated and approved by the parliament (the voice of the people), the punitive sanctions that accompany its implementation are meaningless to many. It raises a question as to why Rwandans should be forced to participate in state development. Furthermore, the attendance card that needs to be presented and signed after undertaking *umuganda* determines who should have access to government services, such as travelling documents or official certificate. But every citizen in Rwanda has a right to government services. What then does the denial of services mean to those who do not attend *umuganda*?

This suggests a need to rethink certain punitive sanctions that are involved in the practice of *umuganda*. Perhaps local people should be allowed to decide what kind of punishments should be given to those who do not attend *umuganda*, with the aim of deciding what is fair to fellow citizens.

Moreover, the study has identified the government's lack or weakness in implementing its own policy. This was evident in areas where, for example, those who do not attend *umuganda* are not fined equally. The policy states that tools necessary for performing *umuganda* are to be provided by the local administrative unit, yet in most places this was not the case. Although this failure may be identified as a general street-level bureaucratic problem, a national state policy which is for the benefit of both state and citizen can only succeed if it is implemented fairly and properly.

➢ The third problem is the utilization of *umuganda* to achieve free service delivery.

The practice of *umuganda* challenges the dominant notion of government delivering services through paid public servants. Based on this study, it was learnt that Kigali benefits from free and compulsory labour, which saves government revenue on opening city water channels, cleaning streets, building roads, schools, and health centres and so on. This implies that such social development practices are dictated by government at the expense of people's time and labour. Yet, services like these are found to be of little value in rural areas such as in the Western Province, where the majority of the population depends on domestic agricultural production for their everyday living. Should free, compulsory labour not be for the sake of meeting rural people's immediate needs to feed their families? There is a need for the policy of *umuganda* to be managed in providing services that not only restore the state's infrastructure but also improve the community's well-being in the long run.

9.2 The potential for *umuganda*

The potential for *umuganda* lies in responding to each of the three general shortcomings identified above. This section is not an attempt to respond in details to each of these problems. Rather it raises some considerations that may feed back into the future policy and practice of *umuganda*.

9.2.1 *Umuganda* under state control

One of the major challenges of *umuganda* is its management which appears to be state-controlled and state owned. Practitioners in development and policy implementation think that the concept of participation has been promoted as a way of giving local people greater decision-making power and influence. However, far too often this form of participation is not achieved. Instead local people are involved in meetings or contribute their labour. Willis

regards this as not participation in the wider sense, because it cannot be linked to empowerment (2005:104).

This study has identified that government leaders at the sector to the village level are in control of any activities planned for *umuganda*. Although local people have expressed their concern about this type of management, government on other hand is enjoying having control over the practice of *umuganda*. This questions the notion of participation in as much as local people's voice is not heard in the planning and organisation of *umuganda*.

The fact that the current traditional practice of *umuganda* is now based on modern government's vision and interests affects the ways in which *umuganda* is understood and practised. Thus government leaders and ordinary people have developed different expectations about the practice and outcomes of *umuganda*. Because of government's interpretation of *umuganda* and the benefits it derives from its practice, it may not be easy to let go of controlling the organisation of *umuganda*. On the other hand, while local ordinary people feel that they have been robbed of their initiative, the government senses that people resent not being able to participate fully in decision-making over *umuganda*, which results in monitoring and even more control. This implies that the weak, especially the poor, will always submit to those who are stronger. Can the policy of *umuganda* be flexible enough to engage communities in planning and organising their activities? Can *umuganda* be controlled but in different ways? Giving these questions better consideration is crucial in helping to ensure the success of the policy of *umuganda*.

There are two ways that can reconcile the current practice of *umuganda* as a state program with the traditional conception of community self-help. One is to have a formal, monthly form of *umuganda*, which is organised by state officials. Secondly, there is the possibility of also having informal *umuganda*, which is purely initiated by ordinary people. The formal *umuganda* could be planned and organised in favour of government projects, with different activities and all community members being required to participate. However, there is a need to ensure that

where a project is required in a certain area, the local people there should be fully involved in the planning stage, so as to facilitate genuine participation and to make successful implementation more likely.

In rural areas where *umuganda* is done once a week, its activities should be distinguished from that of the government organised *umuganda* and the number of hours of the latter reduced, so that people have time to attend to their own needs. For example, having one day per week for government activities could be reduced in favour of a monthly commitment, as done in Kigali, and instead have a day of community - decided activities whenever required. For instance, community members in the *umudugudu* can assess their situation and decide to help those who are in need of shelter, field activities, or even dispute resolution, without any government interference. Nonetheless the government should provide assistance when required by local people. The benefit of this is that projects for the community would be implemented and the community would take ownership. As Brinkerhoff and Crosby state, it is important that a policy be recognised as legitimate and worth pursuing early in the implementation process. (2002: 19).

