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 6. Subjective Social & Psychological Wellbeing

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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

6. SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda come from diverse social, economic, and religious backgrounds and experiences; and they deal with challenges similar to those of the general population. The Genocide against the Tutsi took an emotional and physical toll with long-lasting effects on the health and wellbeing of those who experienced the Genocide firsthand and those who understand the Genocide through secondhand accounts (Lordos et al., 2021; Rieder & Elbert, 2013). In a deeply religious and predominantly Christian country, many Rwandans turn to religion to cope with physical and emotional suffering (Fox, 2012).

The JW-RWA study investigated the attitudes, beliefs, and circumstances of Jehovah's Witnesses before, during, and after the Genocide. Many of the findings reported in previous sections of this report relate to social-environmental factors (e.g., social support) that are conducive to health, healing, and wellbeing. This section focuses on additional indicators of wellbeing: (a) intergenerational communication, (b) family satisfaction, (c) centrality of the Genocide, (d) temporality and hope, (e) posttraumatic stress, (f) posttraumatic growth, (g) subjective wellbeing, and (h) scriptures for religious coping. A review of relevant academic literature provides an overview of the empirical research and theoretical models that aid in understanding overarching influences on wellbeing in post-Genocide Rwanda and the Jehovah's Witness community.

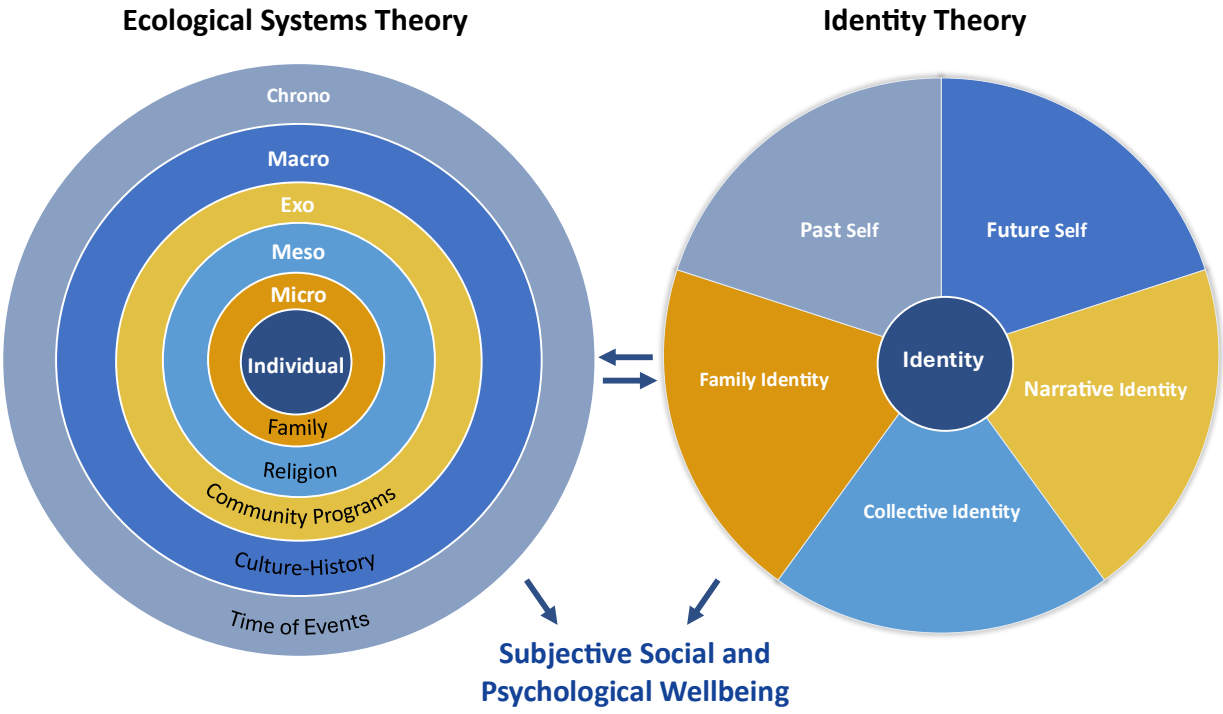
Literature Review

Social and psychological wellbeing happens within the context of multiple, interrelated, and dynamic factors that influence human development and formation of self. As a thematic

framework, the study applied ecological systems theory and identity theory as illustrated in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1

Theoretical and Thematic Framework



The ecological systems theory (EST) is a theoretical model of interconnected social or environmental factors that influence human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, 2006). While earlier theorists of human development emphasized individual traits and internal processes (e.g., Allport, 1961; Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1995), EST shifted the focus to social-environmental influences that individuals navigate and process, thus shaping their identity and behavior. Researchers commonly use EST as a schematic model to organize and interpret findings but not to statistically test the theory's constructs (Tong & An, 2024).

The five EST levels and the corresponding categories that were applied to each level for this study are the following: (a) chronosystem (the influence of time of events), (b) macrosystem (historical and cultural factors), (c) exosystem (organizations and programs), (d) mesosystem (religion), and (e) microsystem (family).

Identity or consciousness of self emerges, develops, and expands over the life course (Nelson, 2008). The developing self is both a cognitive and social construction that changes over time (Harter, 2012; Reicher, 2008) and is influenced by social roles and relationships (Haslam et al., 2009; Hogg & Williams, 2000; Iyer et al., 2008; Vignoles et al., 2011). Although adolescence is a period of exploration for a differentiated identity (Erikson, 1964), individuals also maintain multiple identities that change as circumstances, life priorities, and group membership change. The subjective, multifaceted sense of self depends on various personal, relational, collective, and temporal aspects (cf. Harter, 2012; Sani, 2008; Vignoles et al., 2011). Group membership can become a compass for social interactions and a determinant of self-concept derived from understanding how one usually responds to a given set of circumstances (Gaffney & Hogg, 2023). An inclusive social identity within groups enhances collective action (Tajfel, 1978). Individuals attain a psychological sense of self-continuity through perceived collective continuity of group beliefs and values (Sani et al., 2007; Sani et al., 2008). For the purposes of this section, five aspects of self-identity will be discussed as they relate to the JW-RWA study: the future self, the past self, narrative identity, collective identity, and family identity.

Ecological and identity factors both contribute to subjective wellbeing—to an individual's assessment of different aspects of their lives (i.e., psychological factors such as self-worth and emotional wellbeing). During the social construction of identity, comparisons are used to

subjectively assess if one is better or worse off than others or than they themselves were in the past (National Research Council, 2013; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 2004).

For this discussion of how different ecological levels and aspects of self are relevant to post-Genocide Rwandans, the focus will be on the following: (a) the chrono-level, time of events, and future self; (b) the macro-level, cultural-historical events, and past self; (c) the exo-level, community organization, and narrative self; (d) the meso-level, religion, and collective identity; and (e) the micro-level, family, and family identity.

The following review of academic literature applies the ecological and identity models relevant to subjective social and psychological wellbeing of Jehovah's Witnesses in post-Genocide Rwanda.

Chronosystem, Influence of Time, and the Future Self

Chrono-level factors encompass the effect of the passage of time and how individuals transition from events over the course of one's life. Cognitive processes involved in identity formation and subjective wellbeing include time elements (D'Argembeau et al., 2012), as when individuals reflect on memories of the past self and images of the possible future self (Viebach, 2019).

Historical events are understood in the context of time and chronological ages. Open persecution and violence against Tutsi spanned decades before 1994, leading up to the ethnic genocide (cf. African Rights, 1995; Carney, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2006; National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, 2016). The Genocide against the Tutsi was a defining national and generational marker for Rwandans that established a new temporality extending far beyond the massacres (Benda, 2018). By July 1994, in about 100 horrific days, many Rwandans faced an uncertainty that challenged their basic existence, self-concept, relationships, and wellbeing. Any

anticipation about the coming months or years shifted to a temporary aim to get through the day or the moment.

The aftermath of the Genocide required a present-focus orientation to manage the necessary matters of daily life, with little time to reflect on the past or plan for the future (Waintrater, 2024). However, generations of Rwandans born before and after 1994 have gradually turned their attention from past-saturated narratives or the "rear-view mirror" to a "windshield" focus on the future (Benda, 2018). Government initiatives have identified the need for Rwandans to understand the past and envision the future (Rwanda National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, 2020).

As a testimony to humans' capacity for resilience, most people have a positivity bias in which the intensity of unpleasant events fades more than emotions associated with positive events (Walker et al., 2003). Individuals who conceptualize their future self in more detailed imageries are more likely to connect their present behavior with the future, which makes the future self a motivation for setting long-term goals (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Nurra & Oyserman, 2018). Individuals without a clear concept of an achievable future self often struggle to make decisions over the life course, opting for short-term gratification without long-term objectives (Hershfield, 2011; Yang et al., 2024). An optimistic temporal outlook is related to overall wellbeing, such as having a greater sense of agency and less anxiety, depression, or hopelessness (Chang, 2002; Tang et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2015). How individuals juggle negative past memories with positive future ambitions is a barometer of subjective wellbeing.

Hope is a psychological construct of time that is more than positive optimism but provides a motivational state to attain certain personal goals (Snyder, 2000). As a cognitive and emotional resource, hope is related to finding purposeful meaning in life and setting goals that exemplify

values (Feldman et al., 2018; Feldman & Snyder, 2005). Hope is often associated with religiosity (James & Wells, 2003; Koenig, 2012; Xu, 2016), spiritual meaning and social belongingness (Arnau et al., 2010), and beliefs in an ultimate destiny and divine justice (Bennett, 2011). The positive relationship between hope and wellbeing is supported by decades of empirical research encompassing all age groups and in various circumstances and populations (Collazzoni et al., 2020; Laranjeira & Querido, 2022; Murphy, 2023; O'Connor et al., 2004).

Findings from the JW-RWA study identified several important chrono-level factors to help understand those in the faith community. For example, the Witnesses in Rwanda varied widely in ages as did the time spent studying the Bible before becoming Jehovah's Witnesses. Some Witnesses were baptized in or before the 1994 Genocide and others after the COVID-19 pandemic. Some in the sample population had stopped associating for a period and later resumed affiliation as Jehovah's Witnesses. These factors were considered in analyzing psychosocial variables.

Elements of future time also characterize certain core beliefs held by Jehovah's Witnesses. The survey showed almost unanimous agreement with beliefs that contained temporal elements: (a) Mankind is presently living in the "last days" (thus current difficulties will soon end); (b) In the near future, the righteous and unrighteous will be resurrected (thus giving hope for those who have died); (c) In the distant future, redeemed mankind will live forever under God's rulership over the earth (under perfect circumstances as God originally purposed); and (d) Bible prophesies about the future originate with God (and therefore are trustworthy promises).[1] (See Section 3, Figure 3.10; Chu & Peltonen, 2024). While wishful thinking or "unrealistic optimism" can lead to poor decision-making and outcomes (Shepperd et al., 2015), Jehovah's Witnesses who place

[1] Selected scriptural references to these beliefs are the following: (a) 2 Timothy 3:1–5; (b) Acts 24:15; (c) Psalm 37:9–11, 29; Matthew 6:10; Revelation 21:4; and (d) 2 Timothy 3:16; Romans 15:4.

confidence in the future may draw on *the logic of the main teachings* about the future, which motivated them to be Jehovah's Witnesses. (See Section 3, Figures 3.4 and 3.5.)

This study further examines the Witnesses' temporal view from the vantage point of hope; how much individuals think about the past, present, and future, and how positive or negative they feel about these periods in their lives.

Macrosystem, Cultural-Historical Events, and the Past Self

The macrosystem refers to broad cultural influences that characterize society—the customs, values, and norms that shape how people think and act. The prevailing culture evolves over time with the values and attitudes of each generational cohort shaped by similar social, economic, and historical experiences. The past self draws from personal history and/or cultural-historical events. It involves an assessment of attitudes and decisions from the past that can be used to explain one's current self or to mark a significant change in oneself from the past.

Over the last century, individuals and generations were shaped by their coming-of-age experiences growing up in Rwanda during historical periods, such as the colonial and post-colonial era, the Genocide against the Tutsi, and the more recent period of rapid economic developments. Of the decades of culture-shaping historical events, the 3-month long Genocide created the most significant generational division—those born before 1994 who experienced the Genocide and those born after 1994 whose own coming-of-age experiences would be overshadowed by the Genocide. The Genocide was a "cultural trauma and a watershed event that structures historical narratives" (Nyseth Brehm et al., 2021, p. 116). Individual and collective memories of the Genocide against the Tutsi provided a gauge of healing and wellbeing across generations.

Traumas experienced during and after the Genocide against the Tutsi varied for individuals, depending on gender, ethnicity, and geographic location (Burnet, 2012; McDoom, 2021; Miller

et al., 2020). (See Section 5, Figures 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6.) Persons who survived being targeted during the Genocide faced economic and emotional hardships decades later (Rieder & Elbert, 2013) and higher rates of PTSD compared with the general Rwandan population (Musanabaganwa et al., 2020). Those who were imprisoned for genocidal crimes experienced high rates of depression and PTSD symptoms (Brounéus, 2008).

Thirty years after the Genocide, the Rwanda Biomedical Centre reported progress in addressing mental health issues but noted that Genocide effects on mental health remain profound, with higher levels of PTSD and other mental health disorders among women (23.2%) than men (16.6%). Elevated rates were found among Genocide survivors, female (53.3%) and male (48.8%) (Nsanzabaganwa et al., 2024; see also Kayiteshonga et al., 2022). The project Intergenerational Epigenomics of Trauma and PTSD in Rwanda is studying evidence for the transmission of PTSD from women who were pregnant during the Genocide to their offspring (H3Africa Collaborative Research Center, n.d.; Mutesa, 2023).

Over time, memories of emotionally impactful traumatic events can take on such saliency that they become integral to a person's life narrative (Berntsen & Rubin, 2006; El Haj & Gallouj, 2019; Smelser, 2004). Posttraumatic stress symptoms depend much on the centrality of traumatic events to one's sense of self, while coping mechanisms and cognitive appraisal of traumatic events can mediate the effects of trauma (George et al., 2016). Traumatic events cause people to re-evaluate the beliefs and values that were a part of who they were or are; and in turn, self-identity is the lens through which past and present traumas are interpreted (Berman et al., 2020; Truskauskaite-Kuneviciene et al., 2020).

In the evaluative process, posttraumatic growth—perceived positive psychological changes following traumatic events—adds another dimension to understanding the effects of

genocide and trauma within a faith community. Posttraumatic growth (PTG) has been described as a positive change in appreciation for life, spiritual outlook, and new relationships. (Tedeschi et al., 2018). It is related to hope, religiosity, and social support (Currier et al., 2013; Lasota et al., 2020), and those who maintain their faith despite traumatic events are more likely to report posttraumatic growth (Proffitt et al., 2007; Tedeschi et al., 2018). PTG is a cognitive reframing of past traumas to provide meaning and perspective leading to personal development. Religiosity and religious coping have been found to be positively related to PTG (Fayaz, 2023; Shaw et al., 2005).

Rwandan Jehovah's Witnesses come from this turbulent background and are affected by the cultural and historical environment that would test the social and psychological wellbeing of those making up the faith community. This report presents findings on the centrality of Genocide, posttraumatic stress symptoms, and posttraumatic growth of the study population.

Exosystem, Community Programs, and the Narrative Identity

The exo-level includes organizations, programs, and forums often established by governments or other social entities to further cultural and institutional goals and foster desired behaviors. In the aftermath of the Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwandans have benefited from such government programs aimed to improve the social and psychological environment by providing stability, public education, healthcare, and restorative justice (cf. Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement, 2024). The crisis of the Genocide against the Tutsi became the impetus for organizations to determinedly work to rebuild the fractured culture with new normative ways of behaving and thinking about oneself through the national initiative *Ndi Umunyarwanda* [I am Rwandan] (Rwanda National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, 2020). Government agencies and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) created community outreach programs to promote a national agenda to unify the country. For example, the *Gacaca* trials sought therapeutic outcomes

through restorative justice intended to open dialogue between the community and transgressors (Doak, 2011) and to give "perpetrators opportunities to confess their crimes, show remorse, and ask for and receive forgiveness in front of their community" (Rwanda Ministry of Justice, 2020).

Community-based sociotherapy is established to promote healing and peacebuilding for survivors. Numerous charitable, education, and social service organizations were created to serve important community roles (e.g., IBUKA [https://www.ibuka.rw/], GAERG [https://gaerg.org.rw/], and AERG [https://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/]). In addition to the Kigali Genocide Memorial, the Aegis Trust has sponsored genocide education programs and research initiatives with the mission to prevent genocide and mass atrocities. Such programs are deemed necessary in combatting genocide denial (Kaufman, 2019). The annual *Kwibuka* commemorations were organized to promote national unity, remember victims, and promote genocide education and prevention. Some use the *Kwibuka* period to recall their family's history within the private setting of the home.

All levels within the social-ecological system affect how individuals discuss trauma and genocide, but it is at the exo-level where opportunities for dialogue in community settings have created forums to present individual and collective narratives. With the intent to be therapeutic and instructional, such groups set boundaries and define new norms for what are considered appropriate topics, audiences, and decorum for discussions.

The narrative self provides a sense of meaning through selective reconstruction of the past (Barber & Mather, 2014; Conway et al., 2004; Gilbert, 2018; Pasupathi, 2001). This development of self occurs during interactions with others when individuals construct a narrative identity through storytelling, during which memory of the past and view of the future can change with each retelling and audience (McAdams, 2011). For those whose post-Genocide life included personality

transformation through religious conversion, their newfound conviction is reinforced and reproduced by the telling of personal experiences that reflect the collective traditions of the religion that motivated their individual conduct or reformation (Hovi, 2014). Such change narratives provide personalized meaning-construction (Jesus, 2011). Narratives that are consistent with the self are more likely to be told, while self-discrepant narratives are more likely to contain meaning-making statements and suggest less autonomy than self-consistent accounts (Mutlutürk & Tekcan, 2016). Recalling personal memories of the past self affects the view of the current self and motivates goal-pursuit decisions for the future self (Peetz & Wilson, 2009).

The JW-RWA study propounded the question of how much the Witnesses talk about personal or family Genocide experiences. An understanding of both Rwandan and JW culture puts those findings in context.

In post-Genocide Rwanda, individuals would vary widely in what stories they chose to tell and to whom. Although sharing personal narratives generally creates an emotional bond between the teller and listener (Suzuki et al., 2018), in the context of post-genocide, a person's story can be divisive, opening old wounds. In general, people telling self-narratives tend to limit unflattering details or present what is favorable to the audience. However, selective storytelling may also be out of consideration for the needs and feelings of the listener. Timing, setting, occasion, audience, and intention are only some of the factors determining the appropriateness of what might be discussed, with whom, and in what manner. For example, second-generation children may feel silenced by or prefer being disconnected from their family's past (cf. Ingabire, 2022; Irakoze & Sinalo, 2023; Richters, 2015; Williamson-Sinalo et al., 2021). Research using focus groups in Rwanda found that young adults express a need to learn more about the past, but their parents rarely discuss topics related to intergenerational dialogue about the Genocide against the Tutsi

(e.g., Ingabire & Richters, 2019). Individuals' willingness to initiate conversations or respond to inquiries may vary depending on their relationship with the listener and their Genocide circumstance (Bonumwezi, 2022; Buckley-Zistel, 2006; Keating et al., 2013; Krell et al., 2004; Suedfeld, 2002; Voss, 2018; Williamson Sinalo et al., 2021; Wiseman et al., 2002).

