



THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

# National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC)

## Social Cohesion in Rwanda

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An Opinion Survey  
Results 2005-2007

With technical support from  
The International Rescue Committee



Funding provided by  
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)





Kigali, March 2008

Dear Friends and Partners,

The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) is pleased to present the results of the latest national opinion survey on social cohesion conducted in 2007.

Previously, the NURC has released three nationwide opinion surveys on decentralization, the *gacaca* process and land reform in 2002, 2003 and 2004 respectively. In 2005 and 2006 we conducted follow-up opinion surveys on social cohesion in Rwanda, which consolidated the main questions of the above mentioned three surveys into one questionnaire.

The social cohesion survey attempts to measure the degree of citizens' trust in governmental initiatives, the degree of involvement of citizens in governmental reforms and decentralized governance and finally the judgment of citizens on judicial efficiency and fairness of the *gacaca* process. The findings from the 2007 survey reflect the opinions of almost 10,000 individuals. They give a picture of the current opinion of Rwandans on various aspects of social cohesion, including interpersonal trust, trust in Government action and decentralization, attitudes toward land reform and toward various aspects of the *gacaca* process. It also shows and discusses trends in public opinion on those issues since 2005.

The enclosed survey report suggests that Rwandans largely approve of the decentralization efforts and have great faith in the ability of the Government to improve their lives. They continue to grapple with the long-term effects of the genocide in the *gacaca* process and all Rwandans will have to keep up their efforts to work hard toward reconciliation and unity. We will continue to monitor social cohesion throughout 2008 by means of another follow-up survey.

The 2005, 2006, and 2007 social cohesion surveys were implemented with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and technical assistance from the International Rescue Committee (IRC). We would like to thank them warmly for their valuable contributions.

I invite you, friends and partners, to thoroughly review the conclusions of this report and share your comments with us.

Sincerely yours,

Fatuma NDANGIZA

Executive Secretary

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# 1

## **Executive Summary: Social Cohesion 2005 to 2007: Support for Governance Reforms – Social Trust Mixed**

**R**wanda is gradually making progress on the road to reconciliation reflected in general high trust in Government action and good marks for newly decentralized political structures. However, it is also struggling to overcome widespread interpersonal distrust and continuing divisions between genocide survivors and those accused of or convicted for crimes of genocide.

Division and exclusion rather than cohesion marked Rwandan society from independence up to the genocide in 1994. Enormous efforts have been undertaken to bridge the deep rifts in society and heal the wounds inflicted by the genocide. Bringing government decision-making closer to the people through decentralization and adjudicating crimes of genocide and building the basis for reconciliation through truth telling are central elements in the Rwandan strategy to rebuild the social fabric of the country. The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), in its effort to promote national unity and reconciliation, has been consulting public opinion through surveys on various aspects of social cohesion since 2002. This report presents the results of surveys on social cohesion and highlights trends from 2005 to 2007. The surveys were conducted by NURC with technical assistance from the International Rescue Committee (IRC) with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

According to one common definition of “social cohesion,” it can be described as “the glue that bonds society together.” It requires that members of society feel a sense of belonging and identify with a collective identity. It also entails that individuals trust each other, work together

toward shared goals, and that members of society feel that government institutions represent their interests and further their well-being.

The surveys tracked the opinion of Rwandan citizens on interpersonal trust in society, support for Government reforms with respect to decentralization and land reforms, and civic engagement in local government and in civic associations. It further attempted to assess Rwandans' opinion on the effectiveness of the gacaca process in dealing with the legacy of the genocide and its impact on social relations.

The survey targeted 9,980 respondents and was conducted between June and September 2007 in all 416 administrative sectors of Rwanda. It targeted heads of households, which led to a slight overrepresentation of men (54% of respondents) as compared to women (46%) and to a slightly older and better educated group of people than if it had targeted randomly selected individuals. Respondents are overwhelmingly engaged in agriculture (86%), 26% do not know how to read and write and 24% did not have any formal education. The trend of increasing poverty levels observed in surveys since 2003 seems to have been stopped or even slightly reversed. The share of respondents who consider themselves "very poor" or "rather poor" has decreased from 59% in 2006 to 56% in 2007. Approximately 54% of households polled are under the national poverty line of 90,000 Rwf per year and 63.5% of households spend less than 10,000 Rwf per month.

This executive summary briefly summarizes and discusses the central findings of the 2007 survey.

## **Key Findings**

### **Social Cohesion and Trust in Government Action**

*Interpersonal trust:* A significant majority of survey respondents, 58%, believe that it is "naïve to trust others." This fact in and of itself does not need to be of great concern. In industrialized societies, up to 50% of participants in comparable surveys have also expressed general distrust in their fellow citizens when confronted with a similar question. Feelings of distrust have been growing, though, in Rwanda from 49% in 2005 to 58% in 2007. Interpersonal distrust does not necessarily prevent Rwandans from working together. For example, two-thirds of respondents agree that high levels of distrust are not an impediment for Rwandans to work together on community development projects.

*Trust in Government efforts:* An overwhelming majority of respondents, 97%, agree that "the Government is doing its best to improve standards of living" in the country. This unusually unanimous approval rating for the Government is much higher than in 47 industrialized and developing countries polled in an international opinion survey in 2007 – only China comes somewhat close to the government approval ratings in Rwanda with 89%. Generally, Rwandans have a strong belief in the effectiveness of central Government action, with 56%

agreeing that “decisions that affect the community” should be left to the central Government and 68% agreeing that levels of corruption would be lower in the country if development were left to technical experts at the ministries.

*Support for decentralization:* Despite strong support for the central Government, Rwandans are also in favor of the decentralization process. Between 70% and 85% of respondents agreed that the administrative and decision-making bodies created by the decentralization process are knowledgeable, autonomous in their decision-making, and work well together.

*Citizen involvement:* The survey findings on civic involvement in public matters are somewhat contradictory. While 91% of respondents agreed that, “citizens take part in decision-making on problems concerning them,” only 47% of respondents reported actually having attended a community meeting recently and 23% of respondents are involved in an elected administrative body. It is unclear how voluntary the involvement in public decision-making is since half of all respondents agree with the statement that, “if the coordinator does not force people to act, nothing will be done in the sector.”

*Associations and civil society:* Survey respondents see decentralization as having a positive effect on associative life and civil society. Actual membership in civil society groups is somewhat limited - the most popular organizations are local savings and credit groups (41% of respondents belonged to one in 2007) and spiritual organizations (27% in 2007), while only between 3% and 7% of respondents reported belonging to cultural or sports associations, community user committees, local charitable organizations or local NGOs. Nonetheless, a large majority of respondents across all provinces believe that decentralization has a positive effect on associational life and civil society.

*Land holdings:* There has been a slight increase in the share of the population who own four or more plots of land since 2005. The proportion of households who do not own any land has remained more or less constant at 12%. The largest landholdings are in the North, followed by the South and significantly smaller landholdings in the West and East. The share of households without access to land is highest in the West and lowest in the North (apart from Kigali).

*Land reform:* A growing number of respondents are in favor of land reforms and the modernization of agriculture. A majority of respondents, 62%, agree that ancestral land can no longer be transferred to one’s children and almost equal shares of respondents agreed land has to be regrouped (59%) and that Rwandans can no longer expect to depend on agriculture to make a living (64%). This still leaves a strong minority of between 35% and 40% who are opposed to the idea of abolishing the previous practice of dividing up of farmland between children.

*Women:* Even though there is an unusually high number of female-headed households in Rwanda as compared to most other countries – one of the tragic

legacies of the genocide – women and women-headed households have yet to catch up with men and male-headed households in most socio-economic categories as well as in their involvement in public life. Almost twice as many women as men report not having any formal education (32% compared to 18%) and cannot read and write (33% compared to 19%). A larger share of women consider their household to be poor (59% compared to 53%) and their monthly spending is below that of households headed by men. A higher number of women report not having access to land and, those who do own land, cultivate on average fewer plots than men. Women are much less engaged in public affairs (16% of women are actively engaged in public affairs compared to 28% of men) and they are less likely to be members of economic self-help groups.

### **Regional trends**

There are clear regional differences in the socio-economic profile of the population polled as well as in attitudes and social trust.

The consequences of the genocide seem to have the most severe and long-lasting effects in Southern Province, the rural province with the highest incidence of crimes of genocide in 1994. Southern Province in 2007 has the highest levels of self-reported poverty - 90% of respondents in the South consider themselves very poor, rather poor, or somewhat poor and 68% report living below the poverty line of 90,000 Rwf per year. These poverty figures are confirmed by the lowest number of mattress owners of all Provinces and the lowest meat consumption in the country. These high poverty levels seem to have translated into lower levels of interpersonal trust and a perceived lower ability to work together among citizens in the South. Generally, respondents from Southern Province are more skeptical about decentralization and have greater faith in the central Government. Consequently, a larger share of Southerners compared to other parts of the country believe that decisions on community matters should be left to the Government in Kigali (60% compared to 56% countrywide) and that the central Government is most effective in fighting corruption (76% compared to 68% countrywide). Respondents in the South are more likely (56% compared to 49% countrywide) to believe in the need of central mobilization to get anything done in the sector. While they generally hold positive views of civil society, respondents in Southern Province are less likely to be involved in an elected local body (19% compared to 23% nationwide). Southerners are also most skeptical about land reform and more likely to disagree that Rwandans can no longer live on agriculture.

Eastern and Northern Province are the second and third poorest in terms of self-reported poverty, with 61% and 56% respectively under the poverty line. It is interesting to note that in Eastern Province, self-reported feelings of poverty do not seem to match actual indicators of wealth. Respondents in Eastern Province had the second highest meat consumption and mattress ownership in the country, but still reported themselves to be the second poorest region in the country. Interpersonal distrust is generally high in the

East and skepticism toward the ability to work together is the third highest of all provinces.

Respondents in Northern Province, the Province which experienced the lowest number of genocidal crimes in 1994, expressed the highest level of interpersonal trust and the greatest belief in the ability of Rwandans to work together. Northerners are ardent supporters of decentralization and see less of a need for central Government intervention than in other provinces.

Apart from Kigali, Western Province has the lowest levels of self-reported poverty and slightly higher levels of interpersonal trust than the average across the country. Respondents in Western Province were much more likely to be involved in elected local bodies than in other parts of the country (28% compared to 23% countrywide).

Unsurprisingly, Kigali has by far the lowest rates of self-reported poverty (only 17% below the poverty line). It is the only province with a significant middle class – 32% of households in Kigali spend 50,000 Rwf or more per month. Residents of Kigali are fairly skeptical toward each other and of the ability of the central Government and show levels of civic involvement in elected local bodies that are below the national average.

### **Citizens' Opinion of the *Gacaca* Process**

#### **Effectiveness of the *Gacaca* in Adjudicating Crimes of Genocide**

Large numbers of the general population<sup>1</sup> (98%) and of the survivor (96%) and prisoner (83%) populations believe that the *gacaca* is a more effective way to deal with the large number of pending cases of crimes of genocide than the formal courts. An almost equally large number of all groups (between 95% for general population and 73% for prisoners) believe that the *gacaca* will eradicate the “culture of impunity,” which is considered to have encouraged the perpetrators of the genocide.

#### **Integrity of the Process and the Actors**

*Inyangamugayo*: Despite these overall very optimistic statements about the *gacaca* process, a much more mixed picture emerges if one takes a more detailed look at specific issues. One area of concern is the integrity of the *inyangamugayo*. While large numbers of the general population (92%) believe that the *inyangamugayo* are honest and respect the truth, only 69% of survivors and 32% of prisoners share that opinion. For both groups, survivors and prisoners, trust in the *inyangamugayo* has dropped significantly since 2005.

*Witness Testimonies*: Almost two thirds of the general population believes that witness accounts on either side, the prosecution and the defense, cannot be trusted. An overwhelming number of prisoners (83%) do not

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<sup>1</sup> In what follows, we will often use the term “general population” as shorthand to refer to the sample drawn from the general population for this survey, i.e. in contrast to the two sub-samples of genocide survivors and prisoners.

believe in the truthfulness of prosecution witness accounts and a large number of survivors (77%) have doubts about statements made by witnesses for the defense.

*Genocidal Ideology:* There is a strong sense among genocide survivors that a genocidal ideology lives on in Rwanda. Almost 80% of the general population and 84% of survivors believe that defense witnesses want to lessen the extent of crimes of genocide. Furthermore, an equally large share of survivors (around 80%) believes that there is a “pact of silence” among prisoners who have not confessed and this group also believes that they just did their duty in perpetrating the genocide. These views are generally rejected by prisoners (around 60%), even though there is still a significant minority of about 30% of the respondent prisoners who agree that there is a “pact of silence,” and that a genocidal ideology might live on among certain groups.

*Hopes for Reconciliation and Peace:* Overwhelming majorities of the general population (99%) and the survivor population (92%) believe that the *gacaca* is an essential step toward peace and reconciliation in Rwanda. Prisoners are slightly more skeptical, with 79% agreeing with this view. Genocide survivors largely feel that the *gacaca* will help them regain peace of mind (86%) and that they will feel safer once the process is over (71%). Seventy-three percent of survivors believe that they will be able to coexist harmoniously with prisoners who have confessed in the future and 71% believe that they families of the those convicted of crimes of genocide and families of the victims will be able to reconcile, even though 46% of survivors also feel that it would be naïve to trust prisoners in the future.

*Challenges to Reconciliation and Cohesion:* Despite these hopes for future reconciliation, other statements indicate that large obstacles remain and will continue to pose challenges to community cohesion. A majority of genocide survivors also feels that public testimony during the *gacaca* aggravates tensions between families (76%) and that the families of those found guilty of crimes of genocide will always feel resentful (66%). Prisoners, reject the latter argument (63%), but agree that testimony during *gacaca* aggravates tensions (71%).

*Insecurity and Fear of Retribution:* Significant majorities of genocide survivors (82%) and prisoners (54%) say they feel threatened during the *gacaca*, and large shares of all groups also believe that inyangamugayo as well as defense and prosecution witnesses will be subject to retribution during or after the *gacaca* proceedings. This feeling of insecurity during the *gacaca* is particularly pronounced among female survivors. A majority of survivors (71%) says they will feel safer at the end of *gacaca*, after verdicts are rendered, and also that they will live harmoniously with prisoners who have made confessions (73%). This indicates that there is a sense among a majority of survivors that once the process is over, that those who are guilty and unrepentant are under lock and key, and others have confessed

and asked for forgiveness, reconciliation and long-term peace building can take place.

Overall, public opinion on *gacaca* is mixed, marked by high hopes that it may bring closure for genocide survivors and bring justice and peace to the country. However, skepticism about the integrity of the process is widespread among survivors and prisoners, the groups most directly affected. There are deep rifts that separate those two groups and policymakers will have to pay close attention to address fears of retribution and general insecurity among genocide survivors, prisoners, as well as *inyangamugayo* and witnesses.

For example, among survivors, a significant minority (46%) feel that it would be naïve to trust prisoners who have confessed, and still 25% do not believe that they will be able to cohabitate peacefully with even those perpetrators who confessed; and 20% of survivors reject even the notion that they might feel safer after the end of *gacaca*, indicating that their sense of insecurity is permanent. Similarly, among the prisoner population interviewed, there remains a share of around 15% to 20% who seem to reject the entire *gacaca* process and doubt its contribution to overall reconciliation and peace building.

Careful analysis of the data will have to decide how to weigh the fact that a majority of the population believes that *gacaca* effectively contributes to peace and reconciliation against indications that significant minorities of genocide survivors and prisoners have serious doubts about the process and harbor deep suspicions against each other.

# 2

## Objectives and Methodology of the Survey

### Survey Background and Objectives

This is the third comprehensive opinion survey on national cohesion since 2005 carried out by the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) of Rwanda with technical Assistance from the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Rwanda is in the middle of a transformation process aimed at healing the deep social divisions that contributed to the 1994 genocide. The purpose of the surveys is to regularly take the pulse of the Rwandan population with respect to their trust in each other and in Government, their attitudes toward decentralization and land reforms, toward civic engagement in the newly decentralized structures, and toward the gacaca process. The surveys measure public perception of the progress achieved and of areas that might need further attention.

The 2005, 2006, and 2007 surveys on social cohesion build on earlier thematic surveys NURC and IRC had conducted between 2002 and 2004: a survey on gacaca in 2002/2003, a survey on decentralization in 2003/2004 and a survey on land reform in 2004/2005. The three survey instruments were combined into one tool in 2005 to measure in a single comprehensive questionnaire how government initiatives affect social cohesion in the cells, sectors, districts, and, provinces of the country.

In 2005, the administrative map of the country changed considerably with the geographical restructuring of and decentralization of power to provinces, districts, sectors, and cells. The year 2005 is thus a good baseline year to measure and track public opinion on decentralization reforms that aim to bring government closer to the people and boost development to achieve improved living conditions at all administrative levels. Consequently, this report will not only present results of the 2007 opinion

survey, but whenever relevant discuss trends in public attitudes regarding aspects of social cohesion since 2005.

The report starts with a brief description of the survey methodology, sampling and data collection strategies. In section III it analyzes the socio-economic profile of the sample populations. Finally, sections IV to VI represent the main body of the report with a detailed discussion of survey results in the three areas listed above, decentralization (section IV), civic involvement (section V), and gacaca (section VI). Survey responses to individual questions are generally grouped under larger themes or topics. At the end of each section, major themes and trends are briefly discussed and, where appropriate, questions of relevance to policy makers raised. A list of survey questions is presented in Annex I and survey results for each question for selected variables is presented in Annex II.<sup>2</sup>

## Survey Methodology

### Sampling strategy

The survey sample was determined based on a cluster sampling strategy adjusted to the new administrative dispensation of the country. To ensure a country-wide coverage, the newly created “sectors” were taken as the basic sampling unit. In a multi-stage sampling process, one census zone (zone de dénombrement (ZD) in French) was randomly selected by the IRC in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) Statistics Department in each of the country’s 416 sectors.<sup>3</sup> In each ZD, the survey administrators chose at random 24 households, which led to a sample size of 9,980, equally spread out across the country.<sup>4</sup> For the total sample population at national level, this provides a margin of error of  $\pm 1\%$  at the 95% confidence level.<sup>5</sup> For other sub-groups such as genocide survivors, prisoners, women, or respondents from one province the margin of error will be higher, depending on their share of the total population (see margin of error below for genocide survivors and prisoners). For example, results are often given by province. Given the smaller sample sizes for each

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<sup>2</sup> The raw survey data can be obtained from NURC or the International Rescue Committee Rwanda Office upon request.

<sup>3</sup> The original survey plan proposed by the MINECOM Statistics Department in 2004 was based on the census zones (ZD) of the 2002 national census. The country had been divided into 7,726 ZDs each containing about 225 households. A random list of 320 ZDs taking into account the weight of provinces had been provided to IRC to randomly draw equal household samples in every ZD.

In 2005, the administrative reform reduced the number of provinces or regions from 12 to 5, the number of local government units, thereafter called districts, from 106 to 30 and local communities (sector or *umurenge*) from 1,545 to 416 entities. This administrative reconfiguration was meant to give a comparable weight in terms of population and/or administrative units to provinces, districts and local communities, while addressing the difficulty of defining the limits of Kigali whose population density and growth are high. In order to adapt to the reform, the IRC redesigned the sample to keep only one ZD per sector. While the original list of 320 ZDs of 2004 included two ZDs by sector, only one was kept at random and the IRC randomly selected a new ZD in the sectors that had not been covered. This generated a new list containing 416 ZDs, one in each sector.

<sup>4</sup> The final samples of 2005 and 2006 were 10,158 and 8,719 households respectively.

<sup>5</sup> This means that 19 out of 20 times we can be sure that the opinions expressed by the sample population fall within plus or minus 1 percent of the opinion of the total population (i.e., if we had had a chance to interview the entire Rwandan population of 8.2 million individuals).

province (between 838 in Kigali and 2422 in Southern Province), the margin of error for results reported for results from the provinces ranges from  $\pm 2$  to  $\pm 3\%$ .

### **Population sample**

The household was taken as the survey unit. The head of each household was polled, or, in his/her absence, the spouse. If no spouse was present, a son/daughter of more than 18 years of age was interviewed. Using a list of households updated by the authorities in the cells, each household was randomly assigned a number. The survey team leaders were responsible for the drawing of lots for the surveyed households as well as substitute households in each census zone. The random selection of households by lottery was conducted publicly by the survey team leaders and supervisors at the eve of the pollsters' visit to a community. This procedure had been approved by statisticians of MINECOFIN. The survey as such was conducted without any complications. A substitute household had to be chosen in 5% of the cases in 2007 due to the absence of the residents of a household initially selected.<sup>6</sup>

### **Genocide survivors and prisoners**

A different sampling strategy was used for two specific segments of the Rwandan population: genocide survivors and prisoners. To collect data on prisoners, lists of the prison population in several prisons in the center of the country were obtained where most of the detainees are charged with crimes related to the genocide. Survivors were sampled from the total survivor population living in the surrounding communities of these prisons.

In 2005, 358 prisoners were drawn randomly by the survey supervisors from the lists of prisons in Nyamata, Muhanga and Huye. In 2006, 670 prisoners were drawn from the same lists and additionally from those of Nyamagabe, Gisovu and Kigali. In 2007, a total of 720 prisoners were selected and interviewed from those same prisons.

In the prisons' vicinity, poll supervisors drew at random an equivalent number of survivors, 353 in 2005 and 686 in 2006, and 716 in 2007 from the lists of IBUKA, the association of genocide survivors. The IRC pollsters administered the questionnaires to both groups following recognized protocols of anonymity and non-interference.

### **Survey dates**

Data collection for the 2007 survey took place from June 29 to September 10, 2007. This period roughly coincides with the survey periods for the two previous surveys, which is important to exclude seasonal effects (for example with respect to their feelings of poverty) on people's responses.

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<sup>6</sup> Replacement rates were 6.8% of the cases in 2005 and 6.2% in 2006.

The data was collected by a team of 24 interviewers and 8 team leaders, led by two field supervisors.<sup>7</sup>

### **Administration of questionnaire and recording of intensities**

Pollsters were instructed to read the questionnaire's statements in a monotone voice, without making further comments, and to carefully record the responses. The supervisors monitored the process and verified that visit itineraries were respected and questionnaires filled out correctly. To ensure confidentiality and avoid interference by others, interviews were conducted within the respondents' houses instead of outside or in public places. Interviewers identified themselves as working for the International Rescue Committee on a survey for NURC.

The survey form comprised 33 questions concerning socio-economic variables and of 64 statements of opinion on the subject of social cohesion. A copy of the original questionnaire can be found in Annex I.

The questionnaire was administered in about one hour. There was no logical order to the questions in each section. Repetitive statements aiming at the same issue allowed for testing the coherence of evidence. Using questions of the opinion surveys of 2002, 2003 and 2004 on the *gacaca*, decentralization and land reform, propositions were formulated either as affirmative or as negative statements. As for statements relating to the application of reforms and persons' feelings, these were often formulated as negative statements so as to elicit a reaction on the part of the respondent.

Each proposition was stated as an observation or a value judgment with which the respondent had to agree, disagree or decline to respond (which was recorded as "neutral" or "no opinion"). In a second step, the respondent was asked to specify the intensity of his/her opinion. To this end, the survey protocol required the interviewer, after having read the statement and obtained agreement, disagreement, or an undecided response from the respondent, to show a card (always the same) which allowed the respondent to indicate the "intensity" of his/her opinion, without speaking, by pointing his or her finger at a given diagram.

The card showed a set of nine colored circles which indicated through their color agreement, disagreement or a neutral opinion and, via their size, the intensity of the response: maximum, average and weak. For neutral opinions, the figures represented the absence of a trend or leaning towards agreement or disagreement. Each circle contained a number, from 1 to 9, which the interviewer recorded on the individual's answer form upon obtaining the latter's response.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Data and opinions of the first survey on social cohesion (SOCOS I) were collected in the field between July 17th, 2005 and August 24th, 2005 by 52 interviewers. The data of the second survey (SOCOS II) were collected between May 29th, 2006 and October 13th, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Responses were, in effect, weighted in relation to their intensity according the following scale: +100 for total agreement; +75, strongly expressed agreement; +50 for plain agreement; +25 for a neutral



Intensities provide an additional measure to qualify proportions of a certain group that responded positively or negatively. While generally there is a high correlation between the share of respondents who agree or disagree with a given statement and the positive and negative intensity levels expressed, there are cases where the intensity levels between different groups or different provinces differ significantly, which allows for a more nuanced analysis of responses.

## Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

### Demographic Profile

#### Regional breakdown

The regional breakdown of the survey respondents matches closely the distribution of the 2006 survey since the same sampling strategy was pursued, even though a slightly larger number of households was visited in each sector. The 2005 distribution was slightly different due to the 2005 administrative reforms, which were not reflected in the 2005 sampling strategy. The breakdown of the sample population by Province was as follows:

|      | VK  | SOUTH | WEST  | NORTH | EAST  |
|------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 2007 | 838 | 2,422 | 2,295 | 2,143 | 2,282 |

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opinion leaning towards agreement; 0 for a neutral opinion without leanings; -25, -50, -75 et -100 for the corresponding intensities of disagreement. Using these values, it's possible to calculate the composite index (CI) of a group opinion by adding up the weighted values, positive and negative, obtained from individual responses and dividing the total by the number of respondents. The result will be somewhere between +100 and -100.

