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**National Unity and Reconciliation  
Committee (NURC)**

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**REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**

**THE PROCESS OF DECENTRALIZATION AND  
DEMOCRATIZATION IN RWANDA**

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# Measuring the Impact of Governance Reform on Social Cohesion

## Opinion Survey on the Decentralization and Democratization Processes Underway in Rwanda

NURC by J.C. Desmarais, February 2004

### I. INTRODUCTION

In the last four years, the Rwandan government has taken a series of legal and administrative measures, at the local and national levels, to foster public participation in the management of public affairs and development.

At the local level, citizens' councils (*njyanama*), executive committees and development committees (CDCs) were established in March 1999, through elections in every cell and sector in the country. A similar process was conducted in May 2001 in the communes, jurisdictions which had just been merged into districts. At every level, powers that were formerly concentrated in the hands of the central government's representative were devolved to citizens. As part of the same wave of reforms, "independent tribunals" were established in each cell, sector, district and province in the country with the mandate to make decisions regarding genocide related affairs and also to initiate the reconciliation process.

At the national level, the Rwandan government held a referendum on the Constitution, as well as presidential and legislative elections on May 26, August 25, and September 30, 2003, respectively. The previous year, popular consultations had enabled the Electoral Commission to draw up a Constitution draft that integrated the government's decentralization and democratization initiatives and proposed a semi-presidential system along with a bicameral parliament. The Constitution draft also integrated that commemoration of the genocide, the struggle against "divisionism" and specific dispositions restricting the activities of political parties at the national level between election campaigns.

Our objective in conducting the survey was to measure public support for the governance reform and for the constitutional proposals, prior to the start of the referendum and electoral campaigns. Another objective was to measure social cohesion of local communities. The information gathered will serve as bench marks for other opinion surveys of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission in the years to come.

This poll's analytical framework focuses on the evolution of political cultures and changes in mentalities. We apply this analytical framework to an ambitious political reform that introduces a new mode of thinking and democratic action into a strongly hierarchical and centralized administrative system that will also launch local communities into an extremely demanding "grassroots driven" development process. We also examine the concept of social cohesion. Social cohesion depends on feelings of altruism and mutual trust, which in turn are factors that contribute to people's well-being and to community development.

The social fabric of Rwanda is more than a set of dispersed and unconnected households. Its "structure" is made up of local communities, i.e. of social spheres endowed with a collective memory and the with function of creating consensus. Thus, as in all rural societies, families react

with a “community spirit,” when facing either external interventions or local tensions arising from their living conditions.

However, the regulation of such influences poses a particular challenge in Rwandan communities because they bore witness to a genocide that haunts still them even as it paralyzes their ability to act.

This study focuses in particular on governance reform. Let us recall that the Commission already conducted a poll on popular justice and reconciliation July 8, 2002 to August 12, 2002. That survey polled 6,146 respondents, including genocide survivors and prisoners accused of genocide. A third survey, also national in scope, will be carried out in April 2004 to poll families on land issues.

In all three polls, we explore the political, administrative and judicial cultures of the population, along with its “sense of community,” using quantitative tools. Our intention is to measure the degree of public acceptance of governmental proposals and initiatives: i.e. what people say by analyzing the rates (%) of favorable and non-favorable responses; and what people think by analyzing the intensity (very strong, strong, average and weak) of their support for their own responses. We shall confine ourselves to these two levels of analysis. It’s impossible of course to know whether respondent’s actions are in sync with their words and private thoughts. That’s another matter altogether.

We would like to make it clear that this study does not adopt any normative points of view on the nature of Rwandan democracy, as it is still in the process of defining itself. One could note that “participatory” and consensus democracy tends to take precedence over an indirect and “representative” democracy, which is liable to foster “dissension” and confrontation between parties in the public arena. The government also proposes a frame of reference that excludes any recourse to ethnic categorizations that threaten national unity. We adopt these two positions, which, by the way, have the support of public opinion—judging by the results of the consultations on the Constitution and the opinion survey on *Gacaca*.

The government’s messages are relayed to the grassroots level by local elected representatives who constitute a significant proportion of the population, as well as nearly 20% of our respondents. It is their duty to promote the government’s messages. Their credibility is based on a reputation for honesty, which was publicly recognized by virtue of their nomination for public office. Consequently, it is of particular importance to gather their opinions as members of a distinct group.

Let us repeat that it’s an open question as to whether the government’s messages penetrate popular consciousness, encourage public participation, or contribute to reducing the tensions and distrust that damage social cohesion. Answering such questions would require closer observation of people’s behavior.

### **I.I The country’s administrative structure and the survey’s foundation**

The cell is the basic administrative unit in Rwanda. There are 9,175 cells. A cell is composed of about 100 to 200 families who live on their land or, in the case of the *imidugudu*, nearby. The cell is the constituent unit of the sector. Sectors, of which there are 1,545, are the constituent units of the district. The country has 106 districts in its twelve provinces.

Sectors are “communities” comprised of approximately 800 to 1,500 families. Each district serves as a local government for about a dozen sectors. Their origins go back to the sub-chiefdoms and chiefdoms of old Rwanda, which were retained during the colonial period, then subdivided when the country became independent.

The present administrative reform has introduced deliberative and executive committees in all administrative units (cells, sectors and districts). Women and youth have been accorded a major role in these bodies. Should it become truly effective, this new mode of governance will modify social ties significantly, changing them from vertically oriented to horizontally oriented, and, as a consequence, will affect power relations within families, neighborhoods and local communities.

The nuclear family (or household), which is the basic unit of the country's social and administrative structure, was selected as the survey's basic unit. In each family, the head of the household (often a woman), his or her spouse and, whenever possible, a young adult (18-24) were interviewed.

The random selection of twelve (12) households per cell was done by our team leaders using the Registry of Households. Each cell executive committee ensured that its registry was up-to-date. In December 2002, the cells were randomly selected by MINECOFIN statisticians from provincial lists of districts, sectors and cells in a manner designed to ensure representation of the provinces and the country with an acceptable degree of reliability. In total, 433 cells were visited, 48 in the City of Kigali and 35 in each of the other eleven provinces; 5,410 households were reached and no fewer than 10,831 persons expressed their opinions.

Table 1.

## GENDER \* STATUS \* PROVINCE Crosstabulation

PROVINCE	GENDER			STATUS			Total
				Head of household	Spouse	Son or Daughter	
BUTARE	Female	Count	49	395	50	494	
		% within Gender	9.9%	80.0%	10.1%	100.0%	
	Male	Count	401		48	449	
		% within Gender	89.3%		10.7%	100.0%	
Total		Count	450	395	98	943	
		% within Gender	47.7%	41.9%	10.4%	100.0%	
BYUMBA	Female	Count	44	400	50	494	
		% within Gender	8.9%	81.0%	10.1%	100.0%	
	Male	Count	434		65	499	
		% within Gender	87.0%		13.0%	100.0%	
Total		Count	478	400	115	993	
		% within Gender	48.1%	40.3%	11.6%	100.0%	
CYANGUGU	Female	Count	29	312	44	385	
		% within Gender	7.5%	81.0%	11.4%	100.0%	
	Male	Count	356		53	409	
		% within Gender	87.0%		13.0%	100.0%	
Total		Count	385	312	97	794	
		% within Gender	48.5%	39.3%	12.2%	100.0%	
GIKONGORO	Female	Count	42	291	52	385	
		% within Gender	10.9%	75.6%	13.5%	100.0%	
	Male	Count	359		45	404	
		% within Gender	88.9%		11.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	401	291	97	789	
		% within Gender	50.8%	36.9%	12.3%	100.0%	
GISENYI	Female	Count	58	348	62	468	
		% within Gender	12.4%	74.4%	13.2%	100.0%	
	Male	Count	399		67	466	
		% within Gender	85.6%		14.4%	100.0%	
Total		Count	457	348	129	934	
		% within Gender	48.9%	37.3%	13.8%	100.0%	
GITARAMA	Female	Count	70	317	46	433	
		% within Gender	16.2%	73.2%	10.6%	100.0%	
	Male	Count	390		38	428	
		% within Gender	91.1%		8.9%	100.0%	
Total		Count	460	317	84	861	
		% within Gender	53.4%	36.8%	9.8%	100.0%	
KIBUNGO	Female	Count	60	379	68	507	
		% within Gender	11.8%	74.8%	13.4%	100.0%	
	Male	Count	428		52	480	
		% within Gender	89.2%		10.8%	100.0%	
Total		Count	488	379	120	987	
		% within Gender	49.4%	38.4%	12.2%	100.0%	
KIBUYE	Female	Count	43	328	44	415	
		% within Gender	10.4%	79.0%	10.6%	100.0%	
	Male	Count	351		38	389	
		% within Gender	90.2%		9.8%	100.0%	
Total		Count	394	328	82	804	
		% within Gender	49.0%	40.8%	10.2%	100.0%	
KIGALI NGA	Female	Count	71	417	49	537	
		% within Gender	13.2%	77.7%	9.1%	100.0%	
	Male	Count	455		51	506	
		% within Gender	89.9%		10.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	526	417	100	1043	
		% within Gender	50.4%	40.0%	9.6%	100.0%	
MVK	Female	Count	85	280	61	426	
		% within Gender	20.0%	65.7%	14.3%	100.0%	
	Male	Count	348		39	387	
		% within Gender	89.9%		10.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	433	280	100	813	
		% within Gender	53.3%	34.4%	12.3%	100.0%	
RUHENGERI	Female	Count	53	318	64	435	
		% within Gender	12.2%	73.1%	14.7%	100.0%	
	Male	Count	405		76	481	
		% within Gender	84.2%		15.8%	100.0%	
Total		Count	458	318	140	916	
		% within Gender	50.0%	34.7%	15.3%	100.0%	
UMUTARA	Female	Count	36	431	29	496	
		% within Gender	7.3%	86.9%	5.8%	100.0%	
	Male	Count	444		14	458	
		% within Gender	96.9%		3.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	480	431	43	954	
		% within Gender	50.3%	45.2%	4.5%	100.0%	
GRAND TOTAL			Count	5410	4216	1205	10831
			% within STATUS	49.9%	38.9%	11.1%	100.0%

## I.2 Methodology

Data and opinions were collected in the field between April 15 and May 7, 2003. The random selection and subsequent locating of households was done publicly on the eve of surveyors' visits by our technicians and supervisors, with the assistance of members of the community and the cell coordinator, who declared themselves satisfied with the openness of survey procedures.

The survey as such was executed without any complications. The first eleven households on a list were visited. In 6% of the cases, it was necessary to visit a twelfth household, either because one of the households initially chosen was absent or, in exceptional cases, because of a refusal to participate.

The field survey was carried out by 27 independent surveyors. These individuals were recruited following a publicly advertised call for candidates and the provision of training to ensure proper execution of survey responsibilities. The job of a surveyor was to read the questionnaire's statements in a monotone voice, without making comments, and to carefully record the responses. Ten technicians and supervisors checked to see whether visit itineraries were respected and questionnaires were filled out correctly.

To ensure the survey's confidentiality, each respondent was taken aside and gave his or her opinions anonymously.

The survey form was comprised of about fifteen questions concerning socioeconomic variables (sex, age, marital status, occupation, level of schooling, religion, standard of living, media access and participation in public affairs) and 75 propositions on survey issues, such as the following: "You have to be naive to trust others" (Q. 66) and "A sector located far from the district office will develop less successfully than the others" (Q. 27). For a complete list of questions, see Appendix 1.

The questionnaire was administered in less than thirty minutes and did not require long reflection on the part of the respondent. Questions followed a predictable course progressing from issues at the cell level, to sector issues, then on to district and national issues. A few more or less repetitive propositions were used to test the consistency of a respondent's answers.

Propositions modeled on governmental reform messages were, with a few exceptions, formulated as affirmative statements. As for statements concerned with individual feelings, these were, with some exceptions, formulated as negative statements so as to contrast them with the other propositions, as well as to elicit a reaction on the part of the respondent.

Each proposition was stated as an observation or a value judgment on which the respondent had to give an opinion. There were three options: agree, disagree, or hold a neutral opinion. No omissions were permitted. Secondly, the respondent was asked to specify the intensity of his/her opinion. To this end, the survey protocol required the surveyor to show a card—after having read the statement and having obtained an initial positive, negative or neutral response—which allowed the respondent to indicate the "intensity" of his/her opinion, without speaking, by putting his or her finger on a given diagram. The same card was used for every question.

This card showed a set of nine solid circles which indicated, via 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 a leaning towards agreement or disagreement. Each circle contained a number, from 1 to 9, that the surveyor recorded on the individual's response form upon obtaining the latter's response.

The survey on *Gacaca* demonstrated that Rwandans do not take refuge in neutral positions and that their opinions are neither inconsistent nor contradictory. Rwandans reveal their thoughts through the intensity of their responses. We shall therefore pay particular attention to the “Consolidated Intensity Index” of responses.

Responses were, in effect, weighted in relation to their intensity in accordance with the following scale: +100 for total agreement; +75, strongly expressed agreement; +50 for plain agreement; +25 for a neutral 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 “Consolidated Intensity Index” 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 Consolidated Intensity Index or CII will be +100. In the opposite case, it would -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 CII of -25.

As we shall see, certain groups of respondents, for example men and women or groups from a given province, may give the same answers but differ significantly in the intensity of their opinions.

### **I.3 Purpose of the survey**

The survey seeks to measure public confidence in the new democratic institutions that have been progressively instituted in the country since 1999. The issue is determining whether public opinion judges these institutions to be open and credible and whether it believes them to be capable of equitably distributing the resources of the community and the nation, and capable of strengthening social cohesion and national unity.

Does public safety, which the survey on *Gacaca* determined to be Rwandans’ dominant value—far above other values such as freedom, equality or forgiveness—still occupy this predominant position in the present survey? Are individuals disposed to ensure that the new institutions function well? What motivates them to do so? Finally what are people’s doubts about the reform?

Individual opinions shall be examined as a function of respondents’ participation in councils, committees, *Gacaca* tribunals, etc. Let us recall that 2,071 respondents, i.e. 19% of the sample group, occupy elective positions in these new institutions. Obviously, most of these are at the cell level (17%). Are they the guarantors of the new dispensation?

Consideration of independent variables (gender, age, etc.) enables an in-depth analysis of the opinions expressed. The following is a summary of the family structure and socioeconomic profile of respondents.

### **I.4 Family structure of the sample group**

Half of the sample group (49.9%) is comprised of heads of households, 12% of whom are women. Spouses represent 39% of the sample group and adult children 11%.

The majority of respondents (80%) live in monogamous relationships, 2.3% live in polygamous relationships, 1% of respondents are divorced, 5.4% are widows or widowers and 11.2% are single.

The proportion of single people (and youth) is a little higher in the provinces of Ruhengeri, Gisenyi and Gikongoro (respectively 15.2%, 13.7% and 13.2%), while in Umutara (4.7%) it is lower than the national average of 11.2%.

In the provinces of Ruhengeri and the City of Kigali (MVK) fewer respondents (75%) are in monogamous relationships. Polygamy is least frequent in the province of Kibuye (0.2%) and most common in Ruhengeri, Umutara and Gikongoro (all greater than 3.5%).

Divorce is less common in Umutara (0.3%) and relatively more frequent in MVK (2.3%), which also has a higher percentage of widows and widowers (8.5%).

### I.5 Socioeconomic profile of respondents

First, we shall sketch the profile of respondents in general, then will follow profiles of women, youth under 25 and illiterate persons—which are groups that may be considered as having expressed “reticent” opinions in the survey. Finally, a sketch will be provided of local elected officials, individuals considered to be opinion leaders. The variables selected for this exercise are age, family situation, level of education, religion, standard of living, media access and geographical location.

### I.6 General profile of the sample group

The gender breakdown of the sample group is 50.5% women and 49.5% men.