Cultural norms and etiquette call for certain gender and generational boundaries about topics of conversations. Some people are more self-disclosing, while others steer clear of drawing attention to themselves. Some see value in sharing experiences as life lessons, and others prefer not to bring up the past. Some choose to avoid a victim narrative that focuses on the actions of others in the past in order not to reinforce pessimism and helplessness. More research is needed to understand how openness to intergenerational dialogue about the Genocide against the Tutsi may vary depending on backgrounds and developmental ages.

In addition to these considerations, as a cohesive group with collectivist values, Jehovah's Witnesses would likely consider the possible effects of their conversations on fellow congregants and the congregation as a whole. Over 95% of survey respondents indicated they believed their congregation *makes efforts to integrate all its members and to make them stronger*. (See Section 4, Figure 4.7.) Witnesses who were individually working along with this perceived community value would seek to find commonality among fellow believers and avoid discussions that make comparisons with others, draw attention to others' shortcomings or past wrongs, or could be viewed as having a political agenda. Considering Jehovah's Witnesses' particular sensitivity to remaining politically neutral, individual Witnesses would be reticent about elaborating on personal narratives with potentially polarizing or politicizing effects for those in and outside the faith community.

Jehovah's Witnesses as a religious community offer outreach and education programs to those interested in learning more about biblical principles useful for everyday life. These include public ministry, personalized individual Bible instruction, prison ministry, and interactive Bible studies at weekly meetings open to the public. Such programs encourage values of unity, social cohesion, and peace-building shared in contemporary Rwanda. The *Watchtower* magazine (titled *Umanara w'Umurinzi* in Kinyarwanda) routinely publishes articles promoting prosocial behaviors. This was also true during the 1990s. For example, an article published on March 1, 1994, just before the Genocide, reminded the Witnesses to help those in and outside the religion. It stated that Jehovah's Witnesses are "among the first to perform relief work" (*Umanara w'Umurinzi*, 1993/1994a, p. 10). An article published on June 1, 1994, during the Genocide, on not showing favoritism admonished: "We can ask ourselves, 'Is my brotherly affection partial?'" (*Umanara w'Umurinzi*, 1993/1994b, p. 18). As published in December of 1994, the scripture that Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide would feature during the year 1995 was Colossians 2:2, "Be harmoniously joined together in love" (*Umanara w'Umurinzi*, 1994c, pp. 18–19).

Jehovah's Witnesses' tradition of "witnessing" focuses on biblical accounts rather than personal experiences. Conversations among fellow Witnesses sometimes include expressions about what attracted them to the religion and what changes they made to become Jehovah's Witnesses. Some make significant attitudinal and behavioral changes before they are baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses, such as those featured in video interviews on the website jw.org under "Truth Transforms Lives," translated in Kinyarwanda, "*Ukuri guhindura imibereho*" (https://www.jw.org/rw/isomero/videwo/#rw/categories/VODIntExpTransformations). Among the experiences possibly relevant to Rwandan Jehovah's Witnesses are videos titled: "*Bahoze ari abanzi none babaye incuti*" [Former Enemies Who Became Friends]; "*Nashyize intwaro hasi*" [I

Put Down My Rifle]; and "*Imfungwa yarahindutse*" [From Prison to Prosperity]. Such dramatic change narratives would resonate with narratives told by those who had formerly adopted *génocidaire* hate rhetoric or had been imprisoned for genocide acts but later adopted the position of impartiality, nonviolence, and political neutrality of Jehovah's Witnesses. Narratives of former prisoners who make positive changes often describe their sense of self pre- and post-prison life (Maier & Ricciardelli, 2022). With their strong identification with their newfound religion, Jehovah's Witnesses who were previously imprisoned would view their faith as a contributing factor to their life transformation.

Regardless of one's personal or family Genocide past, the decision to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses entails alignment with values and practices conducive to peace and unity. The JW-RWA survey explores these topics, investigating attitudes and behaviors related to Genocide education and communication about personal and family traumatic and Genocide-related experiences.

Mesosystem, Religion, and the Collective Self

Religion is typically placed at the meso-level. As a central influence on human development, the mesosystem encompasses the interactions and influences of immediate and central environments, such as school, peer groups, and neighborhoods. In the social-ecological systems theoretical model, the mesosystem is not the group itself, but the interaction of the group with the individual's environment. At the meso-level, religious practices within a congregation or faith community may connect the individual with the broader societal system. Religious culture can shape the norms, beliefs, and behaviors of individuals. For some, religious meaning and practices form the core of selfhood (Jesus, 2011). The significance of religion in an individual's life determines if it would be considered a macro-, exo-, meso-, or micro-level influence. The

religion of those whose sense of self is closely associated with a religious group of fellow "brothers" and "sisters" becomes influential like family at the micro-level. Still, even in close-knit religious groups, religion is generally one level below the family, which typically remains the more dominant influence on self-identity.

The collective self is more than simply being a group member but applies to individuals who share common values, goals, experiences, and sense of belonging (Hogg & Williams, 2000). A religious group has its own collective history, culture, and narrative that can become part of the collective self. Unlike time, culture, country, family, and genetically determined factors, religion can be a matter of choice, as was the case for most Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda who changed their religious affiliation during adulthood. Changing groups can result from a process of investigation, comparisons, and assessment of core beliefs, values, and behaviors leading to an adoption of new group norms (Otten et al., 2024). A change in religion is a change in self-image that incorporates the collective self.

As a source of collective pride, group membership can elicit favorable comparisons with other groups and significantly impact wellbeing as a boost to self-esteem, life satisfaction, and overall mental health (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Similarly, belonging to a devalued, stigmatized group can negatively affect wellbeing by creating feelings of isolation and low self-worth. Criticism of the group can be internalized, challenging one's personal and collective identity and influencing overall wellbeing (Jetten et al., 2017). As a minority religion, Jehovah's Witnesses are sometimes marginalized in some countries with threats to its legal and social status (Knox, 2018; USCIRF, 2024). The JW-RWA findings show how Witnesses in Rwanda believe their social and psychological wellbeing (e.g., self-worth and emotional wellbeing) changed since becoming

Jehovah's Witnesses, whether respondents thought the religion had a negative or positive effect on their subjective wellbeing.

Empirical research shows a positive relationship between health and religion and spiritual beliefs (Koenig, 2012). Religiosity is associated with physical health, longevity, healthier lifestyle, increased social support, and more positive emotions (Morton et al., 2017). In a large cross-cultural study of subjective wellbeing, Rwandans associated happiness with religious meeting attendance (Ngamaba, 2016). Religious coping has been found to help with posttraumatic stress symptoms by reframing the meaning of trauma, enhancing resilience, and supplying emotional support (Koenig, 2020; Koenig et al., 2020; Pargament, 1997). In contrast, recovery from trauma is compromised for those with doubts about divine justice or punishment and personal worthiness (Grey et al., 2024; Surzykiewicz et al., 2022).

Previous sections of this report presented in detail aspects of the collective religious profile of Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda. Those findings reveal the following:

1. The majority of Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda are first-generation adult converts (Section 3, Figure 3.2).
2. Witnesses are attracted to the religion by the logic of the teachings, a desire to learn more about the Bible, and to be closer to God (Section 3, Figure 3.4).
3. Jehovah's Witnesses largely agree on fundamental teachings about the nature of God and mankind's hope for the future (Section 3, Figure 3.10).
4. Their religiosity is more intrinsically than extrinsically motivated (Section 3, Figure 3.14).
5. They see themselves as manifesting forgiveness and prosocial attitudes (Section 4, Figure 4.1).

6. They believe genuine repentance is necessary for divine forgiveness (Section 4, Figures 4.2 and 4.3).
7. Their self-image is characterized as having compassionate love for all humanity (Section 4, Figure 4.4).
8. They view their congregation as a source of support and resilience during difficult times (Section 4, Figure 4.7).

This section of the report identifies other characteristics that would contribute to the development of characteristics associated with the faith community, such as temporal orientation. In addition to these, this section reports how the Witnesses in Rwanda understand and apply scriptures as a means of coping with thoughts about the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Microsystem and Family Identity

While historical, cultural, and social influences operate at the macro- and meso-levels, the family operates at the micro-level, which directly affects attitudes, beliefs, behavior, and self-identities (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 2005). The microsystem is the innermost level that interacts with all other levels and has the most direct and sustaining influence on individual development. Like the ecological systems model, the family systems perspective recognizes that family functioning involves the interaction of influencing factors (e.g., life events, social support, and relationships between and among family members). What happens to one affects other family members, individually and collectively (Kerr & Bowen, 1988; Minuchin, 1974). Although crisis situations expose individuals and their family to increased vulnerabilities and dysfunction, family units are also a source of support, resilience, and recovery (Walsh, 2002). Family wellbeing is a mediator for the intergenerational transmission of trauma (Reese et al., 2022), and family communication

was found to mediate maternal PTSD on children's outcomes (Bonumwezi et al., 2024). Good relationships with mothers strengthen positive subjective wellbeing (Lampropoulou, 2018).

Family identity involves the identity of the family as a group and the individual identity that comes from being a member of a family unit. Family identity encompasses the structural composition and the emotional bonds that influence family functioning (Amato, 2014; Noone, 2015; Olson et al., 1983; Scabini & Manzi, 2011).

Families are an integral part of human development, faith communities, and post-Genocide national recovery. From a social learning perspective, parents and significant adults are the main transmitters of attitudes and behaviors (Bandura, 1969; Oliner & Oliner, 1988). The interrelatedness of psychosocial factors becomes evident in families, where beliefs and prosocial attitudes about oneself in relation to others are first developed. The primary factors of attachment and forgiveness lie with the family unit (Lawler-Row et al., 2006).

The concept of family with dual parents and their children sharing a household was shattered during the Genocide against the Tutsi, which disrupted the normal family life cycle and usual generational patterns of marriage and childbearing. Sexual and physical assaults on individuals were intentionally conducted in the presence of other family members who were forced to watch and prevented from intervening. These were demoralizing assaults, not just against individuals, but against the family as a whole (von Joeden-Forgey, 2010).

Normally it is in families that concepts of trust, hope, justice, and loyalty are developed (Scabini & Manzi, 2011). However, loss, conflict, and violations by family members or trusted adults result in psychological and spiritual costs (Mahoney et al., 2003). At the hands of "ordinary" men and women, the Genocide against the Tutsi decimated families and created a moral and social identity crisis (Moshman, 2011; Straus, 2006).

Genocide changed household composition in Rwanda. The number of men killed or imprisoned outnumbered women, resulting in more women becoming widows at younger ages without remarrying. Children of survivors were apt to be raised by extended family networks and children of perpetrators had one or both parents incarcerated (Lordos et al., 2021). Rape victims and children of rape faced dishonor, ostracism, and abandonment (Nowrojee, 1996). As a demonstration of communal coping, families pooled resources and adopted a flexible organizational structure (Theiss, 2018). In post-Genocide households, cultural roles prescribed according to one's gender and developmental age were dismantled as females, minor children, older adults, and unrelated persons took on roles as caregivers, decision-makers, and breadwinners. Women assumed decisional and instrumental roles as heads of households. Orphaned children restructured a semblance of a family, with older siblings adopting parental roles. As functional roles of family members were lost through death, divorce, imprisonment, and relocation, household composition extended beyond immediate family members or biological relatives.

As a system, how a family functions depends much on its (a) cohesiveness (the emotional connection to one another), (b) adaptability (ability to change roles, rules, and relationships when necessary or appropriate), and (c) communication (verbal and nonverbal messages about thoughts and feelings among members). Family cohesion balances individuals' needs for independence and connectedness. Family adaptability provides stability without rigidity (Olson et al., 1983). Family communication is the facilitating dimension of family functioning, used in coping, emotion regulating, and the transmission of values (Black & Lobo, 2008; Noone, 2015; Olson et al., 1983; Papero, 2015; Szcześniak & Tułecka, 2020).

The JW-RWA study determined the household composition for the Witness sample population that could provide evidence of family recovery in post-Genocide Rwanda. The survey

also assessed individuals' satisfaction with family functioning (Olson & Barnes, 2010; Olson & Gorall, 2003). Both household composition and family satisfaction are related to subjective social and psychological wellbeing.

Results

The key findings in this section are presented on the following variables that are indicators of subjective social and psychological wellbeing: (a) communication about Genocide and trauma events, (b) family satisfaction, (c) the centrality of the Genocide, (d) temporal orientation, (e) posttraumatic stress symptoms, (f) posttraumatic growth, (g) perceived change in wellbeing since becoming Jehovah's Witnesses, and (h) scriptures as coping resource. Statistical analyses under each variable include several subgroup comparisons that are pertinent to the variable under consideration. In addition to the usual gender and age group analyses, other subgroup comparisons are made (e.g., years being one of Jehovah's Witnesses, generations, and Genocide role-situations). The large data set of the JW-RWA study allowed statistical analysis of interconnected variables that is rare in post-genocide or post-conflict research.

Overview of Analysis and Subgroups

The following describes the composition of the generational groups and Genocide role-situational groups that are frequently used in analysis in this section.

Generation Groups Related to Genocide

Four generation categories were created that separated groups with different experiences and understandings relative to the Genocide. In previous sections of this report, adults and minors were combined as representing the Genocide Generation; in this final section on wellbeing, the adults and minors during the Genocide were separated. The four groups are Genocide Generation Adults, Genocide Generation Minors, Returnees, and Post-Genocide Generation. At the time of

the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, the Genocide Generation Adults were aged 18 and over (born in or before 1976) and present in Rwanda at least some of the time during the Genocide against the Tutsi. The Genocide Generation Minors were under age 18 (born after 1976) and present in Rwanda at least some of the time during the 1994 Genocide. In this study, the label Returnees refers to those who were not in Rwanda during the Genocide against the Tutsi but later returned. Those in the Post-Genocide Generation were born after 1994, making them the youngest age cohort, with no firsthand knowledge of the Genocide. Comparisons of these four groups identify differences that might be attributed to individuals who have personal Genocide experiences versus those who know about the Genocide only from secondhand accounts. Table 6.1 gives the breakdown of these four generation groups.

Table 6.1

Generation Groups Based on Genocide Experience

Group	Description	Age at Time of Survey	Age in 1994	*n*
Genocide Generation Adults	In Rwanda during the Genocide; born in or before 1976	Aged 47 and over	Aged 18 and over	3,736
Genocide Generation Minors	In Rwanda during the Genocide; born after 1976	Aged 29 to 46	Birth to under age 18	4,780
Returnees	Outside Rwanda during the 1994 Genocide; born in or before 1994	Aged 29 and over	All ages	1,046
Post-Genocide Generation	Born after 1994	Under 29	Not yet born	3,316

Genocide Role-Situations

As explained in Section 5 on Genocide and Trauma, JW-RWA researchers were keenly aware of problems in categorizing individuals into narrowly defined Genocide roles (e.g., victims, perpetrators, bystanders) when in reality individuals' behaviors varied depending on the situations. However, the large JW-RWA data set allowed the categorization of distinct, nonoverlapping groups that were empirically useful.

The survey asked respondents to select from a list of Genocide role-situations that they personally experienced (asked of Genocide Generation Adults) or their family experienced (asked of Genocide Generation Minors and Post-Genocide Generation). Among the response options were the following: (a) *targeted to be killed*, (b) *helped those who were targeted*, (c) *later imprisoned for participating in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi*, and (d) *none of the above*. Respondents were allowed to choose multiple items (e.g., *targeted to be killed* and *helped those who were targeted*). (See Section 5, Genocide and Trauma, Figure 5.17, for breakdown of all response options.) From the large data set, four distinct subgroups with no overlapping Genocide role-situations were created: (a) Targeted, (b) Helper, (c) Imprisoned, and (d) None. The Targeted and Imprisoned categories were distinct from each other, but respondents could also indicate that they helped those targeted. The Helper category excluded those who also indicated that they were targeted or imprisoned. The None category consisted of those who only selected the option *none of the above*. The four role-situation subgroups were created for each of three generation groups: the Genocide Generation Adults (self-identified), the Genocide Generation Minors, and the Post-Genocide Generation (reporting about their family's situation). Table 6.2 shows the *n* for each role-situation by generational group from which the statistical analysis was conducted, with the total

differing per measure depending on missing data and *does not apply* (DNA) and *prefer not to answer* (PNA) responses.

Table 6.2

Distinct Subgroups of Self or Family Genocide Role-Situations as Identified by Genocide Generation Adults, Genocide Generation Minors, and Post-Genocide Generation

Genocide Role-Situation for Self or Family	Genocide Generation Adults—Role-Situation for Self	Genocide Generation Minors—Role-Situation for Family	Post-Genocide Generation—Role-Situation for Family
	n	*n*	*n*
Targeted	445	666	369
Helper	902	899	261
Imprisoned	107	157	54
None	314	235	51

Note. In subsequent comparative analysis using these groups, the *n* will vary slightly depending on missing data.

Due to the large sample size, group comparisons using ANOVAs were followed by Bonferroni post hoc tests, with a meaningfully significant difference of $p < .05$ and $\eta^2 = > .01$. Variations in subgroup sizes resulted from the necessary removal of missing data and *prefer not to answer* (PNA) responses from statistical tests to detect significant group effects. With this background, the following are the key findings related to the subjective social and psychological wellbeing of Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda.

Communication About Genocide Across Generations

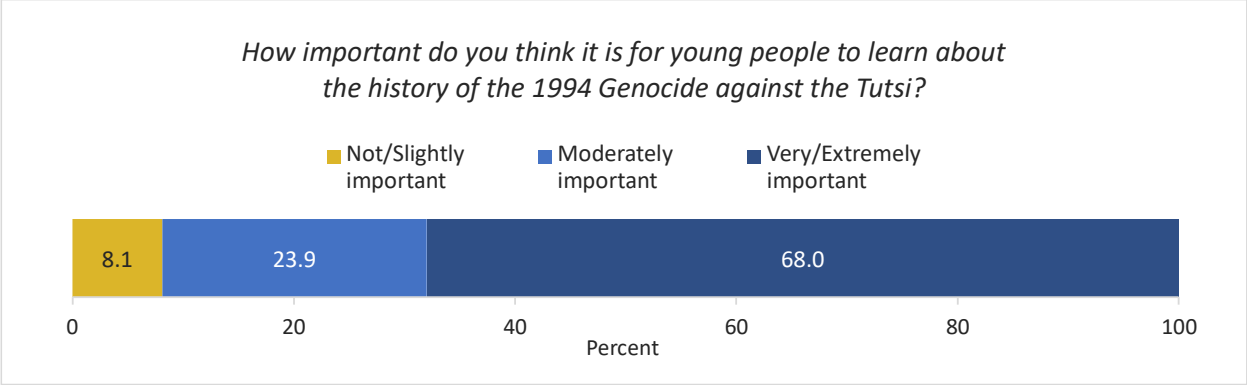
The findings report Jehovah's Witnesses' attitudes and behaviors: (a) their views of Genocide education for young people, (b) their comfort level in talking about traumatic and Genocide experiences, (c) their indication of who they actually talked to about their personal family Genocide experiences, and (d) their view of intergenerational dialogue about such difficult topics.

View of Young People Learning About the History of the Genocide

The survey asked respondents how important they thought it was for young people to learn about the history of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. The measure used a 5-point scale from *not important at all* to *extremely important*. The findings shown in Figure 6.2 combine the response options *not important at all* and *slightly important*, and *very important* and *extremely important*, with the option *moderately important* remaining as a single midpoint. For the total sample, 68.00% thought that learning about the history of the Genocide was *very* or *extremely important*; and a total of 91.89% thought it was *moderately* to *extremely important*. The small percentage who selected either *not important at all* (2.56%) or *slightly important* (5.55%) may have viewed the importance of education about the past Genocide in relative terms compared with Bible instruction. Still, the vast majority of Jehovah's Witnesses viewed Genocide education as important for young people.

