

Decentralization as a policy to promote community participation in the development of Rwanda: a case study of the Nyarugenge district

by

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DEDICATION

To my parents, whose many sacrifices, encouragement and optimism empowered me to fulfil my dreams.

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on examining how the local community of the district of Nyarugenge is, through the decentralization policy, participating in the development of the district. It investigated the extent to which the community of the district experiences the decentralization process. It had three aims. The first was to explain how the decentralization policy offers Rwandans potential opportunities to participate in decisions regarding the development of the district. The findings indicated that they do take part in the decision making in that they participate in the definition, implementation and execution of all activities pertaining to the development of the district. However, the research indicated that their participation in the opportunities offered by the decentralization policy is also subject to a range of different constraints.

The second aim was to identify issues hampering the local community's participation in the success of the decentralization programme. In this regard the results indicated that, though the policy has important objectives, the lack of sufficient economic resources and competent human resources are key obstacles to the complete and full success of the decentralization policy.

The third and last aim of the research was to look at the role of women in the decentralization process and the development of the district. The results indicated that with the implementation of decentralization, women became involved in decision making and in the development process of district. However, their participation is frustrated by the cultural beliefs of some of the local people, who disapprove of the involvement of women in the public world.

A number of recommendations regarding the obstacles revealed by the respondents are made in order to further promote the process of decentralization in Rwanda.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie ondersoek hoe die plaaslike gemeenskap van die Nyarugenge distrik, deur middel van 'n desentralisasiebeleid, deelneem aan die ontwikkeling van die distrik. Meer spesifiek fokus dit op hoe die gemeenskap van die distrik die desentralisasieproses ervaar.

Die studie het drie doelwitte. Eerstens beskryf dit hoe die desentralisasieproses aan Ruandese potensiële geleenthede bied om deel te neem aan besluite oor die ontwikkeling van die gebied. Die bevindings toon dat hulle wel deel het aan die besluite wat betref die definisie, implementering en inwerkingstelling van al die aktiwiteite wat te make het met die ontwikkeling van die distrik.

Die tweede doelwit is om sake wat die plaaslike gemeenskap se deelname aan die desentralisasieprogram bemoeilik te identifiseer. Die bevindings toon dat die beleid belangrike mikpunte het maar dat die gebrek aan voldoende ekonomiese hulpbronne en bevoegde menslike hulpbronne die suksesvolheid en voltooiing van die desentralisasiebeleid bemoeilik.

Die derde doelwit is om die rol van vrouens in die desentralisasieproses en ook in die ontwikkeling van die distrik te ondersoek. Die resultate van die ondersoek toon aan dat vrouens wel deelneem aan besluite oor die ontwikkelingsdoelwitte en die uitvoering van hierdie besluite. Vrouens se deelname word egter sterk beïnvloed deur kulturele oortuigings van plaaslike inwoners wat die betrokkenheid van vrouens in die openbare sfeer afkeur.

'n Aantal aanbevelings word gemaak oor die hindernisse wat deur die respondente uitgelig is om sodoende die desentralisasieproses in Ruanda te bevorder.

ABBREVIATIONS

ARD: Association for Rural Development

CDC: Community Development Committee

CDF: Community Development Fund

CDG: Centre for Democracy and Governance

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CIDA: Canadian International Development Agency

DC: District Council

DDPs: District Development Plans

GoR: Government of Rwanda

HDI: Human Development Index

HDR: Human Development Report

IRC: International Rescue Committee

LGI: Legal Government Initiative

LGSA: Local Government Support Activity

MINALOC: Ministry of Local Government, Community Development and Social Affairs

MINECOFIN: Ministère de l'Économie et de Finance

N.D.: No date

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

N.P.: No page

OGRR: Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda

OXFAM: Oxford Committee for Famine Relief

PAC: Political Administrative Committee

PDF: Portable Document File

PRSP: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

SDC: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

ToT: Training of Trainers

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UP: University of Pretoria

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Decentralization is (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), 2001) “the transfer of decision making competence from the central government to regional or local community levels. Over the past years, decentralization has gained importance in development policy discussions. Many development transition countries are confronted with comprehensive reform processes, which need to enable them to cope with global and national challenges of a political, economic, and social nature. More countries recognize that at least some of the existing problems can be solved by strengthening regional and local government administrations.”

This is true, given that democratic decentralization has been and continues to be advocated as an important component of policy packages to improve governance in developing countries. Decentralization may therefore aid government performance, particularly in formulating and implementing locally oriented development policies, because it helps local people to participate in the decision making.

This research aimed to analyze how the decentralization policy in Rwanda constitutes an opportunity for the community to participate in the development of the district.

Particular attention was given to the gender aspect in order to analyze how women are involved in the decentralization of the local structure. The research also proposed to examine the impediments and constraints to the success of this decentralization process. The case study was done in the district of Nyarugenge.

1.2 RESEARCH MOTIVATION

The purpose of this study was to help the stakeholders of decentralization such as the government to increase the effectiveness of the decentralization programme in Rwanda. The aim of the decentralization policy in Rwanda is to provide a mechanism through which the community can participate in the development of the country. However, the implementation of this mechanism faces many constraints, and the present study aimed to look at alternative solutions.

The importance of this research also lies in the big challenge to the Rwandan government to involve all the Rwandan people in fighting poverty and developing their country by participating in the planning and management of their development process through the local decentralized structures. Some of the reasons that persuaded the researcher to conduct this research were the reading of documents on the topic, the positive reception of the government's decision to involve the whole community in the development of the country, and the researcher's previous experience in the domain of decentralization. In 2002 the researcher was mandated by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to advise local administrative structures in the province of Kibungo.

This background gave rise to the research into how the district of Nyarugenge was experiencing the process of decentralization.

It has been argued that dictatorship and the centralized political system in Rwanda was one of the major causes that led to the genocide and massacres of 1994. In this context, Bergman (2002:7) argues that “decentralization had been urged by a range of actors to counter the perceived passivity of the population in the face of previously high concentration of power in the capital, Kigali. That power structure was, in turn, thought to have contributed to the continued poverty and tensions in the country, as well as being a large factor in the devastating events of 1994, in which hundreds of thousands were killed, millions displaced and the productive capacity of the country drastically reduced.”

This genocide caused children to be orphaned, left people handicapped, in hospitals, in poverty, etc. The decentralization policy can help the local people to face these problems. It aims to change the centralized political system by involving the whole community in a democratic way in engaging the social development issues of the country.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following general research questions were posed:

1. To what extent does the decentralization policy provide an opportunity to the community of Nyarugenge to participate in decision making?

2. Which constraints limit the participation of the representatives of the district in the development process?
3. Which strategies can be implemented to assist the Nyarugenge community to overcome those constraints and thus to participate more effectively in the good governance and development of the district?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 Overall objective

The main objective of this research was to contribute to the development of an understanding of how the decentralization policy helps the Nyarugenge community to participate in decision making regarding the political, economic and social development of this district.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- To explain how the decentralization policy offers Rwandans opportunities to participate in decisions regarding the development of the district.
- To identify issues hampering the local community's participation in the decentralization process and the success of the decentralization process.
- To identify women's role in the decentralization process and the development of the district.
- To propose measures to increase the Nyarugenge community's role in defining and determining the development of the district.

1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Rwanda is one of the overpopulated countries in Africa with an average population density of 400 inhabitants per km². The situation in Rwanda in terms of population and development was seriously affected by the 1994 genocide. This destructive event overwhelmed the social conditions of the country.

The current demographic structure (MINECOFIN, 2002) of the country is characterized by the predominance of the female population, which constitutes 54.4% of the total population. Women have a lower level of education than men. The rate of female illiteracy is 49.35%, compared to 42.43% of males. Among those aged six and older who know how to read and write, females represent 43.43%, while males represent 56.57%. The genocide left a great number of orphaned and non-accompanied children as well as destitute widows. In addition, 34% of families are headed by women.

This disproportion presupposes the existence of social inequality in the participation of men and women in public affairs. To aggravate this problem and those discussed in the next paragraph, the centralized system was seen as outdated, because it excluded the gender dimension and denied the local community participation in their own development. The centralized system was regarded as inappropriate for enhancing the development process, because the country excluded the Rwandese people from participating in the determination of their political, economic, and social well-being. Therefore, when the present Government of National Unity that came into power in 1994, it adopted and implemented a decentralization policy from 2000. It aimed to

incorporate the local community and other players (see chapter 3, section 6) to participate in the social and economic rebuilding of the country.

The decentralization policy (MINALOC, 2001:4) was implemented to redress the Rwandan system that was largely centralized and to resolve the following problems according to MINALOC:

- the inadequate participation of the majority of the population in decision making that concerns their livelihood;
- the inadequate financial and other resources at provincial and district level. It is true that the Rwandan Government had limited revenue, but the little there was, remained concentrated at central government level;
- management structures at local administrative levels that support lack of accountability and transparency;
- passivity, lack of initiative and dependency of the majority of the population, caused especially by over-centralization and exclusion from participation;
- accumulation of powers in one person, both at central and local level, for example, at district (Akarere) level, the powers were centralized in one person, the Burgomaster;
- inadequate capacity and infrastructure (people, systems, structures, institutions, networks, etc.) at both central and local levels;
- officialdom which further erodes the people's say in the management of their affairs, the system generally being accountable to central government instead of to the people;

- little presence of women and young people in the running of the Rwandan political, economic and administrative system.

A political and administrative system in which problems such as the above prevail cannot support economic and social development. The energy of the people concerned is not adequately mobilized to initiate, plan and implement development on the basis of locally identified needs.

The repercussions of an inappropriate governance system are reflected in the economic and social development situation of Rwanda, which is ranked amongst the poor countries of the world, with a Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.450 (Human Development Report (HDR), 2005).

The Government of Rwanda has launched decentralization as a key policy to target poverty reduction. It aims to improve the quality of governance in the country and promote the mobilization of the energies and resources of the local people to participate directly in the determination of their political, economic, and social wellbeing.

In principle, decentralization is meant to give Rwandans the opportunity to be represented at all levels of the administrative structure— national, regional and local. It deserves to be borne in mind that, through the decentralization policy, Rwandan women participate in the development of the country. They participate at all levels of the administrative structures of the district. Their participation began with the implementation of the decentralization policy in Rwanda. The following reasons are given to justify why

women's participation in decision making for development is needed as much as that of men:

- because Rwandan women represent 54.4 % of the population, their material and moral contributions are of great importance;
- women have participated in electing the leaders (they themselves fill a minimum quota of 30% in parliament provided for by the constitution of Rwanda), and have among themselves elected women representatives at all levels of government – national, regional and local;
- the Rwandan Government accepts all international human rights regulations forbidding discrimination on the basis of gender. For example, according to article 7 of the Convention (of 1981) on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women bound the states parties to the convention. “the states party (to the convention) shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right : a) to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; b) to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; c) to participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country” (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 1979)

Due to the decentralization policy, the local population has representatives at all levels of the Nyarugenge district. This means that the population is represented at district, sector and cell level. This representation is the product of a democratic election, which allowed men and women to elect their representatives and to be elected. The assumption is that this representation at all levels of the local administrative structure motivates the whole community to participate in the development of the district.

Furthermore, with decentralization, local decisions are required in principle to be tailored to meet local needs, allowing scarce resources to be generated and expanded with efficiency and public services to be effectively delivered. Indeed, the decentralization policy in Rwanda encourages a more need-based and efficient fulfilment of government responsibilities that reflects local needs and priorities much better. Compared to centralized planning and decision-making mechanisms, decentralized decision-making structures are essentially better suited to generate local ownership and the acceptance of government action, improve mobilization of local potential and allow a consensual definition of priorities. This is especially important in the areas where the efficient fulfilment of government duties basically depends on a knowledge of the local context and needs priorities, namely in the areas of construction, operation and maintenance of the local infrastructure installations and services. Through the decentralization policy, the public services are rendered more effectively and the development of the district is enhanced.

Nevertheless, the findings on the impact of decentralization in developing countries have been quite varied. Many of the inconsistencies can be attributed to the fact that the

correlation between formally announced programmes of decentralization and their successful implementation is quite low, or in some cases non-existent (Nagel, 1997:142). In this context, the situation of decentralization in Rwanda is examined, and in particular the case study of the Nyarugenge district. The comparison of the announced objectives of the decentralization policy with the real situation of this district will help the reader to understand how the community is experiencing the decentralization process.

1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study aims to analyze the extent to which the decentralization policy in Rwanda contributes to community participation in the development of the district. In other words, it wants to establish how the decentralization policy has made community participation in the development of the district possible. In this context, the analysis focuses on the period from 2000 up to 2004. This period is of interest because the decentralization policy was officially implemented in Rwanda in 2000.

Social researchers mention case studies that focus on one or a few examples of social groupings, such as villages, families or juvenile gangs. As Charles Ragin (Babbie, 2004:293) points out, there is little consensus on what constitutes a 'case', and the term is used broadly. The case being studied, for example, might be a period of time rather than a particular group of people. Babbie (2004:293) argues that the essential characteristic of a case study is to limit attention to one aspect in particular.

This study will therefore be limited to the Nyarugenge district. Nyarugenge is an urban district in Kigali, the capital of the Republic of Rwanda. This district has the same policy of decentralization as that of the rest of the country.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUALISATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is important to set out and discuss key concepts used in this study in the first place. Secondly, some key conceptual issues will be unpacked.

2.2 DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPTS

2.2.1 Decentralization

The concept of decentralization is defined by Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema (1983) (in Nagel, 1997:142) as the “transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resources raising and allocation from the central government and its agencies to: (a) field units of central government ministries and agencies, (b) subordinate units or levels of government, (c) semi autonomous public authorities or corporations, area-wide regional or functional authorities, or (e) nongovernmental private or voluntary organizations.”

Decentralization is, according to the Center for Democracy and Governance (CDG) (2000:6), a process of transferring power to a democratically elected local government. It changes the operation of institutions and almost occurs gradually. It requires the

existence of local governments because officials do not have meaningful autonomy unless they answer to their constituents.

It should be noted that there are a variety of definitions of decentralization. The CDG recognizes three types of decentralization: devolution, deconcentration and delegation. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) relies heavily on this formulation (CDG, 2000:6). *Devolution* is the creation of an increased reliance upon the sub-national levels of the government with some degree of political autonomy that is substantially outside direct central government control, yet subject to general policies and laws, such as those regarding civil rights and rule of law. *Deconcentration* is the transfer of power to an administrative unit of the central government, usually the field of a regional office. With deconcentration, local officials are not elected. *Delegation* is the transfer of managerial responsibility for a specifically defined function outside the usual central government structure.

In the context of Rwanda, decentralization (MINALOC, 2001:9) is defined as a process of transferring powers, authority, functions, responsibilities and requisite resources from the central government to local governments or administrative divisions. The concept “local” refers to all levels of sub-national government in a country. Although a country is divided into multiple functional structures, for the sake of clarity this work includes the terms district, sectors and cells all under the single term, “local” or “local decentralized structures”.

Decentralization (CDG, 2000) has three dimensions: political, financial, and administrative. These three dimensions, in essence, represent the primary components of power. The *political dimension* (often referred to as “political” decentralization) involves the transfer of political authority to the local level through the establishment or re-establishment of elected local government (perhaps as a part of democratic transition), electoral reform, political party reform, authorization of participatory processes and other reforms. The *financial dimension* (often referred to as “financial” or “fiscal” decentralization) refers to the transfer of financial power to the local level. It involves increasing or reducing conditions on inter-governmental transfer of resources and giving jurisdictions greater authority to generate their own revenue.

The *administrative dimension* (often referred to as “administrative” decentralization) involves the full or partial transfer of a variety of functional responsibilities to the local level, such as health care services, the operation of schools, the management of service personnel, the building and maintenance of roads, and garbage collection.

Progress along any of these dimensions is decentralization. Decentralization tends to be most effective, when real political autonomy, sufficient administrative responsibility and sufficient financial resources to carry out primary functions are put into place or are transferred to the local level together. Decentralization is as if local officials are being told: “Here are the areas in which you must now work, and here is how you will get the resources needed to actually do the work. And from now on you are responsible to your community for the result you produce” (CDG, 2000:8). Democratic local governance has the best chance to emerge under these conditions.

