Jehovah's Witnesses During and After the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda

Psychosocial Factors Related to Faith, Forgiveness, and Family

Prepared by

Organisation Religieuse des Témoins de Jéhovah

Rwanda

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Section 5. Genocide & Trauma

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CLS-H	Compassionate Love Scale for Humanity
CRSS	Community Resilience and Support Scale
DFS	Divine Forgiveness Scale
DSM-IV	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition
DSM-V	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition
DNK	Do not know
EST	Ecological Systems Theory
FISI	Four-Item Social Identification
HHI	Herth Hope Index
ICD-11	International Classification of Diseases, Eleventh Revision
JW	Jehovah's Witness
JWs	Jehovah's Witnesses
JW-RWA	*Jehovah's Witnesses During and After the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda: Psychosocial Factors Related to Faith, Forgiveness, and Family*
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
M	Mean
MINUBUMWE	Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement
MRND	Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NOA	None of the above

ns	Not (statistically) significant
PNA	Prefer not to answer
PTG	Posttraumatic growth
PTSD	Posttraumatic stress disorder
PTSS	Posttraumatic stress symptoms
RCS	Rwanda Correctional Service
RNEC	Rwanda National Ethics Committee
RTLM	Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines
SCID-I	Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV Axis I Disorders
SD	Standard deviation
SDR	Socially Desirable Responses
SFDPS	Self-Forgiveness Dual-Process Scale
T-CRS	Transcultural Community Resilience Scale

5. GENOCIDE AND TRAUMA

The JW-RWA study investigated situations experienced during the Genocide against the Tutsi. Findings from the large sample of Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda provide insights into the experiences of persons from a wide demographic, geographic, and generational span. The scope of the study necessarily set temporal, spatial, and population boundaries, with Genocide-related survey questions applied specifically to the Genocide against the Tutsi that occurred between April 6 and July 19, 1994, as recalled by the study population who became Jehovah's Witnesses either before or after the Genocide.

The data analysis revealed the contours of residential patterns and family composition just before and just after the Genocide. Data on the location and duration of danger provided context for understanding conditions under which helping behavior did or did not take place. The types of traumatic events experienced during the Genocide reflected the degree of personal suffering and upheaval.

Findings are based on analysis of responses from the total sample, including those who were Jehovah's Witnesses at the time of the Genocide and the majority of the sample who became Jehovah's Witnesses after the 1994 Genocide. Important to the research objectives was understanding the situation of those who belonged to the Rwandan Jehovah's Witness community in 1994. The last part of Section 5 presents findings that are specific to this subgroup.

The study observed certain boundaries in the scope of inquiry. The survey instrument quantified individual circumstances while not delving deeply into sensitive areas that could have caused emotional distress or discouraged participation in the study. Respondents were also not asked about any past or current political views, this in keeping with the research objectives of the

study and the religion's doctrine of political neutrality. Furthermore, in compliance with the requirement of the Rwanda National Ethics Committee, the survey had no direct question about the ethnicity of respondents. However, in a question on Genocide situations, respondents could self-identify as having been *targeted to be killed*, inferring a Tutsi identity. For some Genocide-related statistical analysis, responses to this question were used to categorize respondents as either targeted or not targeted, which provided an indirect indicator of ethnic identity and better understanding of their differential experiences during the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Literature Review

The scourge of genocide raises a host of questions for historians, philosophers, theologians, and social scientists. Extant academic literature about the Genocide against the Tutsi is grounded in scholarship produced in the wake of the Holocaust in Europe and the development of the legal concept of genocide.[1] Scholars have since probed the origins of genocides, means and mechanisms of mass murder, the spread of ideologies, and similar macro-level perspectives (e.g., Clark, 2010; Fox, 2021; Guichaoua, 1995; King, 2010; Mamdani, 2001; McDoom, 2014; Scherrer, 1999; Tammes, 2022). However, as political scientist Kristen Monroe observed, genocide scholars "cannot long remain involved at only an intellectual level" (Monroe, 2012, p. 3). The deliberate attempt to destroy an entire people, often along with any who defy such an attempt, strikes at the very core of what it means to be human, and the moral fabric that binds humans into collective relationships within families, social groups, communities, and nations. Grasping the origins, course, and impact of genocide necessarily includes understanding human elements—individual's actions, beliefs, motivations, vulnerabilities, connections, and social, physical, and psychological

[1] The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was approved by the United Nations General Assembly on December 9, 1948. https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf

consequences. Among the questions academics probe are, Does the decision to join or resist genocide occur in the heat of the moment, or is it based on established notions and values from indoctrination or socialization in culture, family, and religion? In what ways can shared beliefs and practices in faith communities play a role in how individuals behave during genocide?

Empirical research that brings the human dimensions of the Genocide against the Tutsi into clearer focus includes regional and demographic studies of patterns of violence and rescue, and qualitative studies that probe the perspectives and circumstances of those directly involved or impacted (e.g., Ashraph, 2017; Burnet, 2023; Fujii, 2009; Guichaoua, 2005; McDoom, 2021, Straus, 2013a; Verwimp, 2005, 2011), as well as writings by journalists and human rights researchers such as Gourevitch (1998), Hatzfeld (2003/2005), Keane (1995), and Melvern (2000, 2006). Two of the earliest and most detailed accounts are *Rwanda: Death, Despair, and Defiance* (1995) by the NGO African Rights and *Leave None to Tell the Story* by Alison Des Forges (1999) of Human Rights Watch. Written soon after 1994, these exhaustive works were based on interviews, eyewitness accounts, and available documentation. Later studies investigated individuals according to demographic characteristics, such as age and gender (e.g., Banyanga et al., 2017; Brown, 2018; Burnet, 2012, 2015; Mullins, 2009; Sharlach, 1999), or according to Genocide and post-Genocide life circumstances, such as survivors, widows, perpetrators, and their children (Ng et al., 2015; Rieder & Elbert, 2013; Schaal et al., 2009). The mental health of Rwandan refugees has been the subject of several studies (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1996; de Jong et al., 2000; Pham et al., 2004).

Genocide and Religion

Of particular relevance to the JW-RWA study is research on religion and genocide. The role of religious ideology and religious adherents in 20th-century genocides has been well documented (Bartov & Mack, 2001; Brown & Smith, 2022; Mojzes, 1998). Religion-state collusion in genocide has occurred when the religious hierarchy embraced the ethnonationalist ideology of the governing regime. For example, the involvement of German churches in condoning or collaborating with Nazi genocide has received intense scholarly scrutiny (Bergen, 1996; Ericksen & Heschel, 1999; Rittner et al., 2000).

Extensive scholarship exists on the conduct of Christian churches in Rwanda (e.g., Benda, 2012; Bizimana, 2001; Carney, 2014; Denis, 2022; Gatwa, 2005; Gifford, 1995; Katongole, 2011; Katongole & Wilson-Hartgrove, 2009; Linden & Linden, 1977; Longman, 2010; Loumakis, 2016; Rittner et al., 2004; Rutayisire et al., 2000; Schliesser et al., 2021). Institutional religion in the highly missionized country of Rwanda played an ambiguous role in colonial and post-colonial society, and especially during the Genocide against the Tutsi. As Benda has written, foreign missionaries "were church-planting settlers who framed the social, political and theological identities of faith communities of which they assumed leadership for a long time. Therefore, they have to be directly implicated in the critical appraisal of Christianity's failure in 'Rwanda 94.'" (Benda, 2012, pp. 49–50; see also Gatwa, 2005; Simonsson, 2021). Of the many theories accounting for the Genocide, some scholars have looked at the responses of religious groups through a historical, philosophical, and theological lens.

Genocide has been called a "process" rather than an "event" (Fujii, 2009, p. 11), one that entails "millions of discrete acts by thousands or hundreds of thousands of people" (Burnet, 2023, p. 2). To gain insight into individual choices and actions, scholars have called for systematic

micro-level and quantitative studies about perpetration of and resistance to violent acts (Beer, 2014; Croes, 2013; McDoom, 2021; Straus, 2013a). The following discussion covers literature on these more granular, or "neighbor-level" (Fujii, 2009, p. 21), aspects of the Genocide that are examined in the JW-RWA study.

Geography, Duration of Genocide, and Impact on Household Composition

The sheer scale of the Genocide against the Tutsi involves immense challenges in quantifying the human toll across all geographic areas in Rwanda. In addition to official accountings of Genocide-related deaths (e.g., Commission pour le Mémorial du Génocide et des Massacres au Rwanda, 1996; République Rwandaise, 2002; National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2008), some geographically focused studies provide clues to the scope, timing, and intensity of violence in certain locations (e.g., African Rights, 1995; Des Forges, 1999; Fujii, 2009; McDoom, 2014, 2021; Nyseth Nzitatira et al., 2022; Straus, 2013a).

Additionally, the Genocide profoundly impacted family life and household composition (Denov, 2024; Kuehr, 2015; Mutuyimana et al., 2019; Ng et al., 2015; Sadruddin, 2020). As a 1996 Human Rights Watch report on sexual violence observed: "Rwanda has become a country of women," with females then composing an estimated 70% of the population and heading 50% of households (Human Rights Watch, 1996). UNICEF reported that in 1994, some 114,000 "unaccompanied children" had been orphaned or otherwise separated from their parents. Some were taken in by other families or placed in special centers (United Nations Children's Fund, 1996). In 2001, a reported 17% of all children in Rwanda were orphans, and 37% of orphan-headed households cared for other children (United Nations Children's Fund, 2003, November). Orphan-headed households were due to the death of parents during the Genocide against the Tutsi as well as the high rates of HIV/AIDS that spread during and after the Genocide (Human Rights

Watch, 2003). The result was, as Berckmoes et al. noted, in post-Genocide Rwanda, "households are often composed of various family and non-family members" (2017, p. 5). Findings from the present study support other research that the family structure of those targeted to be killed was especially impacted by the Genocide.

Ambiguities of Genocide Role-Situations

Holocaust scholar Raul Hilberg (1992) made famous the genocide roles of perpetrator, victim, and bystander. These roles, or labels, have often been affixed to individual historical actors. Scholarly grappling with the horror of the Genocide against the Tutsi has spawned a substantial body of "perpetrator research" that has explored predictors, correlates, and motivations of genocidal participation, such as demographic profile (Anderson & Jessee, 2020; Nyseth Brehm et al., 2016; Nyseth Nzitatira et al., 2023); personal edification and greed (Loyle, 2009); nature, location, and density of social networks (McDoom, 2021); indoctrination, fear, and social pressure (Adler et al., 2007; Adler et al., 2008; Straus, 2013a); rationalization (Anderson, 2017); childhood abandonment (Bigabo & Jansen, 2020); and bystanders (Doná, 2017; Staub, 2003a, 2005, 2011).

However entrenched the labels of "perpetrators," "victim," "bystander," and "rescuer" may be, abundant research shows that the reality was often more ambiguous. Anthropologist Jennie Burnet borrowed from Holocaust literature the concept of a moral "gray zone" to illuminate "the ways that people navigated complex and morally ambiguous decisions on a daily, sometimes even a minute-by-minute, basis" in Rwanda (Burnet, 2023, p. 48). Moral decision-making at critical moments was muddled by genocide propaganda that used religious symbolism that dehumanized Tutsi (cf. Appleby, 2000; Karegeye, 2015; Simonsson, 2019, 2021). Even in the case of the approximately 100 days of the Genocide against the Tutsi, individuals reportedly assumed multiple roles, sometimes simultaneously, such as those who selectively chose to aid or protect individuals

close to them while engaging in general harmdoing (Anderson, 2019; Bigabo & Jansen, 2020; Campbell, 2010; Fujii, 2009).[2]

The JW-RWA study expands on these earlier empirical studies based on responses from those who were baptized Witnesses by the time of the Genocide and those who converted to the faith in the years after 1994. Broad categories were created for those who (a) faced harm, either targeted to be killed or not targeted; (b) helped those targeted and those not targeted; (c) refused to betray or harm those targeted; or (d) fled the country for safety. In this report, the hyphenated term *role-situation* is used to reflect the agency that individuals may have to adopt certain roles (e.g., *génocidaire*, helper), while recognizing that circumstances can limit or influence role options (e.g., targeted). For example, individuals could become helpers if they were in proximity to or known by those needing help and if they had the means to help. Also, recollection about the nature of help given to Tutsi during the Genocide decades ago could vary widely, and as evidenced by the immense murder rates of Tutsi, it is clear that most Rwandans chose not to take on the role of helper.

Helpers and Rescuers During Genocide

Research findings on the Holocaust are relevant to the study of helping behaviors during the Genocide against the Tutsi. For example, although genocides have historically been state-sponsored programs of mass murder, the acquiescence or cooperation of the general populace has also played a crucial part. Much scholarly exploration of this sobering fact has been prompted by the large-scale participation or support of ordinary citizens in the genocide of the Jews during the Nazi era. The population's consent, support, and participation during the Holocaust did not arise

[2] In the JW-RWA study, the category of "perpetrator" is narrowly defined for the purpose of data analysis, as applied only to those who self-identified as having been imprisoned for participation in the Genocide; that said, definitive or specific guilt cannot be assigned based on the available data.

out of a vacuum. Historian John Weiss (1996), among others, attributes a central role to Europe's long-term history of political, religious, and popular antisemitism in fostering a broad acceptance of the Nazi regime's attempted destruction of European Jews.

Historian Doris Bergen's (2003) observation about the Holocaust can also be applied to the Genocide against the Tutsi: "A substantial part of the population had to be ready to consider it desirable, acceptable, or at least unavoidable, that certain other people would be isolated, persecuted, and killed" (p. 1). The range of participation of the Rwandan populace, from compliance to complicity, increased the risks of aiding Tutsi, a main factor in the extreme rarity of helping behavior during the Genocide against the Tutsi. The JW-RWA study sought to add to the small body of literature on rescue during the Genocide by exploring questions similar to those posed by scholars of Holocaust-era rescue: What characteristics, motivations, and conditions underlay the actions of those few who chose to help Tutsi, whether family, friends, or strangers, during the Genocide?

Pertinent to the Genocide against the Tutsi, decades of scholarship from psychologists and sociologists provide useful insights into the cognitive processes involved in helping behavior that could potentially thwart genocide acts and ideologies. During genocides, helping behavior involves a high degree of moral decision-making. Egoistic (person-centered) inhibitors of helping include operating in "a revised moral context," characterized by the removal of normal moral barriers to murder (Anderson, 2019, p. 135), moral disengagement from targets of violence (Bandura, 1999), low feelings of self-efficacy (Li et al., 2023), and perceived difference or dislike (Stürmer & Snyder, 2010). In the "gray zone" of genocide, helping acts were sometimes mingled with motives of personal gain, such as monetary, material, or sexual payments.

A natural corollary for Holocaust researchers has been to study the dispositional and relational characteristics of individuals who became altruistic helpers and rescuers, that is, those who acted in others' behalf despite risk or sacrifice. Oliner and Oliner (1988) and Tec's (2003) pioneering studies of rescue during the Holocaust isolated several salient factors among the rescuers they interviewed: marginality from the majority community; strong moral and humanitarian values; inclusive feeling of connection toward those belonging to other groups; and willingness to extend help under difficult or dangerous circumstances toward those outside one's immediate social circle. Oliner and Oliner (1988) listed characteristics such as empathetic "involvement, commitment, care, and responsibility" (p. 186) in altruistic rescuers. Some acted according to "internalized norms of social groups to whom they were strongly attached," a "universalistic obligation to help," or "autonomous principles rooted in caring and justice" (pp. 166, 221, 249). Monroe's (2012) qualitative study of Holocaust rescue concluded that identity and self-image played a central role in their actions. "Altruists see themselves as closely connected to others through bonds of common humanity" (p. 151). There are major differences between the historical and cultural contexts of the Holocaust and the Genocide against the Tutsi, but the situational and personal attributes described above could well apply to those few individuals who took the initiative to help Tutsi in 1994.

Roots of Helping and Prosocial Behavior

Analysis of actions and circumstances surrounding helping acts during the Genocide against the Tutsi is often grounded in theories of morality (personal values), empathy (personal feelings), altruism (personal sacrifice), and ingroup/outgroup relations (personal/social identity and the "other"). Staub (2003b) identified three primary motivations behind helping acts: a value of care that assumes personal responsibility for others' welfare; the desire to live up to moral

principles; and empathetic reactions to the suffering of others. A review of key research findings on the role of morality, empathy, and group processes in altruism relates to understanding how the values and motivations of those socialized by religious teachings and practices of the Jehovah's Witness community might contribute to helping behaviors.

Moral Cognition and Helping. "One of the reasons we study rescuers," wrote Block and Drucker (1992), "is that they represent the highest form of moral achievement" (p. 10). Morality and personality are the beginning points for much scholarly discourse on altruistic acts in both ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. Socialization by family, secular or religious teachers, and others is seen as a key explanatory factor that relates to both dispositional traits and relational perspectives (e.g., Bauman, 1989; Dovidio et al., 2006; Hoffman, 2000; Kohlberg, 1964; Mussen & Eisenberg-Berg, 1977). The broad category of morality has been divided into facets of the continuum from (internalized) moral principles to (external) moral actions (Ding et al., 2018), with the caveat that one does not inevitably lead to the other (cf. Batson, 2016). Morality is seen as having both cognitive aspects (e.g., moral reasoning, moral judgment) and affective ones (moral emotion, moral elevation) (Ding et al., 2018).

Empathic Motivation of Helping. Morality has been closely linked with empathy (Decety & Cowell, 2014). Empathy has been seen as a primary motivation for altruistic acts (Batson et al., 1981; Batson 2016) and as a predictor of prosocial behavior more generally (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1991; Penner et al., 1995). Volunteering, which often takes place within religious communities, has also been linked to prosociality, empathy, and helping (Dovidio et al., 2006; Finkelstein et al., 2005; Penner et al., 2005). Studies have shown that children and adolescents may learn and retain prosocial habits as they develop a "volunteer identity" that carries over into later life (Kim & Morgül, 2017). Volunteers scored higher than others in empathy and helpfulness, and those who

volunteered longer than six months scored significantly higher in prosocial behavior (Penner et al., 1995). Piliavin (2010) proposes that volunteer activities can be involved in the development of motivations. “We are what we do, and we engage in activities that reinforce whom we believe ourselves to be” (p. 165).

Group Processes to Reduce Bias in Helping. Altruistic helping and volunteering often take place in group contexts. Ingroup members predictably prefer to help one another, whether within families, social groups, or other collectives, rather than outside the group (Penner et al., 2005). Research on ingroup/outgroup relations often focuses on the dynamics of aggression, discrimination, stereotyping, and other negative manifestations (e.g., Abbink & Harris, 2019; Eisenberg et al., 2010). The field of genocide studies has made important contributions to this literature (e.g., Hinton, 2005; Moshman, 2011; Staub, 2011). However, beyond attention to negative ingroup/outgroup relations, positive dynamics involving intergroup altruism, and particularly ingroup helping of outgroup members, are also increasingly the subject of scholarly study (Stürmer & Snyder, 2010). Intergroup helping can result from shifts in attitudes, such as perspective-taking, which can reduce stereotypical evaluations of others and increase emotional responses to their needs (Davis & Maitner, 2010). Decategorization, or reducing the salience of group membership, can occur through personalized interactions that displace stereotypes with knowledge gained by personal acquaintance. Recategorization involves reordering group boundaries in inclusive ways that reduce group biases, such as by finding common ground among members of separate groups that, in effect, constitutes new groups, or by seeing ingroups and outgroups as subgroups of a larger “superordinate” collective (Gaertner et al., 2000). Reduced biases, in turn, increase openness to intergroup cooperation and helping (Dovidio et al., 2010).

Darley and Latané (1968) explained the "bystander effect" with the concept of "diffusion of responsibility," in which the presence of others may tend to inhibit helping behavior. Levine and Cassidy have, in part, turned the theory on its head by suggesting that "if group norms favor intervention, then the presence of the group can facilitate intervention" (2010, p. 214). Key differences lie in both the psychosocial relationship of those with a shared social identity and the nature of that identity itself. For instance, "some group identities embody norms and values which promote helping the outgroup as a way of establishing or maintaining ingroup value and distinctiveness" (Levine & Cassidy, 2010, p. 222).

Findings from extant literature on prosocial helping behavior during genocides could be compared to the characteristics of the faith community of Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda as reported in Sections 3 and 4 of this report on faith and forgiveness. As one example, the Witnesses' emphasis on attending to the spiritual needs of others through their public ministry regardless of their ethnic or economic backgrounds may have disposed individual Witnesses to help those in physical distress as a natural extension of their charitable religious work.

Gender, Children, and Helping

The JW-RWA study compared gender differences in helping behaviors and explored the role of children during the Genocide against the Tutsi. Regarding gender differences and helping behavior, Eagly and Crowley's (1986) meta review concluded that male social roles foster heroic helping, whereas female roles foster nurturing and caring helping. Espinosa and Kovářík (2015) found more malleability in gender roles, and Nadler (2020) noted little difference between males and females in gender-neutral situations. While the majority of officially recognized rescuers have been males, Brown (2018) documented cases of women offering help in the form of hiding, aiding, and otherwise protecting others, even at great personal risk.