Figure 6.2

Attitude About Young People Learning About the History of the Genocide Against the Tutsi



Note. Total sample minus PNA and missing responses: *n* = 11,504.

Table 6.3 gives a breakdown for the question about Genocide education by gender, generation, and self-identified Genocide role-situations. The percentage of males (69.15%) who selected *very* or *extremely important* was only slightly more than that of females (67.06%). Of the

generation groups who selected *very* or *extremely important*, the Genocide Generation Adults had the highest percentage (71.64%), which was over 5% higher than Genocide Generation Minors (65.98%).

The group analysis that revealed the greatest variation in percentages was among the four distinct role-situation subgroups for the Genocide generation (Targeted, Helper, Imprisoned, and None). Although the majority in all the subgroups thought Genocide education was *very* or *extremely important*, the Targeted group—those who were the victims of hate propaganda that targeted them to be killed—had the lowest percentage (64.96%). This compared with 72.73% of the helpers of those targeted during the Genocide and 70.77% of the None group, who did not have any categorized Genocide role-situations. Notably, the highest percentage of those who strongly favored Genocide education for young people was for those who had been imprisoned for genocide crimes (86.87%)—over 20% more than those who had been targeted (64.96%). In other words, in a turnaround, those who self-identified as having been accused as *génocidaires*—those most likely to have previously acted on the hate rhetoric and ethnically motivated violence but now identified as Jehovah's Witnesses, who oppose hate and violence—believed that teaching what happened during the Genocide was *very* or *extremely important*.

Table 6.3

Attitude About Young People Learning About the History of the Genocide Against the Tutsi by Gender, Generation, and Genocide Role-Situation

Group	*How important do you think it is for young people to learn about the history of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi?*		
	Not or Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very or Extremely Important
	%	%	%
Total (*n* = 11,504)	8.11	23.89	68.00
Gender			
Male (*n* = 5,161)	7.21	23.64	69.15
Female (*n* = 6,343)	8.84	24.09	67.06
Generation			
Genocide Generation Adults (*n* = 3,195)	8.08	20.28	**71.64**
Genocide Generation Minors (*n* = 4,133)	8.20	25.82	65.98
Returnees (*n* = 882)	9.41	23.58	67.01
Post-Genocide Generation (*n* = 2,864)	7.58	25.17	67.25
Genocide Role-Situation of Genocide Generation Adults			
Targeted (*n* = 391)	10.74	24.30	64.96
Helper (*n* = 796)	8.04	19.22	72.73
Imprisoned (*n* = 99)	4.04	9.09	**86.87**
None (*n* = 260)	7.69	21.54	70.77

Note. Bolded numbers highlight noteworthy percentages.

Comfortable Talking to Others About Traumatic Events

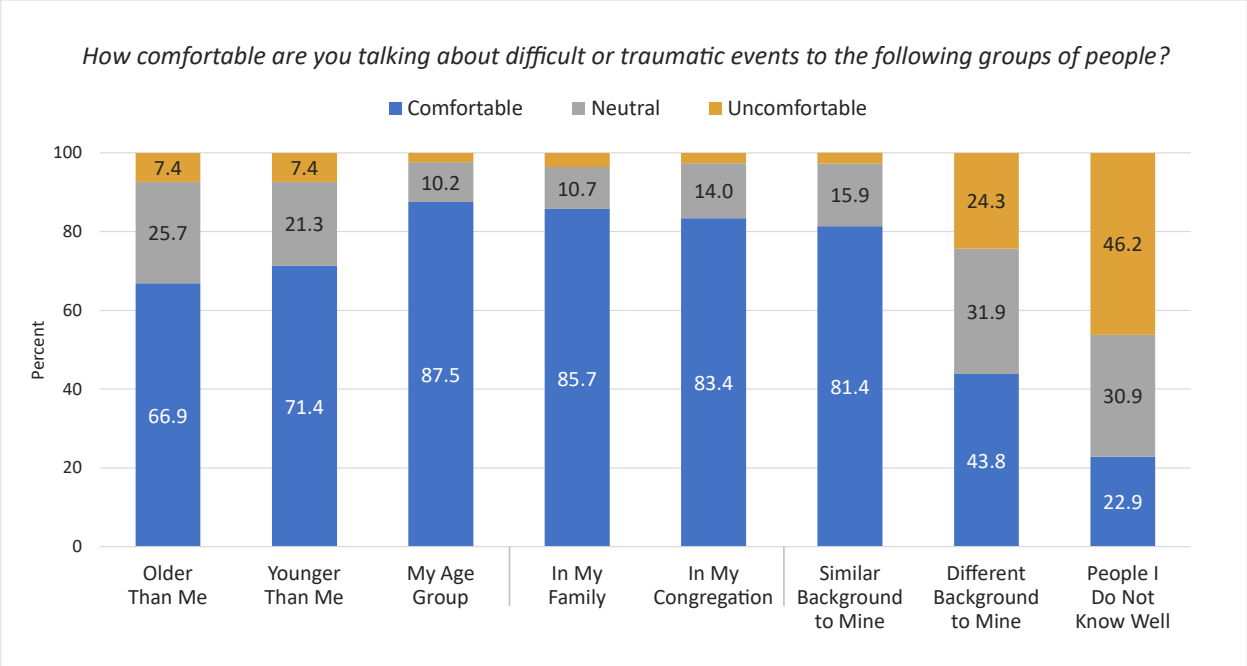
The survey asked respondents, *How comfortable are you talking about difficult or traumatic events to the following eight groups of people?* The response options were those (a) *older than me*, (b) *younger than me*, (c) *in my age group*, (d) *in my family*, (e) *in my congregation*, (f) *with backgrounds similar to mine*, (g) *with backgrounds different from mine*, and (h) *I do not know very well*. The measure used a 5-point scale from *very uncomfortable* to *very comfortable*. Figure 6.3 shows the results with *comfortable* and *very comfortable* combined and *uncomfortable* and *very uncomfortable* combined.

For the total sample, a majority of Jehovah's Witnesses indicated that they were comfortable talking about difficult or traumatic events, especially with those with whom they were

socially connected or shared similar backgrounds. Respondents were most comfortable talking with those of similar ages to theirs (87.48%), in their family (85.74%), or in their congregation (83.42%). Overall, respondents were far more comfortable talking with those who shared similar backgrounds (81.31%) than with persons with different backgrounds (43.83%) or with those whom they did not know well (22.96%).

Figure 6.3

Comfortable Talking to Others About Traumatic Events



Note. *N* = 13,588, total sample minus missing data.

Table 6.4 shows the breakdown of responses by gender, generation, and role-situation. The percentage of males was slightly higher than females in their comfort level in talking with most categories of people. The percentage differences between genders were greater for their comfort talking with those younger (males, 73.73%; females, 69.51%), those with different backgrounds (males, 46.74%; females, 41.52%), and with persons they did not know well (males, 24.44%; females, 21.79%).

For all four generation groups, over 80% indicated being comfortable talking about difficult or traumatic experiences with those in their family and with those in their same age group. Over 75% of all groups were comfortable talking with those in their congregation and with those of similar backgrounds.

The findings suggest developmental patterns more than distinctions between those who experienced the Genocide and those who did not. The Genocide Generation Adults and Returnees (who were the same age cohort, one group in and one group outside Rwanda during the Genocide) were also the most comfortable talking to all groups—more comfortable than the younger Genocide Generation Minors group and the youngest group, the Post-Genocide Generation.

The most notable generational contrast was the nearly 20% difference between the 77.13% of Genocide Generation Adults who were comfortable talking with those younger and the 57.24% of the Post-Genocide Generation who were comfortable talking with those older about life difficulties or traumas. The Post-Genocide Generation was also less likely to be comfortable talking with those younger (64.51%).

The breakdown by Genocide role-situations for the four distinct groups (Targeted, Helper, Imprisoned, and None) showed similar patterns. A high percentage in all role-situation groups felt comfortable talking with those in their congregation, slightly more than talking with those in their family. This was especially true of those formerly imprisoned and now part of the Jehovah's Witness community, with the highest percentage (96.23%) for all role-situations and with all categories of people. Overall, those formerly targeted indicated being comfortable talking about difficult and traumatic experiences with others, but their percentages were lower across all categories compared with those in other Genocide role-situations. For all role-situation groups and

with all categories of people, the lowest percentage was for those in the Targeted group talking with those they did not know well.

Table 6.4

Comfortable Talking About Traumatic Events by Gender, Generation, and Role-Situation

Group	Older	Younger	My Age Group	In My Family	In My Congre-gation	Similar Back-ground	Different Back-ground	Do Not Know Well
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total Sample (*n* = 13,588)	66.90	71.37	**87.48**	**85.73**	**83.42**	**81.40**	43.83	22.90
Gender								
Male (*n* = 5,999)	67.01	**73.73**	87.45	86.26	84.01	81.83	**46.74**	**24.44**
Female (*n* = 7,589)	66.81	69.51	87.51	85.32	82.95	80.91	41.52	21.79
Generation								
Genocide Generation Adults (*n* = 3,734)	**75.01**	**77.13**	**89.90**	**87.63**	**90.17**	**84.31**	**47.05**	22.42
Genocide Generation Minors (*n* = 4,780)	66.72	71.53	85.98	87.18	82.22	81.44	44.60	22.26
Returnees (*n* = 1,046)	70.27	73.23	87.95	87.09	86.81	82.89	45.41	24.95
Post-Genocide Generation (*n* = 3,316)	**57.24**	**64.51**	87.15	81.54	76.45	78.35	38.48	17.73
Genocide Role-Situations for Genocide Generation Adults								
Targeted (*n* = 445)	68.99	66.29	**86.74**	82.70	83.37	78.88	39.78	**19.78**
Helper (*n* = 901)	78.47	**81.58**	90.79	89.23	91.23	**87.01**	50.17	32.74
Imprisoned (*n* = 106)	80.19	80.19	90.57	88.68	**96.23**	83.02	**50.94**	**33.96**
None (*n* = 314)	69.43	78.03	91.40	90.13	93.31	85.67	47.77	27.07

Note. Bolded numbers highlight noteworthy percentages.

Talking About Personal or Family Genocide Experiences

In addition to inquiring about degree of comfort in talking about unspecified difficulties or traumatic events with various categories of people, another survey question asked respondents to identify more specifically those with whom they had actually discussed their personal or family experiences during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Response options to the question were the following: (a) *immediate family members (spouse, children, parents, siblings)*; (b) *extended family members (grandparents, grandchildren, uncles, aunts, cousins)*; (c) *persons associated with my congregation*; (d) *persons met while in the public ministry*; (e) *persons outside my family or congregation*; (f) *persons connected to counseling or outreach programs*; (g) *no one*; and (h) *prefer not to answer*. Figure 6.4 shows the breakdown of percentages for the total sample and by gender of those who selected each category.

Overall, the percentages of those who felt comfortable talking about difficult and traumatic events with different groups were higher than percentages of those who had personally talked about *what [they] or [their] family experienced during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi*. For example, although 85.73% of the total sample (shown in Table 6.4) indicated they were comfortable talking about traumatic events with family, just over half (53.00%) reported actually having had conversations within the immediate family about Genocide experiences.

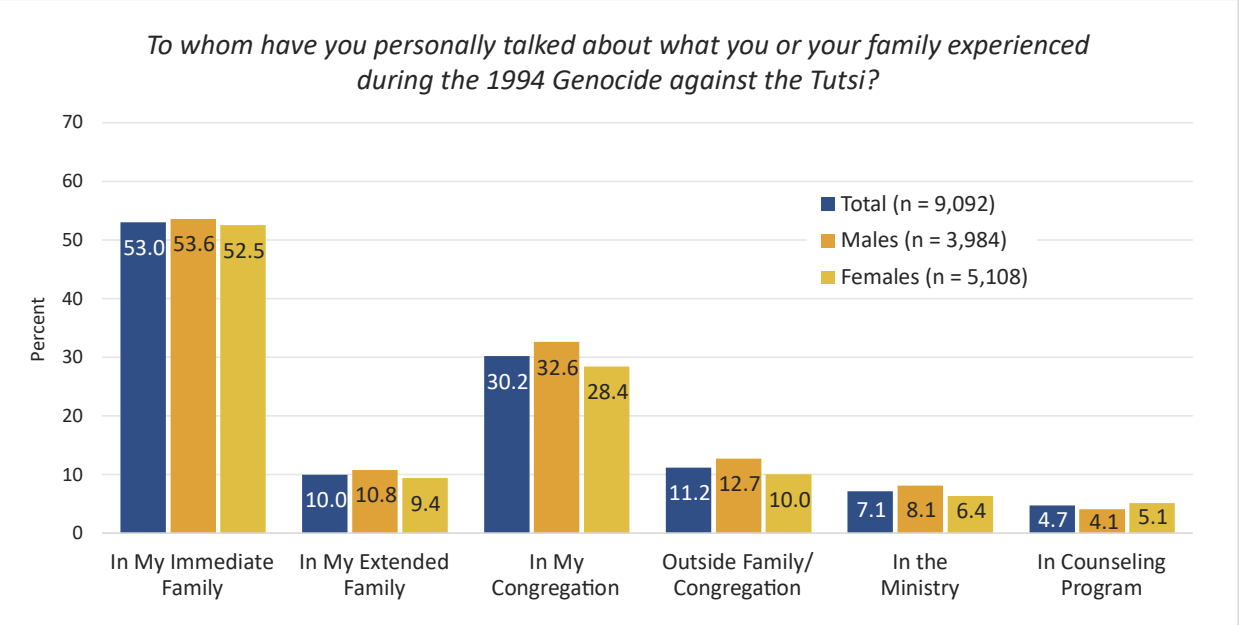
The findings also indicate that conversations about Genocide experiences follow certain relational boundaries, often being reserved for those with the closest interpersonal connections. For example, respondents showed a marked distinction between immediate and extended family, with only 9.99% having discussed Genocide experiences with extended family members. The percentage for extended family was lower than the almost one third (30.19%) who had discussed personal and family Genocide experiences with those in the congregation.

A minority of respondents had discussed Genocide experiences with those outside the family and congregation. Although topics related to justice and human suffering are discussed during Jehovah's Witnesses' ministry outreach and would provide opportunities to relate individual accounts, only 7.12% had discussed their personal or family events with individuals they met in the ministry. This could follow general cultural norms in Rwanda that avoid sharing Genocide experiences outside certain social parameters, as well as normative themes in the Witnesses' ministry, which focus on directing attention to scriptural accounts more than to personal experiences or opinions.

For the total sample, 4.70% of respondents had talked with those *connected to counseling or outreach programs*. In addition to using community mental health provisions, the study found that Jehovah's Witnesses relied on their family and congregation as social resources to communicate and process personal and family Genocide pasts.

Figure 6.4

Dialogue About Genocide, Total Sample and by Gender



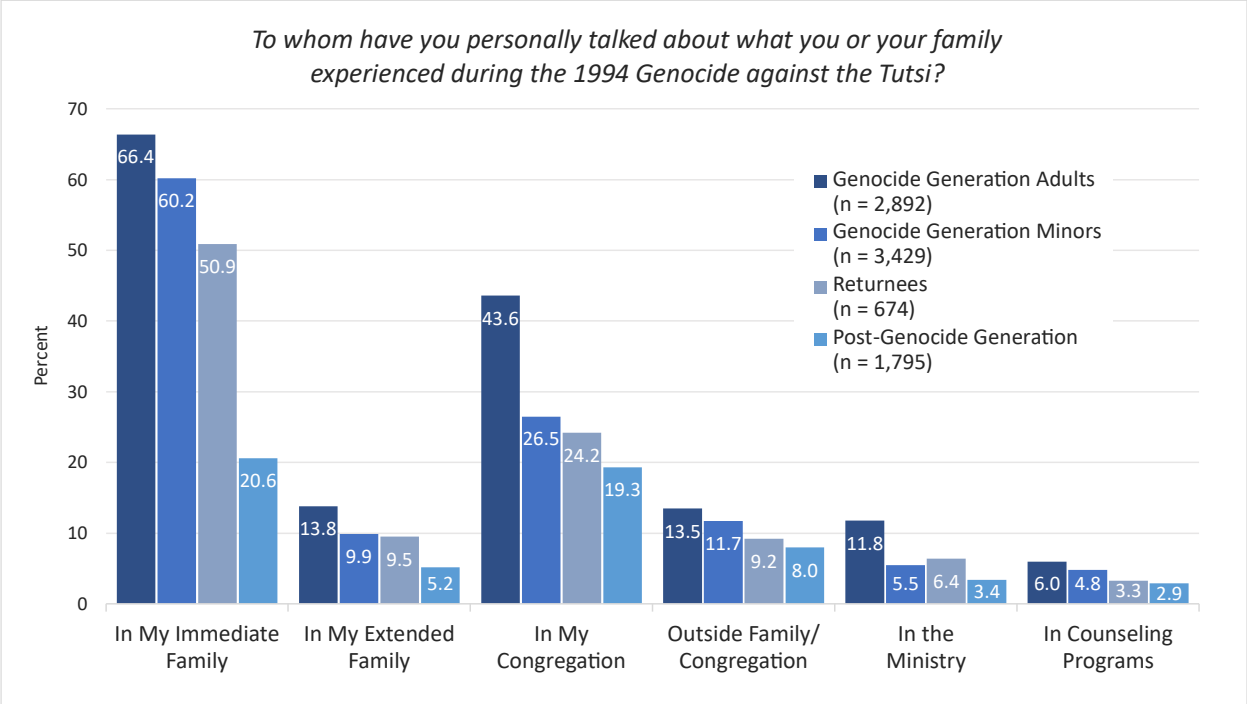
Note. PNA responses and missing data were not included.

To identify generational patterns in communication with others about the Genocide, the data allowed comparisons between Genocide Generation Adults, Genocide Generation Minors, Returnees (those who were the same age cohort as the Genocide Generation Adults but who were not in Rwanda during the Genocide), and the Post-Genocide Generation (those born after 1994 and closer in age to the Genocide Generation Minors but like Returnees had no direct, personal Genocide experiences).

Figure 6.5 shows that the Genocide Generation Adults were far more likely to talk with someone about personal or family Genocide experiences than the younger age cohorts. The greatest generational gap for those who had talked with family members was between Genocide Generation Adults (66.42%) and the Post-Genocide Generation (20.56%). The discrepancies make sense considering possible intergenerational dynamics: The older cohort had actual Genocide experiences to tell, while the younger generation had no personal experiences and would be less likely to relay their secondhand accounts to those with firsthand experiences.

Figure 6.5

Dialogue About Personal or Family Genocide Experiences by Generation Cohort



Note. PNA responses and missing data are not included.

Table 6.5 identifies how firsthand experience versus secondhand knowledge in different Genocide role-situations might affect who talks with whom about personal and family Genocide accounts. Several findings stand out: First, the family was the foremost resource to have conversations about personal and family experiences. This was true of those who survived the Genocide, regardless of personal or family role-situations—as Targeted, Helper, or those later Imprisoned.

Second, despite the centrality of the Genocide against the Tutsi as a pivotal point in the collective memory of Rwandans, the extent that personal and/or family Genocide accounts are topics of conversation varied, especially among certain demographic groups. Those born after 1994 with only secondhand knowledge of the Genocide and those without a Genocide role-

situation as being Targeted, Helper, or Imprisoned were less likely than those who were directly involved in the Genocide to discuss personal or family happenings during the Genocide.