2.2.2 The concepts of governance and of “good” governance

The concept of “governance” is not new. It is as old as human civilization. Simply put “governance” means: the process of decision making by which decisions are (or are not) implemented. Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. Local governance is governing at a local level viewed broadly to include not only the machinery of government, but also the community at large and its interaction with the local authorities (CDG, 2000:5).

Since governance is the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented, an analysis of governance focuses on the formal process and the actors involved in decision making and the implementation of these decisions, as well as informal structures that have been set in place to make and implement decisions. Here, we can say that the government is one of the actors in governance.

According to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (2004:1) “governance” refers to the manner in which power is exercised. “Good” governance is the effective, honest, equitable, transparent and accountable exercising of power by various levels of government. Good governance has eight characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most

vulnerable in society are heard in decision making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society (CDG, 2000:6). If any government happens to reflect on all the abovementioned characteristics, it would deserve to be typified as a democratic one, and hence with “good” governance.

Decentralization gives local governance the opportunity to become increasingly more democratic. It helps to position local officials to work for the benefit of the community at large. Without decentralization, the development of democratic local governance is much more difficult.

2.2.3 Community participation

Different definitions of “participation” have been given. Elliot (1975) has indicated on the basis of European experiences that there are three types that coincide with the degree to which the citizens become involved in the process. The first is the pattern of paternalistic participation that characterizes the centralized state. The second is a conflictive one in which people struggle against that centralization, and the third is co-productive, with the major characteristic being that of negotiation, or agreement that people come together to plan and carry out policies and social programmes.

Other authors emphasize the political implications that are inherent in participation. Castells (1977) mentions that participation is a forum where the state and citizens are allowed to communicate, and Elliot (1975) refers to participation as a democracy

because different social groups join in the decision making process about the issues that concern them.

There is little distinction between the concept of popular participation and that of community participation. While the former is concerned with broad issues of social development and the creation of the opportunities for the involvement of people in the political, economical and social life of a nation, the latter concerns the direct involvement of ordinary people in local affairs. Although popular participation and community participation may be separate, they are obviously interlinked and are inspired by similar ideals and processes. Many definitions of community participation draw on the United Nations Resolutions that were adopted in the early 1970s. One definition of this kind was formulated by a group of experts that defined participation as “the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community and the larger society to actively contribute to and influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development” (Midgley; 1986:23).

Although there are different views about what participation entails, many writers quote the United Nations Economic and Social Resolution 1929 (LVIII) (Midgley; 1986:25) when discussing this issue. This resolution requires the voluntary and democratic involvement of people in “(a) contributing to the development effort, (b) sharing equitably in the benefit derived there from and (c) decision making in respect of setting goals, formulating policies and planning and implementing economic and social development programmes.”

Several writers have distinguished between authentic participation, that involves all three criteria mentioned previously, and pseudo-participation, that limits community involvement to implementation or ratification of decisions already taken by external bodies. White (1982:19) observed that “the involvement of the population in implementation can hardly be considered to be community participation unless “there is at least some degree of sharing of decisions with the community.”

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (1980) employed a superlative style when describing the concept of authentic participation. This concept, it argues, can be distinguished from pseudo-participation because it is not imposed from above but arises from the grassroots, it focuses on distribution becoming a means of obtaining a larger share in the fruits of their own capabilities to make choices and influence outcomes (White, 1982).

2.2.4 Development

The term “development” most often carries an assumption of growth and expansion. During the industrial era, development was strongly connected to increased speed, volume and size. Many scholars question the assumption of growth for numerous reasons, among them the realization that more is not always better. The term development, therefore, may not always mean growth; it does, however, always imply change.

William Fox and Ivan H. Meyer see development as a process of improving the quality of all human lives (Fox & Meyer, 1995:36). They note three equally important aspects of

development: (1) raising people's living levels, i.e. their incomes and consumption levels of food, medical services, education, etc., through "relevant" economic growth; (2) raising people's self-esteem through the establishment of social, political, and economic systems and institutions that promote human dignity and respect; and (3) increasing people's freedom to choose by enlarging the range of choice variables, e.g. increasing varieties of consumer goods and services (Fox & Meyer, 1995:36).

It may be suggested therefore that, the concept of "community development" is concerned with bringing about greater investment of the development effort and the insurance of continuity by creating conditions whereby the vast under-utilized human resources of local communities may be developed and brought into more effective play. Inseparable from this is the goal of improving the quality of popular participation and not merely its quantity (United Nations, 1967:5).

2.2.5 Bureaucracy and rationalisation

The word "bureaucracy" was coined by Monsieur De Gournay in 1745 (Giddens, 2001:348), who expanded the word "bureau", meaning both an official and a writing table – a term derived from the Greek verb "to rule". Bureaucracy is therefore the rule of officials. Bureaucracy as a term was first applied only to the government, but it gradually extended to refer to large organizations in general.

From the beginning the concept was used in a disparaging way. De Gournay spoke of the developing power of officials as an illness called "bureaumania". This view has persisted into current times: bureaucracy is frequently associated with red tape,

inefficiency and wastefulness. Other writers, however, have seen bureaucracy in a different light – as a model of carefulness, precision and effective administration. Bureaucracy, they argue, is the most efficient form of organization human beings have devised, because all tasks are regulated by strict rules of procedure. Weber’s account of bureaucracy, it may be argued, steers a way between the two extremes (Giddens, 2001:348).

According to Weber, “the expansion of bureaucracy is inevitable in modern societies; bureaucratic authority is the only way of coping with the administrative requirements of large-scale social systems. As tasks became more complex, it was necessary for systems of control and management to be developed in order to handle them.” (Giddens, 2001:348)

In this regard, decentralization works in the same way to handle local needs efficiently and rationally. Weber listed the following characteristics of bureaucracy:

- 1) *There is a clear-cut hierarchy of authority;*
- 2) *Written rules govern the conduct of officials at all levels of the organization.* Here the existence of rules and regulations implies a system that allows the use of formal procedure when dealing with work situation matters;
- 3) *Merit employment* – personnel are selected on merit and technical competence;
- 4) *There is a separation between the tasks of an official within the organization and the official’s life outside* – the home life of the official is separate from activities in the workplace;
- 5) *No members of the organization own the material resources with which they operate*– officials do not own

the office they work in, the desk they sit at or the machinery they use (Giddens, 2001:349).

Rationalization in Weber's view is linked to the development of science, modern technology and bureaucracy (Giddens, 2001:14). Decentralization contributes to great efficiency in the provision of services. Opposed to a centralized system, it is characterised by a relatively small monopoly of power.

Van Niekerk, De Waldt & Jonker (2001:249) argue that decentralization can only be effective if:

- adequate financial resources and responsibilities are established;
- higher levels of authority agree to take financial responsibility for local authorities, especially in relation to the elimination of backlogs;
- transfer of functions is provided for in a long-term plan that includes training and capacity building and thorough information to the public;
- the will of the community has been determined through a process of public participation and involvement regarding the functions that should be decentralized;
- local authorities have the same financial, managerial and functional capacity, which can be achieved through a process of rationalization and the joint use of resources;
- efficiency and effectiveness are increased and the human resources potential is used optimally;

- all functions are properly analysed and planned in a co-ordinated manner.

Max Weber indicates that efficiency can only be achieved if organizations are appropriately structured to carry out the tasks before them. Consequently Weber's ideal type of organization is one that is formally structured and managed in a manner that would lead to efficiency.

2.3 CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

"While numerous developing countries have undertaken so-called decentralization programmes, primarily involving deconcentration and delegation, rather than devolution, few have demonstrated the political will necessary for successful implementation" (Nagel, 1997:142). Many studies of decentralization in Africa (Chikolo, 1981; Hyden, & Bratton, 1993) have been quite critical of the general approach, its implementation, or both.

Discussions of decentralization figure prominently in much of the thinking associated with the concept of governance. An evaluation of the implementation of decentralization is important, because the relationship between successful decentralization and good governance is hypothesized as positive. This is expected to be true in countries at every level of development, but particularly in developing countries such as those in Africa (Vengroff & Salem, 1992).

Building on the work of Hyden & Bratton, Charlick (1992:3) defines government as “the effective management of public affairs through the regime (set of rules) which is accepted as legitimate, for the purpose of promoting and enhancing societal values sought by individuals and groups.” Using this definition, Nagel’s analysis of decentralization and local government in Africa emphasizes the following governance issues (Nagel, 1997:154): accountability through local representatives; responsiveness to the public groups; and development opportunities for participation and the presentation of policy alternatives.

Considering the measurement of decentralization, there are no universally agreed-upon criteria for assessing the quality of decentralization. The indicators of the seriousness or the quality of decentralization programmes are different. For example, a group working primarily in central and Eastern Europe is employing a form of elite attitudinal survey to examine decentralization and democracy. Olowu and Smoke (1992) use an inductive approach to identify the determinants of success in African municipal governments, etc.

Does a relationship between the quality of decentralization and the quality of governance exist in a given country? Although one cannot attribute all the changes in governance to decentralization, Nagel (1997:154) argues, “It is certainly an important contributing factor. However, there is a general agreement that significant change in the quality of decentralization has occurred in Senegal and Tunisia over time. The quality of governance in those two countries can be argued to have improved significantly together with the noted increases in decentralization. There have been major gains in

accountability, responsiveness, opportunities for participation, and the representation of policy alternatives in both countries.”

A comparison of Senegal and Tunisia with Nigeria is instructive because, although all three are among the handful of leaders in terms of decentralization in Africa, they have each pursued very different strategies. The emphasis in Tunisia has been very heavily on *deconcentration* within the context of a unitary state. Growing social pressures, including the perceived threat of Islamic fundamentalism, have, from the perspective of the regime, dictated a centrally guided approach to decentralization.

Senegal has used a combination of *deconcentration* and a steadily growing process of *devolution* in response to societal and economic pressures. The inability of the state to cure the nation's economic woes has led to a series of steps designed to shift responsibility to local government units at municipal, rural community and regional levels. Whereas *devolution* appears to be emphasized more than deconcentration and delegation, the Nigerian experience suggests that the real authority is seldom delegated to the local level, and when it is, government's intentions are often suspect. As a result, the autonomy of the local governments has not been appreciably enhanced. Nigeria placed greater emphasis on devolution. Nagel states that “Nigeria, faced with intense ethnic and religious rivalries and competition for national resources, most notably oil, has tried to promote legitimacy through *devolution* to a growing and increasingly fragmented set of states and local councils” (Nagel 1997:153).

The experience of the three nations, according to Nagel, demonstrates that no single policy approach can address all of the demands of decentralization. Each system, in order to succeed, has had to diverge from its initial strategy to add elements from the others. Policy makers should be aware that the quality of the decentralization policy is not linked to any single approach. Adaptation to local needs and opportunities for experimentation are clearly called for.

A major element in most discussions on the promotion of community participation is the concept of institution building. This concept has been formulated by international agencies to denote the creation of procedures for democratic decision making at local level and the involvement of all people in these procedures to the extent that they regard them as the normal way of conducting community affairs. Authorities use the term to denote the establishment of decision-making bodies that are fully representative, democratically elected and accountable.

According to Nagel (1997), a major topic in the literature of community participation is the idea of decentralization. The discussion on this issue has been actively fostered by the United Nations (1982), which has called for the establishment or strengthening of local decision-making bodies in developing countries. The tendency towards centralization, it is argued, must be resisted since it excludes ordinary people from political affairs.

There is a relationship between decentralization and poverty reduction. According to Crook, “the virtues of decentralization such as democracy, popular participation,

responsiveness, accountability and equity have led to the belief that decentralization will lead to greater responsiveness to the poor. Since the poor have been excluded from politics and therefore inaccessible to public goods and services, decentralization is seen as offering greater political participation to ordinary citizens whose 'voice' is more likely to increase with concomitant relevance and effectiveness of government's policies and programmes, especially in poverty reduction" (Crook, 2003:25).

2.3.1 Decentralization and good governance

According to Hyden & Bratton (1993:15), governance refers to the conscious management of political and administrative structures in order to increase the legitimacy of the public domain. On the basis on this global definition, Stren, et al. (1993) specify that "public management based on the principles of governance attempts to improve the system of government, to emphasize efficiency and responsibility of all institutions, to promote democratic principles and electoral processes, and to establish a new organic relationship between government and civil society" Swilling (1997:167).

Four fundamental dimensions of good governance may be spelled out:

- transparency in public actions
- supremacy of the law
- openness to institutional pluralism and popular participation
- respect for the legal standards of those involved

Swilling (1997:167) argues that a good system of governance is founded on the effective presence of the following principles: a certain amount of confidence that should exist between the authorities and the organizations of the civil society; the existence of institutional mechanisms allowing citizens to express their opinions concerning the management of government; and the possibility to observe the democratic processes of the government in the internal management of organizations of the civil society.

The concepts of democratization, decentralization and governance encompass many common characteristics even though they do not deal with the same realities. They are multi-dimensional processes and their implementation requires interventions on several levels. A democratic regime, Swilling (1997:168) argues, is only viable at local level if it borrows techniques and principles promoted by both decentralization and governance.

Decentralization is justified and advantageous in that the cost of the services and the price charged can be closely linked. This applies especially where the benefits of the service can be confined to the direct users of the service, such as those rendered to local communities by local authorities. In this manner, those receiving the benefit (local community) and paying for the benefit, and those providing the benefits (local authorities) are brought nearer to one another.

Van Niekerk *et al.* (2001:349) suggest the following advantages of decentralizing government:

- institutions are able to respond quickly to changing circumstances and customer needs;

- it encourages more direct contact between local functionaries, such as voters, political representatives and office bearers;
- decentralized institutions are far more innovative than centralized institutions;
- decentralized institutions generate a higher morality and more commitment and are inclined to show greater productivity in the execution of their activities;
- they encourage service excellence to ensure that the well-being of the community is promoted;
- it is easier to pinpoint responsibility and demand accountability from political representatives due to the geographical proximity of the voters who elected the representative;
- it secures justice in the application of democratic principles and encourages more voter participation in forums, communities, public meetings, referenda and policy making processes that affect their daily lives.

2.3.2 Decentralization and democracy

Decentralization, in contrast to a centralized political system, shows a resemblance to a democracy. The latter is seen as “a political system which is most able to ensure political equality, protect liberty and freedom, defend the common interest, meet citizens’ needs, promote moral self-development, and enable effective decision making which takes everyone’s interests into account” (Held, 1996:15).

It seems that in the context of decentralization in Rwanda, there is a *representative democracy*. A representative democracy is defined by Giddens (2001:423) as “a political

system in which decisions are taken not by its all members as a whole, but by people they have elected for this purpose”. In the districts of Rwanda, communities have chosen to run their affairs with the aid of democratic principles by electing a small executive committee to make key decisions. This policy of decentralization in Rwanda is a process of democratization. This is (Tim & Alan, 2000:368) “a political change moving in a democratic direction from less accountable to more accountable government, from less competitive (or non-existent) elections to fuller and fairer competitive elections, from severely restricted to better protected civil and political rights, from weak autonomous associations to more autonomous and more numerous associations in civil society.”

CDG (2000:7) argued that “the units for decentralization should be a local development council which should be empowered to assume responsibility for the administration of local level programmes and to initiate a variety of infrastructural and social development projects of its own. As these councils become firmly established, their powers should be extended to administer a variety of additional services. They should be formally linked to higher tier authorities and service as a channel for communicating ideas and innovations upwards.”

What are the characteristics to consider when democratic decentralization is designed?

There are five key characteristics (Barnett, Minis & VanSant, 1997:18) of democratic decentralization that can be observed when they are effectively implemented. They are:

- (1) legal reforms to devolve power not only to local governments, but also to local communities (giving decision-making power and authority to them, especially in matters of socio-politico-economic local concern);
- (2) strengthened capacity of local governments (in terms of finances, personnel, organization structures, management systems, data and information, facilities, networks, etc.);
- (3) local government accountability to both citizens and central government, transparency, and responsiveness;
- (4) enhancing the role of the civil society both at local level and at national level (practising what is preferably called horizontal decentralization); and
- (5) showing both intent and progress in improving the quality of life for the local people (i.e. enhancing people's participation in the consumption of goods and services).