Studies on helping during childhood in general have found that even young children engage in prosocial behavior and helping increases with age (Bar-Tal et al., 1982; Chernyak et al., 2018). Slight gender differences have been noted, with girls who engage in early prosocial behavior developing greater empathy-related traits (Hardy et al., 2015; Van der Graaff et al., 2018). Moran & Taylor (2022) reviewed studies of children in conflict zones for evidence of prosocial behavior toward outgroups. While younger children mainly helped those within their group, empathy and perspective-taking in older children and adolescents may have contributed to prosocial actions across group lines.

Helping During the Genocide Against the Tutsi

The foregoing discussion of prosocial behavior lays the groundwork for considering the characteristics of helping behavior in high-risk settings. In Rwanda, helping behavior has been documented based largely on qualitative interviews of "rescuers" designated as such by survivor organizations or NGOs (e.g., Brown, 2018; Burnet, 2023; Fox & Nyseth Brehm, 2018; Fujii, 2014; Mulinda, 2014; Rothbart & Cooley, 2016; Straus, 2013b; Stefano, 2016). Most researchers delimit "rescuer" to include those who had helped others and had not killed. Expanding traditional definitions, Semelin (2013) introduces additional nuances to the term "rescue," including "ordinary everyday acts" to protect others that become "extraordinary gestures" because of the risk they entailed (p. 2). Rather than the term "rescue," Andrieu (2013) prefers the term "help" because it better reflects the "continuous chain of acts, carried out by a whole series of players," instead of "rescue," which focuses on one moment or person (p. 51). Considering the multilayered acts and individuals involved during the Genocide, the two words are used interchangeably in the succeeding discussion.

According to Burnet (2023), during the early days of the Genocide, rescue of Tutsi, while uncommon, took place somewhat more often than later during the Genocide; as the killing intensified and became more organized, rescue attempts quickly diminished. With the sudden onset of the Genocide in Rwanda, the decision to rescue acquaintances and strangers alike must have occurred spontaneously. It is logical, therefore, that researchers would focus on preconditions that predicted helping behavior. Rothbart & Cooley (2016) examined the effect of ethical education and role models on Hutu rescuers, identifying patterns such as rescuers' sense of self, sense of humanity, and interconnectedness with Tutsi. Rescuers had parental and other role models who explicitly taught them by word and deed to live at peace and who provided "foundational moral clarity" that helped them respond as they did when faced with genocidal violence (p. 88). Many had also witnessed or heard stories of suffering due to anti-Tutsi violence and discrimination during prior periods (i.e., 1959, 1963, 1967, and 1973; cf. Bizimana, 2001), perhaps accounting for empathetic reactions to present Tutsi suffering. Conversely, ambivalence of beliefs and lack of moral clarity can contribute to a lack of compassion and violent acts toward fellow humans (cf. Appleby, 2000; Juergensmeyer, 2017).

Similarly, Fox and Nyseth Brehm (2018) argue that while stable personality traits are usually seen as most salient to the decision to rescue, other factors are also involved, particularly in collective rescue in high-risk situations. As McDoom (2021) found with those who perpetrated violence, rescue also apparently depended heavily on 'who you were, where you lived, and who you knew.' Socialization, such as in parental or religious norms against violence, and situational contexts, such as trusted social networks, played a role in the decision to rescue. "Biographical availability," which refers to personal circumstances such as employment, marriage, and family responsibilities, was also found to facilitate or hinder ones from helping (Fox & Nyseth Brehm,

2018, p. 1629). As examples, those who lived in a home with an underground hiding place might have been more likely to hide fugitives; and those with full-time jobs may have had no time to rescue others.

Religion and Helping During Genocide. In contrast to a substantial body of literature on the complicity of Christian religions to genocide, relatively little has been written on religion and rescue. (See discussion in the Introduction, Section 1 of this report.) This is likely because not only was rescue relatively rare, but evidence of religiously motivated rescue and helping is even rarer. In the face of genocide, individual adherents of various religions ranged in behaviors from zealous participation to passive acquiescence to selfless resistance and rescue (Brown & Smith, 2022; Tec, 2003). However, such actions were not always closely linked to individuals' religious identity. Moreover, even where self-reports indicate a religious motivation, evidence of directionality may be lacking. For example, a rescuer of Jews during the Holocaust may have attributed altruistic acts to his or her religious orientation. Yet, it may not be clear which came first: Did the convert learn and adopt religious values that motivated altruistic acts? Or did the person already have altruistic tendencies and then decide to seek affiliation with a religious community as a structure within which to perform good deeds? Researchers generally agree: The fact that "religious affiliation per se did not distinguish between rescuers and nonrescuers is suggested by their similar religious backgrounds" (Oliner & Oliner, 1988, p. 156). In other words, the link between religious belonging and prosocial acts is challenged by the conspicuous presence of rescuers' co-religionists who acted in harmful ways.

Still, most religious groups embrace values of caring and fraternity, and some (but not all) rescuers belonging to various faith groups explicitly attributed their actions to religious socialization and values (e.g., Burnet, 2023, pp. 84–87). Oliner and Oliner (1988) observed that

such rescuers differed from others "in their interpretation of religious teaching and religious commitment, which emphasized the common humanity of all people" (p. 156). Burnet's (2023) research on Rwandan rescuers concluded: "Participating in a faith community, whether at a mosque, church, or prayer group, that . . . described racial discrimination as sinful greatly increased the likelihood that people would oppose the genocide, attempt to rescue people from death, and persist in those choices even when faced with growing danger" (p. 87).

An important study by Fox et al. (2021) sought clarity with regard to the role of religious beliefs, practices, and social networks in rescue, concluding that religion factored into rescue in three ways: (a) cognitive safety nets, such as low death anxiety due to belief in resurrection, that enabled risky acts; (b) religious practices that inhibited adherents from joining social networks perpetrating violence; and (c) religious social networks that provided opportunities and resources connected to rescue. The marginal status of religious minorities may have produced a stronger inclination to rescue "due to greater empathy or well-established, insular social networks in these communities" (pp. 99–100). Burnet (2023) describes the dense social networks among Rwandan Muslims, who had historically been regarded as "other" in the majority-Christian country. Some among the tiny Muslim minority perpetrated genocidal harm but even these generally avoided killing other Muslims, whereas others joined forces with non-Muslims to resist attacks on Tutsi. The prior experience of repression among marginal groups may have motivated resistance to participation in communal harmdoing. Low-profile and clandestine worship among minority religions may also have prepared some congregants for the dangerous undertaking of help and rescue (Fox & Nyseth Brehm, 2018).

Researchers have identified what seems intuitive about helping behavior: Humans tend to help those whom they know, those with whom they share emotional or social attachment, and

those to whom they relate and toward whom they feel greater empathy or compassion. The greater the cost or sacrifice, the less likely helping takes place. Yet, in contradiction of claimed "helplessness" by those who chose to cooperate, conform, or stand by while atrocities were perpetrated, altruistic acts of rescue have occurred during the Holocaust, the Genocide against the Tutsi, and in other extraordinary situations. Researcher Jean Damascène Bizimana (2001) noted the rarity and core values of those who resisted the Genocide against the Tutsi:

> During the genocide, there were Christians and a few priests who distinguished themselves by courage and compassion beyond human strength. It's a small number, but it's enough to prove that in the most terrible conditions, there are still men and women who respect the life of others, even to the point of dying for it. (p. 139, translated by report author)

Extant research provides evidence that individuals from various religious backgrounds (sometimes contrary to the position of their religious leaders) made decisions of conscience to resist the Genocide by not joining *génocidaires* and by proactively helping those targeted to be killed, even at personal risk. The JW-RWA study contributes to the academic literature by examining ways in which emphasis on peaceful and apolitical positions within a faith community might have influenced both the individual and collective decisions and circumstances of targeted and not-targeted Jehovah's Witnesses during the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Jehovah's Witnesses' Historical Pattern of Nonviolence and Social Cohesion

The subpopulation of special research interest in the JW-RWA study consisted of those who belonged to the religious community of Jehovah's Witnesses prior to and during the Genocide against the Tutsi. Distinctive features of the Witness community include their political neutrality, belief in ethnic equality, ethic of nonviolence, evangelizing work, strong sense of religious identity, and social cohesion. This section of the report discusses factors relevant to their general situation

as a community, the social consequences of their religious affiliation, and their behavior and attitudes in light of certain teachings of the faith.

The response of a given religious community, and individual congregants, to a State-sponsored genocide can partly be attributed to the community's institutional and ethical position toward secular authority. Scholars ascribe the failure of Rwanda's majority churches in 1994 to their pre-existing symbiotic relationship with governmental authorities that at the very least suppressed expressions of disapproval of genocide (Carney, 2014; Gatwa, 2005; Longman, 2010; Schliesser et al., 2021). The "remarkably high degree of political interlinking between the church and the state" included inculcation of obedience to authority by government and religious authorities interested in pacification of the masses (Banyanga & Björkqvist, 2017, p. 3). Pseudoscientific theories of racial superiority underpinned church practices instituted by European missionaries dating back to colonial times and contributed to systemic societal discrimination (Court, 2016; Eltringham, 2006).

The situation of Rwandan Jehovah's Witnesses differed greatly, in part because of their teaching of political neutrality that prevented them from forming a religion-State alliance, even if the government had been willing. According to biblical precepts, Witnesses consider themselves as subjects of God's Kingdom, an actual heavenly government to which they owe their allegiance (John 17:14; 18:36; 2 Corinthians 5:20). At the same time, Witnesses teach the biblical requirement to respect and obey secular authority (Romans 13). Following the model of Jesus and the early Christians, Witnesses do not take sides in political disputes, nor do they engage in political or military activity (John 6:15). Neither do they support resistance movements or violent protests (Romans 12:18; 2 Timothy 2:24). They would refuse compliance only if governments demand actions forbidden by God (Acts 5:29).

Witnesses globally have faced severe challenges to their stand of conscience, particularly during wartime and civil strife, and under dictatorships (Baran, 2014; Garbe, 1993/2008; Marinozzi, 2011; Peters, 2000). It is instructive to examine the historical record regarding the response of Jehovah's Witnesses to the genocidal Nazi regime. During the early years of Nazi rule, Witnesses were targeted and their worship was banned because of their refusal to conform to the discriminatory and militaristic norms of the regime. Witness workers were fired from jobs and their children were expelled from school for refusing to give the Hitler salute (Garbe, 1993/2008). Witness businessmen were punished with boycotts, violence, or incarceration for refusing to observe racial laws (Wilker, 2022). Several thousand Witnesses were incarcerated in prisons and camps for adhering to their religious identity and ideals (Hesse, 2001). As the Hitler government consolidated its power and prepared for war, the consequences of neutrality increased, with hundreds of Witness males being executed for their conscientious objection to military service (Kehoe, 2019). Producing and distributing banned religious literature also led to executions of Witness men and women. As part of its psychological warfare, the Nazi regime offered Jehovah's Witness prisoners the opportunity to go free if they would sign a document recanting their faith. Eyewitnesses report and scholars confirm that very few Witnesses did so (Garbe, 1993/2008).

Under such circumstances, with active suppression and constant surveillance, opportunities for altruistic helping would have been limited. In a similar way to the dynamics identified by Fox and Nyseth Brehm (2018) regarding rescue in the Rwandan context, increasing Nazi repression of Witnesses may have strengthened their social cohesion and motivated clandestine helping behavior. Numerous non-Witness observers reported strong solidarity and mutual helping among incarcerated Witnesses (e.g., Buber-Neumann, 2008; Herbermann, 1959; Kempler, 2013; Liebster, 2003;). Others, including Nazi officials and clergymen, noted Witnesses' staunch refusal to

abandon their religious identity and compromise their stance (Bettelheim, 1960; Hoess, 1959; Lilje, 1985; Niemöller, 1947). Many accounts by non-Witnesses indicate that Witnesses extended help and refused to harm Jews and other targeted groups (Daxelmüller, 2001; King, 1982; Langbein, 1996; Wilker, 2022). Daxelmüller's 2001 study, based on recollections by non-Witness prisoners, attributes the solidarity and prosocial acts of Witness prisoners to the "pre-camp socialization and civilization patterns" of their religious teachings (p. 29).

Although the genocides in Nazi-occupied Europe and Rwanda differ in major respects, the situation of Jehovah's Witnesses had certain similarities. The 10-year governmental ban on Witnesses in Rwanda (1982–1992) was imposed, in part, because of Witnesses' refusal to participate in military service, night patrols, and patriotic exercises (Chu, 2019; Seminega & Nkurikiyinka, 2025). Rwandan Witnesses' experience of government repression may have contributed to a strengthened social network, supporting individuals' refusal to participate in ethnic discrimination and violence and heightening their own willingness and ability to engage in high-risk helping behavior inside and outside the community.

As noted previously, studies of rescuers indicated that universalistic values that rise above social divisions tended to predict altruistic helping (e.g., Oliner & Oliner, 1988). Jehovah's Witnesses, like many other religious and ethical systems, believe in the common origins of all humans and the impartiality of God (Acts 10:34, 35; 17:26–28). Witnesses teach that neither national borders nor ethnic divisions ought to govern their interpersonal relationships with or moral responsibilities toward fellow humans. The Witnesses' evangelizing activity is a visible manifestation of this value. Belief in their obligation to share the gospel message with all persons regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion, or social status (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8) has resulted in interracial and socio-economic diversity in their congregations in Africa and elsewhere

(Long, 1968; Wilson, 1973; Yi & Graziul, 2017). In line with research findings on volunteerism, the unpaid ministry undertaken by all Jehovah's Witnesses may be one factor in the development of prosocial attitudes, including perspective-taking and empathy toward others, especially disadvantaged persons, outside their community. This other-oriented, salvific activity may have primed some Witnesses to offer spontaneous help to strangers despite extreme risk during the Genocide (Chu & Seminega, 2022; cf. Graziano et al., 2007). Witness helpers' belief in the hope of resurrection of the righteous could have acted as a "cognitive safety net" as they undertook extreme risks to help those in need. As detailed in Seminega (2019), their strong social network might have enabled Rwandan Witnesses to engage in collective rescue and helping efforts—a finding that the research data from those targeted to be killed would bear out.

Results

The research findings include analysis of responses from the total sample who were affiliated with various religions at the time of the Genocide and those who were Jehovah's Witnesses before and during the Genocide. General findings related to the Genocide cover the following topics: location and duration of danger, changes in household composition, personal or family traumatic events, multiple role-situations, and children's role as recalled by those who were parents and children. These findings are based mostly on data from the Genocide Generation. In some cases, subgroups within the Genocide Generation were compared (e.g., adults and minors). Some analysis also included how the Post-Genocide Generation understood the traumatic events experienced by older family members. The subgroups analyzed and the number of respondents to each survey question varied. For example, some questions in the survey were directed to certain subgroups (e.g., parents during the Genocide). Respondents who were minors in 1994 would have varied and limited recall of their own experiences, depending on their age; thus, most analysis

focused on those who were adults in Rwanda during the Genocide. Given the period of almost 30 years between the time of the 1994 Genocide and the 2023 JW-RWA survey, a high percentage of respondents in the study population selected *prefer not to answer* (PNA) and *do not know* (DNK) response options to some questions. As would be expected, the Post-Genocide Generation had a high percentage of DNK responses when asked about their family's experiences during the 1994 Genocide. From the analysis, PNA and DNK responses were removed from percentage calculations in the descriptive statistics if these did not contribute meaningfully to the findings.

In order to better understand the impact of the Genocide against the Tutsi, the original intent of the JW-RWA survey was to allow respondents to self-identify as Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa. However, the RNEC stipulated that the survey instrument could not inquire explicitly about the ethnicity of the respondents. Nevertheless, respondents could report whether, during the Genocide against the Tutsi, they had been targeted to be killed—a classification that clearly applies to Tutsi. It is possible that some respondents who were not ethnically Tutsi may have self-identified as having been targeted (e.g., those mistakenly identified by the Interahamwe militia as being Tutsi; those with Tutsi spouses or relatives; or perhaps certain Hutu who were targeted, not for genocide, but because the Interahamwe viewed them as politically moderate or resistant to the Genocide). However, the proportion of such non-Tutsi respondents would have been relatively small in comparison with those targeted to be killed because they were Tutsi.

For purposes of statistical analysis in this study, the category *targeted to be killed* allowed for inferential group comparisons of those targeted (Tutsi) and not targeted (not Tutsi) on selected variables (e.g., posttraumatic stress symptoms, change in household composition, and help received by those targeted during the Genocide). This common ethnic classification for Tutsi was also used to investigate the types and sources of help given to those *targeted to be killed* during

the Genocide against the Tutsi. The analysis of helping behaviors included a breakdown of respondents who were targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and targeted non-JWs in 1994, which provided insights into the faith community and the extent and nature of help given to targeted Tutsi during the Genocide.

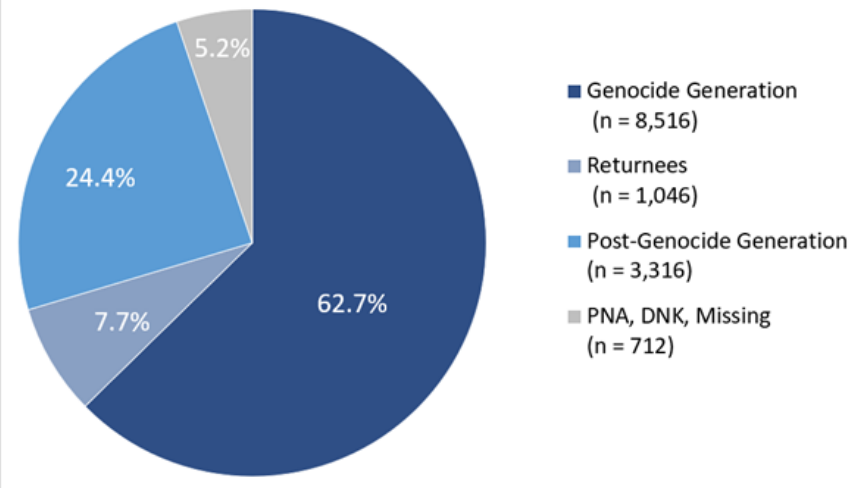
Finally, findings specific to Jehovah's Witnesses before and during the Genocide identify some ways in which principles of nonviolence, political neutrality, and prosociality of Jehovah's Witnesses likely contributed to their practices during the decade-long government ban on the religion and during the Genocide against the Tutsi. Findings on what non-JWs in 1994 saw at the time of the Genocide and reported provide compelling evidence of an overall peaceful and apolitical stance of the Witnesses. In light of the pervasive ethnically divisive ideology and violence perpetrated by génocidiares, the analysis examined how a faith community composed of those who were targeted to be killed (Tutsi) and those not targeted (not Tutsi) could function as a cohesive unit.

Demographic Overview

The JW-RWA study examined the experiences and understanding of the Genocide against the Tutsi of three main demographic groups with different generational or geographical perspectives: (a) the Genocide Generation, which consisted of those born before or in 1994 and were adults or minors living in Rwanda during the Genocide against the Tutsi; (b) Returnees who reported that they were outside Rwanda during the 1994 Genocide; and (c) the Post-Genocide Generation who were born after 1994. Figure 5.1 shows the proportion of the three main groups in the total sample and the percentage of the sample whose group could not be identified because of PNA and DNK responses and missing data.

Figure 5.1

Sample Population by Main Demographic Groups



Note. Total sample, *n* = 13,590. As elsewhere in this report, *prefer not to answer* and *do not know* responses are abbreviated PNA and DNK.

Table 5.1 gives a breakdown of the three main generational groups by gender and age.

Table 5.1

Generational Breakdown by Gender and Age

Group	Genocide Generation	Returnees	Post-Genocide Generation	Total
	n (%)	*n* (%)	*n* (%)	*n* (%)
Total	8,516 (66.13)	1,046 (8.12)	3,316 (25.75)	12,878 (100)
Gender				
Male	3,826 (67.16)	426 (7.48)	1,445 (25.36)	5,697 (44.24)
Female	4,690 (65.31)	620 (8.63)	1,871 (26.05)	7,181 (55.76)
Age				
Early Young Adults Age 18–28, Born 1995–2005	-	-	3,316 (100)	3,316 (25.75)
Young Adults Age 29–39, Born 1984–1994	2,802 (32.90)	504 (48.18)	-	3,306 (25.67)
Middle-Aged Adults Age 40–59, Born 1964–1983	4,514 (53.01)	465 (44.46)	-	4,979 (38.66)
Older Adults Over Age 59, Born Before 1964	1,200 (14.09)	77 (7.36)	-	1,277 (9.92)

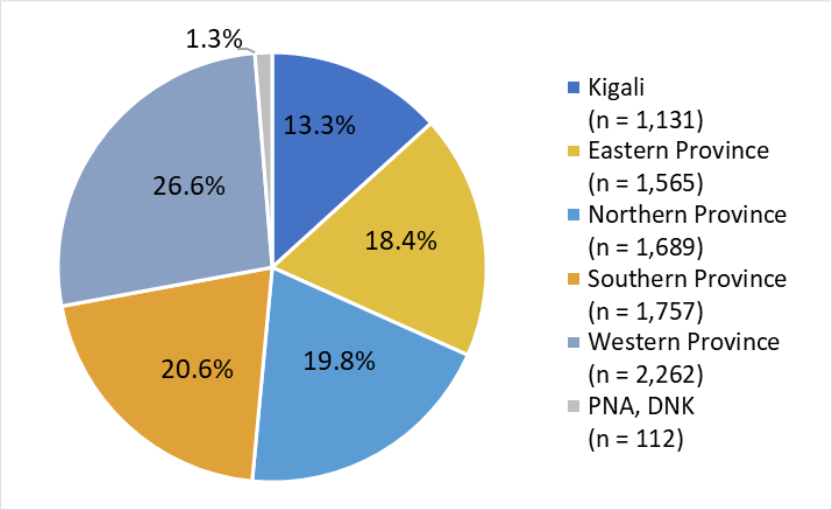
Note. The total of 12,878 equals the total sample (*n* = 13,590) minus 712 respondents who had missing demographic data that did not allow group classification. In the data analysis, the *n* varied depending on missing data, PNA, and DNK responses. Present ages are calculated based on the year of data collection, 2023.