**Table II.**

**AGE \* GENDER Crosstabulation**

			GENDER		Total
			Female	Male	
AGE	18-24	Count	901	628	1529
		% within Gender	16.5%	11.7%	14.1%
	25-34	Count	1279	911	2190
		% within Gender	23.4%	17.0%	20.2%
	35-44	Count	1456	1377	2833
		% within Gender	26.6%	25.7%	26.2%
	45-54	Count	1135	1307	2442
		% within Gender	20.7%	24.4%	22.5%
	55-64	Count	535	719	1254
		% within Gender	9.8%	13.4%	11.6%
	65+	Count	169	414	583
		% within Gender	3.1%	7.7%	5.4%
Total		Count	5475	5356	10831
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Education levels are as follows: 31.7% of respondents have never been to school; 59.1% have attended elementary school, including 26.3% who attended up to sixth grade; 7.1% had registered at high school, including 1.5% who reached grade twelve; 2.1% have had access to post-secondary education.

Levels of education varied considerably from province to province: 44% of respondents from Byumba had no schooling in contrast to 18% of residents in the capital. Over 26.4% of respondents in the capital state that they have attended high school.



The illiteracy rate, an indicator used in the analysis of survey results to follow, is 38%. It rises to 53% in Byumba, to 46% in Gikongoro, to 45% in Kigali Ngali and falls to 26% in the capital. It is also a little lower in Gitarama (31%) and Kibuye (31%).

The religious profile is not very diversified. The majority (95%) are Christians, 57% of whom are Catholic, 35% Protestant and 3% followers of new denominations. While Muslims are 3% of the population nationwide, in the capital they represent 12% of the sample group. The geographical distribution of various Christian denominations has not varied since the preceding survey: Kibuye and Gikongoro are 50% Protestant, while Byumba is 72% Catholic.

The economic profile also is not diversified: 88.5% of respondents depend on farming or animal husbandry for their living; 4% are merchants and 3% are employed in services, public administration and education. Over 97% of respondents are not salaried workers.

Radios and beds or mattresses were utilized as indicators of “material assets” in the preceding survey. According to the results of the present survey, 54% of respondents own a radio and 41% a bed or mattress. This profile has remained stable since 2002. In the capital, 85% of respondents own a radio and 87% a bed or mattress. The situation is different in Byumba, Cyangugu and Gikongoro where only 43% of respondents own a radio. Mattresses are less used in Ruhengeri (17%), Byumba (25%) and Gikongoro (26%).

Respondents were required to indicate whether they had eaten meat during the preceding two weeks. This was a new indicator of “relative wealth.” Only 22% declared that they had. The proportion rose to 57% in the capital and 26% in Kibungo. It fell to 10% and 12% in Gikongoro and Byumba, respectively.

The respondent’s personal assessment of his own economic situation is another useful piece of information: 93% of respondents consider themselves poor, 1% consider themselves rich and 6% see themselves as neither. Of those who say they are poor, 4% deem themselves to be extremely poor, 47% very poor and 42% poor.

Combining those who consider themselves very poor and extremely poor in a single category generates the following rates of “self-perceived poverty:”

**Table III.**

Province	Level of Poverty
Kigali Ngali	60%
Gitarama	60%
Gikongoro	58%
Kibuye	57%
Butare	56%
Byumba	53%
Cyangugu	51%
Kibungo	49%
Umutara	48%
Ruhengeri	45%
Gisenyi	43%
MVK	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51%</b>

Let us note that according to statistics published by the World Bank, about 60% of Rwandans live under the extreme poverty line, which is defined as a per capita purchasing power of 1 US dollar per day or less.

Respondents who returned to Rwanda after the events of 1994 constitute 10% of the sample group. They mainly settled in Umutara, where they constitute 40% of respondents, in the City of Kigali (20%), in Kibungo (18%) and, in smaller numbers, in Butare, Byumba and Gisenyi (5 to 6%).

### **I.7 Profiles of women, youth and illiterates**

These three categories of respondents often seem to have the same opinions in the survey. Do their socioeconomic profiles differ from the rest of the population?

Not much, it would seem. The only significant difference concerns illiteracy. Forty-four percent of women, as opposed to 31% of men, say that they are illiterate; 38% of the former and 26% of the latter have never attended school.

The illiteracy rate among young adults (18-24) is not as high. It is 22%, as compared to 38% for respondents as a whole. Young adults have a 35% primary school completion rate, which is higher than the overall average rate of 26%.

On the whole, illiterate persons are not as “rich” and are less “informed.” In this group:

- 40% own a radio, compared to 53% of respondents as a whole;
- 26% own a bed or mattress, compared to 41% of respondents as a whole; and
- only 12% had eaten meat recently, compared to 22% for the entire sample group.

Furthermore, illiterate people “participate” less in public life. Just 7% of them were elected as members of local committees or councils, compared to 19% for respondents as a whole.

### **I.8 Socioeconomic profile of local elected representatives**

Local elected representatives, as we have stated, constitute nearly a fifth (19.1%) of respondents. Their gender breakdown is 32% women and 68% men. Elected officials aged 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 constitute 22%, 21%, 22% and 18%, respectively, of their own age groups. Elected officials are somewhat less numerous in the youngest and oldest age groups: they are 11% among young adults (18-24) and 14% among those that are 65 and older. Sixty-nine percent of elected officials are heads of households as opposed to 50% for the sample group as a whole; 25% are spouses and 6% are sons or daughters.

Education levels among local elected representatives are higher. Only 11% of them had not been to elementary school, as opposed to 32% for respondents as a whole; 40% had completed elementary school, while 26% of respondents as a whole had done so. Consequently, local elected representatives have a higher literacy rate, 86%, as opposed to 62% for respondents as a whole.

Elected officials are wealthier: 66% own a radio, 52% have a bed/mattress and 27% had recently eaten meat, as opposed to 54%, 41% and 22%, respectively, for respondents as a whole. Moreover, the impression of being better off is more common amongst elected officials.

## **II. GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR PRESENTING SURVEY RESULTS**

Responses shall be presented under four broad headings: concerns about public safety, social cohesion, the values promoted as part of the reform and issues on which opinions are divided.

### **II.1 Public safety and the struggle against corruption**

Concerns about public safety appeared as the priority value for Rwandans in the survey on *Gacaca*. This dimension resurfaces with respect to governance. Joining concerns about personal security and the security of one's material possessions is an interest in justice and the struggle against corruption.

### **II.2 Social cohesion**

Social cohesion is examined via a series of questions related to trust or lack of same between individuals. The topics examined are mutual aid, participation and sense of community, personal reputation, intergenerational solidarity, reconciliation and sociocultural life. The differences of opinion between elected officials and the rest of the population provide good indicators of the benefits arising from decentralization.

### **II.3 Values of the reform reaching consensus**

The new values promoted by the reform such as collegiality, the empowerment of local communities, the accession of women to positions of greater authority, the limitation of confrontations between political parties, the modernization of rural areas and fairness towards society's most vulnerable individuals are all strongly backed by the public.

### **II.4 Question areas concerning the reform**

Public opinion has yet to discern the impact of decentralization on local communities. It doesn't really favor women's participation in local affairs. It has noted the lack of technicians at the local level. It doubts whether districts are truly autonomous. Finally, it wouldn't necessarily restrict the political parties to the national level.

## **III. SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

### **III.1 Public safety concerns and the struggle against corruption**

#### *III.1.1 Public safety concerns*

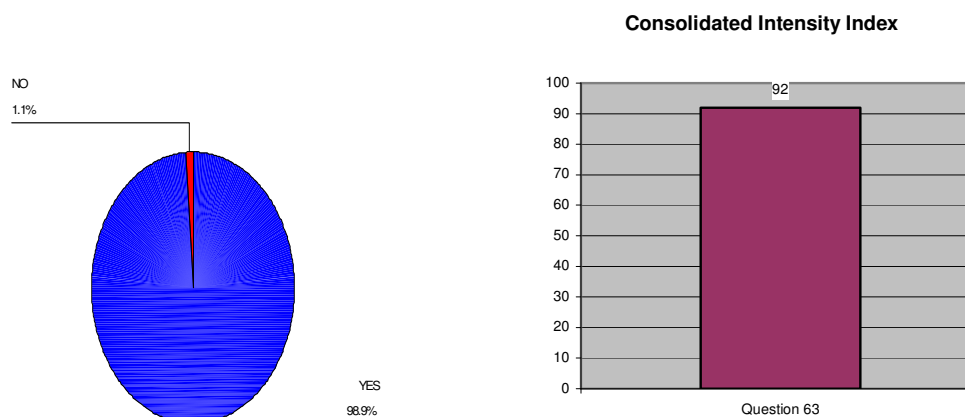
The survey on *Gacaca* of July 2002 showed quite clearly that the population's chief concern was public safety. On the occasion of the public presentation of that survey's results in March 2003, we were asked to take a more thorough look at this question. In the present exercise, carried out a few weeks before the referendum, we sought to determine whether the population made a favorable assessment of the government's efforts to maintain a climate of security in the country and ensure the safety of individuals.

The survey shows that the population deems "the efforts instituted by the government to ensure order and public safety to be credible" (Q.63). This is recognized by 97% of respondents. The Consolidated Intensity Index (CII) of public opinion on this point is 92, which indicates total consensus.

Figure 1 :

**Q.63 : Leta ifitiwe ikizere mu kurinda ituze n’umutekano rusange w’abaturage.**

- ◆ The government is credible in its efforts to guarantee order and public safety.



The survey also found that respondents consider it just as crucial “to struggle against corruption as it is to ensure public safety” (Q.67). In effect, 98% of respondents agree with this statement. The corresponding CII is 91. Once public safety is ensured, the government must ensure that good governance prevails, especially in the struggle against corruption. This is one of the survey’s most important findings.

In a question asking them to weigh the relative merits of the struggle against corruption versus the democratization process—formulated as follows: “It’s not worth pursuing democratization if the police and the judicial system are not closely supervised” (Q.68)—89% of respondents gave priority to the strengthening of the police and the judicial system. Respondents accorded a CII of 76 in favor of this opinion. The consensus on this opinion is not as strong as the consensus on the preceding opinion. The police and the judicial system are the population’s two means of deterrence and recourse against abuses and injustices.

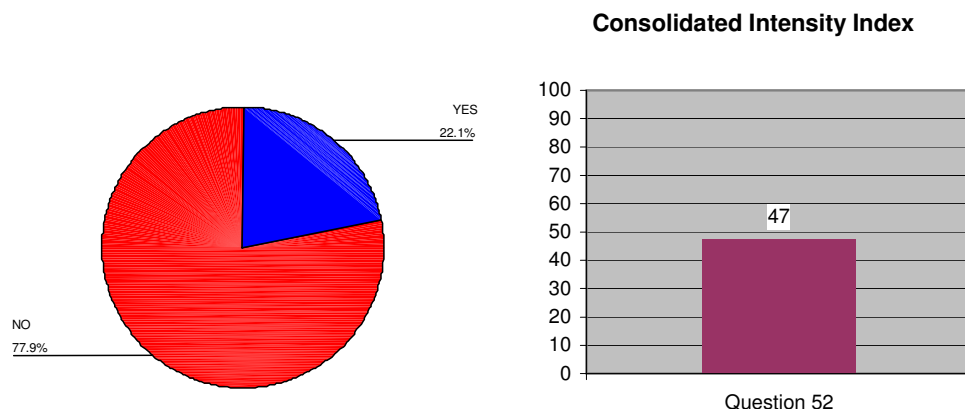
Public opinion on question 68 does not vary according to socioeconomic variables, but it does vary according to the geographic distribution of respondents. Two groups of provinces stand out: Gitarama (CII +14), Butare (+9) and Gikongoro (+7), on the one hand; Byumba (-10), Kigali Ngali (-9), Kibungo (-7) and the City of Kigali MVK (-6), on the other. For the first group, the struggle against corruption should come before democratization; the second group cares less about the struggle against corruption and more about democratization.

Concern about public safety is also evident in the response to a question on the impact of decentralization (the other aspect of good governance alongside the struggle against corruption) on internal security. The issue was whether “the transfer of authority towards the districts might put the country’s internal security in peril” (Q.52). One fifth (21%) of respondents think that the devolution of the State’s powers could put the country’s security in danger; 8% were undecided on this question; and 72% think there is nothing to fear from decentralization. The CII for whether it’s “safe to decentralize” is 47. A weak score given that the decentralization aims to increase the population’s feeling of confidence and security. Such an answer might seem surprising as Rwandans judge the central government as very credible (CII = 92) regarding public safety (see Q.63, examined above).

Figure 2 :

**Q.52 : Ishyirwa ry'ububasha bwa Leta mu maboko y'uturere bizahungabanya umutekano w'imbere mu gihugu.**

- ◆ The transfer of power from the central government to the districts will put the interior safety of the country in danger.



The most fearful categories are: women, who have an intensity differential of -7 compared with men; 18-24 year-olds, with a differential of -6 compared to their elders; people without radios, with a differential of -6 compared to radio owners; and, in particular, illiterate persons, with a differential of -12 compared to those who read and write. People who are better off in terms of diet or material possessions are more confident, as are local elected officials. The intensity differentials are +5 and +8 for the former and +17 for the latter, when one compares them with their respective opposing categories.

There is relatively strong geographical variance in the intensity of opinions regarding the relationship between security and decentralization (Q.52): Butare (CII +19), Gikongoro (+10), Kibuye (+7) and Gitarama (+6) are the provinces most convinced of decentralization's public safety dimension; Byumba (-17), Kigali Ngali (-9) and Kibungo (-8) are the least convinced.

In the provinces where decentralization is not perceived as a threat to the country's security (Q.52), respondents hope that the implementation of this decentralization is accompanied by close oversight of the police and the judicial system (Q.68). Indeed, these respondents seem to consider this component of decentralization a greater priority than democratization (Q.68). The provinces more concerned about the effects of the decentralization opt for the other side of the equation in question Q.68: i.e. democratization.

In short, in the minds of apprehensive respondents, who are quite numerous, the fight against corruption and the professionalization of policing and judicial institutions are indispensable to public safety.

Let us pursue the analysis of decentralization's impact on the struggle against corruption by examining the responses to a series of more explicit questions.

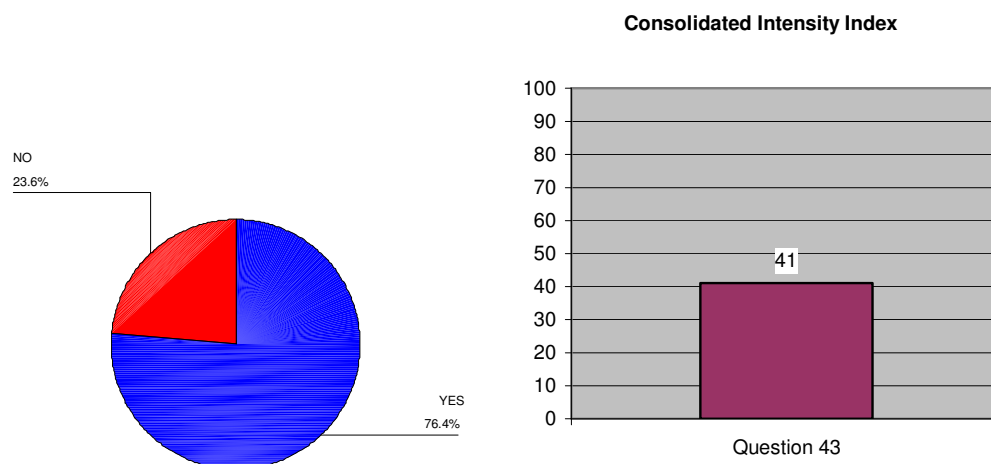
### ***III.1.2 The struggle against corruption.***

*"There would be less corruption if we left development in the hands of the State." (Q.43)*

Figure 3 :

**Q.43 : Ruswa yagabanuka baretse ibikorwa bigamije iterambere bigakorwa n'impuguke ziturutse muri minisiteri n'abandi bakozi ba Leta.**

- ◆ There would be less corruption if one would let the development be done by the ministry technicians and the State civil servants.



Most observers tend to think that decentralization should enable the establishment of better control over the local officials in charge of administering decentralized development funds via an increase in the number of persons ensuring oversight.

In reaction to the above statement, 68% of respondents agree that there would be less corruption in a centralized system. The CII is 41. In a word, two-thirds of the population believe that decentralization opens the doors to corruption more than centralized management does. Clearly, decentralization is not yet perceived as a means to protect against abuses. And yet, this objective is just as important in the spirit of the reform as the goal that consists of breaking the dependency on the State, a reality anchored in people's mentality.