Recalling that one of the objectives of the policy of *umuganda* is to unite people of Rwanda after a long history of division, *umuganda* should be a practice that feeds into policy reformulation for the sake of achieving its goal. This can only be done where participation as empowerment for the people is approached differently from the popular participation that is seen in the current practice of *umuganda*. For example, since *gacaca* has now ended its mandate, in June 2012, can *umuganda* take the role of uniting people? Can the meetings that are organised after *umuganda* be used to help bring about reconciliation instead of listening only to government announcements? *Umuganda* is possibly the only practice that brings many people together at one time. While appreciating this effort, can the power over the practice of *umuganda* be transformed enough to accommodate different needs for resolution in the communities?

9.2.2 *Umuganda* as mandatory

Compulsion in the policy and practice of *umuganda* is reflected in the state control of its practical implementation which entails a threat of punitive sanctions. Although there are some aspects of volunteerism in the practice of *umuganda*, especially when, for example, building houses for homeless people, informants in both Kigali and Western Province identified the managerial practice of *umuganda* as compulsory. Such decision-making and instruction not only serve to undermine participation but also limit the capacity of citizens and give little chance for people to be empowered in development that serves their interest.

The post-genocide government has a clear developmental vision for the country.The pressure on the objectives set and limitation of time seem to have led to a style of administration that has prevented popular participation, again imposing on local people to act even when it is against their will. Although this may be a means for the government to carry out its developmental project, it may not be sustainable in the long run. While one may wonder why should people be forced to take part in activities that are meant for their own benefit, a further question is whether people should be given the liberty to participate or not. The concern is that, if punitive sanctions are abolished, may people will not participate as much as they do now. Yet again it is difficult to believe that the present levels of participation will rise as long as punitive sanctions continue to be applied. Is there no other way that Rwandans can be organised and actually be trusted with a sense of personal responsibility for community development without government intervention?

While the majority in Kigali attend *umuganda* once a month, those in Western Province perform *umuganda* weekly and sometimes twice a week. The rural population's labour is the biggest asset that they have. How long will they endure, spending many hours for free labour on government projects instead of their own household productive activities? While a great spirit of resilience is needed in the practice of *umuganda*, there has to be a careful re-examination of its compulsory nature. Having *umuganda* as a mandatory practice, not only defines who a good citizen is, by having an attendance card signed, but also narrows the sense of participation by ordinary people.

The continuation of the compulsion of *umuganda* combined with punitive sanctions inherited from colonial rule emphasises the failure of the current government to transform *umuganda* into a means of well-being for Rwandan. As much as people still identify *umuganda* as their traditional practice, there is a need for it to be constantly nurtured and defended and reformulated. Individuals and groups may resist and oppose those in power but most of the time they cannot ignore the government's influence on different developmental practices such as those of *umuganda*. This calls for some reconsideration of the governance of the practice of *umuganda*.

What emerges from this study is that *umuganda*'s value is in community participation. This depends on leadership and on the resources available. Nevertheless, if development is the goal community participation need not rely on government. Usually community members know what they need and how to get it. They may be incapable in some respects but when they are mentored, they can develop skills, knowledge and expertise for themselves, which is a form of nation-building. This requires a collaborative kind of leadership. Consequently, *umuganda* is a very important policy sphere with the potential to mediate community building and to support other government policies. This was evident in the data presented which indicated that *umuganda* is currently used to pass government information and mobilise the people to implement state projects. Nevertheless, as the former president of the Republic of Tanzania, Mwalim Julius Nyerere believed, true development is the development of the people and is brought about by the people themselves (The Republic of Tanzania 1996, 2). This should be understood differently from people being forced to take part in development activities. It is rather the creation of an environment that allows people to be engineers of development for themselves and their nation. It is the creation of an environment where ordinary people are not considered only as beneficiaries of progress but also as the key agents of change.

9.2.3 *Umuganda* as free labour

With *umuganda* identified as a potential platform for community mobilisation and information - sharing the government has established an easy way to implement the policy designed. The labour costs of *umuganda* contribute to the national development programs, as well as a means of service delivery. The question is how people would benefit from such labour. This differs, depending on the social status of the beneficiaries and the location of the labour. Some benefit is direct, other is indirect.