Location of Genocide Generation During the Genocide

The survey asked Genocide Generation respondents which province and district they lived in during the Genocide (using today's geographic divisions). As shown in Figure 5.2, the Genocide Generation in the sample population ($n = 8{,}516$) was geographically distributed across all provinces.

Figure 5.2

Residence by Province During the Genocide Against the Tutsi



Note. *N* = 8,516. Residence was based on current geopolitical divisions.

Jehovah's Witnesses are not concentrated in specific geographic areas or districts. The JW-RWA survey data identified districts in which the Genocide Generation (adults and minors) resided at the time of the 2023 survey and used the current geographic divisions to determine their district of residence at the time of the Genocide against the Tutsi. Table 5.2 lists the 30 districts in Rwanda, with the number of respondents who reported where they lived at the time of the 1994 Genocide. Respondents who did not provide both their Genocide location and current location were removed from this analysis ($n = 187$). The table shows variations in the number and percentages who remained in the same area since the Genocide (e.g., 76.47% of those in Nyagatare in the Eastern Province and 75.50% of those in Rusizi in the Western Province) or who moved to a different area since the Genocide (e.g., 67.52% of those in Nyarugenge in Kigala and 57.14% of those in Karongi in Western Province.)

Table 5.2

Residence of Genocide Generation by District at Time of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi and Any Change at the Time of the 2023 Survey

Province	District	Residence, 1994	Stayed		Left	
		n	*n*	%	*n*	%
Kigali	Gasabo	451	242	53.66	209	46.34
	Kicukiro	270	122	45.19	148	54.81
	Nyarugenge	391	127	32.48	264	67.52
Northern	Burera	139	66	47.48	73	52.52
	Gakenke	542	316	58.30	226	41.70
	Gicumbi	366	199	54.37	167	45.63
	Musanze	277	139	50.18	138	49.82
	Rulindo	352	202	57.39	150	42.61
Southern	Gisagara	206	123	59.71	83	40.29
	Huye	427	242	56.67	185	43.33
	Kamonyi	190	88	46.32	102	53.68
	Muhanga	397	214	53.90	183	46.10
	Nyamagabe	164	93	56.71	71	43.29
	Nyanza	104	53	50.96	51	49.04
	Nyaruguru	169	94	55.62	75	44.38
	Ruhango	94	50	53.19	44	46.81
Eastern	Bugesera	307	213	69.38	94	30.62
	Gatsibo	291	177	60.82	114	39.18
	Kayonza	129	86	66.67	43	33.33
	Kirehe	137	79	57.66	58	42.34
	Ngoma	262	194	74.05	68	25.95
	Nyagatare	85	65	76.47	20	23.53
	Rwamagana	330	156	47.27	174	52.73
Western	Karongi	119	51	42.86	68	57.14
	Ngororero	625	419	67.04	206	32.96
	Nyabihu	237	119	50.21	118	49.79
	Nyamasheke	107	73	68.22	34	31.78
	Rubavu	542	362	66.79	180	33.21
	Rutsiro	370	244	65.95	126	34.05
	Rusizi	249	188	75.50	61	24.50
Total		8,329	4,796	57.58	3,533	42.42

Note. Residence by district during the time of the Genocide against the Tutsi is based on current geopolitical divisions. The frequencies and percentages of those who stayed or left are based on the current location reported in the 2023 JW-RWA survey.

The main reasons for population shifts in districts varied over time. For example, the National Census Service (2003) in Rwanda noted in its preliminary report on the 2002 census that "the demographic situation of Rwanda, some 11 years since the last Census and 8 years after the war and the genocide . . . unleashed massive population displacements that have profoundly modified the structure of the population of this country" (p. 4). In fact, the 2002 census was delayed 1 year "due to the need to ensure that the population had properly settled down within the entire national territory after the massive displacements of the 1990s" (National Census Service, 2005, p. i). Later population shifts during the last 2 decades are generally attributed to rural-urban migration and economic development strategies, with improved economic, education, and healthcare advantages in urban areas (cf. National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, 2016; World Bank Group, 2017; World Bank Group, Government of Rwanda, 2020). For the study population overall, 57.58% of the Genocide Generation lived in the same district where they experienced the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Duration of Danger

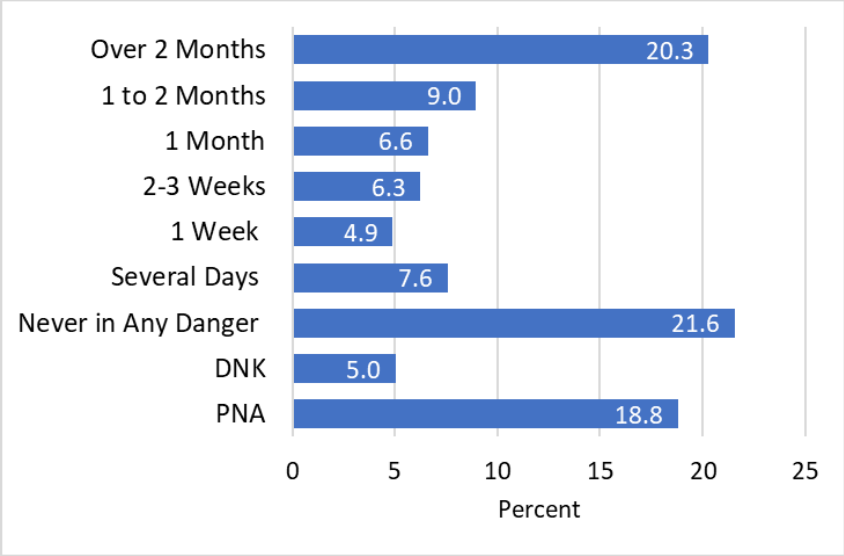
Coordinated massacres of Tutsi took place nationwide, with the Genocide against the Tutsi affecting every part of Rwanda in some way (cf. National Commission for the Fight against Genocide, 2021). Other studies have documented the unfolding of Genocide events and identified the varied degrees of danger by ethnicity, gender, and region (cf. African Rights, 1995; McDoom, 2014, 2021). The JW-RWA study considered the duration of danger during the Genocide against the Tutsi primarily as one of several factors that might have influenced helping behavior during the Genocide. The findings reported below give an overview, followed by a breakdown by gender and province, shown in Figures 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5. Additional analysis on the duration of danger

was conducted on the types of help given to those targeted and in danger for 1 month or more, shown in Figure 5.21.

To determine the approximate length of time respondents recalled being in danger, the survey asked those who were adults in the Genocide Generation, *Approximately how long were you in danger, if at all, during the time of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi?* As shown in Figure 5.3, one fourth (23.84%) gave PNA or DNK responses. One third (35.87%) reported being in danger for 1 month or more; about one fifth (18.72%) were in danger for several days or up to 3 weeks; about one fifth (21.57%) reported never being in danger.

Figure 5.3

Duration of Danger, Breakdown by Time Intervals, Genocide Generation Adults



Note. *N* = 3,616 adults in Rwanda during the Genocide who reported duration of danger.

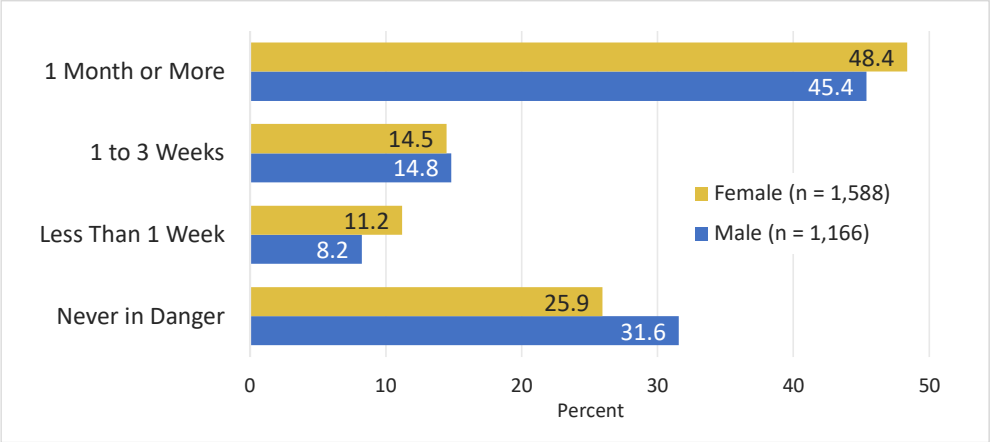
Duration of Danger by Gender

Figure 5.4 shows the duration of danger with a breakdown by gender. Excluding the PNA and DNK respondents, almost half (47.10%, *n* = 1,297) of respondents (males and females combined, *n* = 2,754) were in danger for 1 month or more; a little over one fourth (28.32%) were

never in danger. A slightly higher percentage of females (48.36%) reported being in danger for 1 month or longer, compared with males (45.37%); more males (31.56%) than females (25.94%) reported never having been in danger. Findings are consistent with other research of the intense danger Tutsi women experienced.

Figure 5.4

Duration of Danger by Gender, Genocide Generation Adults



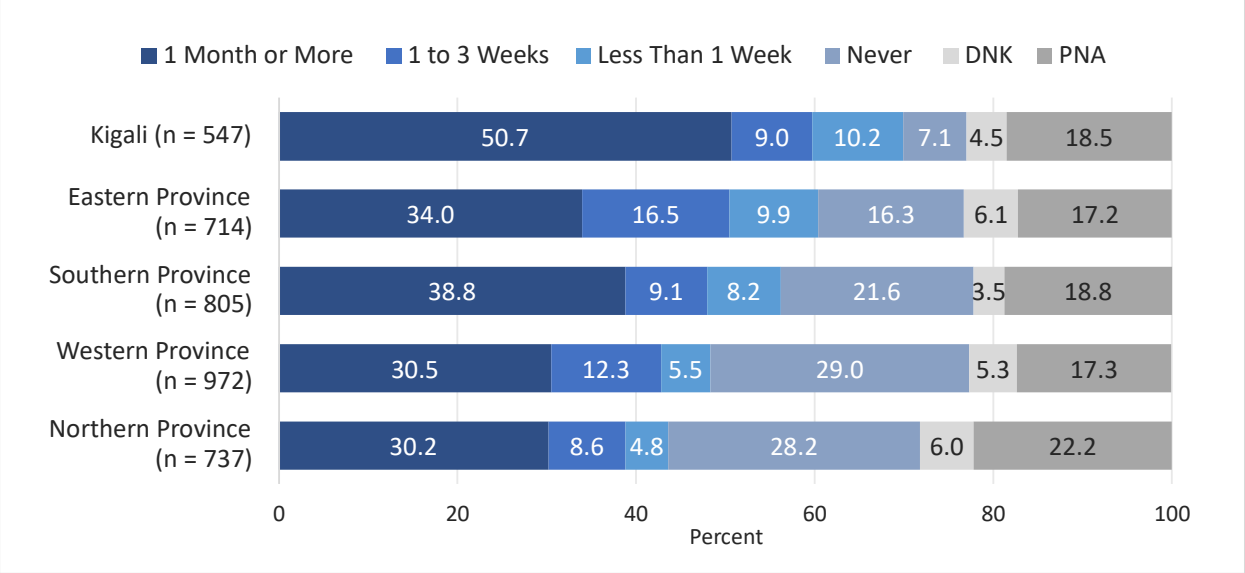
Duration of Danger by Province

The length of danger experienced during the Genocide against the Tutsi varied by geographic location. The survey only allowed respondents to report the duration of danger at one location, so the data do not reflect situations of those who changed locations, fleeing to different districts or provinces. Recall of past traumas and the duration of danger changes over time, and the survey question does not account for the types and intensity of danger, such as those experienced in areas where large-scale massacres of Tutsi were sometimes fast-moving. Findings show that the Genocide against the Tutsi was carried out across Rwanda and that danger persisted in some areas more than others. As shown in Figure 5.5, those in Kigali during the Genocide reported being in danger the longest, with about half in danger for 1 month or more. Those in the Western and Northern Provinces reported the shortest time in danger. The percentage of those who selected

PNA was similar across all provinces—between 17.2% and 22.2% of respondents regardless of the geographic location and duration of danger.

Figure 5.5

Duration of Danger by Province, Genocide Generation Adults



Note. *N* = 3,600. The figure does not include those who selected PNA for the geographic location (*n* = 16).

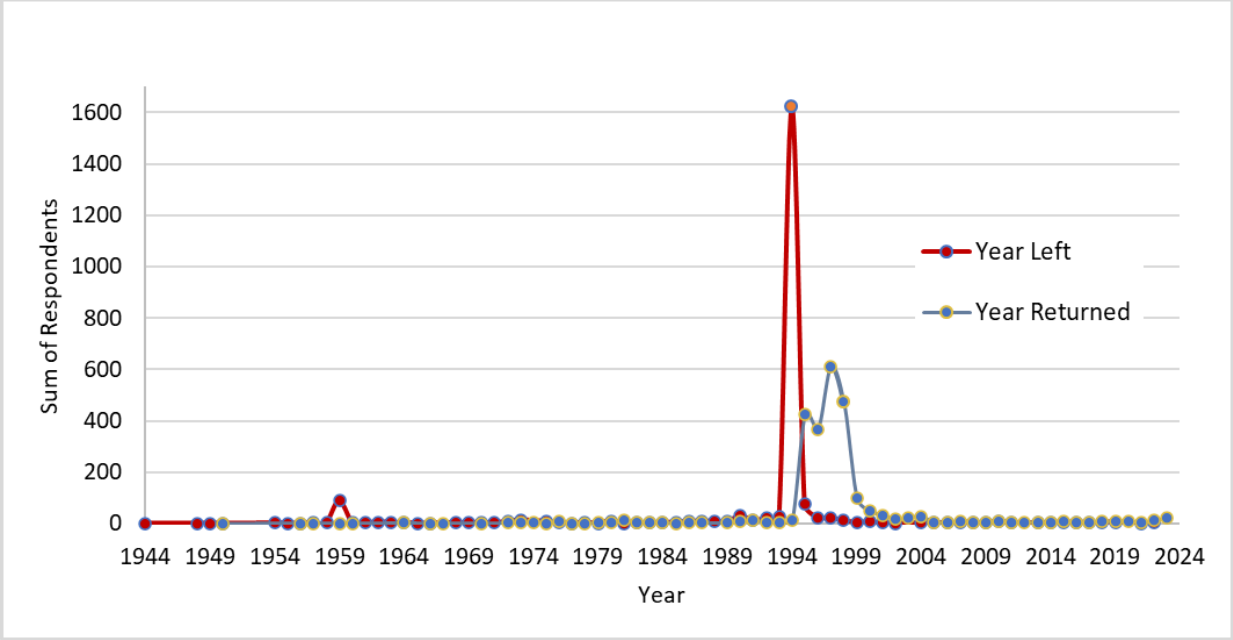
Those Who Lived Outside Rwanda for a Time

For a broader context, the survey asked respondents, to the best of their recollection, in both the Returnee and Genocide Generation subgroups if they had ever lived outside Rwanda at any time, and if so, in which country and which year they left and returned. A total of 3,902 reported living outside Rwanda for a time in the following countries: 51.50% (*n* = 2,233) in Zaire/Democratic Republic of Congo; 15.13% (*n* = 656) in Tanzania; 10.15% (*n* = 440) in Burundi; 8.95% (*n* = 388) in Uganda; 1.68% (*n* = 73) in Kenya; 4.38% (*n* = 190) in other countries. (Some [8.21%, *n* = 356] did not report in which country outside Rwanda they lived.)

Figure 5.6 charts the peak years of migration during the period of political violence around 1959 and around the time of the Genocide against the Tutsi. The chart highlights the exodus and return of displaced persons who fled Rwanda over decades and later returned.

Figure 5.6

Those Who Lived Outside Rwanda for a Time, Years Left and Returned



Note. Respondents who reported the year left numbered 2,146; those who reported the year returned numbered 2,379.

Effect of Genocide on Household Composition

In the wake of the Genocide against the Tutsi, the disruption of family life would be evident by the reconfiguration of households and loss of family members. Both an increase or decrease in size of the household unit during the Genocide would require significant adaptations in roles and functions within restructured family units. The survey investigated the number in households and the types of households respondents recalled 1 month before and 1 month after the Genocide against the Tutsi. Unlike Rwanda census data collected face-to-face per household at the time of the census-taking, the survey data were based on individual respondents' retrospective recall.

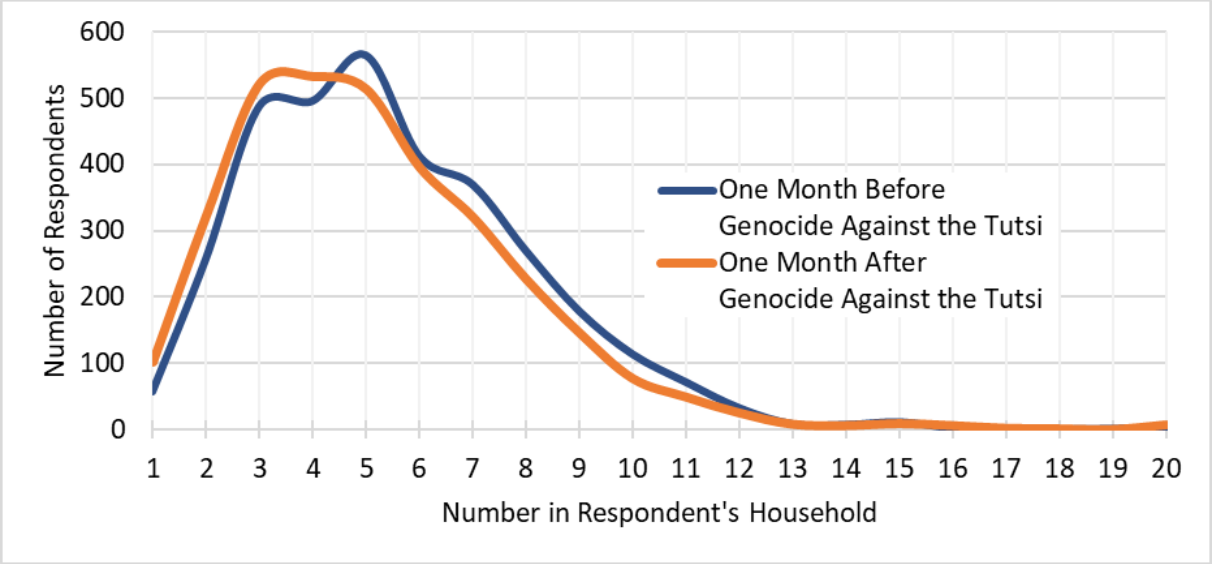
Although the questions, collection procedures, and timing of the JW-RWA survey data and national census data differed, statistics from the general population censuses are provided for context and comparison.

Household Size Before and After the Genocide Against the Tutsi

The study analyzed the shifts in the household size before and after the Genocide against the Tutsi as recalled by those who were adults and in Rwanda during that time. (See Figure 5.7.) For a direct comparison, analysis was conducted on those who reported their household size both before and after the Genocide. The average number of persons that respondents reported living in their households before the Genocide was 5.5 individuals (total of 17,092 in households reported by 3,113 respondents) and 5.2 individuals after the Genocide (total of 16,137 persons in households reported by 3,113 respondents). Within the short interval of a few months, households numbering 4 or less members increased and households with 5 to 12 members decreased. According to the 2002 census report, which was the most recent census post-Genocide, household sizes averaged 4.5 persons in 1978, increased to 4.7 in 1991, and declined again to 4.5 in 2002, with 61.2% of households consisting of 3 to 6 members (National Census Service, 2005). Thus, a 0.7 difference existed between the average household size of 5.5 persons 1 month after the Genocide as reported almost 30 years post-Genocide by survey respondents and the average household size of 4.5 persons reported in the 2002 national census conducted 8 years after the Genocide. However, the 0.3 decline in household size 1 month before and after the Genocide reported by the study population is roughly consistent with the 0.2 decline found between the 11-year interval of the 1991 and 2002 national censuses. For comparison, in the last census conducted in Rwanda in 2022, the mean size of household was 4.1 individuals, reflecting more recent socio-economic factors contributing to a decrease in household size (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2023).

Figure 5.7

Number in Genocide Generation Households One Month Before and After the 1994 Genocide



Note. Respondents who reported household composition both 1 month before and 1 month after the Genocide against the Tutsi numbered 3,113.