Women and illiterate persons, with differentials in intensity of -4 and -11 compared to men and literate persons, respectively, deem that the local governments will be less transparent than the State. The 18-24 year old group does not differ from the rest of the population on this issue.

In contrast, the other groups believe that decentralization could be just as safe as centralization. The differentials in intensity, when compared with their respective opposing categories, are +11 for local elected officials, +11 for people with more expensive diets, +9 for owners of radios and +8 for those who have a bed or mattress. This opinion is stronger among sector level elected officials: the intensity differential is +14 compared to their colleagues at the cell level. Muslims are also among the optimists with a difference of intensity of +5.

In the provinces, public opinion is divided. Respondents from Cyangugu, Gikongoro and Butare in southwestern Rwanda are more convinced of the virtues of the decentralization with deviations in intensity of +10, +9 and +4, respectively; respondents from MVK (City of Kigali) and Umutara are less convinced with CII deviations of -14 and -5, respectively.

This judgment on the effectiveness of the decentralization concerns the struggle against corruption seems harsh. However, when one examines public opinion at a less general level with respect to

controlling financial or other irregularities in the new decentralized institutions, one observes that opinions are less negative. Large differences may be observed between a blanket statement and more specific and detailed propositions. Such fluctuations are not uncommon in opinion surveys.

**At the district level.** Public opinion recognizes that government contracts are awarded in accordance with more open procedures since the creation of the local governments (Q.39). This is what four fifths (81%) of respondents think. The CII is 69 and opinions do not vary in intensity according to socioeconomic variables or the holding of elected office. The geographical variance is greater. Respondents from Umutara think that government contracting is now more transparent with a CII deviation of +12; respondents from Kigali Ngali and Kibungo think the same with deviations in intensity of +9 and +6, respectively. However, respondents from the City of Kigali have doubts as indicated by a CII deviation of -16. Respondents from Gikongoro and Gitarama also have doubts as indicated by their CII deviation of -6.

**At the sector level.** The survey sought to determine whether respondents thought that corruption and injustices had diminished in sectors after the decentralization (Q.28). Respondents who support this proposition represent 85% of the sample group. The Consolidated Intensity Index (CII) is 67. There is no variation in intensity related to socioeconomic variables or to the holding of elected office.

There are, however, slight geographic deviations in intensity from the CII. Respondents from Umutara and Byumba support the proposition slightly more strongly with a deviation in intensity of +4 as do those from Kibungo with a deviation in intensity of +6. In contrast, respondents from Gisenyi (-10), MVK (-8) and Kibuye (-5) are less inclined to think that corruption has lessened at the sector level.

At the sector level, it is now possible to have a dishonest sector coordinator dismissed by appealing to the Sector Council (Q.24). This is acknowledged by 92% of respondents. The corresponding CII is 85. There is little variance related to socioeconomic variables or to the holding of elected office. However, a small degree of variance between provinces is apparent. Respondents from Umutara have a CII deviation of +5. In contrast, a CII deviation of -5 indicates that respondents in Cyangugu, Gisenyi and Ruhengeri seem a little more skeptical.

**At the cell level.** “One may also make a complaint about the president of the cell executive committee to that very body.” (Q.6). This proposition was acknowledged by 90% of respondents. The corresponding CII is 79 and is without much variance related to socioeconomic variables or to the holding of elected office. However, respondents from Umutara and Byumba are more strongly supportive of this statement (CII +7), while those from Cyangugu, Gikongoro and the City of Kigali are less strongly supportive (-8).

**To summarize,** public opinion moderately (if not weakly) subscribes to the idea that the decentralization will contribute to the struggle against corruption (CII = 42). However, public opinion is more favorable to this notion when asked to judge level by level. Respondents think, with CII of 80 and 85 respectively, that the restructuring of the cell and the sector will augment the effectiveness of the struggle against corruption. They are less convinced (CII = 67) when it comes to the district. These contradictory results may reveal a certain tension between two modes of thought, one, hierarchical and centralizing, the other, egalitarian and participatory, which coexist in every individual. One may also provisionally conclude that the still young decentralization process has yet to prove itself in the struggle against corruption—despite certain positive examples at the community level.

### III.2 Social cohesion

In this section, we seek to determine whether decentralization and democratization strengthen horizontal solidarity and whether they strengthen and give cohesion to communities. The propositions to be analyzed explore social cohesion by breaking it down into seven basic “qualities”: trust, spontaneous mutual aid, participation, etc., which are easy to define and easy to translate into popular speech. This list of elements may be made more complete and the associated propositions made more exact in future surveys.

The following components of social cohesion were selected:

- trust and openness towards others
- resilience
- participation in community development
- having a reputation for honesty
- sense of community
- encouragement given to youth participation
- the importance of sociocultural associations
- reconciliation

In the Rwandan context, reconciliation is certainly the predominant issue in social cohesion. The intensity of the emotions related to the genocide and reconciliation was already examined in the survey on *Gacaca*. Consequently, we shall concentrate on analyzing other elements, particularly openness to others, mutual aid and cooperation. They constitute the most immediate expressions of “altruism” and provide the most common indicators of social cohesion.

Three questions, formulated as negative propositions, make it possible to gain a good idea of the present strength of altruist sentiments. They are:

- “Does one have to be naive to trust others?” (Q.66)
- “In my neighborhood, people don’t spontaneously think of getting together to confront an unexpected problem.” (Q.13)
- “We can’t undertake development projects in the community because distrust between neighbors is too great.” (Q.5)

Figure 4 :

#### Q.66 : Kwizera abantu ni ukudashishoza.

- ◆ It is naive to trust others.

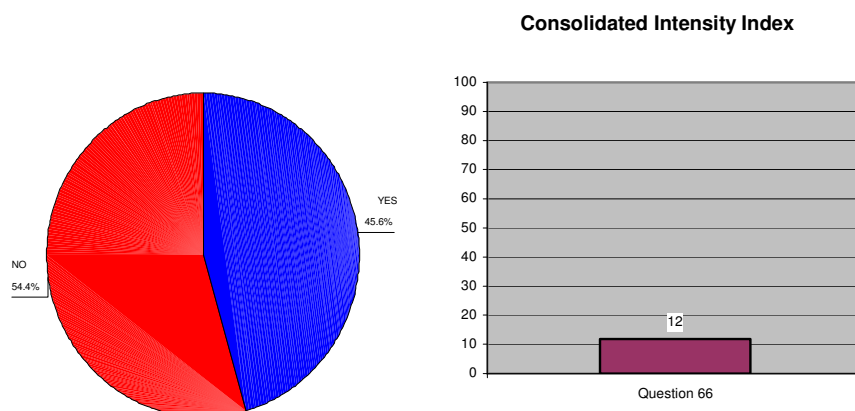




Figure 5 :

**Q.13 : Abaturanyi banjye, ntibihutira gutekereza kwishyira hamwe kugirango bakemure ikibazo kivutse.**

- ◆ In my circle, one does not easily think of joining together to solve a new problem.

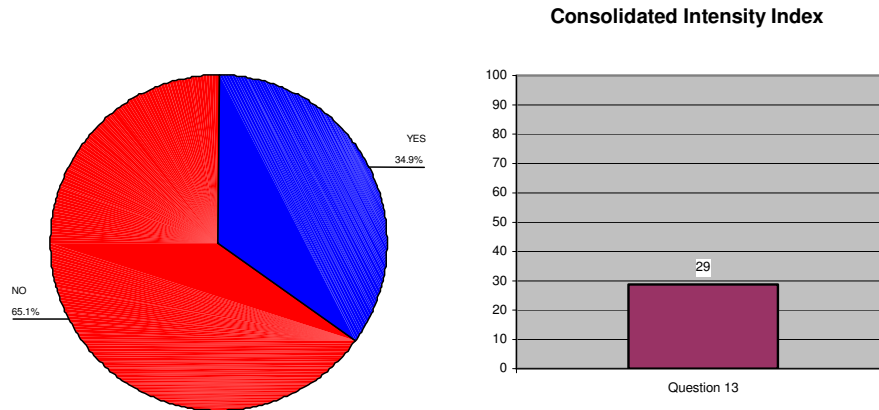
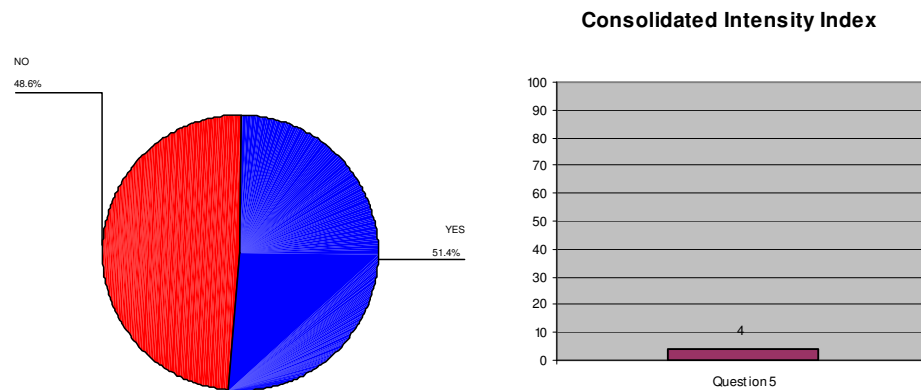


Figure 6 :

**Q.5 : Imishinga y’iterambere rusange ku rwego rw’akagari ntishoboka kubera urwikekwe ruri hagati y’abatwaga bigatuma badakorera hamwe.**

- ◆ Community development projects cannot be done at the cell level because people are too distrustful of each other to work together.



**III.2.1 Trust and openness towards others**

Mutual trust is the chief ingredient in social cohesion. It may be presumed, in assessing the responses to these questions, that trust was not completely absent before April 1994. In spite of the threats of slaughter, didn’t genocide victims stay in their homes until the final explosion? In April 1994, the “relative” trust felt by survivors was transformed into total distrust. Fear, as well as the fears of being denounced and of suffering reprisals diminished the trust felt by those who fled the country in July 1994. Distrust has since fluctuated on all sides as a function of the steps and processes related to the reintegration and recomposition of communities.

All of the protagonists in the genocide were prey to very powerful emotions: fear, hatred, anger, despair, a sense of abandonment, disappointment, shame, etc. Nine years later, time, the resilience of individuals, the succor of culture and religion, and the efforts made by the government to ensure public safety and to reconstruct the country, have mitigated the intensity of these emotions.

Does the respondent deem it reasonable to trust others at the present stage of community and national life? (Q.66)

The survey indicates that 41% of respondents think it naive to trust others, while 53% deem that such trust is possible. Trust barely carries the day with a CII of +12.

Examining responses by social category, one finds that:

- women are more distrustful than men are, with an intensity differential of 8 separating the genders;
- illiterates are more distrustful with an intensity differential of 11 separating them from literate people; and
- 18-24 year-olds, “youth” according to Rwandan criteria, are more distrustful than 25-34 year-olds. The intensity differential between the two age groups is 8.

In short, weaker groups are less trustful. They are also, as we have already seen, more inclined to demand an authoritarian system of protection.

In contrast, the survey indicates markedly greater trust among local elected officials. The intensity of their willingness to trust others is 14 points higher than the rest of the population. This difference increases as one climbs the administrative ladder. Elected officials in sectors (+15) are more trustful than their colleagues at the cell level. Moreover, among the latter, members of the public affairs executive are more trustful (+23) than ordinary elected officials.

Trust is also stronger among the wealthiest respondents: the intensity differentials are +7 and +4 for those with greater material means and for consumers of meat when compared with their respective opposing categories. Sociocultural variance is moderate. Radio owners are more trustful by 6 points. Membership in the traditional church denominations makes no difference. Muslims are more trustful (+8), while the level of trust among members of new church denominations is 10 points below the CII for this category.

The geographical variance in feelings of trust is quite significant. Trust is quite high in Gisenyi and Butare (+16), two provinces at opposite ends of the country. Trust is also high in the province of Ruhengeri (+7), which neighbors Gisenyi, and in Gikongoro and Cyangugu (+6), which neighbor Butare. The provinces where the intensity of trust is less than the overall CII are Kigali Ngali (-20), Byumba (-15) and the City of Kigali (MVK) (-12).

In summary, 40% of respondents, in particular women, illiterate persons and young adults, think that distrust is a fact of life. Half of the population (53%) indicates that it is more trustful, with the officials implementing the administrative reform leading the pack.

What influence might be attributed to the decentralization, the implementation of which had only just begun? At the present time, it's impossible to say because of a lack of information on the state of public opinion in preceding periods. Let us note that the intensity of trust among local elected representatives is double that of the population: 26 as opposed to 12. Variations in levels of trust among these two groups will be recorded in future surveys, thus providing more information on the reform's progress.

### III.2.2 Resilience

Resilience is the ability to “bounce back” on the part of individuals, communities or organizations that have been totally “transformed” by extreme trials and tribulations or experiences that nearly destroyed them. The three chief characteristics of resilience are: a strong dose of realism; the capacity to make sense of traumatic events; and the strength and creativity to “improvise” appropriate solutions with rudimentary means, either individually or collectively. A resilient community is capable of getting organized to find a solution to an unexpected problem. We shall emphasize the third characteristic of resilience, presuming that the other two aspects are implicitly present.

The proposition on the likelihood of uniting to confront adversity was formulated as a negative statement: *“In my neighborhood, people don’t spontaneously think of getting together to confront an unexpected problem.”* (Q.13)

For 32% of respondents, mutual aid doesn’t happen spontaneously; 64% think it does. The CII is +29 in favor of spontaneous mutual aid.

Thus, nearly two thirds of respondents say that mutual aid—which is an indicator of resilience in individuals and communities—does occur. However, in response to the preceding question (Q.66), only half of respondents said they could trust others. In terms of intensity, the contrast is stronger still: a CII of 12 for trust as opposed to a CII of 29 for spontaneous cooperation. Apparently, it’s possible to collectively improvise solutions in a community without there necessarily being a high level of trust within the community.

Weaker groups—youth, women and illiterate persons—are somewhat less resilient, the intensity indices of their opinions being lower by 5, 4 and 3 points than those of their respective opposing categories. Material wealth, radio ownership and religious denominations are not sources of variance in public opinion in this regard.

Local elected officials have a stronger belief in the capacity of communities to bounce back in the face of adversity. This is reflected by an intensity differential of +10 compared to ordinary citizens.

There is strong provincial variance: improvised mutual aid seems easier in Butare, Ruhengeri and Gisenyi where deviations from the Consolidated Intensity Index are +23, +14 and +12, respectively. Once again, we observe the “centers” of trust, previously identified in question Q.66. In contrast, respondents from the City of Kigali (MVK) and Kibungo are amongst the least inclined to engage in mutual aid, their CII deviations being -27 and -21, respectively.

### III.2.3 Participation in community development

The proposition in Q.5 states: *“We can’t undertake development projects in the community because distrust between neighbors is too great.”* The responses enable an assessment of whether the community is more or less united, which is a precondition of community development.

For 49% of respondents, the weak level of mutual trust blocks the execution of community development projects; 45% are of the contrary opinion. For respondents as a whole, trust is weak—as attests a CII of -4. This suggests that the community lacks sufficient cohesion and unity to carry out projects for the future.

As observed above, it is possible to rally in the face of adversity without there necessarily being mutual trust. However, with respect to community development, this doesn’t seem necessarily to be the case. It’s harder to undertake projects for the future without a minimum of mutual trust.

In Rwandan public opinion, basic trust garners an intensity index of 12, improvised mutual aid an index of 29, and community cohesion, as we've just seen, a CII of -4. Consequently, the dominant opinion seems to follow these trends:

- The level of basic trust is weak.
- The capacity for collective response in the face of adversity (which corresponds to the type of "self-confidence" that characterizes resilience) is rather strong.
- The weak level of trust within the community constitutes an obstacle to community development.

The development process, which should be endogenous to communities, seems more blocked by the lack of trust than the degree of "resilience" in communities. This indicates that greater efforts must be made to strengthen mutual trust than have been made thus far. This would be done by fostering the strengthening of a sense of community as well as by the creation of community associations and networks. The resilience of individuals and communities does not in itself guarantee community development and the flowering of voluntary associations. However such resources should be utilized to initiate dialogue on good local governance (the struggle against corruption and participation in decision-making), on acceptance in the community of all persons, without exclusions, and on fairness for the vulnerable and the disadvantaged—i.e. the three components of social harmony.