2.3.3 Decentralization and community participation

To what extent can political decentralization be seen as a basis for community participatory decision making?

The general tendency is to understand political decentralization only from the angle of a local electoral practice whereby local people elect their leaders as well as their representatives in central government legislatures. However, political decentralization is more than this narrow view. It is a political process of transferring power (decision making) from the central government to give citizens, and/or their elected representatives, more say in public decision making in domains that go beyond politics

to include general socio-economic development. It can involve matters of financial decision making such as in deciding a local council budget as it is done in 'Participatory Budgeting' in Porto Alegre (Brazil) (Navarro, 2002: 15), issues of development planning such as designing a community development plan, aspects of service delivery such as designating where a feeder road will pass, where a water well will be dug or where a school or a maternity centre will be constructed.

If the power to make such decisions is passed on from the central government to local governments/people/communities, it is within the realm of political decentralization. The choice of leaders through election is just a small component of political decentralization. Political decentralization could be another name for devolution, especially if its provisions are enshrined in legal documents.

Seen against this light, political decentralization (being a process of transferring decision-making power and authority) becomes a strong vehicle for championing local diversity, local autonomy, local affairs, local socio-cultural systems and local interests and needs in general by providing a structural and institutionalized venue through which local people can participate and exert "more influence in the formulation and implementation of policies" (Kauzya, 2004:6) and the determination of their development in general. If it is taken that democracy means the rule of the people, then political decentralization, by facilitating participation of the people in decision making, promotes democracy.

How does democratic decentralization create a playing field for citizens' participation?

When political decentralization is understood in the above sense, it becomes clear that it can be a vehicle for promoting democratic participation. In fact, one would not see the value in political decentralization if it was not linked to the promotion of participation of local people or their representatives in the process of decision making and implementation. In a general way, “what is difficult about using political decentralization to promote democratic participation is not in understanding the link between the two, but rather how, through the process of decentralization, to create structures that inspire communities people and facilitate their participation in the decision-making and implementation process” (Kauzya, 2004:7).

In the majority of cases, structures such as local councils, executive committees and local government civil services are established through decentralization in the belief that since they are near to the people and they are managed by representatives of the local people, they will suffice for participation. This is only partly true. Such structures represent what is known as vertical decentralization (i.e. the transfer of power, authority, functions, responsibilities, and resources from central government to local government). They promote participation by representation, but not direct participation, and here lies the major problem. There are instances where the same structures that are established through decentralization to promote democratic participation become instruments of elected local dictatorships. They become structures of highly centralized local governments or **centralized decentralization**.

One of the dangers to guard against in decentralization is the risk of **recentralization** at local level. For vertical decentralization to avoid this danger, it needs to be complemented by horizontal decentralization, which is a process through which the local communities are empowered through community-based civil society organizations, and structural arrangements that integrate the community's socio-economic actors into the analysis of local problems and decision preparation and making, as well as implementation of the local government structures. The example of the Community Development Committees in Rwanda is informative on this point: "In line with decentralization, Community Development Committees (CDCs) were set up to identify needs and priorities in their development plans and form the planning process at the local levels. To ensure the actual participation of the population in its development, the planning should be a participatory process, including all the different levels. The Community Development Committee established at each level from the lowest (cell) to the highest (district) is an important organ for participatory planning for poverty reduction. The plans that are made at the cell level go up through the sector level, the district level and up to the national level. It is important to note that the civil society groups, NGOs and the private sector are legally included in the Community Development Committees and the planning process" (UNDESA, 2004:65).

Participation in elections is a matter of voting that, depending on the mandate of the elected leaders, is once-in-a-period activity. For the people to be seen to participate fully, this requires reinforcement by voice, i.e. the day-to-day influence the people exercise on their leaders to shape the decisions they make, and demand accountability from them for the resources put at their disposal. The World Bank puts it clearly: "Voting

democracy is often considered as satisfying the conditions for citizen participation and voice in the design of decentralized systems, but in practice this may not be sufficient. Meaningful participation requires that citizens be informed and that their voices have an impact where consequences are immediate. The legal/regulatory system needs to provide for, at minimum, full, timely and easily accessible public disclosure of resource allocation decisions – in budgets, in procurements, and in expenditure programs. An output/outcome orientation to expenditure management would be even more desirable” (UNDESA, 2004:67).

If it is accepted that a democracy is not only premised on elections, then the most often expressed view that decentralization, especially devolution, enhances participation by providing political structural arrangement and legal provisions for voting to choose local leaders, is just a small part of the requirements for full participation. For decentralization or any other structural arrangement to facilitate socio-economic democratic participation, it must take into account the full range of the possibilities of participation. Certainly participation in the election of local leaders is one of the various components of people’s political participation. However, for people to determine their destiny, they need to participate in:

- (1) deciding which problems concern them most and in which ways in order to set priorities on which to expend their energies and resources for their own benefit;
- (2) planning the way their problems will be solved and their needs met;
- (3) working to produce goods and services and to distribute them through engagement in a full range of economic, commercial and non-profit activities;

- (4) paying for the goods and services, which in essence underpins their participation in consumption.

To conclude this chapter it can be argued that the successes or failures of decentralization policies cannot be adequately understood outside of the issues and conceptualisations discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3

DECENTRALIZATION IN RWANDA

3.1 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the decentralization process in the context of Rwanda, and more specifically the decentralization policy in Rwanda. As this research focuses on the district of NYARUGENGE, the chapter also provides some insight into the process of decentralization in that district in order to review the process of decentralization as well as the challenges experienced during its implementation.

3.1.1 A brief historical context of decentralization in Rwanda

There was a total breakdown of institutions, systems, structures and human capacity in Rwanda as a result of the genocide of 1994. Since then, the country has gone through the painful challenge of rebuilding the whole infrastructure of the government. From the period of the emergency, through the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, up to the current effort of development, a considerable amount of work has been accomplished in the area of re-establishing and strengthening good governance (political, economical, social and administrative). A combined effort by the Rwandan people, donors and development partners has resulted in the country being put back on the right path for long-term development.

In January 1998, reflecting on the transition from emergency to development and recognizing the need to develop a national programme, the government held a national workshop on governance. Priority areas for governance interventions in Rwanda were identified, notably public reform, the strengthening of the justice sector, the parliament, decentralization and local governance, the strengthening of government coordination, and, human resource development.

Later, a series of brainstorming meetings, initiated and conducted in May 1998 and March 1999, led to the development of the government's vision on governance issues such as unity and reconciliation, democracy, gender dimensions, economic policy and security. This led to a number of policy proposals such as the decentralization policy and the Gacaca community justice initiative (Ministry of Local Government, Community Development and Social Affairs, 2002:9).

3.1.2 The setting up of a foundation for governance during the transition period

A designated Interim Governance Programme (1998 -2000) was implemented through 2001. Alongside the Interim Governance Programme, the government continued its efforts to put the governance back on track. The following are some of the area of achievements of the governance:

- the development and implementation of administrative reform;
- the strengthening of parliament;
- the rehabilitation of the justice sector;

- the strengthening of national unity and reconciliation, and the promotion and protection of human rights;
- the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- the demobilization and reintegration of the army; and
- the introduction of decentralization and the development of local community.

At this point, it was basically a process of initiating, formulating and debating policy, holding elections at cell, sector and district levels, electing local officials, introducing participatory development projects in 72 of the former communes(in Rwanda, commune is nowadays referred to as district), and ensuring ongoing administrative decentralization in the ministries of health and education (MINALOC, 2001:11).

3.2 A BRIEF PICTURE OF POVERTY IN RWANDA

The table below contains indicators of economic development and poverty in the country.

Table 3.1 Selected indicators of economic development and poverty in Rwanda

Indicator	Current level	Year
Population	7 979 930	2000
Proportion of population below the poverty line	60.29%	2000
Life expectancy at birth (according to HDR)	43 years	2000
Maternal mortality per 100 000 births	810	2000
Infant mortality per 1 000 (before first birthday)	107	2000
Infant mortality per 1 000 (before fifth birthday)	198	2000
HIV prevalence (15-49 years)	13.7	2000
Total fertility rate	5.8	2000
Contraceptive prevalence rate	4%	2000
Proportion of children immunized < 5 years	72%	2000
Fertiliser used per ha	2kg/ year	2000
Gross primary school enrolment	100%	2000/1
Net primary enrolment	73.3%	2000/1
Gross secondary school enrolment	102%	2000
Net secondary school enrolment	60%	
Adult literacy (>15 years)	52.36%	2000
Adult literacy (>15 years females)	47.79%	2000
Adult literacy (> 15 years males)	58.06%	2000
Malnutrition: low height for age (stunting)	42.7%	2000
Malnutrition: low weight for age (underweight)	29%	2000

Sources: *Ministry of Local Government and Social Affairs, 2002: National Programme for Strengthening Good Governance for Poverty Reduction; HDR, 2005: Country Fact sheets, Rwanda: Human Development Index.*

The proportion of households living below the poverty line (\$1 per person per day) was 40% in the 1985 household budget expenditure survey, then rose to 53% in 1993 and to

an estimated 70% since 1996. Peculiar to Rwanda is the genocide-related poverty. The vulnerability of some groups has increased since the genocide, resulting in the emergence of the 'new very poor'.

Poor households are now more likely to have a female as head and/or a child as head and are characterized by a lack of able-bodied labour. The proportion of the households 'complete'(with able-bodied adults) has fallen from 86% before the genocide of 1994 to 16% after the genocide, with the remainder made up of households with either females, widowers or children as heads (Ndahimana,2002).

3.3 LINKS BETWEEN DECENTRALIZATION AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Problems of poverty and governance are inextricably linked as has been suggested. If power is abused, or exercised in weak or improper ways, those with the least power—the poor – are most likely to suffer. “Weak governance compromises the delivery of services and benefits to those who need them most.... Thus, the poor governance generates and reinforces poverty and subverts efforts to reduce it. The essential precondition to improve the lives of the poor or the local people is strengthening government.” (Navin, Hammergren, Knack, & Levy, 2000:275)

The government of Rwanda sees good governance as the exercising of political, economic, and administrative authority to manage the nation's institutions as well as leadership behaviour through which citizens' groups can articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations, and mediate when the participation, interests, and

livelihood of the governed are the prime motives of the leaders' actions at every level of society (MINALOC, 2002).

In several societies (Navin, Hammergren, Knack & Levy, 2000:278), vulnerability to crime, violence, and corruption is a major dimension of poverty and is often the concern most forcefully expressed by the poor. Governments can act to check these forms of arbitrary action by making the justice system accessible and limiting violence and exploitation by the police. In some cases alternative dispute resolution bodies can be less expensive and speedier than the traditional court system, but neither will necessarily be fair. Governments can also introduce methods by which the local community can report – anonymously or publicly– on the behaviour of public officials. This way of allowing local people in Rwanda to report publicly on their leaders' behaviour has been implemented in diverse meetings held in many districts of the country.

Good governance and poverty reduction cannot be separated, and are not independent of each another in other words. Sustainable poverty reduction strategies can only be achieved in a context of good governance. On the other hand, poverty is a constraint to the existence and even sustaining of good governance. Good governance will facilitate participation and therefore empower citizens to utilize their resources more efficiently.

According to Crook and Sverrisson (2001), decentralization is linked to poverty reduction for two reasons. Firstly, effective implementation of poverty reduction strategies often requires detailed and specific local knowledge, which may be most readily obtainable

through a decentralized and locally accountable system of governance. The right kind of decentralization will therefore enable local government units to have sufficient technical and financial capacity to carry out their assigned functions.

Secondly, the relationship between decentralization and poverty reduction depends on the targeting of poverty-reducing public investment by local government units. Local government units implement the national poverty reduction policy, narrowly or broadly defined. A narrowly defined poverty policy uses transfers of income, in money or other means, to the poor. A broadly defined poverty reduction policy also encompasses policies intended to increase the productivity of the poor through the formation and maintenance of human capital – health and education – and improved access to markets and productive resources in general (Crook & Sverrisson, 2001).

Therefore, in this context, the GoR recognizes that the devolution of power, authority and resources plays a vital role in the fight against poverty. Through its policy of decentralization, people at grass-roots level have been and will be empowered to identify their needs and seek their satisfaction under the leadership of elected local authorities.

3.4 THE RWANDAN DECENTRALIZATION POLICY AND ITS PRINCIPLES

Before examining how the Nyarugenge community experiences the decentralization policy (see chapter 5), it is important to illustrate the objectives of Rwanda's decentralization policy. This section also considers the modes of decentralization

applied in the Rwandan decentralization process, and the principles that are intended to guide it.

3.4.1 Objectives of the Rwandan decentralization policy

The objectives of Rwanda's decentralization policy are the following:

- To enable and create structures for local people to participate in initiating, making, implementing and monitoring decisions and plans that concern them, taking into consideration their local needs, priorities, capacities and resources by transferring power, authority and resources from local government to lower levels.
- To strengthen accountability and transparency in Rwanda by making local leaders directly accountable to the communities they serve, and by establishing a clear linkage between the taxes people pay and the services that are financed by these taxes.
- To enhance the sensitivity and responsiveness of public administration to local environment by placing the planning, financing, management and control of service provision at the point where services are provided and enabling local leadership to develop organization structures and capacities that take into consideration the local environment and needs.
- To develop a sustainable economic planning and management capacity at local level that will serve as a driving force for planning, mobilization and implementation of social, political, and economic development to alleviate poverty.

- To enhance effectiveness and efficiency in planning, monitoring and delivery of services by reducing the burden of central officials who are at a distance from the point where needs are felt and services delivered (MINALOC, 2001).

With the above objectives the government of Rwanda is recognizing decentralization as an instrument for people's political empowerment, a platform for sustainable democratization, a structural arrangement for the mobilization of economic development energies, initiatives and resources and a weapon for people's reconciliation, social integration and wellbeing. Therefore, the decentralization policy is intended to give power to the people and enable them to execute their will for self-development. It evolves institutions that are not only democratic, accountable and transparent, but also efficient and effective in service provision and community development.

3.4.2 Modes of decentralization

According to Rwanda's decentralization policy, decentralization was conceived to be implemented through three modes: deconcentration, delegation, and devolution (MINALOC, 2001).

- Under **deconcentration**, some of the services and functions reserved for central government will be executed by central government's public servants that will be located in local governments, but hierarchically responsible directly to central government.

- Under **delegation**, some of the services and functions reserved for central government will be delegated to local governments and requisite resources will be transferred to them for effective provision of these delegated services.
- Under **devolution**, the powers, authority, responsibilities, services and resources currently centralized at central government level will be transferred to local governments, which will be created by law as legal entities with powers to sue and be sued.

The combination of these three phases of decentralization has been and continues to be geared towards the economic, political and managerial/administrative empowerment and reconciliation of the people of Rwanda to determine their livelihood.

3.4.3 Principles inherent to the Rwandan decentralization programme

The Rwandan decentralization policy emanates from the government's commitment to empower its people to determine their destiny. Therefore, the decentralization policy is formulated and will be implemented with respect to the following principles (MINALOC, 2001):

- the ensuring of national unity, indivisibility and even development;
- the ensuring of local autonomy, identity, interests and diversity;
- the separation of political and administrative/technical authority/work;
- the matching of transferred responsibilities with the transfer of financial, human and material resources.

Respecting the principle of national unity, indivisibility and even development will, in terms of the principles underpinning the policy, make sure that decentralization is not used as an excuse for national disintegration and indiscriminate development.

Respecting the principle of local autonomy, identity, interests and diversity will make sure that decentralization champions people's participation in identifying local needs and interests, making plans for satisfying them, mobilizing resources and their energies in the implementation of the plans.

Respecting the principle of separation of political and administrative/technical authority will help to avoid duplication, overlaps and conflict which confuse accountability.

Finally, matching the transferred responsibilities and functions with the requisite financial, material and human resources will ensure that decentralization is meaningful in giving local populations the capacity to plan and manage their local development.