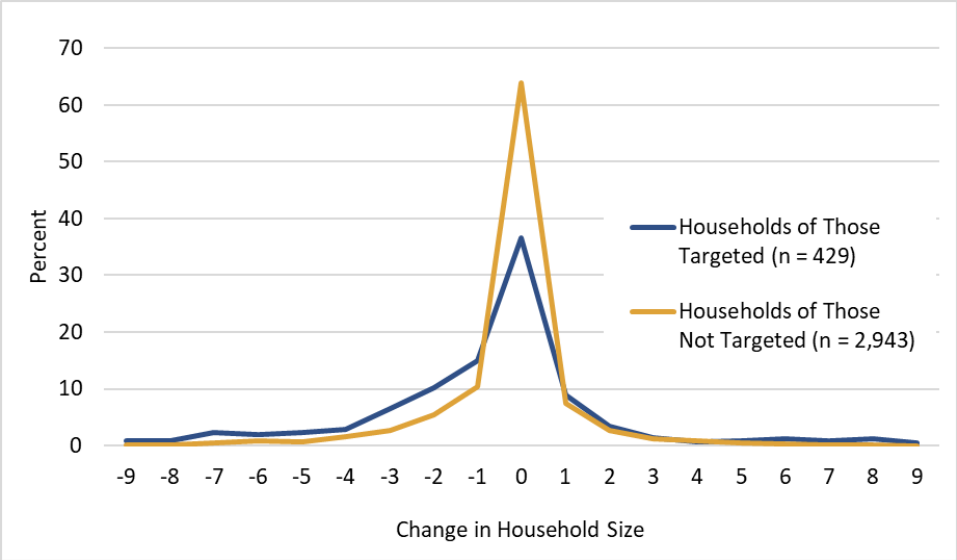
Household Size One Month Before and After the Genocide for Those Targeted and Not Targeted

The Genocide against the Tutsi resulted in unfathomable loss and disruption for families of Tutsi targeted to be killed. Figure 5.8 shows changes in household composition from the period 1 month before and 1 month after the Genocide for those who were targeted (Tutsi) and not targeted (not Tutsi) during the Genocide. Almost two thirds (63.40%) of those targeted reported a change in household size compared with 36.14% of those not targeted. The percentage of those targeted whose household size declined was twice that of those who were not targeted (42.89% and 22.52%, respectively). Household size increased following the Genocide for 19.11% of those targeted and 13.23% of those not targeted, which was likely the result of reconfigured households due to death, disability, and displacement of members resulting from Genocide events. Whether an increase or decrease, the dramatic changes in households immediately after the Genocide would

mean other adjustments, such as in gender roles and economic situation. The survey findings underscore the differential experiences of those targeted and not targeted.

Figure 5.8

Change in Household Size Between One Month Before and After the Genocide for Those Targeted and Not Targeted



Types of Households, One Month Before and After the Genocide Against the Tutsi

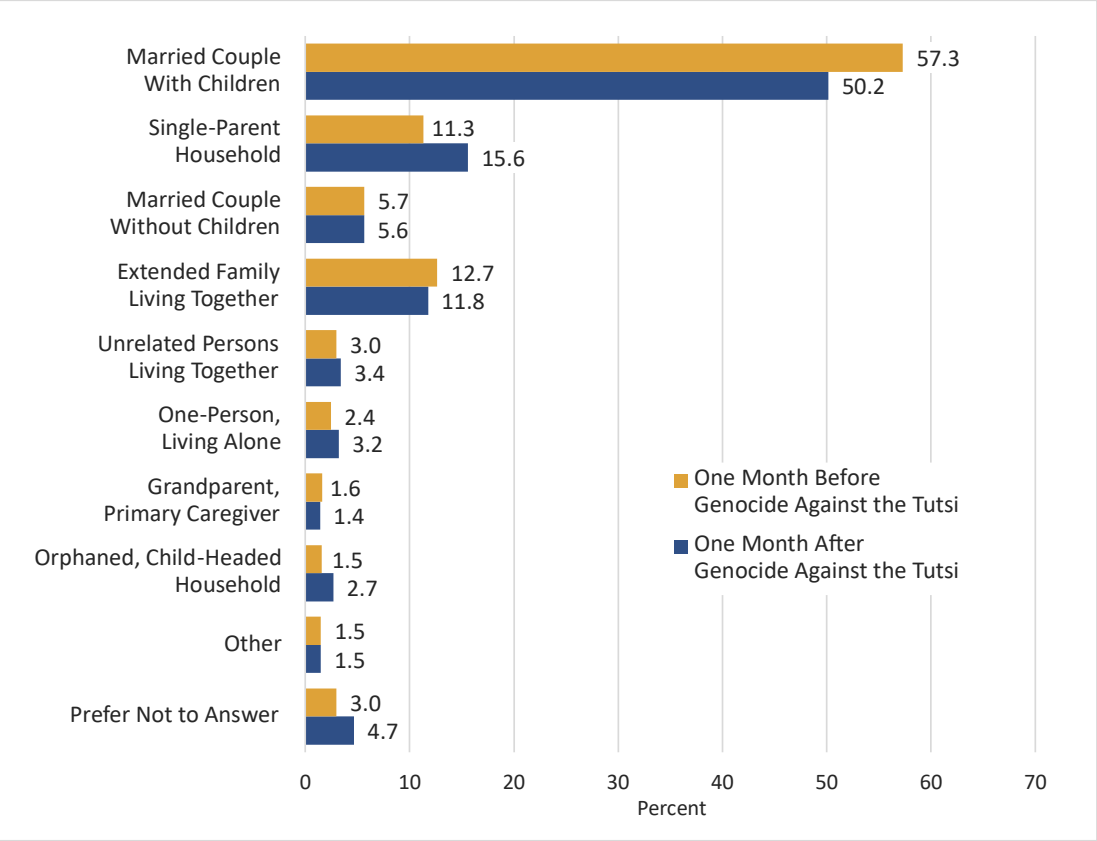
The change in the types of households before and after the Genocide against the Tutsi indicates the disruption within households. Figure 5.9 shows how the types of households changed, as reported by survey respondents who were adults in Rwanda during the Genocide (n = 3,619). The percentage of single parent households increased by about 4% from 11.33% (n = 410) to 15.58% (n = 564), while the percentage of households composed of married couples with children declined almost 7%, from 57.31% (n = 2,074) to 50.15% (n = 1,815). Although comparable national data are not available for 1 month before and after the Genocide, for purposes of comparison, the 1991 and 2002 census data reported that over the 11-year span, single-parent

households increased from 19.0% to 29.1%, while two-parent households declined from 59.1% to 47.7% (National Census Service, 2005).

For other household types, the JW-RWA study population found between 1 month before and after the Genocide, orphaned, child-headed households increased from 1.55% ($n = 56$) to 2.68% ($n = 97$). The percentage of those who lived alone increased from 2.43% ($n = 88$) before the Genocide to 3.21% ($n = 116$) after the Genocide. The data do not identify the relationships of those in households with extended family members or grandparents as primary caregivers; however, in both cases, the decrease in percentages, as shown in the chart, would reflect changes in intergenerational roles and relationships.

Figure 5.9

Household Types, One Month Before and After the Genocide – Genocide Generation Adults



Note. *N* = 3,619.

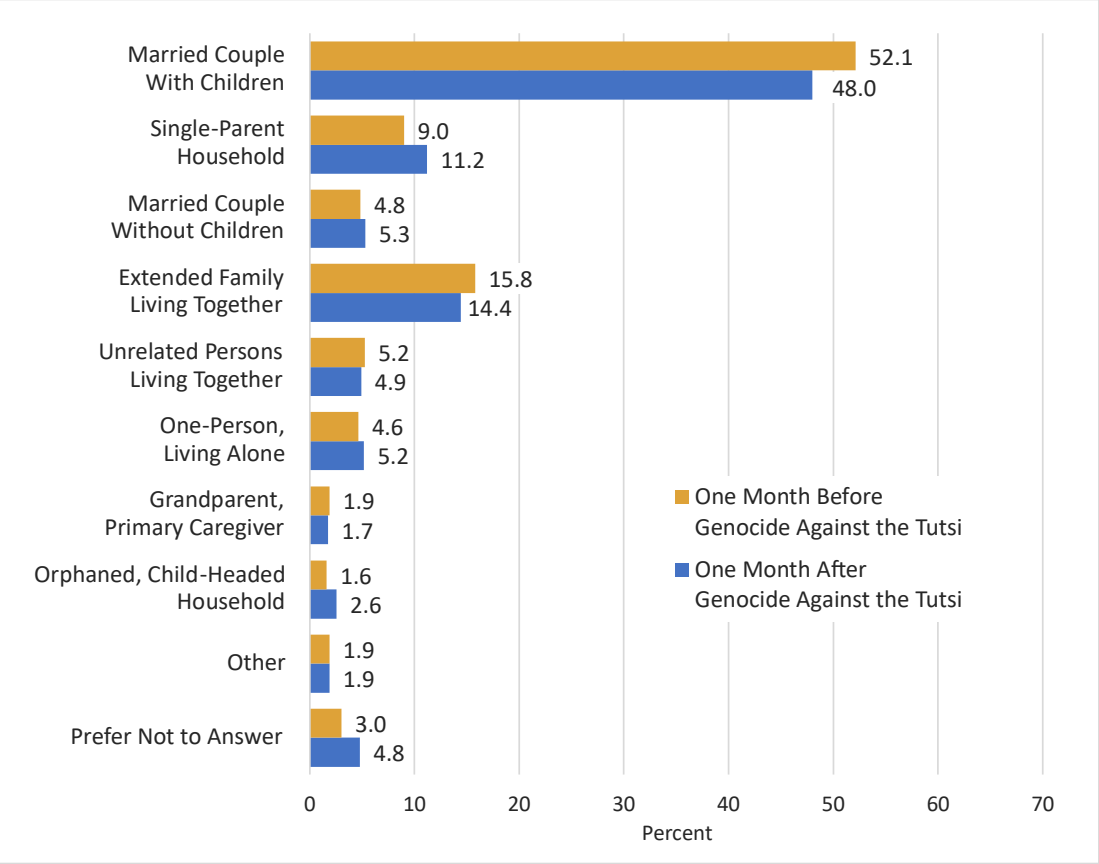
Gender Differences in Household Types, One Month Before and After the Genocide Against the Tutsi

Noticeable gender differences in types of households were found, based on responses from 2,130 females and 1,489 males in the Genocide Generation of the sample population. (Figure 5.10 shows the changes in household types for males; Figure 5.11 shows the changes for females.) The decline in the percentage of households of *married couples with children* for females before and after the 1994 Genocide was twice that for males (9.30% versus 4.10%). Female respondents in *single-parent households* increased 5.68% compared with an increase of 2.22% for male respondents. By comparison, government sources indicate that "between 1991 and 2002, the

proportion of female-headed households increased considerably from 25.0% to 35.2%" (National Census Service, 2005, p. 160). Although a higher percentage of males than females lived with *unrelated persons* after the 1994 Genocide (4.90% of males compared with 2.35% of females), the percentage of females living with *unrelated persons* increased 0.94%, while the percentage of males decreased 0.34%. Of the *orphaned, child-headed* households after the 1994 Genocide, 59 were females and 38 were males. Of those living *alone* (in one-person households) after the Genocide, 77 were males and 39 were females.

Figure 5.10

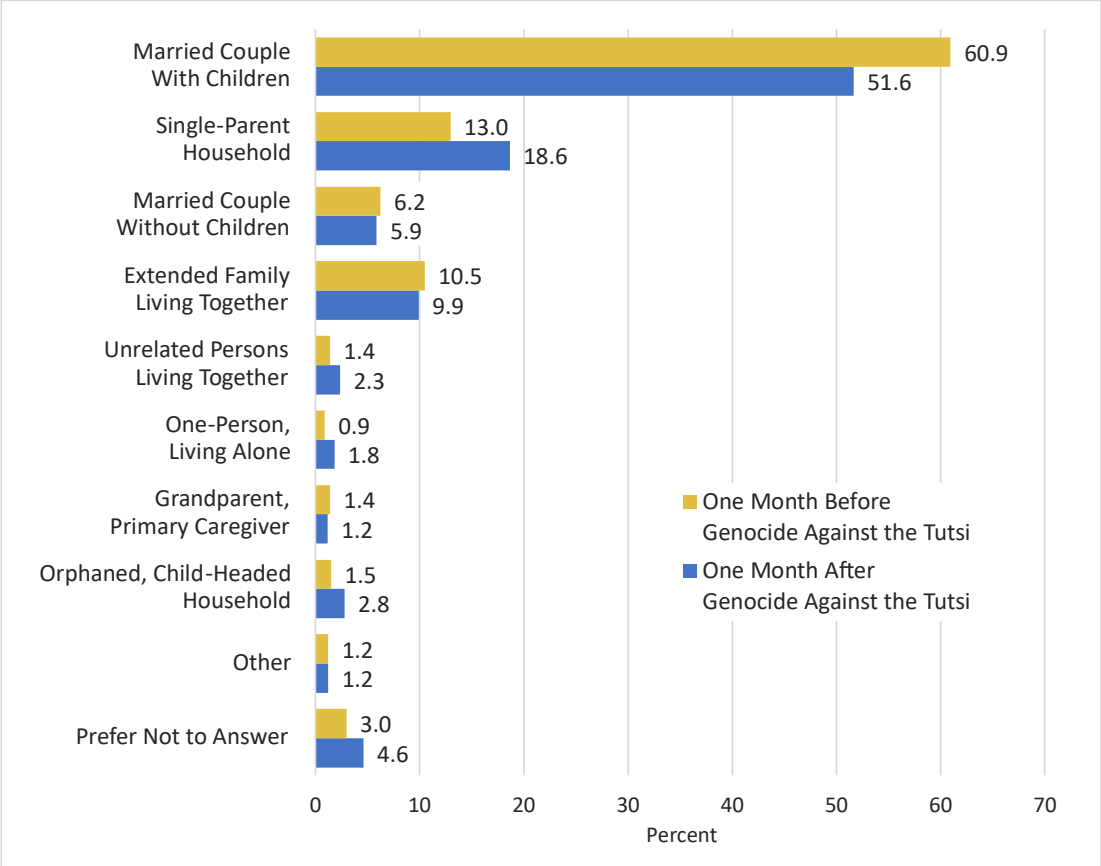
Household Types, One Month Before and After the Genocide – Males



Note. Males, *n* = 1,489.

Figure 5.11

Household Types, One Month Before and After the Genocide – Females



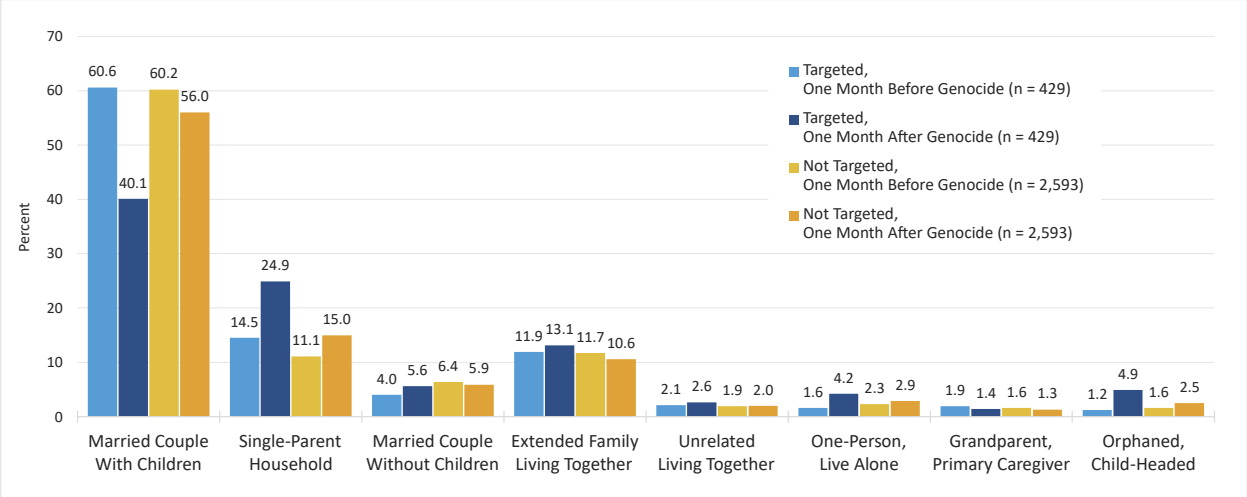
Note. Females, *n* = 2,130.

Household Types, One Month Before and After the Genocide Against the Tutsi for Those Targeted and Not Targeted

Similar to the findings on the change in household size, data analysis identified differences in types of households between those targeted and not targeted during the Genocide. As shown in Figure 5.12, 1 month after the Genocide, a higher percentage of those targeted (24.9%) were in single-parent households, representing a 10% increase from 1 month before the Genocide. This compared with 15.0% and a 4% increase in single-parent households for those who did not identify as being targeted. The findings underscore the differential experiences of targeted and not targeted groups during the Genocide against the Tutsi. No comparable national data were found.

Figure 5.12

Change in Household Types, One Month Before and After the Genocide for Those Targeted and Not Targeted



Traumatic Events During the Period of the Genocide Against the Tutsi

From a list of nine traumatic events, the survey asked all respondents which events they or their family experienced during the time of the Genocide against the Tutsi. The list of nine events was adapted from ones used in Rwanda by other trauma researchers (Pham et al., 2004; Rugema et al., 2015). The events listed in the measure did not represent all possible traumatic events but frequently reported events. The following examines traumatic events experienced by the Genocide Generation in Rwanda during the Genocide, then compares traumatic events by gender, Genocide experiences (those in and outside Rwanda), and generations (Genocide Generation about personal experiences and Post-Genocide Generation about their immediate family's experiences).

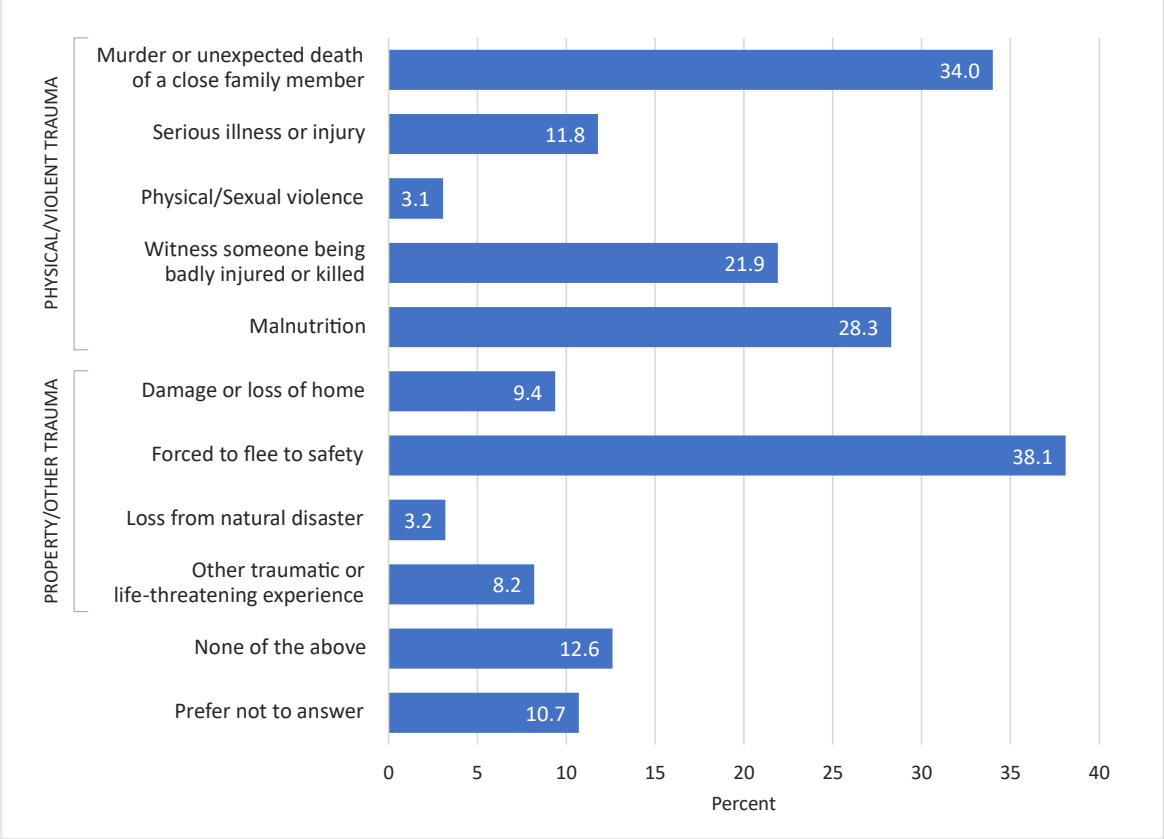
Traumatic Events Experienced by the Genocide Generation

Figure 5.13 shows the list of trauma events and the percentage of respondents in Rwanda during the Genocide against the Tutsi who experienced each event. The degree of violence during the Genocide was reflected in the data. One third (34.00%) of the Genocide Generation

respondents reported having a close family member *murder[ed] or die unexpected[ly]*; one fifth (21.89%) reported witnessing *someone being badly injured or killed*; one tenth (11.84%) had *serious illness or injury*; and 3.09% reported experiencing *physical or sexual violence*. *Malnutrition* was experienced by 28.26% of respondents, and 12.55% of respondents reported that they had *none* of the listed traumatic events during the time of the Genocide, which could reflect the diversity of experiences, individually and geographically, and the limited number of traumatic events listed in the question. One tenth (10.69%) of respondents *prefer[red] not to answer* what traumatic events they had experienced during this time.