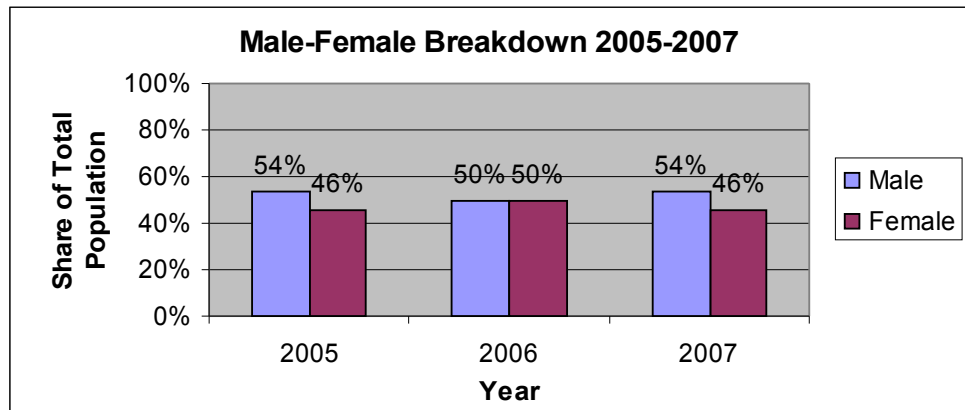
If all respondents are unanimous on a given statement and in total agreement with it, the Composite Index (CI) will be +100. In the opposite case, it would be -100. If 50% of respondents simply agree with a given statement while the other 50% strongly disagree with the same statement, this would produce a CI of -25.

Regional breakdown in percentage terms since 2005:

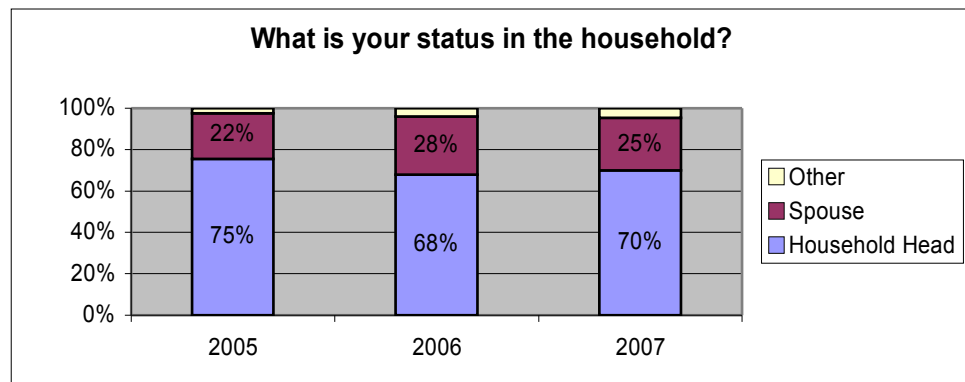
|      | VK  | SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|------|-----|-------|------|-------|------|
| 2005 | 10% | 26%   | 24%  | 17%   | 23%  |
| 2006 | 8%  | 24%   | 23%  | 21%   | 23%  |
| 2007 | 8%  | 24%   | 23%  | 22%   | 23%  |

## Gender

Of the total of 9,980 respondents, 46.2% were female; 53.8% were male. This means that women are underrepresented in the survey sample as compared to their share of the national population of 52.3% (2002 census data). In 2005, the share of female survey respondents was 46% as well, while in 2006, it had increased to 50%.

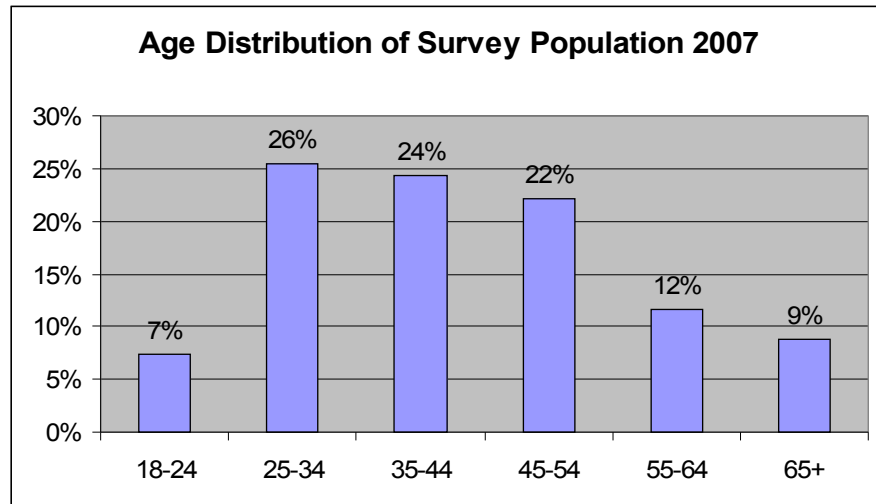


This underrepresentation of women is due to the focus on interviewing heads of households for this survey. Among respondents, 69.9% were heads of household, of which more than two thirds were male (74%) and less than one third (26%) female. Spouses were interviewed in those cases where the head of household was not present. All 2,537 (or 25% of total sample) respondents in the category “spouse” were female. The category “other” (4.7% of total sample) reflects those cases where neither the head of the household nor a spouse were present at the time of the interview. In that case, another member of the household, usually a son or daughter, was interviewed.



Among genocide survivors, 63% of respondents were female and only 37% were male, while among prisoners a large majority (85%) was male and only 15% were female. Due to the high number of female-headed households among survivors, the 74% of respondents among that group were heads of household, while only 18% were spouses.

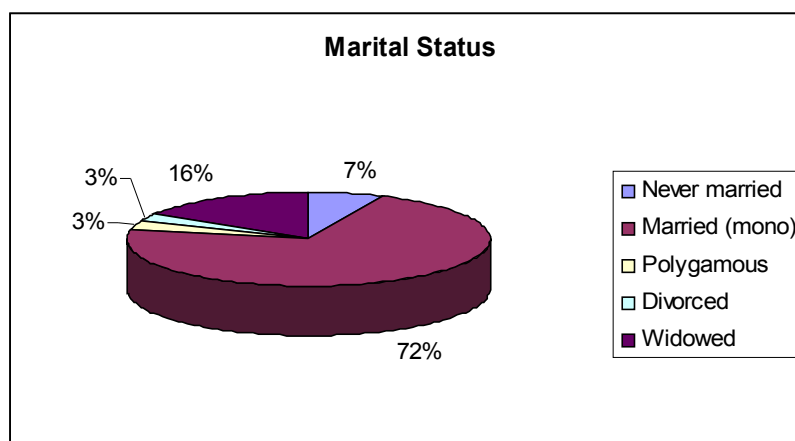
## Age



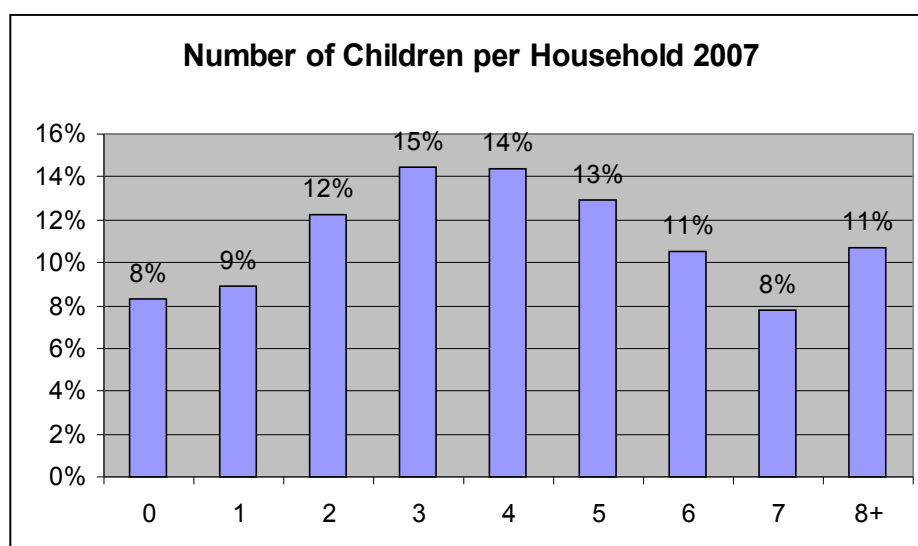
Rwanda has an overwhelmingly young population. According to the 2002 census, more than half of Rwandans (56.2%) are below 20 years of age and 20 to 24 year-olds alone represent 10% of the population. The sample for this survey has a much smaller share of young respondents and is heavily concentrated among middle-aged and older age groups. This again is due to the sampling strategy of targeting heads of households. More than half of the heads of household surveyed (58.2%) are between 35 and 64 years old, while young heads of households, i.e. those 34 years and younger, make up approximately one third (32.9%). Among genocide survivors, the age distribution was roughly similar to the general population. However, the prisoner population sampled was made largely of individuals in their middle ages - 65% prisoners are between 35 and 54 years old, and only 15% are 25 years old or younger.

## Family structure

Almost 72% of respondents are married in a monogamous relationship. The long-term effects of the genocide are reflected in a large share of widowed households in the general population (16%), and in particular among genocide survivors (37%). Only 6.8% of respondents were never married, 2.7% were divorced, and 3% lived in a polygamous relationship.



The average household in the sample had 5 members, with roughly 50% of the sample having five or less, and 50% having more than five members. The average family in the sample had 4 children, with 42% of households having more than 4, i.e. between 5 and 12 children. Roughly 8% of households had no children at all.

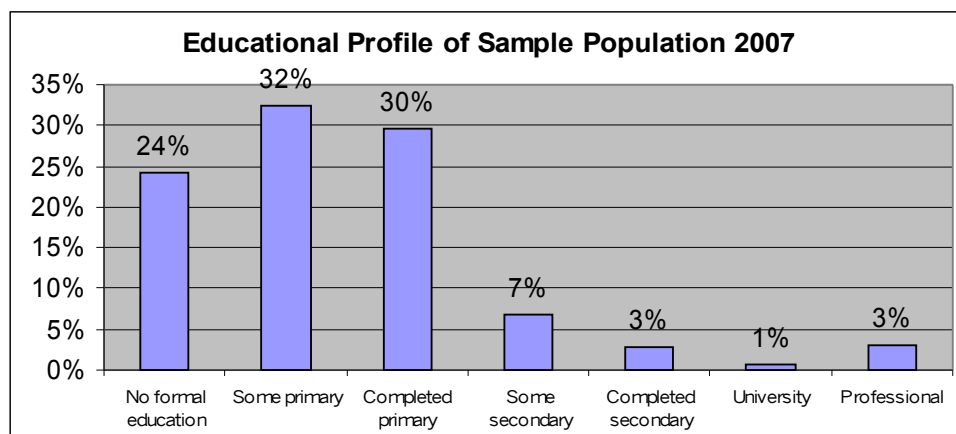


### Educational profile

Among survey respondents, 24.3% do not have any formal education and 25.7% do not know how to read and write. Sixty-two percent have some primary education, with 29.6% completing six years of primary school. Only 2.8% of respondents finished secondary school at level S6 and 3.1% received technical or vocational training.

Genocide survivors have educational levels comparable to the general population with 30.7% having completed six years of primary schooling and 24% not having any formal education. Twenty-seven percent of survivors do not know how to read and write. Prisoners interviewed are on average more educated than the general population sample. Only 19%

of prisoners do not have any formal education and only 17% do not know how to read and write, while 33% completed six years of primary education.



This is a significant improvement compared to the numbers in 2005 (37% illiteracy rate; 32% never attended school) and 2006 (36% illiteracy rate; 31% never attended school). There is no obvious explanation for this large difference from one year to another. Generally, Rwandan males have higher educational levels than females. In light of the overrepresentation of men in the sample, one would expect the sample to be more highly educated than the average population. However, it seems unlikely that the demographics of the sample alone could explain those drastic year-to-year improvements. Since the sample only targeted adults, it also seems unlikely that they reflect actual improvements in educational levels, notwithstanding all the investment in improving education by the Government. Improvements in the educational system would only translate in higher literacy and school attainment rates of the adult population at the earliest after five to ten years.

Regionally, reported illiteracy rates were highest in Southern (30%) and Northern Province (29%), around average in the East (26%) and lowest in Western Province (22%) and Kigali (4.8%).

## Religion

Catholicism remains the largest religious affiliation, expressed by 55% of respondents (2006: 56%), while 39% (2006: 37%) adhere to Protestantism and 2% (2006: same) to the Muslim faith.

## Residency

Country-wide, 93% of respondents had lived in Rwanda before 1994, while 7% had come back more recently. There are significant variations in this figure, though, with 15% of all respondents in the Eastern Province and 13.5% of respondents in Kigali having returned only after 1994. The share

of recent returnees was lowest in Northern Province with 1.7% and in Southern Province with 3.6%. At the local level, 93% of respondents reported to have lived within the same cellule for more than five years.

## **Socio-economic profile**

### **Occupation**

As in previous years, survey respondents in 2007 were predominantly engaged in agriculture at 86% (2005: 87%; 2006: 89%).<sup>9</sup> Eight percent reported to earn a living in trade and services, 1.5% worked in the education system and 1.1% in construction. Only 0.4% worked in an administration position.

With respect to occupation, there are clear variances depending on the age group and region. A smaller share of younger age groups work in agriculture (only 75.5% for those between 19-24 years and 81.8% for those between 25-34 years), while more than 90% of those above 45 years of age are active agriculturalists.

Only 38% of respondents among Kigali residents report working in agriculture, while 21% are traders and 17% work in the services sector. In the Northern, Southern, and Eastern provinces more than 91% of residents' primary occupation is farming, while the share of farmers is slightly lower in the West (86%).

Unsurprisingly, educational levels are correlated with occupational preferences. The share of respondents with no schooling who work in agriculture is 95%, and decreases significantly with increasing schooling - 87.7% of those who have finished primary school and only 19.1% of those who have finished secondary school consider themselves farmers.

### **Self-reported poverty**

The share of respondents who consider themselves "rather poor" or "very poor" had continuously increased since the first NURC/IRC survey of 2003 from 51% in 2003 to 59% in 2006. The 2007 data indicate that this trend may have been stopped. The share of respondents who consider themselves rather poor or very poor has decreased by 3 percentage points to 56%, which is statistically equal to the 2005 level (55%).

|                    | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Feeling of poverty | 51%  | 54%  | 55%  | 59%  | 56%  |

<sup>9</sup> This contrasts with the finding by the National Institute of Statistics, which reports a significant decrease in the share of the population working in agriculture from 88% in 2001 to 80% in 2006. See National Institute of Statistics Rwanda, *Preliminary Poverty Update Report - Integrated Living Conditions Survey 2005/06*, Kigali, December 2006, p. 25.

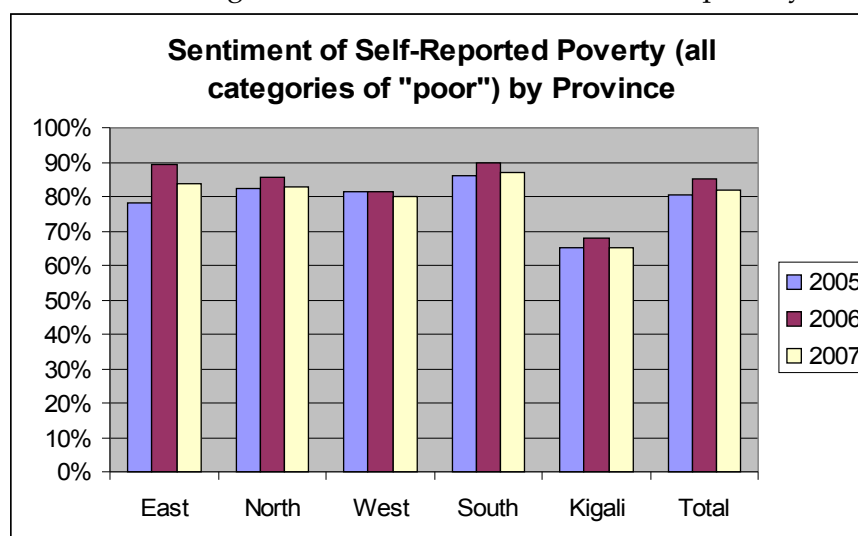
A closer breakdown of the self-reported feeling of poverty reveals some interesting trends within the category of the “poor.” The share of those who view themselves as “very poor” actually peaked in 2005 at 22%, and then slightly decreased in 2006 to 21% and finally to 18% in 2007. In contrast, the share of those who consider themselves “rather poor” has continued to increase from 33.1% in 2005 to 37.9% in 2006 to reach a peak at 38.3% in 2007. The percentage of respondents who view themselves as “somewhat poor” has remained basically constant at 25.4% in 2005 and 25.9% in both 2006 and 2007.

The sentiment of poverty across all three categories of poverty (“very poor,” “rather poor,” and “somewhat poor”), slightly improved in 2007. While 80.5% of respondents considered themselves to be part of one of the three categories of poverty, that share increased to 85.2% in 2006, but decreased to 82% in 2007.

These findings have to be interpreted within the limits imposed by self-reported categories of poverty and within the margin of error of  $\pm 1\%$ . A 3% decline is statistically significant and it seems safe to say that the feeling of poverty has not increased since 2006 and shows trends toward improvement.

**Regional variation:**

There are wide regional variations in the sentiment of poverty.



Across all three years, respondents in Southern Province have been reporting the highest levels of poverty. In the South, the share of those who fall into one of the three categories of poverty increased from 86% in 2005 to 90% in 2006 and decreased slightly to 87% in 2007. Extreme poverty is also greatest in the South with 61% considering themselves very poor in 2007, the same level as in 2005. Southern Province also has the lowest share of respondents who consider themselves to be rich (1% in 2007) or middle income (12.1%).

While the Northern and Eastern Provinces show similar self-reported poverty rates (around 83% in each), respondents in Western Province see themselves as slightly better off than the average in the country with 80% of respondents falling into one of the three categories of “poor.” More respondents in Western Province considered themselves part of the middle income or rich categories than in any other rural province (17% and 3% respectively).

The share of the population who self-identify as poor is 15% to 20% lower in Kigali as compared to the provinces, with 65% of Kigali households considering themselves poor and by far the largest share of households that consider themselves to be middle income (30%).

### **Household spending**

Reported household spending provides additional details regarding the level of poverty in the country. The average expenditure per household per month was 12,800 Rwf. Nation-wide, 44% of households reported spending less than 5,000 Rwf (US\$9.26)<sup>10</sup> per month; 63.5% spend less than 10,000 Rwf and 79% less than 20,000 Rwf per month in 2007.

The Government of Rwanda has set the national poverty line at 90,000 Rwf per year, i.e. 7,500 per month or roughly 250 Rwf per day (US\$0.44/day). This means that approximately 54% of the households in this sample live below the poverty line.<sup>11</sup>

As with the above mentioned reported sentiments of poverty, there are wide variations in household spending patterns between different geographical regions of the country. Respondents in Southern Province seem to have far fewer funds at their disposal than respondents in other regions. Spending power is weakest in Southern Province, where 59% of households reported spending less than 5,000 Rwf a month and 89% of households spend less than 20,000 Rwf per month – more than 10 percentage points more than the national average and significantly more than in other regions. Moreover, roughly 68% of households in Southern Province, 55.5% in Northern Province, 61% in Eastern Province, and 43.1% in Western Province report spending below the national poverty line of 7,500 Rwf. As can be expected, the spending power of Kigali residents is significantly higher with only 12.2% of respondents spending 5,000 Rwf or less in a month and approximately 17% living below the national poverty line. Kigali has by far the highest proportion of households able to spend more than 50,000 Rwf a month with 32%. Only 3.6% of households in Western Province, and only 1.9% in Eastern Province are able to spend 50,000 Rwf or more in a month.

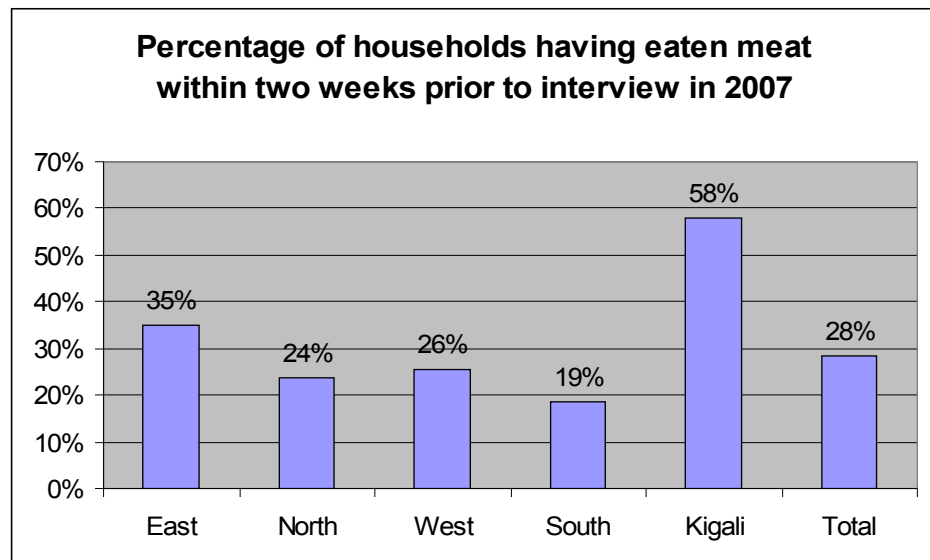
<sup>10</sup> Current market exchange rate was approximately 540 Rwf for 1 USD in late 2007.

<sup>11</sup> This is slightly lower than recent poverty figures of 56.9% of the population living below the poverty line as reported by the United Nations Development Programme. See United Nations Development Programme, *Turning Vision 2020 into Reality – From Recovery to Sustainable Human Development: National Human Development Report 2007*. Rwanda, 2007, p. 7.

## Indicators of wealth

To further gauge the respondents wealth status, they were asked whether they owned mattresses, radios, and whether they had eaten meat in their household over the past two weeks. A larger share of the sample was able to afford radios (71%) than mattresses (51%). Only 28% of the households reported to have eaten meat in the two weeks prior to the interview.

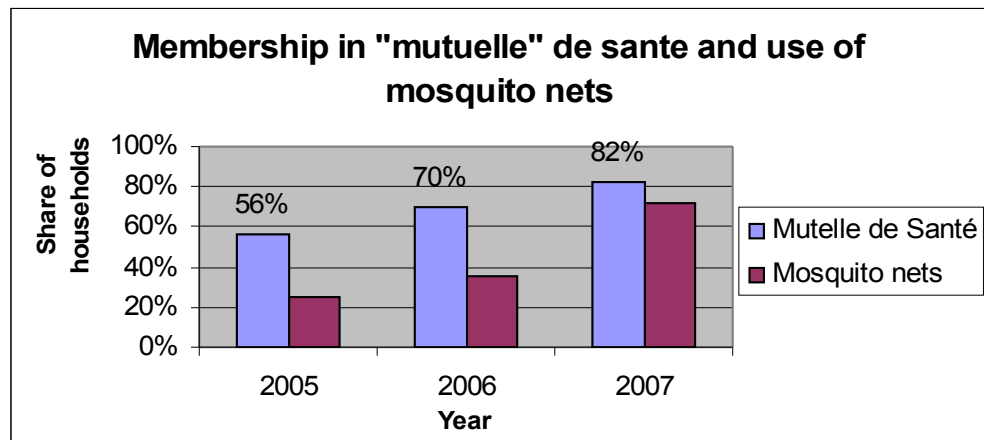
With respect to regional variance, the results on the indicators of wealth closely match the regional pattern found in the variance of sentiments of poverty and household spending. Southern Province has the lowest number of mattress owners (41%) on par with Northern Province (41%), while Western Province (47%), Eastern Province (62%) and Kigali (87%) are relatively better off. These numbers are roughly matched by meat consumption figures (see chart below).



One curious aspect needs to be mentioned here. Respondents in Eastern Province show the second highest score on self-reported poverty (84% of all respondents consider themselves to fall into one of three categories of poverty), but in terms of material wealth as reflected here, they seem to be doing comparatively better than people in the other rural provinces.

## Health behavior indicators

Each year survey respondents are asked whether their children sleep under a mosquito net and whether they are members of a “mutuelle de santé” health insurance. Membership in the health insurance scheme has significantly increased over the past two years from 57% in 2005 to 82% in 2007. Similarly, the share of households whose children sleep under mosquito nets at night has grown from 25% in 2005 to 35% in 2006 and made a big leap to 72% in 2007 thanks to the subsidized distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets.



### Land use and ownership

Over the past three years, the share of respondent households that did not farm at all remained more or less constant at around 12%. There seems to be a slight increase in land ownership and the number of plots farmed on the colline. The number of households with access to one, two, or three plots on the colline has decreased by 3 percentage points while the share of households with access to four or five plots has increased by the same share since 2005. This could be an indication of people having increasingly access to more plots of land.

This trend seems to be confirmed by a significant increase in the percentage of households that are able to lease land for farming. While only 36% of respondents were able to lease land for farming in 2005, 44% reported to do so in 2007 with most of the increase among those who lease one to three plots. The same trend does not hold true for swamp plots, though. The share of households having access to swamp lots has decreased slightly since 2005 from 14 to 12%.