Direct benefit

Direct benefits are activities that community members initiate, for example, by building houses or helping in one another's fields. These offer direct short-term benefits. However, based on the findings, activities that directly benefit community members are seldom performed in *umuganda*. Many activities are related to the visualisation of economic development in Rwanda. How much attention should be paid to economic development, community development and to poverty reduction? The last two are often seen as part of economic development, which aims more at general outcomes that at the welfare of specific communities.

In addition, most activities are often directed from district or sector level. Local people have no say in the planning and organisation of these activities, which means that the activities are a state defined benefit. Occasionally, people in rural areas will organise themselves to build for their neighbours who are in need. But participants in the study complained that without the approval of the local leaders there is nothing that they can do to initiate *umuganda* for anyone who is in need. This indicates the monopolisation of *umuganda* by government and how little local people benefit from their own labour.

While relying on community participation, *umuganda* has not been effective in targeting and benefiting the poor. The majority, especially those in rural areas, are still living in absolute poverty. Consequently, *umuganda* makes no sense to the ordinary population when they

cannot use their labour for what they consider to be of direct benefit to their households. Instead, the practice of *umuganda* should be approached holistically so that all can benefit according to their needs.

Indirect benefit

Activities in *umuganda* that can be considered indirectly beneficial to the people, are, for example, building schools, clinics or even roads. These are regarded more beneficial to the government than they are to the people. While an urban population may benefit directly from the use of a major road, the rural population might not, yet everyone benefits indirectly.

The current study has identified the government's ignorance or narrow understanding of development for the people. The policy of *umuganda* is structured so that it has the power of bringing communities together for development. Nevertheless, the study indicates that *umuganda* has not been adequately explored in this regard. While this free labour should be of benefit to local communities, most of the activities concentrate on building public infrastructure, planting trees and cleaning streets, which offer indirect benefit to most.

Sustainability cannot be achieved without the full involvement of beneficiaries, in this case the ordinary banya-Rwanda. For example, could farmers, in rural areas, or people in need of shelter use *umuganda* to assist each other as they did in the pre-colonial era? Could it be used for food security? There is no development when people are still living below the poverty line and are not empowered to fight against structures that bind them into poverty. Local people may not have enough resources to boost their economy, but their labour is a great asset to their economy development. Government leaders need not bypass this reality. Once well managed, *umuganda* could become a good policy mechanism for other policies that require popular mobilisation and participation.

Given Rwanda's rate of economic and demographic growth, and expectations of regional trade, further development is likely. But the population needs to be empowered so that they can initiate and direct *umuganda* not only for the sake of other government policies but also for the direct benefit of communities. Providing services that not only uplift the community but also activities that improve well-being in the long run should be the focus of *umuganda*. This means pursuing a variety of community service initiatives that include not just what the government has identified but what the community itself has identified as a problem. This is the philosophical meaning of *umuganda*.

9.3 A philosophical understanding of *umuganda* today

The philosophy and practice of *umuganda* are crucial to the future of Rwanda in promoting good governance, social development and economic development. Their relationship is portrayed in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1: Key areas in nation-building
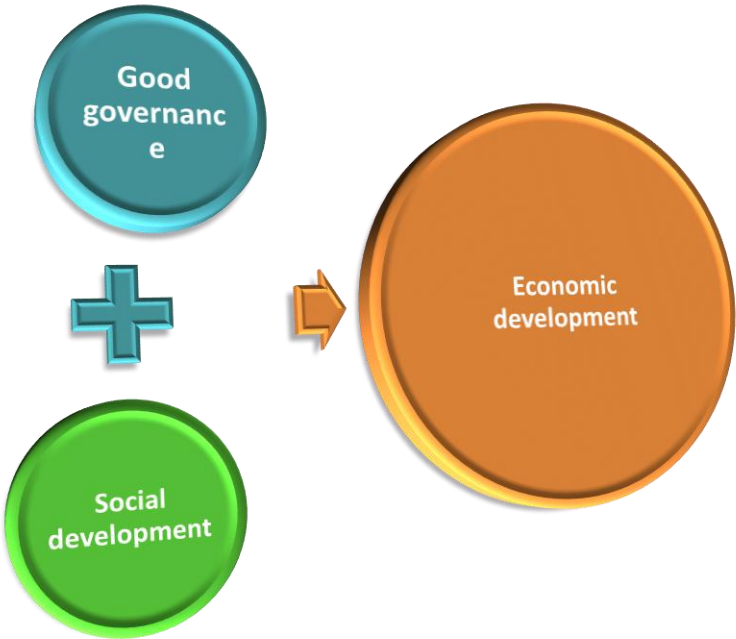
Although the three pillars are mutually important, each element will be discussed separately.