In terms of intensity of opinion regarding the likelihood of community development, women have a differential of -4, illiterate persons a differential of -8 and youth -5, when compared to their respective opposing categories. The three weakest categories have analogous reactions.

Religious affiliation influences perceptions on the potential for community development. The intensity differential between Catholics and Protestants is -5. Muslims (-4) as well believe that disunity in the community impedes community development.

Radio listeners (CII +7), respondents who eat meat (+8) and local elected officials (+9) are more convinced of community unity than their respective opposing categories.

There is strong variance between provinces. The provinces the most confident of community unity are, in the North, Gisenyi and Ruhengeri with CII deviations of +12 and +17 and, in the South, Gitarama (+31). In contrast, the provinces where communities seem the least united are Byumba and Kibungo with intensity deviations of -22 and -20 and, to a lesser extent, Umutara (-10). These three provinces became more heterogeneous following the recent integration of large numbers of refugees. As for the provinces of Ruhengeri and Gitarama, they will often appear in this survey as major centers of social cohesion.

It's possible to refine the measure of social cohesion by exploring other aspects of public opinion related to standards of conduct and to values such as altruism, social justice and reconciliation, as we shall now see.

### ***III.2.4 The importance of a reputation for honesty***

Social cohesion results largely from the efforts that each person makes to meet his or her obligations and preserve his or her reputation for reliability and honesty. One trusts a person who submits to an internalized social code of conduct out of a sense of honor and duty. Consequently, acquiring a reputation for honesty requires time: one has to prove oneself.

Three propositions enable an assessment of the importance that respondents accord to a reputation for honesty:

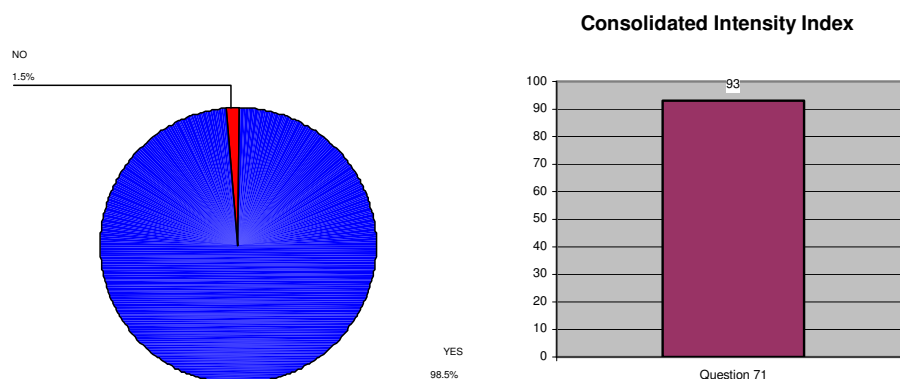
- *"It is extremely important to earn a reputation for honesty and to honor it."* (Q.71)
- *"Honesty is a deeply rooted value in Rwandan culture."* (Q.70)

- “It takes time to ‘establish one’s reputation’ and to inspire confidence in others.” (Q.72)

Figure 7 :

**Q.71 : icy’ingenzi mu mibanire n’abandi ni uguharanira kuba inyangamugayo no kubyubahiriza.**

- ◆ It is extremely important to earn a reputation for honesty and to honor it.



#### 3.2.4.1 Honesty: a prerequisite of trust

Having a reputation for honesty is an asset in social interaction (Q.71). Ninety-eight percent of respondents agree. The corresponding CII is 93. Honesty is as strong a value as public safety was shown to be above. Socioeconomic and cultural differences are not a factor regarding this opinion. The importance of earning a reputation for honesty is slightly weaker in urban areas. Thus, the City of Kigali (MVK) has a CII of 88.

#### 3.2.4.2 Cultural roots of honesty

Regarding question (Q.70), which concerns the cultural rootedness of honesty as a value in Rwandan society, 92% of respondents acknowledge that Rwandan culture is still very much alive—the corresponding CII is 79—and that it permits others to rigorously express their opinions about oneself, notably through the notions of *inyangamugayo* (integrity) and *indakemwa* (above all suspicion).

Youth are slightly less convinced of the moderating impact of culture in this regard (hence an intensity differential of -3 compared to older people). Local elected officials, who were chosen by the population on the basis of such criteria, are slightly more in agreement (+3) with the proposition than ordinary citizens are.

The provinces which more strongly acknowledge this value are Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, Kibuye and Cyangugu, with CII deviations of +6 to +10. Those supporting this proposition somewhat less are MVK, Kigali Ngali and Gikongoro with CII deviations of -5 to -10.

#### 3.2.4.3 Earning a reputation for honesty

Regarding the question on the time required to earn one’s reputation and inspire confidence (Q.72), 74% of respondents say that a reputation for honesty is not earned overnight. The Consolidated Intensity Index for this answer is 47.

No gender-based differences in opinion were observed. However, a differential of 14 points separates the youngest respondents from the eldest respondents, the latter being more conscious of the time factor. The same is true of illiterate persons and non-radio owners. Their intensity differentials are +9 and +5 in comparison with respondents from their respective opposing categories. Wealthier people, elected officials and respondents belonging to new church denominations are less concerned with the time factor. Their CII deviations are -3 or -4. In their opinion, it's possible to earn a good reputation more rapidly.

The geographical variance is quite considerable. A good reputation is harder to acquire in Kibuye (CII +16), Gitarama (+15), Cyangugu (+10), Kibungo and MVK (+7). On the other hand, it seems possible to do so more rapidly in Kigali Ngali (-17), Gisenyi (-16), Byumba and Umutara (-6).

Although respondents from the capital (MVK) grant less importance to a reputation for honesty and see it as less strongly rooted in Rwandan culture, they nevertheless think that it takes time to earn such a reputation. In four provinces, Gitarama, Kibuye, Cyangugu and Kibungo, respondents attach more importance to personal reputations, value the roots in Rwandan culture of this concern, and think that it takes time to earn one's reputation. It is difficult to say why the people of Gisenyi, Byumba, Kigali Ngali and Umutara are more willing to presume honesty in others.

### 3.2.5 *Sense of community*

The propositions on social cohesion make it possible to define a few indicators of the "sense of community," taking into account the present state of the processes related to decentralization and the promotion of community development. For the purposes of analysis, there are a number of approaches to examining the community, for example: as an environment where voluntary associations and networks based on sharing of resources and solidarity are created to promote particular interests and/or communities; or as an environment that permits direct participation in local public institutions. We shall examine the community in accordance with the latter approach.

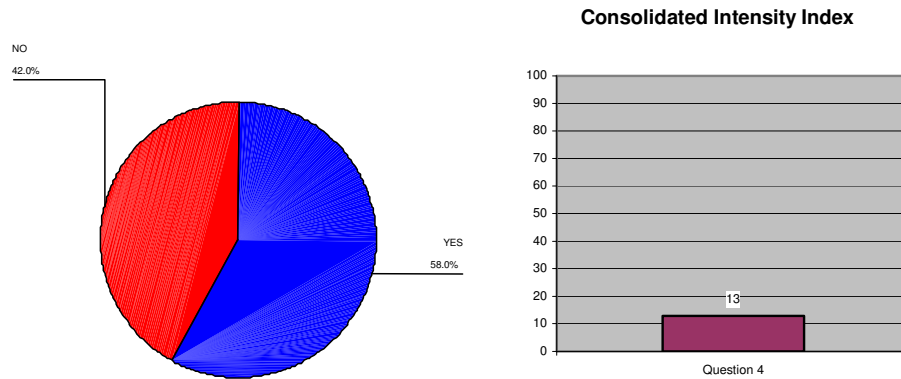
Three propositions enable us to effect such an analysis of the community (albeit in an incomplete fashion, obviously):

- *"The family is solely responsible for the maintenance and conservation of its fields; the local administration has no say in the matter."* (Q.4)  
The family manages the land and the environment as if they were private property, without outside interference.

**Figure 8 :**

**Q.4: Buri muryango niwo wonyine ushinzwe gutunganya imirima yawo no gufata neza ubutaka (kurwanyana), abatowe mu kagari nta jambo babifitemo.**

- ◆ Only the family is responsible for the maintenance of its fields and the conservation of the ground (erosion); the elected representatives do not have any say on the subject.

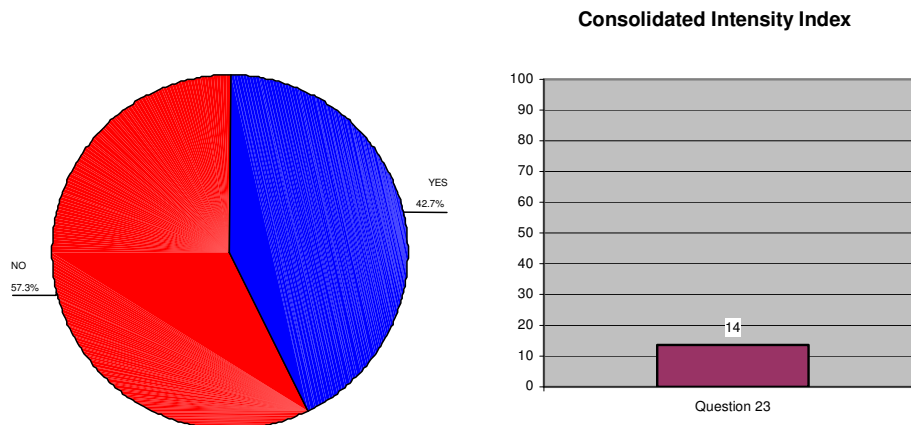


- *“Without the authoritarian intervention of the sector authorities, nothing would get done in the community.” (Q.23)*  
The community practically doesn’t exist. People defer to the local “authority.”

Figure 9 :

**Q.23 : Umuhuzabikorwa adashyize agahato ku bantu, ntacyakorwa ku murenge.**

- ◆ If the coordinator does not force people to act, nothing will be done in the sector.

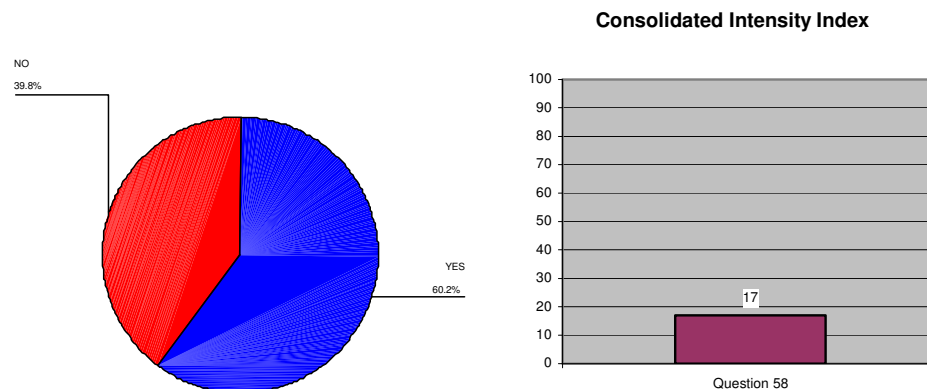


- *“If everyone took care of their own family’s business and left decisions concerning the community to the State, things would go better.” (Q.58)*  
The community and its representatives have little influence in relation to the State.

Figure 10 :

**Q.58 : Buri wese yitaye kubikorwa bwite by’umuryango we akarekera ibisigaye Leta ibintu byagenda neza kurushaho.**

- ◆ If every person deals with his own family affairs and leaves the decisions that effect the community to the government of Kigali, that will be better.



### 3.2.5.1 Retreat into the family

*“The family is solely responsible for the maintenance and conservation of its fields; the local administration has no say in the matter.” (Q.4)*

According to over 54% of respondents, the family is solely responsible for the land it farms. In contrast, 41% think that local elected officials have a say in the matter. The CII is 13 and leans towards withdrawal into private life. A similar ratio (roughly 50/40) was observed regarding distrust of others and regarding doubts on community development projects (Q.66) and (Q.5).

Women, youth and illiterate persons withdraw more into the family and have less of a community spirit, a fact attested to by intensity differentials of +6, +7 and +14, when compared with their respective opposing categories. In contrast, the wealthiest families (those who have beds and eat meat regularly) are less favorable towards autarky than poor families. The resulting intensity differentials are -9 and -10.

Religious affiliation is also a factor in public opinion: compared to the overall CII, respondents belonging to new Christian denominations withdraw more into family life (+8) and are less open to directives from the local administration. Muslims, on the other hand, are less withdrawn and more open (-9) to such directives.

Local elected officials and radio listeners are markedly more open to directives from the local administration, with intensity differentials of -17 and -10 in comparison with their respective opposing categories. Among elected officials, those at the cell level are more open to such directives than those at the sector level; an 8-point intensity differential separates the two groups.

There is strong geographical variance from the overall CII. The provinces that are more willing to accept intervention external to the family in land-use management are Gisenyi (-24) and Gitarama (-21). The provinces least open in this regard are Kibungo (+30), Umutara (+27) and Byumba (+13).

The legal and administrative aspects of land-use management will be the subject of the next opinion survey.

### 3.2.5.2 Power of the local authority

*“Without the authoritarian intervention of the sector authorities, nothing would get done in the community.” (Q.23)*

The survey indicates that 41% of respondents are of the opinion that nothing is done in the community unless the authorities force people to act. In contrast, 55% say that people can act on



their own initiative in favor of the common good. The CII is 14 and leans in favor of voluntary participation in community activities. The CII of the response to question Q.4 was 13 and indicated the tendency of families to withdraw into their own private affairs (see the preceding point), hence a social cohesion differential of 27. It would seem then that the community is stronger in the face of local authorities than it is in relation to the family.

Women, youth under 25 and illiterate persons think that the local authorities must intervene to ensure that people work together. In this, their intensity differentials go from -9 to -11 when compared with their respective opposing categories. Muslims (-7) also agree with such intervention.

Wealthier respondents (+3) and those who are frequent radio listeners (+4) are, in contrast, of the opinion that recourse to the authorities is unnecessary. Likewise, local elected officials (+14) think that the community is capable of acting on its own initiative. Members of sector councils are even more convinced of this—their intensity differential when compared with other elected officials is +14.

Variance between the provinces is relatively slight. In Butare, Gikongoro, Kigali Ngali, Ruhengeri and Gisenyi a strong sense of community exists. In these provinces the community is more able to do without the intervention of the authorities, as their respective CII deviations of +6, +4, +5, +5 and +4 attest. The provinces where the community seems less able to organize autonomously are Kibuye, Cyangugu and Kibungo, with intensity deviations of -7 to -9.

### 3.2.5.3 *The State's power over the community*

*“If everyone took care of their own family's affairs and left decisions concerning the community to the State, things would go better.” (Q.58)*

According to 57% of respondents, the State would be more efficient in managing local affairs; 38% think the converse. The resulting CII of 17 indicates that the role of the community is undervalued.

In comparison with their respective opposing categories, women (+4), and, above all, illiterate persons (+14) and non-radio owners (+10) more strongly believe that the State would better manage local affairs. Youth are a little less certain of this (-3), which, for once, distinguishes them from women and illiterate persons.

On the other hand, in comparison with respondents of more humble circumstances, wealthier respondents, those owning a mattress (-12) and those who eat meat more frequently (-19), think that local affairs can be well managed without State involvement. Muslims agree (-8). A differential of 5 points separates Protestants from Catholics, with the latter seeing the State play a greater role in the management of local affairs.

Local elected officials and better-informed respondents (-11 and -10, respectively) favor greater autonomy for the community in the management of its own affairs.

Public opinion varies appreciably from province to province. The provinces that still desire State intervention in community affairs are Kibungo and Umutara (CII +17), Byumba (+8), Gikongoro (+7), Kigali Ngali (+8) and Butare (+4). The provinces that desire such intervention less are Gitarama (-27), the City of Kigali, i.e. MVK, (-21) and Gisenyi (-15).