As can be expected, regional variations in access to land are significant. Land ownership is significantly lower in Western Province where 12% of the households do not farm their own land compared to only 7% in the East and 4% in the North. Consequently, more households in Western Province lease land (51% compared to 50% in the South, 43% in the North, 40% in the East). Northern Province has by far the highest share of large landholdings since 32% of Northern households own more than 4 plots compared to 23% in the South, and 15% and 16% in the East and West respectively. Access to swamp farming is much higher in the South than in other provinces with 55% of households farming on swamp plots compared to only 30% in Western Province and 24% and 23% in Eastern and Western Provinces. Unsurprisingly, almost 60% of Kigali residents do not own any farm land.

While these statistics indicate that more and more households are able to farm on a larger number of plots, this also indicates that the total landholdings under cultivation must have increased, despite a general scarcity of arable land.

## **Civic engagement**

### **Local administration and civil society**

The survey asked respondents a number of questions regarding their involvement in elected local councils and various organizations of civil society from local savings groups to spiritual groups and organized NGOs.

Overall, respondents' membership in elected local councils in 2007 is again back at 2005 levels after a significant decline in 2006, with 23% of respondents being involved in an elected body at one or another level of administration from the umudugudu to the national parliament. The largest share of respondents were involved at the umudugudu level (8% in 2007) and in the gacaca proceedings (6% at cellule level; 3% at sector level).

Civic engagement in community-level civil society associations or organizations has not varied dramatically over the years. The most popular civil society organizations are local savings and credit groups (41% of respondents belonged to one in 2007) and spiritual organizations (27% in 2007). Between 3% and 7% of respondents reported belonging to cultural or sports associations, community user committees, local charitable organizations or local NGOs. These figures are largely unchanged since 2005 with spiritual organizations and local savings groups showing a slight increase (approximately 3%) in popularity since 2005.

The share of respondents who attended a community meeting in the four weeks prior to the interview has shown a steady increase from 38% in 2005 to 47% in 2007.

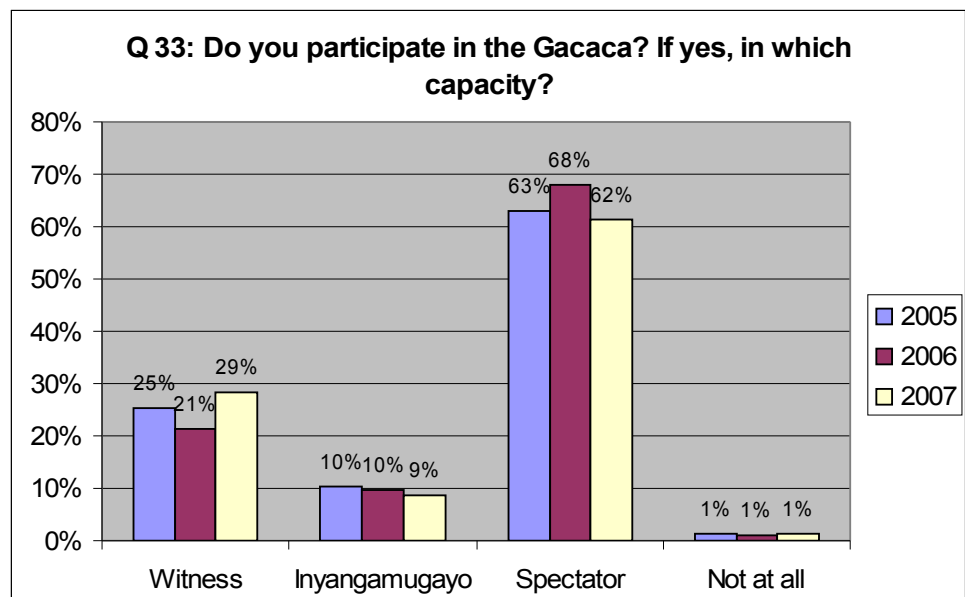
Regional trends show civic engagement to be slightly higher in Western Province, followed by the East and North, with Southern Province and Kigali showing slightly lower levels of civic participation. For example, 28% of respondents in Western Province report to be active in elected local bodies compared to 23% in the East, 21% in the North and Kigali and only 19% in the South. Respondents in Eastern Province seem to be the most actively engaged in religious groups and in local charitable organizations (many of them religious).

### **Participation in Gacaca**

Apart from the specific questions assessing respondents' opinion of the effectiveness and fairness of the *gacaca* process (questions 31-64), the survey

asked respondents to report on their participation in *gacaca* proceedings to gauge the general level of engagement.

Active involvement in the *gacaca* seems to have increased slightly since 2005. In particular, the number of respondents who reported to be witnesses at *gacaca* proceedings has increased by 4 percentage points since 2005 after a drop in 2006 and now stands at 29% of all respondents, while 9% of all respondents have been active as *inyangamugayo* – practically unchanged since 2005. Sixty-two percent of respondents watched *gacaca* proceedings. Only 1% of all respondents reported not being involved at all in *gacaca* across all three years.



Regional variation shows that involvement in *gacaca* proceedings closely matches the general level of civic engagement. Hence the levels of involvement in *gacaca* proceedings was highest in Western Province, where 35% of all respondents, i.e. 6% more than the national average, reported to be witnesses in *gacaca* proceedings, either for the defense, prosecution, or for both. Participation as a witness was significantly lower in the South (23%), in Kigali and the East with 25% each, and 30% in the North. A similar trend holds for the numbers involved as *inyangamugayo*. The low involvement of respondents in Kigali and the East may be explained by a larger number of more recent residents. These figures also reflect the distribution of crimes of genocide across the country - there were significantly fewer crimes in the North than in the South and West.

## **Gender (In)Equality – Status of Women**

### **Female-headed households:**

Of all women in the sample, 31.5% report to be widowed. As a consequence of the sampling strategy, which targeted heads of households, 40% of women sampled are heads of household. Only 53.5% are married.

### **Education:**

Almost twice as many women as men report to have no formal education – 32% of all women as compared to 18% of all men. Only a quarter of all women have completed primary school, compared to one third of all men. At secondary school level, they are equal, though, with 2.8% of all women respondents and 2.8% of all male respondents having completed secondary school. Of all women, 33.2% could not read and write, compared to 19.3% of all men. This would be a significant improvement compared to 2005, though, when 44% of all women and 30% of men reported not to know how to read and write.

### **Preventive Health:**

Women are slightly less likely than men to belong to a mutuelle de santé (79% of all women, 84% of men); they are also less likely to report that children in their household use mosquito nets (69% compared to 75%).

### **Occupation:**

Women and men are almost equally likely to be engaged in agriculture – women at 86.6% vs. men at 85.3%; women are slightly more likely to be traders, at 4.4% versus 3.5%.

### **Poverty:**

Women are slightly more likely to consider themselves being “rather poor” or “very poor” – 59.4% compared to 53% of males; a larger share of women reports spending less than 1,000 Rwf (12.3% vs. 7.9%) and 5,000 Rwf or less (48.3% vs. 40.8%) per month. A much higher percentage of women in households are in lower spending categories. Of all female respondents, 80% spend less than 20,000 Rwf per month (667 Rwf/day – about US\$1.22) – 66.3% spend less than 10,000 Rwf/month. Only in the high-spending categories women do slightly better – 5.6% of all women report that their household spends more than 50,000/month as compared to 4.7% of all men. Only 65% of women report that their household owns a radio as compared to 75% of men. Only 26% of women reported eating meat the past two weeks as compared to 31% of men.

### **Access to land:**

Women have access to less land than men – 14% have no access to land at all compared to 10.5% of men – 36.3% of women cultivate 3 or more plots vs. 43.2% of men. Women are also less likely to lease land for cultivation – 59.3% of all women do not lease land, compared to 53.7% of all men.

### **Civic engagement and activism:**

Generally, women report lower levels of communal and political activism. Of all women, 84% are not actively engaged in any local administration compared to 72% of men. Women mainly get involved at the level of the umudugudu (5% of all women) and in the gacaca process (4.6%). Only 36% of women are members of an economic self-help group compared to 46% of men. Only 4.6% of women reported being active within community user committees (GCB) compared to 8.7% of men. But women are more likely to be members of prayer groups (30%) than men (24%). Even with respect to charitable organizations, women are less likely to be members (5.8%) as compared to men (8.8%).

# 4

## Interpersonal Trust and Trust in Government Reform

The notion of “social cohesion” has remained vague and poorly defined even though it has been used by social scientists and policymakers since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a policy goal, the concept gained great prominence in the 1990s in particular within the European Union and in Canada with an eye on building multicultural societies where all members feel a sense of belonging and have equal access to opportunities and resources. It has since also risen to prominence in international development circles, notably within the World Bank, who considers it key to the achievement of growth and the reduction of economic inequality.<sup>12</sup>

In the most basic and intuitive sense, social cohesion refers to “something that glues us together” or “the glue that bonds society together.”<sup>13</sup> There is an ideational component to social cohesion in that a sense of belonging or a psychological identification with a collectivity is essential for cohesion to be built. But there is also a relational component, i.e. how members of society actually relate to and interact with one other.

The most generic recent definition of social cohesion sees it as “a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of society as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioral manifestations.”<sup>14</sup> In this definition, the “vertical” interactions refer to the relationship between the state and individuals in society, while “horizontal” interactions are between individual members of society.

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<sup>12</sup> See William Easterly, Jo Ritzen, and Michael Woolcock. *On ‘Good’ Politicians and ‘Bad’ Policies: Social Cohesion, Institutions and Growth*. World Bank Policy Research Paper 2448 (September 2000).

<sup>13</sup> See Fernando Rajulton, Zenaida R. Ravanera, and Roderic Beaujot. “Measuring Social Cohesion: An Experiment Using the Canadian National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating,” In *Social Indicators Research*, No. 80 (2007), pp. 461-492; and UNDP. *Towards Peaceful Development: Rebuilding Social Cohesion and Reconciliation – Central Sulawesi and North Maluku*, July 2004, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Chan, Ho-Pong To, and Elaine Chan. “Reconsidering Social Cohesion: Developing a Definition and Analytical Framework for Empirical Research.” *Social Science Research Indicators*, No. 75 (2006), pp. 273-302 (p. 290).

In order to get a better sense of the state of social cohesion in Rwanda, this survey thus examines several of the abovementioned dimensions of social cohesion at the level of intra-societal interaction and at the level of state-society relations, notably:

1. Interpersonal Trust
2. Trust in Government action and decentralization reforms
3. Citizen involvement in Elected Bodies and Civic Associations
4. Support for land reform

One key component in the Government of Rwanda's efforts to reconcile and unify the country and to address the root causes that contributed to the genocide – the exclusion of different groups of society, racist discourse, and overcentralized Government decision-making – is bringing government closer to the people through decentralization and the promotion of citizen involvement at all levels of decision-making.

After the genocide of 1994, the Government of Rwanda undertook several consultative meetings with national leaders on how to empower the citizens through participation in the decisions making and the management of public affairs on one hand, and to increase accountability of administrative and elected leaders towards citizens. As a result of these consultations, the Government of Rwanda opted for decentralization and good governance.

In March 1999, Community Development Committees (CDC), Executive Committees and Councils were elected at cell and sector level and at what was then called the “commune” level in 2001. At the national level, a referendum on the Constitution was held on May 26, 2003, and presidential and legislative elections on August 25 and September 30, 2003 respectively.

The first phase of decentralization from 2000 through 2005 established democratic and community development structures at all levels.

In 2006, with the redistricting and following elections at district, sector, cell and village/umudugudu levels, the decentralization process entered its second five-year phase (2006-2010). The current phase aims at consolidating progress on national development priorities and at deepening the decentralization process by enhancing effectiveness in services delivery to communities.

The decentralization process is expected to have largely positive effects on public decision-making. However, the pace and large scope of reforms also has the potential to upset existing institutions, unintentionally exacerbate existing social inequities and tensions and undermine citizens' trust in Government. The annual surveys on social cohesion aim at tracking public opinion on these reforms and help NURC to measure public support for Government initiatives.

## I. Interpersonal Trust

In this chapter, we shall look at various measures of intra-societal trust. It is widely recognized that without a minimum level of inter-personal trust society would not function. Trust between individuals in society and trust between individuals and institutions are key ingredients in making societies function effectively and ultimately fundamental in bringing about peace and development.

Social trust provides the cohesiveness needed for the development of meaningful relationships with other members of society. Trust is based on notions of reciprocity, responsibility, and moral obligation. Trust between individuals makes life less complex and makes social interactions more predictable. I am more likely to help my neighbor if I know I could count on his/her help in case I was in need myself. Trust helps to mobilize individuals to work toward common goals and makes communal projects more effective.<sup>15</sup>

Interpersonal trust is thus a key ingredient in social cohesion and a fundamental pillar upon which other societal processes rest. Community development and civic engagement at all levels assume that individuals have a basic sense that they can rely on each other and work together for the betterment of their lives and their communities. Deep divisions had marked the pre-genocide society and the genocide left deep scars on the nation's and on individuals' psyche, be they survivors, returnees, refugees, or perpetrators. There is no one way of rebuilding trust between individuals, but many small steps that need to be accomplished.

Perceived predictability in interactions seems to be a key component in building trust. In other words, the more frequently people respond as I expect them to, the more confident I will grow that they will respond the same way all the time, and hence my trust in them increases.

Respondents were asked three different questions which attempted to gauge their trust in each other and to work together on development projects.

Q 25: It is naïve to trust others.

Q 4: In my neighborhood, one does not easily think of coming together to solve a new problem.

Q 2: Community development projects cannot be implemented at the cell level because people are too wary of each other to work together.

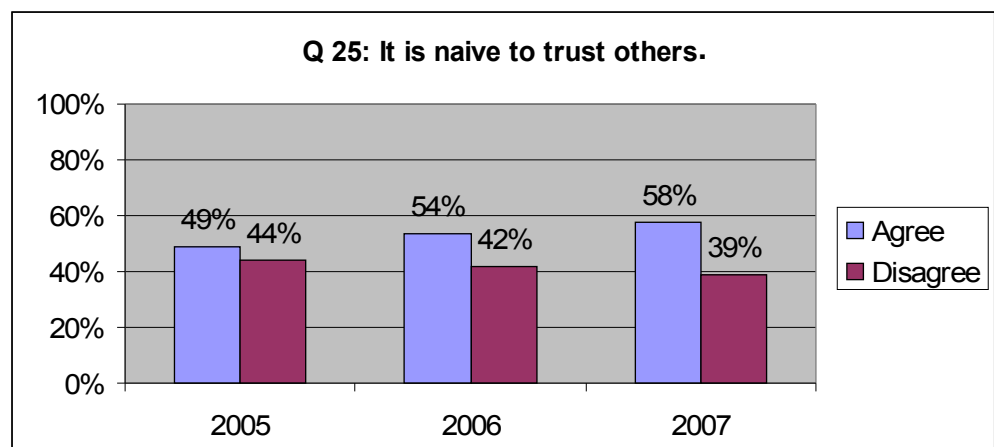
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<sup>15</sup> For a detailed theoretical discussion, see Michael R. Welch et. al. "Determinants and Consequences of Social Trust." *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol. 75, No. 4, November 2005, pp. 453–473.

## Detailed Analysis:

### Q 25: *It is naïve to trust others.*

Survey respondents were presented with a general statement asking them for their agreement or disagreement about the notion that, generally, it is naïve to trust others. A majority of respondents, 58%, agreed with this statement, while 39% disagreed. This is a significant increase compared to 2005, where not quite half of the respondents, 49%, agreed with the proposition, i.e. an increase of 9% within two years. This is confirmed by the intensity levels that respondents felt about their answers. Those agreeing with this proposition feel more strongly about their position in 2007 than two years ago (an increase of 8 points to 50).



Regional variations show a very mixed pattern. Those who agree with this statement are most numerous in Eastern Province (61%) and in Kigali (59%). Fewer respondents in the North (55%), and South and West (57% each) agreed with this statement. An analysis of the trends since 2005 reveals strongly increasing support for the proposition that it is naïve to trust others in the East (+16%), South (+11%), and in Kigali (+10%). In Southern Province an unusual pattern emerges, with a sharp rise of agreement with the statement in 2006 (+22%), and a drop of 11% from 2006 to 2007. In other provinces support for this proposition rose more gradually over the two years.

Interestingly, genocide survivors and prisoners do not seem to have stronger feelings of distrust than the general population, with 59% of survivors and 57% of prisoners agreeing with this statement, which is within the margin of error and thus statistically the same outcome as for the general population.

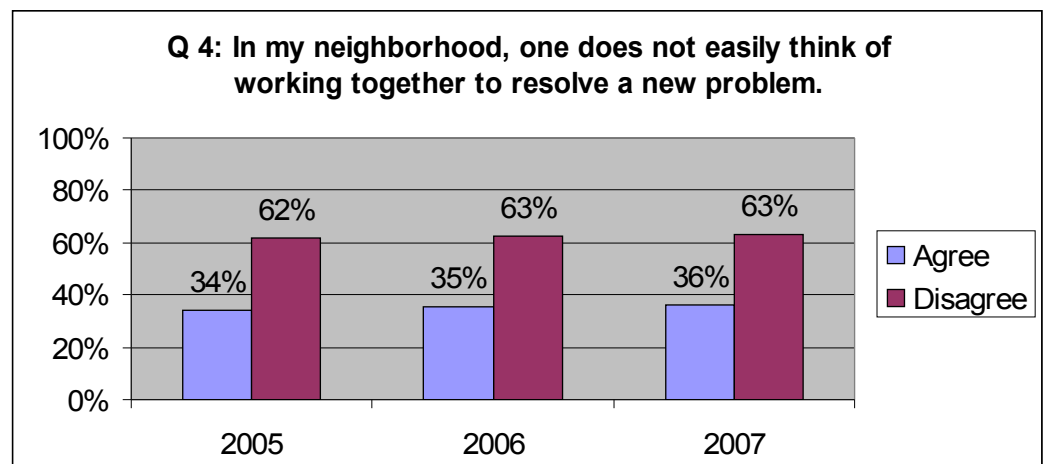
Women are slightly less trusting than men – 60% of women believe that it is naïve to trust others, while 56% of men hold the same opinion. Unsurprisingly, poor people are less trusting than better off individuals. Respondents who considered themselves “very poor” are much more numerous to agree to this question (71%) than those who only feel

“somewhat poor” (59%) and much more than those who see themselves as “somewhat rich” or “rather rich” (49%). Interestingly, the category of the very rich are much more likely (64%) to think that it is naïve to trust others than the average of the population.

**Q 4:** *In my neighborhood, one does not easily think of coming together to solve a new problem.*

A more specific question tried to gauge the ability of respondents to jointly solve newly arising problems.

A majority, 63%, disagrees with this statement, while more than one third, 36%, of respondents agrees that people do not easily work together to solve problems. Doubts about the ability to work together seem to be greatest in Southern Province and in Kigali, where 43% and 40% respectively agree with this statement. Only 29% and 32% subscribe to this proposition in the North and East respectively. These figures have remained largely unchanged over the past two years.



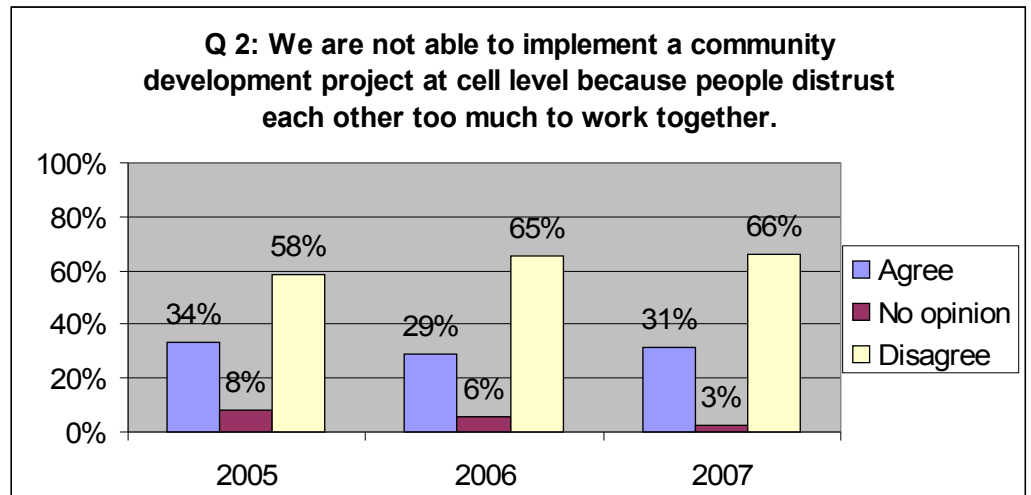
Since 2005, the number of respondents in the West and South who feel that people do not easily work together has increased significantly, while it has practically remained at the same levels in the North, East, and in Kigali.

There seems to be a greater skepticism about the capacity of Rwandans to work together among genocide survivors, 46% of whom agree that people do not easily work together. This is ten percentage points more than the national average. Prisoners are only slightly more likely than the average population to support this statement at 38%. There is no difference between women and men on this question.

**Q 2:** *Community development projects cannot be implemented at the cell level because people are too wary of each other to work together.*

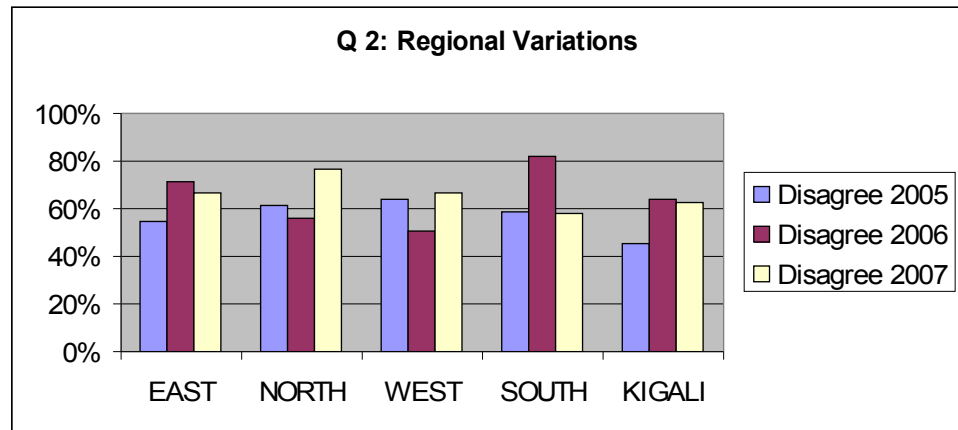
Finally, combining statements made in questions 25 and 2, respondents were asked a more specific question about whether distrust has an impact on people’s ability to work together in the implementation of community

projects. A considerable majority of respondents, 66%, disagreed with this statement. Only slightly less than 1/3 of respondents, 31%, indicated that the level of distrust at the cell level are such that it would impede development projects. Disagreement with this statement has increased since 2005 by 8%, while support for the statement has decreased slightly from 34% in 2005.



Regional patterns show strong disparities. Skepticism about people's ability to work together due to distrust seems to be greatest in Southern Province, where 39% of respondents supported this statement, up from 36% in 2005. However, apart from the South, all other provinces show increasing disagreement with this statement. For example, in Kigali disagreement rose from 45% in 2005 to 62% in 2007 and in Eastern province from 54% in 2005 to 67% in 2007. This seems to indicate that with increasing experience in collaborating on community projects - which may or may not be due to the decentralization process - Rwandans feel more confident that high levels of distrust do not impact on their ability to work together on such projects.

As in question 4 above, genocide survivors show much higher levels of skepticism about Rwandans' ability to work together due to a lack of interpersonal trust with 43% approval for this statement - 12 percentage points more than among the general population. This number has practically remained the same (in statistical terms) since 2006. The share of prisoners who agrees with this statement is only slightly larger than the general population at 35%, down significantly from 43% in 2006.



**Discussion: High levels of personal distrust but ability to work together**

The 2007 survey results indicate that the general level of distrust among respondents is high and shows an upward trend since 2005 if individuals are presented with a general statement about trust and distrust. It is important to note here that agreement with a general statement does not immediately mean that people actually distrust each other in specific situations. Consequently the survey included two additional questions (Q 2 and Q 4) that probed into how interpersonal trust might affect people’s ability to work together. When presented with the more concrete statements in Q 2 and Q 4, roughly two-thirds of respondents (63% and 66%) rejected the notion that distrust prevents individuals from working together. This still leaves approximately one third of respondents with a feeling that a high level of distrust is an obstacle to collaborating on development projects, which poses a challenge for a society that seeks unity and reconciliation across the entire population.

If we compare these findings with figures on social trust in Western industrialized societies, we find that distrust among Rwandans is only slightly elevated compared to survey results in Western countries. For example, a 2007 survey by the US-based Pew Research Center<sup>16</sup> found that 50% of Americans agreed with the statement that, “you can't be too careful in dealing with people.” However, what is less comforting in the context of Rwanda is that distrust has been increasing since 2005, despite all efforts to work toward unity and reconciliation.

A regional pattern emerges that indicates higher levels of distrust and greater skepticism toward the ability of Rwandans to work together in Southern Province and in Kigali. Southern Province is the only province where levels of distrust across all three questions showed a significant increase since 2005. A contradictory pattern emerges for Eastern Province,

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<sup>16</sup>See Pew Research Center. *Americans and Social Trust: Who, Where, and Why*. Washington, DC: February 22, 2007. Available at <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/414/americans-and-social-trust-who-where-and-why>.

where respondents express the highest level of support for the statement that it is naïve to trust others, but reject in equally high numbers the notion that individuals might not work together due to distrust. This might indicate that there are other incentives to working together such as economic incentives or mobilization efforts by local leaders that are stronger than a general feeling of distrust. Overall, levels of general distrust are lowest in Northern Province, where respondents also show the strongest support for collaboration and joint problem solving.