Good governance

Good governance means different things to different countries. In Rwanda, good governance is related more to political and administrative decentralisation. However, the economic aspect of decentralisation should not be ignored, especially as this is concealed in the planning and management of *umuganda*. While the role of government in the management of *umuganda* is questioned in this study, a condition for economic growth is good governance that allows social growth. For this to happen in Rwanda, local government officials would have to recognise that people have the ability to transform their own lives. This would entail government delegating powers to the rest of the society. For example, the management and functions of *umuganda* could be performed by local people themselves, with the government as mentor.

While this study has identified poor motivation and reluctance regarding participation in *umuganda*, good management of the policy and practice of *umuganda* could achieve far higher levels of participation by a public with a positive attitude. This can only be done by allowing local people's involvement in planning and organisation of *umuganda* based on local communities' priorities. Policies such as decentralisation, good governance, poverty reduction and reconciliation can be implemented through state control but cannot succeed without the genuine and full participation of ordinary citizens. Through good governance local leaders can work closely with residents to develop ideas. Thus, the government does not have to concern itself with not having enough to give to its citizens. Instead, *umuganda* can do a lot for national development while maintaining the unity of the people.

Social development

Based on the findings of this study, the traditional aim of *umuganda* was to bring about a sense of solidarity and strengthen social cohesion. In its current form, *umuganda* also seeks to improve information sharing, provide a learning ground for coordinated activities, promote

civic-mindedness, and through shared experience, develop a sense of collective consciousness. This study has demonstrated the shift in the practice of *umuganda* to that of political concentration, rhetorically known as nation-building. However, the majority of the people do not identify with this remote, indirect benefit.

Even though, in general, policies are designed to solve social problems as well as enacting change, in most cases policy design is based on a tradition of exercising power and authority rather than on knowledge as a basis for responding to the needs of the people. In the case of *umuganda*, participation is limited so much that the potential beneficiaries do not understand the objectives of the policy. Therefore, the policy fails. Much needs to be done in engaging communities rather than in telling them what to do. The government should enable people to be in charge of practising *umuganda*. For example, in rural areas, basic service delivery is historically provided by people themselves rather than by government. People are used to building their own houses, fetching water from a river and electricity is not a major issue, although it is needed. Moreover, school classrooms and clinics are to some extent built by *umuganda*, which confirms the capacity that ordinary people have for social development.

Economic development

The concept of economic development can be ruthless, by benefiting some at the expense of other. This study has revealed how the management of *umuganda* excludes the voices of the people, thus advancing the interests of some while others experience little benefit. Economic development can hardly be achieved when society is poorly governed and when the majority in the communities are poor. This is evident in the practice of *umuganda* where Kigali has so much in terms of infrastructure, while Western Province has little. Nevertheless, if governance reaches the people and allows full participation, economic development can be a means of advancing social development as well. Rwandan society is composed of people with different skills such as teachers, architects and so on who can volunteer their time and knowledge to do

something beyond cleaning streets. Currently, the population of Rwanda stands at 11million.[78] If, for example, at least 5 million people spend four hours every month to perform services for the community, a journey in the fight against poverty, and economic development could be embarked upon. The people in the community usually know each other; it is easy to know who is in need and to make this a priority in the activities of *umuganda*. This extends *umuganda* into becoming not only a tool for building and maintaining public property, but also would encourage an exchange of services, skills and expertise that are found within the community. This could also allow development within communities as well as throughout the country.

However, the essence of volunteerism is required in order to achieve the maximum level of local people's passion for *umuganda*. This calls for reconsidering the current punitive sanctions that are involved in the practice of *umuganda*. A sense of compulsion undermines the core value of social and community development and a spirit of volunteerism. It also raises the need for the government to become less involved in the whole practice of *umuganda.* Although it is still debatable how reduced a role government should have, communities can be stronger when they exist within a more enabling context. This includes creating an environment of political leadership, law and legislation as well as an appropriate attitude for government administration and civil servants.

Theoretically, the implementation of any policy should be accompanied by policy evaluation. Yet the study found that little or no proper evaluation has been done on the policy of *umuganda*. This is a serious missing link in policy management and policy implementation, as it hinders the possibility of improvement. Therefore, a system of evaluating the practice of *umuganda*, the implementation of the policy, should be introduced.

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[78]www.statistics.gove.rw accessed on July 2011.