Third, most Jehovah's Witnesses did not use their personal or family Genocide experiences as points of discussion when sharing their beliefs with others in the public ministry. Although their personal experiences and perspectives might be relevant and perhaps compelling, only a few of those who were targeted during the Genocide (5.83%), helpers of those targeted (15.41%), or imprisoned for genocide crimes (16.30%) shared their Genocide experiences with individuals while in the ministry.

Table 6.5

Dialogue About Personal or Family Genocide Experiences by Generational Genocide Role-Situations

Group	In Immediate Family	In My Congregation	In the Ministry	In Counseling Program	With No One
	%	%	%	%	%
Targeted					
Genocide Generation Adults, About Self (*n* = 412)	75.00	50.97	5.83	16.50	3.88
Genocide Generation Minors, About Family (*n* = 600)	76.50	31.33	3.50	10.83	12.17
Post-Genocide Generation, About Family (*n* = 281)	30.25	22.42	3.20	4.27	43.06
Helper					
Genocide Generation Adults, About Self (*n* = 740)	72.30	48.38	15.41	5.95	9.59
Genocide Generation Minors, About Family (*n* = 706)	66.29	28.75	7.93	4.11	23.23
Post-Genocide Generation, About Family (*n* = 169)	20.12	15.38	3.55	2.96	62.72
Imprisoned					
Genocide Generation Adults, About Self (*n* = 92)	78.26	56.52	16.30	5.43	6.52
Genocide Generation Minors, About Family (*n* = 116)	61.21	27.59	6.90	6.90	23.28
Post-Genocide Generation, About Family (*n* = 40)	22.50	30.00	2.50	0.00	45.00

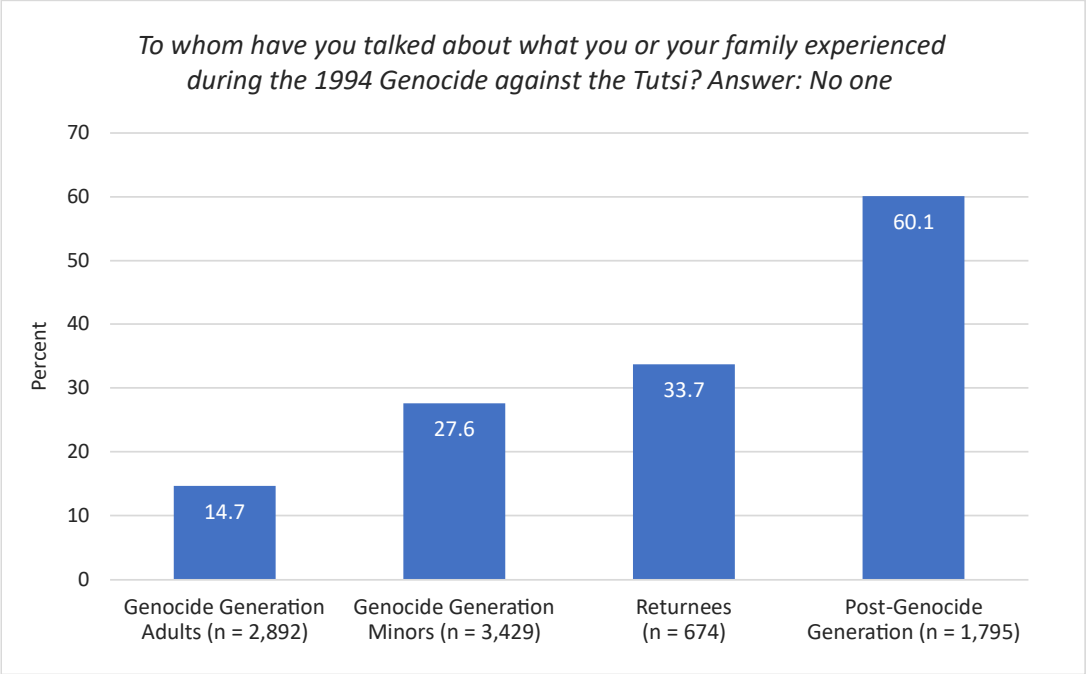
Table 6.5 (continued)

None (No Specific Genocide Role)					
Genocide Generation Adults, About Self (*n* = 216)	40.74	21.76	5.09	0.93	45.37
Genocide Generation Minors, About Family (*n* = 167)	42.51	16.77	2.40	0.60	47.31
Post-Genocide Generation, About Family (*n* = 32)	28.13	18.75	3.13	3.13	65.63

Almost one third of the sample (30.87%, *n* = 9,092) indicated that they had talked with no one about personal or family experiences during the Genocide against the Tutsi. Gender differences were minor, with 29.64% of males (*n* = 3,984) and 31.83% of females (*n* = 5,108) who had not talked about Genocide experiences. In contrast, a 45% difference existed between the oldest and youngest cohorts as shown in Figure 6.6. The generational divide may be related to developmental ages, but the numbers suggest understandable differences between those with the most personal experiences versus those with only family experiences. Based on findings shown in Figures 6.4 and 6.5, the approximately 40% of Post-Genocide Generation who had talked with someone about their family's Genocide experiences were not having these conversations with many different types of people. About 20% of Post-Genocide Generation had talked with other family members and nearly 20% had talked with someone in the congregation, compared with the 66% of Genocide Generation Adults who had talked with family and 44% who had talked with those in the congregation.

Figure 6.6

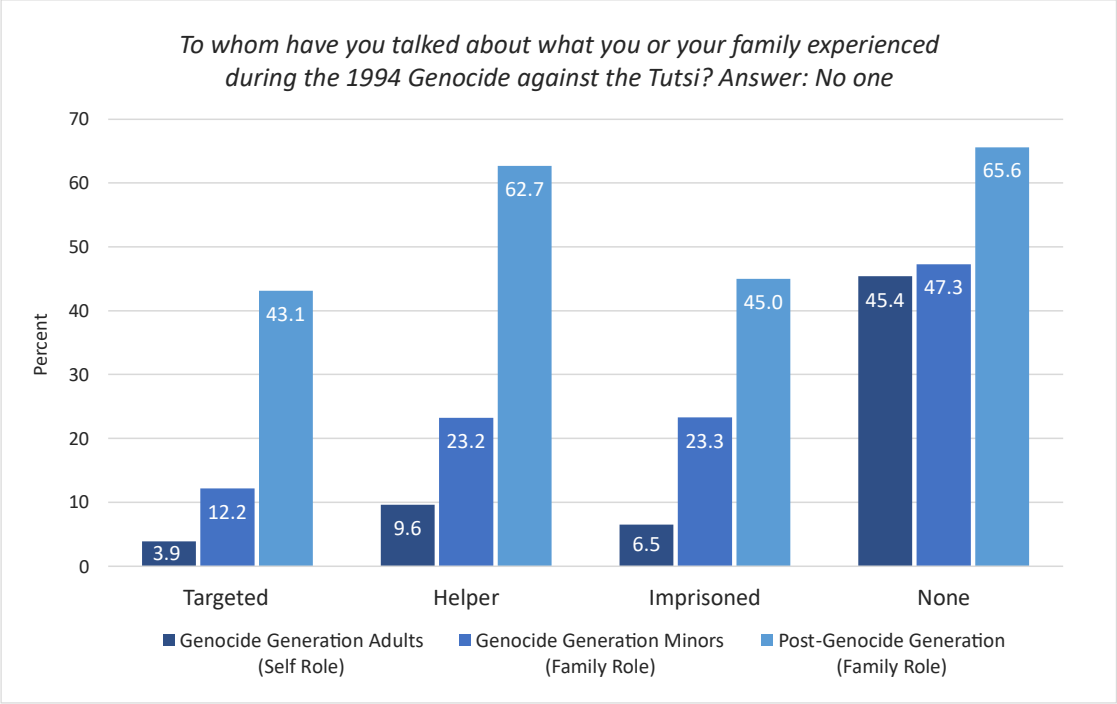
Dialogue With No One About Personal or Family Genocide Experiences by Generation



Percentages of those who had talked with no one about Genocide experiences varied between the distinct Genocide role-situations in the three generation cohorts. (See Figure 6.7.) Those most likely to have talked with no one about Genocide experiences (between 43.06% to 65.63%) were those without personal experiences (Post-Genocide Generation) or specific Genocide role-situations (labeled None). In contrast, less than 10% of the Genocide Generation Adults—whether labeled as Targeted, Helper, or Imprisoned—had not shared their personal experience with someone. Over 60% of Post-Genocide Generation who indicated that they had family who had helped those targeted also indicated that they had talked with no one about their family Genocide experience. Thus, family stories about being victims or perpetrators were more likely to be discussed with someone than were family stories about helping those targeted during the Genocide.

Figure 6.7

Dialogue With No One About Personal or Family Genocide Experiences by Genocide Role-Situations and Generation



Note. The four role-situations by generation are distinct groups with a different number for each. Genocide Generation Adults: Targeted, $n = 412$; Helper, $n = 740$; Imprisoned, $n = 92$; None, $n = 216$. Genocide Generation Minors: Targeted, $n = 600$; Helper, $n = 706$; Imprisoned, $n = 116$; None, $n = 167$. Post-Genocide Generation: Targeted, $n = 281$; Helper, $n = 169$; Imprisoned, $n = 40$; None, $n = 32$.

View of Conversations About Past Traumas and Genocide Experiences

To investigate the willingness on the part of older and younger Jehovah's Witnesses to have conversations about the Genocide and to explore the emotional and cognitive associations with conversations about the Genocide, the survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with 10 statements on a 5-point *agree-disagree* scale. The statements are grouped below under the five categories used for this report:

Learn, Respect

Young people can learn from their family's history—good and bad.

People should respect those who do not want to talk about difficult experiences.

Family Open to Talk

Older ones in my family are open to telling younger ones about their life experiences.

Young ones in my family are open to hearing about life experiences from older ones.

Painful, Moral Lessons

It is painful for me to hear about my family's experiences during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

My family has talked about moral lessons learned from the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Burden, Harm

Children should not be burdened with learning about others' traumatic experiences.

Talking about past traumas does more harm than good.

Tired, Angry

I am tired of hearing and talking about genocide.[2]

Talking about the Genocide against the Tutsi makes my family angry.

Figure 6.8 shows the results for the total sample for each item, with the percentages of those who selected the response options with the combined *disagree* and *strongly disagree* responses and combined *agree* and *strongly agree* responses. Most respondents believed people should respect those who do not want to talk about their traumatic experiences (86.02%) and that young ones can learn from their family's history, both good and bad (87.55%). Over three fourths thought that younger ones were open to hearing older ones' experiences (78.22%) and that older ones in their families were open to discussing their life experiences (79.33%). However, agreement responses to Genocide-specific statements were divided. Over half (55.01%) reported that it was

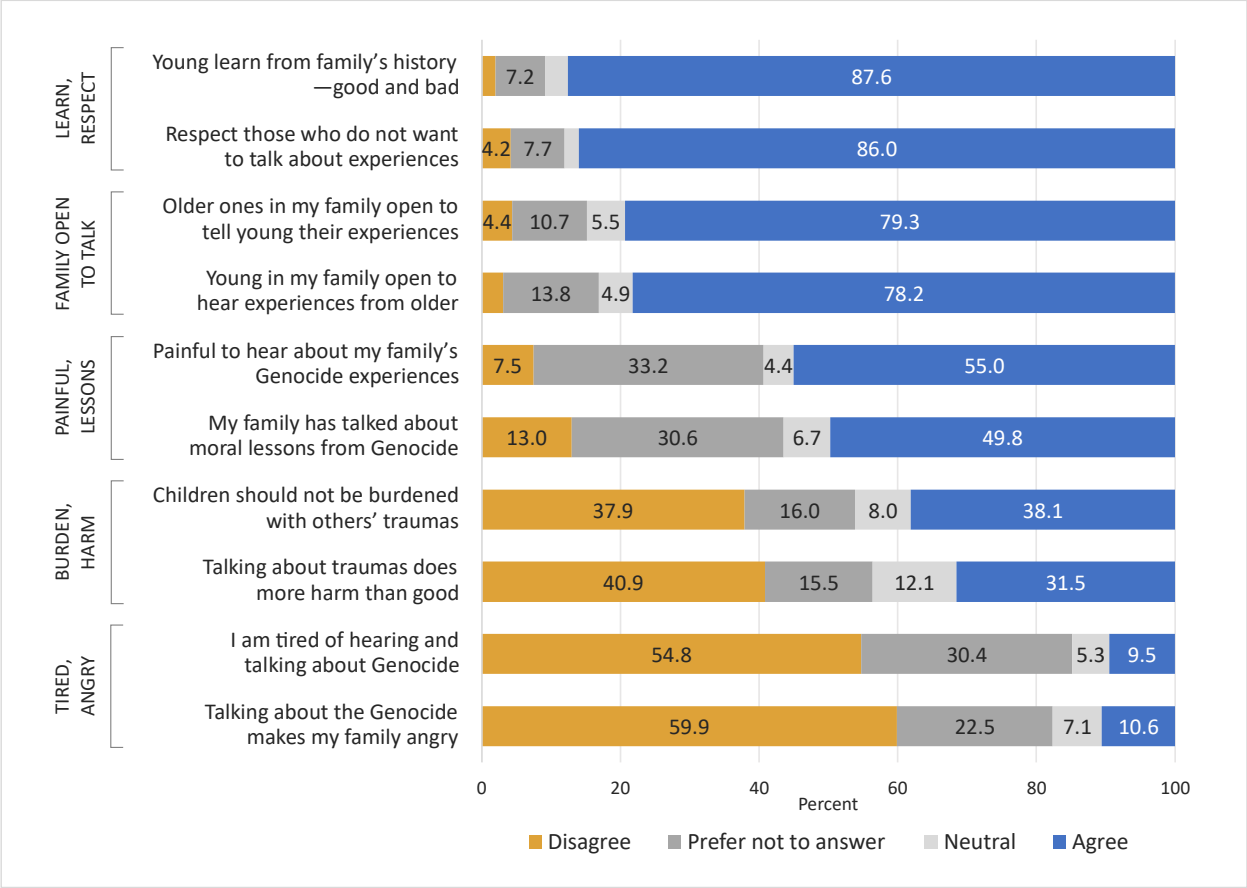
[2] The survey instrument used the word *genocide* in lower case in the statement, *I am tired of hearing and talking about genocide.* The intention was to broaden the meaning to genocides in general; however, given the historical and cultural context, it is likely that respondents in Rwanda would have in mind the Genocide against the Tutsi. Thus, in reporting and interpreting findings related to this survey item, no distinction in meaning is made.

painful to hear about their family's Genocide experiences. Half (49.75%) reported that their families had talked about moral lessons learned from the Genocide.

Findings show complex, nuanced views of respondents about intergenerational conversations regarding past trauma and the Genocide. For example, although the majority in the total sample were open to intergenerational sharing of trauma or Genocide experiences, 38.12% responded that children should not be burdened by others' traumas and 31.52% thought that talking about traumas did more harm than good. Although the majority disagreed with statements about being tired of Genocide talk (54.76%) or that it made their family angry (59.85%), about 10% of respondents agreed that they had these negative associations with talking about Genocide. Statements with high percentages of *prefer not to answer* responses suggested a degree of discomfort, especially for statements related to being painful (33.18%), having moral lessons (30.56%), tired of Genocide talk (30.41%), and making family angry (22.52%).

Figure 6.8

View of Intergenerational Conversations About Past Traumas and Genocide



Note. *N* = 13,587, total sample minus missing data.

Cognitive and Emotional Associations With Conversations About Trauma and Genocide. Further analysis focused on the statements that included an emotional or cognitive appraisal of conversations related to either past traumas or the Genocide. Table 6.6 gives a breakdown of percentages for the total sample and by gender and generation. The table includes the percentages of *agree* and *strongly agree* combined; given the relatively high percentage of *prefer not to answer* responses, these percentages are shown in parentheses. The *prefer not to answer* responses were around 30% for statements related to *painful*, *moral lessons*, and *tired of talking about Genocide* across both gender and generation subgroups.

The percentages of males and females were similar in how they viewed intergenerational conversations about Genocide or other traumatic events. However, a pattern of gender differences occurred on five items related to a negative emotion. In each case, slightly higher percentages of females to males agreed that (a) it was painful to hear family Genocide experiences (57.33% versus 52.05%), (b) talking did more harm than good (34.12% versus 28.24%), (c) children should not be burdened with others' traumas (39.97% versus 35.78%), (d) they were tired of hearing and talking about Genocide (10.94% versus 7.74%), and (e) talking about the Genocide made their family angry (11.90% versus 8.90%).

Responses across the four generational cohorts were similar—within a few percentage points for each item—with some notable exceptions. The percentages of those who reported that it was painful to hear about their family's Genocide experiences were similar for the Post-Genocide Generation (53.11%), Genocide Generation Minors (55.33%), and Returnees (53.35%), but slightly lower than Genocide Generation Adults (61.10%).

Over half (60.97%) of the Genocide Generation Adults, compared with 42.04% of the Post-Genocide Generation, indicated that their family talked about moral lessons from the Genocide. About one third of both the Genocide Generation Adults (39.11%) and Returnees (34.03%) thought that talking about Genocide did young people more harm than good, compared with about one fourth of the younger Genocide Generation Minors (29.39%) and Post-Genocide Generation (26.69%).