One possible explanation for these varying patterns of interpersonal trust across different provinces is the differing levels of violence, displacement, and return in those provinces. Southern Province had the highest levels of genocidal crimes and Eastern Province and Kigali have the highest numbers of returnees. Comparatively, Northern Province experienced a lower level of crimes of genocide.

Genocide survivors are not generally more likely to think that it is naïve to trust others, but they seem to be much more skeptical about the ability of Rwandans to work together to solve problems. Prisoners do not share those feelings – their levels of trust in working together are very much in line with the levels of trust expressed by the general population.

Women seem to be slightly more distrusting generally than men, even though roughly the same proportions of women and men believe that Rwandans are still able to work together.

## **II. Trust in Government Action and Decentralization Reforms**

### **a. Trust in Government Action Generally**

Respondents were asked to respond to five statements, which probed various dimensions of their opinion of Government as an important and trusted actor in the development of the country and in protecting their lives and advancing their well-being.

*Q 22: The government does its best to promote the living standards of Rwandans.*

*Q 20: If everyone dealt with his/her own family matters and left decisions which affect the community to the government things would be better.*

*Q 1: The family alone is responsible for the maintenance of its fields and soil conservation (erosion); the elected representatives at the cell level do not have any say on the matter.*

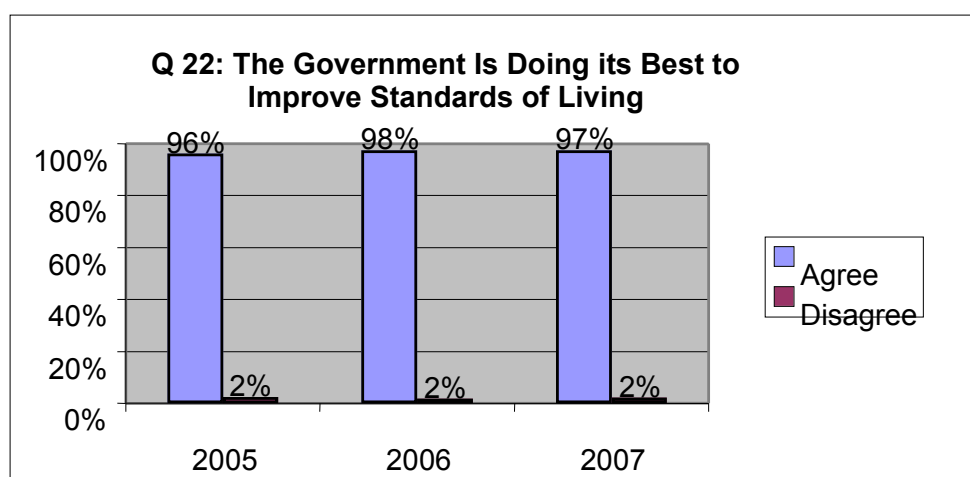
*Q 17: It is necessary to limit the right of association and the right to form political parties since we have to continue to fight against divisionist tendencies.*

*Q 18: The transfer of power from the central government to the districts will put the internal security of the country in danger.*

### Detailed Analysis:

**Q 22:** *The government does its best to promote the living standards of Rwandans.*

The overwhelming majority of respondents seemed to have faith in the Rwandan Government's efforts to promote development and well-being. The most straightforward statement about their belief that the GOR has their well-being in mind met resounding approval among the respondents with 97% in agreement and only 2% in disagreement (1% did not have an opinion). This number has been virtually unchanged since 2005, when 96% voiced a similar opinion, and is virtually the same as in 2006 (97.5%).<sup>17</sup> Approval was unanimously between 96% and 98% across all provinces in 2007. Kigali and Eastern Province recorded an increase in support for Government action of 4% and 3% respectively over 2005 figures, while in the other provinces it has remained at the same level since 2005.



Genocide survivors were slightly less numerous to agree to this statement at 93%, while prisoners were less positive about the Government's efforts with only 83% of respondent prisoners approving of this statement. Among both sub-groups, appreciation for the Government's efforts seem to be on an upward trend, though, with a 2 percentage point increase in approval rating for survivors and a 3 percentage point increase for prisoners since 2006.

Among socio-economic groups, there is large support for this general statement. It is no surprise that among those who consider themselves rich

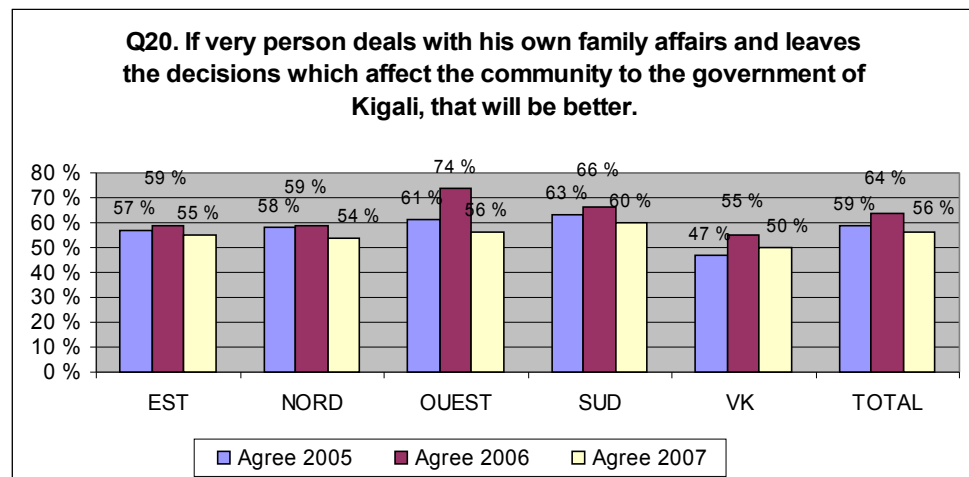
<sup>17</sup> It is important to note here that all following results are statistically significant at the 95% level with an error margin of +/-1% for all nation-wide results and an error margin of +/-2% for all province-level results. In other words, for nation-wide results, we can be sure that 19 out of 20 times the results reported would be within a range of plus or minus one percentage point of the actual public opinion of the entire population (had we been able to administer the same survey on the entire population). For province-level results we can be sure that 19 out of 20 times the survey results are within plus or minus two percentage points of the actual result had we been able to survey the entire population. This means that subsequently all changes in nation-wide results from one year to another have to be interpreted in a way that a change of 2% from one year to another is statistically not a significant change, but has to be treated as virtually the same figure.

support for the Government's efforts is stronger (100%) than among those who consider themselves very poor (96%). Similarly, those who own seven or more plots of land agree with this statement at 99%, while those who do not on any land only agree at 95%.

Subsequently, respondents were asked for their reaction to two statements which aimed at uncovering their feelings of Government intervention into their lives.

**Q 20:** *If everyone dealt with his/her own family matters and left decisions which affect the community to the government things would be better.*

A majority of respondents thinks that public matters should be left to the Government of Rwanda to deal with. Fifty-six percent of respondents agreed with this statement – they seem to trust the Government to an extent that they do not seem to feel the need to get involved in community matters themselves. A significant minority, though, at 43% does not subscribe to this statement. While this expresses significant faith in the effectiveness of the central Government, it might raise concerns with respect to civic engagement. The trend has shown an inconsistent pattern since 2005, even though it exhibits an overall decline. After a significant increase in opinions supporting this view from 59% in 2005 to 64% in 2006, it declined to 56% in 2007. One possible interpretation is that with increasing involvement of the population in decentralization and their experience with local-level service delivery, people gradually get used to the idea that the central Government is not the main provider of their development.



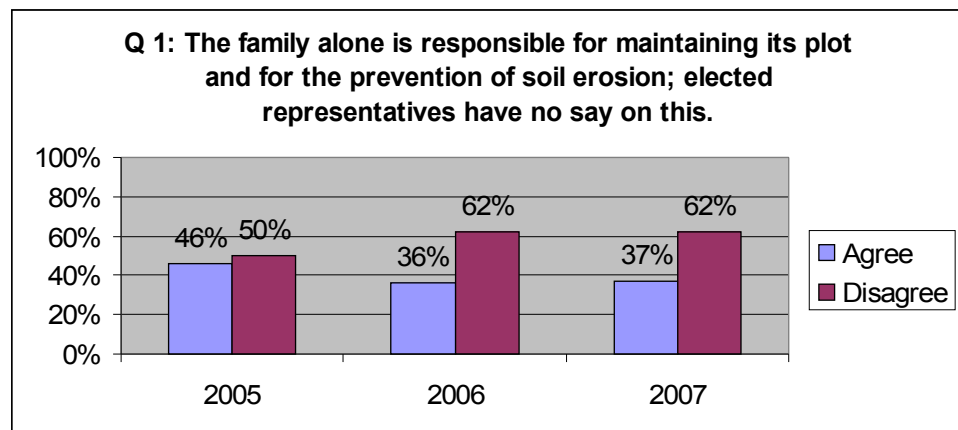
Regionally, respondents in Southern Province seemed to agree to this statement in greater numbers than elsewhere at 60%, while only one in two Kigali residents (50%) shared this view. This could indicate that more Southerners trust the central Government to take care of their development than residents of Kigali. However, it could also mean that Southerners

simply do not want to see any interference by the Government into their family matters, while residents of Kigali do not mind as much.

Both genocide survivors (53%) and prisoners (54%) are only slightly less likely to feel that community decisions should be left to the Government than the average for the general population sample.

*Q 1: The family alone is responsible for the maintenance of its fields and soil conservation (erosion); the elected representatives at the cell level do not have any say on the matter.*

A similar statement probed respondents' opinion on whether elected bodies should legitimately have a say in matters that are of immediate concern to farming families. A majority of respondents, 62%, disagreed with this statement and sees a legitimate role for elected officials at the cell level to get involved with issues of agricultural and environmental management. More than one third of respondents, 37%, agreed with the statement, even though they feel less strongly about their position (positive intensity index of 33, compared to a negative intensity index for those in disagreement of -54).



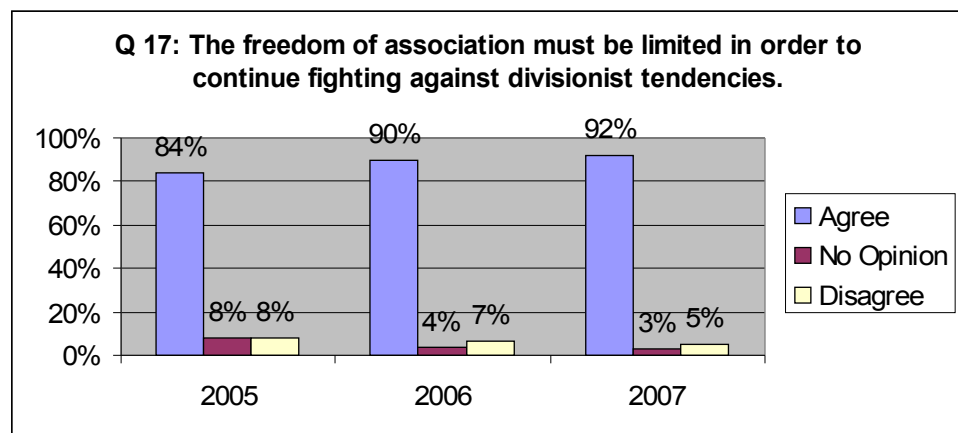
Southerners emerge as the most skeptical of the involvement of elected representatives at the cell level. Almost one in two respondents in the South, 45%, agree with the statement that the family alone should maintain fields and manage soils. This sentiment in the South has increased by 4% since 2005. Respondents in the East were also skeptical at 43%, with Kigali and the West (33% of agreement), as well as the North (28%) showing much more trust in elected officials getting involved in agricultural management. Apart from the South, the trend shows increasing openness to the involvement of elected officials all across the country since 2005, even though the numbers have stayed steady (statistically speaking) at 36% and 37% in the past two years.

A higher percentage of genocide survivors, 42%, feel that the elected representatives should not interfere in agricultural decision-making, while

prisoners seem to be more open to Government intervention with only 32% agreeing to this statement.

**Q 17:** *It is necessary to limit the right of association and the right to form political parties since we have to continue to fight against divisionist tendencies.*

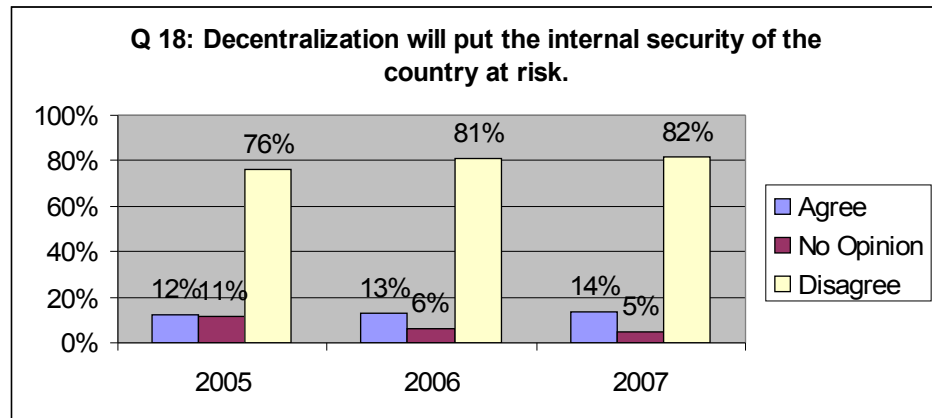
A large majority of respondents seems to accept limitations on the freedom of association and the right to form political parties that pursue a divisive or racist agenda. An overwhelming majority of 92% agree with this statement, while only 3% disagree and 5% did not want to give an opinion. This support for Government policies with respect to associations is felt across the country with slightly less support in Kigali than in the other provinces. Support for this statement has increased since 2005, when 84% of respondents approved of limitations to the freedom of association.



It is not surprising that a larger share of genocide survivors is in favor of this statement, with 93% agreeing to limiting freedom of association. A majority of the prisoner population interviewed also supports this statement, but in much smaller numbers (81%).

**Q 18:** *The transfer of power from the central government to the districts will put the internal security of the country in danger.*

Only a minority of respondents fear that decentralization and the transfer of power from the center to the districts will compromise the country's security. Only 14% fear that security will be at risk, while 82% reject this view and 5% abstained from giving an opinion. Concern about decentralization's effect on internal security was greatest in the South and West with 15% each. The opinion of genocide survivors (83% disagreed) and prisoners (79%) more or less matches feelings among the general population.



These findings could mean support for the current decentralization strategies in that it is not seen as contributing to divisions and tension in the country.

### Discussion: Majority Confident about Government Action

An overwhelming majority of respondents seems to be confident that the Government of Rwanda is trying hard to improve living standards in the country and welcomes Government intervention. In fact, compared to other countries all across the world, a consistent approval rating of above 90% for government activities is highly unusual. A recent public attitudes poll of 47 countries across all continents by the US-based Pew Global Attitudes Project found only China coming close to those figures found in Rwanda at 89% approval rating for the national Government. Among industrialized countries approval for Government efforts generally ranged between 40% and 60%. Support for the national Government was between 60% and 74% in some of the most stable and successful African countries such as Uganda (61%), Senegal (74%), and Ghana (73%), and much less for less stable and well-off African states such as Ethiopia (39%) and Nigeria (50%). Interestingly Kenyans rated their national Government highly before the December 2007 elections and subsequent instability with 79% approval rating for the Government in 2007.<sup>18</sup>

The contribution of elected bodies to local development is acknowledged by a majority and only a relatively small minority fear that decentralization may jeopardize hard-won internal security. The fact that a majority expressed the feeling that community matters should be best handled by the central Government is sending an ambiguous message. On the one hand, it seems to underscore sentiments expressed in other questions about a belief in the relevance of central Government intervention to their lives. On the other hand, it raises questions about the balance between reliance on the central Government and decentralized decision-making with and

<sup>18</sup> See Pew Research Center. *Global Attitudes Project, Spring 2007 Survey*, pp. 50. <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=257>. The question asked in the Pew Survey was "Is the influence of our national government on the way things are going very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, or very bad?"

civic engagement. If a significant majority feels that community matters are best handled by the central Government, they would have no reason to get involved in community affairs. It might also reflect still a largely felt presence by the central Government at local level, despite all decentralization efforts.

#### **b. Trust in Government Measures to Control Corruption**

What holds true for individual relationships also is true for the relationship between individuals and government institutions: the more predictable the interaction is, the more citizens gain trust in government. If the government follows clear and widely known rules, citizens are more willing to engage with Government institutions. Trust in government action depends in large part on whether citizens view the bureaucracy to be impartial and effective in delivering government services promptly and with efficiency. It is hard for citizens to build trust in Government action if officials are seen as having their own agendas and abusing their positions of power.

Consequently citizens' perception of the Rwandan Governments' fight against corruption at all administrative levels plays an important role in measuring trust in Government. If the GOR is successful in curbing corruption, confidence in Government action should increase over time and individuals should be more willing to follow or get involved in government activities. This is why the survey asked respondents four questions related to the Government's efforts to fight corruption and to the impact of decentralization on levels of corruption.

*Q 14: There would be less corruption if one left the development to the technical staff at the ministries and the central government civil servants.*

*Q 8: There is less corruption and injustice in the sector currently than before decentralization.*

*Q 12: Public contracts are awarded with more transparency since the creation of districts.*

*Q 3: It is possible to complain to the cell committee against the cell coordinator.*

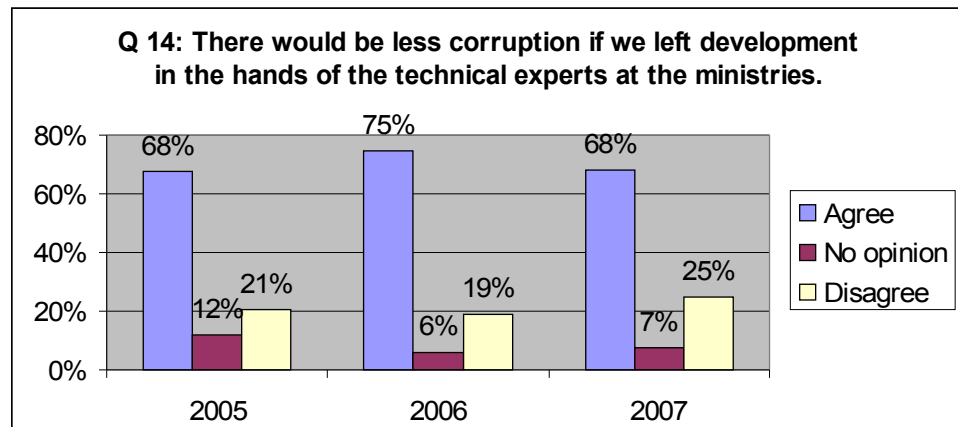
#### **Detailed Analysis:**

*Q 14: There would be less corruption if one left the development to the technical staff at the ministries and the central government civil servants.*

Question 14 gauged respondents' perception on whether the central Government is less corrupt than other institutions involved in development efforts. A strong majority, 68%, agreed with this view, while 25% disagreed. This strong believe in the incorruptibility of the central Government actually returned to the same level as in 2005 after a significant increase in 2006 (75%). Noticeable here is the relatively significant number of respondents who did not want to give an opinion

(7%). A high abstention rate usually either means that the question was not easily understood, or that it was deemed too sensitive for many people to voice an opinion.

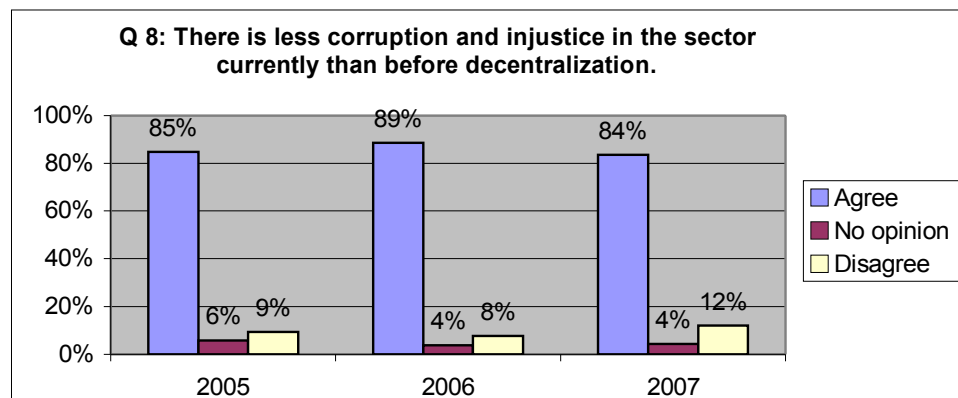
Regionally, the belief in the ability of the central Government's ability to bring down corruption was by far strongest in Southern Province, where 76% of respondents agreed. Significantly fewer people agreed in Kigali (62%) and in the North (64%).



**Q 8: There is less corruption and injustice in the sector currently than before decentralization.**

One could assume that a corollary to question 8 above would be to assume that decentralization has increased corruption. However, surprisingly, respondents seem to think that decentralization has actually contributed to a decrease in corruption at the sector level. A large majority, 84%, agrees that there is less corruption within the sector now than before decentralization, while only 12% disagree.

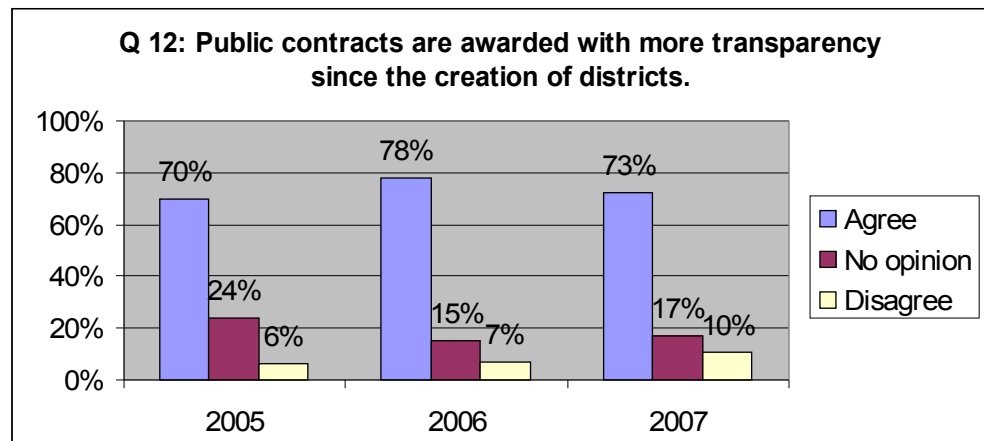
The rate of approval was lowest among respondents in Kigali with 78% while they were fairly equal in all provinces with approval rates of between 83% and 86%.



**Q 12:** *Public contracts are awarded with more transparency since the creation of districts.*

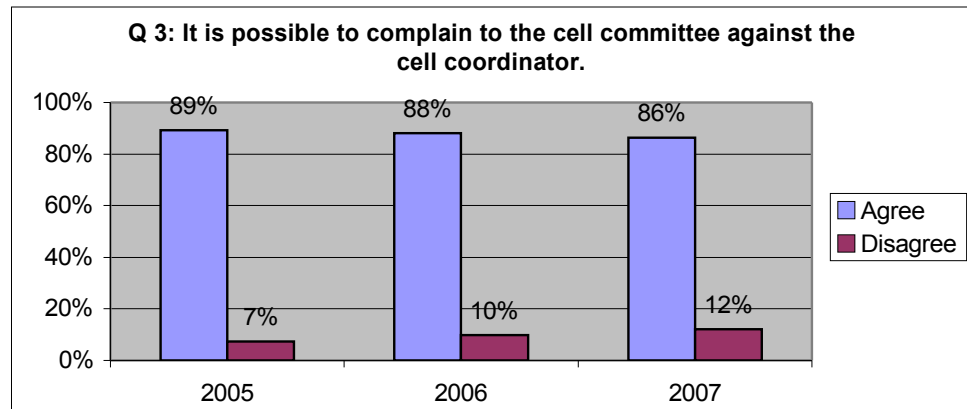
Another statement tried to probe respondents' opinion of a specific, corruption-prone area, the award of public contracts. Again, respondents seemed to confirm that decentralization has decreased corruption, with 73% confirming that the awarding of contracts has become more transparent. Only 10% disagreed, with 17% abstaining. This high abstention rate seems to suggest that a significant number of respondents may consider questions on local corruption too sensitive to give an opinion. Slightly more respondents agreed with this statement than in 2005, even though the level of agreement has decreased since 2006 by 4 percentage points.

In the provinces, support for this statement ranged from 70% in Eastern Province to 76% in Southern Province.



**Q 3:** *It is possible to complain to the cell committee against the cell coordinator.*

Question 3 indirectly probed respondents' opinion of whether they feel empowered to take action in cases of improper or corrupt behavior by the cell coordinator. A large majority, 86%, does indeed feel empowered to complain to the cell committee about the coordinator, while only 12% do not. The number of respondents who approve of this statement has slightly decreased since 2005, though, by 3 percentage points. Agreement is fairly unanimous across all provinces ranging from 84% in Kigali to 87% in the North.



### **Discussion: Decentralization seen as bringing decrease in corruption**

Questions on people's view about the fight against corruption yield contradictory results. On the one hand, respondents seem to agree that corruption has decreased at the sector level and that contract awards within the district have become more transparent. They also seem to feel that they can take recourse against the head of the cell in case of wrongdoings. On the other hand, a significant majority of respondents expressed their belief that the technocrats of the central government are better able to control corruption.