9.4 Conclusion

This study draws on local people's desire in Rwanda to improve the organisation of *umuganda*, mostly involving local community members in planning and deciding priorities. This entails ordinary community members reclaiming the ownership of *umuganda*. One of the major challenges that were found in this study is the power and control that the government has over defining the practice of *umuganda*.

This study shows that *umuganda* as a form of development is not only a modern concept but a traditional idea that has been transformed in how it is organized, practised and who benefits from these development activities. While in the early days, activities were initiated and owned by people themselves, the state now controls and benefits from *umuganda*. But development in Rwanda has much to learn from the traditional values of *umuganda*.

Moreover, looking at the whole practice of *umuganda*, it is not about just social action but also about bringing people together to unify them. For the majority of people are still psychologically wounded from the 1994 genocide. People should be given a chance to demonstrate and exercise their capacity in social construction without their capacity being underestimated. With proper management, *umuganda* could help to recognize that there are many ways a country could assist the poor and achieve economic development.

The potential for the practice of *umuganda* lies in the opportunities for the local population to mingle with not only neighbours but also with their leaders. But such participation must be without the threat of punitive sanctions, and essentially give local people an opportunity to plan and organise *umuganda* in order to solve their individual and local community's problems. The government's ability to use *umuganda* as a means for communication can offer platforms where social, economic and political issues can be discussed and understood. Therefore, the most important feature of *umuganda* in post-genocide Rwanda is community engagement, with a great possibility of reunifying Rwandan society. It is not the amount of work done,

rather, it is the gathering of people and exchanging of ideas for the sake of rebuilding mutual trust among the indigenous people. Beyond doubt this is the greatest value Rwanda can obtain from practising *umuganda*. It is believed that the more community members share, or at least understand and tolerate each other's values and attitudes, the stronger their community will be. Through the practice of *umuganda*, of working together, Rwandans can be able to see beyond what divides them and to focus more on what they can do together to build their future. But the prospects for *umuganda* depend heavily on the government's willingness to compromise by lessening control and allowing fuller participation by ordinary community members.

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Appendix 1

Application letter for access on research and data collection

PENINE UWIMBABAZI
University of KwaZulu Natal
Policy and Development Studies
Private Bag X01, Scottsville
3209, Pietermaritzburg
South Africa

30 November 2010

The Minister of Local Government

Dear Sir,

RE: Application for access on research and data collection

I am a Doctoral student in Policy and Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal, in South Africa. As part of the requirement for the degree, I am required to analysis data collected from a certain community, region or country. Being a Rwandan citizen, it is a pleasure and meaningful for me to research on my country. My topic is *"An Analysis of Umuganda: the Policy and Practice of Community Work in Rwanda"*. This is an empirical study. The research is planned to be conducted in two communities: one in Kigali City and the other in the Western Province (Cyangugu).

I am therefore writing to request a written permission to conduct my research in these two communities starting from 14 December 2010. Data collection consists of a questionnaire that will be filled in by randomly selected individuals in communities, local leaders, and elderly people.

The ethical clearance letter from the University's High Degree Office that confirms my research worth to be carried forward and the questionnaire are attached.

I thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely yours

Penine Uwimbabazi

Appendix 2

Response to the request to conduct research

REPUBULIKA Y'U RWANDA

Kigali, ku wa   **1 6 DEC 2010**

N° 2047   /07.06

MINISITERI Y'UBUTEGETSI BW'IGIHUGU

Website: www.minaloc.gov.rw

B.P. 3445   Kigali

Mrs Penine UWIMBABAZI

Dear Madam,

Re: Response to your request

Reference is made to your   Letter   dated 30th November 2010 requesting a written permission to conduct your research with the aim of analyzing umuganda: *the Policy and Practice of Community Work in Rwanda,* in Kigali City and in Western Province from 14 December,

I inform you that the Ministry of Local Government allows you to carry out the research that you have planned in those areas and I hope the final result will be very profitable to you and to the Ministry.

Indeed, do not hesitate to ask for any other information from us.

Regards,

RUGAMBA Egide
Director General
Planning & M.E
MINALOC

MUSONI James
Minister of Local Government

Appendix 3

Letter of consent

An Analysis of umuganda, the policy and Practice of community work in Rwanda

My name is Penine Uwimbabazi. I am conducting research for a PhD Policy and development Studies in the School of Social Science at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, (e-mail: penineu@yahoo.fr). The study is being supervised by Prof. Ralph Lawrence (e-mail: lawrencer@ukzn.ac.za). The research objective is to understand whether and how the policy and practice of community work (*umuganda*) can contribute to development and peace in Rwanda. The study seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge concerning community work in Rwanda. This includes understanding a policy for community development in Rwanda, how it is being implemented and its effects on the community, and how it can be improved.