Table 6.6

Cognitive and Emotional Associations With Conversations About Trauma and Genocide by Gender and Generation

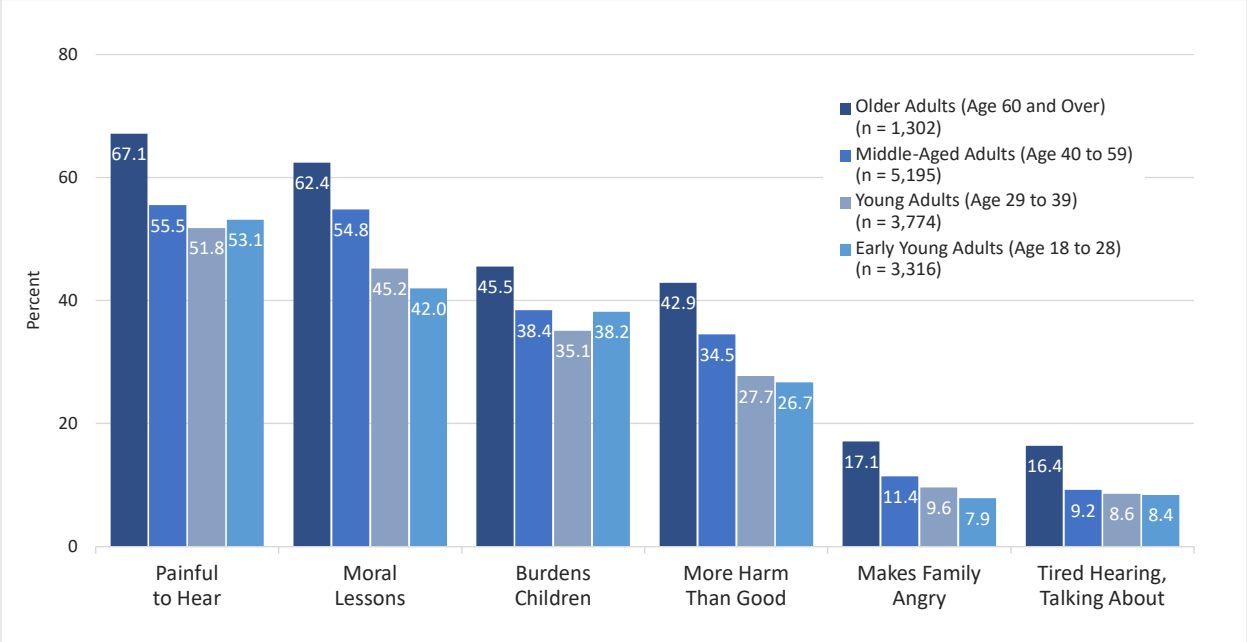
Group	Painful to Hear	Moral Lessons	Burdens Children	More Harm Than Good	Tired of Hearing, Talking	Makes Family Angry
	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)
Total Sample	55.00	49.75	38.12	31.52	9.52	10.58
(*n* = 13,587)	(33.18)	(30.56)	(15.95)	(15.51)	(30.41)	(22.52)
Gender						
Male (*n* = 5,998)	52.05	51.47	35.78	28.24	7.74	8.90
	(35.16)	(28.69)	(15.46)	(14.89)	(27.98)	(20.39)
Female (*n* = 7,589)	57.33	48.39	39.97	34.12	10.94	11.90
	(31.61)	(32.03)	(16.34)	(16.00)	(32.34)	(24.21)
Generation						
Genocide Generation	61.10	60.97	41.66	39.11	12.38	14.06
Adults (*n* = 3,733)	(29.36)	(25.56)	(14.95)	(15.27)	(28.69)	(20.89)
Genocide Generation	55.33	50.48	35.88	29.39	8.45	9.64
Minors (*n* = 4,780)	(33.39)	(29.54)	(14.69)	(14.48)	(29.29)	(20.63)
Returnees (*n* = 1,046)	53.35	45.89	40.82	34.03	9.37	13.67
	(33.37)	(33.08)	(16.54)	(15.39)	(33.08)	(23.52)
Post-Genocide	53.11	42.04	38.18	26.69	8.35	7.90
Generation (*n* = 3,316)	(31.48)	(30.82)	(13.63)	(12.39)	(26.99)	(21.14)

The findings revealed a consistent pattern between development age groups of emotional and cognitive associations with Genocide-related conversations. Figure 6.9 shows the percentage of agreement for each statement by age groups and contrasts the percentages between the oldest group (ages 60 and older) and the youngest group (ages 18 to 28). As previously discussed, for the total sample, over three fourths (79.33%) agreed that older ones in their family were open to telling younger ones about their life experiences. However, the older ones in the sample, aged 60 and older, were more likely to indicate that conversations about their family's Genocide experience were painful for them (67.13%) compared with early young adults, aged 18 to 28 (53.11%). Other differences related to age included much higher percentages for the oldest age group than the youngest age group associating moral lessons with conversations about the Genocide (62.37% and

42.04%, respectively). Older adults were more likely than early young adults to indicate a concern that conversations about the Genocide were a burden for children (45.47% versus 38.18%) and did more harm than good (42.86% versus 26.69%).

Figure 6.9

Cognitive and Emotional Associations With Conversations About Past Traumas and Genocide by Age Group



Data analysis investigated whether the length of time that respondents were baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses made a difference in percentages of emotional or cognitive associations with trauma or Genocide conversations. Overall, the respondents did not vary much in responses depending on how long they had been baptized, but slight percentage differences were noted. (See Table 6.7.) For example, those who were baptized Jehovah's Witnesses at the time of the 1994 Genocide had higher percentages who said it was painful to hear about their family's Genocide experiences (59.91%) and that their family had talked about moral lessons learned from the Genocide (54.77%). The findings suggest the gravity and moral difficulty of their situations during

the Genocide against the Tutsi. Percentage differences narrowed when PNA responses were considered, as in the case of those who indicated they were tired of hearing and talking about Genocide or those who thought that children should not be burdened with learning about others' trauma experiences.

Table 6.7

Cognitive and Emotional Associations With Trauma or Genocide Conversations by Years as Baptized Jehovah's Witnesses

Years as Baptized Jehovah's Witnesses	Painful	Moral Lessons	Burdens Children	More Harm Than Good	Tired of Hearing, Talking	Makes Family Angry
	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)
29 or More Years, Baptized in or Before 1994 (*n* = 661)	**59.91** (31.92)	**54.77** (31.47)	39.18 (18.15)	32.07 (17.55)	8.47 (34.49)	9.23 (24.51)
19 to 28 Years, Baptized From 1995 to 2004 (*n* = 3,239)	55.42 (35.35)	51.25 (32.11)	36.37 (17.66)	31.12 (16.92)	8.92 (32.23)	10.37 (23.28)
9 to 18 Years, Baptized From 2005 to 2014 (*n* = 5,288)	53.48 (33.70)	48.49 (30.98)	37.33 (15.90)	30.81 (15.34)	9.91 (30.52)	10.23 (22.66)
4 to 8 Years, Baptized From 2015 to 2019 (*n* = 3,313)	55.18 (32.57)	49.56 (29.67)	39.09 (14.82)	31.90 (14.79)	9.21 (29.10)	10.78 (22.31)
3 or Fewer Years, Baptized in or After 2020 (*n* = 1,086)	57.64 (26.80)	48.90 (26.06)	43.55 (13.17)	34.71 (13.08)	11.05 (25.97)	13.08 (19.06)

Note. Bolded numbers highlight noteworthy percentages.

Conversations About Genocide and Trauma—Perspective by Generation and Genocide Role-Situations

The large data set allowed the investigation of emotional and cognitive associations with trauma and Genocide-related conversations based on Genocide role-situation for the generation cohorts. As explained above, the four distinct Genocide role-situation groups (Targeted, Helper, Imprisoned, and None) were separated by the three generation cohorts (Genocide Generation Adults, Genocide Generation Minors, and Post-Genocide Generation). For purposes of the analysis below, the group labeled None was composed of those who indicated that they did not have role-situations of the Targeted, Helper, or Imprisoned, and thus served as a useful comparison group.

Percentages tended to be similar within the distinct role-situation categories across generation cohorts. Table 6.8 gives the percentages of *agree* and *prefer not to answer* responses for selected items related to emotional and cognitive associations with conversations about Genocide experiences. The highest percentage for any of the statements was for the targeted Genocide Generation Adults (88.31%) who indicated that hearing about Genocide family experiences was painful. The targeted Genocide Generation Adults also had the highest percentage to say they were *tired of hearing and talking about genocide* (21.12%) or that *talking about the Genocide makes [their] family angry* (19.55%).

Genocide Generation Adults who were previously imprisoned for genocide crimes had the highest percentages of respondents who agreed with the following: that their family had talked about moral lessons learned from the Genocide (75.47%), that children should not be burdened with learning about others' traumatic experiences (45.28%), and that talking about past traumas does more harm than good (43.40%). Targeted Genocide Generation Adults and Post-Genocide Generation with imprisoned family had higher percentages than other groups who reported that

talk about the Genocide made their family angry (19.55% and 18.52%, respectively). Curiously, a lower percentage of the Post-Genocide Generation with family who were imprisoned for genocide crimes (31.48%) thought that learning about the past traumas was a burden for young people.

Table 6.8

Cognitive and Emotional Associations With Trauma or Genocide Conversations by Genocide Role-Situations and Generation

Genocide Role-Situation by Generation	Painful	Moral Lessons	Burdens Children	More Harm Than Good	Tired of Talking, Hearing	Makes Family Angry
	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)	% Agree (% PNA)
Targeted						
Genocide Generation Adults, About Self (*n* = 445)	**88.31** (7.87)	62.92 (21.80)	42.02 (11.01)	41.12 (10.11)	**21.12** (20.00)	**19.55** (14.61)
Genocide Generation Minors, About Family (*n* = 666)	86.04 (8.41)	57.96 (22.22)	33.93 (10.81)	29.73 (9.31)	11.41 (17.27)	10.96 (13.51)
Post-Genocide Generation, About Family (*n* = 369)	88.08 (3.79)	55.01 (14.63)	37.13 (6.50)	23.58 (4.61)	11.92 (8.94)	11.38 (7.32)
Helper						
Genocide Generation Adults, About Self (*n* = 901)	66.59 (24.20)	66.37 (18.87)	44.06 (12.43)	39.73 (11.54)	13.65 (25.42)	15.21 (16.43)
Genocide Generation Minors, About Family (*n* = 899)	58.62 (29.70)	56.28 (22.91)	36.15 (10.12)	28.92 (10.34)	8.90 (22.58)	9.12 (15.13)
Post-Genocide Generation, About Family (*n* = 261)	62.07 (18.39)	59.00 (13.79)	40.23 (6.51)	24.52 (4.98)	7.66 (14.18)	6.51 (7.66)
Imprisoned						
Genocide Generation Adults, About Self (*n* = 106)	70.75 (19.81)	75.47 (15.09)	45.28 (14.15)	43.40 (15.09)	16.04 (16.98)	12.26 (10.38)
Genocide Generation Minors, About Family (*n* = 157)	66.24 (23.57)	51.59 (21.02)	42.68 (11.46)	35.67 (12.74)	8.92 (21.66)	12.74 (15.29)
Post-Genocide Generation, About Family (*n* = 54)	72.22 (11.11)	42.59 (24.07)	31.48 (11.11)	27.78 (7.41)	3.70 (12.96)	**18.52** (9.26)

Table 6.8 (continued)

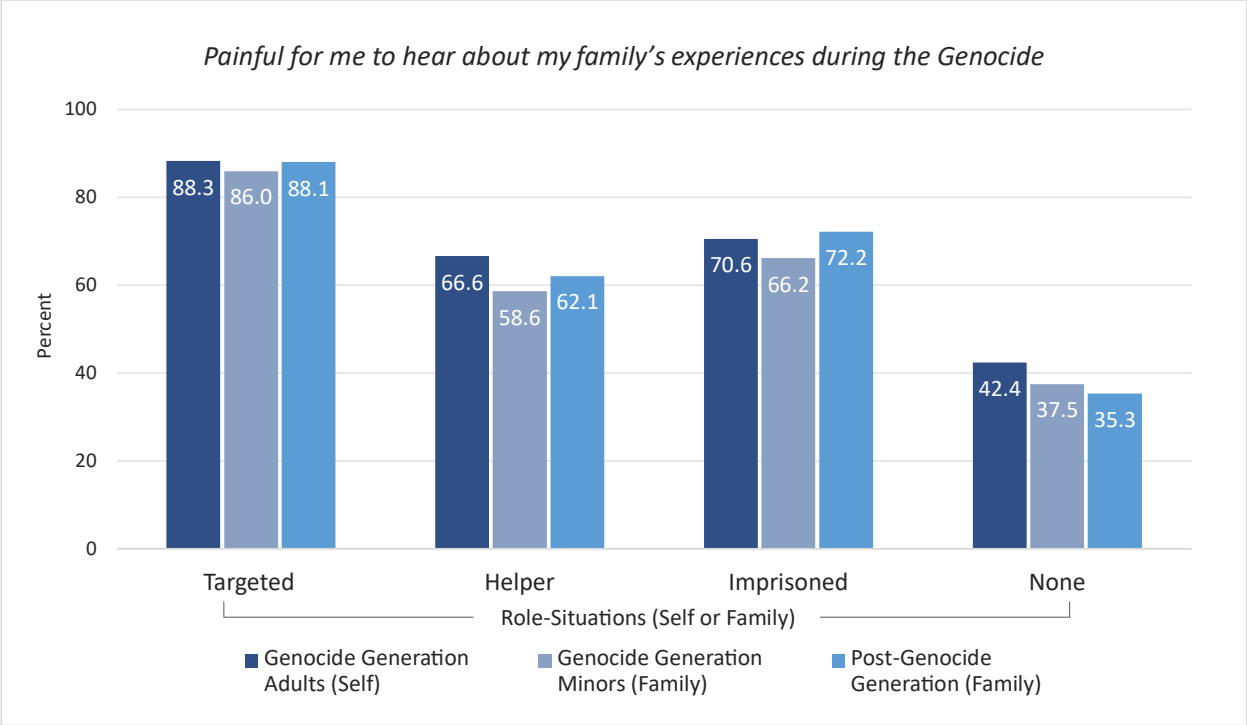
None (With No Specific Genocide Role-Situation)						
Genocide Generation Adults, About Self (*n* = 314)	42.36 (40.45)	47.13 (32.17)	41.72 (14.97)	39.49 (15.61)	8.28 (34.08)	9.87 (24.20)
Genocide Generation Minors, About Family (*n* = 235)	37.45 (39.15)	43.40 (27.23)	38.30 (13.19)	32.77 (15.74)	9.79 (25.96)	8.94 (17.02)
Post-Genocide Generation, About Family (*n* = 51)	35.29 (39.22)	43.14 (25.49)	45.10 (9.80)	21.57 (9.80)	11.76 (19.61)	1.96 (11.76)

Note. Bolded numbers highlight noteworthy percentages.

To better understand the generational patterns, analysis focused on responses to the statement: *It is painful for me to hear about my family's experience during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi*. The survey data could not reveal intergenerational patterns based on dyadic generational relationships within family units but could examine aggregate patterns for the distinct role-situation groups across generations. (See Figure 6.10.) For example, the percentage of those targeted who indicated it was painful to hear about their family's Genocide experiences was similar for the three comparison groups: Genocide Generation Adults (88.31%) who self-identified as being targeted compared with Genocide Generation Minors (86.04%) and Post-Genocide Generation (88.08%) who indicated that their family was targeted. The percentages of those who were in the distinct Helper group across the three generations ranged from 58.62% to 66.59% compared with the Imprisoned group with a range from 66.24% to 72.22%. In contrast, the percentages for the None group—those who did not fall into any of the Genocide role-situations—ranged from 35.29% to 42.36% for those who reported that hearing about their family's Genocide experiences was painful.

Figure 6.10

"Painful to Hear About Family Genocide Experiences" by Distinct Role-Situations Across Generations



Note. Genocide role-situations for each generation were distinct, not overlapping, groups. The *n* value for each of the 12 distinct groups was as follows: (a) Genocide Generation Adults: Targeted, *n* = 445; Helper, *n* = 901; Imprisoned, *n* = 106; None, *n* = 314; (b) Genocide Generation Minors: Targeted, *n* = 666; Helper, *n* = 899; Imprisoned, *n* = 157; None, *n* = 235; and (c) Post-Genocide Generation: Targeted, *n* = 369; Helper, *n* = 261; Imprisoned, *n* = 54; None, *n* = 51. PNA responses were not removed from the calculation of percentages.

Statistical analysis of mean scores was conducted for the single item *painful to hear about family Genocide experiences*. Table 6.9 gives the breakdown of mean scores for the four role-situations within each of the three generations on the *disagree-agree* scale of 1 to 5. Results from ANOVA with post hoc Bonferroni analysis and eta-squared for effect size found meaningfully significant differences in the *painful to hear* mean scores between role-situations within all generations. Results show a consistent pattern for role-situations across generations. The distinct None group of those who reported having no role-situation had the lowest *painful* mean score and was significantly different from all other Genocide-specific role-situations across all generations.

Those who were targeted or had family targeted had the highest *painful* mean scores compared with other role-situations. Although the pattern was similar, the *painful* scores for all distinct role-situations experienced by the Genocide Generation Adults were higher than those reported by Genocide Generation Minors and Post-Genocide Generation based on their family's role-situations, with one exception. Post-Genocide Generation who had family who were imprisoned had slightly higher *painful* scores than did the Genocide Generation Adults who had been imprisoned. However, across all generations, the *painful* scores for the Imprisoned group were not significantly higher than for Helpers.

The results show that (a) role-situations during the Genocide against the Tutsi affected the degree to which individuals felt it was painful to hear about family experiences during the Genocide, and (b) across generations, both percentages and mean scores were similar within each of the role-situation groups, indicating a strong intergenerational pattern.

Table 6.9

"Painful to Hear About Family Genocide Experiences" Mean Scores by Distinct Role-Situation and Generation

Distinct Role-Situation by Generation	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Significance
Genocide Generation Adults (About Self)				
Targeted	264	4.40	0.68	
Helper	471	4.03	0.91	$p < .001$;
Imprisoned	64	4.03	0.99	$\eta^2 = .08$
None	133	3.54	1.22	
Genocide Generation Minors (About Family)				
Targeted	415	4.32	0.74	
Helper	465	3.93	0.94	$p < .001$;
Imprisoned	88	4.10	0.80	$\eta^2 = .09$
None	98	3.36	1.30	
Post-Genocide Generation (About Family)				
Targeted	267	4.38	0.74	
Helper	172	3.87	1.05	$p < .001$;
Imprisoned	30	4.13	0.90	$\eta^2 = .103$
None	29	3.38	1.08	

Note. ANOVAs with post hoc Bonferroni test and eta-squared for effect size were used with a meaningfully significant difference as $p < .05$ and $\eta^2 > .01$. To calculate mean scores, PNA responses were removed.

The findings have implications for families, congregations, and mental health providers making decisions about whether to uniformly encourage discussion about the Genocide. The findings provide insights as to who might be most open to discussions and who might most benefit from discussions within trusted, close relationships.

Family Life

The previous section of this report showed how household types and composition changed between 1 month before and 1 month after the Genocide. (See Section 5, Figures 5.7 to 5.12.) This section looks at the household composition within the Jehovah's Witness community at the time of the survey (2023) and how individuals viewed support and communication within their families.

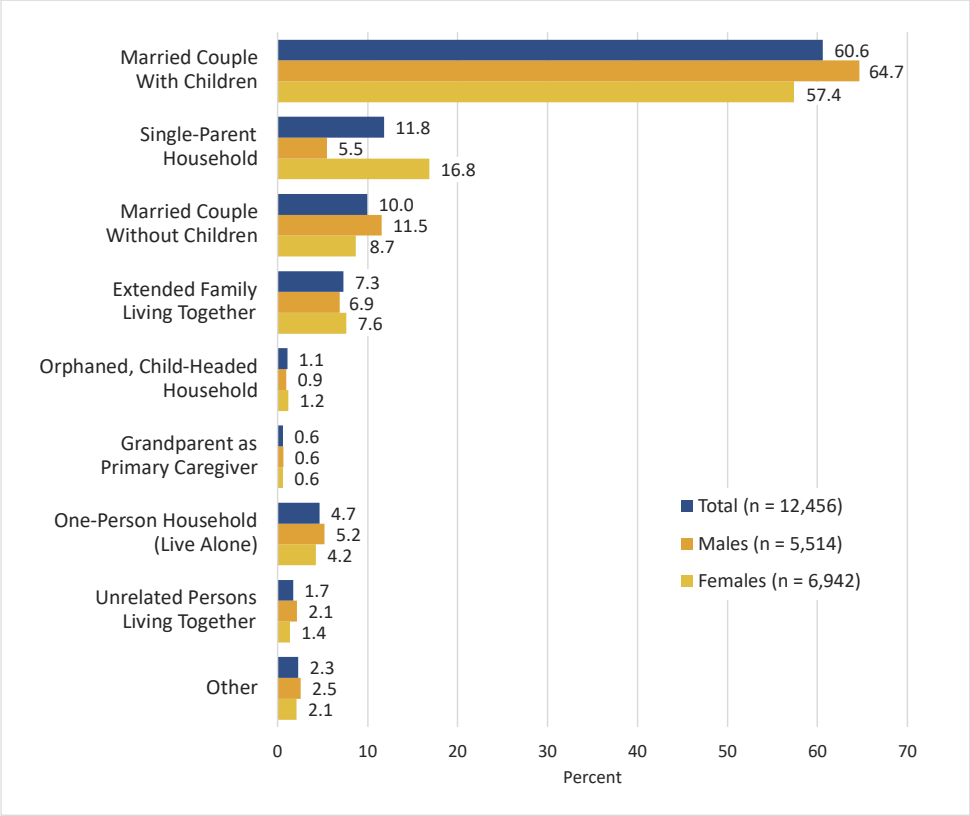
Household composition was only one of several factors used to explore possible effects on family satisfaction of Jehovah's Witnesses in post-Genocide Rwanda. Statistical analysis examined multiple demographic, religious, and genocide factors.