While this latter view seems to match other responses which express a strong favorable view of the capacity of the central Government (see discussion on Q 22 above), these contradictory positions whereby respondents express at the same time a great belief in the central Government but also a belief that decentralization is effective in fighting corruption are not easily reconciled. It is conceivable that while overall corruption at the local level has decreased, it is still higher than at the level of the central Government. It is also possible that individuals in rural areas usually do not receive a lot of information about cases of corruption at the level of the central Government and thus feel it is generally less corrupt than local bodies where they may experience corruption personally. Finally, high rates of "no-opinion" responses on questions 12 and 14 could indicate one of three things. First it could mean that respondents did not understand the questions. Second, it could indicate that respondents did not have any knowledge of the issue the questions were addressing. Third, high no-response rates can also mean that the topics discussed were considered too sensitive and that respondents were uncomfortable providing an opinion on a statement. In all those cases, high no-response rates do raise questions about the reliability of the responses generally, since they might indicate that even those respondents who did agree or disagree with the statement might not have given their true opinion.

#### **c. Effectiveness of Decentralization Reforms and New Administrative Structures**

Bringing government closer to the people and thus increasing the legitimacy of public decision-making is one of the goals of decentralization. In order to win the trust of citizens, the decentralization process has to be able to achieve its stated goals and newly created decentralized structures of decision-making have to be seen as legitimate and efficacious.

The survey thus presented respondents with four statements, each of which aimed at gauging their opinion on the performance and effects of various decentralized bodies.

*Q 5: Only the executive secretary really knows what needs to be done. The executive committee members do not know what to do.*

*Q 11: The district is only one element in the administrative chain of the country; it does not have any autonomy.*

*Q 13: Local construction companies will develop more quickly with decentralization.*

*Q 15: At the district level, collaboration between the advisory council and the executive committee is good.*

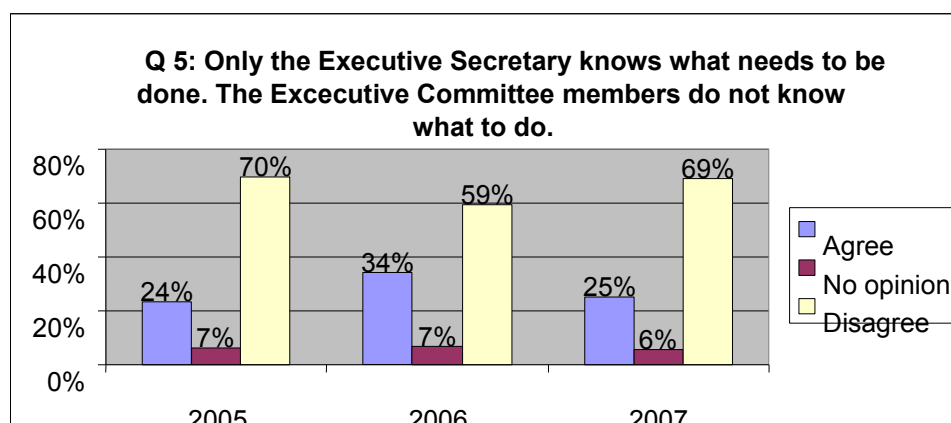
#### **Detailed Analysis:**

*Q 5: Only the executive secretary really knows what needs to be done. The executive committee members do not know what to do.*

Question 5 probed respondents' opinion of decision-making in the recently created bodies as part of the decentralization process. Do those bodies work as desired?

A significant majority (69%) disagrees with the statement and thus seems to believe that the Executive Committee at the cell level is indeed effective. Only 25% think that it is only the cell coordinator who knows what actions to take. This level of agreement is similar to 2005. This seems to indicate that a majority of over two thirds of respondents believe that the executive committee of the sector has a role to play and that the sector coordinator is not all-powerful.

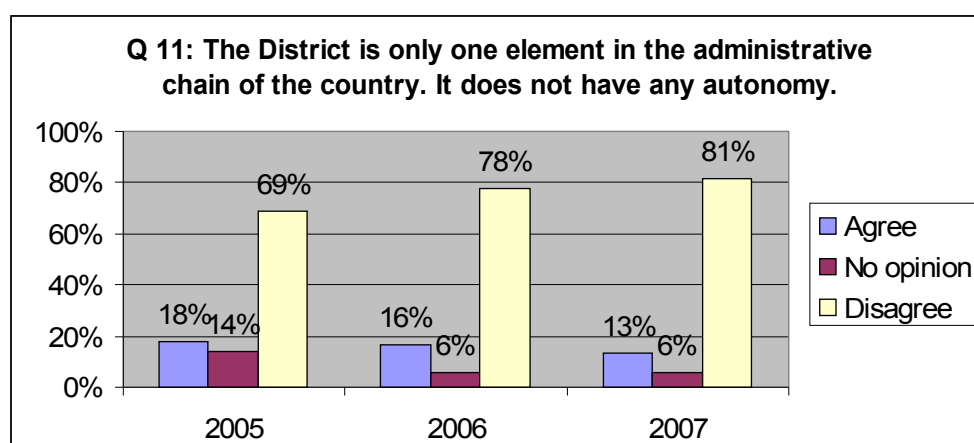
More people in the South (30%) and West (28%) agree with this statement than in other parts of the country (North 21%; East 22%, Kigali 24%). In both, Southern and Western Province this sentiment has increased by 8 percentage point since 2005, which may indicate that their actual experience with decentralized structures makes them more skeptical of the role and level of involvement of the Executive Committee.



**Q 11:** *The district is only one element in the administrative chain of the country; it does not have any autonomy.*

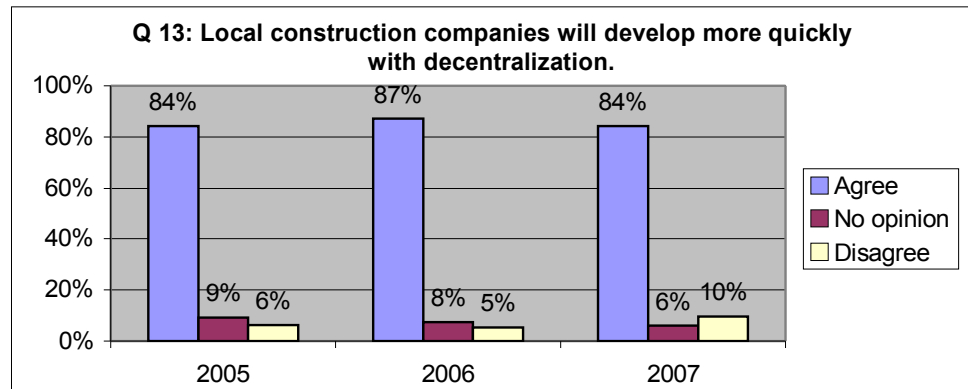
Question 11 aimed at assessing respondents' opinion of the independence of decentralized decision-making at the district level.

A large majority (81%) disagrees with the statement and thus feels that the district has considerable autonomy – only 13% seem to believe that the district indeed does not have any autonomy. This disagreement rate has increased significantly since 2005 from 69% to 81% (12 percentage points), which might reflect that with increasing experience with decentralized decision-making, the impact of local government bodies makes itself felt. In the North (87%), in Kigali (84%), and in the East (83%), people felt most strongly that this statement was not true. Significantly fewer individuals in the South (74%) disagreed. There was a relatively high abstention rate countrywide on this question (6%), which may indicate that a number of individuals at the local level actually do not know much about what district institutions do.



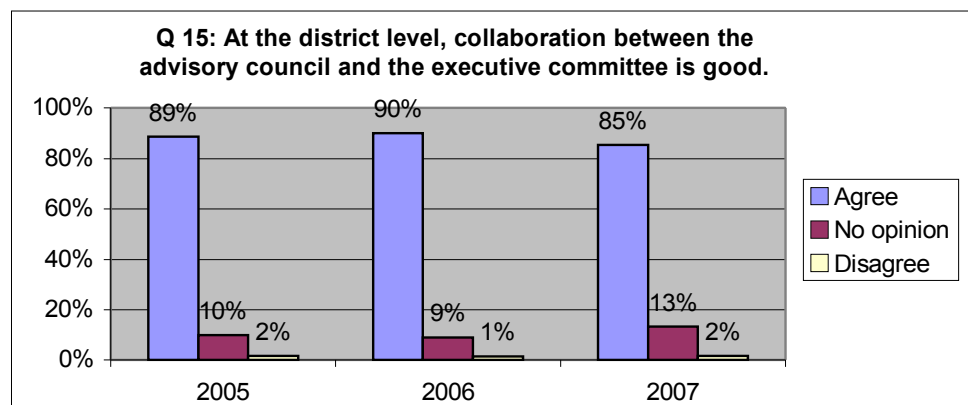
**Q 13:** *Local construction companies will develop more quickly with decentralization.*

Can the actual effects of decentralization on economic development actually be felt at the local level by an increase in the number in construction companies? A large majority agrees with the statement (84%), and thus expresses the hope that decentralization will be a boon to local construction. This outcome has remained roughly at the same level as in 2005, with little regional variation.



**Q 15:** *At the district level, collaboration between the advisory council and the executive committee is good.*

There is also overwhelming agreement (85%) that the advisory council and executive committee at the district level work well together, even though this strong approval has slightly decreased since 2005 (from 89%). Again, abstention rates were high in this question, which might indicate that a number of respondents are not that familiar with the activities of the district level institutions.



## **Discussion: Slight Decline, But Overall Positive Views on Decentralization**

A large share of respondents feel that recently created bodies of decentralized decision-making at the district and cell level are working. They also have great hope that decentralization will be reflected in increased construction activity as a sign of development and progress. Relatively high rates of “no-opinion” responses could indicate that many respondents are not entirely familiar with the workings of cell and district institutions. Skepticism toward the functioning of those bodies is higher in Southern Province; acceptance is highest in Northern Province and in Kigali.

### **III. Citizen involvement in Elected Bodies and Civic Associations**

If Rwandans across all provinces, districts, sectors, and cells feel that they have a stake in the way decisions are made, their trust in government actions should increase. Several survey questions provided citizens with chance to reflect on their willingness to engage with the decentralized administrative structures through their participation in elected government bodies as well as in civic associations or NGOs.

#### **General Civic Engagement**

Three questions tried to probe into respondents’ general opinion on getting involved in public matters and decision-making.

*Q 23: In my sector, citizens take part in decision-making on problems concerning them.*

*Q 7: If the Executive Secretary does not force people to act, nothing will be done in the sector.*

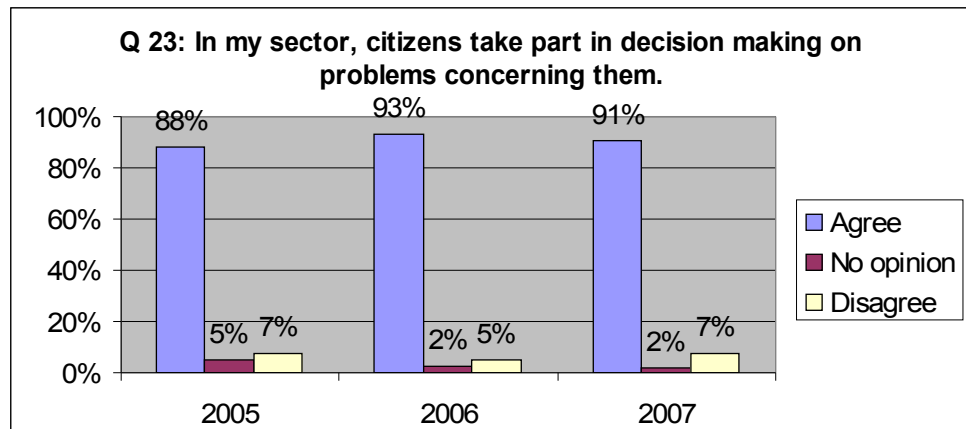
*Q 9: One does not need to make development plans in the sector to know what needs to be done.*

*Q 10: Women are less concerned than men about the management of schools and other community development institutions.*

#### **Detailed Analysis:**

*Q 23: In my sector, citizens take part in decision-making on problems concerning them.*

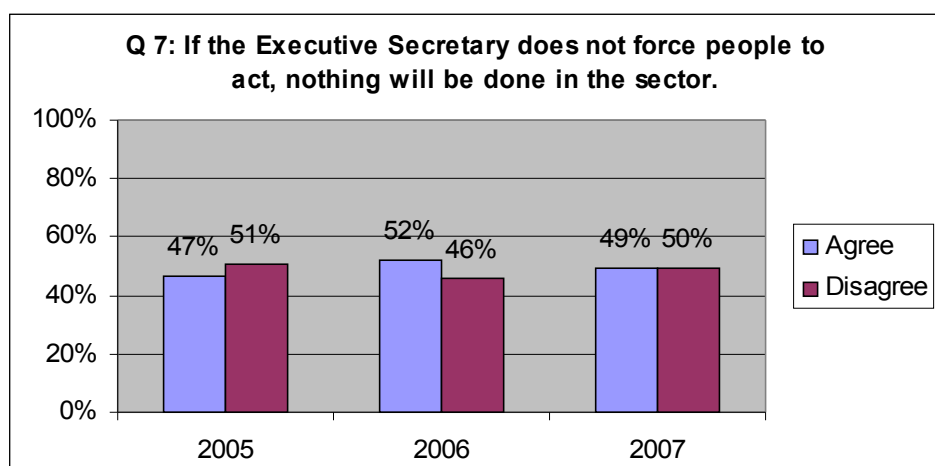
There is overwhelming agreement (91%) that generally citizens take part in decision-making on issues which are of concern to them. Support in favor of citizen involvement in decision-making has remained at similar levels since 2005 and it is strong across all regions ranging from agreement rates of 89% to 92%.



**Q 7: If the Executive Secretary does not force people to act, nothing will be done in the sector.**

Question 7 tried to get at the motivation for people’s involvement in public matters at the sector level. Interestingly, respondents were split on this question. Half of all respondents think that indeed, the coordinator has to push people to act, the other half disagree.

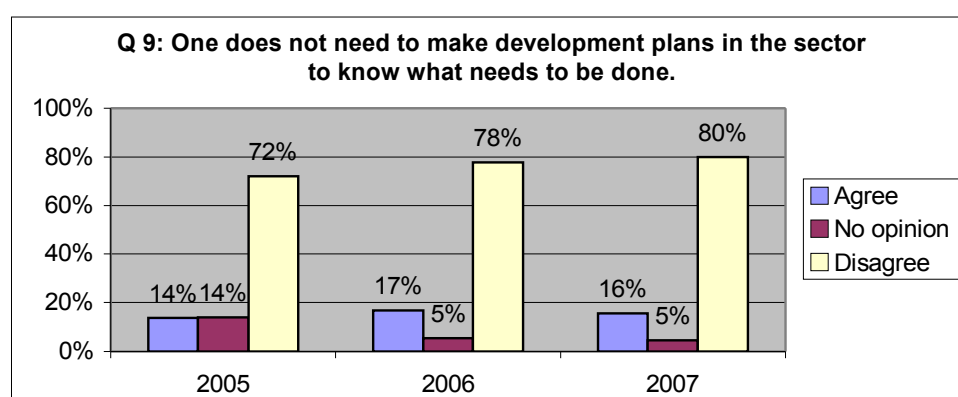
There are strong regional variations with respondents in Kigali and in Northern Province (43% agree; 56% disagree) less likely to feel that pressure from above is needed to people to get involved at the sector level. In contrast, a much larger share of respondents in Southern Province (56%) agree that it takes pressure from the coordinator for citizens to get involved in public affairs at the sector with the West (48% agreement) and East (52% agreement) somewhere in between. These figures have not changed significantly since 2005 and are roughly the same for genocide survivors and prisoners, too.



**Q 9:** *One does not need to make development plans in the sector to know what needs to be done.*

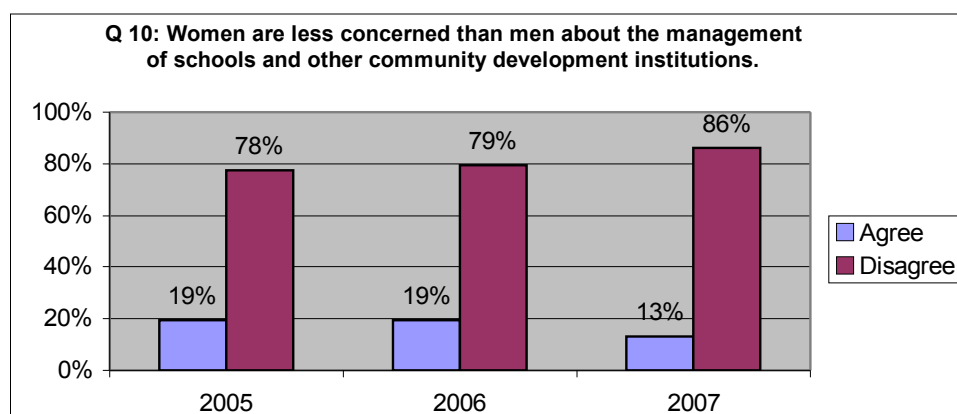
Rwandans are planners, on average – at least when it comes to local development. A large majority reject the notion that development can take place without a good plan – 80% of respondents think there is a need for development plans. Only 16% think such plans can be dispensed with. Appreciation of development plans seems to have grown from 72% in 2005 to 80% in 2007 with increasing experience with decentralized decision-making.

Respondents in the South are less strongly in favor of development plans at 74%, while the most ardent planners can be found in Kigali and Northern Province (83% agreement in each).



**Q 10:** *Women are less concerned than men about the management of schools and other community development institutions.*

Survey participants were asked whether women are less involved in the management of development at the local level. A large majority, 86%, of respondents rejected that notion, while only 13% agreed, with no statistically significant difference between the opinions expressed by female (85% disagree) or male (87% disagree) respondents. Respondents in Southern Province were most likely to agree that women are indeed less concerned about community development with 20% holding that view, while respondents in the North and in Kigali were least likely to agree (only 7% and 8% respectively). Genocide survivors, a majority of whom are female, felt even more strongly about rejecting the idea that women are less concerned with community development at 91%.



### Associations, NGOs and Decentralization

Three questions probed citizens' opinion on the effect of decentralization on associative life and civil society.

**Q 19:** *Since decentralization has started, it has been easier to form cooperatives and private enterprises.*

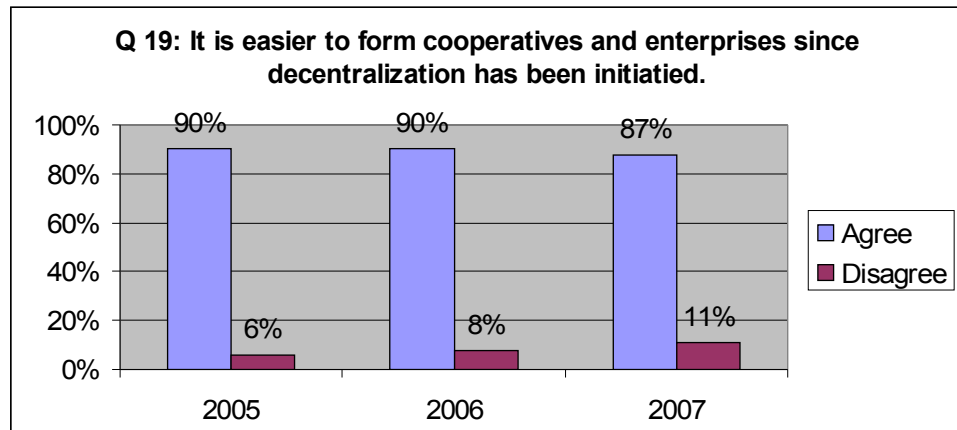
**Q 16:** *Decentralization will bring NGOs closer to the population.*

**Q 24:** *District authorities cooperate with civil society organizations to achieve improvements in my community.*

#### Detailed Analysis:

**Q 19:** *Since decentralization has started, it has been easier to form cooperatives and private enterprises.*

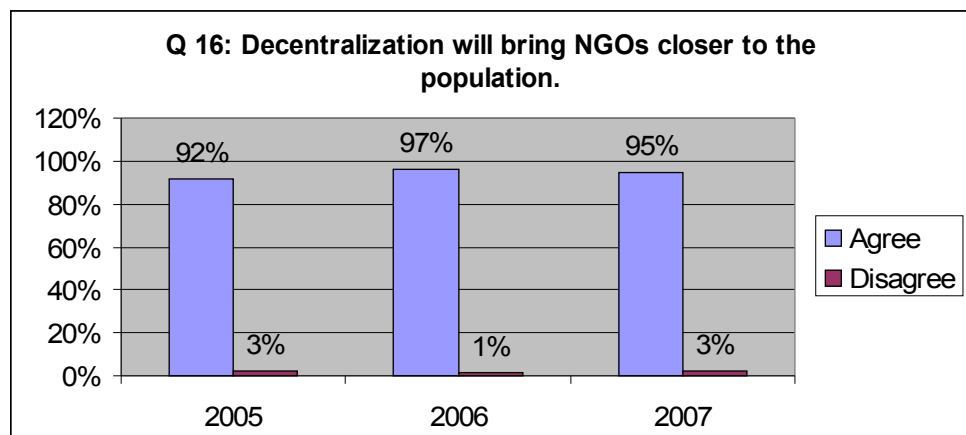
A large majority agrees that since decentralization it has been easier to form cooperatives and enterprises. Given the fact that 86% of respondents mentioned farming as their main occupation, this result might mainly be relevant for the formation of cooperatives. It is unclear how many respondents actually could have had first-hand experience with forming enterprises.



**Q 16:** *Decentralization will bring NGOs closer to the population.*

**Q 24:** *District authorities cooperate with civil society organizations to achieve improvements in my community.*

There is also a strong sense among respondents that NGOs will be closer to the people thanks to the decentralization process (95% agree) and that there is good cooperation between district authorities and civil society organizations when it comes to community development (91%).



### **Discussion: Strong Civic Engagement, with some Nudging from Above**

Survey respondents believe that there is significant civic engagement in public affairs and they overwhelmingly support the active involvement of men and women in community matters as well as structured development planning. However, even though people overwhelmingly confirmed that citizens take part in decision-making, they remain skeptical whether anything can get accomplished without some pressure from above. Respondents are split with respect to the motivation for public engagement of citizens, with an equal number believing that pressure from officials is needed for people to work on community matters in the district.

Mobilization and motivation for civic engagement seems to be higher in the North and in Kigali and lowest in Southern Province, where more than

half of the respondents agreed that without pressure from above things do not move forward in the district. At the same time, there was a larger number of Southerners who were skeptical about the benefits of development planning and about the involvement of women in community institutions.

The opportunities that the decentralization process seems to afford cooperatives, local enterprises and civil society organizations are widely appreciated by the large majority of the sample population. People generally feel that decentralization is good for NGOs and for associations and enterprise development at the local level and that the cooperation between decentralized administration and civil society groups is going well.

#### IV. **Support for Land reform**

For an overwhelming percentage of the Rwandan population agriculture is the primary activity and the source of most families' livelihood. Most of Rwandans are very attached to land on which they lay hope for their existence. Pressure on scarce arable land by a growing population is considered to have contributed to ethnic tensions, which culminated in the 1994 genocide.

A combination of high population growth, poor land management, and the incapacity of landowners to increase productivity of available land remain issues of serious concern even today. Since 2003 the Government of Rwanda has embarked on a land reform, which, on the one hand, confirms long-term leases of land on the hills and public management of swamps, and, on the other, puts a stop to the subdivision of agricultural farms when land is passed down from parents to their children.

The way land reform is perceived and accepted or resisted by the population is thus of relevance to overall acceptance of Government action and to social peace and cohesion.

The survey presented respondents with four statements to assess their attitudes toward the Government-led land reforms:

*Q 26: It's no longer really important to continue to live on ancestral land and to transfer it to one's children.*

*Q 27: It is not possible to reduce food insecurity and poverty in the country unless we consolidate landholdings and modernize agriculture.*

*Q 28: We can no longer expect Rwandans to continue living on agriculture.*

*Q 29: Poorly developed land property should be taken over by the State or Local governments.*

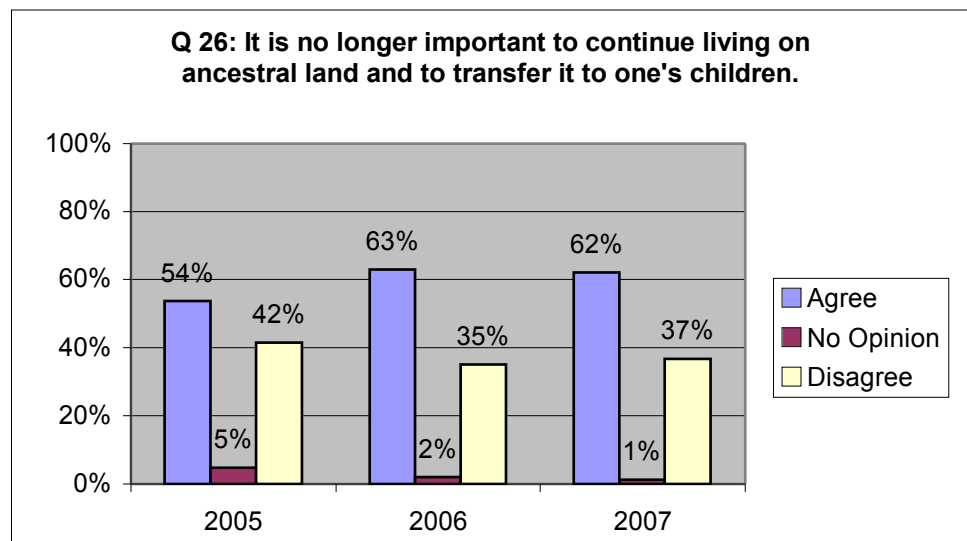
#### **Detailed Analysis:**

*Q 26: It's no longer really important to continue to live on ancestral land and to transfer it to one's children.*

A majority of respondents (62%) agrees with this statement - and there has been an a growing proportion of respondents (8 percentage points) who accept this statement since 2005, even though positive opinions spiked up to 66% in 2006 from 54% in 2005, but came down by 4% this year. A significant minority of more than one third (37%) of respondents disagree. These results might indicate two things. First, it could mean that Rwandans are indeed changing their opinion on the importance of ancestral land to their and their children's livelihoods. However, given the essential role

agriculture keeps playing in most Rwandans' lives, this seems an unlikely conclusion. Therefore, it could simply mean that a significant share of the population has learned from public information and actual reforms that ever-continuing subdividing of land is not a sustainable solution to Rwanda's land scarcity. Therefore they are resigned to the fact that the traditional practices will have to change.