I would like to thank you for participating in this research. With your agreement, you are requested to give information concerning community work, how it is being organized, the different activities associated with socio-economic development and its contribution to the community at large. Helpful suggestions will be welcomed for possible transformation regarding the ways that community work can be better implemented. Your participation is voluntary. The research is not going to offer any money for the information and no transport costs will be involved.

Before using a tape recorder, permission will sought from the participant. Should you not agree to this, the researcher will write down answers to the questions. If you agree to the use of tape recorder, the researcher will insure that all information recorded is kept safely and deleted immediately after the use. The information from interviews and focus groups is going to be kept in a safe place until no longer necessary, where upon it will be destroyed. The information will not be kept after five years (according to the UKZN Research Ethics)[79]. The research is expected to be completed in November 2011, and the research result will be shared to the community, academics policy makers and government thereafter.

Your confidentiality and anonymity are assured. No names or anything that can identify you will be published. To repeat, your participation is voluntary. It would be highly valued.

I have read the above information, and I have decided of my own free will to participate in this research.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

---

[79] https://researchethics.ukzn.ac.za

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Appendix 4

Issues observed by researcher

1. How does the population understand *umuganda?*

2. Who participate in *umuganda*?

2. How do they participate?

3. Why do they participate?

4. What activities are performed during *umuganda*?

5. Who decide what activities to be performed?

6. How many hours do these activities take?

7. How do local people benefit from these activities?

8. How is *umuganda* organized?

9. Who organizes *umuganda*?

10. Who supervises *umuganda*?

11. Can local people help decide what should be done for *umuganda*?

12. How useful is *umuganda*?

13. Are there improvements that could be made to *umuganda*?

14. Is the policy of *umuganda* successful?

Appendix 5

Questions for semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions

PREAMBLE

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS PART OF MY PhD RESEARCH.
THE QUESTIONNAIRE IS FOR OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS, ELDERS AND ORDINARY COMMUNITY MEMBERS.
THE ANSWERS ARE COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL.
THANK YOU FOR THE TIME YOU WILL SPEND IN CONTRIBUTING TO THIS RESEARCH WORK.

QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE CIRCLE THE CODE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE UNIQUE MOST APPROPRIATE ANSWER TO EACH QUESTION.

I. DEMIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender: 1 = Female   2 = Male

2. Age range: 1 = 18-20   2 = 21-30   3 = 31-40   4 = 41-50   5 = 51-60

      6 = 61-70   7 = 71-80   8 = over 80   9 = Not documented

3. Date of birth (date/month/year): …………………………

4. Province ……………………………………………..

5. District …………………………………………………

6. Sector ……………………………………………..

7. Cell ………………………………………………...

8. Village …………………………………………………

9. Education level reached

        0 = None

        1 = Primary school only

        2 = Secondary school

        3 = Post-secondary school (certificate, diploma or first degree)

        4 = Graduate degree (Masters, PhD)

        9 = Not documented

10. Marital status

        0 = Never married/single

        1 = Married

        2 = Divorced or separated

        3 = Widowed

        9 = Not documented

11. Employment status

        0 = Not employed currently

        1 = Student

        2 = Casual worker

        3 = Self-employed/business

        4 = Employed with not a leadership post

        5 = Employer and leader

        6 = Retired or elder

        9 = Not documented

If employed, please specify your position:

12. Does the respondent belong to the focus group? 1 = Yes   0 = No

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

13. What is the root meaning of the term "*umuganda*"?

      1 = A pole of wood making the main pillar of a traditional house

      2 = A batch of poles of wood for building a traditional house

      3 = A voluntary work initiated by community members

      4 = A community work initiated by leaders, e.g. the King

      5 = Other, please specify: ………………………………………………………….

14. In your opinion, which of the following statements better describe *umuganda*?

1 = Mutual assistance work in a community

2 = Public community work organized by a state/government

3 = Both the above statements describe *umuganda*

4 = Other, please specify: …………………………………………………………..

III. GENERAL QUESTIONS ON UMUGANDA

15. Which of the assertions below best indicates the purpose of *umuganda?*

1 = Improve the welfare of the community by mutual work assistance

      2 = A forum to communicate the decisions of leaders to the population

      3 = A forum to give the population an opportunity of expressing their opinions

      4 = All the above statements meet the purpose of *umuganda*

      5 = Other, please specify:

Period	Purpose	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

16. Which of the following items describe the mainactivities in *umuganda*?

1 = Building houses, shelters for domestic animals, and helping in domestic tasks

2 = Working in the fields and public places

3 = Taking care of sick people, disabled and older people

4 = Public labor: constructing streets, health centers, etc.