Figure 5.13

Traumatic Events the Genocide Generation Experienced During the Genocide Against the Tutsi



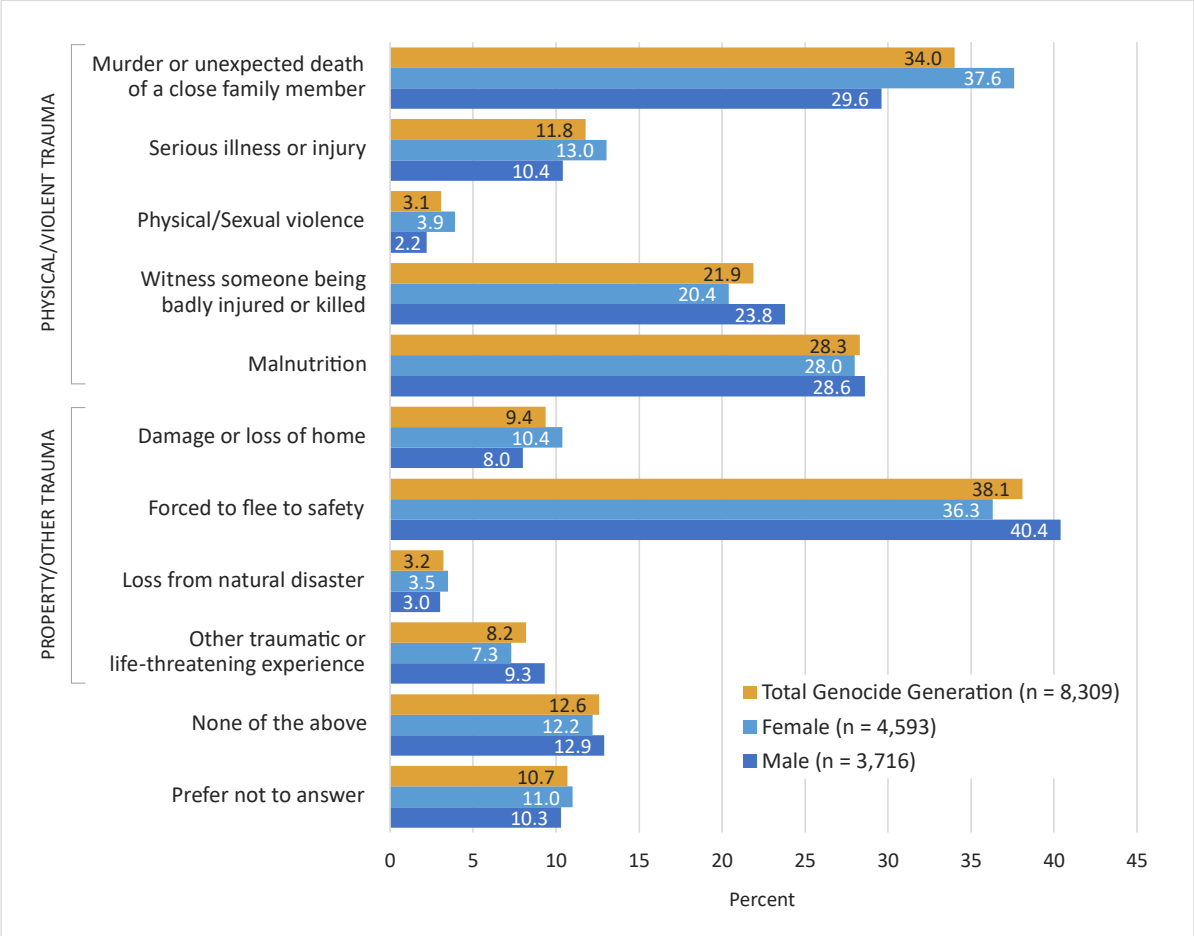
Note. *N* = 8,309.

Traumatic Events During the Genocide Against the Tutsi by Gender

Males and females had somewhat different traumatic experiences during the Genocide against the Tutsi. Analysis examined the traumatic events as reported by the total Genocide Generation—adults and minors who were in Rwanda during the Genocide against the Tutsi (n = 8,309). Figure 5.14 shows the findings for the total subgroup and a breakdown by gender (males, n = 3,716; females, n = 4,593). A higher percentage of females than males experienced the following traumatic events: had the *murder or unexpected death of a close family member* (37.56% females; 29.60% males), *serious illness or injury* (13.04% females; 10.36% males), *physical or sexual violence* (3.85% females; 2.15% males), and *damage or loss of home* (10.43% females; 8.05% males). A higher percentage of males than females experienced the following: *witness[ed] someone badly injured or killed* (23.76% males; 20.38% females) and *forced to flee to safety* (40.45% males; 36.25% females). A similar proportion of males and females experienced *malnutrition* (28.61% males; 27.98% females).

Figure 5.14

Traumatic Events During the Genocide Against the Tutsi—Gender Differences

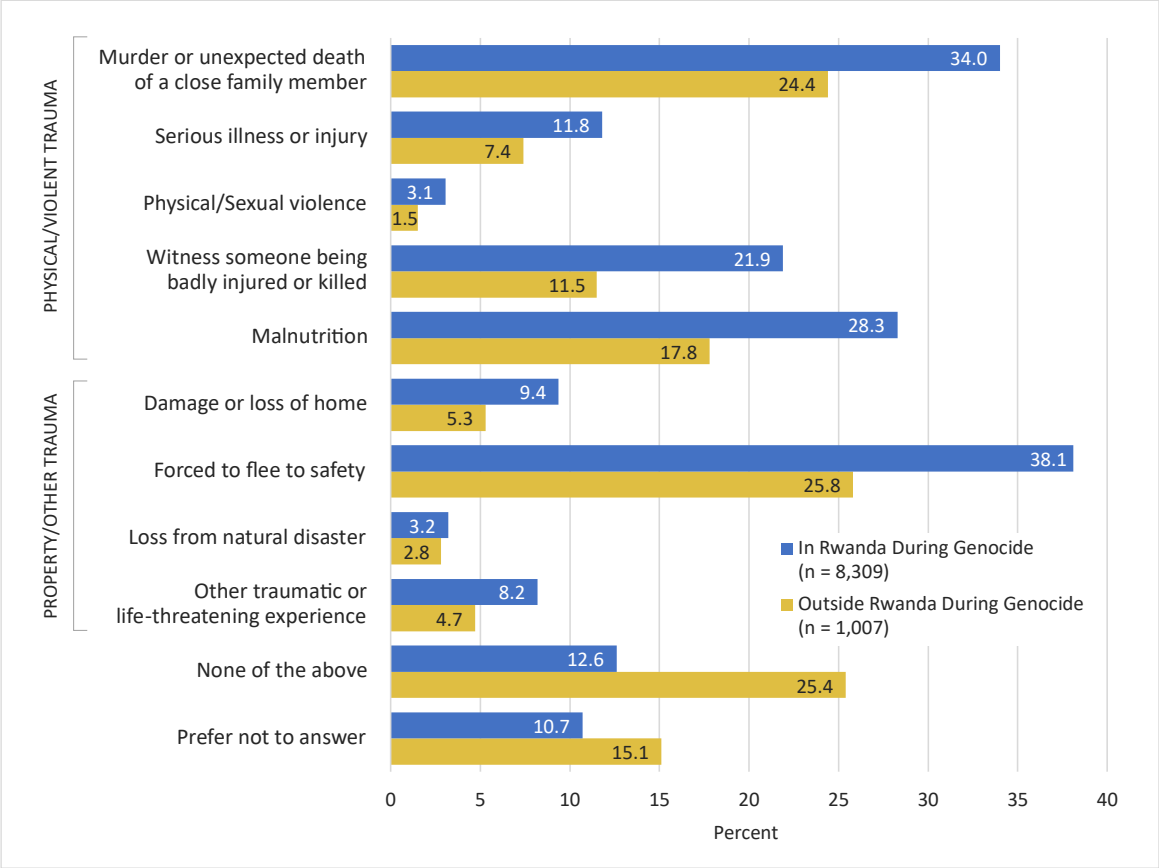


Traumatic Events of Those In and Outside Rwanda

Figure 5.15 compares the personal experiences reported by those born in or before 1994 who were (a) in Rwanda during the Genocide against the Tutsi (n = 8,309) and (b) outside Rwanda during the Genocide (n = 1,007). As would be expected, those outside Rwanda at the time of the Genocide experienced fewer traumatic events than those in Rwanda during the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Figure 5.15

Traumatic Events During the Genocide Reported by Those In and Outside Rwanda



Traumatic Events Reported by Those in Rwanda About Personal Experiences and Those Born After 1994 About Family's Experiences

In addition to asking about personal traumatic events of those born in or before 1994, the survey asked respondents who were born after 1994—the Post-Genocide Generation—what members of their immediate family experienced during the time of the Genocide against the Tutsi. Figure 5.16 compares traumatic events of those born in or before 1994 who were in Rwanda during the Genocide against the Tutsi (n = 8,309) and the experiences of family members as reported by the Post-Genocide Generation who were born after 1994 (n = 3,285). (It was outside the scope of this research to investigate the situations and characteristics of those outside Rwanda; thus, the

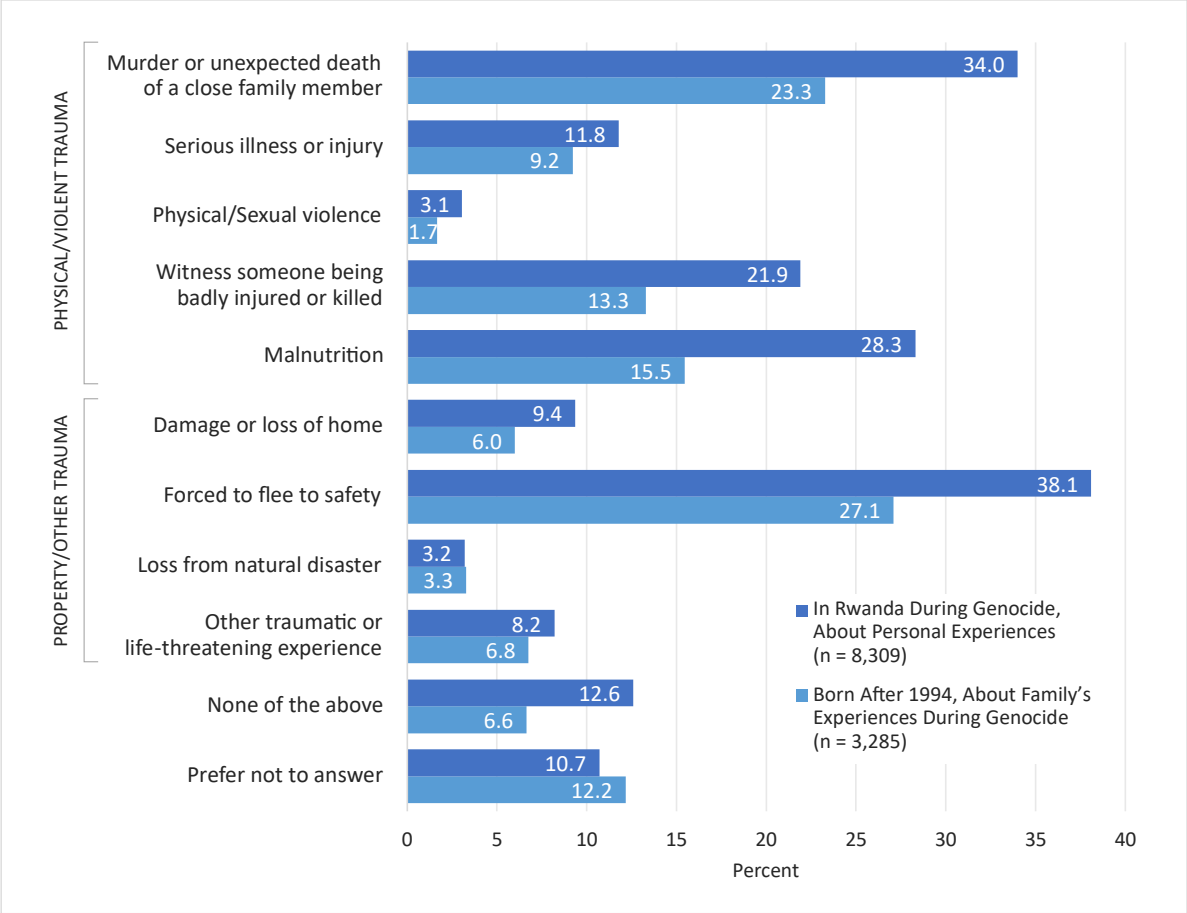
survey data did not separate Post-Genocide Generation respondents whose family were in or outside Rwanda during the Genocide.)

The survey gave the Post-Genocide Generation the response option *do not know*, since they would know less about the experiences of family members than would those answering the questions for themselves. Over one fourth (29.56%) of the Post-Genocide Generation reported they did not know about any family members' traumatic events during the time of the Genocide.

A higher percentage of the Genocide Generation (in Rwanda in 1994) reported experiencing every traumatic event listed in the measure than what the Post-Genocide Generation's understood of their family's experiences. As shown in Figure 5.16, the gap between the Genocide Generation and Post-Genocide Generation was more than 8% for the following items: *murder or unexpected death of a close family member*; *forced to flee*; *malnutrition*; and *witness[ed] someone badly injured or killed*.

Figure 5.16

Traumatic Events During the Period of the Genocide Reported by Those in Rwanda During the Genocide About Personal Experiences and Those Born After 1994 About Family's Experiences



Note. Post-Genocide Generation respondents were given the option *do not know*. DNK responses (*n* = 971, 29.56%) were included in the calculation but are not shown in this chart.

Role-Situations During the Genocide Against the Tutsi

The study investigated the situations of those who were baptized Witnesses during the Genocide and those who converted to the faith in the years following the Genocide. As previously explained, the hyphenated term "role-situation" is used to reflect that individuals may or may not have agency in the roles they adopted or situations they experienced. The survey provided a list of eight Genocide role-situations: (a) *targeted to be killed* (Tutsi); (b) *faced harm but not targeted*; (c) *helped those targeted*; (d) *helped those in danger but not targeted*; (e) *refused to betray those*

targeted; (f) *refused to harm those targeted*; (g) *later imprisoned for participating in Genocide*; and (h) *fled the country for safety*. To encourage candor from respondents who self-identified as having been imprisoned for participating in the Genocide, no further details were requested about their imprisonment.

Analysis showed the percentage of responses per individual items. For further analysis, four broad composite groups were created to explore the interaction of role-situations: (a) faced harm (targeted to be killed and not targeted); (b) helped those targeted and not targeted; (c) refused to betray or harm those targeted; and (d) fled the country for safety. Using these four categories, analysis investigated multiple role-situations as respondents perceived themselves. (Of the 3,736 respondents who comprised the Genocide Generation Adults in the sample, 3,620 provided data on their role-situations. The number of respondents to subsequent Genocide-related questions varied.)

When inquiring about helping and harming behaviors, the survey did not assess what opportunities, if any, individual respondents had to give or refuse help or harm. Thus, it cannot be assumed that those not selecting *refused to harm* then must have harmed others, or that those not selecting *helped those targeted* then must have refused to help. The self-categorizations reflect respondents' subjective recall. The findings from the study population of Jehovah's Witnesses and those who later became Jehovah's Witnesses cannot be generalized to other religious or demographic groups in Rwanda. With these interpretive limitations in mind, the findings support qualitative studies that have used in-depth interviews to explore the complexity of human behavior and the capacity of men, women, and even children to simultaneously take multiple, morally contradictory roles, such as perpetrator/enabler and rescuer/helper, especially in the complicated

conflict situations of the Genocide (e.g., Brown, 2018; Fox & Nyseth Brehm, 2018; Rothbart & Colley, 2016; Straus, 2013b).

Additionally, since most genocide studies focus on the experiences of adults rather than on children or the family unit, the JW-RWA study included measures to explore the helping role of children during the Genocide against the Tutsi—what parents remembered observing their children doing and what children remembered they did during this period. Memory of events changes over time and with the retelling, and what parents recall in hindsight about the helping roles of their children may differ from their children's version of their situations. Parents and adult children's reconstructed memory of negative events can vary depending on developmental, relational, and other psycho-social and cultural influences (cf. Dykas et al., 2010; Fivush et al., 2003; Fivush et al., 2004). The survey findings provide insights into how parents and adult children remembered the ways children contributed to or complicated situations during the Genocide.

Data analysis was first conducted for adults in the Genocide Generation with a breakdown by gender. Respondents who were minor children during the Genocide were asked to identify roles of family members; these were compared with responses of adults.

Role-Situations of Adults in the Genocide Generation

Percentages of responses from adults in the Genocide Generation were calculated for each of the eight role-situations, along with a breakdown for males and females. Figure 5.17 shows the percentages, including the PNA, DNK, and *none of the above* responses.

The response options allowed respondents to indicate if they saw themselves in active roles by helping others or in more passive positions by not participating in the Genocide. The highest percentage of responses were for those who either *refused to harm* those targeted (37.40%, $n = 1{,}354$) or *refused to betray* those targeted (32.43%, $n = 1{,}174$). Refusing to harm or betray

those targeted and providing help to those targeted for some may have involved taking a stance on behalf of those targeted to some degree and could have entailed a degree of personal risk.

Although the survey items did not qualify the degree of help that might have been given—which could have ranged from relatively small acts to ones involving extreme personal risks or sacrifices—only a relatively small percentage of respondents self-identified as helping others during the Genocide. One fourth (28.01%, $n = 1{,}014$) indicated that they helped those targeted; one tenth (10.03%, $n = 363$) reported that they helped those who were in danger but not targeted.

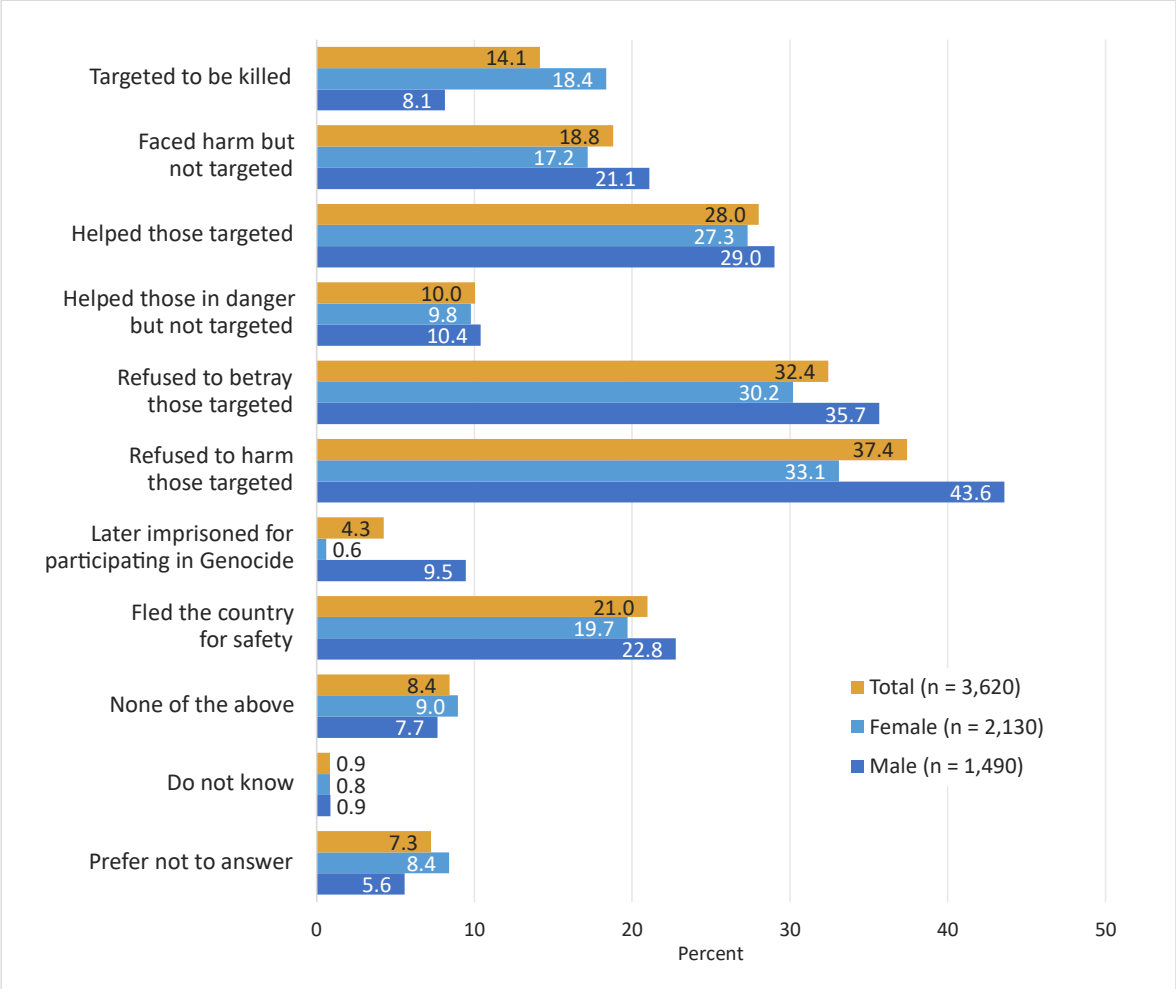
Those who were targeted to be killed totaled 512 or 14.14% of the 3,620 adult respondents in Rwanda during the Genocide—121 males and 391 females. Those who faced harm for reasons other than being targeted numbered 680—314 males and 366 females.