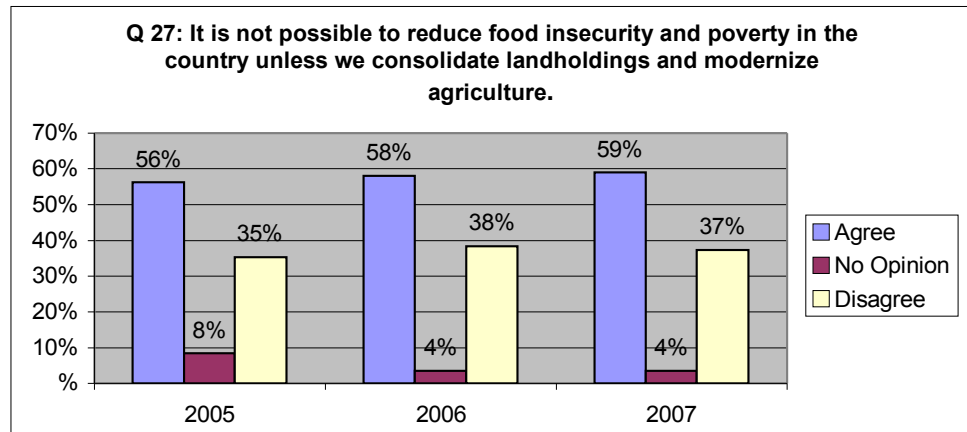
Support for this statement was strongest in Eastern Province and Kigali (67%) and in the West (65%). It was much weaker in the South (56%) and the North (59%).



*Q 27: It is not possible to reduce food insecurity and poverty in the country unless we consolidate landholdings and modernize agriculture.*

Question 27 provided a similar statement to question 26 with respect to the population's understanding of the need for modernizing agriculture. A growing share of respondents believes that landholdings have to be consolidated and agriculture modernized to fight food insecurity, with 59% agreeing with this statement, up from 56% in 2005.

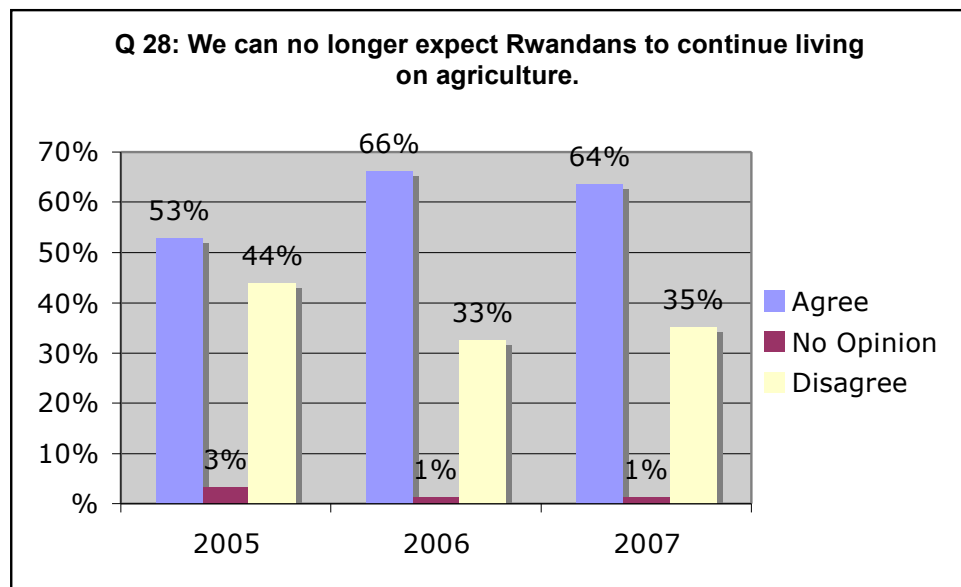
Responses to question 27 seem to confirm that respondents who agreed with Q 26 are not wholeheartedly enthusiastic supporters of the notion that there have to be limits to bequeathing land to children, but there are pragmatic and economic reasons to do so.



*Q 28: We can no longer expect Rwandans to continue living on agriculture.*

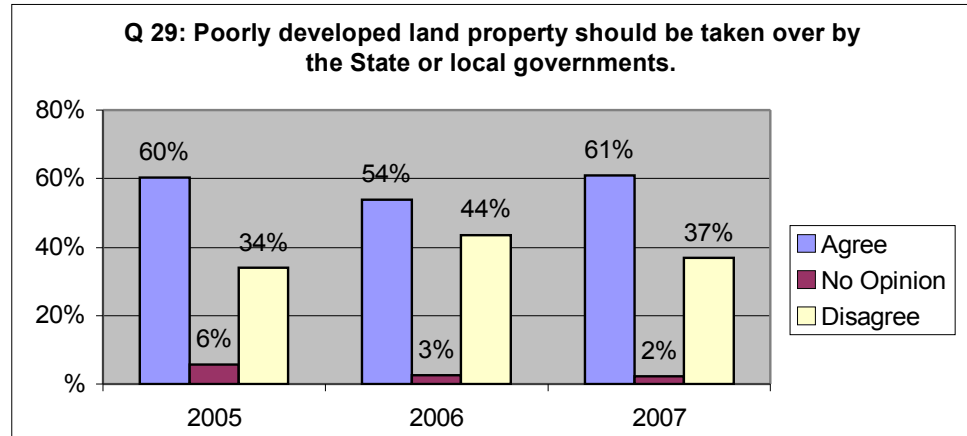
Support for this statement is basically equivalent to question 26. It shows a pragmatic acceptance of the reality of growing land pressure in Rwanda by almost two thirds of respondents. While this must be certainly welcome, it also leaves slightly over one third of respondents who disagree and continue to see Rwandans' future in agriculture.

It could be expected that urban citizens are most enthusiastic about this statement, with 78% agreeing, followed by Eastern Province (67%), and the West (63%). This view is less popular in the South where 39% oppose it and 59% support it.



*Q 29: Poorly developed land should be taken over by the State or District governments.*

A majority of respondents (61%) is also in favor of the seizure by the central or District Governments of land that is not properly used, with a bit more than one third (37%) of the population opposing such land seizures.



#### **Discussion: Pragmatism about land reform**

A significant share of Rwandans seems to be convinced by the argument that Rwanda needs land reform and modernization of its agricultural practices to move ahead in economic development. Across three different questions, each one related to assess respondents' view of the underlying rationale for ongoing land reforms, a majority of approximately above 60% agreed that land reforms are needed to avoid the increasing partition of farmland into smaller and smaller holdings per family. This still leaves a strong minority of between 35% and 40% who are opposed to the idea of preventing the dividing up of farm plots between children.

Support for land reform that prevents the atomization of farm land is weakest in Southern Province and strongest in Eastern Province and in Kigali.

## Citizens' Opinion on Effectiveness and Fairness of the Gacaca Process

The Government of Rwanda initiated the *gacaca* in 2001 after it had become clear that the formal justice system did not have the capacity to try approximately 120,000 detainees accused of genocide and genocide-related crimes. Inspired by traditional community-based mechanisms of mediation and conflict resolution, the GOR devised a process of participative justice, the *gacaca*. In the *gacaca* process the population - survivors, perpetrators, and witnesses - is given the chance to speak out about crimes and atrocities committed during the genocide before a panel of community-elected *inyangamugayo* ("persons of integrity") who adjudicate cases locally with the exception of those that fall under the first category of genocide crimes,<sup>19</sup> which are tried in the formal court system. After the information gathering phase, *gacaca* trials started in mid-2006 in more than 12,000 courts and before approximately 15,000 *inyangamugayo* as judges.

NURC, with technical assistance from the International Rescue Committee, has been tracking public opinion of the *gacaca* since 2002. By mid-2007, the time of data collection for this survey, trials had been underway across the country for well over one year. The pace of trials accelerated significantly

<sup>19</sup> The Organic Law no. 08/96 defines 1<sup>st</sup> category genocide crimes as those falling in the following categories;

- Planners, organizers, instigators, supervisors of the genocide
- Leaders at the national, provincial or district level, within political parties, army, religious denominations or militia;
- Well-known murderers who distinguished themselves due to the zeal which characterized him in the killings or the excessive wickedness with which killings were carried out;
- Perpetrators of rape or acts of sexual torture

in 2007 due to the planned closure of *gacaca* proceedings by the end of the year.

With millions of Rwandans having attended weekly *gacaca* meetings in their cell and tens of thousands having been actively involved as *inyangamugayo* or witnesses for the prosecution or for the defense, their experience with the process has deepened and they had time to more deeply reflect on and evaluate the *gacaca* and all its implications for reconciliation and justice in Rwanda.

The 2007 survey much more than its predecessors is based on people's actual experiences with *gacaca* instead of their expectations about a hypothetical process. Consequently, while previous surveys concentrated on hypothetical questions directed toward the future, this year's study focuses to a greater extent on those questions that deal with the actual effects of trials and on questions about the expectations of the general population, genocide survivors, and prisoners for the aftermath of the trials.

To analyze citizens', survivors', and prisoners' appreciation of the effectiveness and fairness of the *gacaca*, questions are grouped into three larger categories.

- I. **Effectiveness of the Judicial Process**
- II. **Truth Telling**
- III. **Reconciliation, Peace, and Security**

The current *gacaca* is an approach, which links two distinct processes. On the one hand, it is a modern process meant to repair injustices through an extensive search for the truth, categorizing crimes according to nature and severity, the recognition of those who are innocent, the conviction and sentencing of culprits, along with reasons justifying these decisions.

On the other hand, it is an attempt at collective reconciliation based on the traditional *gacaca*. The traditional *gacaca* is a mediation process aimed at reestablishing bonds between families and sanctioning the violation of rules that are shared by the community through reconciliation and restoring people's standing within the community. The challenge of the post-genocide *gacaca* is to effectively dispense justice by adjudicating serious crimes fairly and based on established procedures, while opening the door for community dialogue and long-term reconciliation.

Given the enormity of the crimes and the deep rifts they created within communities, it is obvious that Rwandans are traveling on a difficult road to reconciliation. The traditional concept of *gacaca* was not designed to deal with crimes of this enormity. Even though the *gacaca* approach to trying crimes of genocide was tested during a pilot phase starting in 2002 its effects on Rwandan society were unpredictable. It is thus instructive to take a closer look at whether, in the opinion of the Rwandan population at

large, as well as genocide survivors and prisoners, the *gacaca* as it is implemented now is contributing to promote the idea of justice and reestablish social peace? What are the constraints limiting its efficiency and its effects?

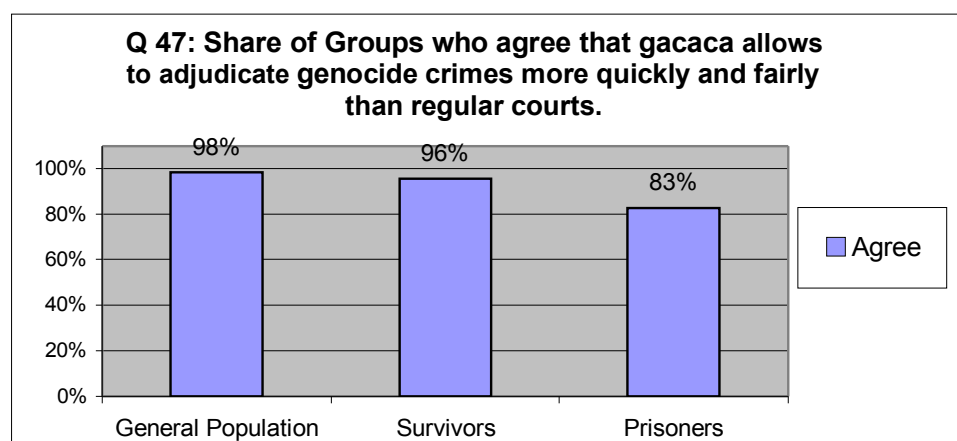
In practice, it is not always easy to separate questions about the effectiveness of the judicial process and its outcomes from statements related to reconciliation and peace. The effects and outcomes of the judicial process are more immediate to measure by probing citizens' perceptions of the competence of its actors and the acceptance of the outcomes of the trials. Reconciliation and the rebuilding of social peace are longer-term processes, which the survey tried to measure by asking questions about whether different groups trust each other and whether the trials might lead to actions that run counter to establishing social peace and unity such as feelings of revenge and retribution, reprisals against *inyangamugayo*, witnesses, or defendants, and a general sense of insecurity.

### I. Effectiveness of the Judicial Process

#### General Effectiveness of the *gacaca*

*Q 47: Gacaca allows us to adjudicate crimes against humanity and crimes related to the genocide more quickly and fairly than other existing judicial institutions.*

Respondent survivors and respondents from the general population agree strongly, at 96% and 98% respectively, that the *gacaca* is able to adjudicate crimes related to the genocide more effectively than the formal justice sector. For both survivors and the general population this view has been strong and unchanged since 2005.



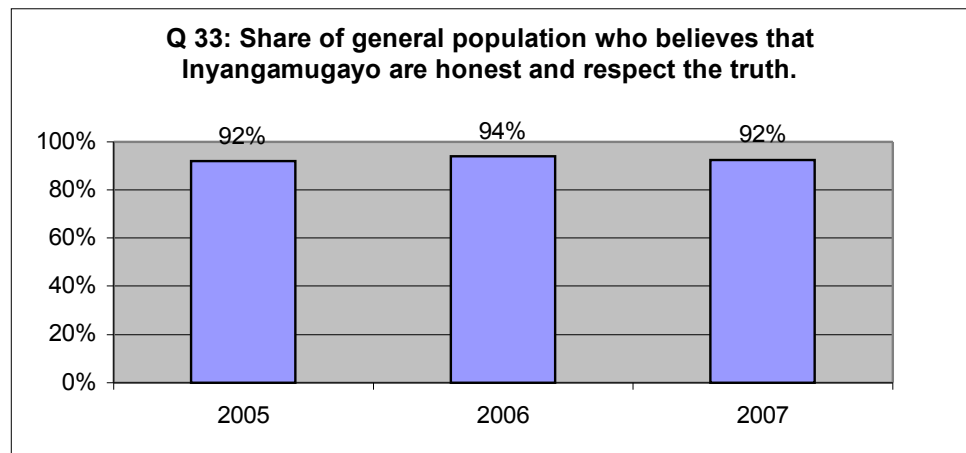
While a majority of prisoners interviewed also agrees with this statement, the share of prisoners who support it is significantly lower at 83%. This still indicates solid support for the *gacaca* as a judicial process, even though a significant minority of 15% of prisoners does not consider it more effective or fairer than the formal justice system. It is noticeable that the share of

prisoners who approve of the judicial aspect of *gacaca* has declined with increasing exposure to the process from 88% in 2005 to 83% in 2007 after a drop to 80% in 2006.

### **Integrity of the judges**

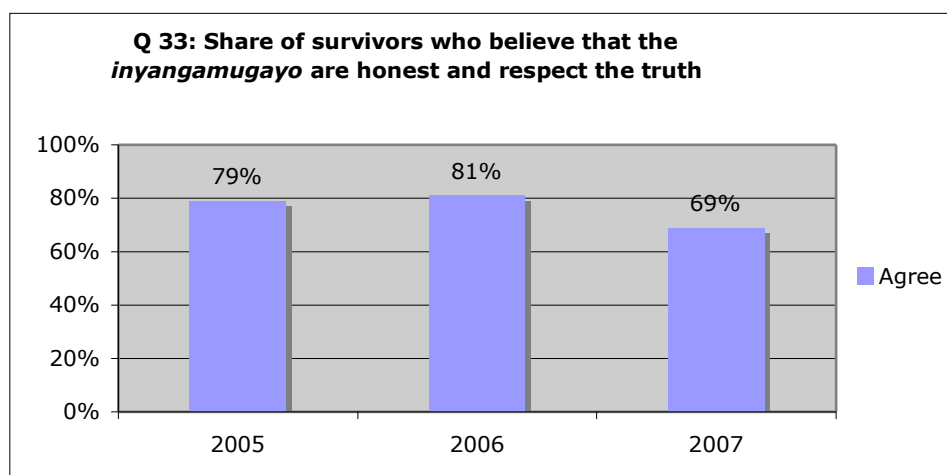
*Q 33: The inyangamugayo are honest judges who respect the truth and individual rights.*

As in previous years, a strong majority, 92%, of the general population feel that the *inyangamugayo* are honest, will respect truth and individual rights. Naturally, those among the respondents who are active as *inyangamugayo* themselves feel most strongly about this statement (94%), followed by spectators (93%) and defense witnesses (92%), while a large but slightly lower share of prosecution witnesses (85%) and those who do not participate in *gacaca* at all (82%) share this opinion.

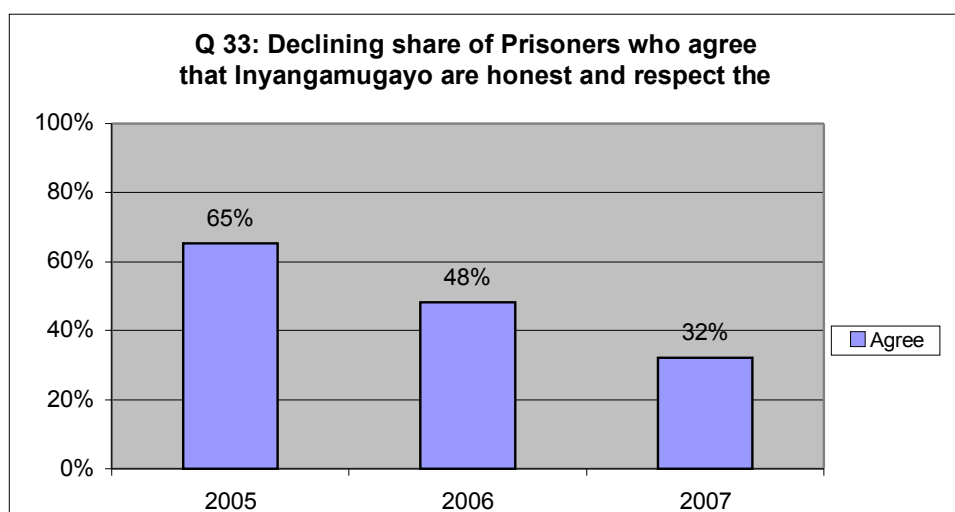


However, this sentiment is not shared by survivors and prisoners.

Even though just over two thirds (69%) of survivors agreed with this statement in 2007, this leaves a significant minority of 29% of survivors who have doubts about the *inyangamugayo*'s integrity. Even more alarming is that the share of survivors who support the statement has declined significantly over the past year by 12 percentage points from 81% in 2006 to 69% in 2007.



The trend is even more worrisome among prisoners. The share of prisoners who agree that *inyangamugayo* are honest and respect the truth has halved from 65% in 2005 to only 32% in 2007. The trend shows a rapid but steady decline over the years, by 17 percentage points from 2005 to 2006 and by 16% percentage points from 2006 to 2007.

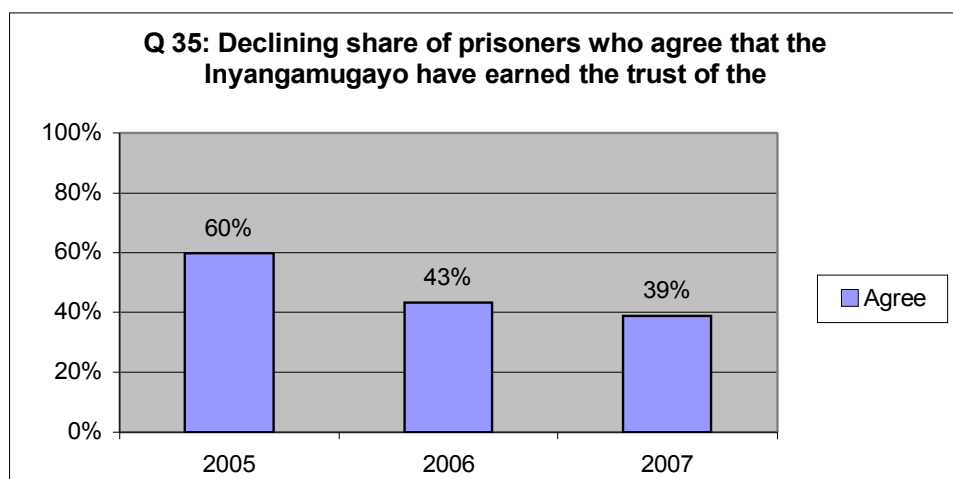


*Q 34: The inyangamugayo have earned the trust of the genocide survivors.*

The trend noted in responses to Q 33 is confirmed in the results for Q 34. While a large majority (89%) of the general population believes that the *inyangamugayo* are able to earn the trust of genocide survivors, a much smaller and declining share among survivors, the groups actually affected, agree. Only 68% of survivors agreed that the *inyangamugayo* have their trust in 2007, down from 78% in 2006, i.e. a 10 percentage point drop within one year.

*Q 35: The inyangamugayo have earned the trust of the accused.*

Similarly, while 85% of the overall population believes that the *inyangamugayo* are able to earn the trust of the accused, respondents from the prisoner population disagree. Only 39% of prisoners agreed that the *inyangamugayo* have earned their trust. A majority of prisoners, 56%, seemed to think that the *inyangamugayo* are not able to win their trust. This number has also decreased considerably since 2005, when a significant majority (60%) of prisoners still seemed hopeful that the *inyangamugayo* could ultimately be trusted.

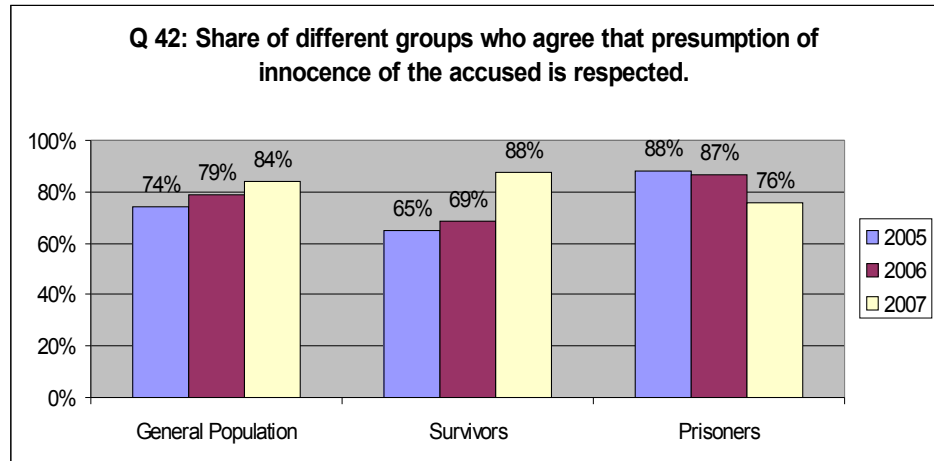


### Presumption of innocence

*Q 42: The accused who have not confessed are presumed to be innocent by the Gacaca courts.*

To be a credible judicial process, it is important that certain fundamental principles of legal procedures are respected during the *gacaca*. One such principle is the presumption of innocence for defendants until they are found guilty and sentenced.

Across all categories of respondents, there is a feeling that the *gacaca* is able to uphold the principle of the presumption of innocence until found guilty. Eighty-four percent of the general population shares this feeling, while 76% of prisoners and 88% of survivors agree. There is nonetheless a declining trend among prisoners, who were more numerous to share this feeling (88%) two years ago at the beginning of the process.