5 = Following speeches and directives of representatives of leaders

6 = Other, please specify:

Period	Main activities	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

17. In your understanding, who initiated the idea of establishing *umuganda*?
1 = Political leaders
2 = Community request
3 = Policy-makers suggestion
4 = Other, specify: …………………………………………………………

Period	Initiator	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

18. Who among the following individuals supervise activities in *umuganda*?

1 = A representative of the state/kingdom

      2 = Chief of a village

      3 = Nominated individual

      4 = Head of household

      5 = Everyone

      6 = Other, please specify: …………………………………………….

Period	Supervisor	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

19. Who was/is required to participate in *umuganda*?

1 = One male adult in the household (above 18 years)

2 = One female adult in the household (above 18 years)

3 = One person in the household irrespective to age and sex (a young child also)

4 = All adult males only

5 = All adult females only

6 = Adults of both sex

7 = All people irrespective to age and sex (young children also)

8 = Other, specify:_____

Period	Participant	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

20. What main reason motivates people to participate in *umuganda*?
1 = Mutual help
2 = Meet friends, neighbours and socialize with new people
3 = Please leaders
4 = Get information about government's plans
5 = Fear to be fined or prosecuted as *umuganda* was obligatory by law
6 = All the above five assertions are valid
7 = Other, specify:_____

Period	Motivation	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

21. Which of the following describes how the population understands *umuganda*?

1 = A forced and non-beneficial labour

2 = A forced but beneficial public work

3 = A voluntary and beneficial public work

4 = A tool of oppression by leaders

5 = Other, please specify: ……………………………………………..

Period	Understanding	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

22. To your knowledge, what was the main reason for establishing *umuganda*?
1 = to obtain a cheap labour force
2 = to train the population for self-solving problems
3 = to maintain to unit of the population
4 = to create a channel of communication with the population
5 = other, specify: ………………………………………………………

Period	Reason	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

23. What effect *umuganda* has on the population in the view point of leaders?

1 = Poverty eradication

2 = Good governance and accountability

3 = Unity and reconciliation

4 = All the above

5 = Other, specify: …………………………………………………………

Period	Effect	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

24. To your knowledge, how often *umuganda* was/is done?
        1 = Every day
        2 = Once a week
3 = Once every two weeks
4 = Once a month
5 = Once in two months
6 = Other, specify: …………………………………………………………………

Period	Hours/days/ weeks	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

25. How many hours per day the activities of *umuganda* take/took?

1 = Less than two hours

2 = Two to three hours

3 = Three to four hours

4 = Four to five hours

5 = Five to six hours

6 = More than six hours

7 = Other, specify_____

Period	Hours per day	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

26. Where (are/were)the activities of *umuganda* planned?

1 = At leaders' (King, President, etc…) palace

2 = District level

3 = Sector level

4 = Cell level

5 = Village level

6 = Other, specify:_____

Period	Venue	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

27. What role do political leaders play/played in administering *umuganda*?

1 = None

2 = Planning activities

3 = Monitoring and evaluation

4 = Supervising and reporting

5 = Plan activities, supervise and reporting

6 = Other, specify: ………………………………………………………………

Period	Leadership role	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

28. What sentence was/is given to those who did/do not participate in *umuganda*?

1 = No punishment

2 = Verbal reprimand

3 = Pay fine

4 = Corporal punishment

5 = Go to jail

6 = Other, specify:_____

Period	Punishment	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

29. What activities were/are performed in *umuganda*?

1. Work on farms: 1 = Yes   0 = No

Period	On farm
Pre-colonial	
Colonial	
Post-colonial until genocide	
Post-genocide	

2. Cleaning of streets: 1 = Yes   0 = No

Period	Cleaning streets
Pre-colonial	
Colonial	
Post-colonial until genocide	
Post-genocide	

3. Building houses   1 = Yes 0 = No

Period	Building houses
Pre-colonial	
Colonial	
Post-colonial until genocide	
Post-genocide	

4. Making streets: 1 = Yes   0 = No

Period	Making streets
Pre-colonial	
Colonial	
Post-colonial until genocide	
Post-genocide	