Household Composition

Genocide uprooted family units and required males and females, young and old, to define for themselves new roles in reconfigured units to accomplish daily functioning. Figure 6.11 shows the types of households within the Jehovah's Witness community nearly 30 years after the Genocide. The majority (60.61%) of the sample lived in households with married couples and children, higher for males (64.65%) than for females (57.40%). A little over one tenth (11.81%) were single parents. A sizable proportion were in households without traditional mother-father and husband-wife configurations, particularly for females. For example, females were more likely to be in single-parent households (16.84%) than were males (5.48%). For the total study population, 7.31% of individuals were in households composed of extended family members living together. In total, over one tenth (10.32%) of the Witnesses were in other nonnuclear household types, including households consisting of one person living alone, orphaned or child-headed, grandparents as primary caregivers, unrelated persons living together, or other types of households.

Figure 6.11

Household Type for the Total Sample and by Gender



Note. Percentages were calculated minus PNA responses and missing data.

Figure 6.12 shows household type by generation cohort. The effects of the Genocide and the recovery were seen in the shifts in percentages for the generational groups of Jehovah's Witnesses, particularly evident in the percentages for married couples with children. Under two thirds of the Genocide Generation Adults were in households composed of married couples with children (61.28%) compared with over two thirds (67.90%) of Returnees who were outside Rwanda during the Genocide. The best indicator of the gradual normalizing of family life was the almost three fourths of Genocide Generation Minors (72.56%) in households consisting of married couples with children. Compared with other generation groups, Genocide Generation Minors were the least likely to be in single-parent households (5.80%) or in extended families living together (3.22%) and most likely to be married without children (11.63%).

However, other cultural trends not related to Genocide may be influencing the delay in marriage and childbearing for the Post-Genocide Generation. The below-age-30 Post-Genocide Generation were the least likely to be in married-with-children households (34.29%). Over one fifth of Post-Genocide Generation (22.08%) indicated that their household type was best categorized as extended family living together. Post-Genocide Generation respondents in single-parent households (14.19%) followed Genocide Generation Adults (18.30%), with a proportion of the Genocide Generation Adults and Post-Genocide Generation respondents in single-parent households, possibly being in the same households. Post-Genocide Generation had the highest percentage of persons living alone (6.18%), followed by Genocide Generation Adults (5.86%).

Figure 6.12

Household Type by Generation

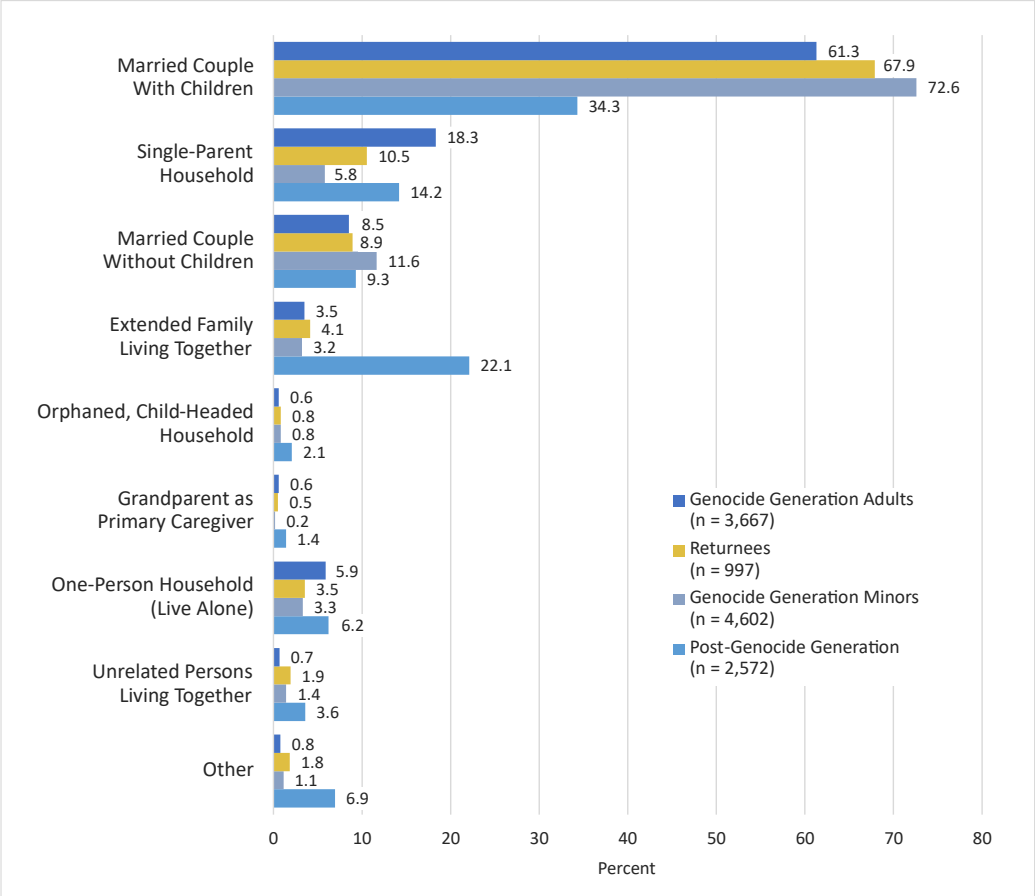
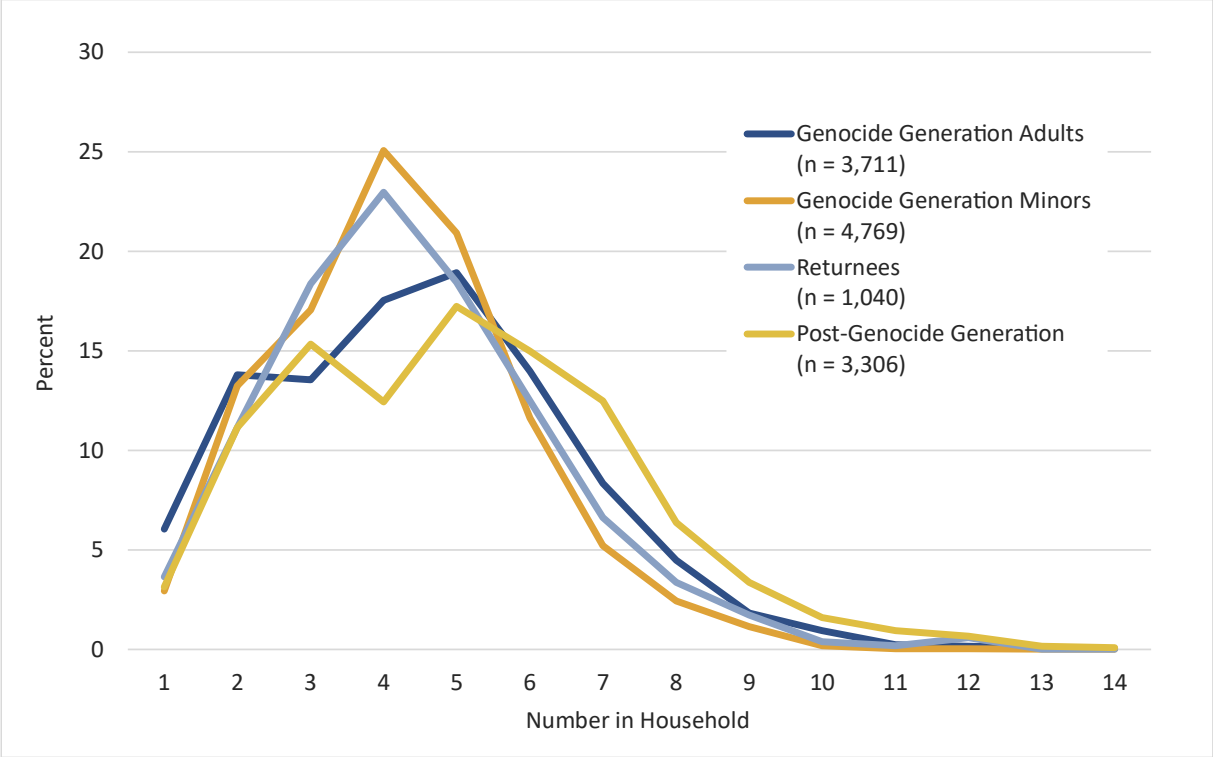


Figure 6.13 graphs household size by generational cohort. The aggregate snapshot of household size does not capture the various reconfigurations of households following the Genocide against the Tutsi. The gradual stabilizing of household structures is suggested by the household size of Genocide Generation Minors who entered young adulthood after 1994 and would have begun forming their own family units over the next 30 years post-Genocide. Compared with the other generation cohorts, their household size was more concentrated in the range of three to five members.

Figure 6.13

Household Size by Generation



Family Satisfaction

The JW-RWA survey included a Family Satisfaction scale that consists of 10 items related to cohesion, flexibility, and communication in the family (Olson & Barnes, 2010). Examples of items are as follows: *the degree of closeness between family members*, *your family's ability to*

resolve conflicts, and *your family's ability to cope with stress*. Respondents rated how satisfied they were with the items, from 1 to 5 for *very dissatisfied*, *somewhat dissatisfied*, *generally satisfied*, *very satisfied*, and *extremely satisfied*. Cumulative scores ranging from 10 to 50 measured overall family satisfaction.

Without comparable measures or study populations, direct comparisons of family satisfaction for the sample population cannot be made with Rwanda's general population or with Western populations unmarred by recent genocide history. However, the large data set from the nationwide sample allowed an investigation of multiple variables associated with family satisfaction within the Jehovah's Witness community.

For each of the 10 items in the family satisfaction measure, the percentage of respondents (n = 13,581) who indicated that they were either *generally*, *very*, or *extremely satisfied* for nine of the 10 items separately ranged from the high of 94.45% to 83.52%, with the exception of one item with a percentage of 68.48% satisfaction for *fairness of criticism*. For individual items in the three family satisfaction dimensions, the total percentages of the three combined *satisfied* response options were as follows: (a) Satisfaction with family cohesion was 94.45% for *degree of closeness* and 89.32% for *concern for each other*, (b) satisfaction with family flexibility was 89.31% for *ability to resolve conflicts* and 83.52% for *ability to cope with stress*, and (c) satisfaction with family communication was 92.01% for *quality of communication* and 68.48% for *fairness of criticism*.

Multiple, independent variables were used to explore group differences in family satisfaction. The findings based on the mean of total family satisfaction scores were organized under four categories: (a) demographic factors (gender, age group, marital status, and health status), (b) household characteristics (household type, size, and age groups of minors), (c) religious

factors (families with JW and non-JW spouses and adult children, and years as JWs), and (d) Genocide factors (Genocide generation cohorts and Genocide role-situations). Findings related to the four categories were separated into four corresponding tables shown below that list the mean, standard deviation, and significance levels based on results from appropriate *t*-tests, ANOVAs, and Bonferroni post hoc tests. Together the analysis offers insights into how multiple factors may influence family life. The mean score (35.27) and standard deviation (7.14) for the total sample serve as a comparison with various subgroups.

Family Satisfaction and Demographic Factors. Table 6.10 shows the breakdown of family satisfaction mean scores for demographic factors. As discussed in the literature review, empirical research suggests gender differences in family satisfaction over the family life cycle. How Rwandan men and women viewed their present family life may be influenced by attitudes and actions during the Genocide against the Tutsi. For the JW sample, both men and women expressed similar satisfaction with family life, with no statistically significant difference in mean scores for males and females (males, $M = 35.94$; females, $M = 34.75$).

Similarly, no significant difference in mean scores was found between age groups. Consistent with generational stake theory and the developmental need for individuation and generational separation during the emerging and young adulthood years, the youngest adult group in the study population had the lowest family satisfaction mean score (34.76) of the four age groups.

One fourth (25.91%) of the JW adults were never married and two thirds (66.24%) were married. (Within the religious community, Jehovah's Witnesses do not recognize polygamous marriages or extramarital, cohabitating relationships.) Of those formerly married, 5.24% were widowed, and only 0.96% were separated and 1.65% were divorced. Married Witnesses had the

highest family satisfaction (M = 36.04) and least variation (SD = 6.80) compared with unmarried groups.

Of the demographic characteristics, family satisfaction varied with self-reported health status. For the total sample, those with better health reported higher family satisfaction. Based on health status, family satisfaction scores for the total sample and for older adults were similar. However, the proportion of older adults reporting poor to fair health (61.59%) was higher than that for the total population (47.48%). Compared with young adults and middle-aged adults, the lower family satisfaction of older adults was likely a factor of their poorer health status.

Table 6.10

Family Satisfaction and Demographic Factors

Demographic Factors	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Significance
Total Sample	13,581	35.27	7.14	-
Gender				
Male	5,992	35.94	6.63	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .0069$ (*ns*)
Female	7,589	34.75	7.49	
Age Group				
Early Young Adults (Age 18 to 28)	3,316	34.76	7.29	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .0057$ (*ns*)
Young Adults (Age 29 to 39)	3,774	36.11	6.99	
Middle-Aged Adults (Age 40 to 59)	5,191	35.1	7.07	
Older Adults (Age 60 and Over)	1,300	34.83	7.30	
Marital Status				
Single (Never Married) (25.91%)	3,440	33.89	7.50	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .022$
Married (66.24%)	8,795	36.04	6.80	
Separated (0.96%)	127	32.63	8.76	
Divorced (1.65%)	219	33.37	8.26	
Widowed (5.24%)	696	33.87	7.28	

Table 6.10 (continued)

Health Status, Total Sample				
Poor	536	29.88	8.99	
Fair	5,801	33.47	7.1	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .11$
Good	4,851	36.34	6.14	
Very Good or Excellent	2,160	39.22	6.25	
Health Status, Older Adults (Age 60 and Over)				
Poor	123	30.17	9.27	
Fair	658	33.99	7.22	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .077$
Good	364	36.90	5.68	
Very Good or Excellent	123	37.70	6.12	

Family Satisfaction and Household Characteristics. Consistent with findings on marital status showing married individuals having significantly higher family satisfaction, of the eight household types, those consisting of married couples without children had the highest family satisfaction score ($M = 38.45$), followed by married couples with children ($M = 35.57$). (See Table 6.11.) As household size increased, family satisfaction score declined, particularly in households with seven or more persons. Larger households require more interactions to negotiate how space, time, and resources are used to accommodate diverse needs.

The addition of children and their developmental changes can challenge the three components that make up family satisfaction—cohesion, flexibility, and communication. For example, changes in marital relationships come with having a newborn or toddler (e.g., husbands/fathers devoting more time to work, wives/mothers devoting more time to childcare). Additionally, family studies consistently show that marital satisfaction reaches a low point in the family life cycle when children in the household become teenagers (e.g., Cui & Donnellan, 2009; Olson et al., 1983). In the current study, statistical analysis examined differences in family satisfaction for households with and without minor children—toddlers under age 3, young children aged 3 to 12, and teenagers aged 13 to 17.

For the JW sample in Rwanda, family satisfaction was slightly higher for households with toddlers (M = 35.58) and slightly lower with teenagers (M = 34.62). However, differences in mean scores were slight, variation based on standard deviation was consistent, and no significant differences were found in family satisfaction in households with or without children in any of the three age groups. From a family systems perspective, that there were no significant differences in family satisfaction for households with minors would be an indication of the cohesion, flexibility, and communication of interconnected members—both parents and children—contributing to the overall functioning of the family unit.

Table 6.11

Family Satisfaction by Household Characteristics

Household Characteristics	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Significance
Type of Household				
One-Person, Live Alone	580	33.25	8.26	
Married Couple Without Children	1,239	38.45	6.48	
Married Couple With Children	7,547	35.57	6.90	
Single-Parent Household	1,470	33.77	7.17	
Orphaned, Child-Headed Household	134	33.34	7.24	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .033$
Grandparent, Primary Caregiver	74	34.00	6.87	
Extended Family Household	909	34.73	7.24	
Unrelated Living Together	211	34.36	6.74	
Other	285	33.35	7.67	
Household Size				
1 to 2 Persons	2,251	36.33	7.48	
3 to 4 Persons	4,833	35.80	6.78	$p < .001$;
5 to 6 Persons	4,347	34.84	7.10	$\eta^2 = .01$
7 or More Persons	2,097	33.86	7.36	

Table 6.11 (continued)

Household With and Without Minor Children by Age Group				
Toddlers Under Age 3 (at Least One)	2,303	35.58	6.89	$p = .025$; $\eta^2 = .00037$
No Toddlers	11,276	35.21	7.19	(*ns*)
Young Children Age 3 to 12 (at Least One)	5,310	35.29	6.91	$p = .81$; $\eta^2 = .0000043$
No Young Children	8,269	35.26	7.29	(*ns*)
Teenagers Age 13 to 17 (at Least One)	4,470	34.62	7.26	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .004$
No Teenagers	9,109	35.59	7.06	(*ns*)

Family Satisfaction and Religious Factors. Shared religious beliefs and practices can unite families during difficult times as well as in routine daily living. Conversely, religiously divided households can experience strained relationships, owing to differences in theological viewpoints or departures from long-held religious traditions. To better understand how religion might affect family satisfaction, two religious factors were analyzed: the presence of JW and non-JW relatives in the household and the length of time respondents had been baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses.

Table 6.12 shows the breakdown of family satisfaction and religious factors. Households in which all adults were Jehovah's Witnesses had significantly higher family satisfaction scores ($M = 37.03$) than households where some adult members were not Jehovah's Witnesses ($M = 33.50$). This was consistent with the statistically different scores for those married with JW spouses ($M = 37.09$) and with non-JW spouses ($M = 33.28$). Further breakdown by marital relationships showed that husbands with JW wives had the highest family satisfaction score and the least variation within the group ($M = 37.28$, $SD = 5.84$), while wives with non-JW husbands had the lowest score and most variation within the group ($M = 32.59$, $SD = 8.23$).

Three types of parent-child dyadic relations were considered: (a) respondents whose parents were or were not JWs at birth, (b) respondents whose parents were or were not currently

JWs, and (c) older parents whose adult children were or were not JWs. In all three cases, family satisfaction scores were slightly higher, but not statistically different, if respondents had a parent or adult child who were also JWs. Religious similarities or differences between adult children and parents did not alter family satisfaction scores.

Analysis also tested group differences depending on the length of time as Jehovah's Witnesses. A general trend but no statistical differences were found. Those who were baptized JWs for 3 or less years had slightly lower family satisfaction scores ($M = 34.25$), and those who were JWs for 19 to 28 years had slightly higher scores ($M = 35.79$). Those baptized the longest—in or before 1994—reversed the upward pattern somewhat ($M = 35.21$), with likely confounding effects of health status. The findings showed little difference in family satisfaction for those recently baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses or for those who had remained Jehovah's Witnesses for long periods of time.