Respondents who indicated that they had been imprisoned for participating in the Genocide against the Tutsi totaled 154 (4.25% of the Genocide Generation Adults in the sample)—141 males and 13 females. They came from all provinces in Rwanda. Their ages at the time of the 1994 Genocide ranged from 18 to 64, with a mean age of 31.85. Of the 154 who were or had been imprisoned, 146 (94.81%) became baptized Jehovah's Witnesses after the 1994 Genocide. (Jehovah's Witnesses' ministry outreach extends to those in the community and in prison.) Eight respondents reported that they were baptized adult Jehovah's Witnesses at the time of the 1994 Genocide and were accused and imprisoned for participating in the Genocide.[3]

[3] With respect to Jehovah's Witnesses' doctrine of nonviolence, the question arises as to how the community views violation by baptized congregants of this deeply held religious value against harmdoing. In such cases, certain internal congregational measures may be taken, separate from and, if applicable, in addition to actions undertaken by civil authorities. Within Witness congregations, the matter of serious, unrepentant sin by baptized congregants is handled by congregation elders based on biblical principles. Violent behavior can constitute grounds for removal from the congregation. However, upon sincere repentance and cessation of the sin, a wrongdoer may request to be reinstated into the congregation. For a description of the ecclesiastical process of removal from the congregation and pastoral resources available to facilitate reinstatement into the congregation, see *The Watchtower,* August 2024, study articles 31 to 35, pp. 2–31 (*Watchtower*, 2024).

Figure 5.17

Role-Situations of Adults in Genocide Generation, Total and by Gender



Role-Situations as Identified by Adults and by Minors About Family Members During the Genocide

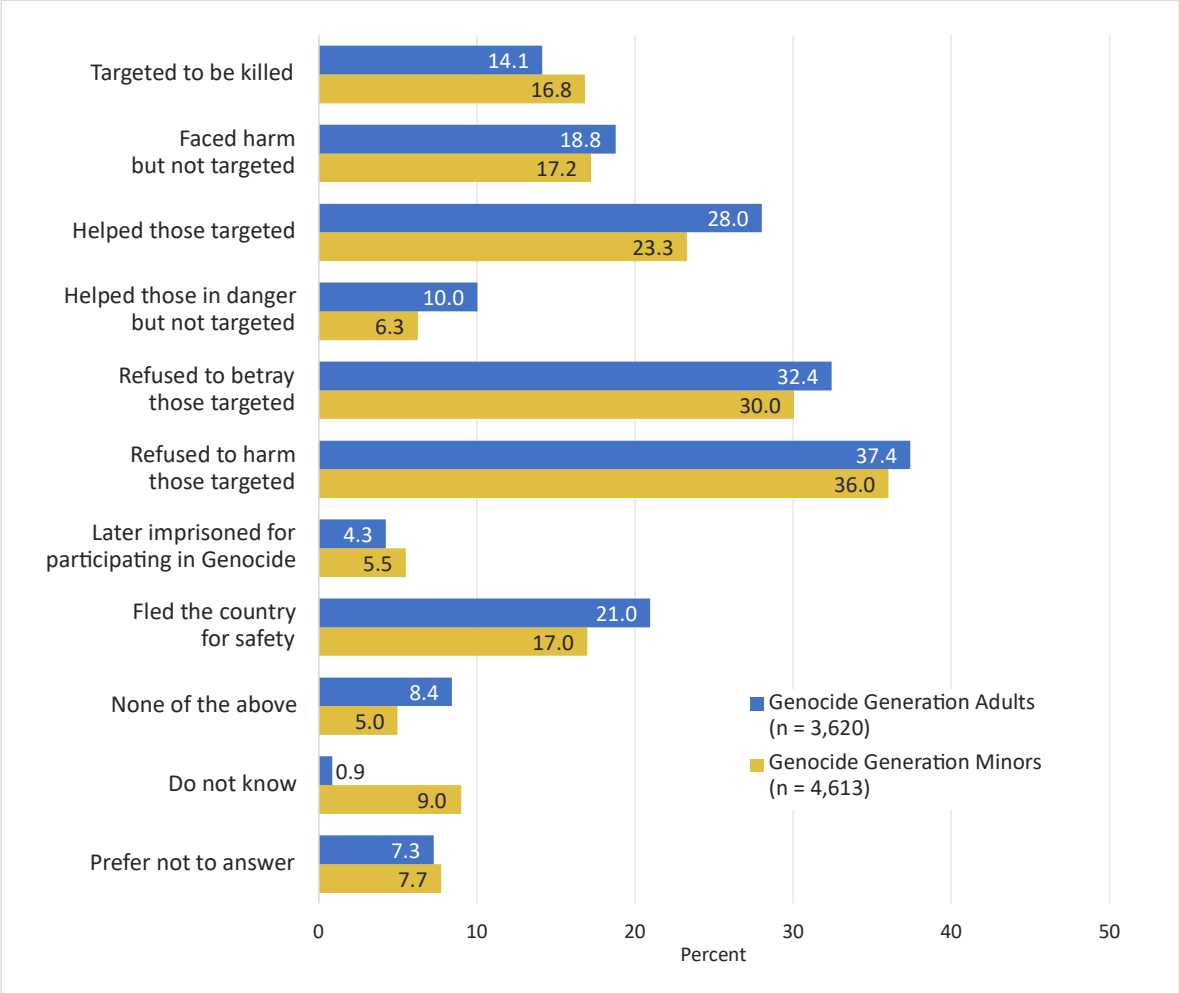
The JW-RWA survey data allowed a comparison of how adults during the Genocide identified their own role-situations and how minors during the Genocide reported the role-situations of their respective family members. The survey asked respondents in the Genocide Generation who were under age 18 which role-situations described members of their immediate family (e.g., targeted, helped those targeted, refused to betray those targeted, later imprisoned).

The findings provide insights into the perceptions of minors about the role-situations of their family.

Figure 5.18 shows the role-situations that adults identified for themselves and how minors at the time of the Genocide perceived the Genocide role-situations of family members. Ten percent (9.6%) of the minors during the Genocide reported that they did not know the situations of family members during the Genocide. Still, a comparison of the responses of adults and minors for each role category (e.g., targeted, helped targeted) was informative, with the two perspectives being within a few percentage points of each other. A higher percentage of minors reported having family who were targeted or imprisoned than did adults who self-identified, perhaps due in part to a higher number of offspring reporting in reference to the same parents. The lower percentages of minors for other role-situations may reflect less communication within family circles about these situations. (See Section 6, Subjective Social and Psychological Wellbeing.) However, in general, the ways that adults and minors in the Genocide Generation perceived the role-situations they or their family experienced were similar.

Figure 5.18

Role-Situations During the Genocide as Reported by Adults and by Minors About Family Members



Multiple Role-Situations During the Genocide Against the Tutsi

Research findings confirm that the role-situations of individuals were more complex than the one-dimensional categorizations (e.g., victim, perpetrator, bystander, and rescuer). To better understand the fluidity, complexity, and dynamics of Genocide situations, the intersection of the four broad Genocide role-situations was analyzed.

Table 5.3 shows the frequencies and percentages of the profiled role-situations and how the situations intersected for adults in Rwanda during the Genocide (n = 3,620). For example, almost one third (30.63%) of those who faced harm also reported that they helped others. One

fourth of those who refused to harm or betray those targeted also reported that they faced harm. Half of those who fled for safety also refused to harm those targeted, and some 40% who fled indicated that they also helped others. (See Section 6, Subjective Social and Psychological Wellbeing, for further analysis of those who self-identified with distinct role-situations.)

Table 5.3

Matrix of Multiple Role-Situations During the Genocide Against the Tutsi

Role-Situation	Faced Harm	Refused to Harm/Betray	Helped Others	Fled for Safety
	n (%)	*n* (%)	*n* (%)	*n* (%)
Faced Harm (*n* = 1,172)	-	394 (33.62)	359 (30.63)	219 (18.69)
Refused to Harm/Betray (*n* = 1,576)	394 (25.00)	-	719 (45.62)	379 (24.05)
Helped Others (*n* = 1,170)	359 (30.68)	719 (61.45)	-	302 (25.81)
Fled for Safety (*n* = 759)	219 (28.85)	379 (49.93)	302 (39.79)	-

Note. Total combined profile groups, *n* = 3,620.

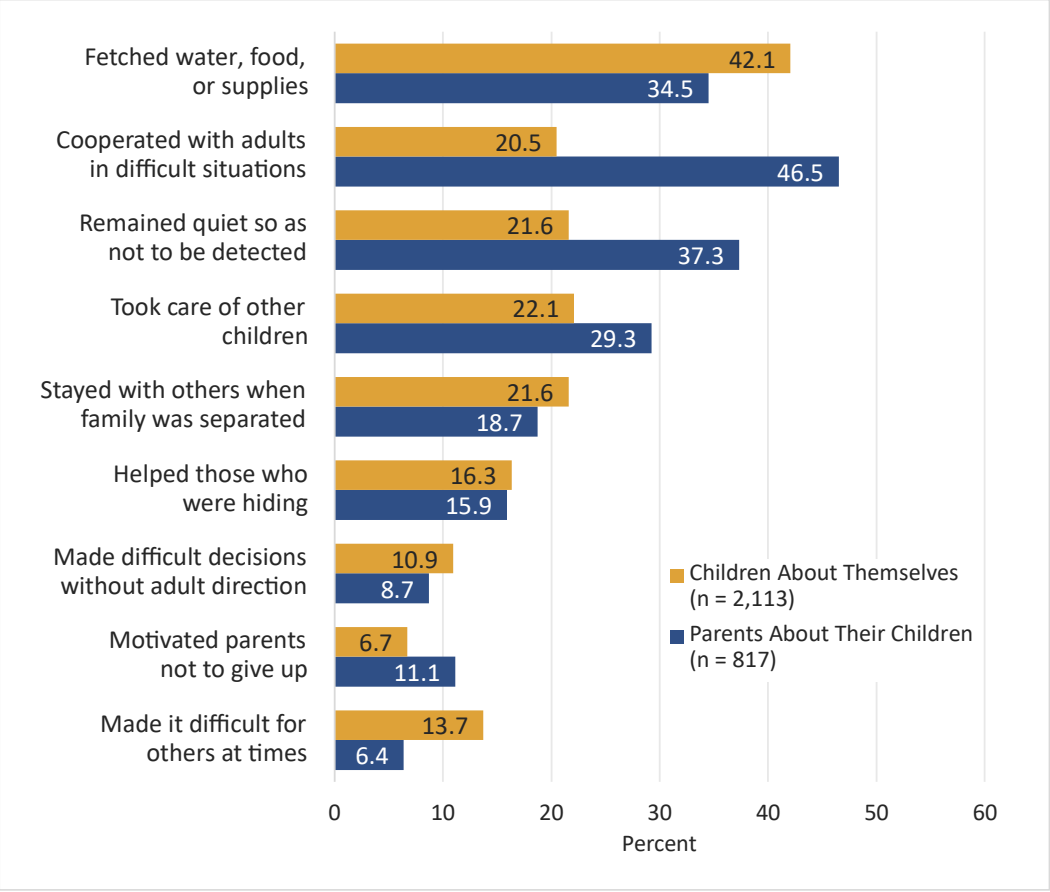
Children's Roles During the Genocide Against the Tutsi

Survey respondents who were parents or children in Rwanda during the 1994 Genocide were given a list of behaviors common for children during the Genocide. Parents were asked which they had observed their minor children doing, and children were asked which they remembered doing during the Genocide against the Tutsi. Of the parents (*n* = 1,851) and children (*n* = 4,357), 267 parents and 790 children selected *prefer not to answer* (PNA), and 767 parents and 1,454 children selected *none of the above* (NOA). Those who selected NOA may have been in areas less affected during the Genocide against the Tutsi, or the items listed in the survey might not have reflected their situation. For a more accurate understanding of the situation of children during the Genocide, PNA and NOA responses were removed in the final analysis.

The findings reveal consistencies and differences between parents and children's recollections, as shown in Figure 5.19. Parents' recall was more positive about children cooperating, remaining quiet so as not to be detected, caring for other children, and being a motivation not to give up. Children were more likely to recall instrumental tasks (fetching water, food, and supplies) and times when they made it difficult for parents. From the perspectives of both parents and children, the findings show that role-situations of children varied and affected how families navigated difficult situations during the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Figure 5.19

Children's Role During the Genocide as Recalled by Parents and Children



Help Received by Those Targeted—Jehovah's Witnesses and Non-JWs

The JW-RWA study investigated helping behavior during the Genocide against the Tutsi based on data from those who identified themselves as being targeted to be killed during the Genocide. (As explained in the introduction to Section 5, in this analysis the term *targeted* is applied to Tutsi.) The findings include the following: (a) the types of help those targeted received; (b) the approximate number of persons who helped; (c) the relationship to the persons who helped (e.g., family, neighbor, stranger); (d) the religion of those who helped them, if known; and (e) whether they had communicated with any helper in the past year.

Analysis included a breakdown of those targeted who were either Jehovah's Witnesses or non-JWs at the time of the Genocide against the Tutsi. Out of a total of 3,620 respondents who were adults in Rwanda during the Genocide, 540 were Jehovah's Witnesses and 3,080 were not JWs. As shown in Table 5.4, the percentage of those in the two subgroups who self-identified as being targeted (Tutsi) was 10% higher for Jehovah's Witnesses in 1994 than non-JWs in 1994 (23.15%, 125 out of 540 compared with 12.56%, 387 out of 3,080).

Table 5.4

Targeted and Not Targeted During the Genocide Against the Tutsi, Jehovah's Witnesses and Non-JWs

Group	Genocide Generation Adults (*n* = 3,620)		Jehovah's Witnesses, 1994 (*n* = 540)		Non-JWs, 1994 (*n* = 3,080)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Targeted	512	14.14	125	23.15	387	12.56
Not Targeted	3,108	85.86	415	76.85	2,693	87.43

Types of Help Those Targeted Received

Analysis examined the extent to which different types of help were given to those who were targeted—help that could have contributed to their surviving the Genocide. Table 5.5 shows the types of help that those targeted received.

Table 5.5

Types of Help Received During the Genocide – Targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and Non-JWs

Types of Help Received	Total Targeted (*n* = 512)		Jehovah's Witnesses in 1994, Targeted (*n* = 125)		Non-JWs in 1994, Targeted (*n* = 387)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Hid me on their property	194	37.89	63	**50.40**	131	33.85
Gave me food, clothing, or supplies	176	34.38	59	**47.20**	117	30.23
Warned of dangers	162	31.64	51	**40.80**	111	28.68
Helped me to get to a hiding place	149	29.10	53	**42.40**	96	24.81
Tried to stop an attack	143	27.93	29	23.20	114	**29.46**
Could have been killed for helping me	94	18.36	44	**35.20**	50	12.92
Took care of children in my family	78	15.23	26	20.80	52	13.44
Gave gift or money to bribe attackers	70	13.67	20	16.00	50	12.92
Helped me to flee the country	64	12.50	23	18.40	41	10.59
Coordinated with others to help me	51	9.96	19	15.20	32	8.27
Helped in other ways	40	7.81	12	9.60	28	7.24
Received no help	97	18.95	12	9.60	85	21.96

Note. Bolded numbers show higher percentages for each type of help reported by targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and targeted non-JWs. PNA responses (*n* = 4) are not shown in the table.

Figure 5.20 presents these data graphically. The type of help most received was being hid on others' property—given to half (50.40%) of the targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and one third (33.85%) of targeted non-JWs. Over 40% of targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and approximately 30% of targeted non-JWs reported that they were warned of danger, helped to a hiding place, and/or

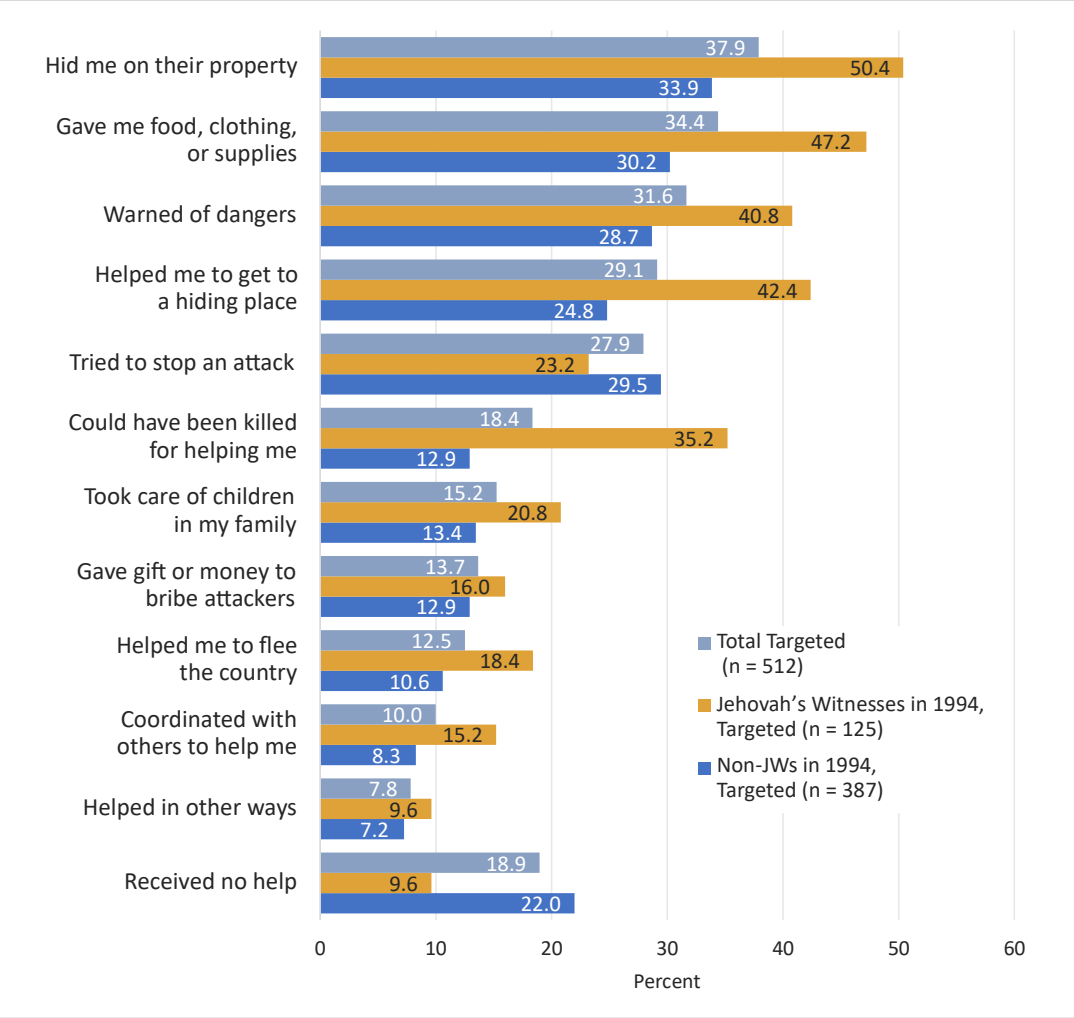
given food, clothing, or supplies. The percentage of those whose helper(s) tried to stop an attack was higher for targeted non-JWs than targeted Jehovah's Witnesses (29.46% compared with 23.20%). (Efforts to stop attacks that involved using weapons or physical force would have been less likely among Jehovah's Witnesses.)

Ten percent of those targeted reported receiving help that was coordinated with others (15.20% of targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and 8.27% of targeted non-JWs). For those who reported receiving no help, a little over 12% difference was reported between targeted non-JWs (21.96%) and targeted Jehovah's Witnesses (9.60%).

The greatest percentage difference in types of help the two subgroups received was that their helper could have been killed for helping—35.20% targeted Jehovah's Witnesses compared with 12.92% targeted non-JWs.

Figure 5.20

Types of Help Received During the Genocide – Targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and Non-JWs



Effect of Danger on Types of Help Targeted Received

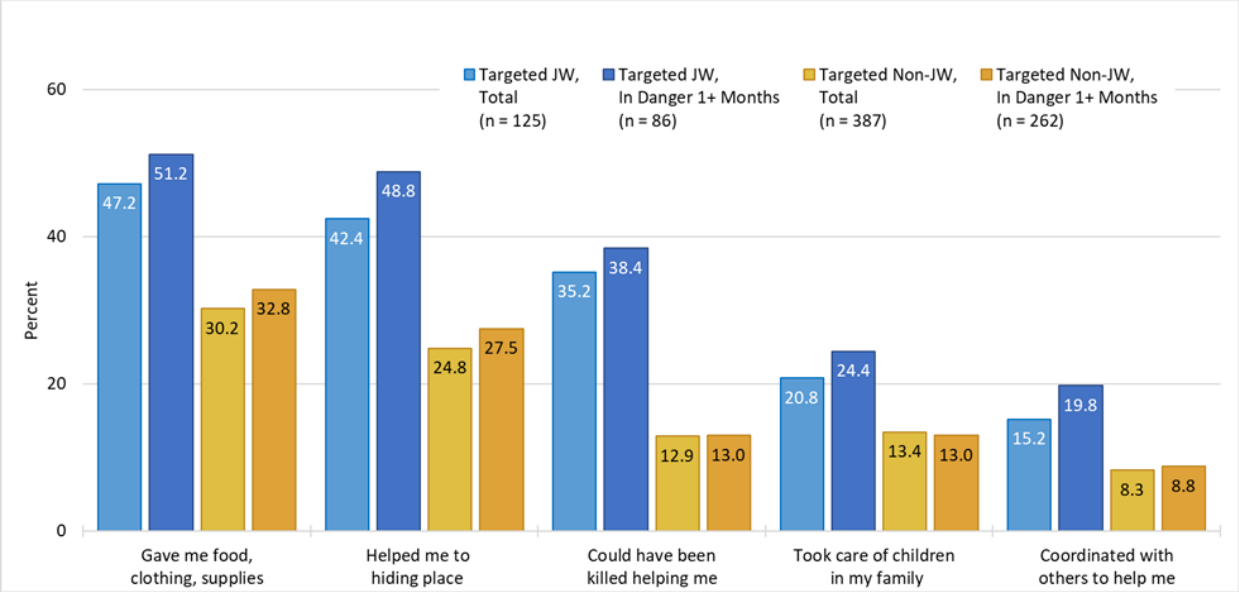
As previously reported, duration of danger during the Genocide varied by gender, and region (as shown in Figures 5.4 and 5.5). Results reveal that duration of danger also affected the extent and types of help given to those targeted to be killed. To test whether the extent and types of help differed between those who were in danger for short versus longer durations, analysis was conducted on two subgroups—targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and targeted non-JWs in 1994.