3.5 ACHIEVEMENTS OF DECENTRALIZATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

This section deals with some of the achievements of the Government of Rwanda.

3.5.1 Legal and regulatory framework

According to Ndahimana (2002) the decentralization policy and the implementation strategy for the national decentralization policy that were both adopted by the GoR on 26 May 2000, had begun much earlier. A number of the legal instruments and

procedures outlined in the appendix (see Annexure 4) were set up. They seek to empower local authorities with the required administrative and financial powers, and hence to facilitate the implementation of the decentralization process.

3.5.2 Elections

The successful organization of elections at local government level in March 1999; March 2001; and March 2002 is widely regarded as a major success of the GoR in promoting good governance and decentralization. These elections, in which over 205 national and international civil society groups and diplomats were observers, have been regarded as a real test of the Rwandan population's concern and interest in the stability and good governance of their country. Although only about 3,34 million people registered to vote, i.e. about 67% of those eligible to vote, an overwhelming 96,1% (i.e. 3,21 million) actually voted in the March 2001 elections.

Table 3.2 The outcome of the local elections

Years	Levels	Male		Female		Total
		Number	%	Number	%	
1999	Cell & sector levels	110 656	71.1%	45 083	28.9%	155 739
2001	District Councils	2 045	74%	720	26%	2 765
	Executive committees	403	76%	127	24%	530
2002	Cells	90 369	72.50%	34 270	27.50%	124 638
	Sectors	10 577	85.82%	1747	14.18%	123 245

Source: Ndahimana, 2002

According to this table, fewer women than men were elected in the local structures. However, it should be noted that apart from these formal structures women have other special structures in which they work parallel with the official structures (for more details see sections 3.8.1 and 3.8.2).

The process of building a local government through democratically elected representatives in Rwanda is clearly still evolving and faces fundamental difficulties.

These include:

- Lack of experience and expertise in democratic procedures and practices, as both the administrative cadres and local communities are new to democratic practices and cultures.

- The media and civil society are still evolving so that their role in mobilizing and sensitizing the masses is not effective. As a result, civic education in the run up to elections was inadequately done.
- Logistical and financial resource constraints affected the Rwandan National Electoral Commission. The budgetary allocations to the commission remain completely inadequate, presenting many difficulties in its operations.
- Electoral law and procedures are generally not known to citizens. This situation that has tended to compromise the effective management of the election process.

The decentralization policy and the law of 2001 that governs it indicates that the main unit of local government is the district (approximately the same as the former commune), with some functions carried out at the level of the province (formerly the prefecture). Elections for the district mayor by the local community have replaced the former system where the central government appointed the mayor. Each district has a community development committee (CDC) that guides the district development activities. Cells elect representatives to the CDC at sector level; the sector level CDC elects its representatives to the district level.

3.5.3 Decentralization-related policies

The major policies that have been adopted to facilitate the implementation of the decentralization policy are the fiscal decentralization policy and the community development policy.

Fiscal decentralization has been established in order to allow districts to raise their own resources so as to enable them to finance their current activities. The main components of this policy are: empowering local authorities to set tax and license rates, empowering local authorities to levy service fees, devolving property tax to local governments, establishing development funds for local governments, strengthening accounting and audit systems for local governments, and establishing a programme-based budget strategy for local governments (Ndahimana, 2002).

The **community development policy** is based on the principles that the community at grass-roots level is the pillar of a durable development; that investments should be made in projects that benefit a large portion of the population; that investments should target the priority needs in production, distribution and processing; that gratuity should be avoided and limited to vulnerable groups; that only national infrastructures will be managed by the central government; that all other projects will be managed at the level of local governments; and that there will be reliance on own resources. The community development policy provides for six strategic actions as follows: setting a management system that involves the communities and making them responsible for their development; encouraging the emergence of a organizational dynamism; setting up a network of the collection and circulation of information; setting up a development fund; and setting up a system of micro-financing adapted to the reality of Rwanda (Ndahimana, 2002).

3.5.4 Implementation of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

In 1999 the Government of Rwanda (GoR) set up the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) to lead national efforts to promote unity and reconciliation that are essential for sustainable human development and lasting peace. Since its creation it has conducted a series of local and national consultations and promoted civic education at provincial and district and national levels. At a national summit in 2000, the NURC endorsed findings from consultations that found that poverty, bad governance, and injustice were the main cause of disunity in Rwanda. The NURC's training sessions are aimed at promoting unity and reconciliation. They target specific groups, including the youth, leaders, and ex-refugees. In this regard decentralization policy also presents an opportunity for the NURC to strengthen reconciliation efforts at grass-roots level.

3.5.5 Implementation of the Gacaca courts

Gacaca is a traditional judicial process updated to deal with cases against those accused of less serious genocide crimes in Rwanda. Gacaca is making a bid for speeding up the lagging court cases against over 100 000 defendants. The introduction of the Gacaca system of justice has created important opportunities to consolidate the process of unity and reconciliation among the population. The Gacaca court speeds up justice, but in some cases it raises tension at the same time, as the government is devolving more decision making to the local level (Kanyankore & Nzabakwiza 2004).

The courts provide employment for 258 208 locally based judges. Training of trainers courses have been presented to 780 of those judges. With 11 000 sites set up in 2002, the courts provide another functional infrastructure at grass-roots level. About 36% of the local judges are women – an action to promote gender sensitivity.

The Gacaca court system, being an adaptation of the traditional ways of resolving conflict, has the objective to reconcile and reinforce the unity of the Rwandan people. The elected leaders at cell and sector level play an important role here. For example, they invite the community to Gacaca sessions. This system is meant to facilitate the population of the same cell or sector to work together in order to judge (after learning the truth pertaining to the genocide) those who have participated in the genocide, to identify the victims and rehabilitate the guiltless persons.

3.6 DONORS' SUPPORT OF DECENTRALIZATION

Donor actors in governance include the following:

- On the vertical plane, international and regional bodies such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, whose influence in governance at national level increases with the phenomenon of internationalization and regionalization.
- On the horizontal plane, international civil society organizations (e.g. Save the Children Fund, OXFAM, International Red Cross, Amnesty International, etc.), and multinational private enterprise.

Rwanda's international development partners comprise bilateral and multilateral donors and lenders, and international agencies as well as some international NGOs. Donors and lenders have supported Rwanda consistently during the post-genocide recovery phase and have now organized themselves to take responsibility for coordinating the different aspects for Rwanda's new development phase on the basis of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

For instance, the USAID interventions, i.e. LGI and LGSA were developed during the immediate post-genocide era, when the overall GoR policy focus was on democratization and good governance; peace and security for all; the promotion of national reconciliation and human rights; the reconstruction of social and economic infrastructure; rural economic transformation; human resources development; transparency and accountability; and popular participation in governance and development. Strategic actions to achieve these broad objectives include a number of public sector reforms (MINALOC, 2002). These formed the basis for USAID and other donors' interventions in Rwanda. The current USAID/ARD project is focusing on developing accounting and financial management systems in local governments, and strengthening the financial mobilization and management capacity (skills, tools, systems) in selected districts.

Since August 2002, donors and ministries have participated in the ongoing process of cooperation to arrange interventions more effectively, optimise the exchanging of experience and permit synergies between partners. The European Community (EC) has

developed a coordination role for EC member states with respect to Rwanda's rural economic development.

The World Bank financed support to parts of Gikongoro, Butare, Gisenyi, Byumba and to districts and the town (it has only one town) of the Umutara province. Belgium financed support in four districts in the north of the Kigali-Ngali province, and the Swiss financed support for the Kibuye province. At district level, managerial training has included accounting, and the organization of local level tenders for modest public works. One nation-wide initiative that USAID financed, trained district level accountants to allow them to track any funds in the common support (Kanyankore & Nzabakwiza, 2004).

3.7 PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

A major development associated with the process of decentralization is the involvement of communities in the planning process (*participatory bottom-up planning*) so that development actions by both the local and central governments take into account the communities' own identified needs and priorities. Direct involvement of people in developmental actions at community level is expected to ease the pressure on the central government, which is severely constrained by inadequate manpower resources.

For example, the community action planning piloted in the Butare province by MINALOC and the NPRP during consultations in the preparation of the PRSP was largely successful, indicating that a participatory practice offers promising possibility for

promoting community development. The community planning approach based on the traditional culture of working together (locally referred to as *Ubudehe*) has shown that it can be a good means of promoting bottom-up development actions based on the local communities themselves being able to analyze their own problems and their development priorities without influence from outside. This spells out one of the achievements of decentralization, even though the lack of financial resources severely limits the results of community participatory approaches – at least for the moment (Ndahimana, 2002:40).

The application of *Ubudehe* for poverty reduction in Rwanda is based on the principle that the poor and their communities know the problems they face, but that they often do not have sufficient information and skills to design the best solutions, and may not be aware of other options available and the costs involved. External interventions in this regard should only be provided after careful analysis of development preferences of the local people and communities if the external support is to be executed effectively and to ensure local ownership of pro-poor projects, especially in the rural areas.

3.8 WOMEN'S POSITION WITHIN DECENTRALIZED LOCAL STRUCTURES

The government's decision to include women in the governance of the nation is based on a number of factors. These include the gendered nature of the Rwandan conflict; the perceptions that women are better at reconciliation; the critical role that women play in

community security; and the experience of Rwandans that women are less corrupt than men (Powley, 2004:8).

Rwanda's commitment to the inclusion of women is, it may be argued, evident. At the level of national leadership, the Rwandan government has made women visible with high-level appointments. In addition, the government has attempted to address women's concerns and gender implications in their policy planning. Rwanda is a signatory to various international instruments that uphold women's rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979), and the Platform for Action adopted at the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995). Rwanda's constitution, adopted in May 2003, underwrites CEDAW and commits to at least 30% parliamentary representation to women.

It has also devised innovative structures to promote women's participation in governance at all administrative levels – from the smallest cell to the sector, district, provincial, and national levels. The creation of development structures for women, include the establishment of a separate Ministry for Gender and Women in Development (MIGEPROFE), down to the local government structures (women councils). This has in effect strengthened institutional frameworks to better address the situation of women.

In order to understand the extent to which women are represented in local structures, two types of electoral innovations through which women have benefited in this regard are briefly discussed.

3.8.1 The triple ballot

In the sector and district elections in 2001, Rwanda introduced an electoral mechanism aimed at including women (and young people, who were also defined as a formerly unrepresented group) in governance.

In these elections, each voter uses three ballots: a general ballot, a women's ballot, and a youth ballot. In each sector, voters selected one person on each ballot, thus picking a general candidate (frequently, but not necessarily, a man), a woman, and a young person. Through a subsequent indirect election, a district council was chosen from candidates who won at the sector level. This district council included all of those elected on the general ballot, one-third of the women, and one-third of the youth. From that group, the district mayor and other executive committee officials were chosen.

As a result 27% of those elected to the district councils in 2001 were women (Powley, 2004:9). The introduction of triple ballots in March 2001 guaranteed that women would constitute at least 25% of district-level leadership. This system provided for women who were not comfortable in challenging men directly in elections.

3.8.2 A parallel system of women's councils and women-only elections

Women's councils are grass-roots structures elected at cell level by women only (and then through indirect election at each successive administrative level), that operate in parallel to the general local councils and present women's concerns.

The Ministry of Gender and Women in Development established the women's councils shortly after the genocide, and their role has been expanded considerably. At each level, the women's council includes ten women who are representatives for legal affairs, civic education, health, and finance. They are involved in skills training and making local women aware of their rights, as well as in advising the generally elected bodies on issues that affect women and taking women's concerns to them. These councils ensure that women's views on education, health, security, and other issues are articulated to local authorities.

While the women's councils are important in terms of decentralization and grass-roots engagement, lack of resources prevent them from maximising their impact. Members of local women's councils are not paid, and because they must volunteer in addition to their paid work and family responsibilities, the councils are less effective and less consistent than they could be. Nevertheless, women in these grass-roots councils have been active in creating new political space.

The head of a women's council holds a reserved seat on the general local council, providing a link between the two systems. These parallel women's councils exist at the local, provincial, and national levels. Women's councils and women's elections began with the September 2003 elections. Twenty-four of the 80 seats in lower house of parliament derived from women's councils through their elections.

3.9 THE DISTRICT OF NYARUGENGE

3.9.1 Creation of the district

The district of Nyarugenge was created by law no 07/2001 of 19 January 2001. The latter dealt with the organization and functioning of the city of Kigali.

The district of Nyarugenge was previously known as the urban commune of Nyarugenge. Before 1990 it encompassed the capital of the country and was instituted by decree-law no 15/75 of 1975. It covered 47 km². The resident population was estimated to be 34 398 inhabitants on 31/12/1987 and the density was 748 inhabitants/km² (District de Nyarugenge, 2004).

In terms of law no. 07/2001 of 19/01/2001, the organisation and functioning of the city of Kigali and the district of Nyarugenge was restructured. According to the general national census (National Census Office, 2002:13) of 15-30 August 2002, it now extends over a surface area of 786 km² with a population of 100 921 inhabitants and an average of 12 841 inhabitants/km². It encompasses six administrative sectors: Muhima, Cyahafi, Biryogo, Rurenge, Gitega and Nyarugenge.

3.9.2 Political borders of the district of Nyarugenge

The district of Nyarugenge is bordered:

- in the north by the district of Gisozi
- in the east by the district of Nyamirambo

- in the south by the district of Gikondo
- in the west by the district of Kacyiru.

It is actually in the heart of the Kigali. It has a high concentration of commercial activities. It comprises the centre for administration offices including international administration offices, international organizations, embassies, banks etc.

3.9.3 Geographic aspects

The district of Nyarugenge is situated on the central plateau between the crest of Zaire-Nil and the savannah of the East. It has four seasons:

- two rainy seasons
- two dry seasons.

The average temperature is 20 °C and the average rainfall is 117.4 mm per year. The relief of the district of Nyarugenge presents two structures:

- a zone of highlands: the sector of Nyarugenge
- a hilly and mountainous zone with steep aspects: the sectors Muhima, Cyahafi, Biryogo, Rurenge and Gitega.

The district of Nyarugenge has two small streams that separate the sectors of the district from sectors of other districts. One is the stream of Mpazi that flows into the river of Nyabugogo, and the other is the stream of Rwampara, which has its source in the sector of Kimisagara. Because of urbanization process, the fauna and flora are almost non-existent in the district that covers a big part of Kigali city.

3.9.4 Socio-economic aspects

The district of Nyaruenge, like other districts of the country, has a mission to improve living conditions and the economy of its population in order to meet the fundamental needs of the people (e.g. education, housing, food consumption, and medical treatment).

According to the National Census Office (2002:13), the district of Nyarugenge had a population of 100 921 in 2002, of which 58.5% were female and 41.5% male. The annual growth rate of the population was 3%. Of the 2002 population, 32% lived in abject poverty in the slum areas of the district. More than half the population (79,6%) had been to school but ironically only 1.9% could read, and a mere 12.2% had received only one form or another of education. The main language spoken by the majority of the population was Kinyarwanda (95.4%), followed by Swahili (22.5%), French (21.4%) and English (11.1%). Thus, as some Rwandans are bilinguals, this explains why the total of those statistics data are more than 100%).

In the Nyarugenge district all local meetings are conducted in Kinyarwanda, the local language, and this provides an opportunity for everybody to participate. However, in cases where the education levels are low, participation becomes limited. Lower levels of education generally imply less access to information that would otherwise permit fuller participation in principle.

Arguably these literacy rates have a negative impact on the promotion of participation and the actual engaging of the local community in issues of governance as their scope of grasping technical concepts and ideas is greatly inhibited.

There is a fairly low unemployment rate of 19.5%, with the main employers being the government, which employs 40% of the current workforce, and the private sector, which employs 60%.

The main faith classifications in the district are Christianity, whose followers constitute 70% of the population, and the Muslim faith, whose followers make up 15.5% of the population. Other religious faiths are practised by 11% of the population.

A large percentage of the population (58.2%) is single, compared to the 29% that is married; 0.9% is separated and 4.6% is widowed. The relatively higher percentage of single persons does not necessarily mean a young population, because there are many people who are unofficially married.