Table 6.12

Family Satisfaction and Religious Factors

Religious Factors	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Significance
JW Adults in Household				
All Adults Are JWs	6,754	37.03	6.34	$p < .001$;
Not All Adults Are JWs	6,544	33.50	7.47	$\eta^2 = .061$
JW or Non-JW Spouse				
Married to JW Spouse	6,124	37.09	6.18	$p < .001$;
Married to Non-JW Spouse	2,523	33.28	7.81	$\eta^2 = .063$
Husband With JW Wife	3,295	37.28	5.84	
Husband With Non-JW Wife	832	34.69	6.69	$p < .001$;
Wife With JW Husband	2,829	36.86	6.55	$\eta^2 = .069$
Wife With Non-JW Husband	1,691	32.59	8.23	
With and Without JW Parents at Birth				
With No JW Parent at Birth	11,759	35.21	7.18	$p = .0078$;
With at Least One JW Parent at Birth	1,822	35.69	6.89	$\eta^2 = .00052$ (*ns*)

Table 6.12 (continued)

Adult Child With JW and Non-JW Parent (Currently)				
With JW Parent (Currently at Least One)	4,317	35.49	7.03	p = .03; η^2 = .0003 (*ns*)
With Non-JW Parents	8,967	35.20	7.18	
Older Adult Parents (Age 60 or Over) With JW and Non-JW Adult Child				
Older Adult Parents With JW Adult Child	753	35.38	7.14	p = .011; η^2 = .0051 (*ns*)
Older Adult Parent With Non-JW Adult Child	515	34.33	7.30	
Time as Jehovah's Witnesses (Year of Baptism)				
3 or Less Years (in or After 2020)	1,086	34.25	7.27	p < .001; η^2 = .0037 (*ns*)
4 to 8 Years (2015 to 2019)	3,310	34.90	7.14	
9 to 18 Years (2005 to 2014)	5,285	35.40	7.15	
19 to 28 Years (1995 to 2004)	3,239	35.79	6.98	
29 or More Years (in or Before 1994)	661	35.21	7.48	

Family Satisfaction and Genocide Factors. Findings about painful Genocide memories and family satisfaction initially seemed to contradict one another. Results on attitudes about conversations about personal and family Genocide experiences showed the degree to which respondents agreed that it was painful to hear about their family's Genocide experiences. Statistically significant differences were found between the Genocide role-situations for all generations, with those Targeted having the highest indicators of pain. Findings based on both percentages and mean scores showed that emotional degrees of pain based on Genocide role-situations were consistent across generations. (See Figure 6.10 and Table 6.8.)

However, no statistically significant differences were found between family satisfaction and the generation cohort or Genocide role-situation. (See Table 6.13 below.) The higher standard deviations for some groups indicate greater variation in responses, particularly for Genocide Generation Adults who were targeted (*SD* = 7.70) and for those who were imprisoned for genocide

crimes (*SD* = 8.15). On average though, neither the generation cohort nor the Genocide role-situation had a significant or negative effect on the family satisfaction for the study population.

Table 6.13

Family Satisfaction by Generation and Distinct Role-Situations

Generation	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Significance
Generation (Total)				
Genocide Generation Adults	3,729	34.97	7.23	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .0046$ (*ns*)
Genocide Generation Minors	4,780	35.89	6.96	
Returnees	1,046	35.30	7.06	
Post-Genocide Generation	3,316	34.76	7.29	
Genocide Generation Adults—Personal Genocide Situation				
Targeted to Be Killed	445	34.65	7.70	$p = .108$; $\eta^2 = .003$ (*ns*)
Helped Those Targeted	901	35.51	7.29	
Imprisoned for Genocide	105	35.68	8.15	
None	314	34.67	6.95	
Genocide Generation Minors—Family's Genocide Situation				
Targeted to Be Killed	666	36.39	7.53	$p = .276$; $\eta^2 = .002$ (*ns*)
Helped Those Targeted	899	36.17	6.90	
Imprisoned for Genocide	157	35.34	6.97	
None	235	35.67	6.60	
Post-Genocide Generation—Family's Genocide Situation				
Targeted to Be Killed	369	33.99	7.43	$p = .187$; $\eta^2 = .007$ (*ns*)
Helped Those Targeted	261	35.26	6.90	
Imprisoned for Genocide	54	34.52	7.39	
None	51	34.55	6.72	

Though seeming to be contradictions, these findings are consistent with social-ecological and family systems theories of how individuals manage competing cognitive and emotional factors that are common in relationships. The circumstances and feelings of individual family members affect the family unit individually and collectively. Many Rwandan Jehovah's Witnesses acknowledged personal feelings of pain associated with hearing about past Genocide experiences of family members. However, cognitive processes place the emotional pain in the contextual situation—their family lived through the Genocide against the Tutsi. The research findings show

that for many respondents, painful emotions and positive appraisal of family life coexist. Thus, despite past traumas, personal failings, and ongoing challenges, most Jehovah's Witnesses in post-Genocide Rwanda reported being generally satisfied with their family's cohesion, flexibility, and communication.

Centrality of Genocide

The JW-RWA study examined the centrality of the Genocide against the Tutsi and individuals' temporal view of their lives. Centrality of Genocide was assessed in three ways: how often individuals think about the Genocide and the perceived effect of the Genocide on their worldview, family, and self. The study assessed the extent to which Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda think about the Genocide and how they subjectively assess the effects of the historical traumatic event on their personal and family identities.

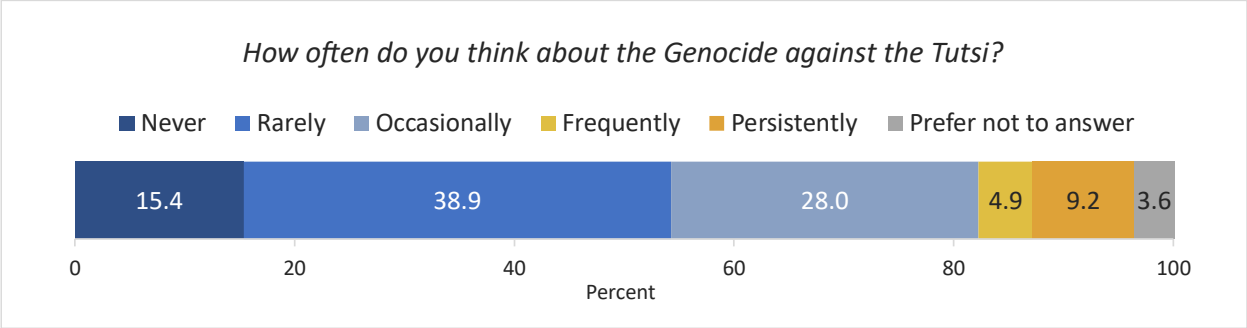
Centrality of Genocide—Frequency Thinking About the Genocide

The survey first asked respondents how often they think about the Genocide against the Tutsi, using a 5-point scale from one to five (*never*, *rarely*, *occasionally*, *frequently*, *persistently*), with the option *prefer not to answer*.

For the total sample, respondents varied in how often they thought about the Genocide as shown in Figure 6.14. For some (14.16%), the Genocide was a frequent or persistent thought, and others (15.36%) indicated they never thought about the Genocide. Most respondents fell in the middle, thinking about the Genocide rarely (38.89%) or occasionally (27.95%).

Figure 6.14

Frequency Thinking About the Genocide, Total Sample



Note. *N* = 13,590.

Mean scores on how often respondents indicated they thought about the Genocide were calculated. Table 6.14 gives an overview of findings by subgroup: gender, age group, generation, Genocide role-situation, and years being Jehovah's Witnesses. Mean scores for the total sample fell just above the occasional range ($M = 3.17$). All subgroups fell between the occasional and frequent range of 3 to 4, with the exception of the Post-Genocide Generation (consisting of early young adults) who thought about the Genocide the least often, that is between occasionally and rarely ($M = 2.70$). Statistical differences were found within all subgroups except gender. The variables in the subgroups had overlapping factors related to chronological age. The older Witnesses (i.e., older adults, the Genocide Generation Adults, and those baptized in or before 1994) thought more often about the Genocide than those who were likely younger in each of the subgroups.

Table 6.14

Frequency Thinking About the Genocide by Subgroups

Group	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Significance
Total	12,334	3.17	0.91	
Gender				
Male	5,530	3.20	0.88	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .00135$ (*ns*)
Female	6,804	3.14	0.93	
Age Group				
Early Young Adults	2,977	2.70	0.88	
Young Adults	3,426	3.06	0.86	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .1189$
Middle-Aged Adults	4,714	3.43	0.82	
Older Adults	1,217	**3.57**	0.89	
Generation				
Genocide Generation Adults	3,446	**3.53**	0.84	
Genocide Generation Minors	4,429	3.21	0.84	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .1141$
Returnees	940	3.16	0.92	
Post-Genocide Generation	2,977	2.70	0.88	
Distinct Role-Situation of Genocide Generation Adults				
Targeted	430	3.70	0.88	
Helper	847	3.49	0.8	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .0278$
Imprisoned	103	**3.86**	0.79	
None	279	3.36	0.88	
Years as Baptized Jehovah's Witness				
JW for 29 Years or More (Baptized in or Before 1994)	597	**3.47**	0.78	
JW for 19 to 28 Years (Baptized 1995–2004)	2,940	3.37	0.81	
JW for 9 to 18 Years (Baptized 2005–2014)	4,823	3.13	0.92	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .0277$
JW for 4 to 8 Years (Baptized 2015–2019)	2,994	3.02	0.93	
JW for 3 Years or Less (Baptized 2020–2023)	980	3.01	0.99	

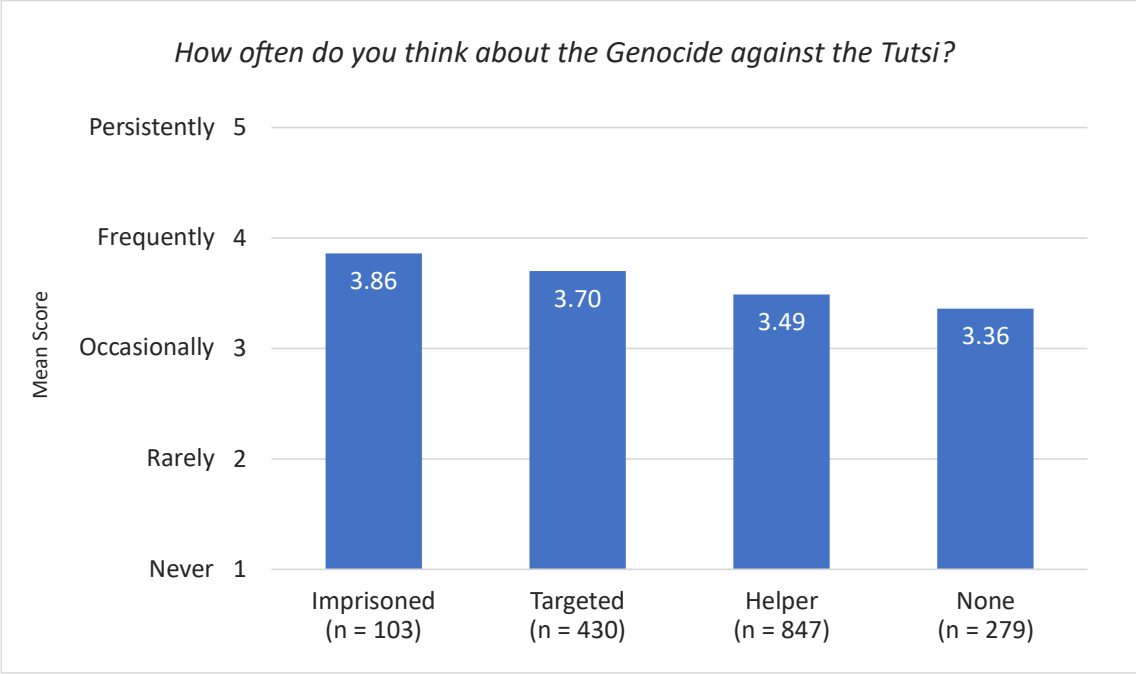
Note. Statistical analysis using ANOVA and Bonferroni post hoc comparisons found significant differences within all groups except gender. Bolded numbers show the highest mean scores within each of the statistically different groups.

Differences were also found depending on role-situations of the Genocide Generation Adults. (See Figure 6.15.) No statistical differences were found between those imprisoned and

those targeted. However, both the Imprisoned and Targeted groups thought about the Genocide significantly more often than either the Helper or None groups.

Figure 6.15

Frequency Thinking About the Genocide by Role-Situation for Genocide Generation Adults



Centrality of Genocide—Effect on Worldview, Self, and Family

To further assess the saliency of the Genocide against the Tutsi for the study population, the survey included three items from Berntsen and Rubin's Centrality of Event Scale (2006) that were applicable to both those with firsthand experience and secondhand knowledge of the Genocide. The survey used a 5-point scale from 1 to 5 for s*trongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neither agree nor disagree*, *agree*, and s*trongly agree*, and with the additional PNA option. The three statements were respondents' subjective assessment of how the Genocide affected their view of the world, their family's collective identity, and their own life:

The Genocide against the Tutsi has affected the way I think and feel about the world.

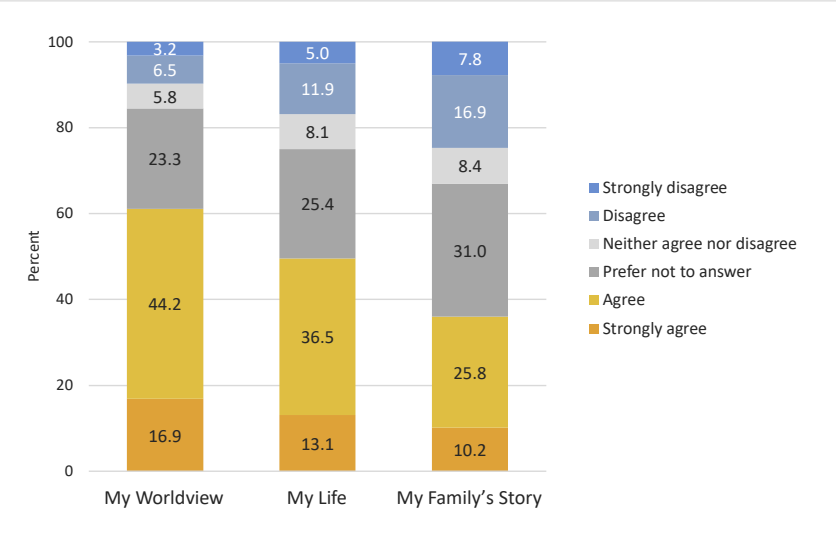
I often think about the effects the Genocide against the Tutsi has on my life.

I feel that the Genocide against the Tutsi is a central part of my family's life story.

Figure 6.16 shows the percentage of responses for the total sample per item. Overall, the Genocide was found to have the strongest effect on worldview, with 61.14% agreeing that it affected how they thought and felt about the world. Half (49.59%) often thought about the Genocide's effect on their own life. A smaller percentage (35.99%) felt that the Genocide was a central part of their family's life story. Considering the nature of the Genocide, a proportion of the sample was neutral or disagreed that the Genocide affected their worldview (15.50%), their own lives (24.99%), or their family's story (33.05%). However, PNA responses were high for each item, particularly related to family (30.96%); therefore, PNA responses needed to be factored in when drawing any conclusions. Subgroup analysis comparing mean scores (in which respondents who selected PNA would be removed from calculations) was not conducted.

Figure 6.16

Centrality of Genocide, Percentages for Total Sample



Note. *N* = 13,590. Genocide centrality was measured using three items from Berntsen and Rubin's Centrality of Event Scale (2006).

The breakdown of each item by gender in Table 6.15 further emphasizes the importance of considering PNA responses. Without considering PNA responses, more males showed higher centrality of the Genocide than females for all items—and with a 10% difference between males and females related to their worldview. However, a higher percentage of females than males had PNA responses. When accounting for PNA responses, no gender differences were found, as shown in the last row of Table 6.15. The same pattern and degree of centrality were found for males and females across the three items, with respondents reporting a greater impact on their overall worldview and a smaller percentage indicating that the Genocide influenced their family's life story.

Table 6.15

Centrality of Genocide by Gender

Response Options	My Worldview		My Life		My Family's Story	
	Males %	Females %	Males %	Females %	Males %	Females %
Disagree/Strongly disagree	9.13	10.24	15.35	8.11	23.06	25.98
Neither agree nor disagree	5.90	5.67	9.62	6.90	10.11	6.97
Agree/Strongly agree	**66.51**	**56.90**	52.01	47.67	37.76	34.59
Prefer not to answer (PNA)	**18.46**	**27.20**	23.03	27.32	29.06	32.45
Strongly agree, Agree, and PNA combined	**84.97**	**84.10**	**75.04**	**74.99**	**66.82**	**67.04**

Note. Females, *n* = 7,589; Males, *n* = 6,001. Bolded numbers highlight noteworthy percentages.

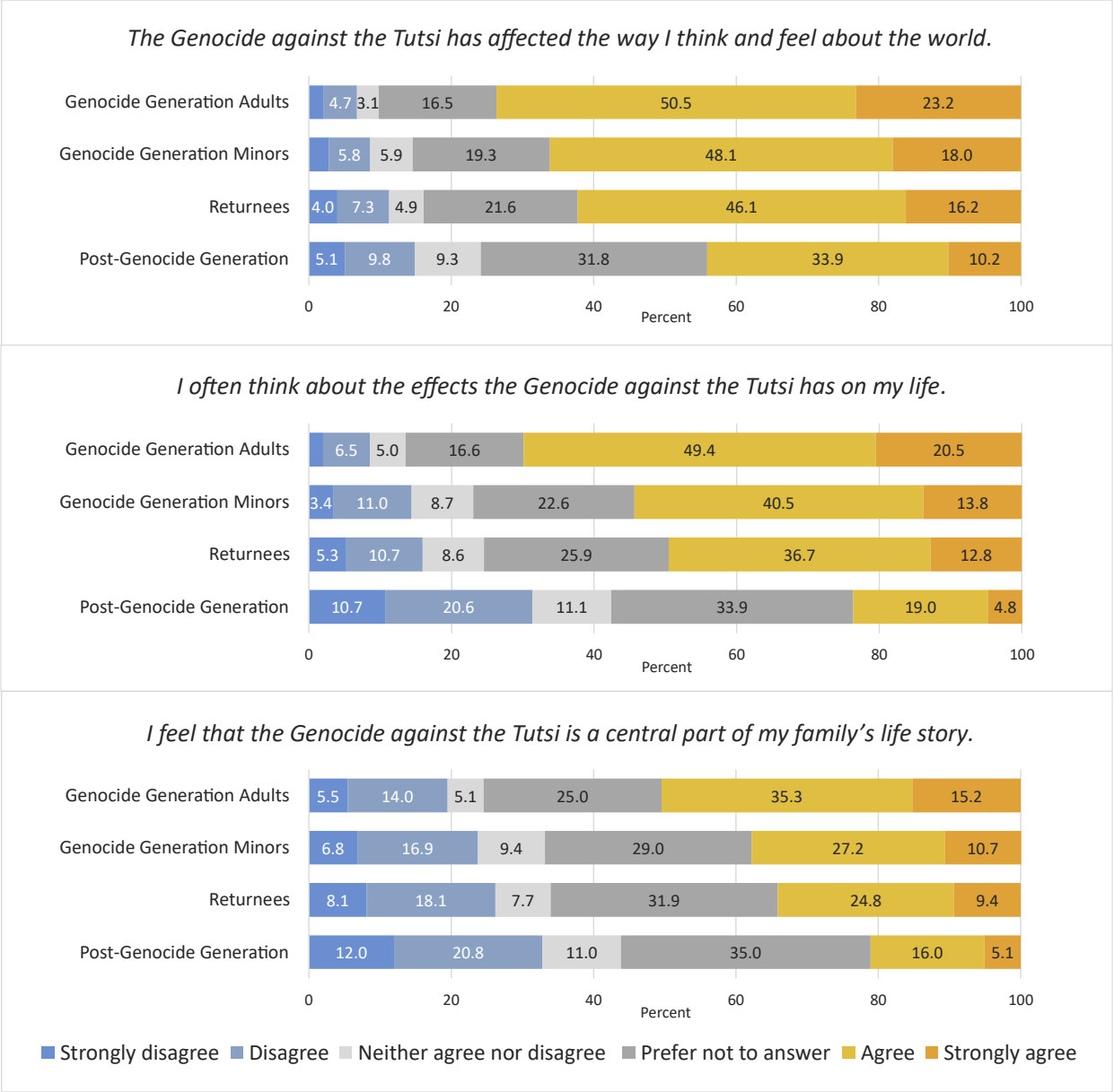
Similar analysis was conducted for each centrality item by generation as shown in Figure 6.17. Across all three items, the pattern was similar, with higher percentages of centrality of the Genocide for Genocide Generation Adults and the least centrality for the Post-Genocide Generation. Genocide was more salient for the Genocide Generation Adults, but with variations in agreement (*agree* and *strongly agree*) per item: about worldview (73.63%), about self (69.89%),

and about family (50.48%). The percentage differences on the Genocide's effect between Genocide Generation Adults and the Post-Genocide Generation for each item were as follows: on worldview, 22.07%; on family's story, 16.71%; and on self, 30.62%, which had the greatest generational gap. In general, a stair-step pattern for the generation groups was found in the subjective assessment of the Genocide's effect. For example, from high to low, the percentages of those who agreed that the Genocide affected their family's life story were as follows: half of the Genocide Generation Adults (50.48%), a little more than one third of the Genocide Generation Minors (37.82%) and Returnees (34.13%), and one fourth of the Post-Genocide Generation (21.11%).