The percentages of the 125 targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and 387 targeted non-JWs who were in danger for 1 month or more were similar (67.97% and 67.70%, respectively). However, as measured in types of help received, targeted Jehovah's Witnesses in danger longer received more types of help than other targeted Witnesses in danger for shorter periods; whereas, targeted non-JWs who were in danger longer received the same or fewer types of help than other targeted non-JWs endangered for shorter times. Of the 11 types of help (listed in Figure 5.20 above), the difference in percentages for each item between the total targeted non-JWs and those who were in danger for 1 month or more was relatively small, ranging from a decrease of −1.46% to an increase of +2.59%. In contrast, for targeted Jehovah's Witnesses, the percentage of types of help for those in danger 1 month or more increased from +0.87% to +6.44%.

Figure 5.21 shows the five items with the highest percentage change in types of help received for those who were targeted and in danger for 1 month or more. A difference of over 25% was found between targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and targeted non-JWs in danger for 1 month or more who also indicated that their helper could have been killed for helping them. A difference of approximately 20% existed for those given food, clothing, and supplies, and for those helped to a hiding place. Over 10% more targeted Jehovah's Witnesses than targeted non-JWs had help caring for their children if they were in danger for 1 month or more. The percentage of those targeted who had coordinated help was two times more for targeted Jehovah's Witnesses than non-JWs.

Figure 5.21

Change in Helping Those Targeted in Danger One Month or More



Number of Helpers for Those Targeted

The findings highlight the importance of individual acts of help that can mean the difference between survival and death. As shown in Table 5.6, 21.96% of targeted non-JWs received no help compared with 9.60% of targeted Jehovah's Witnesses. (The percentage of those receiving no help would likely be higher for those targeted who did not survive the Genocide.) Most of the targeted in the sample survived with the help of a few, or between 1 and 5 persons, with similar percentages for targeted Jehovah's Witnesses (44.80%) and targeted non-JWs (49.09%).

The findings suggest that a religiously connected community can provide both individual and collective support during hardships, even genocide. In the case of targeted Jehovah's Witnesses, 20.00% reported receiving help from over 15 individuals, over twice the percentage for targeted non-JWs (8.27%). The fact that 15.20% of targeted Jehovah's Witnesses reported having received help that was coordinated with others (as shown in Figure 5.20) and 20.00% reported

having help from over 15 people suggests that they benefited from a socially connected network of trusted individuals.

Table 5.6

Number of Helpers Reported by Targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and Non-JWs

Number Who Helped	Total Targeted (*n* = 512)		Jehovah's Witnesses in 1994, Targeted (*n* = 125)		Non-JWs in 1994, Targeted (*n* = 387)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
No one helped	97	18.95	12	**9.60**	85	21.96
A few (1–5)	246	**48.05**	56	**44.80**	190	**49.09**
Several (6–10)	64	12.50	20	16.00	44	11.36
Many (11–15)	16	3.13	3	2.40	13	3.36
Very many (over 15)	57	11.13	25	**20.00**	32	8.27
PNA and DNK	32	6.25	9	7.20	23	5.96

Note. Bolded numbers highlight the items with notable variations between targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and targeted non-JWs.

Relationship of Targeted to Their Helpers

The study investigated the social context in which those targeted knew those who helped them. The survey question asked, *Who helped you during the Genocide against the Tutsi?* Respondents could select all that applied from the following options: (a) *extended family*, (b) *neighbor*, (c) *schoolmate, workmate*, (d) *teacher, supervisor, stranger*, and (e) *other*, along with *do not know* and *prefer not to answer*. The question did not indicate how many persons in each category helped, identify the religion of the helper, or provide the option *helped by fellow believer*.

Table 5.7 gives a breakdown of the relationship category in which those targeted reported at least one person who helped them. Both targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and non-JWs who became Witnesses after the Genocide showed similar patterns. Both groups received help from at least one person, with most help coming from neighbors and extended family. Slightly more of the targeted

Jehovah's Witnesses reported receiving help from at least one neighbor (41.60%) and extended family (28.00%) compared with non-JWs in 1994 (37.73% and 22.74%, respectively).

In considering whether shared religious identity factored into helping acts, it is important to note that residence patterns of religious communities in Rwanda varied. Targeted members of larger, well-established churches may have been more likely to reside near relatives and neighbors having the same faith. Rwandan Muslims, a marginalized religious community dating back at least to colonial times, tended to live together in semi-autonomous villages often termed "Swahili quarters" (Benda, 2012, pp. 85–86). By contrast, the community of Jehovah's Witnesses in the 1990s consisted mainly of first-generation adult converts who did not necessarily live in geographic proximity to fellow believers, nor would they have had many extended family members of like faith. Some of the most disturbing accounts during the Genocide against the Tutsi were of neighbors, friends, and family who joined in massacres (cf. Fujii, 2009). Although neighbors and extended family could not always be trusted, the research findings show that neighbors ranked first in the list of helpers for those targeted, followed by extended family. It suggests the importance of geographic proximity and relational context in helping behaviors during the Genocide. A relatively high percentage of those targeted selected *other*, which likely included those connected by religious or social ties who did not fit the response options of geographic or relational proximity (e.g., those belonging to the same religious community or friends who came from a distance to assist). Eleven percent of those targeted received help from a stranger, highlighting that familiarity alone was not a determinant for some to provide help and for those targeted to accept help.

Table 5.7

Relationship of Targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and Non-JWs to Helpers During the 1994 Genocide

Relationship to Helpers	Total Targeted (*n* = 512)		Jehovah's Witnesses in 1994, Targeted (*n* = 125)		Non-JWs in 1994, Targeted (*n* = 387)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Neighbor	198	38.67	52	41.60	146	37.73
Extended Family	123	24.02	35	28.00	88	22.74
Other	82	16.02	31	24.80	51	13.18
Stranger	58	11.33	13	10.40	45	11.63
Schoolmate, Workmate	36	7.03	12	9.60	24	6.20
Teacher, Supervisor	7	1.37	1	0.80	6	1.55
Received No Help	97	18.95	12	9.60	85	21.96
PNA and DNK	18	3.51	1	0.80	3	0.78

Note. Respondents could select more than one option.

Religion of Those Who Helped the Targeted

The survey also asked, *What was the religious affiliation of those who helped you?* Table 5.8 shows the response options and the number and percentage of respondents who reported having at least one person of the listed religions help them. Respondents selected the religion category if at least one helper was affiliated with the religion. Findings show that the religion of those who gave help was not proportional to the religious distribution in Rwanda at the time of the Genocide. Less than one third (31.27%) of targeted non-JWs in the study population received help from Catholics—about half the percentage of Catholics in Rwanda in 1994. Although Jehovah's Witnesses were a fraction of one percent (0.03%) of the Rwandan population in 1994, one fifth (20.67%) of respondents who were targeted non-JWs reported that they received help from Jehovah's Witnesses or those associated with them (i.e., JW family or Bible students). (*Family* in this question would likely have been immediate family in contrast with *extended family* that was

specified in the previous question.) Help at a critical point could possibly have contributed to their interest in studying and eventually becoming Jehovah's Witnesses.

Notably, the vast majority of targeted Jehovah's Witnesses (80.80%) reported receiving help from those associated with the religious community—either baptized or unbaptized publishers (64.80%) or their relatives and Bible students (16.00%). Targeted Jehovah's Witnesses also reported receiving help from Catholics (16.00%) and those of other religious affiliations (10.40%).

Table 5.8

Religion of Helpers for Targeted Jehovah's Witnesses and Non-JWs

Religion of Helpers	Total Targeted (*n* = 512)		Jehovah's Witnesses in 1994, Targeted (*n* = 125)		Non-JWs in 1994, Targeted (*n* = 387)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Jehovah's Witness (Baptized/Unbaptized Publisher)	142	27.73	81	64.80	58	14.99
JW Associate (Family, Bible Student)	42	8.20	20	16.00	22	5.68
Catholic	141	27.54	20	16.00	121	31.27
Protestant	38	7.42	6	4.80	32	8.27
Muslim	17	3.32	3	2.40	14	3.62
Traditional/Animist	3	0.59	1	0.80	2	0.52
Other	31	6.05	3	2.40	28	7.24
Received No Help	97	18.95	12	9.60	85	21.96
PNA and DNK	84	16.41	6	4.80	78	20.55

Note. Respondents could select more than one option.

Table 5.7 shows the relational context of helpers and Table 5.8 shows the religion of helpers. The tables provide different information, and the data in each do not intersect or quantify the number of helpers in each category. However, it is reasonable to conclude that most help given to targeted Jehovah's Witnesses came from fellow believers, as might be expected in a small,

close-knit, marginalized faith community. Despite the generally low social status of Witnesses in the larger Rwandan community during this period, targeted Jehovah's Witnesses also benefitted from help from non-JWs who were neighbors and extended family.

These findings provide insights into the circumstances of those targeted in the faith community of Jehovah's Witnesses. Eighty percent received help from fellow believers and their associates; 35% reported that those helping them could have been killed doing so; 20% had help from more than 15 people during the Genocide; 20% of those in danger for 1 month or more received help that was coordinated with others. This level of help despite the life-threatening risks to both the targeted and their helpers suggests a socially connected network of trusted individuals. These findings are consistent with anecdotal and biographical accounts of some targeted Jehovah's Witnesses who survived the Genocide with the aid from a support network of mostly fellow believers who improvised strategic, coordinated help at great personal risk. (See Section 1, Introduction.)

Communication Between Those Targeted and Their Helpers

The JW-RWA survey asked whether those targeted had been in communication with any who had helped them during the Genocide. Despite the passing of almost 30 years after the Genocide, many reported that they and their helpers had been in communication during the year of the survey (2023). This was the case for 38.50% of targeted non-JWs (149 out of 387 respondents) and 63.20% of targeted Jehovah's Witnesses (79 out of 125 respondents).

A proportion (57.58%) of the Genocide Generation lived in the same district at the time of the survey as they did during the Genocide against the Tutsi. (See Table 5.2 for residence during the Genocide and change in residence at time of the 2023 survey.) Living in the same district or in close proximity to where one personally experienced Genocide events could mean having regular,

unsettling reminders of past traumas. In like manner, knowing and being in communication with those who shared personal experiences of simple or significant acts of kindness could prompt reminders that provide a measure of optimism in an otherwise dark history. Judging from survey findings on congregation support and resilience for those who are now Jehovah's Witnesses, the common experience of trauma (in all its variations), remembrance of help given at critical times, and now having shared beliefs could contribute to a bonding effect within their congregations. (See Section 4, Forgiveness and Prosocial Behavior.)

Jehovah's Witnesses—Nonviolence and Political Neutrality During the Ban and Genocide

At a time when hate rhetoric was laden with religious symbolism, churches were massacre sites, and parishioners became perpetrators, moral prohibitions against harm and murder gave way to widespread participation in dehumanizing violence. Conformity and self-preservation led individuals to actively or passively support Genocide. Those moved with empathy to resist the Genocide by helping victims could not be certain they had the support of their religious leaders. Under these dire circumstances, relatively few had or made opportunities to help those targeted to be killed.

This begged the question, What contributed to the higher percentages of helping behavior among Jehovah's Witnesses compared with others during the Genocide? The research suggests an advantage that the Witnesses had over others who were moved to help, that is, the Witnesses' collective experience dealing with persecution prior to the Genocide. Within the small faith community, individuals had already demonstrated to themselves and one another that their religious identities could override the divisiveness of political agendas and socially prescribed ethnic identities. During the ban period, the religious group in Rwanda strengthened their social network and reaffirmed their shared religious values that helped them to navigate the moral

dilemmas posed by the violence and chaos of the Genocide. Mutual trust and, in some cases, coordinated help provided targeted Witnesses with individual and collective sources of support.

The JW-RWA study sought to collect data on those who were Jehovah's Witnesses or JW associates during both the government ban and the Genocide. As reported in Section 3 of this report, 661 survey respondents (4.86% of the total sample of 13,590) were already baptized Jehovah's Witnesses in or before the year of the Genocide against the Tutsi. Of these, 552 were adults in Rwanda in 1994. According to the organization's records, approximately 2,500 Jehovah's Witnesses participated in the ministry during the year prior to 1994 and approximately 400 Witnesses, family, and Bible students are believed to have been killed during the Genocide. Thus, the sample population from the JW-RWA survey research—conducted 30 years after the 1994 Genocide—consisted of approximately one fourth of those who were Jehovah's Witnesses at the time of the Genocide.

A total of 1,137 survey respondents identified themselves as having been either baptized Jehovah's Witnesses or unbaptized associates of the group (e.g., family members or Bible students) during the government ban, 1982 to 1992. Two years after the ban was lifted, 981 of the 1,137 of the sample population who had lived through religious persecution during the ban reported also being in Rwanda during the Genocide against the Tutsi. Thus, the study could investigate the practices and circumstances of the same individuals under two historical events—as Jehovah's Witnesses or JW associates under ban and as baptized Jehovah's Witnesses during the Genocide. This section examines the patterns of nonviolence and political neutrality of these longtime Witnesses during these periods in two ways:

1. During the government ban (1982 to 1992), Witnesses refused involvement in political and military activities, with many reporting their experiences of suppression. These

findings corroborate historical and anecdotal evidence of the development of a social network of mutual support. The study findings show that this network apparently continued to support individual and collective help for those targeted to be killed, which could be considered a form of nonviolent resistance against the Genocide.

2. Individuals who were not Jehovah's Witnesses during the Genocide reported seeing Jehovah's Witnesses refuse to participate in the Genocide.

The JW-RWA findings provide research-based information during two periods of its early history in Rwanda.

Jehovah's Witnesses Under Ban

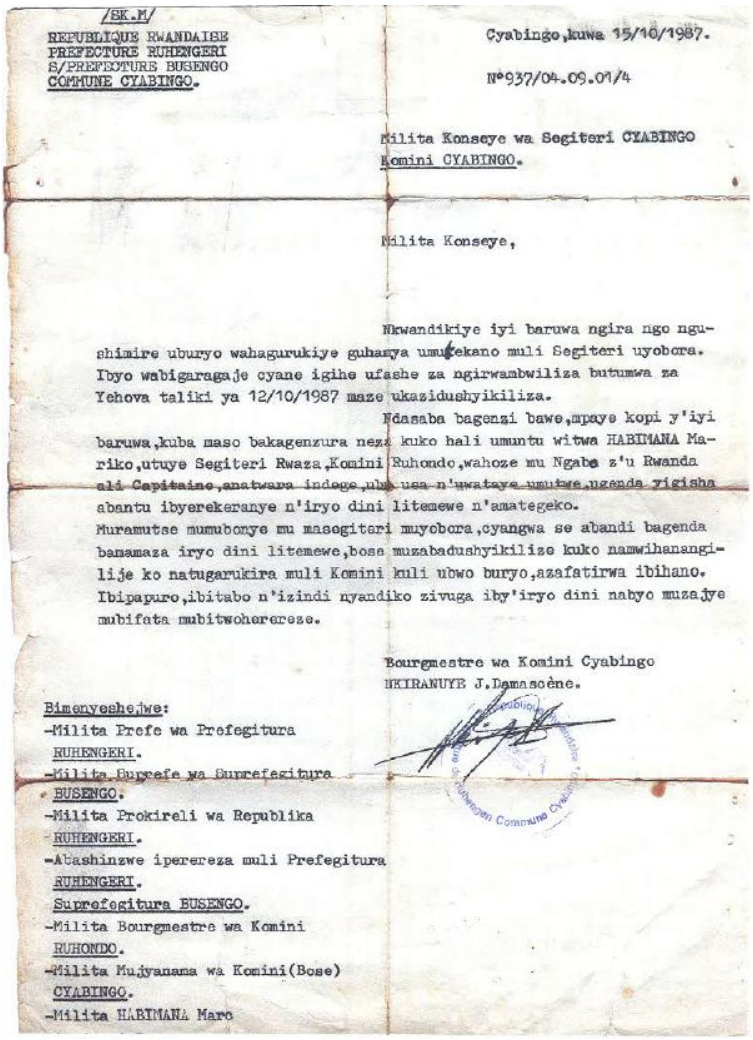
The documentary record of the history of Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda during the 1980s and 1990s is incomplete. Written communications and administrative documents under the previous government give evidence of the extent to which the community of Jehovah's Witnesses was the target of official repression throughout the country. For instance, as shown in Figure 5.22, a 1987 letter from the Burgomaster of Cyabingo Commune demonstrates the coordinated government efforts to apprehend and punish Jehovah's Witnesses for sharing their religious beliefs.

Figure 5.22

1987 Letter From Burgomaster of Cyabingo Commune About Jehovah's Witnesses

J. Damascène NKIRANUYE to the counselors of all sectors, October 15, 1987; No. 937/04.09.01/4.

Burgomaster of Cyabingo Commune urges officials to arrest Jehovah's Witnesses and confiscate their literature.



/SK.M/
REPUBLIQUE RWANDAISE
PREFECTURE RUHENGERI
S/PREFECTURE BUGENGO
COMMUNE CYABINGO.

Cyabingo,kuwa 15/10/1987.

N°937/04.09.01/4

Milita Konseye wa Segiteri CYABINGO
Komini CYABINGO.

Milita Konseye,

Nkwandikiye iyi baruwa ngira ngo ngushimire uburyo wahagurukiye guhanya umukekano muli Segiteri uyobora. Ibyo wabigaragaje cyane igihe ufashe za ngirwambwiliza butumwa za Yehova taliki ya 12/10/1987 maze ukazidushyikiliza.

Ndasaba bagenzi bawe,mpaye kopi y'iyi baruwa,kuba maso bakagenzura neza kuko hali umuntu witwa HABIMANA Mariko,utuye Segiteri Rwaza,Komini Ruhondo,wahoze mu Ngabe z'u Rwanda ali Capitaine,anatwara indege,ubu usa n'uwateye umutwe,ugenda yigisha abantu ibyerekeranye n'iryo dini litemewe n'amategeko.

Muramutse mumubonye mu masegiteri muyobora,cyangwa se abandi bagenda banamaza iryo dini litemewe,bose muzabadushyikilize kuko namwihanangilije ko natugarukira muli Komini kuli ubwo buryo,azafatirwa ibihano.

Ibipapuro,ibitabo n'izindi nyandiko zivuga iby'iryo dini nabyo muzajye mubifata mubitwohereze.

Bourgmestre wa Komini Cyabingo
NKIRANUYE J.Damascène.

Bimenyeshejwe:
-Milita Prefe wa Prefegitura
RUHENGERI.
-Milita Burefe wa Burrefegitura
BUSENGO.
-Milita Prokireli wa Republika
RUHENGERI.
-Abashinzwe iperereza muli Prefegitura
RUHENGERI.
Suprefegitura BUSENGO.
-Milita Bourgmestre wa Komini
RUHONDO.
-Milita Mujyanama wa Komini(Bose)
CYABINGO.
-Milita HABIMANA Maro

Source. Organisation Religieuse des Témoins de Jéhovah.

Additionally, the 2002 census report provides some demographic information about "adherents" of the religious group (National Census Service, 2005). According to this census data most closely following the Genocide against the Tutsi, Jehovah's Witnesses in 2002 made up 0.5% of the total population, with some 30% of congregants living in urban areas across Rwanda. The

largest concentration was in the City of Kigali. Percentages of Jehovah's Witnesses in the 12 provinces in 2002 were as follows: Kigali City (1.4%), Kigali Ngali (0.5%), Gitarama (0.2%), Butare (0.4%), Gikongoro (0.2%), Cyangugu (0.2%), Kibuye (0.2%), Gisenyi (0.8%), Ruhengeri (0.3%), Byumba (0.4%), Umutara (0.5%), and Kibungo (0.3%).

Prior to the Genocide against the Tutsi, the small religious group of converts faced intense opposition during a decade-long government ban. The Witnesses' collective stance and mutual support during the historical period of persecution between 1982 and 1992 foreshadowed the response of the faith community as individuals and as a group during the Genocide. The government ban came from powerful political forces using legal means to directly attack the beliefs and religious identity of the Witnesses.