In most cases married women who are also uneducated tend to be so engaged with household work that it limits them as far as participation in the politics of the community is concerned. This is particularly true for the slum sectors of Biryogo, Rugenge, Gitega and Cyahafi. In contrast, educated widows tend to participate actively. The widows have formed various associations at sector level and they have also an umbrella association at district level. This arrangement continues to city level and even up to national level. The widows are in this way able to participate by advocating for their rights.

The population of the district is increasing through a massive rural exodus. People from the rural areas coming to seek work in town have limited accommodation and the overpopulation causing many problems in maintaining the city. Serious social demands are created in many domains, e.g. health, hygiene, education, and accommodation.

The majority of the inhabitants of the Nyarugenge district are young people, and they cause many problems related to juvenile delinquency. In the district of Nyarugenge, according to the demographic data of 2003, juvenile delinquency occurs as a consequence of four apparent situations (District de Nyarugenge, 2004:7):

- scarcity of suitable land for cultivation accentuated by demographic pressure and insufficient jobs;
- illiteracy and limited professional qualifications to utilize the available resources;
- cultural degradation, value changes and lack of social integration;
- poor familial and social supervision.

Because of the urbanization process, agriculture and stock breeding in the district have been replaced by commerce and handcraft, which are more developed activities in the city than in rural or other area in the country. In some sectors of the district, youth associations have developed and are interested in handcraft. The following activities are popular in this regard: sewing, joinery, repairing cars/motorbikes, making handcraft objects, forging metal, repairing tyres, repairing shoes, running hair salons, building, etc.

As far as infrastructure is concerned, the district of Nyarugenge has buildings for personnel, many ministries, hotels, banks, embassies, hospitals and schools.

In conclusion, this chapter looked at decentralization in Rwanda – its objectives, principles and the context through which the local people of the Nyarugenge district are experiencing the decentralization process. It is important to note here that the country, as well as the district of Nyarugenge, is ravaged by poverty, that the decentralization policy was introduced to fight poverty by involving local people in decision making and the development of the district and that the process of decentralization tries to follow the principles of good governance by involving local and international organizations in the development of the district.

CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to discuss the process followed to conduct the research. The researcher used different methods and techniques of data collection and analysis. This chapter explains why it was preferable to use both qualitative and quantitative methods and different techniques for gathering information, how the sample was defined, how the data was collected and the analysis done.

4.2 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Runyon, Haber, Pittenger & Coleman (1996:63) define qualitative research as: "... a programme to guide the researcher in collecting, analyzing and interpreting observed facts". The characteristics of qualitative research are strikingly different to more traditional quantitative approaches (McKereghan, 1998:15). The reasons why a qualitative method as well as a quantitative method was chosen, was to avoid the pitfalls inherent in one method. Denzin (1959) coined the term "triangulation" to refer to multiple methods of data collection. This concept validates the use of a variety of methods, which because of their complementarity may be employed to correct their respective shortcomings.

It is important to delineate the characteristics of quantitative and qualitative data to understand the reasoning that underpins the choice to use both methods. The following table highlights three differences between the two methods.

Table 4.1 Difference between qualitative and quantitative method

Quantitative data	Qualitative data
Based on meaning derived from numbers.	Based on meanings expressed through words.
Collection results presented in numerical and standardized data.	Collection results in non-standardized format requiring classification into categories.
Analysis results through the use of diagrams and statistics.	Analysis through the use of conceptualization.

Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:381).

A qualitative approach is characterized by data collection in a natural setting where the researcher acts as a key instrument (Saunders, *et al.*, 2000:381). Neuman (1997:329) says in this regard “the qualitative researcher focuses on the subjective meanings, definitions, metaphors and descriptions of specific cases. And as such, it is difficult to develop precise measures expressed as numbers.”

Qualitative research is distinguished from the quantitative in that the latter uses numbers and statistical methods, while the former does not rely on numerical measurements. According to Haralambos and Holborn (1994:107), qualitative data is “usually seen as richer, more vital, as having greater depth and more likely to present true picture of a way of life, of people’s experiences, attitudes and beliefs.”

Furthermore, qualitative research contains a deep, rich description and is more concerned with nuance and understanding than specifying outcomes or products. Generally, the data is analyzed by means of an inductive process. Campbell (1996:11) explains this inductive process by saying “qualitative researchers assume reality is socially constructed and that variables are complex, interwoven and difficult to measure. Thereby, the researcher seeks the insider’s point of view and is personally involved in the process.”

Typically, according to Babbie and Mouton (2003:278), qualitative research designs share the following features:

- a detailed engagement/encounter with the object of the study;
- selecting a small number of cases to be studied;
- an openness to multiple sources of data (multi-method approach);
- flexible design features that allow the researcher to adapt and make changes to the study where and when necessary.

Babbie and Mouton (2003) distinguished three main design types of qualitative research: ethnographic studies, case studies, and life stories. This research has made use of a case study method. The case study is “an investigation of a single unit” (Runyan in Babbie & Mouton, 2003:281). The units of study can be an individual person, but case studies, can be done of other units such as a family, a treatment team, a community, or a country.

With reference to the different types of case studies suggested by Babbie and Mouton (2003), this study focuses on the analysis of one district. It aimed to research issues related to the Rwandan decentralization policy in the Nyarugenge district. The analysis of this process can be seen to be a ‘study of an organization and of institutions. Babbie and Mouton (2003) argue that such studies include “studies of best practice, policy implementation and evaluation, human practices, management and organizational issues, organizational culture, processes of change and so on” (Babbie & Mouton, 2003:281).

Furthermore, Schurinck (1996:12-13) indicates that a qualitative researcher will rarely conduct a study to test a hypothesis or theory. Instead of formulating a hypothesis, this researcher formulated research questions in line with the aim of the study (see section 1.3 and 1.4 in the first chapter). Another significant strength of qualitative research is that it seeks to “explore where policy, folk wisdom, and practice do not work” (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:46).

Quantitative research is considered by some to be more **reliable** than qualitative investigation. This is because, according to Duffy (1986), a quantitative approach aims to control or eliminate extraneous variables within the internal structure of the study, and the data produced can also be assessed by standardized testing. The reliability of qualitative research is weakened by the fact that the process is under-standardized and relies on the insights and the abilities of the observer, thus making an assessment of reliability difficult (Duffy 1986:59).

Although qualitative methodologies may have greater problems with reliability than quantitative methodologies, the position is reversed when the issue is **validity**. The weakness in quantitative research is that the more tightly controlled the study, the more difficult it becomes to confirm that the research situation is like real life (Sandelowski, 1986:30).

The qualitative approach is mostly criticized for focusing on one case, i.e. the one district, “in its use of methods such as interviewing and in-depth analysis” (Babbie & Mouton, 2003:281). Nevertheless, the approach ensures the unearthing of an enormous amount of information that serves to enhance intensive understanding of the studied phenomenon.

As a combination of approaches in social science is useful, the researcher used both methods. After the data had been collected, it needed to be converted into numerical form and subjected to statistical analysis. The task here is to reduce a wide variety of

items of information to a more limited set of attributes. The tables have been utilized for that purpose.

As has been suggested, each method has its strengths and weaknesses. That is why both methods were used, in this research, to gain their advantages and alleviate their weaknesses.

The strengths of the quantitative method (Matveev, 2002:54) include:

- “stating the research problem in specific and set terms;
- achieving high levels of reliability of gathered data due to controlled observations, laboratory experiments, surveys, or other form of research manipulations;
- eliminating or minimizing subjectivity of judgment.”

The weaknesses of the quantitative method (Matveev, 2002:55) include:

- “failure to provide the researcher with information on the context of the situation where the studied phenomenon occurs;
- inability to control the environment where the respondents provide the answers to the questions in the survey;
- limited outcomes to only those outlined in the original research proposal due to closed type questions and the structured format.”

Because of the in-depth nature of qualitative research, it usually relates to a small, selective sample (Cormack, 1991). A weakness hereof, according to Bryman (1988), is

that the researcher could have been influenced by a particular predisposition. More over small-scale studies cannot be generalised (Linda, 1994:717).

“The strength of the qualitative methodology employed lies in the fact that it has an holistic focus, allowing for flexibility and the attainment of a deeper, more valid understanding of the subject than could be achieved through a more rigid (quantitative) approach” (Duffy, 1986:75). A weakness of qualitative methodology is “the possible effect of the researcher’s presence on the respondents” (Linda, 1994:718).

The strengths of the qualitative method (Matveev, 2002:58) include:

- “obtaining a more realistic feel of the world that cannot be experienced in the numerical data and statistical analysis used in quantitative research;
- flexible ways to perform data collection, subsequent analysis, and the interpretation of collected information;
- providing a holistic view of the phenomena under investigation;
- ability to interact with the research subjects in their own language and on their own terms ;
- descriptive capability based on primary and unstructured data.”

The weaknesses of the qualitative method, according to Matveev (2002:64), include:

- “departing from the original objectives of the research in response to the changing nature of the context;

- arriving at different conclusions based on the same information depending on the personal characteristics of the researcher;
- inability to investigate causality between different research phenomena;
- difficulty in explaining the difference in the quality and quantity of information obtained from different respondents and arriving at different, non-consistent conclusions;
- lacking consistency and reliability because the researcher can employ different probing techniques and the respondent can choose to tell some particular stories and ignore others.”

4.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS/TECHNIQUES OF DATA-COLLECTION

Different instruments/techniques were used to conduct this research.

4.3.1 Questionnaire

Information was gathered using *open-ended* and *closed-ended* questions. Follow-up interviews were conducted for clarification purposes. The *closed-ended* questions are those “on which the respondent is asked to select an answer from among a list provided by the researcher” (Babbie & Mouton, 2003:233). The *open-ended* questions are those “on which the respondent is asked to provide his or her own answer to the question” (Babbie & Mouton, 2003:233). In the open-ended questions the interviewee responded freely to the questions of the researcher in the context that he/she was not limited by a “yes” or “no” answer, as is the case for closed-ended questions. In this perspective, Oppenheim (1966:41) argues: “the chief advantage of the open question is the freedom

that it gives to the respondent. Once he has understood the intent of the question, he can let his thoughts roam freely, unencumbered by a prepared set of replies.” However, as it was a written questionnaire a space or a number of lines were given where respondents could give their comments on the open-ended questions (see questionnaire A, section ii).

Closed-ended questions were used to collect data which helped to build the tables of the next chapter. Those tables facilitated the interpretation of the results that clarified the extent to which decentralization provides an opportunity to the community to participate in its social, political, and economic development. A closed-ended question is one in which, according to Oppenheim (1966:40), “the respondent is offered a choice of alternatives replies. He may be asked to check or underline his chosen answer(s) in a written questionnaire. Questions of this kind may offer simple alternatives, such as, ‘Yes’ and ‘No’.”

The *thematic analysis* (presented in chapter 5), derived from questionnaires A and B, helped promote an understanding of the community’s attitude towards the decentralization policy, and how it gives them the opportunity, or not, to be more involved in the development of the district. This thematic analysis that was derived from the open-ended questions was of major importance for gaining more information (given as statements) from the respondents’ answers.

The questionnaire was not tested by doing a pilot test before conducting the main interviews with the respondents. The researcher’s experience in the field of decentralization in Rwanda was sufficient he felt for him to design an appropriate

questionnaire for this research. As was noted in section 2 of the first chapter, the researcher spent one year on the project of the IRC, helping the districts of the Kibungo province to deal with decentralization and good governance. Though the district Nyarugenge is not in the Kibungo province, the researcher had the necessary experience on which to draw when compiling the questionnaires. Using this background knowledge and experience, questionnaires (A and B) were designed, keeping the research objectives in mind in formulating the research questions (see chapter 1).

4.3.2 Interview

This approach was used as a data-gathering technique. The qualitative interview is “an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which an interviewer has a plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked in particular words and in a particular order. A qualitative interview is essentially a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent.” (Babbie & Mouton, 2003:289)

Here, interviewer-administered questionnaires were used for the selected representatives from the local level (cells, sectors and districts) up to the levels of the province and central government. Questionnaire B was given exclusively to the “key” persons dealing with matters of decentralization at provincial level and in the Ministry of Local Government, Community Development and Social Affairs. Their ideas were analysed simultaneously with those of other respondents.

The researcher contacted every respondent individually and interviewed him/her in order to obtain information. However, respondents were asked to fill in the forms in his/her own time and a date for collecting the completed forms was arranged. This flexibility finds its justification in the quantitative method. In quantitative research the investigator maintains a detached, objective view in order to understand the facts (Duffy, 1986). The use of some methods, Linda (1994:717) argues, may require no direct contact with subjects at all, as in postal questionnaire surveys. It can be argued that even interview surveys allows the researcher to have little, if any contact with respondents, especially if hired staff carry out most of or all the interviews. The strength of such a detached approach may contribute to guarding against biasing the study and ensuring objectivity.

Oppenheim (1966:36) says of this technique “the self-administered questionnaire is usually presented to the respondents by an interviewer or by someone in an official position, such as a teacher, or a hospital receptionist. The purpose of the inquiry is explained, and then the respondent is left alone to complete the questionnaire, which may be sent in or collected later. This data-collection ensures a high response rate, accurate sampling, and a minimum of interviewer bias, while permitting interviewer assessments, and giving the benefit of a degree of personal contact.”

4.3.3 Documentary research

Information was obtained from documentary sources such as books, articles, journals and official reports. Internet websites, library material from the University of Pretoria and Rwanda’s official reports about decentralization, were used.

4.4 SAMPLING

“A sample is a set of elements selected in some way from a population. The aim of sampling is to save time and effort, but also to obtain consistent and unbiased estimates of the population status in terms of whatever is being researched.” (Sapsford & Jupp, 1999:25)

In this context, this research was not conducted by making use of a census survey but by the sampling of the population. While the former includes every member of the population, the latter is the technique of collecting information from a portion of the population (Kumar, 1996:65). The sample survey was appropriate for this research.

The method of sampling that was used is the *non-probability sample* or *non-random sample*. The non-probability sampling techniques (Babbie & Mouton, 2003:166) “are the most appropriate where the research situations make probability sampling impossible or inappropriate”. It needs to be noted that the council members of the district as well as those of each sector meet once per trimester. As they do not have any permanent offices, it was impossible to conduct a census. However, the executive committee of every sector and district has an office where it can deal with local issues together with the community. The executive committees participated in this research by completing the questionnaire. As some members of the executive committee of the sectors were members of the district council, some of the latter were included in the sample. This explains why a non-random sample technique was used.

In terms of Article 2 of law no. 04/2001 of 13/01/2001 the organization and functioning of the district as an entity in Rwanda was promulgated by law no. 34/2002 of 14/11/2002 (official gazette no. 24 of 15 December 2002). The district is subdivided into sectors, which in turn are subdivided into cells. According to the latter, each district, sector or cell has elected representative committees (executive committee and council committee).

The population was made up of 40 individuals, with 16 representatives at district level and 24 representatives from the six sectors. According to Babbie and Mouton (2003:174), a study of the population is “that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected”.

The district of Nyarugenge has 16 representatives from whom ten were elected. These ten individuals completed the questionnaire. They were members of the district executive committee as well as workers in the administration of the district.

A sample of 12 people from the 24 elected representatives at the level of all sectors of Nyarugenge district was selected. Because of the retrenchment of civil servants in Rwanda at the time every sector retained four representatives per sector – two in charge of political issues and two technicians. Although the district had six sectors, only two elected representatives per sector were selected, one in charge of political issues and one technician. This meant that 12 out of 24 elected representatives from all the sectors completed the questionnaire.

In addition the questionnaire was also submitted to 12 people from the district community as a whole. Among the 12 people, one elected representative from cell level in each sector was included. These individuals came from the local community. According to Rwanda's decentralization policy (MINALOC, 2001), "each person of 18 years old and above is automatically a member of the council of the cell (in which he or she lives). The members of the executive committee of a cell are at the same time members of the council of that cell." Unlike at the level of cells where the council is a structure through which the residents directly participate in planning, managing, and controlling their local development affairs, a sector is a level where people participate through their representatives. This is the reason why the specific sample could be selected as it was. The same questionnaire was used for the whole sample.