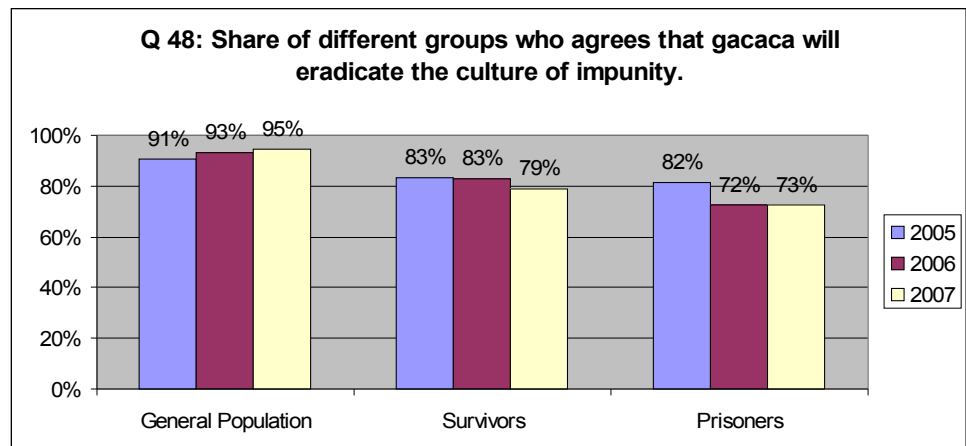


### Tackling the “culture of impunity”

*Q 48: Gacaca will allow us to eradicate the culture of impunity.*

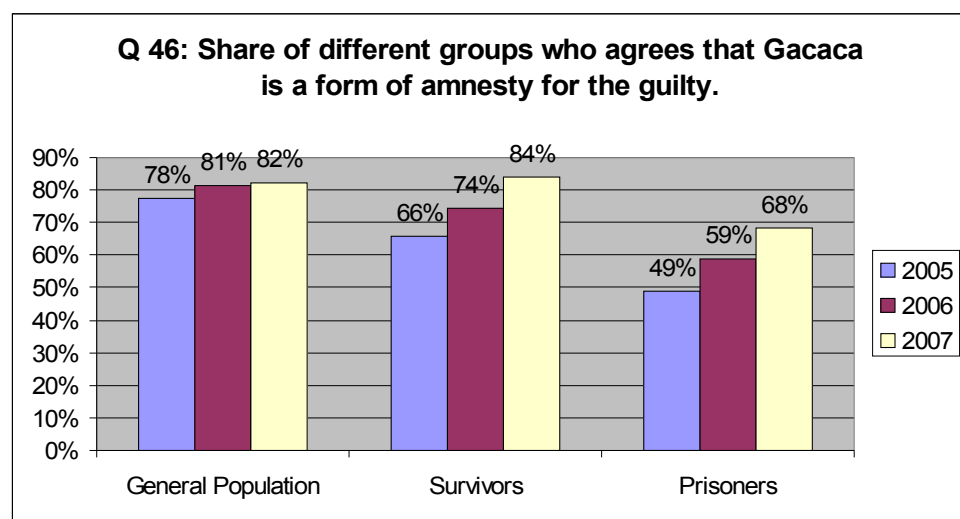
One of the fundamental goals of the Government of Rwanda is to put an end to the “culture of impunity,” which is considered to have facilitated the mobilization of a large number of people for genocide. An effective system of universal justice in which no individual or group can be above the law and in which all those who committed crimes are subject to legal sanctions is thus a fundamental requirement to eradicate the culture of impunity.

Respondents overall agree that the *gacaca* contributes to the eradication of the culture of impunity with 95% of the general population being in favor of this statement. A smaller but significant share of genocide survivors (79%) and of prisoners (73%) also support this statement. Support among those groups has weakened over the past two years, though, in particular among prisoners, where it has declined by 9 percentage points since 2005.



Q 53: *Gacaca is a form of amnesty for the guilty.*

In apparent contradiction to question 48 above, a large majority of the general population (82%) and an even larger proportion of genocide survivors (84%) agree that *gacaca* offers a way to provide amnesty for those found guilty of involvement in the genocide. A majority of prisoners (68%) also agrees with this notion, even though they are much less numerous (by 16 percentage points) than survivors to think so. However, the idea that *gacaca* is a form of amnesty for the culprits seem to have been rapidly gaining ground as the *gacaca* have unfolded. For both survivors and prisoners the share of those who approve of this statement has grown by almost 20 percentage points since 2005.



It is unclear whether the large support for this view that the *gacaca* amounts to amnesty for the guilty might contribute to longer-term peace. Given the responses to question 48 above, in which a majority across all population groups agreed that the *gacaca* helps to fight the culture of impunity, it seems likely that respondents understood “amnesty” in a traditional sense of an act of pardon that implies an element of forgiveness and a desire to reconcile. In that case the *gacaca* might indeed contribute to peace and reconciliation. Yet if “amnesty” is considered to be tantamount to impunity by letting those who are responsible for the genocide off the hook, then this view would be a rather ominous sign for the country’s future.

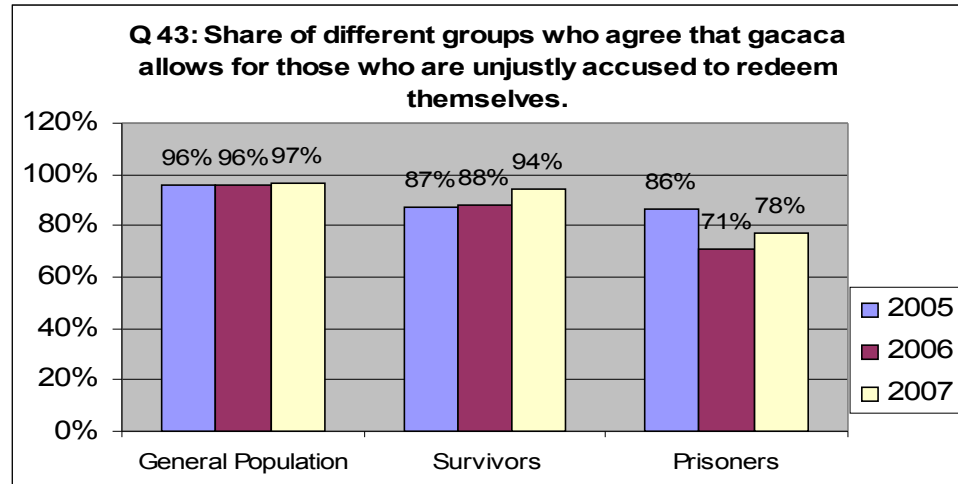
## II. Is Truth Being Told?

### General

Q 43: *Those accused unjustly are relying on Gacaca to redeem themselves.*

Question 43 indicates that there is a basic sense among the general population as well as among survivors and prisoners that the truth can come to light during the *gacaca*. Almost all respondents (97%) from the

general population agreed that those who have been accused unjustly are hoping that the truth will come out through the *gacaca* process. This opinion is shared by 94% of survivors and by 78% of prisoners.



However, when asked more specific questions about truth telling in the *gacaca* process by probing people's opinion on the accuracy of testimony and the motivations of different parties before the *gacaca*, a more complex picture emerges.

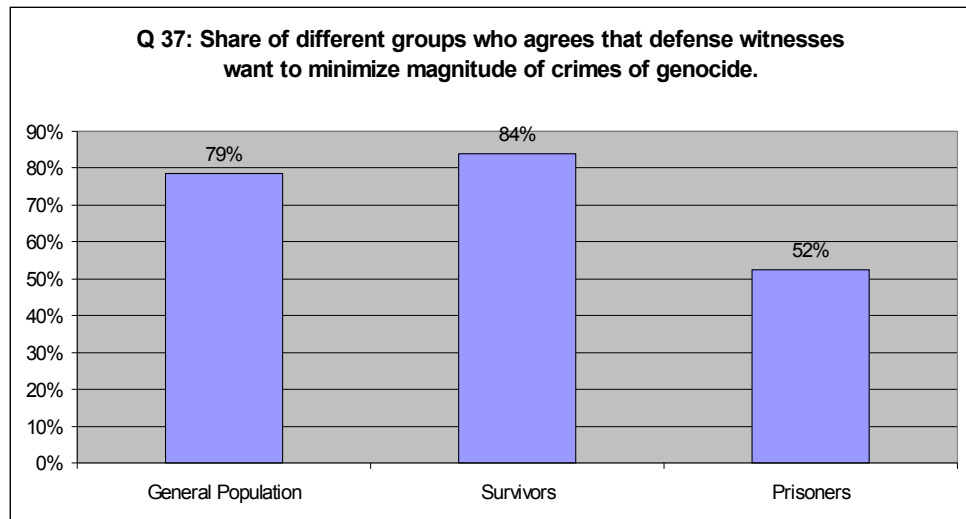
### Credibility of Testimonies

*Q 36: Prosecution witnesses want to participate in Gacaca to eliminate any doubts surrounding crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity.*

*Q 37: Defense witnesses will intervene in Gacaca in an attempt to diminish the magnitude of crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity.*

Taken together, questions 36 and 37 about the motivations for prosecution and defense witnesses to testify show that both sides are viewed quite differently. A large share of the general population agrees with both statements (Q 36: 94%; Q 37: 79%). The agreement with the proposition in question 37 that defense witnesses are trying to diminish the magnitude of crimes of genocide indicates that the general population has significant doubt about their motivations and hence the veracity of testimonies made for the defense.

Survivors largely share this view (Q 36: 93%; Q 37: 84%), while prisoners agree widely with question 36 (86%), but disagree to a much larger degree with the statement in question 37. A large minority of prisoners, 41% disagree with the proposition that defense witnesses want to minimize the extent of the crimes of genocide, while 52% of prisoners concede that this might be the case.

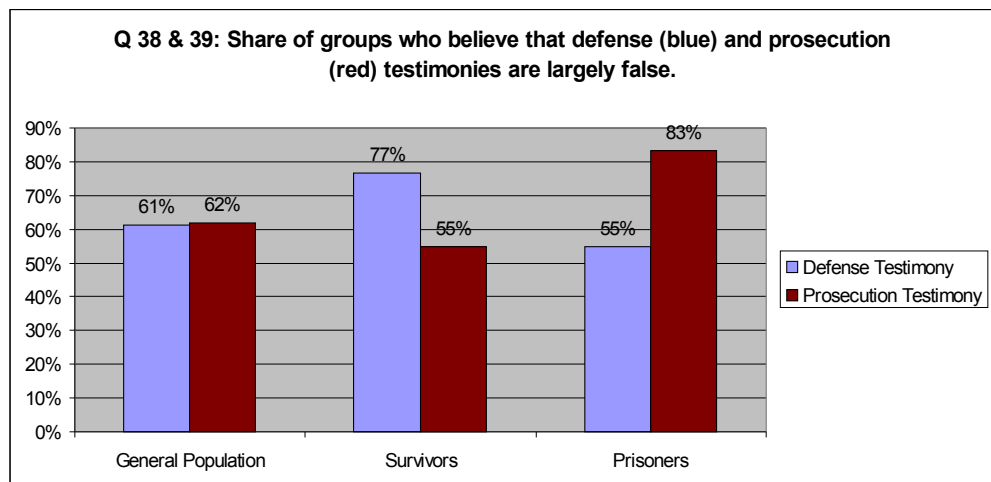


*Q 38: Many defense testimonies made during Gacaca are false.*

*Q 39: Many prosecution testimonies made during Gacaca are false.*

With respect to the truthfulness of witness testimony for the prosecution or for the defense, skepticism is widespread among all groups. Almost two thirds of the population (Q 38: 62%; Q 39: 61%) believe that false testimony will be given frequently by witnesses on both sides, the defense and the prosecution.

Opinion on the veracity of testimony shows a reverse pattern among survivors and prisoners. While prisoners in large numbers (83%) believe that there is a lot of false prosecution testimony, and a smaller number (55%) believe that a lot of false information is given by the witnesses of the defense, survivors feel exactly the opposite. A much larger majority of survivors (77%) expects defense testimonies to be false than those who feel that statements by prosecution witnesses will be untrue (55%).



These results generally indicate a low level of trust in testimonies made before the *gacaca* with a majority of the population across all groups believes that false accusations and false defense testimonies are quite common during the *gacaca* proceedings.

### **Obstacles to Truth Telling**

*Q 40: No one testifies against a member of his/her own family.*

One potential obstacle to telling the truth before the *gacaca* is the reluctance of witnesses to denounce their own family members.

Only roughly one third of respondents from the general population think that this statement is true - 35% believe that witnesses may even testify against family members. The share of respondents who agree with this statement has significantly increased since 2005, though, from 22% to 35%.

A much larger number (58%) of genocide survivors believe that it is true that no witness testifies against his or her own family, while prisoners seem to think that this is largely incorrect, with only 24% agreeing and 73% disagreeing.

*Q 41: Women seldom reveal the acts of sexual violence they have endured.*

Another obstacle to uncovering the truth could be the shame and stigma felt by victims of certain types of crimes, notably rape and sexual violence.

A much larger share of survivors (73%) thinks that it is difficult for women to give testimony about sexual violence than among the general population (57%) or among prisoners (45%). Interestingly, the share of women among the general population who believe that this statement is correct is equal to the share of men (57%). Among survivors, the share of women who approve of the statement is significantly (8 percentage points) lower than the share of men (women: 70%; men: 78%).

Of note here is the high abstention rate among prisoners (20%) and even among the general population (13%), which indicates that even in the context of this survey sexual violence is a sensitive topic to discuss in public or in private.

### **Genocidal Ideology**

*Q 44: The accused who have not confessed are obeying a pact of silence.*

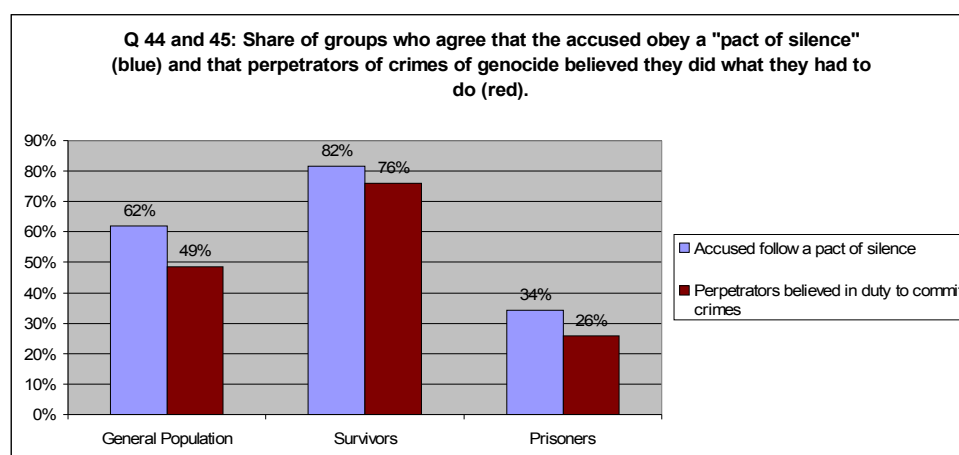
*Q 45: Those who committed crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity but refuse to confess maintain that they did what had to be done.*

Some of the most sensitive questions asked were with reference to the lingering effects of what is considered the “ideology of genocide.” As could be expected, genocide survivors agree with both of these statements in much greater numbers and feel more intensely about them than the general population, while a majority of prisoners disagree with the statements.

A significant majority of survivors believe that there is a pact of silence that prevents many defendants from confessing (82%) and that those defendants who refuse to confess believe in some sense of duty in what they did (76%).

A significant majority of prisoners do not believe that there is a pact of silence (55%); and an even larger proportion (66%) rejects the notion that those who refuse to confess believe they acted out of some sense of duty.

The general population is divided on these questions. While a significant majority (62%) believes in the existence of a pact of silence, respondents were almost equally split (49% agreement vs. 45% disagreement) on Q 45. On both questions and among all groups these opinions have not changed significantly since 2005 and seem firmly entrenched.



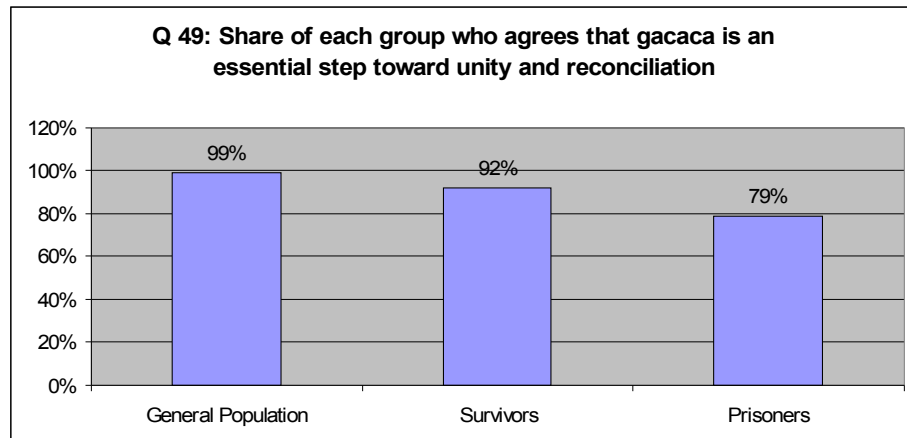
Overall high abstention rates for these questions testify to the sensitivity of their nature. For example, in 2006, a quarter (25%) of all respondents among the general population refused to give an opinion on Q 45. In 2007, abstention rates have declined to between 8 and 10%.

### III. Reconciliation and Peace

#### General

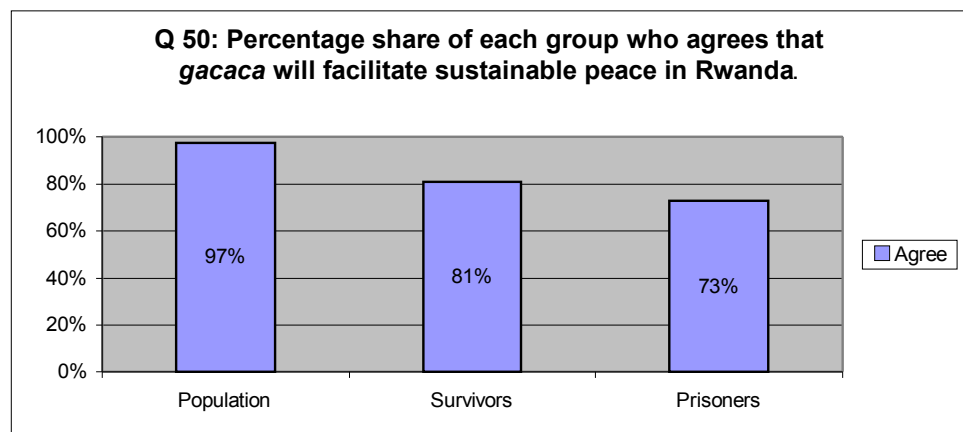
*Q 49: Gacaca is an essential step towards unity and reconciliation among Rwandans.*

The population at large resoundingly (99%) agrees that *gacaca* is an important step toward achieving unity and reconciliation in Rwanda. Survivors also overwhelmingly (92%) subscribe to this statement, while Prisoners are slightly more skeptical with 79% agreeing and 18% disagreeing. Support for this statement among prisoners has dropped from 87% in 2005.



*Q 50: Gacaca will facilitate sustainable peace within Rwandan society.*

While the general population also endorses this statement wholeheartedly at 97%, both survivors and prisoners are more skeptical. Only 81% of survivors agree that *gacaca* will help to bring sustainable peace to Rwanda. Prisoners are even less likely to support the notion of *gacaca* contributing to long-lasting peace with 73% agreeing and 22% disagreeing. Support for this statement among prisoners has declined by 7 percentage points since 2005, even though it increased from 2006 to 2007 after having fallen by almost 20 percentage points in 2006.



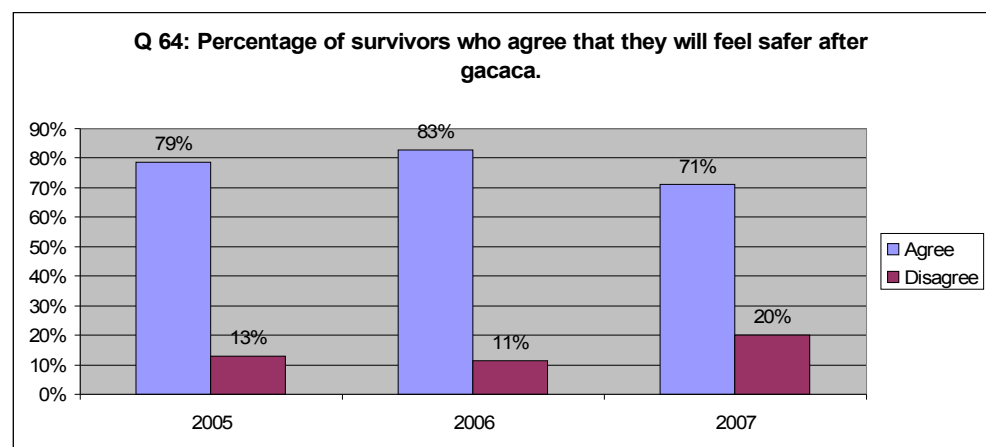
*Q 51 Genocide survivors participate in Gacaca mainly to regain peace of mind.*

Genocide survivors largely agree (86%) that they would like gain peace of mind and closure through the *gacaca* process.

**Q 64:** *Once the Gacaca verdicts are rendered, the survivors will feel safer.*

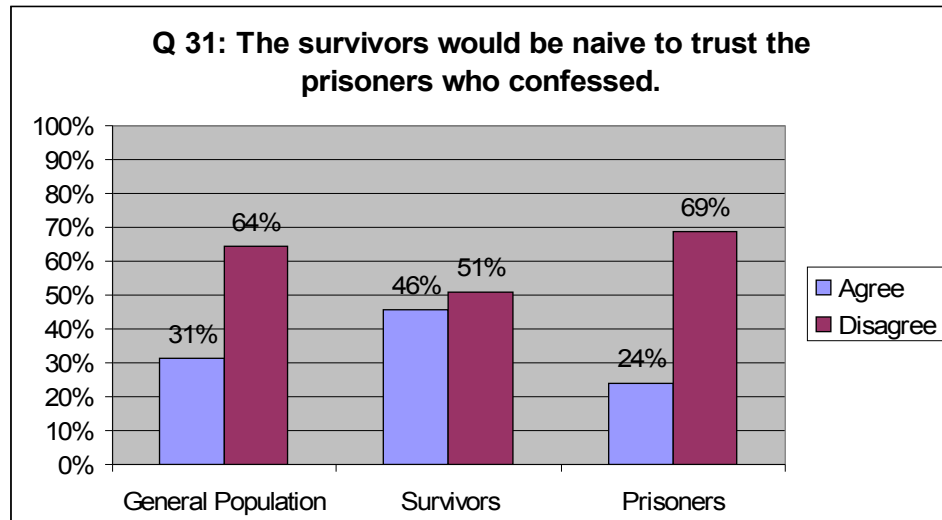
Another question asked respondents whether survivors may not only find peace of mind, but actually feel that their personal safety has improved at the end of the *gacaca* process.

A majority of survivors (71%) agrees with this statement, while 20% reject this proposition and 9% did not want to voice an opinion. A large share of respondents from the general population (94%) and a significant share of the prisoner population (84%) believe that survivors will indeed feel better once verdicts are given.



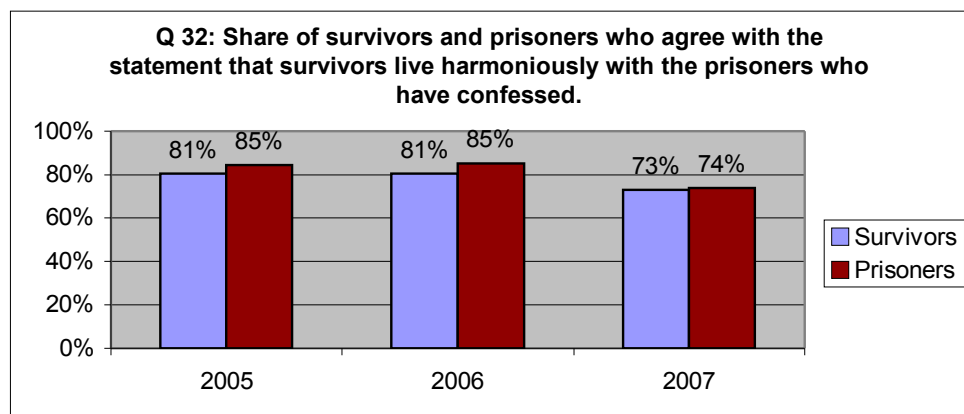
**Q 31:** *The survivors would be naive to trust the prisoners who confessed.*

The proposition that survivors might not be able to trust prisoners who confessed to their crimes was rejected by a majority of the general population (64%) and even more so by prisoners (69%). Survivors feel much more ambiguous about this statement, with approximately half (51%) rejecting it, while slightly less than another half (46%) believes that they indeed cannot trust those who confessed.



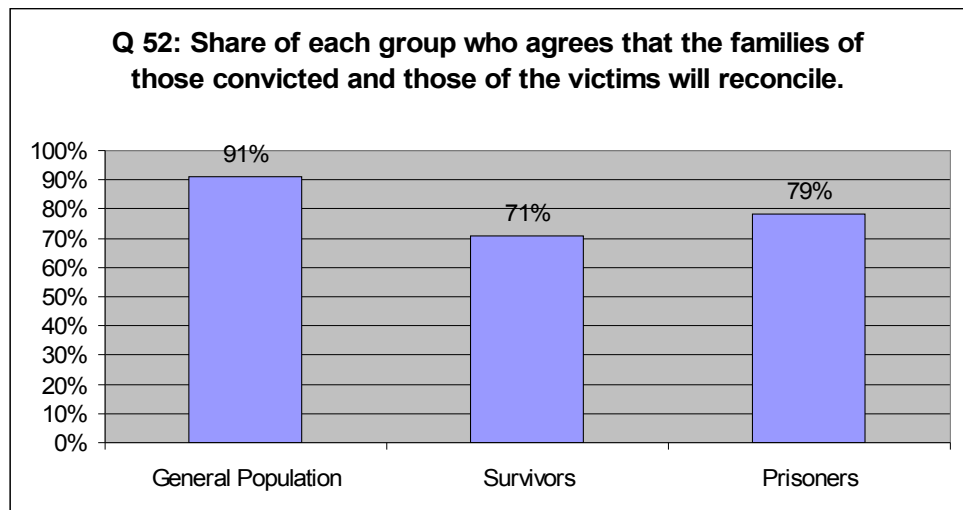
*Q 32: Survivors live harmoniously with the prisoners who have confessed.*

A related question probed the groups' opinion on whether harmonious coexistence is possible between survivors and those prisoners who have confessed. Encouragingly, a (statistically) equal share of survivors (73%) and prisoners (74%) responded to this question in the affirmative, thus expressing the belief that they are able to live together harmoniously. A significant minority of one fourth (25%) of survivors rejected it, though, while only 12% of prisoners disagreed and 14% abstained.