Two remarks may be made. The three indices of community cohesion and autonomy in relation to, respectively, the family (-13), the local authorities (+14) and the State (-17) are all very weak. The family, the State and, to a lesser extent, the local government seem to be markedly stronger

institutions than the community. However, the community is stronger in relation to the local authorities than it is in relation to the family or the State.

If one compares the geographical pattern of opinions on personal trust (openness towards others, mutual aid and cooperation) with that of community autonomy in relation to the family, the local authorities or the State, one observes a strong correlation between these two groups of variables. The provinces of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri (in the North) and of Butare and Gitarama (in the South) are more “trustful” and have a greater belief in community autonomy. The City of Kigali (MVK) and the provinces of Byumba, Kibungo, Kigali Ngali and Umutara are more “distrustful” and have a lesser sense of community.

### 3.2.6 Trust in youth

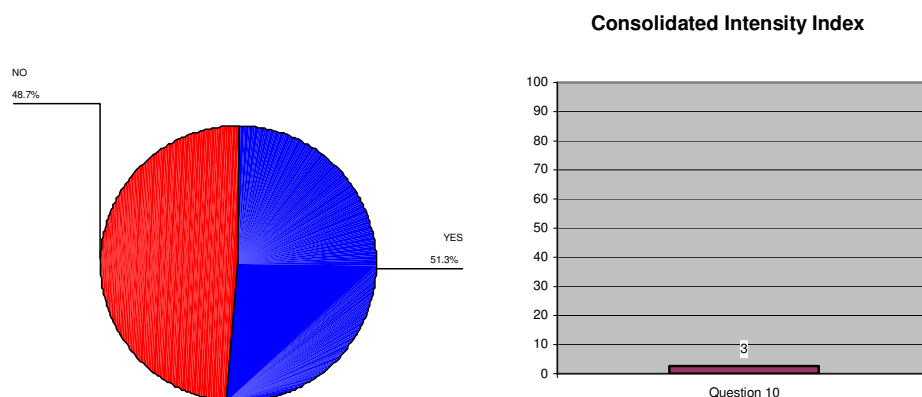
Social cohesion may also be inferred from the encouragement given to youth participation in community life:

“Can youth be responsible participants in public affairs through their own youth committee and as members of cell executive committees?” (Q.10)

Figure 11 :

#### Q.10 : Urubwiruko ntirufite ubushobozi buhagije kuburyo rwagira komite y’inzezo zarwo (SOJ) no kugira umwanya muri komite y’akagari.

- ◆ Young people are not responsible enough to have their own young people committee (SOJ) and to have a seat in the cell committee.



According to 45% of respondents, youth are not qualified to participate in the community decision-making process; 47% are of the opposite opinion. The resulting CII of 3 leans towards confidence in youth, albeit very weakly so. In conclusion, public opinion isn’t really in favor of encouraging youth participation in community bodies.

Illiterate persons are more distrustful of youth participation than literate persons are (the intensity differential is -9). The variables of gender, age, radio ownership and material well-being have no influence here. Muslims (-7) are a little less trustful than the practitioners of other religions are. On the other hand, local elected officials (+10) tend to have more trust in youth. Public opinion is thus articulated around the opposing positions taken by illiterate persons and local elected officials.

Regional variance is very strong. The provinces of Gitarama, Butare, Cyangugu, Kibuye and Gikongoro, with CII deviations of +29, +20, +17, +20 and +8, respectively, have more trust in youth than the provinces of Ruhengeri, MVK, Byumba and Gisenyi, where one observes CII deviations of -24, -21, -15 and -12, respectively.

Overall, the southern provinces seem more favorably disposed towards youth. The capital and the northern provinces are markedly less so. Demographic pressure and land issues, which are particularly acute in the northern provinces, may be factors behind the greater distrust of youth in these areas. As for the capital, respondents there may be fearful of the massive arrival of youth unable to find employment. They are perhaps also distrustful of youth, judged as being too free and too irresponsible in the city environment. The lack of trust in youth may more generally be attributed to a culturally large generation gap, or to a fragilization of communities induced by the rise of youth.

### 3.2.7 *Sociocultural life: a factor of social cohesion*

One variable often considered a good indicator of social cohesion is the density of sociocultural associations. These enable their members to widen their networks of social interaction and to create bonds via horizontal solidarity with other individuals who live in the same conditions and have the same interests. In fact, the reform in governance seeks to encourage horizontal networking between individuals in local associations as an alternative to clientelism and top-down dependency.

Unfortunately, true associations are rather rare in Rwanda. They've been discredited since 1994 because they were the tools of a pernicious leadership who encouraged the execution of the genocide. For want of other examples, the proposition on horizontal solidarity was formulated as follows: *“Do associations of a cultural nature—choir groups and prayer groups—strengthen trust among members and do they encourage participation in the local community’s activities?”* (Q.29)

Eighty-seven percent of respondents answered in the affirmative. The CII of this opinion is 70. The survey found no differences due to gender, age or literacy. As for the religious affiliation variable, Protestants (+5) attach markedly more value to sociocultural associations than Muslims (-16). Better off people (-10) and frequent radio listeners (-4) value the role of associations of this type less than people from the opposing categories. As for local elected officials (-2), on this issue they differ little from the population as a whole.

There is moderate geographic variance. In the capital, people attach practically no value to voluntary associations, hence a CII deviation of -30. The provinces most receptive to sociocultural associations are Gitarama (+14), Butare (+11), Gikongoro (+8), Kibuye (+7) and Ruhengeri (+3). The least receptive provinces are Byumba (-5), Kibungo (-5) and Umutara (-3).

Provinces with a strong sense of community seem to attach greater value to sociocultural associations, as do Protestants.

### 3.2.8 *Reconciliation*

The feelings of the protagonists called on to participate in *Gacaca* were explored during a preceding survey. In the present survey, the focus is on measuring the impact of the return of freed prisoners to their communities. Is there apprehension regarding the difficulties posed by cohabitation and, above all, do respondents think that repentance will be credible in the eyes of the victims? Two questions were asked on this issue, with the second being more direct than the first:

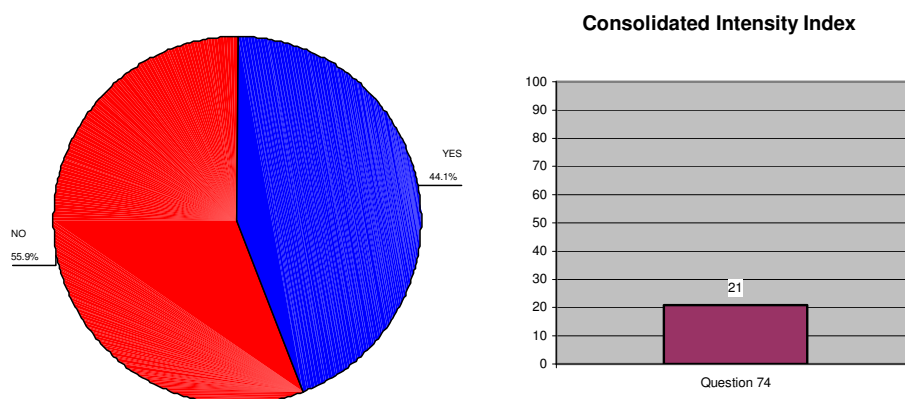
- *“Will the victims of the genocide and the prisoners who have acknowledged their guilt be able to live together ‘in harmony?’ ”* (Q.75)

- “Can the victims of the genocide, without being naive, trust those who confessed their crimes against them?” (Q.74)

Figure 12 :

**Q.74 : Abacitse ku icumu baaba badashishoza bagiriye icyizere abagororwa bireze bakemera icyaha.**

- ◆ Survivors would be naive to trust the prisoners who confessed.



3.2.8.1 *Cohabitation of the protagonists of Gacaca*

As to whether genocide survivors and repentant perpetrators who have returned to the community can live together “in harmony” (Q.75), the survey found that 78% of respondents are optimistic. The corresponding CII is 64.

Women (-6) are a little less optimistic than men are. They were also more skeptical about reconciliation in the survey on *Gacaca*. There’s no variance due to literacy, age, religious affiliation, radio ownership or material well-being. Local elected representatives, particularly those from the sector level, are a little more optimistic (+5) than ordinary citizens.

The geographic variance in public opinion is slightly more pronounced. The most optimistic provinces are Ruhengeri (CII +14), Kibuye (+12), Cyangugu (+10), Kibungo and Gitarama (both +5). Is it possible that the memory of the genocide has faded in these provinces? In contrast, the inhabitants of Butare (-14) and the capital, MVK (-10) have less confidence in the likelihood of harmonious cohabitation.

3.2.8.2 *Credibility of the repentant*

Genocide victims will have to live alongside their repentant oppressors. Will they do so with “full confidence?” Will the confessions, the repentance and the requests for forgiveness by the guilty be credible in the eyes of the victims? The question was formulated as follows: “Can the victims of the genocide, without being naive, trust those who confessed their crimes against them?” (Q.74)

This proposition elicited the most undecided opinions by far: 20% of women and 16% of men were undecided. Public opinion finds it difficult to foresee the outcome of the most important issue bearing on cohesion in communities: reconciliation between the protagonists of the genocide. Over half of respondents (53%) think that the repentant will be credible in the eyes of the victims; according to 29%, they won’t be. If one combines the undecided with the doubters,

then the split is equal. On the other hand, with a CII of 20, public opinion leans towards trust. Given the circumstances, that's hardly negligible.

Women think, with an intensity differential of 4 points compared to men, that survivors would be naive to trust the repentant. Age and material well-being don't cause opinions to vary on this issue. In contrast, radio owners (+3), Protestants (+5), literate persons (+8) and, especially, local elected officials (+10) are more optimistic than the respondents from the respective opposing categories.

There's very pronounced geographic variance. The provinces that believe more strongly that the repentant will be credible in the eyes of their victims are Ruhengeri (CII +24), Gisenyi (+23) and, to a lesser extent, Umutara (+9), Kibuye (+8) and Cyangugu (+6). Let us mention in passing that Gisenyi and Ruhengeri are also the provinces whose inhabitants least wish that reference be made to the genocide in the Constitution and in schools, as we shall see below. The least optimistic provinces regarding the reestablishment of ties of trust between the repentant and victims are MVK (-30), Byumba (-21), Kigali Ngali (-16) and Butare (-7).

Let us note that the survey shows a 44 point intensity differential ( $Q.75 = 64$ ;  $Q.25 = 20$ ) between the hope that the protagonists of *Gacaca* will live side by side in harmony and the likelihood of real ties of trust between victims and their repentant oppressors.

#### **IV. CONSENSUS VALUES UNDERLYING GOVERNANCE REFORM AND DECENTRALIZATION**

One observes in the present survey, as with the survey on *Gacaca*, that public opinion is strongly supportive of the reforms proposed by the government. This is hardly surprising. Councils and "expanded executive committees" are already well established in each unit of the country's administrative structure. Public information meetings are frequently held by local elected officials, as well as by MINALOC officials and the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission.

The strong consensus reaction elicited by the reform on governance is thus understandable in the context of unanimity presently prevailing in Rwanda. This consensus is founded on:

- the reform's fundamental objectives: national unity, democratization, individual freedoms and universal access to public office;
- objectives specifically related to the genocide: freedom of action for political parties and associations, commemoration of the genocide and preferential access to public office for women;
- the objectives of economic and social development;
- the objectives of promoting the development of civil society and local communities; and
- the implementation of the reform in practical terms.

##### **IV.1 The reform's fundamental objectives: national unity, democratization, individual freedoms and universal access to public office**

Public opinion is overwhelmingly supportive of the grand objectives of the decentralization and democratization. The responses to the following questions bear this out:

- 1- For 98% of respondents, national unity is the reform's final objective. The CII in support of this opinion is 94 (Q.48).
- 2- For 97% of respondents, democracy is also a fundamental objective of the reform. The corresponding CII is 92 (Q.73).

- 3- Individual liberties are acknowledged as an aim of the reform by 98% of respondents. The corresponding CII is 92 (Q.69).
- 4- According to 96% of respondents, the reform must also guarantee universal access to public office. The corresponding CII is 91 (Q.61).

#### **IV.2 Objectives specifically related to the genocide: freedom of action for political parties and associations, commemoration of the genocide and preferential access to public office for women**

- 1- The government's proposals, included in the Constitution draft, on closely supervising political parties by submitting them to the scrutiny of the Senate and a forum of parties are massively supported by public opinion, with 96% of respondents in favor and a CII of 90 (Q.62).
- 2- Furthermore, 91% of respondents accept the government's proposal to restrict the freedom of association to prevent divisions prejudicial to the country's unity. The corresponding CII is 82 (Q.50).
- 3- The government's proposals to enshrine remembrance of the genocide in the Constitution (Q.59) and to make it a subject of civic education in the schools (Q.64) are accepted by 87-88% of the population, with a CII of 75. (The provinces of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri stand out with a deviation in intensity of -15.)
- 4- Affirmative action in favor of women's participation in the elective bodies of local structures, districts and the Parliament is also overwhelmingly supported by public opinion with:
  - a 94% affirmative response rate and a CII of 83 with respect to local structures, i.e. the sectors and cells (Q.9); and
  - an 89% affirmative response rate and a 74 of CII with respect to higher level structures (Q.42).

#### **IV.3 Objectives of economic and social development**

Decentralization, still a very new process, has yet to have much impact on economic and social development. Nonetheless, public opinion is supportive and has high expectations. Thus:

- 1- 93% of respondents recognize, with a CII of 82, that the population now discusses development initiatives at the grassroots level in deliberative assemblies (Q.12).
- 2- 94% of respondents agree with modernizing agriculture (one of the reform's major objectives), i.e. increasing production and promoting local transformation of agricultural products. The corresponding CII is 85 (Q.14).
- 3- Public opinion hopes that the decentralized development funds will stimulate income generating activities (Q.49) and finance economic investment projects (Q.30). These two propositions elicit positive reactions from 96% and 94% of respondents, respectively. Their CIIs are 87 and 86. The inhabitants of the capital, however, are less optimistic (-12 and -13, respectively) on these points.
- 4- Public opinion thinks that decentralization offers more guarantees of establishing elementary schools, as attest the 90% positive response rate and the CII of 79 (Q.40). The new province of Umutara is counting greatly on it (+15). MVK, however, is more doubtful (-18).
- 5- Public opinion also thinks that the decentralization will improve basic health care services (Q.47). The positive response rate is 95% and the CII is 87.

#### **IV.4 Promoting the development of civil society and local communities**

1) Of course the scope of civil society (NGOs and groups arising from the community) extends beyond economic and social development. However, as civil society is not highly developed in

Rwanda, with the exception of its religious sector component, this survey examines it only in terms of its potential participation in the decentralized management of development funds.

Two questions were asked:

*“Will the decentralization bring NGOs closer to the public?”* (Q.46)

*“Do parents’ groups ‘own’ their schools?”* (Q.25)

According to 92% of respondents, decentralization may bring NGOs closer to the grassroots. The CII is 83. Elected officials (+4) are more optimistic in this regard than ordinary citizens.

Moreover, according to 94% of respondents, with a CII of 81, users, in this case parents, have “ownership rights” over public service institutions (Q.25), just the same as the other institutional investors who financed them. Support is slightly weaker in the capital and Ruhengeri (-7) and stronger in Gitarama (+10) and Butare (+4). This parallels the polarization identified regarding trust in youth; the capital and Ruhengeri are on one side, and Gitarama and Butare on the other.

2) Decentralization of public and social services towards the sector administrative level, considered a center of community life, is presently one of the most debated objectives of the reform. Four propositions enable us to measure the vigor of community life at the sector administrative level:

- *“Do the inhabitants of a sector have something in common?”* (Q.15)
- *“Should they build a community office?”* (Q.17)
- *“Should civil status documents be registered in the sector?”* (Q.18)
- *“Should the sector be the seat of a permanent conflict mediation committee?”* (Q.20)

2.1) It appears obvious that the inhabitants of a sector believe that they constitute a small community as 95% of respondents answer yes to the first question above, with a CII of 84.

2.2) Sector offices are desired by 85% of the population, with a CII of 67. However, public opinion varies considerably from province to province. People in Cyangugu (-16), Gisenyi (-15), Ruhengeri (-9) and Kibuye (-5) in the West are less supportive of the idea of instituting sector offices. Respondents in Umutara (+12) and Kibungo (+9) in the East, along with those of Gitarama (+9), Butare (+6), and Gikongoro (+5) in the Southeast, are more supportive of the idea.