30. In your opinion, who was/is getting much benefit from *umuganda*?

1 = Each person in the community

2 = Only leaders

3 = Both the individuals and leaders

4 = Other, please specify:_____

Period	Benefit	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

31. In your opinion give the level of benefits of *umuganda* for:

1. Local individuals:

1 = Very beneficial

2 = Beneficial

3 = Less beneficial

4 = Not beneficial at all

5 = Other, please specify:_____

Period	Level of benefit	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

2. Entire local community

1 = Very beneficial

2 = Beneficial

3 = Less beneficial

4 = Not beneficial at all

5 = Other, please specify:_____

Period	Level of benefit	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

3. Political leaders:

1 = Very beneficial

2 = Beneficial

3 = Less beneficial

4 = Not beneficial at all

5 = Other, please specify:_____

Period	Level of benefit	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

4. Country as a whole:

1 = Very beneficial

2 = Beneficial

3 = Less beneficial

4 = Not beneficial at all

5 = Other, please specify:_____

Period	Level of benefit	If other, specify
Pre-colonial		
Colonial		
Post-colonial until genocide		
Post-genocide		

32. What is your view of *umuganda* as it is practised today?

1 = Has improved

2 = Remained unchanged

3 = Has worsened

4 = Other, please specify: …………………………………………………………

33. Which of the following types of *umuganda* is more beneficial to the community?

    1 = Informal

    2 = Formal

Why? Explain shortly ……………………………………………………………………

34. Is the current policy of *umuganda* successful?

1 = Yes

0 = No

35. If yes to Question 32, can the following be taken as evidences of the success?

1. Improvement of socio-economic status of the population: 1 = Yes   0 = No

2. Getting easily governable population: 1 = Yes   0 = No

    3. Increase of GDP in the population: 1 = Yes   0 = No

    4. Political maturity of the population: 1 = Yes   0 = No

    5. Other evidences, specify: …………………………………………………………

36. Do the following represent challenges in administering *umuganda*?

1. Difficult to supervise: 1 = Yes 0 = No

2. Interrupt rest of people in wee-end: 1 = Yes 0 = No

3. Lower representation of the population: 1 = Yes 0 = No

4. Lack of necessary tools: 1 = Yes 0 = No

5. Other, please specify:………………………………………………………………

37. Can the following help to improve the efficiency of *umuganda*?

1. Motivate people to increase the number of participants   1 = Yes   0 = No

2. Improve the quality of management   1 = Yes   0 = No

3. Increase the number of working hours   1 = Yes   0 = No

4. Reduce the number of working hours   1 = Yes   0 = No

5. Make an accurate selection of activities   1 = Yes 0 = No

6. Restructure decision-making policy   1 = Yes   0 = No

38. What future is there for *umuganda*?

1. The *umuganda* will continue to be efficiently done   1 = Yes   0 = No

2. The *umuganda* will continue, but inefficiently done   1 = Yes   0 = No

3. The *umuganda* will be eradicated from the community   1 = Yes   0 = No

4. The *umuganda* will be replaced by labour force   1 = Yes 0 = No

5. Other, please specify:………………………………………………………………….

39. Should *umuganda* continue?   1 = Yes 0 = No

40. If *umuganda* continues, how can it be improved?

1 = Train communities on the usefulness of the community managing their activities

2 = Transfer control from the government to the community?

3 = Both the above two strategies would improve the efficiency of *umuganda*

4. Other, please specify: ……………………………………………………..

41. Are there any other views or items of information that you would like to add? 1 = Yes
0 =No

If yes, please explain:

Appendix 6

An example of work and evaluation undertaken for *umuganda*

No	Work done	Size of the work/quantity	Pricing the work	People attended	Comments
1	Cleanness: Cleaning streets of Kadasomwa - Mundima, the road that goes to CENA through Electrogaz, and the roads that connects umurenge wa Mururu and Kamembe. - Create a road in Mirundi - Create a road in Kannyogo-Rushakamba-Kabeza.	8KM	**Frw 2 448 500**	Between 4897 and 6331	The level of participation in umuganda was up to 71%. After umuganda, different speech that sensitize people in: - A day of a tree (explain to people the usefulness of planting trees) - Closing the campaign of fighting against SIDA (AIDs) -To grow grasses by the streets, nears their yards (3m) - Make sure your name is written correctly on the election list - Land registration
2	Prepare grounds that will be used for school buildings (three rooms) in Muhanga for 9YBE and carrying stones	144m²			
3	Cleaning up at the elections sites	126m²			
	Total	-	**Frw 2 448 500**	**4897/6331**	

Source: Report of umuganda, No. 236. Western Province, District of Rusizi, sector Kamembe, 27 April 2010