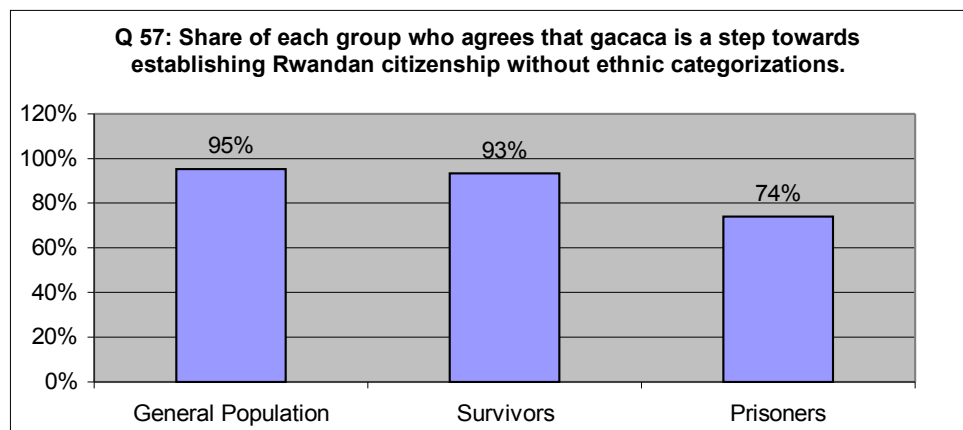
*Q 52: After the gacaca the families of the condemned and those of the victims will reconcile with one another.*

There is general optimism that reconciliation between families of victims and perpetrators will occur after the end of *gacaca*. The general population is most sanguine about those prospects, with 91% expressing their agreement with the statement. Naturally, survivors and prisoners are more skeptical. While 79% of prisoners believe that reconciliation is possible, only 71% of survivors support this statement.



*Q 57: Gacaca is a step towards establishing Rwandan citizenship without ethnic categorizations.*

To fight what the Government of Rwanda has termed “the racist ideology of genocide,” the *gacaca* is seen to contribute to the declared goal of building a society where ethnic labels do not matter anymore. A large majority (95%) of the general population agrees that *gacaca* is taking a step in that direction. This view is shared by genocide survivors, 93% of whom express their agreement. Prisoners are again more skeptical. Only 74% think that *gacaca* is helping citizens to establish a society without ethnic categorization, while 19% reject this view and 7% did not want to give an opinion. These levels of support across all three groups have remained largely unchanged since 2005.



### Challenges to Reconciliation and Community Cohesion

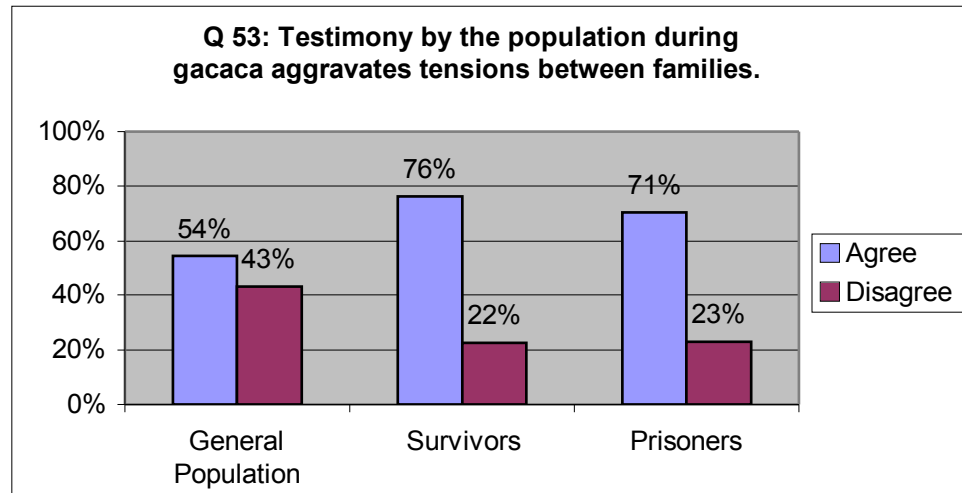
Reconciliation after long conflict and genocide is a long and difficult process. Public truth telling forced many painful issues and memories out in the open. While the desired effect of truth telling is to lead to a cathartic process at the end of which victims and perpetrators can reconcile, it also

has the potential to open old wounds and increase tension within and between communities.

The below survey questions explored whether the *gacaca* in certain areas may contribute to renewed feelings of antagonism and injustice.

**Q 53:** *Testimonies from the population during Gacaca aggravate tensions between families.*

A majority across all groups agrees that public testimony contributes to increased tensions between families. While the general population is almost equally split (54% agree; 43% disagree), a larger share of survivors (76%) and prisoners (71%) believe that tensions between families increase due to public testimonies.



The feeling that some testimonies may lead to heightened tensions has increased since 2005 among all groups (general population +9%; survivors +3%; prisoners +7%), which might be due to actual experience with *gacaca* proceedings over the past two years.

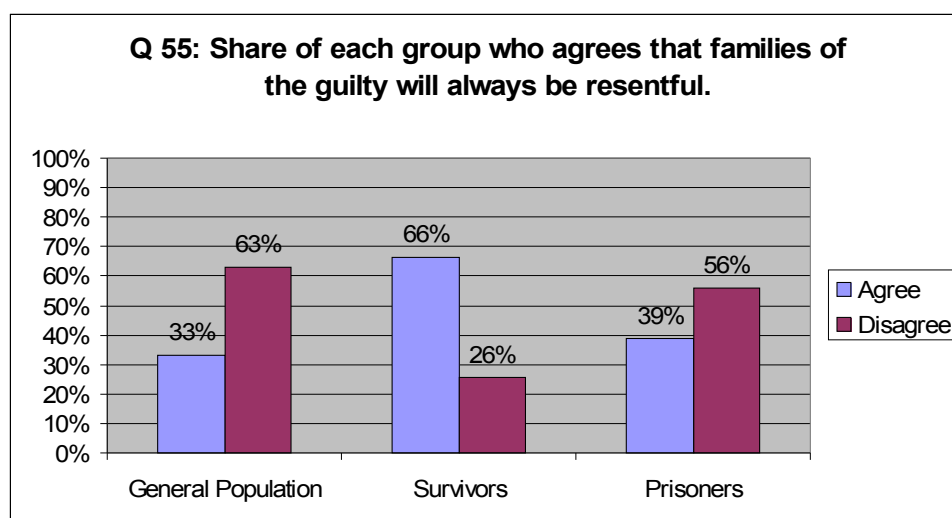
**Q 54:** *Revelations of rape of women and girls will hinder the reconciliation process.*

Another potential source of increased tension within communities could be knowledge about sexual violence and rape against women and girls. Only a minority across all groups feels that revelations of sexual crimes might be an obstacle to reconciliation, with 30% of general respondents and 36% of prisoners feeling that way. As could be expected, survivors feel most ambiguous about this statement with a plurality of survivors, 47%, agreeing and 43% disagreeing.

**Q 55:** *Families of the guilty will always be resentful.*

Question 55 wanted to know about respondents' view on lingering feelings of resentment among those found guilty of crimes of genocide. Of the prisoner population, the most directly affected group, a majority of 56% rejected this view, while a significant minority of 39% believes that feelings of resentment will remain. Similarly, only a minority among the general population, 33%, believe that the statement is true, and 63% reject it.

In stark contrast, two thirds (66%) of the respondents among survivors agree with this statement – they expect feelings of resentment to persist. This is a significant number, which may indicate that a lot of continuous work toward reconciliation will be needed.



**Q 56: Families of the guilty will be the objects of suspicion.**

Will families of the guilty be ostracized in the future? Among prisoners, 42% believe that their families may be the object of other people's prejudice in the future, while half of all survivors believe this to be the case. This expectation that the families of those convicted of crimes may experience prejudice is lowest within the general population with only 31% agreeing.

### Fear of Retribution

Worse than prejudice or antagonistic feelings and tensions in communities, the *gacaca* process could revive old hostilities and invite acts of retribution. A number of questions probed whether retaliation against different groups involved in *gacaca* trials is a possibility.

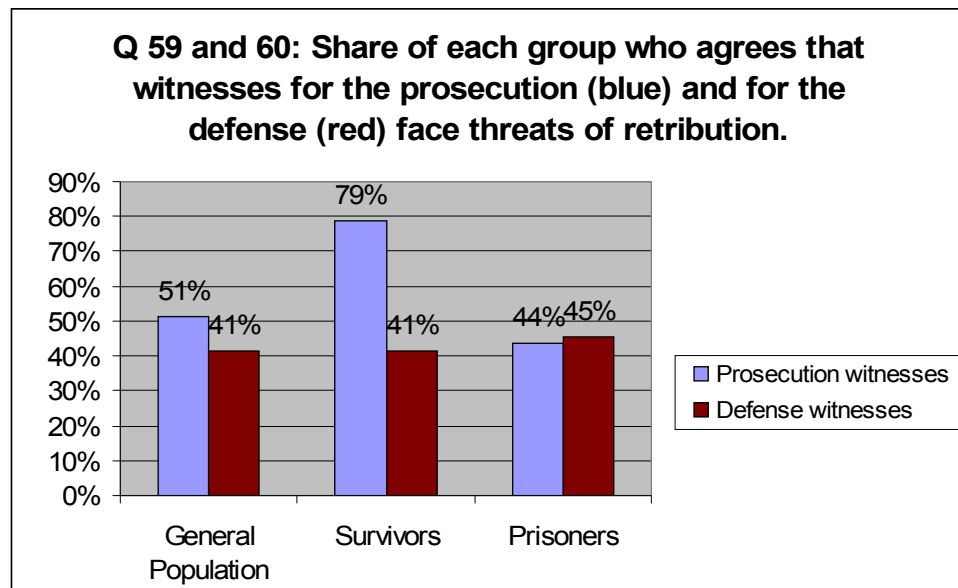
**Q 59: Prosecution witnesses are victims of retribution following their testimony.**

A significant majority of survivors, 79%, believe that prosecution witnesses run the risk of acts of reprisals after their testimonies. The general population is split on this question, with 51% agreeing that prosecution witnesses might be subject to retaliatory acts and 47% disagreeing. Prisoners were also equally split, with 44% of prisoners agreeing and

disagreeing. A strong majority (66%) among those who identified themselves as prosecution witnesses among the general population agreed that they are subject to retribution.

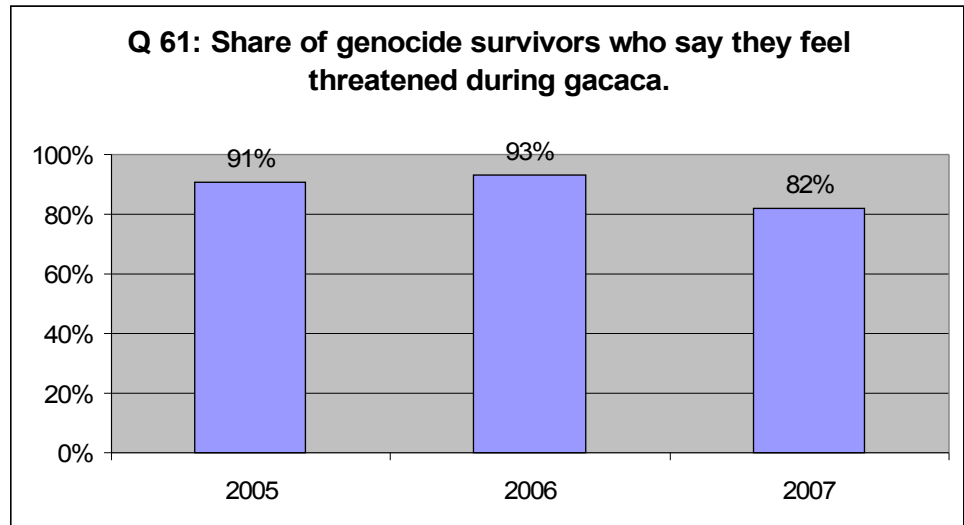
*Q 60: Defense witnesses are victims of retribution following their testimony.*

A lower share of respondents across all groups believes there to be retribution against defense witnesses. This feeling is highest among prisoners (45%), and slightly lower among survivors and the general population (41% each).



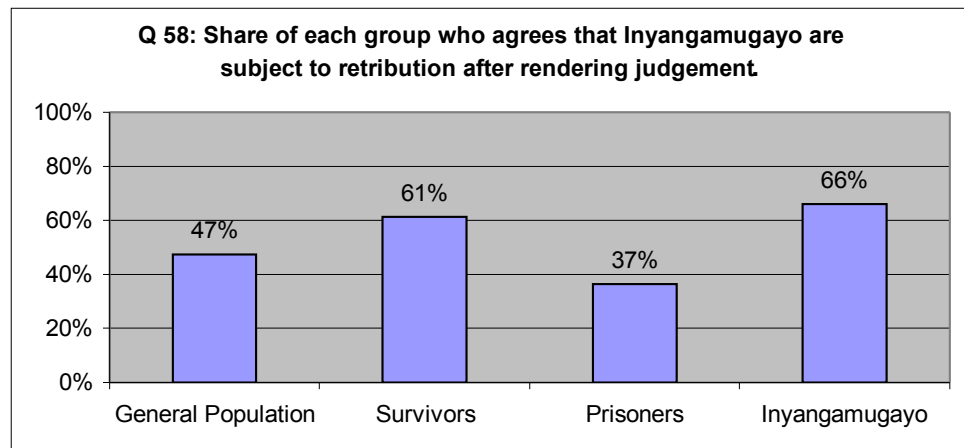
*Q 61: Genocide survivors feel threatened during Gacaca.*

A large majority of genocide survivors, 82%, agree with this question, while only a slim majority among the general population and a minority of prisoners believe that survivors feel threatened during *gacaca* proceedings. The share of respondent survivors who say they feel threatened has decreased since 2005 from 91%, but remains at a high level.



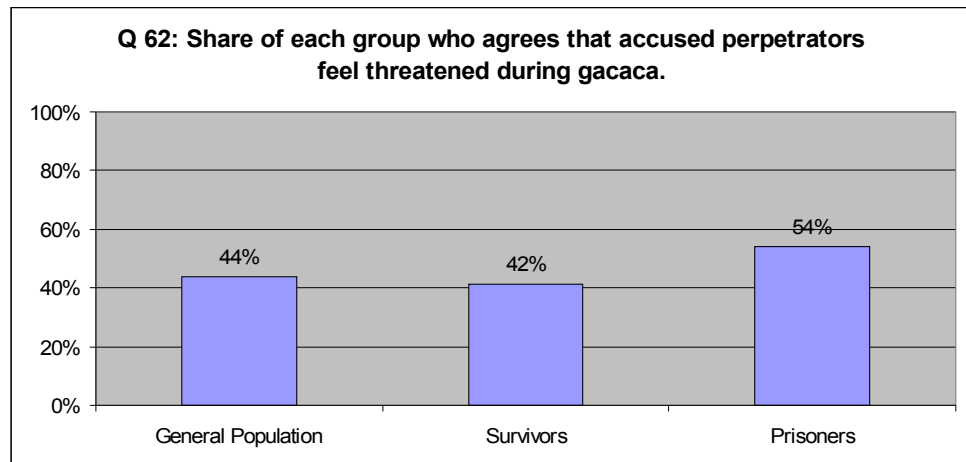
**Q 58:** *The Inyangamugayo are subject to retribution following their judgments.*

A majority of survivors, 61%, also fear that *inyangamugayo* are subject to reprisals after their judgments. The survivors' concern for *inyangamugayo* is only shared by a minority of the general population (47%) and an even smaller proportion among prisoners (37%). Not surprisingly, those among the general population who identified themselves as *inyangamugayo* widely agreed with this statement at 66%.



**Q 62:** *Accused genocide perpetrators feel threatened during Gacaca.*

Fewer genocide survivors (42%) or member of the general population (44%) agreed that the accused also might feel threatened during the *gacaca* proceedings. As would be expected, the share of those who agree with this statement is higher among prisoners at 54%.



**Q 63:** *The accused who have confessed their guilt are subject to threats and retribution from their accomplices.*

The opinion that those who confessed face reprisals from those who did not confess seems widespread among survivors (63%) and, to a lesser degree, among the general population (50%). Those who are actually concerned, the prisoner population, are split, with 49% of respondent prisoners agreeing and 43% disagreeing.

#### **Discussion: Hope for Peace and Reconciliation, But a Sense of Insecurity**

The responses on statements and questions related to the *gacaca* reveal that, naturally, the effects of the genocide seem to linger on 13 years after its occurrence. It seems obvious from the results that relations between survivors and perpetrators and their families will be difficult for some time to come. They have the potential to improve once *gacaca* is over and if both sides feel their issues are dealt with fairly.

Large numbers of the general population and of survivor and prisoner groups believe that the *gacaca* is a more effective way to deal with the large number of pending cases of crimes of genocide than the formal justice system. An almost equally large number of all groups believe that generally the *gacaca* is an important step toward unity and reconciliation in Rwanda. Significant proportions of all groups also feel that it will help bring about sustainable peace for the country.

Despite these overall very optimistic statements about the *gacaca* process, a much more mixed picture emerges if one takes a look at specific issues in greater details.

With respect to the effectiveness and credibility of the judicial process, on the positive side, a significant majority believes that the *gacaca* will contribute greatly to reversing the culture of impunity which was pervasive in the country for so long. Significant numbers, even among the

accused, also agree that the process is strong enough to ensure the presumption of innocence of those who have not confessed.

However, with respect to the trust that various groups have in the actors and the process, serious doubts remain.

For one, there is doubt about the integrity of the *inyangamugayo*. Around 30% of prisoners and 20% of survivors feel that *inyangamugayo* are not honest and may not respect the truth. Thirty percent of survivors and 56% of prisoners stated that the *inyangamugayo* do not have their trust.

Almost two thirds of the general population believes that witness accounts on either side, the prosecution and the defense, cannot be trusted. An overwhelming number of prisoners (83%) does not believe in the truthfulness of prosecution witness accounts and a large number of survivors (77%) has doubts about statements made by witnesses for the defense.

There is a strong sense among genocide survivors that a genocidal ideology lives on among prisoners who seem unrepentant. Almost 80% of the general population and 84% of survivors believe that defense witnesses want to lessen the extent of crimes of genocide. Furthermore, an equally large share of survivors (around 80%) believes that there is a “pact of silence” among prisoners who have not confessed and this group also believes that those who refuse to confess feel that they just did their duty in perpetrating the genocide.

These views are generally rejected by prisoners (around 60%), even though there is still a significant minority of about 30% of the respondent prisoners who agree that there is a “pact of silence,” and that those who do not want to confess believe that they did what they had to do.

Genocide survivors have a heightened sense of insecurity and feel that the *gacaca* has led to threats of or actual retribution. More than two years after the start of *gacaca* proceedings, a large majority, 82%, of survivors say they feel threatened during *gacaca*. A significant share of survivors feels that threats and acts of retribution are likely against prosecution witnesses, *inyangamugayo*, and those who have confessed, indicating strong distrust among survivors against the accused perpetrators. They continue to fear that vestiges of a “genocidal ideology” persist as reflected in their responses to questions about the motivations of defense witnesses and those who confessed.

Survivors’ feeling of insecurity seems to indicate uneasiness with the process, rather than with the general effectiveness of the *gacaca*. A majority of survivors (71%) says they will feel safer at the end of *gacaca*, after verdicts are rendered, and also that they will live harmoniously with prisoners who have made confessions (73%). This indicates that there is a

sense among a majority of survivors that once the process is over, that those who are guilty and unrepentant are under lock and key, and others have confessed and asked for forgiveness, reconciliation and long-term peace-building can take place. However, while trials are going on, a large number of survivors feel highly insecure and are afraid of retributions against their own and against other key groups whom they might consider allies, notably *inyangamugayo* and prosecution witnesses.

The sense of insecurity is less pronounced but still significant among prisoners. Between 49% and 54% of prisoners say they will feel threatened during *gacaca* and that those who confess will face reprisals on the part of others who did not.

Overall, the picture is mixed and policy makers will need to analyze the data carefully to draw any conclusions. In particular, they will have to decide for themselves whether to focus on the significant majorities who believe that *gacaca* effectively contributes to peace and reconciliation, or to pay more attention to the significant minorities among both groups, survivors and prisoners, who reject some of those notions.

For example, among survivors, a significant minority (46%) feel that it would be naïve to trust prisoners who have confessed, and still 25% do not believe that they will be able to cohabitate peacefully with even those perpetrators who confessed; and 20% of survivors reject even the notion that they might feel safer after the end of *gacaca*, indicating that their sense of insecurity is permanent.

Similarly, among the prisoner population interviewed, there remains a share of around 15% to 20% who seem to reject the entire *gacaca* process and doubt its contribution to overall reconciliation and peace-building. Prisoners' responses to questions 47, 49, and 50 seem to indicate that, which all deal generally with the effectiveness of the process (Q 47) and probe whether *gacaca* will contribute to peace and reconciliation (Q 49 and 50), and which all drew between 15-20% negative responses.<sup>20</sup>

Between the genders, women survivors are slightly more skeptical of the *gacaca* than men, with about 5 to 10 percentage point fewer women than men indicating approval for statements such as whether the *gacaca* contributes to durable peace in Rwanda or whether it can help eradicate the culture of impunity. Women survivors are also less likely than men to feel safe after the end of the *gacaca* trials (women: 67%; men: 79%). These findings matter in particular since women make up almost two thirds (63%) of the sample of genocide survivors interviewed for this survey.

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<sup>20</sup> Statistically, the responses for questions 47, 49, and 50 have high and statistically significant correlation coefficients (about 0.5 at the 0.01 significance level), which indicates that a large share of the same people gave a negative response to all these questions. From this one can conclude that there is a significant minority among prisoners who do not believe in the effectiveness of the *gacaca* process nor do they believe that it contributes to peace and reconciliation.

Women prisoners made up only approximately one sixth (15%) of the prisoner sample. Female prisoners, on almost all questions, largely agreed with men, except that, if anything, they are slightly more skeptical of the *gacaca* process than men since they are marginally less likely to believe in the integrity of *inyangamugayo* (Q 33), but somewhat more likely to believe that most prosecution testimony will not be truthful (Q 39).

Regionally<sup>21</sup>, survivors in Western Province are far more optimistic about the *gacaca* and its potential to reconcile Rwandans than in the rest of the country. Across all questions, survivors interviewed in the West believe in large numbers that the *gacaca* will bring durable peace; they feel much more strongly about the integrity of *inyangamugayo* and believe in much smaller proportions that false testimony among defense or prosecution witnesses will be widespread. On the flipside, respondent survivors in Southern Province and Kigali are generally much less likely to believe in the *gacaca*'s potential to contribute to durable peace and more numerous to distrust *inyangamugayo* and witness testimony. Consequently, the feeling of insecurity expressed by survivors is more widespread in Kigali, the East and the South, than in Western Province.

An almost reverse regional pattern can be discerned among prisoners, who are much more numerous in Kigali to believe in the potential of *gacaca* to reconcile the country and bring peace (Q 49 and 50) and to believe in the integrity of *inyangamugayo* and witness testimony (Q 33, 38, 39) than prisoners in other parts of the country. Skepticism about *gacaca* is much stronger among prisoners in Eastern Province, Western, and Southern Provinces with those in the West having less faith in *inyangamugayo* and witnesses, but those in the East express the greatest sense of insecurity (Q 62) and are less likely to believe that *gacaca* contributes to durable peace (Q 49).

It is important for analysts and policymakers to properly “read” these sentiments triangulate them with other information or data that this survey cannot provide.<sup>22</sup> Decision makers then have to assess for themselves whether a process that, despite many flaws, draws approval ratings of 70% to 80% provides strong enough a basis to build long-term unity and reconciliation, or whether those minorities who do not believe in the process have the potential to disrupt the peace-building process.

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<sup>21</sup> We have to note here that the survivor and prisoner populations targeted were not drawn from a countrywide sample, so the regional figures do not have the same comparative value as those for the general population. For prisoners, even though there have been efforts to hold prisoners in detention facilities close to their location of origin to enable them to participate in *gacaca*, it is not guaranteed that prisoners say from Huye prison are actually from the South.

<sup>22</sup> For example, to learn more about the motivations, fears, and hopes of those minorities who reject the *gacaca* process and doubt that it has any contribution to reconciliation, qualitative individual interviews or focus groups or other relevant studies could provide important additional insights for policymakers.