For example, during the meeting of the Ruhashya Commune Development Council, chaired by the prefect of Butare, on July 7, 1989, Jehovah's Witnesses were described as undermining the security of the Commune. As shown in Figure 5.23, the minutes stated that the Witnesses "must be confronted and suppressed because they disturb public order by refusing to respect authority, salute the flag, sing the national anthem, wear the President's pin, and more."

Figure 5.23

1989 Communication From Ruhashya Commune Development Council About Jehovah's Witnesses

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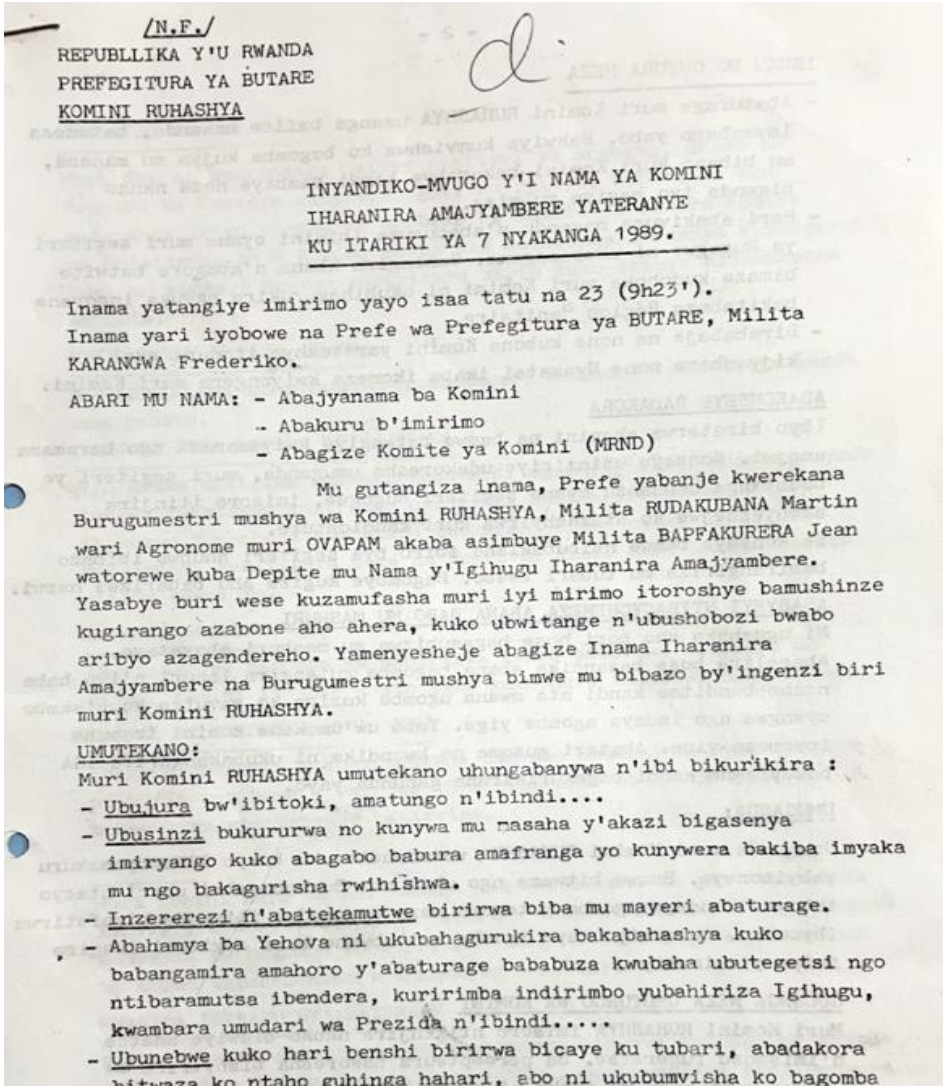
Meeting minutes of the Ruhashya Commune Development Council, July 7, 1989, chaired by Frederiko KARANGWA, Prefect of Butare Prefecture.



/N.F./
REPUBLLIKA Y'U RWANDA
PREFEGITURA YA BUTARE
KOMINI RUHASHYA

INYANDIKO-MVUGO Y'I NAMA YA KOMINI
IHARANIRA AMAJYAMBERE YATERANYE
KU ITARIKI YA 7 NYAKANGA 1989.

Inama yatangiye imirimo yayo isaa tatu na 23 (9h23').
Inama yari iyobowe na Prefe wa Prefegitura ya BUTARE, Milita KARANGWA Frederiko.

ABARI MU NAMA: - Abajyanama ba Komini
- Abakuru b'imirimo
- Abagize Komite ya Komini (MRND)

Mu gutangiza inama, Prefe yabanje kwerekana Burugumestri mushya wa Komini RUHASHYA, Milita RUDAKUBANA Martin wari Agronome muri OVAPAM akaba asimbuye Milita BAPFAKURERA Jean watorewe kuba Depite mu Nama y'Igihugu Iharanira Amajyambere. Yasabye buri wese kuzamufasha muri iyi mirimo itoroshye bamushinze kugirango azabone aho ahera, kuko ubwitange n'ubushobozi bwabo aribyo azagendereho. Yamenyesheje abagize Inama Iharanira Amajyambere na Burugumestri mushya bimwe mu bibazo by'ingenzi biri muri Komini RUHASHYA.

UMUTEKANO:
Muri Komini RUHASHYA umutekano uhungabanywa n'ibi bikurikira :
- Ubujura bw'ibitoki, amatungo n'ibindi....
- Ubusinzi bukururwa no kunywa mu masaha y'akazi bigasenya imiryango kuko abagabo babura amafranga yo kunywera bakiba imyaka mu ngo bakagurisha rwihishwa.
- Inzererezi n'abatekamutwe birirwa biba mu mayeri abaturage.
- Abahamya ba Yehova ni ukubahagurukira bakabahashya kuko babangamira amahoro y'abaturage bababuza kwubaha ubutegetsi ngo ntibaramutsa ibendera, kuririmba indirimbo yubahiriza Igihugu, kwambara umudari wa Prezida n'ibindi.....
- Ubunebwe kuko hari benshi birirwa bicaye ku tubari, abadakora bituza ko ntaho guhinga hahari, abo ni ukubumvisha ko bagomba

Source. MINUBUMWE Archives, Butare Prefecture files (page 1 of 4)

Despite government repression and societal discrimination, the authorities noted that Jehovah's Witnesses slowly continued to increase in numbers even under ban and especially after the ban was lifted 2 years prior to the Genocide. As shown in Figure 5.24, a November 10, 1989,

letter from the Burgomaster of the Ngoma Urban Commune to the Prefect of Butare Prefecture stated: "I believe the relevant authorities should take this matter seriously, as instead of discouraging them, the number of Jehovah's Witnesses continues to grow."

Figure 5.24

1989 Letter From Burgomaster of Ngoma Urban Commune About Jehovah's Witnesses

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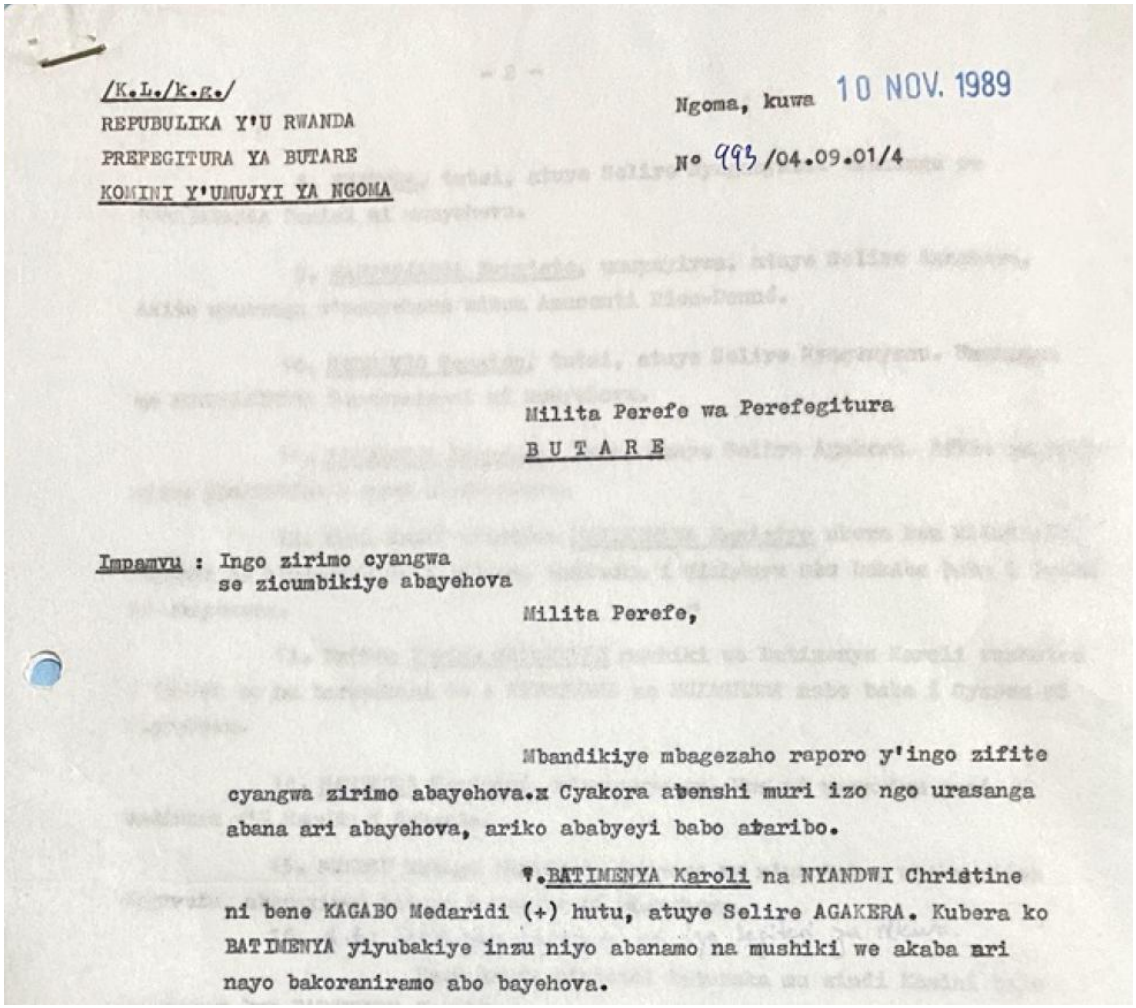
Joseph KANYABASHI to the Prefect of Butare Prefecture, November 10, 1989, No. 993/04.09.01/4.

A 1989 letter from the Burgomaster of Ngoma Urban Commune to military, law enforcement, and intelligence service officials, listing 15 households with Jehovah's Witnesses.



/K.L./k.g./
REPUBULIKA Y'U RWANDA
PREFEGITURA YA BUTARE
KOMINI Y'UMUJYI YA NGOMA

Ngoma, kuwa 10 NOV. 1989
N° 993/04.09.01/4

Milita Perefe wa Perefegitura
B U T A R E

Impamvu : Ingo zirimo cyangwa
se zicumbikiye abayehova

Milita Perefe,

Mbandikiye mbagezaho raporo y'ingo zifite cyangwa zirimo abayehova.z Cyakora abenshi muri izo ngo urasanga abana ari abayehova, ariko ababyeyi babo abaribo.

1.BATIMENYA Karoli na NYANDWI Christine ni bene KAGABO Medaridi (+) hutu, atuye Selire AGAKERA. Kubera ko BATIMENYA yiyubakiye inzu niyo abanamo na mushiki we akaba ari nayo bakoraniramo abo bayehova.

Source. MINUBUMWE Archives.

During these foundational years for the Witness community in Rwanda, the new converts chose to adopt a religion that was persecuted and unpopular. In that hostile climate, the small group of fellow believers and their families would have had multiple opportunities to determine how they would handle new challenges, both as individuals and as a collective group. They could not have known that these years of building congregational relationships, adhering to moral principles despite pressure, and refusing to compromise moral principles would be tried under even more extreme duress. Some types of helping behaviors that proved vital to those targeted to be killed during the Genocide were likely familiar to the group during the ban (e.g., warning of danger, giving food, caring for others' children).

Analyses of responses from survey respondents who were baptized Jehovah's Witnesses or associated with the Witnesses (e.g., Bible students) during the government ban show a consistent pattern of practices in line with their principles. From a list of five political activities, the survey asked respondents to indicate which, if any, they had refused to do. The survey question did not determine if respondents complied with orders to participate in political activities or whether they simply did not encounter such situations at the time. Of the 981 in this subgroup, 773 reported their position during the ban. Almost three fourths refused to make political donations (72.15%). Over half refused to participate in political celebrations (61.46%) and wear political emblems (58.23%); and 42.19% refused to cease evangelizing. Although religious identity could easily be changed or concealed, results suggest this was not the case for the Witnesses, including newly converted ones, during the high-tension era of the government ban.

Adherence to principles of faith had serious consequences during the ban. Nearly half (47.87%) of the Witnesses and their associates recalled being verbally harassed. Over one fourth (27.94%) were forbidden to attend religious meetings. Many were treated as criminals, with 25.23%

being interrogated by officials and 18.89% arrested. Beyond the criminal justice system, the education system added pressure, with 3.88% who were personally expelled from school and another 4.27% whose children were expelled for refusing to participate in religious or patriotic ceremonies.

Two years after the government ban, in 1994, Jehovah's Witnesses remained a small and unpopular minority religion in Rwanda. Trauma events experienced during the ban were compounded during the Genocide. During the ban, 21.98% of Witnesses and their associates fled their home for safety; and during the Genocide, 50.90% of this same group reported that they fled the country for safety. Some experienced physical or sexual violence during the ban (7.72%) and during the Genocide (5.39%). Almost 12% (11.88%) had their homes raided or ransacked during the ban; 15.97% had damaged or loss of homes during the Genocide. Despite patterns similar to the decade-long ban, the months-long Genocide was exponentially more severe and intense, with half (48.90%) of those who lived through both the ban and the Genocide having a close family member who was murdered or died unexpectedly during the span of a few months during the Genocide.

The research findings show that in those early years, the predominantly new converts—who had the option to change or conceal their association with the stigmatized group—chose to identify themselves as Jehovah's Witnesses despite potential ostracism and personal harm. Facing political persecution, the Witnesses individually and collectively determined how they would adhere to the principles of nonviolence, political neutrality, and impartiality, positions that would be put to extreme test during the Genocide.

Jehovah's Witnesses During the Genocide Against the Tutsi

A total of 552 respondents were baptized Jehovah's Witnesses who experienced the Genocide against the Tutsi. The ages of the 552 Witnesses during the Genocide ranged from 18 to 64 years, with a mean age of 29.06 in 1994. Approximately half were females (48.37%) and half were males (51.63%). Jehovah's Witnesses at the time of the Genocide were located in all provinces, with the largest proportion in high Genocide-intensity areas, particularly Kigali and the Eastern Province, with 538 who reported their location during the Genocide: Kigali ($n = 161$, 29.93%), Southern Province ($n = 114$, 21.19%), Eastern Province ($n = 94$, 17.47%), Western Province ($n = 93$, 17.29%), and Northern Province ($n = 76$, 14.13%). In this subgroup, 432 indicated the length of time they were in danger during the Genocide; 60.42% ($n = 261$) reported being in danger for 1 month or more.

Observers of Jehovah's Witnesses' Nonviolent Position

Research findings on the practices of Jehovah's Witnesses during two different time periods and circumstances—the 1982–1992 government ban and the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi—identify patterns of behavior that are consistent with attitudes and beliefs advocated by the faith community. Reports of prosocial helping behavior were based not only on what the Witnesses said about themselves but also on reports of persons who belonged to other religions at the time—how Jehovah's Witnesses helped them, even at the risk of personal harm. In these cases, behavior and beliefs aligned.

A similar litmus test was needed to determine if those in the faith community maintained standards guided by interconnected principles of respect for life, being peaceable toward all persons, and being without ethnic prejudice, as professed by various religions. Perhaps the most convincing evidence that Jehovah's Witnesses as a group adhered to their position of nonviolence

came from observances and reports of those who were not Jehovah's Witnesses at the time of the Genocide against the Tutsi.

The survey asked respondents how they learned about Jehovah's Witnesses position of political neutrality and nonviolence. Included in the response options was the statement *I saw Jehovah's Witnesses refuse to participate in the Genocide*. A total of 776 respondents who were in Rwanda during the Genocide but were not baptized Jehovah's Witnesses at the time selected this response option. The 776 who reported they observed JW's nonparticipation in the Genocide consisted of 351 males and 425 females from all provinces during the Genocide. They came from various religious backgrounds—those whose parents were Catholic (66.37%), Protestant (17.91%), associated with other religions (2.32%), or no religion (4.51%).

These data from respondents who were not then Jehovah's Witnesses provide evidence of individuals who maintained a peaceful, nonpolitical position during the Genocide against the Tutsi. Seeing individuals remain nonviolent in stark contrast to the general population evidently proved to be a leading reason that some of these observers were attracted to the religion. As reported in Section 3, the survey asked respondents what *originally* attracted them to Jehovah's Witnesses and what motivated them to *remain* in the religion. In a list of 12 response items from which respondents could select three was the option *I was/am attracted to Jehovah's Witnesses' position of nonviolence*. From responses from 13,395 in the total sample, 20.04% selected this as one of their top three original attractions to the religion and 22.14% selected this as a main reason they remain in the religion. For the 776 who reported they observed Jehovah's Witnesses refusing to participate in the Genocide, 33.02% were originally attracted to the religion because of their nonviolence—10% more than for the total sample. The impact of their observing Jehovah's Witnesses during the Genocide appears to have remained constant some 30 years later, with a

similar percentage of 32.35% indicating that the nonviolent stance was a main reason they remained in the religion.

The findings show Jehovah's Witnesses helped those targeted to be killed despite dangers. Targeted Jehovah's Witnesses reported that they had support from fellow believers who helped despite the risk of being killed, and the help they received increased for those in danger longer. Though surviving Rwandan Witnesses in 1994 numbered little more than 2,000, their nonviolent stance was observed and reported on by those who were not Jehovah's Witnesses at the time of the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Reactions to Jehovah's Witnesses' Prosocial and Nonviolent Position

Jehovah's Witnesses' nonviolent stance elicited different reactions. The JW-RWA survey asked, *When you first learned about Jehovah's Witnesses being nonviolent and politically neutral, which describes your thoughts and feelings?* Respondents replied as follows: 1.12% reported being angry; 3.05% thought they were wrong; 33.51% were surprised; and 41.48% respected them. For the JW-RWA sample—all of whom became JWs—58.32% reported that the (moral and ethical) position of nonviolence of the Witnesses led them to want to learn more.

Until this study, the only evidence that Jehovah's Witnesses maintained a prosocial, nonviolent position during the Genocide came from anecdotal reports by Witnesses and non-Witnesses. Some genocide researchers in scholarly qualitative studies have documented how individuals of different religious affiliations took the moral high ground to respect human life by not participating in the Genocide, even risking their own lives to save others (e.g., Benda, 2012; Burnet, 2012; Conway, 2011; Fox et al., 2021). However, such individuals were the exception in a religious climate of moral complicity. In the case of Jehovah's Witnesses, the few who participated in the Genocide were the exception.

Conclusion

The violence perpetrated during the Genocide against the Tutsi was not an assault based on religious grounds per se but rather based on socially prescribed labels that marked one ethnic group as superior to another—a belief that was antithetical to the tenets of Jehovah's Witnesses and inconsistent with the diverse makeup of their congregational social networks. The ethnically motivated attacks tested how those in the faith community would define themselves—by their newly-adopted collective religious identity or by their long-standing socially prescribed ethnic identity.

The prevailing propaganda and pressure prior to and during the period of the Genocide resulted in people defining and dividing themselves and others into immutable classifications. The historical record shows that for many religious people during the Genocide, shared membership in a common religion was insufficient to override socially conceived boundaries that pitted individuals against their relatives, neighbors, and fellow worshippers. In the heat of the Genocide, ethnic identities trumped religious ideals.

To varying degrees, the attacks on Jehovah's Witnesses during the Genocide could have been motivated by both ethnic and religious prejudices. Almost one fourth (23.15%) of Jehovah's Witnesses in 1994 identified themselves as being targeted for slaughter. In contrast, other Witnesses would have faced harm, not for genocide, but because of their religiously motivated refusal to participate in genocidal violence or their association with and help given to Tutsi.

The data show how the small group of Jehovah's Witnesses responded individually and collectively to violent threats directed toward those targeted to be killed. Prior to the Genocide, the government ban would have had a unifying effect on the minority faith community, creating a social network of trusted friends committed to shared moral principles. Intrinsic religious

motivations that move individuals to act according to their core principles would foster prosocial, altruistic helping behavior. (See Section 3, under the subheading Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiosity.) The combination of intrinsic motivations and a trusted social network would enable singular and coordinated initiatives to help fellow believers and other Rwandans.

An important objective of the JW-RWA study was to understand the situations and experiences of those who make up the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda today—the hardships they endured, obstacles they overcame, and their ongoing struggles from the effects of past traumas. Sections 3 and 4 of this report discussed findings on how shared beliefs, social support, and prosocial behaviors within a religious community bring together people from different generations, geographic regions, and Genocide experiences. The JW-RWA study provides research-based evidence of a pattern of nonviolence and prosocial helping behaviors among Jehovah's Witnesses despite adverse conditions. The study confirmed the human capacity to respond to the needs of others with compassion and moral decency in situations of extreme violence and adversity.

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