2.3) The administrative decentralization of civil status registries to the sector level is keenly desired by 94% of the population, with a CII of 90. This opinion is stronger still in Gitarama and Kibuye, which have CII deviations of +7 and +6, respectively. Only the capital (-12) is more reticent.

2.4) Ninety-five percent of the population desire permanent conflict mediation committees in the sectors. The corresponding CII is 88. Two provinces are less favorable to this kind of committee: Gisenyi and MVK with deviations in intensity of -15 and -9, respectively.

#### **IV.5 Implementation of the reform in practical terms**

The new decentralized institutions and their operating rules are very widely accepted by the population:

- 97% of respondents, with a CII of 92, recognize that the elections in the sectors and districts were free and fair, and conducted without interference (Q.16).
- 90% of respondents, with a CII of 76, recognize that there was adequate information on decentralization (Q.51). The inhabitants of MVK (-10) are less persuaded that this was so.
- 97% of respondents, with a CII of 90, recognize that authoritarianism must be rolled back to encourage public participation (Q.57).

The inhabitants of MVK (-8) are less persuaded that this is the case.

- 93% of respondents, with a CII of 82, recognize that one can now speak his or her mind (Q.33) and discuss and decide on development initiatives (Q.12) in community meetings. The inhabitants of MVK are more doubtful (-6 and -8).
- 91% of respondents, with a CII of 80, recognize that the committee members in the cells have acquired experience since the last elections (Q.11). The inhabitants of MVK (-8) are more doubtful.
- 94% of respondents, with a CII of 83, recognize that committee members prepare sector meetings together (Q.11).
- 86% of respondents, with a CII of 70, recognize that information on the dates and agendas of sector council meetings is well-publicized (Q.22). The people of Butare, Gikongoro and Byumba say they are better informed (+13, +11 and +10, respectively). In contrast, the residents of MVK, Kibuye and Cyangugu don't follow the meetings as closely (-12, -13 and -16, respectively).
- 94% of respondents, with a CII of 84, recognize that the addition of four vice-mayors (Q.37) allows the executive to better serve all categories of the population. Furthermore, 91% of respondents believe that the executive committee and the district council have a good working relationship (Q.44). The CII is 84.
- 87% of respondents, with a CII of 73, recognize that youth make decisions, alongside their elders, on income generating activities at the cell level (Q.8). People in Kibuye more strongly agree (+7) and those of Gisenyi less strongly agree (-6).
- 89% of respondents, with a CII of 79, recognize that demobilized soldiers are reintegrating into community life without difficulty (Q.36). It seems that the reintegration of demobilized soldiers is most difficult in Gikongoro (-9), MVK (-9) and Gisenyi (-4). This process seems easier in Umutara and Kibuye (+7).
- 93% of respondents, with a CII of 84, recognize that taxes should be progressively increased according to taxpayers' incomes (Q.32). The provinces most in favor of progressive taxation are Gitarama and Umutara (+7), along with Kibungo, Butare, Kibuye and Kigali Ngali (+4 to +5). On the other hand, the people of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri are less in favor of progressive taxation (-11). This is also true of Gikongoro (-8).
- 89% of respondents, with a CII of 76, recognize that a part of local taxation should serve to assist vulnerable persons (Q.19). People in Gitarama and Kibungo more strongly agree (+5). The people of MVK (-8) less strongly agree. This is also true of Kigali Ngali and Gikongoro (-4).

There is no doubt that, overall, public opinion accepts the main objectives of the new model of governance: promotion of national unity, democratization, recognition of individual liberties and universal access to public office. Public opinion also supports the pursuit of specific objectives arising from lessons drawn from the genocide: supervision of political parties and associations, commemoration of the genocide, and wide and immediate access to public office for women. The objectives of economic and social development: modernization of agriculture, decentralization of development funds, local planning and management of public services also count as priorities acknowledged by the population. Public opinion supports communities getting organized at the sector level to participating in development and the management of public affairs. Finally, public opinion believes that the reform is going well so far.

Taken together, the Consolidated Intensity Index of these opinions enjoying strong consensus is 80. Youth (at 76) and local elected officials (at 77) have slightly lower average indices, which, however, is not the case for women. In this chorus of approval, Umutara, Gitarama, Butare, Kibungo and Kibuye stand out with their slightly stronger support for national policies. Their CII deviations are + 4 for Umutara, +3 for Gitarama and +2 for Butare, Kibungo and Kibuye. Public opinion is more critical in MVK (-8), Gisenyi (-3) and Cyangugu (-3).



## V. ASPECTS OF REFORM STILL LACKING CONSENSUS IN PUBLIC OPINION

As we have just seen the new model of decentralized governance is widely accepted by the population. However, divergences appear in public opinion regarding:

- decentralization's impact at the "cell" level;
- women's place in associations where their presence has not yet been made legally mandatory;
- the relevance of "development plans," the main result, after all, of deliberations in all councils and committees;
- the availability of development technicians in the districts;
- the degree of real autonomy enjoyed by districts in relation to the provincial level;
- the presence of political parties in the sectors; and
- the Parliament's authority over the institution of the Presidency.

### V.1 Impact of decentralization at the "cell" level

Although public opinion keenly wishes to see decentralization take place at the sector level, it is more ambivalent regarding its effects at the cell level. Let us recall that in the previous administrative structure, power was concentrated in the hands of a leader appointed by the sector coordinator, who was himself appointed by the commune burgomaster. Since March 1999, the cell coordinator belongs to a 10 member executive committee, which is responsible for administrative affairs and development at this level. The members of this committee are directly accountable for their administration to the community that elected them.

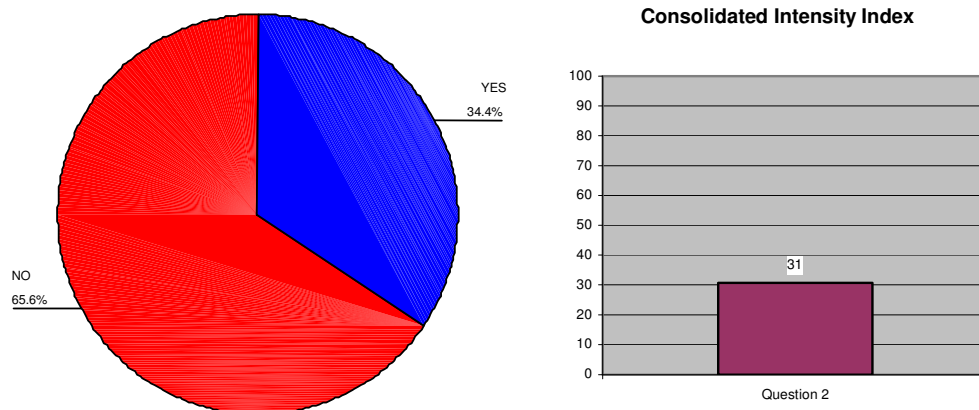
Two questions allowed public opinion to pass judgment on the pertinence of the cell level committees and the effectiveness of the decentralization both horizontally (from the leader to the members of his committee) and vertically (from the sector towards the cell). The two questions were:

- *"Would the cell coordinator be more effective without a cell executive committee?"* (Q.2)
- *"Is the cell coordinator more accountable to the sector coordinator than to his executive cell committee?"* (Q.3)

Figure 13 :

**Q.2 : Umuhuzabikorwa w'akagari yarushaho gukemura neza ibibazo by'akagari nta komite y'akagari.**

- ◆ The person in charge of the cell would solve the cell's problems better without the cell committee.



1) As for the first question, the survey shows that 30% of respondents think that the cell coordinator would resolve problems more effectively if he were the sole decision-maker. In contrast, two-thirds (64%) accord some credibility to the cell committee. The CII is 31 in favor of the cell committee. This is quite some distance from the average CII of 80 garnered by the consensus values noted above. It would seem that the cell executive committee has yet to contribute much to administration at the cell level.

The socioeconomic categories that accord the least credibility to the cell committees are those previously classified as “weaker”: women, with an intensity differential of -10 compared to men; illiterate persons, with a differential of -26 compared to literate people; people who don’t follow the news on the radio, with a differential of -13 compared to radio owners; and youth under 25, with a differential of -11 compared to 25-45 year-olds. The less wealthy—those who don’t have a bed/mattress (-17) and those who haven’t eaten meat recently (-11)—also think that the cell committees are ineffective. Those who believe themselves among the poorest are also more doubtful (-10) of the effectiveness of the cell executive committees.

In contrast, local elected officials (+24) are favorable to cell committees than ordinary citizens. Members of the new denominations (+10) are more convinced of the pertinence of the cell committees than Catholics and Muslims.

Public opinion is rather strongly split from province to province regarding the effectiveness of the neighborhood (i.e. cell) executive committees. The capital is close to the CII, but three provinces are markedly below the CII, while seven provinces are above it. The provinces that least believe in the effectiveness of the cell committees are Byumba (-25), Kigali Ngali (-18), Ruhengeri (-18) and Kibungo (-4). Those that do believe in their effectiveness are Gitarama (+20), Umutara (+12), Cyangugu (+11), Kibuye (+9), Butare (+8), Gikongoro (+7) and Gisenyi (+4).

On this question, the province of Ruhengeri (more skeptical of the effectiveness of the cell committees) differs from the province of Gisenyi, in the northwest. Likewise, Kibungo is less persuaded of the effectiveness of the cell committees than the province of Umutara, in the East. The central southwestern provinces (Gitarama, Butare, Gikongoro, Cyangugu and Kibuye), on the one hand, and the provinces of Byumba, Ruhengeri and Kigali Ngali, on the other, have opposing attitudes: the former group favors a more collegial attitude, while the latter group favors concentrating authority in a single official.

2) In response to the second question (Q.3), 43% of respondents say that the sector coordinator’s authority outweighs that of the cell committee; 49% affirm the opposite. The CII is 5 in favor of those recognizing the relevance of the cell committee. In short, public opinion is

divided and doesn't strongly believe that the cell committee—and by extension the entire cell—counts for much in relation to the authority of the sector. The cell committee's authority (CII = 31) evaporates when faced with that of the higher level (CII = 5). In all likelihood, the cell has yet to become the hands on school for democracy and participation it was intended to be.

Women believe slightly less in the cell's autonomy than men do, with an intensity differential of -6. The same holds for, illiterates (-23) compared to the better educated, the less well-informed (-13) compared to radio owners, and youth under 25 (-8) compared to 25-45 year-olds. This is also the case of poorer respondents, i.e. those not owning a bed/mattress (-23) and for those who haven't eaten meat recently (-15). In contrast, elected officials (+19) recognize the cell committee's authority more than ordinary citizens do. Finally, the followers of the new denominations (+8) accord greater credibility to the cell committee and to decentralization than the faithful of other religions.

The provincial variance in public opinion is also significant and completely parallels that of the preceding question. The provinces of Ruhengeri (CII -21), Byumba (-17) and Kigali Ngali (-10) believe less in the autonomy of the cell committees. On the other hand, the provinces of Kibuye (+17), Umutara (+16), Cyangugu (+12), and, to a lesser extent, Butare and Gitarama (+6) ascertain a greater impact of decentralization and democratization at the local level.

It would seem then that the vertical and horizontal decentralization of authority has yet to have an impact in the neighborhoods, where democracy was to be learned. A higher level of general education is needed, as is better information, more consultation at this level, and, above all, a profound change in mentalities if participatory democracy is to take root and transform individuals into watchful and responsible citizens. Particular efforts might be devoted to understanding the community political cultures of provinces that stand out in this regard.

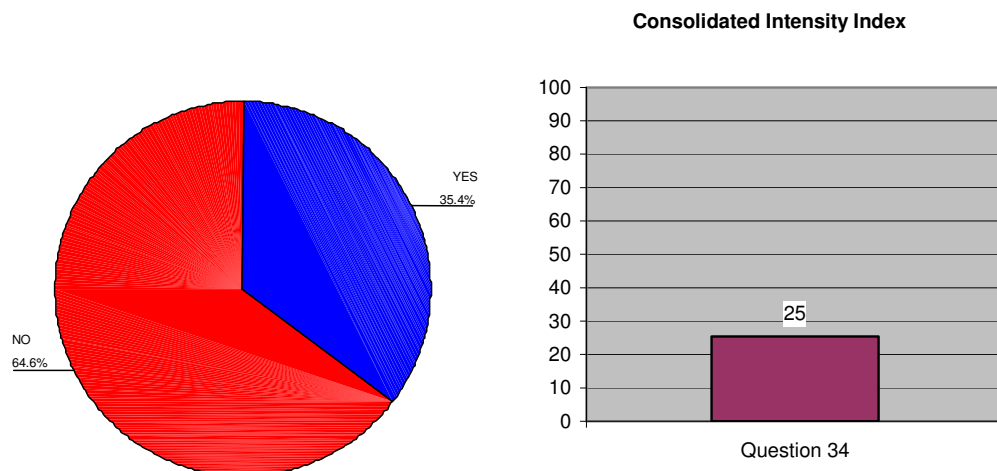
## V.2 Women's role in community life

As we saw above, the population supports according a major percentage of seats to women in the new parliament. Is this also true for political life in the community? Is it accepted that women come out of homes and play active roles in associations? Does the population acknowledge, without being instructed by governmental directives, that women, who are often more numerous than men, have their place in school management committees and in community services and development institutions? The question was formulated in such a way as to determine whether the management of community institutions concerned women as much as it does men (Q.34).

Figure 14 :

**Q.34 : Abari n'abategarugori ntibarebwa n'imicungire y'amashuri n'ibindi bikorwa by'amajyambere rusange nk'abagabo.**

- ◆ Women are less concerned than men about the management of schools and other community development institutions.



The responses indicate that 34% of respondents think that the management of these institutions does not really concern women; 62% say, on the contrary, that it concerns women as much as men. The corresponding CII is favorable to women's participation, but only equals 25 points.

Men and women share the same opinions on this subject, which is rather remarkable. However, illiterate persons (-17) are more inclined to think that women do not have a place in community institutions. Those who are less well-informed by radio (-10) express the same opinion. Curiously, youth under 25 also think that women should participate less in community life, with a differential of -9 compared to 25-45 year-olds. The poorest people, those without a bed/mattress (-16) and those who haven't eaten meat recently (-11), are also resistant to the idea of women's participation in the management of community institutions.

In contrast, elected officials (+24) are far more in favor than ordinary citizens. Elected officials in the sectors, who, in theory, are responsible for elementary schools, are more in favor than elected officials at the cell level (i.e. neighborhoods) by an intensity differential of +15. The followers of new religious denominations (+8) are also more open to women's participation than respondents of other religions.

All in all, the doors to community level institutions are not as open to women as the doors of local elective bodies. Let us take another look at questions Q.42 and Q.9 (see section 4.2 above). Eighty-nine percent of respondents are favorable (with a CII of 74) to women having strong representation in the Parliament and the district councils. Moreover, 94% (with a CII of 83) support a strong female presence in sector councils and cell executive committees. In both cases, public opinion entirely endorses the government's "affirmative action" policy. With respect to community institutions, reservations are expressed in certain categories of respondents without, however, overturning the general tendency.

Provincial variance regarding gender equality at the community level is quite considerable. The most liberal provinces are Butare (CII +23) and Gikongoro (+15) in the South, as well as Umutara (+12) in the northeast. The most traditionalist provinces regarding women's participation in community services institutions are Byumba (-22), Cyangugu (-9), Ruhengeri (-10) and MVK (-7). It's surprising to observe that the inhabitants of the national capital are less open to women's participation than certain rural provinces. It's true that the city/country boundary is not well-defined in Rwanda and that an urban culture is barely beginning to emerge in Kigali.

To be concise, the poorest and weakest social categories—except for women this time—seem less disposed to let women leave their homes and fields to participate in community affairs. Nobody

sees any problem with wealthier women being elected at higher levels. However, it is less accepted that other women get involved in schools, health clinics, etc.