Finally two people were selected as key individuals involved in the decentralization policy, one at provincial level and the other one from central government, from the Ministry of Administration and Local Government.

Questionnaire B was used to obtain general information about the research questions (see the transcripts of the interviews in the appendix).

Thirty four individuals constituted the sample size (without counting the two people interviewed at the level of the province and Ministry). Questionnaire A was given to the respondents at the level of district, sector and cell. It was distributed to ten respondents at the district office of Nyarugenge, to 12 respondents at the six sector offices, and finally to 12 individuals selected from the community (the latter are the respondents at

cell level). The community members were selected randomly from local people who came from all the cells of the Nyarugenge district seeking service at the administration office of the sector.

The sample was stratified by gender in order to address gender issues.

4.5 RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND LOGIC OF INVESTIGATION

The research procedure is the way in which the research was conducted to gather the required data within a specific period determined by the researcher. According to De Vos (1998:42), a research procedure is a step-by-step plan the researcher employs in gathering the information, consisting of the selection of the most relevant data-collecting and measuring instruments from those available.

Keeping in mind the techniques used to collect data, the questionnaires were distributed among the elected and non-elected persons of the district of Nyarugenge. As said in the previous section, the non-elected respondents were included in the category of the elected representatives at cell level. They were included in order to get a holistic understanding on the decentralization programme that needs their participation to succeed. The letter of introduction from the University of Pretoria that requested permission to do the research was presented to the authorities of the district, asking them to participate (see appendix 1). The executive secretary of the district wrote a letter to the sectors suggesting to them that they participate in the study by responding to the questionnaire. Consent to complete the questionnaire was requested from each

respondent. Some refused to complete it on the pretext of being very busy with their duties.

Of the questionnaires that had been addressed to the respondents at district, sector, and cell level (both local elected representatives and not elected -- see questionnaire A), 34 out of 40 were returned, giving a response rate of 85%. Sufficient, according to Babbie (1998) who says “a response rate of 50% in the study is representative enough for data analysis to be undertaken”

The data analysis was done as follows: the first step was to condense the collected data into interpretable portions. The data collected through questionnaire A, together with the notes taken from the informal interviews from questionnaire B, was studied and organised under subtitles derived from the questionnaires. In so doing, the researcher identified a number of common initial themes.

The second step was to construct tables from the closed-ended questions, where “yes” or “no” responses were requested.

The third step was to transcribe the respondents’ answers to the open-ended questions. Those answers helped the researcher to understand and interpret the respondents’ perceptions about the decentralization process. A qualitative approach, according to Duffy (1987:54), “is used as a vehicle for studying the empirical world from the perspective of the subject, not the researcher.”

It is important to note that the structuring of the collected data into different themes, as in chapter 5, was done by taking into account the research objectives and the research questions of the study.

4.6 ETHICAL ISSUES FOR THE RESEARCHER TO CONSIDER

Conducting research ethically can be described as a balancing act. A researcher must balance the general obligation to promote knowledge with the general obligation to treat others fairly. These obligations exist before, during and after the actual project. However, there are instances when the researcher's personal influence can affect qualitative research, for example the gender and race of the researcher could affect the manner in which the participants respond to the interviewer-administered questionnaires (Ragunanan, 1999:63).

Permission to undertake this study was sought from administrative authorities of the district of Nyarugenge. Because they agreed it was possible to do a survey in the different sectors and cells in the district. Informed consent was also sought. A number of people refused to take part as has been suggested.

It was important to assure the respondents that the data collected during interviews would be treated anonymously and that I was not interested in them as individuals.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an analysis and interpretation of the data collected during the investigation are given.

The chapter is divided into the sections that are essentially driven by the aims of this study (see chapter 1) and that are linked to the questions that were used for gathering information from the respondents.

The questionnaire was translated from English into Kinyarwanda, which is a national and official language spoken by the whole population of the country. The questionnaire in both languages, Kinyarwanda and English, is presented in the appendix (see Annexures 2 and 3).

5.2 IDENTIFYING THE RESPONDENTS

The NYARUGENGE district of Rwanda was the case studied. The sample consisted of the people of the district. The respondents were people working in the district of Nyarugenge or were inhabitants of that district.

Section (i) of questionnaire A (see appendix 2) provided biographical information on the respondents. It encompassed information about the respondents' situation regarding their marital status, level of education and occupation in the decentralized structures of the district. Questionnaire A was answered by 34 individuals.

In order to supplement the information collected from questionnaire A, questionnaire B was given to two people – one working at provincial level and the other in MINALOC (see the transcripts of the interview in the appendix 5).

5.2.1 Gender category of the respondents

The questionnaire was given to both men and women. The female respondents totalled 15 and the males 19. This means that 55.9% of the respondents were male and 44.1% female.

The decentralization process aims to involve the whole community, without gender discrimination, to participate in decision making for the development of the country. In this context women as well as men were needed to answer the questions.

5.2.2 Marital status of the respondents

The respondents were of different marital status, as presented in the table below.

Table 5.1 Marital status

Respondents	Married	Unmarried	Widows/widowers	Total (%)
Women	7	6	2	15 (44.1%)
Men	6	12	1	19 (55.9%)
Total (%)	13 (38.2%)	18 (53%)	3 (8.8%)	34 (100%)

As can be seen in the table above, the sample included people that were married, unmarried and widows/or widowers. Among them, 38.2% were married, 53% unmarried, 8.8% widows/widowers and 0% divorced.

The findings do not mean that in the district of Nyarugenge there are no persons who have been divorced. There are many divorcees (see section 3.9.4) but, amongst those who completed the questionnaire, there were no divorcees. The proportion of those who immediately agreed to complete the questionnaire and who know how to read and write probably explains the high percentage of unmarried people (53%). At the district level, the elected representatives were required to have a certain level of education. Many of them were working in the day and studying at night. Those who have the possibility to continue their studies while working are mostly the unmarried.

5.2.3 The family size of respondents

All the respondents were adults with different levels of education, some of them with big families, i.e. with many children for whom they were responsible.

Table 5.2 Respondents' children

Respondent's children	Respondents	%
One - three	10	29.4%
Four - seven	12	35.2
Eight and more	7	20.6%
No children	5	14.8%
Total	34	100%

From the data in the table above, 29.4% of respondents had between one and three children, 35.2 % had between four and seven, 20.6% had eight children or more, and 14.8 % did not have children.

In other words more than 80% of the respondents had many children under their care. The 14.8% who did not have children included unmarried people who were studying at the different universities in Kigali after working hours.

The important conclusion that can be drawn from this table is that many of the respondents, in spite of the high rate of unmarried people (53% as shown in the table 5.1), had children for whom they were responsible – a responsibility that was caused especially by the genocide. Overall this responsibility reduced their participation in the development activities of the district, especially in the case women burdened with household tasks and the consequences of the genocide such as rape, torture and diseases.

5.2.4 Respondents' qualifications

The question about level of education helped to indicate which category of people was actually involved in the decentralization process at local level in the district.

The respondents did not all have the same level of education. The table below summarizes the respondents' different qualifications, categorized according to gender.

Table 5.3 Level of education of the respondents with reference to the gender

Educational level	Women	Men	Total (%)
Primary school	3	3	6 (17.7%)
High school	6	8	14 (41.1%)
University	4	7	11 (32.3%)
None	2	1	3 (8.9%)
Total (100%)	15 (44.1%)	19 (55.9%)	34 (100%)

N=34

Of the 34 respondents who completed the questionnaire, 14 had at least been in high school, 11 were at university level, 6 had primary school education, and 3 were illiterate. Of the 11 at university level, only 4 had completed their level of licence (honours degree). The rest were at the time studying during the evening. This was the same for the 41.1% of respondents listed under “high school”. They had not completed their secondary school education. They had completed at least one year of secondary school.

The different educational levels of respondents may have influenced the respondents’ perceptions and understanding of the decentralisation programme it may be argued.

5.2.5 Respondents’ positions in the decentralized structures

People occupying different positions in the local administration of the district of Nyarugenge constituted the sample for this study. Hence it was possible to assume that they were more informed about the positive aspects of the decentralization policy as well as the various constraints to success it faces.

Table 5.4 Positions of the respondents

Position of respondents	Respondents	%
Member of the District Executive Committee and worker in the district office	10	29.4%
Member of Executive Committee of the sectors	12	35.3%
Members of the cell council or inhabitants of the district	12	35.3%
Total	34	100%

The district office had 16 representatives, from whom 10 representatives elected by the local community responded to the questionnaire. They were the CDC and PAC, which both constituted the executive committee of the district. At sector level, 12 members of executive committee responded. Some of these were also members of the district council. This was possible under the provision of the decentralization policy which stated that “each Sector will elect through direct universal suffrage one person to represent it in the district council” (MINALOC, 2001:18). Finally, 12 individuals from the local community, assimilated into the cell council, were selected. (Chapter 4 explains how the respondents were categorized).

5.3 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS

It is fundamental for any development of a district to gain community participation to succeed. As the success depends on the implementation of a policy that allows the local people to participate in the decision making, the researcher was also interested in understanding the situation of the district of Nyarugenge, i.e. the respondents' perceptions on the subject of the decentralization programme.

To obtain this information, questionnaires A and B were given to the respondents.

5.3.1 Respondents' perceptions on the decentralization programme

It was interesting to note the respondents' perceptions on the decentralization policy (see question 8). As indicated in the table below, 100% of the respondents agreed that with respect to the decentralization policy, development of the district would be possible. This may mean that the respondents have positive attitude towards the decentralization policy per se.

Table 5.5 Delivery of public services and the development of the district under the decentralization policy

	Respondents	Percentages
Agree	34	100%
Disagree	0	0%

The respondents explained why the development of the district can be attained if the decentralization policy was implemented correctly. A number of reasons were given. One of the reasons was as follows: the decentralization policy allowed the local people to participate in the making of decisions and in the development activities of the district because it was based on the principles of democracy, good governance and respect for human rights. For example, according to the decentralization policy, they argued, local people had to elect their representatives without any discrimination. The policy gave them the opportunity of having a say and they could participate in the planning of local development activities. In addition, the district was trying to follow the principles of democracy because the local leaders were accountable to the local people in responding to the problems of the community for which they had been elected. According to them, if an elected local representative did not fulfil the task for which he/she had been elected, he/she had to answer to the council and be replaced if necessary. This response is a positive one towards the policy of decentralization.

Another point mentioned by the respondents was the important role that the decentralized structures were meant to play in the process of unity and reconciliation for Rwandans after the genocide of 1994. Local structures played an important role in the implementation of the Gacaca process. For example, the local leaders invited the local community to meetings where they could testify about what had happened during the genocide. This was strongly enhanced, according to the respondents, by confessions and the willingness of the community to solve its own problems.

The next question intended to assess whether the local leaders and the community of the district of Nyarugenge agreed that the decentralization policy gave them the opportunity to participate in the development of the district. The table below summarizes the results.

Table 5.6 Opportunity given by the decentralization policy for participation in decision making and development activities

	Respondents	Percentage
Very much	18	53%
Not very much	11	32.3%
Not at all	5	14.7%
Total	34	100%

According to this table, 53% of the respondents were of the opinion that the decentralization policy definitely allowed and encouraged the local community to

participate in decision making and development activities of the district. Thirty-two point three percent indicated that the decentralization policy provided a moderate opportunity to the local community to participate in the development of the district and 14.7% denied that this policy had contributed to their participation. How did the respondents substantiate their positions?

First, 53% of the respondents strongly accepted that the decentralization policy gave the local community the opportunity to participate in decision making and the development of the district. To explain their ideas, they argued as follows:

“With the introduction of the decentralization policy the local people have become involved and therefore decision making for development took place.”

“Because all activities start at cell level through to sector level with the final decision at district level, it causes the whole local community to participate.”

“The decentralization policy has involved the local community in the development activities of the district; especially in that the local community participates to elaborate the Community Development Plans. This helps to respond to real local needs and according to priority.”

Secondly, the explanations of those respondents who argued that this policy moderately helped the local community to participate in the development of the district (32.3%) were linked to weaknesses present within the decentralization programme. The following opinions can assist us to substantiate this intermediate position.

“Yes, the decentralization policy helps local people to participate in decision making for the development of the district, but some of the objectives of the decentralization policy are not yet implemented. For example, many activities are still centralized and solved at district level, as if the sector level cannot solve them. It is the district which is at present entitled to conduct civil marriages. Why can this function not be decentralized to sector level?”

“When a sector reports the prioritized development projects to the district, those projects are prioritized again at district level before being implemented, and this shows that decisions continue to be finalized at district level.”

The third position was that of people (14.7%) who denied that the decentralization programme had contributed to local participation. The explanations of the supporters of this pessimistic position can be more or less linked to that of the second position, because both blamed the system of decentralization for being inadequate.

“The decentralization policy does not give us the opportunity to participate in decision making. The reason is that the decisions made by the low levels of cells and sectors are not taken into account at the district level, which has the final decision about the kind of project to be implemented in the district”. “On the contrary, it is a decision taken by leaders at district level which is implemented regardless of the local people’s views or the views of their representatives at cell and sector levels.”

In this regard the following needs consideration: the priority of projects to be implemented is determined according to the needs of the local community, but also according to the funds that are available for a project. Hence, the district level has to choose among different projects suggested by the cell and sector levels. According to the national decentralization policy (MINALOC, 2001), “the criteria for choosing which development project is to be implemented are determined in proportion to the economic possibility of the district and the priority needs felt by the local community.”

If a project suggested by local people at cell and sector level is not selected and implemented at district level because of lack of funds, the local communities or local structures may conclude that their suggestions were not taken into account. This was the impression of the 14.7% of the respondents. This means that clear coordination of information within those local structures and between local people needs to be implemented. In addition, in order to avoid a kind of “centralization of decentralization”, the district needs to decentralize some of its functions to the sector and cell levels, not only for efficiency but also to gain full participation of the local people.

Table 5.7 Change in community participation in development since the implementation of the decentralization policy

	Respondents	Percentage
Very much	16	47.0%
Not very much	14	41.2%
Not at all	4	11.8%

N=34

With this question, which intended to establish if a positive change in community participation had been brought about by the decentralization policy, 47% strongly agreed that it had brought a positive change. This position was supported by the respondents' views, as stated in the following arguments:

“With decentralization, the local community has become aware that they have a say in the development of their district.”

“Local communities feel that with local problems like theirs, any development activity in the district is a result of consensual decision of the local people.”

“Before implementation of the decentralization programme, there was no avenue for local people to forward their needs and views. These days, it has been possible. For example, the primary school infrastructure has been renewed after consensus was reached by the local people.”

The respondents argued that the delivery of services had also improved since the implementation of the decentralization policy.

Forty one point two percent of respondents agreed that there had been change, but not very much, brought about by the decentralization process. People had been involved in decision making regarding the administration of the district. This was not the case with the previous system, where the former burgomaster (in Rwanda, mayor was previously referred to as burgomaster) had a unilateral decision making power in his district.

It can be suggested that the arguments of the 47% and 41.2% categories of respondents showed that there had been a positive change after the implementation of the decentralization policy. Their opinion can be summarized as follows:

- in principle, the people of the community were aware that they had a choice;
- the community participated in this choice;
- they felt free to say what they liked when participating.

Eleven point eight percent of the respondents took a pessimistic position about change brought about by the decentralization system. They argued that decentralization could not bring great change, given that the local community and many of the leaders of low levels, especially the level of cells and sectors, had a low level of understanding about the duties and responsibilities for which they had been elected and they had limited skills in involving development activities.

It was interesting to see the extent to which the decentralization programme was viewed by the respondents as a strategy to implement the good governance process in Rwanda (see question 3, section ii of questionnaire A). The ideas that substantiated their answers showed that they had accepted that the decentralization policy in Rwanda was a strategic way to implement good governance in the country. Some of the reasons that were given are highlighted in the following statements:

“With the decentralization policy the local community has gained access to the election of their leaders and to dismiss any of them who is not able to fulfil his /her duties.”

“The service delivery is efficient or quick and not time consuming.”