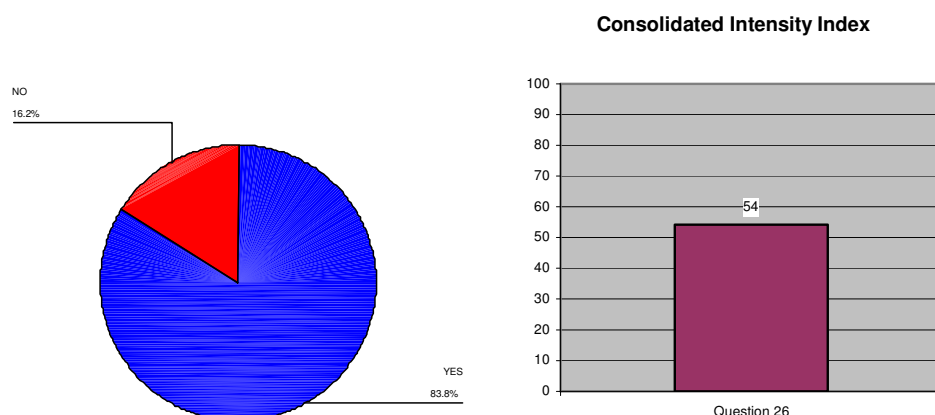
### V.3 Participation of vulnerable persons

One of the reform's objectives is to give a voice to the vulnerable persons in the community. The traumatic experiences they've been through and the precariousness of their living conditions inhibit their participation in the process of elaborating the projects now coming on line. Do respondents think that enough attention is paid to their needs and that they are sufficiently involved in development planning? (Q.26)

Figure 15 :

#### Q.26 : Abamugaye, abasheshakanguhe n'abana b'impfubyi birera bafite uruhari iyo hategurwa gahunda z'iterambere.

- ◆ The disabled, the elderly, and the children heads of households have a say in planning development.



Seventy-nine percent answer yes. However, the corresponding CII of 54 is rather weak in the context of the present survey. Responses do not vary according to socioeconomic variables or to the holding of elective office. However, there is considerable geographic variance, which is an argument in favor of including this variable in the pool of governmental reforms impact indicators.

The inhabitants of the capital (CII -16) unite with respondents from Butare and Gisenyi (-9), provinces with strong social cohesion, in saying that vulnerable persons don't have as strong a voice in this regard as would be desirable. As for provinces with weaker social cohesion, respondents think that vulnerable persons are now better treated. This is the case in Byumba (+11) and Umutara (+8), as well as Kibuye (+9). Provinces with greater social cohesion seem more sensitive to the expectations of vulnerable persons and judge that more could be done to integrate them.

## V.4 Influence of decentralization on the private sector

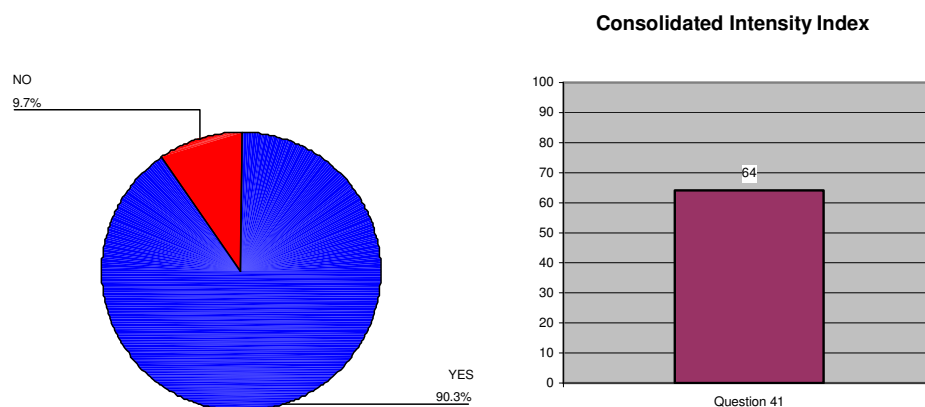
As we saw above, the population strongly recognizes (CII = 82 / Q.46) that decentralization will bring local NGOs closer to the population and districts where civil society is presently very weak. NGOs will help vulnerable groups to increase their presently minimal participation in the local planning process (CII = 54 / Q.26).

Does the population have the same opinion regarding private businesses, also extremely rare at the local level? Will decentralizing the management of development funds favor, for example, local growth of the construction sector? (Q.41)

Figure 16 :

### Q.41 : Abubatsi bikorera ku giti cyabo mu byaro bazarushaho gutera imbere vuba kubera ubuyobozi bwegereye abaturage.

- ◆ Local construction companies will develop more quickly with decentralization.



In response to the last question, 83% respond that the decentralization will encourage the local private sector. However, the CII of 64 is low enough to be highlighted. It appears that public opinion remains unsure of the linkage between decentralization and the development of the local private sector.

Responses do not vary as a function of respondents' socioeconomic variables. However, provincial variance is significant: Gisenyi (+12) and Ruhengeri (+13) stand out compared to the rest of the country. These two neighboring provinces seem more optimistic concerning the future of local entrepreneurs in the context of decentralization. In contrast, the provinces of the central southern region: Butare (-6), Gikongoro (-7) and Gitarama (-7) appear less optimistic than average. Let us note that Gitarama is also the least optimistic province regarding the potential impact of the decentralization on civil society (CII -8 re Q.46).

## V.5 Relevance of “development plans” and access to development technicians

To date, the reform process has sought the participation of the population and community leaders in development planning. The majority of the country's districts have already completed an inaugural development plan. Many districts benefited from financial assistance and the contribution of development technicians. Their plans came to fruition in the building of a school, sector office, roads, a market, etc. Elsewhere, these plans remained a dead letter due to a lack of financing and technicians. The survey sought to determine whether the population deemed it valid

to make development plans in a decentralized manner, which is the present practice, given the great shortage of technicians in the districts needed to carry out the projects planned.

To find out, two propositions were formulated as questions:

“Is it necessary to draft development plans in the sectors (communities) to know what must be done?” (Q.31)

“Is the shortage of technicians in the districts an obstacle to development?” (Q.45)

Figure 17 :

**Q.31 : Si ngombwa ko hakorwa igenamigambi ry’amajyambere ku murenge, kugirango hamenyekane igikwiye gukorwa.**

- ◆ One does not need to make development plans in the sector to know what it's necessary to do.

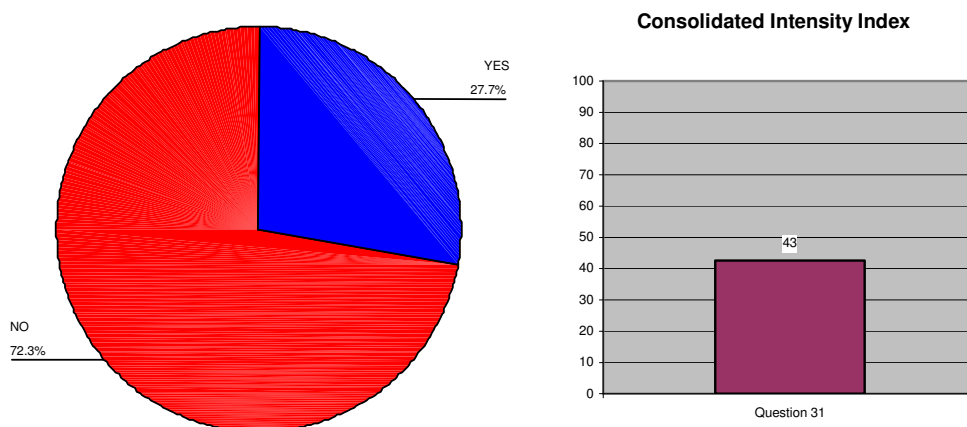
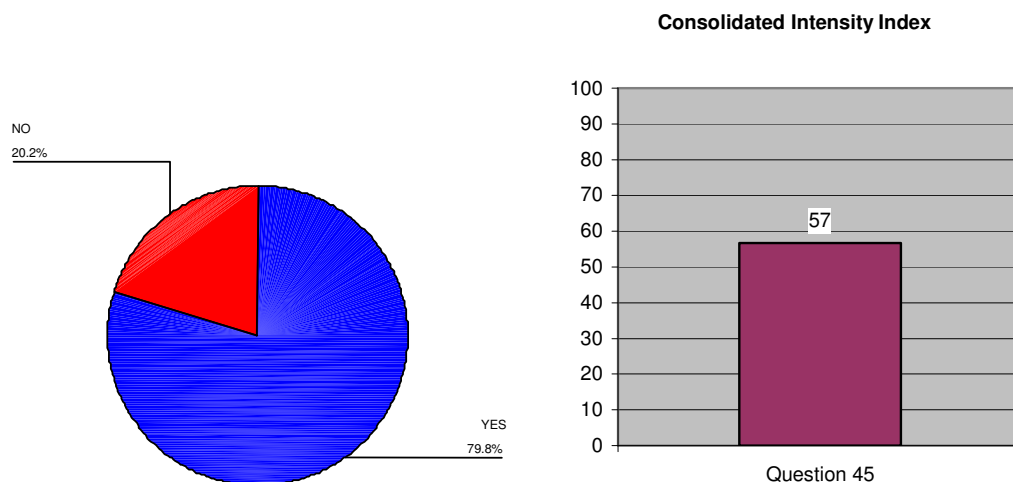


Figure 18 :

**Q.45 : Mu turere, impuguke mu rwego rwa tekiniiki ntizihagije kuburyo zatugeza ku majyambere.**

- ◆ There are not enough technicians in the districts to do development there.



1) As for the question on development plans, which for the time being are the main responsibility of the decentralized structures, the survey generated a relatively weak response. Nearly a quarter of respondents (22%) think that the decentralized development plans are unnecessary, while 71% have the opposite opinion. The CII is 43 in favor of such plans. The respondents who are more doubtful about their usefulness are women (-6 compared to men), illiterates (-11), people lacking sources of information (-9) and youth under 25 (-8 compared to 25-45 year-olds). In contrast, the better off respondents (+6 for those with a bed and mattress) and elected officials (+19) think that decentralized planning is necessary.

Provincial variance is quite strong. The provinces that see greater usefulness in decentralized planning are Butare (CII +14), Kibuye (+12) and Gitarama (+10). MVK (-15), Byumba (-14), Kigali Ngali and Kibungo (-9) deem it less necessary.

One notes that the respondents of Gitarama approve of decentralized planning despite being less optimistic regarding the development of the private sector and civil society at the sector level.

2) The question concerning the shortage of technicians (Q.45) elicited the following response: 78% of respondents recognize that the number of technicians in the districts is insufficient; 15% of respondents hold the opposite opinion. The CII is 57. The groups who most deplore this situation are literate persons (+9), the better off (+9 for those with a bed and mattress), local elected officials (+7), the better-informed (+5) and men (+4).

It's the outlying provinces in the East and southwest that are most critical of the lack of technicians: i.e. Umutara (+22), Kibungo (+19), Kibuye (+13), Cyangugu (+6), Gitarama (+10) and Butare (+4). Byumba (-26), Kigali Ngali (-25), Gisenyi (-14) and MVK (-6) seem less concerned about the absence of technicians in the districts.

It seems then that Byumba, Kigali Ngali and the City of Kigali deem it less useful to engage in an extensive decentralized planning process and feel a lesser need for technicians in the districts. The most remote provinces in the eastern part of the country, Umutara and Kibungo, which are experiencing rapid transformation, do not have a firm position on decentralized planning, but do deplore the shortage of technicians. Gitarama and its neighboring provinces (Kibuye and Butare) see greater usefulness in decentralized planning, even as they acknowledge the lack of technicians. Gitarama seems to count on the private sector and civil society less to remedy the lack of technicians in the districts.



## V.6 Administrative autonomy of the districts

The responses to the following two questions furnish insight into public opinion on the degree of autonomy enjoyed by districts in relation to the provincial level. In the past, the important decisions affecting the commune were taken at the provincial and central levels. In contrast, the new laws on decentralization leave some leeway to the districts, subject to subsequent provincial oversight.

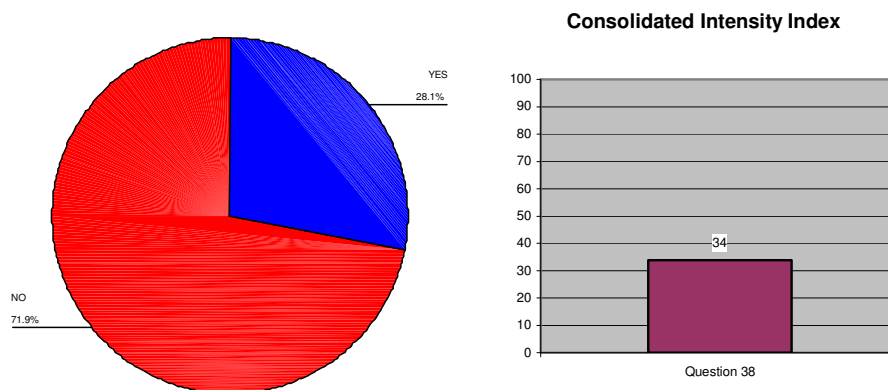
1- *“Does the public give credence to this fundamental change of perspective or does it instead still perceive the district as simply an arm of the central administration?” (Q.38)*

2- *“Does public opinion acknowledge the district’s capacity to redistribute the resources at its disposal between its different constituent sectors while applying its own criteria on fairness?” (Q.27)*

Figure 19 :

### Q.38 : Akarere ni agace gato mu ruhererekane rw’ubuyobozi bw’igihugu, nta bwisanzure gafite.

- ◆ The district is only one element in the administrative chain of the country, it does not have autonomy.



Regarding the first question (Q.38), over a quarter (27%) of respondents say that the district does not enjoy autonomy. Only two thirds of the population think that districts are more than just administrative sub-branches of the central government. The CII of the dominant opinion is only 34.

Illiterate persons in particular think otherwise (-14), as do less well-informed people (-8), youth under 25 (-9) and the less wealthy (-4 for those who have neither a bed nor a mattress and -5 for those who rarely eat meat). As for elected officials (+13), they believe in district level autonomy more than ordinary citizens do. Sector level elected officials (+14) are more convinced of district level autonomy than their cell level counterparts. Let us also mention that Protestants (+10) and, especially, followers of the new denominations are more convinced that districts are autonomous.

Provincial variance of opinions on administrative decentralization parallels public opinion on the decentralization of development, an issue examined above: Butare (+23), Umutara (+16), Gitarama (+11), Gikongoro (+7), Gisenyi (+5) and Kibuye (+4) more strongly believe in that district level autonomy is a reality. On the other hand, Byumba (-31), Kigali Ngali (-18) and MVK (-15) are skeptical.

Opinions on the second proposition (Q.27) are stronger still. The survey shows that nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) declare that a district's outlying sectors will develop less than other sectors will. The CII is 29. In other words, districts are still deemed too weak to guarantee a certain equality among their constituent communities.

There is little variance in this opinion. Illiterate persons (+6), those who are less well-informed (+5) and the poorest respondents (+9 for those who eat meat less often) more strongly believe that outlying sectors will develop less well than other sectors will. Elected officials (-8) believe otherwise.

Provincial variance is relatively slight: Kibuye (+11), Gikongoro (+10), Umutara (+7), Byumba (+7) and Cyangugu (+6) are more skeptical regarding fair distribution of resources among districts, while Gisenyi (-13), Ruhengeri (-10) in the northwest and Kigali Ngali (-10) lean the other way.

### **V.7 Presence of political parties in the sectors and districts, and the role of Parliament**

The survey was conducted before the referendum on the Constitution, which proposed, along with two hundred other clauses, limiting the activities of political parties to periods when election campaigns are underway. The responses in the survey, as we shall see below, reflect neither the Constitutional Commission's consultations nor, subsequently, the results of the referendum. This variance in public opinion is explained by the fact that the participants in the Electoral Commission's consultations were mainly persons who were already interested in political and constitutional issues. Ordinary citizens hardly showed up. The opinions heard during these consultations were unanimously opposed to the "decentralizing of partisan politics." Quite rightly, it was judged unwise to foster the establishing of parties in local politics due to the drift towards ethnic politics that characterized the "multi-party" system at the beginning of the preceding decade. In May 2003, the constitutional clauses related to this issue were voted on at the same time as the other clauses of the Constitution. The result, public opinion rejected the recourse to partisan politics in everyday life.