“Decisions are taken with the logic of “down-up” and not “top-down.”

“Problems are these days resolved at local level (sector, district).”

“The whole community has its representatives (youth, women, men) in the local structures.”

“An elected representative feels the moral responsibility to serve the community in a positive way because they have elected him.”

It seems that the above ideas indicate that decentralization is, as viewed by the local community, a strategic way to implement democracy in that it aims to involve the whole community to participate in decision making for their destiny. The community has elected its representatives and collaborates with them for the same goal – that of developing their district.

The researcher was also interested to know if the local people really participated in the choice, implementation and execution of the development projects of the district (see question 9). On this question, as it appears in the table below, the respondents had opposing views.

Table 5.8 Participation of the whole community in the choice, implementation, and evaluation of the development projects of the district

	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	24	70.5%
No	10	29.5%
Total	34	100%

As was indicated in the above table, the majority of the respondents (70.5%) agreed that the community participated in the development projects of the district. They agreed by reporting that *“the CDC which has been elected by the local people is in charge of the implementation and follow-up of the community development projects of the district. The CDC holds discussions with the local community in the sectors (six sectors of the district) to determine which priority project should be implemented according to the real needs of the community and the available resources of the district.”*

This discussion is the first stage where the local people participate through the plenary assembly in suggesting which project to implement according to the local needs in the

district. The district council, considered as the parliament of the district, is the committee that has to check if the executive committee is fulfilling its task in the district. The position of the members of the district council on the project to be run is paramount.

However, 29.5% of the respondents reported that “there is no participation of the local people for the project to be implemented”. These respondents gave many reasons that demonstrated that, on the contrary, the community had less participation than their local representatives, as some of those respondents argued:

“Not all in the community participate but their elected representatives (executive and council committees).”

“The community’s decision about a project to be implemented is sometimes changed without the local people being informed.”

Another respondent stated: *“it is only the council in every structure that decides on behalf of the local people because it represents the community and the executive committee of the district executes what has been raised by the sectors.”*

5.3.2 Evaluation of local leaders

It was interesting to discern how the local elected representatives were monitored and evaluated in terms of the respect and the success of the decentralization policy (see question 6 of questionnaire A). According to the respondents:

“An evaluation is made by a superior structure of a lower one. They check what has been done in six months or one year in the sector or district and see if they have followed the planned government programme.”

“The evaluation of local leaders is made by the council committee elected for that purpose into local administrative structures.”

“It is made by the latter committee in collaboration with the local community.”

“The community brings complaints against any leader to the superior level in order to be examined. For example, when it is at cell level, they bring the case to the sector; when it is at sector level, they bring it to the district.”

“The monthly report of the executive committee is examined and marked by the superior level through a form which they fill in.”

The above suggests that local leaders are monitored and their activities are evaluated by the local community, especially through their council committee, which is considered to be a local parliament.

In order to understand whether the local community has a say or not about their leaders, the following question (see question 4, section ii of questionnaire A) was asked of the respondents: ‘Does the community have authority to release an elected representative when he/she doesn’t fill his/her functions?’ In answer to this question, 82.3% of the respondents accepted that the local community had the power to release their representative once he/she was not able to fill his/her tasks for which he/she had been elected. However, 17.7% argued that the local community had no power to release their local leaders. The table below illustrates the proportion.

Table 5.9 Power to dismiss a local leader

	Respondents	Percentage
YES	28	82.3%
NO	6	17.7%

N=34

It is understood that as people have the power to elect their representatives, they also have the same power to dismiss them when it is necessary. This is set out by articles 19 and 20 of 13/01/2001 establishing the organization and functioning of the district. For example, article 20 states the following:

“If the population of the sector discovers an elected representative who is unable to perform his/her functions, they raise the issue with the sector which re-examines the issue. If it is found that the issue is valid, the sector counsellors forward it to the district council which examines it and comes to a conclusion. A counsellor can be dismissed on a written request of at least one third of District Council members, addressed to the Chairperson of the Council.”

5.3.3 Decentralization and management of local resources

Decentralization is viewed as an appropriate way to manage the local resources of the district. The following question (see question 7 of questionnaire A in the appendix) was

asked to test the respondents' ideas on this. The respondents gave their points of view. The proportion can be seen in the table below.

Table 5.10 Decentralization and management of local resources

	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	32	94.1%
No	2	5.9%

N=34

Most respondents (94.1%) agreed that the decentralization programme, if wisely implemented, could be useful to respond to local needs and 5.9% did not give a response.

The following responses illustrate the above position:

“This is true because the district fund would be used for the real needs prioritized by the local community.”

“Because the local community would do a follow-up of everything that is happening with the development projects which are launched in the district.”

“They would be informed about the management of their funds.”

“As there is an auditor who often ensures control of how the budget of the district was used, this would guarantee the management of resources.”

“As the policy states that the community has to participate in defining the projects to be implemented, they have accordingly to be informed of where the funds came from and how they have been used by their local representatives.”

“Because no one is allowed to decide alone, without consultation with others (district councillors,) to which projects the funds will be allocated.”

All these ideas show that the local community of the district of Nyarugenge has a positive attitude towards the decentralization policy and that if wisely implemented the local resources can be wisely managed with transparency. The local people would be sufficiently involved in the management of local resources through defining the projects to be implemented in the district.

It is important to note that there is an ‘if clause’ included in question 7. That question provided information on the respondents’ attitudes towards the decentralization policy and the management of local resources. The respondents did not explain their real experiences, but how the policy could have very positive results if it were actually respected. This explains the high rate (94.4%) of those who agreed with that question. The positive attitude of the respondents towards the decentralization policy can also be found in table 5.5, which indicates that 100% of the respondents recognized that with the correct implementation of the decentralization policy public service delivery can be rendered effectively.

It was also interesting to identify from where the district gets resources for dealing with the development projects of the district (see question 17). The district has various sources, as can be seen in the following table.

Table 5.11 Source of funding for the development projects of the district

Sources of revenues	Frequency	Percentage
Rwandan government	16	47%
International aid	12	35.2%
Resources of the district	19	55.8%
Local NGOs	11	32.3%

N=34

As can be seen in the table above, the total of the frequencies is not equal to the number of respondents. One respondent may have stated that the district had all the suggested elements as sources of revenue. This shows that the district had diverse sources of revenue, though the respondents argued that it did not have sufficient means to satisfy the local needs.

According to law no 04/2001 of 13/01/2001, establishing the organization and functioning of the district, modified and implemented by law no 32/2002 of 14/11/2002 (official gazette no 4 of 15 December 2002), article 117 states that the district's sources of revenue and assets are as follows:

- a) Taxes and fees of the district
- b) Funds obtained from certification services rendered by the district
- c) Funds from movable and fixed assets
- d) Profits from investment by the district, and interests from its own shares and income generating activities
- e) Fines
- f) Loans
- g) Government subsidies
- h) Legal costs and proportional rights as charged by Canton Courts
- i) Funds obtained from services rendered by the district or from different public infrastructures
- j) Donations and legacies.

It is essential to note here that to have many sources where a district can ask for funds does not mean that it has the required resources to fulfil its demands. In other words, though the district has diverse sources, it is not a guarantee for it to have sufficient funds whenever there is a need. To have a source to ask for aid is not synonymous with obtaining what you ask for. In other words the district of Nyarugenge has limited resources, though it has diverse sources of revenue. The limited resources impact negatively on the success of the decentralization process.

5.3.4 Gender aspects in the matter of decentralization

In this regard, the researcher wanted to know the extent to which women have their representatives in the different local structures (see question 10). With the decentralization programme, women are elected at all levels of the local administrative structures (cells, sectors, and the district) to occupy leading positions. Through the formal election of local representatives held in 2001 (see table 3.2), women in the district of Nyarugenge were included, as the Rwandan constitutional law provides that women have to be involved in the local structures of the country. The current constitution of Rwanda states that in every elected committee, women must occupy at least 30% of the positions. In every executive committee there must be a female coordinator to deal with women's issues. In every council committee, women occupy one third of the positions. It is interesting to note that outside these formal structures, women have other structures that deal with women's issues in diverse activities in the district (for more details see chapter 3, section 8).

In the district of Nyarugenge, according to the respondents, women were sufficiently represented; they occupied more than 30% of leading positions. Nevertheless, one of the respondents states: *“even if women are present in the leading place of the district, they do not have self-confidence in the execution of their functions”*. For example, he argues, *“there are some women who are reluctant to take a speech in the public area”*. The respondent emphasized this idea on the grounds of the Rwandan adage: *“nta nkoko ibika isake ihari”*; literally it means “no hen can crow where there is a cock”.

For the purpose of this research, it was interesting to ask the respondents whether the decentralization policy has motivated women to be involved in development activities of the district. The question was formulated in the following way: to what extent does women's representation at the different levels in the district enforce women's participation in the development of the district? To this question (question 11 in appendix), all the respondents reported that the fact that women occupy places in local structures enforces women's participation in the development activities. The latter idea was emphasized by the following statements given by the respondents:

"Women feel that the development activities are theirs, because they are represented."

"A woman feels more comfortable to speak to other women about some problems which she would not easily talk about to a man."

"Sometimes they feel reluctant to compete with men for a vacant place in the local administration, but in these days there are some courageous women who dare."

"Among the elected women, the educated women fill their duties better than even an educated man."

In the same context, the following question was asked: "Do female representatives have as much autonomy in decision making as their male counterparts regarding their functions?" (See question 12 in the appendix). The table below illustrates the respondents' position.

Table.5.12 Autonomy of female representatives in their functions

	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	23	67.7%
No	11	32.3%
Total	34	100%

It is clear that the majority of the respondents (67.7%) accepted that like the men, female representatives had autonomy in decision making in the functions for which they were elected. However, about one third (32.3%) of the respondents argued that female representatives did not have the same autonomy as men.

When the respondents were asked to substantiate their positions, those who agreed that female representatives had the same autonomy at all levels of the local structures as the men in their functions gave a number of reasons:

“Women have the same rights in voting as men.”

“Female representatives have a budget at the district level to solve their problems, and they have a say.”

“Everyone among the local representatives has his/her attributions well defined and he/she must be accountable to those who have elected him/her.”

“Women have the right to compete for a leading post or get any upgrade like everybody.

We support our wives to overcome the traditional culture which excluded them. It is

known that if a woman is educated, the whole country is educated because of the key role women play within the households.”

“Everyone’s point of view is taken into account regardless of his/her gender.”

However, as is observed in the table above, around one third of the respondents (32.3%) argued that women did not have the same power as men in decision making for the development of the district. They argued that *“women are under the influence of men in whatever decisions men make for the development of the district”*. But it seems that they also contributed to their own weakness, as can be seen from one respondent’s statement: *“women’s decision making is hindered by the traditional beliefs of some women and men who underestimate women and consider men’s ideas to be more relevant than the opinions of women.”*

By the same token, the above ideas recall one of the respondents’ opinions that denigrate women’s speech or position in the public world: *“No hen can crow where there is a cock.”*

To conclude this section, it can be said that even if women occupy leading positions, they do not have full autonomy in exercising their functions due to the persistent cultural ideology which excluded women from the public sphere. This brings to mind the famous “hegemonic masculinity” of the feminist theorist R.W. Connell in his works, *Gender and Power* (1987), and *Masculinities* (1995), where Connell defines “hegemonic masculinity” as *“the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of the patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to*

guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell, 1995:145).

This kind of traditional cultural thinking undermines the potential success of the decentralization programme of the district in that it does not allow women to offer their full participation in the development activities. The whole community has to be sensitized to destroy those traditional thoughts that exclude women from public community activities.

5.4 CONSTRAINTS

The decentralization programme faces many challenges that hinder its long term success. With the need to be concise, the respondents were asked to name the three major challenges that the district of Nyarugenge faces (see question 5 of questionnaire A, section ii). The respondents named a number of problems such as:

- Ignorance (low level of understanding of local leaders and local community)
- Dictatorship of some of the local leaders
- Extreme poverty
- Insufficient means for well-delivered services
- Low level of education and lack of sufficient training sessions.

These problems can be categorized into two major obstacles: the economic situation of the district and insufficient information and poor understanding of the local community or/and some of the local leaders.

5.4.1 Constraints related to the economic growth of the district

“One of the principal reasons for the poor record of decentralization in developing countries is the mismatch between the decentralized responsibilities and financial authority” (Rondinelli, *et al.* 1984:48) Limited revenue-generating possibilities and little or no access to capital markets, coupled with insufficient assistance from the central state, are a common recipe for local government failure.

A decentralization design that focuses on the need for the development must prevent local government from being burdened with duties without concomitant resources. Decentralization should therefore not result in the de-linking of taxes and spending responsibilities. The World Bank emphasizes the link between taxing and service delivery:

“Decentralization frameworks must link (...) local financing and fiscal authority to the service provision, responsibilities and functions of the local government – so that local politicians can bear the costs of their decisions and deliver on the promises” (www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization/what.htm, 2005).

Whereas the district has diverse sources of revenue such as government subsidies, loans, fines, etc. (see section 5.3.3), its economic position remains that it is unable to afford many projects that require big amounts of money.

With the intention of understanding how the situation of the shortage of funds for the district constitutes a hindrance to development, the researcher asked a question where the respondents were asked to mark an appropriate answer/or block (see question 19 in the appendix).

Table 5.13 Response to statements

Opinions	Agree	Percentage	Disagree	Percentage
The district cannot be developed without the financial sponsors	32	94.1%	2	5.9 %
Apart from the resources of the district, the funding comes only from the government	7	20.6%	27	79.4%
Some of the objectives of the development projects are not realized because of insufficient economic possibility	29	85.2%	5	14.7%

N=34

From the table above, 94.1% of the respondents agreed that without financial sponsors, the district of Nyarugenge cannot be developed, in other words, development activities of the district cannot be afforded. However, 5.9 % of the respondents disagreed by arguing that:

“With commitment of the local community, there can be a positive change, and hence a development of the district without the contribution of sponsors.”

“We cannot wait for external aid which often arrives when there is no emergency.”

“As one respondent argued in the Kinyarwanda adage that ‘akimuhana kaza invura ihise’ meaning literally that ‘the external aid comes when it has finished raining.’ That is why he felt that development without external aid can be possible with self-commitment of the local people and leaders of the district.

Those who thought that sponsorships were needed so that the district could develop have tried to justify their position as follows:

“Because major development projects such as building of roads, schools, etc., require a lot of money that the local community cannot afford without sponsors, sponsors are strongly needed.”

“As the district has difficulty even in paying the workers in its sectors, external aid is needed to face the various issues which require vast amounts of money, like the implementing of high cost projects, paying the salaries of workers, paying allowances to councils for meetings, and other official activities.”

The second element of the table was concerned to identify whether or not the funds for development projects in the district come from government or from the district itself. Seventy nine point four percent of the respondents disagreed and said that funds came

not only from central government but also from other sources. Even with help from external sponsors, the district had to supplement its budget with taxes from the local community to address its problems. On the other hand, 20.6% of respondents maintained that *“it is only the central government that is basically our sponsor to add to our own efforts.”* *“Once the district realizes that its funds are insufficient, it reports to the central government, which has to contribute.”*

Although the central government through MINALOC/CDF gives a certain amount to every district to solve the local problems, one of the respondents argued, *“The amount is usually insufficient to resolve all the development projects of the district. This obliges the districts to look for other sponsors. “The government contributes small amounts to the big budget which is required to implement expensive projects of the districts.”* This shows the extent to which the local people still remain dependent on the central government’s sponsorship and other institutions in order solve the problems in their district.

The third sub-question in this table was to establish if there were insufficient economic possibilities in the district which handicapped local projects. In response to this question 85.2% of the respondents said that some of the development projects did not attain their objectives because of a lack of sufficient funds. However, 14.7% of the respondents argued that all *“development projects are realized according to how they were planned. Sometimes the development projects are badly conceived, this leads to those projects being a failure.”*

“The district has a limited budget, but if it were used wisely, it should have positive consequences.” From the last response it may be suggested that mismanagement of local resources exists. Another problem is that the respondents argued, *“Plans that are made by the district are for a very limited amount and that is not sufficient for the expensive projects really needed by the local community because of the shortage of money of the district.”*

“The objectives of the development projects are realized because, even if the district has insufficient financial means, we sometimes ask credit from the bank.”

All the above ideas explain the extent to which the district of Nyarugenge is undergoing difficulties related to insufficient economic means that hinders the development of the district. It is clear that a single actor can never achieve the development of the district. The development has to be the result of interrelated participation by different partners like the central government, the international and local NGOs, and the local community of the district.

5.4.2 Constraints related to capacity building of the local leaders

Any institution that does not take into account the matters of the capacity building of its community will struggle with development. It is important to determine whether the local elected leaders that had received training could more effectively deal with local issues around development. The respondents gave their positions, which can be seen in the table below.

Table 5.14 Training of elected representatives from cells and sectors throughout the district

	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	8	23.5%
No	26	76.5%

N=34

Twenty three point five percent of the respondents said that the elected local representatives had been satisfactorily trained for their functions. However, 76.5% of the respondents denied this and argued that the training was not sufficient. All the local elected representatives of the district had been trained to carry out their functions. However, there is already a need for further training on an ongoing basis.

Question 21 reads: Do the elected representatives require any further training for carrying out their functions? What kind of training do they require?

All of the respondents said that the elected local leaders of the district were in need of further training sessions and that there should be ongoing training related to their functions and responsibilities in the local administration. The respondents also indicated a number of fields in which they would like to be trained in order to strengthen their capacity as local leaders:

- Training of the elected representatives regarding the decentralization policy so as to gain the involvement of the local people for the development of the district

- How to combat bribes and accordingly, to improve good governance
- The management and coordination of local structures
- Keeping abreast of the tasks that need to be done; labour law, welfare requirements, etc.
- Teaching people to cooperate.

5.4.3 Constraints related to community participation

The decentralization programme faces many constraints, as we saw in the previous sections – constraints due to the poor economic possibilities of the district, the level of understanding of the local people, etc. This section looks at the following question: Which problems pertaining to the decentralization policy cause the community not to participate effectively in the development activities of the district? (See question 14 in the appendix 2).

The respondents listed a number of constraints in this regard. These problems are the following:

- The low level of understanding of the local leaders and the community
- Some people being absent from important meetings
- The poor understanding of the local people about the decentralization principles and the lack of a basic infrastructure in the district
- A lack of coordination when defining the priority projects to be launched. (The determination of priority must be understood by the whole community, because if

they are not informed of what is going to be done, they will not consider it as their project, and their full participation in the development activities will not be given)

- Some of the members of the community do not know their rights to participate in the development activities of the district
- Local people are asked to contribute 25% to a project that requires a large amount of money. But, it is difficult for the local people to find the amount required for each project, because of insufficient means of the local people
- Some members of the local community who have a traditional way of thinking who agree with their representative's views even when the latter is not relevant.
- Lack of coordination of local government procedures.

To conclude this section: all the abovementioned problems have negative consequences for the decentralization programme in the district.

5.4.4 Community participation in the development projects of the district

The data included in this section was drawn from the feedback and responses to questions 14, 15 and 16 (see the questionnaire in the appendix 2).

The researcher wanted to measure the extent to which community participation in development projects of the district took place (see question 14). The main responses to this question follow. Firstly, defining a development project for implementation in the district come about as a result of the community's suggestions raised from a discussion held in plenary sessions often led by the CDC. In other words development activities

were analyzed and defined on the basis of the problems revealed and experienced by the local community. Secondly, the community had evaluated the CDC's duties according to how they accomplished their tasks and had decided on who to keep and who to replace. Thirdly, the community participated in a collective work called "umuganda", which is in the public interest.

From this it may be suggested that this process connoted the implementation of good governance because the community participated in the choice and execution of their decision.

In order to succeed, the development projects needed not only to be designed and implemented; but also to be monitored and evaluated continually. Referring to question 15 the respondents answered as follows:

"Activities are always monitored."

"Evaluation is done firstly by the owner of the project, i.e. the community, and secondly by the supporters of that project."

"Monitoring of a project is especially done by the CDC but also by the one who is responsible for the project. For example, every elected representative has his responsibilities. Among the members of the executive committee, there is someone who is in charge of education, in charge of communication, in charge of youth, in charge of women, etc. Therefore, for example, the one who is in charge of education will deal with projects of building schools."

“It is especially the CDC with an executive secretary which deals with the follow-up of the different projects of the district. They sometimes get in experts for an evaluation when it is necessary and when it is approved by the council.”

From this it can be concluded that the monitoring and evaluation of the development projects of the district were done by many actors in different projects managed by local people.

According to the interviewees, the district managed small and big projects. Small scale projects are for example, the association of “mutuelle de santé”, association Kora, which processes garbage into “modern embers” to provide fuel for the cooking of food in restaurants. The garbage is sometimes also processed into fertilizer. There are also associations dealing with hand crafts, associations that pay school fees for the poor people at primary and secondary schools, etc. The big projects are those, according to the respondents, that entail a large amount of money and require external sponsors or other local organizations’ interventions. These are projects that deal with the construction of infrastructure such as the building of roads, schools, offices for sectors, markets, etc.

To conclude this chapter, it may be argued that the analysis and interpretation of the interviews conducted with the respondents shows that the policy of decentralization has contributed to encouraging the participation of local people in the development of the district. By the same token, there are imperfections or limitations that hold back the total

participation of the local people, and hence obstacles to the success of the decentralization process were also revealed.

The next and final chapter consists of the general conclusion and some recommendations. The latter suggests solutions to overcome the constraints faced for the development of the district.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The final chapter has two main sections, namely a conclusion and recommendations. The conclusion summarises the main points of the previous chapters. The recommendations involve possible solutions to the problems that have been identified through this study, and that have a negative effect on the success of the decentralization programme.

6.1 CONCLUSION

In this study an assessment was carried out exploring the perceptions of people with regard to the decentralization programme as applied in the district of Nyarugenge. The first aim was concerned to establish: to what extent the implementation of the decentralization policy had promoted community participation in the development of the district. The primary assumption was that a decentralization policy contributes to community participation in the development of a district. This policy of decentralization in conjunction with other regulatory instruments has played an important role in involving the local community in participating in the development of their district. The representatives of the local structures (councils and CDC committees) were elected to manage the development process of the district. The policy provided women with the opportunity to be elected to local structures and participate in decision making and the

development of the district, whereas before the implementation of this policy they had been excluded. However, some ideas related to the famous “hegemonic masculinity” constitute a barrier to women’s participation in public affairs. Chapter 5 also provides data as to the extent to which women and the community of the district experience the policy of decentralization in general.

The second aim was concerned to establish: what was hampering the community’s participation in the decentralization programme. The results of this study revealed the extent to which the insufficient economic resources of the district frustrate the community’s participation. For instance, as the local community decides on the priority of projects to be implemented according to their needs, the CDC at the level of the district chooses the project to be implemented according to other variables like the financial resources of the district. Another problem is related to the level of understanding of the local community and its committee representatives that needs to be enhanced for the success of the decentralization programme. The definition of sustainable development planning and management of local resources requires skilled personnel. The CDC’s capacity needs to be empowered for the mobilization of resources and appropriate planning to alleviate poverty. More details on the problems related to the economic possibility and the capability of local human resources were given in chapter 5 and the recommendations are suggested in subsequent paragraphs.

The former centralized system of leadership and its previous ideology of having one decider: the burgomaster has been challenged by an implementation of a decentralized programme of government. The involvement of local people in decision making for the

development of the district by the government of Rwanda's decentralization system has enhanced good governance, democracy, and poverty reduction in the country.

The selected case for study was the district of Nyarugenge. To achieve the research objectives, questionnaires and interviews were used (see the questionnaires in the appendix).

The first chapter consists of a general introduction to the research project. It provided a general picture of the research by presenting the following main points: Motivation for the research, the research questions, the research objectives, the problem statement and the delimitations of the study. The second chapter of the research on the grounds of sociological theories presents a discussion concerned to define key concepts and deals with a number of concomitant conceptual issues. Chapter 3 presented the situation of Rwanda with regard to their decentralization programme, and a general presentation of the district of Nyarugenge was given. It presented general information of the location where the research was conducted and it presented a general illustration regarding the decentralization policy in Rwanda— how this policy involved local people in decision making for the development of the district.

Chapter 4 dealt with the methodological aspects of the research. Based on theoretical grounds, the reasons why it was better to apply a particular method or technique of research rather than another one were also explained. Chapter 5 is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of the results of the examination of the data collected during the investigation conducted in January and February 2005 with the local people of the

district and some of the key persons dealing with the decentralization programme at provincial and ministerial level.

The interpretation of the collected data suggested the following:

- The decentralization policy and laws to enable the community to participate were implemented in Nyarugenge district.
- In principle and overall the local community had positive perceptions of the decentralization policy.
- Given that a decentralization policy programme was recently implemented in the country, the sometimes unsuccessful local participation and hence, the hindrances to the success of decentralization policy in the district are understandable.
- The local community participated in community planning. In the context of poverty reduction, one of the government's expectations from decentralization is the creation of a framework that promotes bottom-up planning where the community decides what the development needs and priorities are, and participates in the design and implementation of development programmes based on local needs.
- Community development committees (CDCs), and councils at local government level were elected through democratic elections. They are controlled by and answerable to the population (to illustrate this, see for example section 5.3.2).

- Whilst gender imbalances persist, some achievements have been realised in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in Rwanda.
- The analysis of interviews conducted with the respondents showed that the decentralization policy contributed to the involvement of the local people of the district in the decision making and development of the country.

However, the research revealed persistent limitations that obstruct the success of decentralization programme in the district. Hindrance to the success of the decentralization policy is due to constraints that will be summarised in few main points below:

- There is a lack of experience and expertise in democratic procedures and practices, as both the administrative cadres and local communities are new to democratic practices and cultures. The decentralization policy is newly implemented in the country: The process of building local governance through democratically elected representatives in Rwanda is clearly still evolving and confronts fundamental difficulties.
- Decentralised resource management requires local know-how that is often not readily available in especially the basic structures of the district.
- Gender equality is one of the policies pursued by the government of Rwanda. Constitutionally, women are entitled to 30% of the decision- and policy-making

positions. Structures for women are in place, with democratically elected leaders. However, there are many problems that women are facing and that hinder their participation and the success of decentralization. They are the following: representation is still low in Nyarugenge as many women are illiterate; the link between women structures and local government structures is not yet sufficiently appreciated. There is also the traditional culture that denigrates women's role in the public world active in the district (see for example section 5.3.4 and comments on table 5.12).

- Lack of skills in community planning: even if the decentralization policy has promoted local community participation especially through the CDC in the definition of community planning, the CDC and DC are still weak and their appreciation, involvement and ownership of the planning process needs to be deepened. Therefore, Navin *et al.* (2000:275) argue that "decentralization is not necessarily good or bad. If it is designed well, it can move decision making closer to people and improve governance, including the efficiency of service delivery. If decentralization is not appropriately designed or is introduced in environments in which local participation and accountability are constrained, its effect can be negative." There is an inadequate capacity and low literacy level among the CDCs and DCs of the different structures of the district of Nyarugenge.
- There is a lack of experience with regard to the handling of the decentralized system; many of the local officials are used to the centralized system that is being replaced because of its inadequacy. Consequently, it is paramount for the

government to implement permanent training sessions for the local leaders to better carry out their duties.

- Economic and financial decentralization: Among the critical factors observed during the field visits was a lack of financial resources to support decentralization actions at district level. The noticeably slow progress of actualizing fiscal decentralization is a major cause of concern in the local government administrative units and an ongoing source of frustration.
- There is incongruity between decentralized functions and resources. Therefore, even if decentralization has contributed to local participation in the development activities, a major problem facing the proponents of decentralization in the Nyarugenge district and one of relevance to community participation is finance. Local communities are unable to raise sufficient revenues to meet their own needs – they are dependant on external funds and thus subject to external control. However, in this district decentralized resources are often insufficient to carry out decentralized tasks.
- Inadequate facilities in local structures: local authorities in Nyarugenge are constrained by inadequate facilities such as transport, appropriate offices and office communication facilities, which often make them inefficient.

These constraints constitute barriers to the community's meaningful participation in the development of the district. They are obstacles to the success of the policy of decentralization that aims to involve all people to define the development of their country.

6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This work has its limitations in that it does not extend to communities all around the country. The study took place in one district only. Although many conditions in this area may be replicated elsewhere, perhaps the views of the people in other areas may not.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, some recommendations are offered with a view to enhancing the implementation and success of the decentralisation policy in the district of Nyarugenge. As the success of the decentralization programme requires the interplay of factors and actors, such as local and central government, sponsors from local and international organizations, and civil society, the recommendations that follow are relevant:

- There are various methods of promoting the effective performance of public tasks on a local level. One way is to *support the clarification* of the relationship between central and decentralised authorities. Another is to support the local levels in *building up and extending* their political and administrative structures. Finally,

sectorial projects implemented by local authorities can be supported in a manner that fosters local development. Therefore, appropriate restructuring of the public administration system is needed to forestall the anticipated risk of duplication of activities at central and decentralized levels.

- *Mainstreaming gender in decision making and socio-economic development:* the policy of decentralization has contributed to delineating women's role in the development activities in local development. However, in addition to what the respondents have suggested regarding this point (see section 5.4.4), these research findings recommend that the need to design specific assistance programmes to assist income-generating activities under the decentralization policy should be articulated and appropriately supported. Women need to be sensitized to break the culture of inhibition in order to exercise their rights and play an active role, not only in their households, but also by empowering women in business, farming and community-based actions, and involving them in the public sphere.
- Organizing the population into communal groups/cooperatives, and refocusing their energies in viable economic activities, would not only increase income-generating possibilities but also have a positive impact on the reconciliation process and long-term stability. This is because the population would focus on economic activities, thereby preventing the possibilities of dividing the society through the promotion of ethnic or other socio-cultural differences. It is also important to strengthen the organizational capacity at the local level by enforcing

the 'mutuelle' de santé, private schools and education cost-sharing. It would be important to encourage local communities of the district to work together in the designing and implementation of community socio-economic projects as a way of fostering unity and a sense of community belonging.

- There is a definite need to enhance the participation of the civil society by integrating the various local civil society organisations in project design and implementation to increase options for capacity-building support.
- *Financing decentralization activities:* the income of the district of Nyarugenge comes mainly from taxes paid by its local people and businessmen in the district. As these are unfortunately insufficient, the government's contribution should be increased so that the district can afford the development of the district. As the government offers only 10% of the budget to each district through the CDF, this is insufficient when compared to the tremendous budgets required for the district of Nyarugenge to implement its developments projects (see section 5.4.1).
- *Training:* this study recommends that the various training programme modules and activities should be harmonised. This would involve the integration of approaches and modules into standard manuals and curricula for use by all decentralization-related training providers. As part of capacity building, there should be continuous needs assessments to make training more tailor-made and responsive to the actual needs. Training needs to be done continuously through

training of trainers (ToT) to ensure continuity. The local leaders of the district need many training sessions in order to overcome all the difficulties revealed and mentioned in the previous sections (see particularly section 5.4.2; section 5.4.3 and section 5.4.4).

- Local government staff salaries: Further imaginative solutions need to be devised so that districts can be in a position to pay the staff salaries on a regular and sustainable basis, taking into account the provisions of the law and using, for example, overdrafts or short-term borrowing mechanisms within the limits of the financial situation of each district.
- It would be important to sensitize the population about the need to participate in the financing of development activities and service delivery via the payment of taxes and other financing mechanisms, because the central government's allocations to the district through the CDF are not sufficient and the support from the NGOs are not always everlasting.
- Coordination of decentralization activities: the government needs to examine how procedures can be streamlined to facilitate relations that are transparent to the whole community and enable quick decision making. The challenge (see section 5.4.1) is that of ensuring organizational harmony with the decentralization policy.

In conclusion, this policy has involved the community in the development activities of the district, though many problems persist. These recommendations should be taken into account for positive results. It can also be mentioned that in addition to the recommendations stated above, there are others that were given throughout the dissertation.

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