The present survey, conducted with a random sample of the population, sheds a different light on this question. It also explored the relationship between the Parliament and the Presidency. On this point, the opinions expressed agree with the Constitution.

The survey's propositions were formulated as follows:

- 1- *"Is it desirable to have political parties present at the local level (district and sectors)?"* (Q.54)
- 2- *"Should the Parliament's decisions be strongly binding on the President of the Republic?"* (Q.60)

Figure 20 :

**Q.54 : Byaba byiza ko amashyaka yakorera ku rwego rw’uturere n’imirenge.**

- ◆ The presence of political parties at the district and sector levels is desirable.

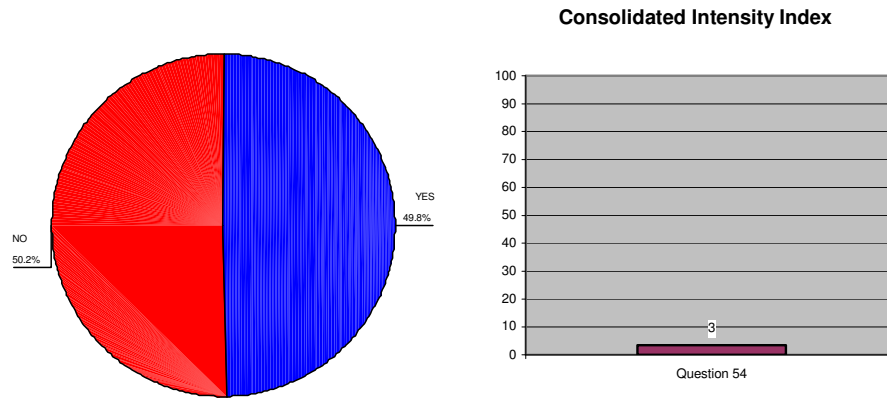
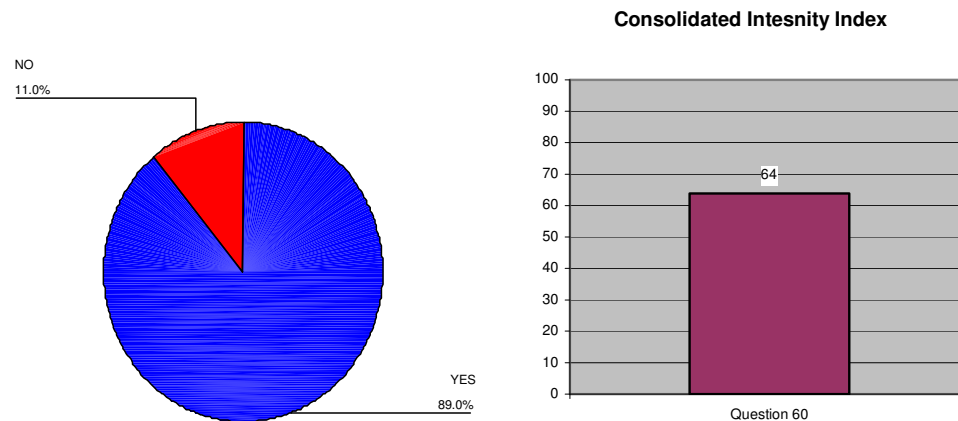


Figure 21 :

**Q.60 : Nyuma y’inzibacyuho, umukuru w’igihugu ntiyagombye kwemeza ibyo inteko ishingira amategeko itatoye.**

- ◆ After the transition, the President of the Republic should not decide what the Parliament did not vote upon.



The survey shows that “decentralizing” political parties down to the community level (Q.54) seems a desirable option to nearly half of the population (48%). In contrast, 43% of respondents object to having political parties active at the district and sector levels. The Consolidated Intensity Index of public opinion is 3 in favor of the presence of political parties on the local level. It’s clear that the population is divided on this question.

Women (+5) are more in favor of decentralizing political parties than men are. The same is true of illiterate persons (+14), the less well-informed (+11), youth under 25 (+8) and the poorest respondents (+9 for those without a bed/mattress and +7 for those who haven’t eaten meat recently), when compared with their respective opposing categories.

In contrast, elected officials (-13) think that decentralizing partisan politics is undesirable. Muslims and followers of the new religious denominations lean the same way, with intensity differentials of -11 compared to Catholics and -7 compared to Protestants.

Provincial variance is quite pronounced. The provinces where respondents desire more strongly the presence of political parties locally are Byumba (+23), Kibuye (+23), Cyangugu (+17) and, to a lesser extent, Ruhengeri (+5). In the other camp, are the provinces of Umutara (-19), Gisenyi (-17), Kibungo (-16) and, to a lesser extent, Kigali Ngali, Gikongoro and MVK (-5).

Often illiterate, the persons who desire the presence of political parties on the local level fit the following psychological profile, which is based on the principal criteria for social cohesion (see Q.66, Q.13, Q.5, Q.4, Q.23, Q.5, Q.10 et Q.74):

- *They are more distrustful*  
In the intensity of their responses to question Q.66, those who favor decentralizing political parties are 18 points more distrustful than those who do not support such decentralization. The intensity differential regarding distrust between illiterates who desire such decentralization and literate persons who do not desire it is 23 points.
- *They have a weaker propensity towards horizontal solidarity, which is an indication of a weaker community “resilience” (Q.13)*  
In this regard, the intensity differential between partisans and non-partisans of the presence of political parties at the local level is 25 points. The intensity differential between illiterate respondents favorable to the decentralizing of political parties and literate persons who oppose it is 23 points.
- *They have less concern for community solidarity (Q.5)*  
The intensity of “community solidarity” is 20 points less among partisans of allowing political parties at the local level than among non-partisans. The intensity differential is 24 points between illiterate respondents favorable to the decentralizing of political parties and literate persons who oppose it.
- *Their families tend to withdraw to their own fields (Q.4)*  
On this point, the intensity differential between partisans and non-partisans is 16 points. Illiterate respondents who desire the decentralizing of political parties lean more towards autarky (+28) than literate persons who oppose it.
- *They are more dependent on local authority*  
The supporters of decentralizing political parties are more dependent on local authority than opponents by 26, 27, 25 and 32 points, judging by the intensity of their responses to questions Q.23, Q.2, Q.3 et Q.21, respectively. The respective intensity differentials are 34, 49, 44 and 49 points, between illiterate respondents favorable to the decentralizing of political parties and literate persons who oppose it.
- *They are less disposed to get involved in community development*  
The intensity differential between the responses of supporters and opponents of question Q.5 is 20 points. The intensity differential is 28 points between illiterate respondents favorable to the decentralizing of political parties and literate persons who oppose it.
- *They lack confidence in youth*  
The intensity differential between the responses of supporters and opponents of question Q.10 is 12 points. Illiterate persons who desire the decentralizing of political parties are 19 points more distrustful of youth than literate persons who oppose it are.
- *They tend to see great distrust between genocide survivors and repentant genocide perpetrators*  
In relation to question Q.74, the intensity differential between supporters and opponents is 18 points. The intensity differential is 26 points between illiterate respondents in favor of decentralizing political parties and literate persons who oppose it.

As for the second question, which concerns the role of the Parliament in a presidential system, the survey indicates that nearly 4/5 (78%) of respondents think that the President should not overturn a decision made by the Parliament. The CII is 63. This response varies very little in accordance with respondents' socioeconomic characteristics or their personal involvement in the decentralization, i.e. whether they are elected officials or ordinary citizens. There is however a degree of provincial variance: Byumba (-18), Kigali Ngali (-13) and MVK (-12) would accord more power to the President than to the Parliament, while Butare (+14), Gitarama (+13) and Umutara (+10) desire a strengthened Parliament. These latter provinces seem to be moving away from a political tradition that is well established in Rwanda.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

In light of the subjects covered by this opinion survey (governance, decentralization, social cohesion and democratization), the large number of persons interviewed (no fewer than 10,831 respondents), its geographical coverage (every province in the country, including the City of Kigali), and the period in which it was completed (April-May, 2003), i.e. just before the referendum and the national elections), this exercise in popular consultation carried out under the authority of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission is irrefutably one of the most important such exercises ever done in the entire history of Rwanda.

For the political leaders of the country, the opinions of common Rwandan citizens—whether women or men, poor or rich, farmers or merchants, etc.—count. The very fact of this opinion survey is further evidence of that. In a few years, public opinion will have taken shape in Rwanda and find a thousand and one ways to express itself.

During the few years preceding this survey, the Rwandan people experienced the instituting of decentralized structures of governance, the opening of new spaces for citizen participation in public affairs and the effective transfer of important political responsibilities from the central government to local public authorities. How did this people, battered by genocide and exile, and accustomed to an entirely different paradigm of political organization, experience such a metamorphosis?

This was the overarching question that the present survey attempted, within the limits inherent in any comparable exercise, to grapple with by providing with some elements of insight, in the hope that they might shed light on the paths of the future. One of the limits of this exercise is that it dealt with what people say they think and feel. Whether in Rwanda or anywhere else, no opinion survey can capture a true picture of people's behavior.

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The sample group used as the basis of this survey included slightly more women than men. Eighty-eight and a half percent of respondents earned their living through farming or animal husbandry. Sixty-two percent had some formal education. In addition, 93% said they were poor, indeed 51% said they were very poor or extremely poor.

Conducted with a sample group of 10,831 adult respondents distributed among 433 cells, from every region of the country, this survey had an excellent chance of accurately portraying the state of mind of the Rwandan people as a whole. Furthermore, the survey could be expected to capture certain particularities from province to province.

Chosen at random, respondents were interviewed anonymously during approximately a half-hour in their homes. To the extent possible, we separately gathered the opinions of three adults per household: i.e. husband, wife and a son or daughter aged 18 to 24.

After first gathering socioeconomic information on each respondent, the twenty-seven (27) surveyors then obtained respondents' opinions on 75 propositions, generally formulated as affirmative statements: Do you agree, disagree or have a neutral opinion? In addition, the respondent was required to indicate the intensity of his/her initial answer: agree absolutely, disagree somewhat, etc. This very simple method made it possible to effect a second level of analysis.

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The use of the present tense in this document is intended to reflect what was the current state of mind of Rwandans during the period when the survey was conducted, i.e. April and May 2003.

Let us now recap and further highlight the most significant findings that can be drawn from this popular consultation.

The survey shows that what Rwandans most desire remains unchanged: public safety must be ensured. What is meant by public safety is the protection of persons and property against all forms of violence and theft. The survey also observes that Rwandans are very satisfied with the excellent results obtained by the present government in this regard. The survey also highlighted another great issue of concern: corruption and other abuses that local authorities could potentially engage in. Sensitivities on this issue undoubtedly reflect suspicions inherited from a bygone era in which the President appointed the burgomasters. Be that as it may, for the great majority of respondents, the Central State is presently perceived as the supreme guarantor of both public safety and the prevention of corruption and other abuses of power.

The great majority of respondents have no hesitations regarding the decentralization process. They want it to continue. In addition, they want the struggle against corruption to be at the top of the public agenda. Moreover, almost all respondents remarked that the new decentralized governments award local public contracts in accordance with standards of integrity. They are also nearly unanimous in thinking that it is now possible to obtain the resignation of a dishonest leader—that alone is a small revolution in mentalities.

A certain number of Rwandan citizens, particularly those belonging to more vulnerable groups, greet decentralization with a degree of apprehension. They perceive its risks more readily than its advantages. In a word, they fear that decentralization will result in a relaxing of central controls on the forces of order and the courts. Given a choice between the decentralization reforms and a strong centralized State, they would apparently opt for the latter.

The new decentralized structures implemented by the government in 2002, in 106 districts and 1,545 sectors, required thousands and thousands of elected officials to make them work. The leaders of the country counted on communities to choose honest and credible representatives. In effect, the survey reveals that despite the political madness of the last decades, honesty has remained a value solidly anchored in people's mentalities.

Nevertheless, communities often remain characterized by insufficient social cohesion and distrust between individuals, both of which constitute significant impediments to community development. In the northern provinces, the principal obstacle to social cohesion seems to be the integration of young adults. In these provinces, people are not uniformly supportive of the participation of 18 to 24 year-olds in the decision-making processes of the decentralized structures. Doubts remain regarding their qualifications. In contrast, in the central and southern provinces, the cohabitation of repentant (or pardoned) genocide perpetrators and genocide

survivors seems to constitute the greatest obstacle to social cohesion. This is the question that elicited the most undecided opinions.

Concerning variance in responses from province to province, several other points emerge. The survey found provinces in the North and in the South where respondents show greater optimism on the cohesion of local communities and their capacity to organize for community development. Above all, this is true of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, on the one hand, and of Gitarama and Butare, on the other. In contrast, in the eastern provinces unity remains to be forged. Kibungo seems to stand out in terms of its lack of social cohesion, which explains a tendency to defer to higher authorities regarding questions of community interest. In Kigali Ngali, where trust between people also seems to be lacking, cells don't seem to function as well as elsewhere. The people in Kibuye appear to be more demanding when it comes to honesty; they are also, along with the people of Byumba, among the respondents most open to the decentralization of partisan political activities. After Butare, Gikongoro is the province that is most open to women's participation in the activities of community institutions. In Umutara, while people decry the shortage of trained personnel more, they do believe in the autonomy of the districts. In Cyangugu, people care less about sector meetings and do not particularly care whether each sector has an administrative center. Less inclined to participate in voluntary associations, and particularly skeptical regarding the chances of reconciliation between genocide survivors and repentant genocide perpetrators, the inhabitants of the City of Kigali seem unenthusiastic about the virtues of the decentralization and less convinced than most other Rwandans of the solidity of the reform's initial achievements. Finally, the moderate enthusiasm of respondents from Byumba for decentralization and participatory democracy could be explained by a significant lag in literacy and school attendance, as well as a context of greater poverty.

In general, many households think that local authorities should not meddle in the management of their lands and that it would be better that the State manage all issues related to the public interest, including right up in the hills. Apart from the provinces that stand out in terms of greater social cohesion, the feeling of belonging to a community responsible for its own fate does exist in the sectors, but is rather weak. Without the efforts of the sector leaders, local communities barely seem capable of acting by themselves for the common good. There is in effect a great deal of work to be done in the communities to foster the gradual emergence of consensus on issues and the development of a sense of community. The deliberative structures established by the decentralization reform in the cells, sectors and districts could play a major role in this regard. The management committees of new community institutions (e.g. schools) and other local associations represent potential centers for forging consensus.

The survey nevertheless highlights two significant assets for community development: the resilience of communities (their capacity to react in the face of adversity despite a lack of unity) and the good will and, without a doubt, the positive leadership exercised by local elected officials at all levels, particularly in the sectors and districts. It is quite remarkable that local elected officials, who constitute nearly 20% of the sample group, are in general strong supporters of strengthening local administrations and decentralized planning.

Public opinion is divided on certain aspects of decentralization. Closer to the public, cells often continue to wait for directives from above (i.e. the sector or district) and to operate in accordance with an old paradigm (i.e. less openness towards women, youth and more vulnerable individuals). Some respondents doubt the usefulness of local development plans or the ability of communities to elaborate solid plans, given the shortage of trained personnel. Doubts remain regarding the autonomy enjoyed by districts in relation to provincial authorities. Some would like to strengthen the Parliament's position in relation to the Presidency. However, in certain provinces (e.g. Byumba), public opinion leans in the other direction. Slightly less than half of respondents say they support a decentralization of partisan political activities in the districts and sectors. Those in favor seem to accord more importance to top-down relationships (the seeking of well-connected benefactors in Kigali?) than to the development of horizontal solidarity within their own

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communities. The profile of these respondents corresponds rather closely to that of respondents apprehensive about the effects of decentralization. Elected officials in the districts and sectors strongly disagree with this point of view.

In general, the population massively endorses the overall objectives of the action program elaborated by their political leadership: national unity, democratization, prevention of “divisionism” and a resurgence of genocide, a greater presence of women in elected bodies at all levels, etc. The population is equally supportive of the new orientations in social and economic development: modernization of agriculture, local planning and management of public services, etc. Finally, public opinion is largely favorable to the strengthening of the sectors as centers where services to the community are concentrated (e.g. the Civil Status Registry, the mediation committee), a reform foreseen as part of the decentralization process.

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