Returnees who were contemporaries of the Genocide Generation but who had lived outside Rwanda during the Genocide indicated the Genocide against the Tutsi was less central to them than either the adults or minors who experienced the Genocide firsthand. However, PNA responses were also higher for Returnees and especially for the Post-Genocide Generation who did not experience the Genocide firsthand. Approximately one third of the Post-Genocide Generation preferred not to answer questions about the centrality of Genocide.

Figure 6.17

Centrality of Genocide by Generations



Note. *N* = 13,590.

The findings show that the Genocide was more integral to the identities of those with the closest temporal and spatial proximity to the Genocide. Some 30 years after the Genocide against the Tutsi, the findings reveal a generational divide in how individuals internalize and identify with Rwanda's past.

Temporality and Hope

Temporality was assessed in three ways: how often individuals think about their past, present, and future; the extent to which they perceive the periods of life as negative or positive; and their level of hopefulness.

First, the study investigated temporal perspectives to determine how Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda think and feel about the past, present, and future. Temporality was assessed in two ways: (a) how often individuals think about periods of their life and (b) the extent to which they perceive the periods of life as negative or positive. The two related sets of questions were prefaced with a primer, followed by the questions:

Some people think about different time periods in their lives.

How often, if at all, do you think about your life during the following time periods?

Please indicate how you feel about the following time periods.

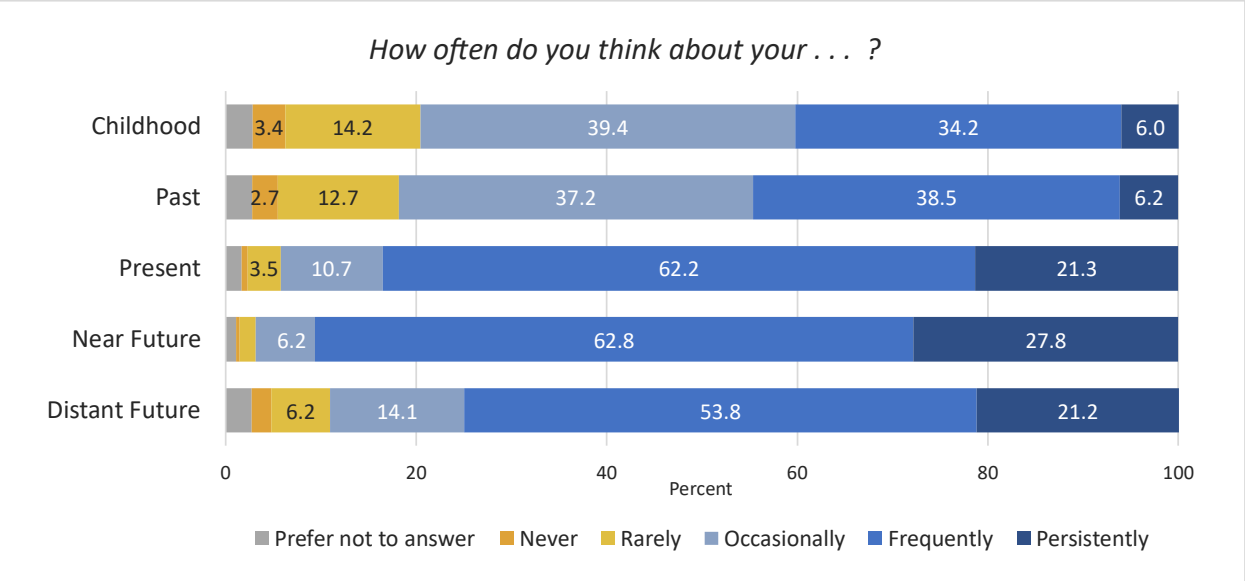
The time periods for both sets of questions were identical: childhood, past (recent past, other than childhood), present, near future, and distant future.

Temporality—Thinking

Figure 6.18 shows the breakdown of responses for each period for the total sample. The periods in life that most respondents thought about persistently or frequently were the near future (90.67%), the present (83.54%), and the distant future (74.97%). However, a sizeable percentage thought about their childhood (40.25%) and their past (44.63%). A small percentage indicated that they rarely or never thought about the present (4.08%), near future (2.05%), or distant future (8.25%). The temporal orientation that encompassed both present and future thinking would be conducive to decision-making for short- and long-term goals.

Figure 6.18

Temporality, Frequency Thinking About Different Periods of Life, Total Sample



Note. *N* = 13,586, total sample minus missing data.

Statistical analysis was conducted to determine if temporal orientation varied by demographic or situational factors. Table 6.16 shows a breakdown of the temporal orientation for the following groups: gender, age, generation, Genocide role-situation, years baptized, and interrupted or continuous association with Jehovah's Witnesses. There were no statistical differences within any of the groups. Regardless of the group, Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda had a temporal orientation of the present and into the future.

Table 6.16

Temporality, Frequency Thinking About Different Periods of Life by Subgroups

Group	Childhood	Past	Present	Near Future	Distant Future
	M (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)
Total (*n* = 12,705)	3.27 (0.90)	3.35 (0.88)	4.03 (0.71)	4.18 (0.64)	3.88 (0.89)
Gender					
Male (*n* = 5,692)	3.23 (0.87)	3.32 (0.85)	4.05 (0.70)	4.20 (0.64)	3.92 (0.87)
Female (*n* = 7,013)	3.30 (0.92)	3.36 (0.90)	4.01 (0.72)	4.15 (0.64)	3.85 (0.91)

Table 6.16 (continued)

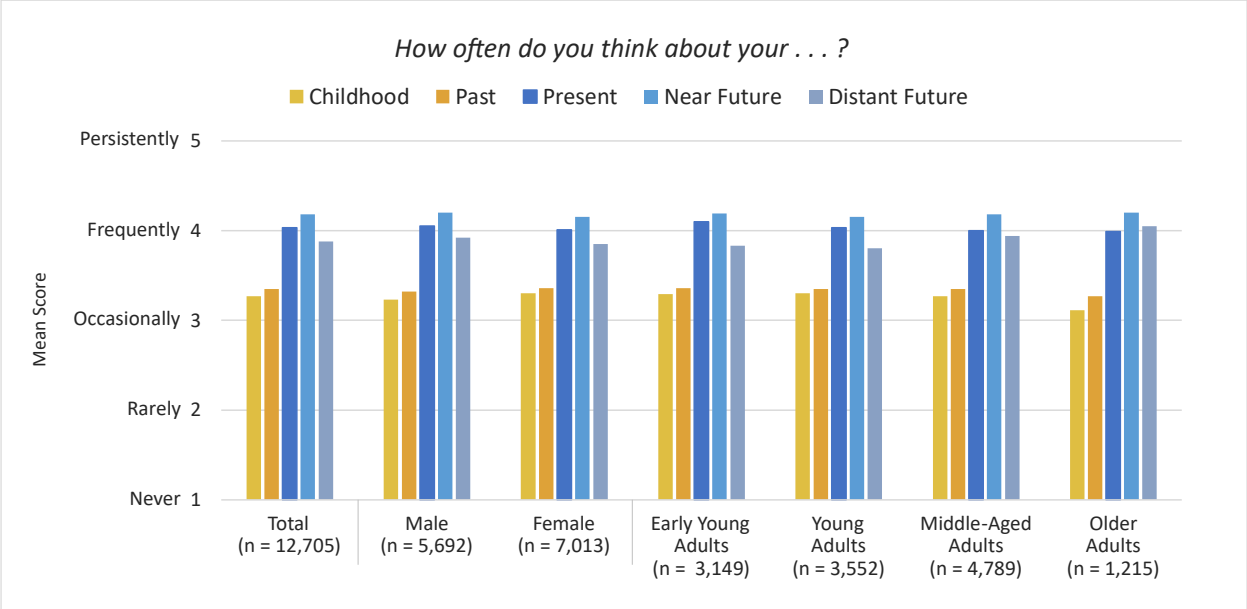
Age Group					
Early Young Adults (*n* = 3,149)	3.29 (0.88)	3.36 (0.87)	4.10 (0.68)	4.19 (0.65)	3.83 (0.94)
Young Adults (*n* = 3,552)	3.30 (0.86)	3.35 (0.84)	4.03 (0.69)	4.15 (0.63)	3.80 (0.90)
Middle-Aged Adults (*n* = 4,789)	3.27 (0.90)	3.35 (0.88)	4.00 (0.74)	4.18 (0.64)	3.94 (0.85)
Older Adults (*n* = 1,215)	3.11 (1.02)	3.27 (0.98)	3.99 (0.76)	4.20 (0.66)	4.05 (0.85)
Generation					
Genocide Generation Adults (*n* = 3,463)	3.19 (0.96)	3.30 (0.93)	4.00 (0.76)	4.20 (0.64)	3.99 (0.86)
Genocide Generation Minors (*n* = 4,533)	3.32 (0.85)	3.38 (0.84)	4.04 (0.68)	4.16 (0.63)	3.86 (0.88)
Returnees (*n* = 971)	3.26 (0.90)	3.34 (0.86)	3.95 (0.78)	4.15 (0.67)	3.83 (0.88)
Post-Genocide Generation (*n* = 3,149)	3.29 (0.88)	3.36 (0.87)	4.10 (0.68)	4.19 (0.65)	3.83 (0.94)
Genocide Generation Role-Situation					
Targeted (*n* = 412)	3.24 (1.01)	3.42 (0.93)	4.00 (0.75)	4.21 (0.67)	3.98 (0.89)
Helper (*n* = 859)	3.18 (0.97)	3.29 (0.94)	3.99 (0.76)	4.23 (0.63)	3.99 (0.90)
Imprisoned (*n* = 99)	3.30 (0.86)	3.41 (0.88)	4.11 (0.73)	4.31 (0.53)	4.13 (0.88)
None (*n* = 290)	3.08 (0.96)	3.19 (0.96)	3.95 (0.78)	4.19 (0.60)	3.90 (0.85)
Years as Baptized Jehovah's Witness					
JW for 29 Years or More, Baptized in or Before 1994 (*n* = 611)	3.22 (0.92)	3.34 (0.81)	3.98 (0.73)	4.22 (0.64)	3.94 (0.86)
JW for 19 to 28 Years, Baptized 1995–2004 (*n* = 2,999)	3.29 (0.88)	3.39 (0.87)	4.01 (0.71)	4.19 (0.63)	3.94 (0.84)
JW for 9 to 18 Years, Baptized 2005–2014 (*n* = 4,943)	3.27 (0.90)	3.33 (0.87)	4.02 (0.71)	4.16 (0.64)	3.84 (0.90)
JW for 4 to 8 Years, Baptized 2015–2019 (*n* = 3,124)	3.25 (0.91)	3.34 (0.88)	4.06 (0.71)	4.17 (0.65)	3.86 (0.91)
JW for 3 Years or Less, Baptized 2020–2023 (*n* = 1,028)	3.28 (0.91)	3.30 (0.93)	4.06 (0.75)	4.19 (0.68)	3.94 (0.93)
Interrupted or Continuous JW Association					
Interrupted JW Association (*n* = 1,203)	3.39 (0.91)	3.44 (0.91)	4.06 (0.72)	4.18 (0.66)	3.91 (0.89)
Continuous JW Association (*n* = 11,415)	3.26 (0.90)	3.34 (0.87)	4.03 (0.71)	4.18 (0.64)	3.88 (0.89)

The mean scores for the total sample and by gender and age group were charted to visually show the differences in how often Jehovah's Witnesses thought about periods in their life.

Although development age differences were expected, a similar pattern was found across both gender and age groups. (See Figure 6.19.) The common assumption was that older adults would think more often about their past and young adults would think more about their future. However, regardless of age group, thinking about the present, near future, and distant future was more frequent.

Figure 6.19

Thinking About Different Periods of Life by Gender and Age Group



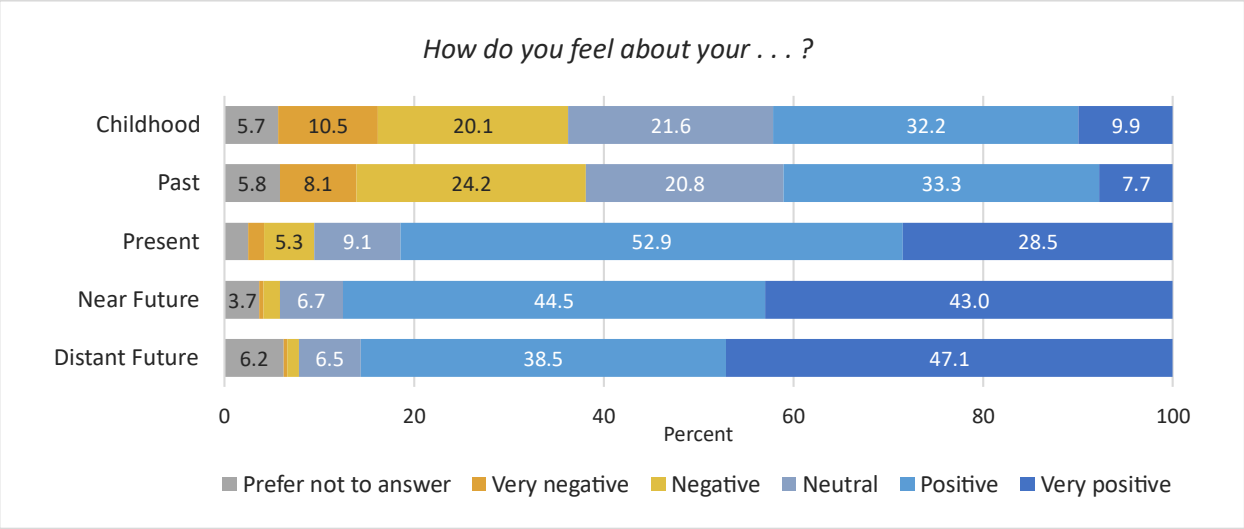
Temporality—Feeling

A temporal orientation toward the future can be negative (e.g., anxiety or dread of what might happen) or positive (e.g., optimism or anticipation of desirable events). The degree of positive and negative feelings about the past and future is an indicator of psychological wellbeing. In the context of post-Genocide, negative thoughts could readily occur in thinking about the past (e.g., intrusive thoughts related to past traumas) and what the future might hold (e.g., due to the realities of poverty or other challenges).

As shown in Figure 6.20, approximately 40% felt positive about their childhood (42.14%) and past (41.05%); and slightly under one third felt negative about their childhood (30.59%) and past (32.27%). Twice the number of those positive about their childhood or past were positive about their present lives (81.42%), and even more were positive about their near future (87.52%) and distant future (85.66%).

Figure 6.20

Temporality, Feeling About Different Periods of Life, Total Sample



Note. *N* = 13,590.

Table 6.17 gives a breakdown by gender, age group, generation, and Genocide role-situation. No statistical differences were found in mean scores for gender, age, generation, or interrupted association for any of the time periods. Those who were Jehovah's Witnesses for the longer period (baptized in or before 1994, and from 1995 to 2004) were significantly more satisfied with their past than those baptized after 2004 ($p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .0117$). Those baptized the longest had the most positive rating of their childhood and their past. However, depending on how long the person had been a baptized Jehovah's Witness, no differences were found for their view of the present, near future, or distant future.

The other statistical significance was between those who had been imprisoned for genocide acts compared with those with other role-situations for how they felt about their childhood ($p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .014$) and past ($p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .023$). Of all the groups shown in Table 6.17, those who had been imprisoned were most negative about their childhood and past.

Table 6.17

Temporality, Feelings About Different Periods of Life by Subgroups

Group	Childhood	Past	Present	Near Future	Distant Future
	M (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)
Total (*n* = 11,643)	3.11 (1.19)	3.10 (1.13)	4.05 (0.86)	4.33 (0.72)	4.40 (0.72)
Gender					
Male (*n* = 5,252)	3.08 (1.15)	3.13 (1.10)	4.11 (0.80)	4.32 (0.73)	4.41 (0.72)
Female (*n* = 6,391)	3.14 (1.22)	3.08 (1.16)	4.01 (0.91)	4.34 (0.72)	4.39 (0.71)
Age Group					
Early Young Adults (*n* = 2,965)	3.21 (1.14)	3.20 (1.09)	4.06 (0.85)	4.30 (0.77)	4.38 (0.75)
Young Adults (*n* = 3,228)	3.03 (1.20)	3.11 (1.12)	4.06 (0.85)	4.28 (0.75)	4.36 (0.74)
Middle-Aged Adults (*n* = 4,347)	3.09 (1.21)	3.04 (1.16)	4.06 (0.86)	4.39 (0.67)	4.42 (0.68)
Older Adults (*n* = 1,103)	3.19 (1.20)	3.06 (1.15)	4.02 (0.93)	4.36 (0.71)	4.46 (0.67)
Generation					
Genocide Generation Adults (*n* = 3,141)	3.13 (1.21)	3.01 (1.17)	4.06 (0.90)	4.40 (0.68)	4.45 (0.68)
Genocide Generation Minors (*n* = 4,129)	3.05 (1.19)	3.10 (1.13)	4.05 (0.84)	4.31 (0.72)	4.39 (0.72)
Returnees (*n* = 900)	3.13 (1.21)	3.12 (1.14)	4.06 (0.85)	4.34 (0.70)	4.37 (0.72)
Post-Genocide Generation (*n* = 2,965)	3.21 (1.14)	3.20 (1.09)	4.06 (0.85)	4.30 (0.77)	4.38 (0.75)
Distinct Role-Situation, Genocide Generation Adults					
Targeted (*n* = 370)	3.07 (1.27)	2.89 (1.17)	3.88 (1.10)	4.39 (0.70)	4.44 (0.69)
Helper (*n* = 781)	3.15 (1.20)	3.13 (1.15)	4.09 (0.88)	4.41 (0.67)	4.45 (0.70)
Imprisoned (*n* = 100)	2.59 (1.26)	**2.48 (1.20)**	4.09 (0.94)	**4.48 (0.64)**	**4.55 (0.61)**
None (*n* = 266)	3.20 (1.16)	3.13 (1.15)	4.07 (0.89)	4.35 (0.66)	4.44 (0.64)

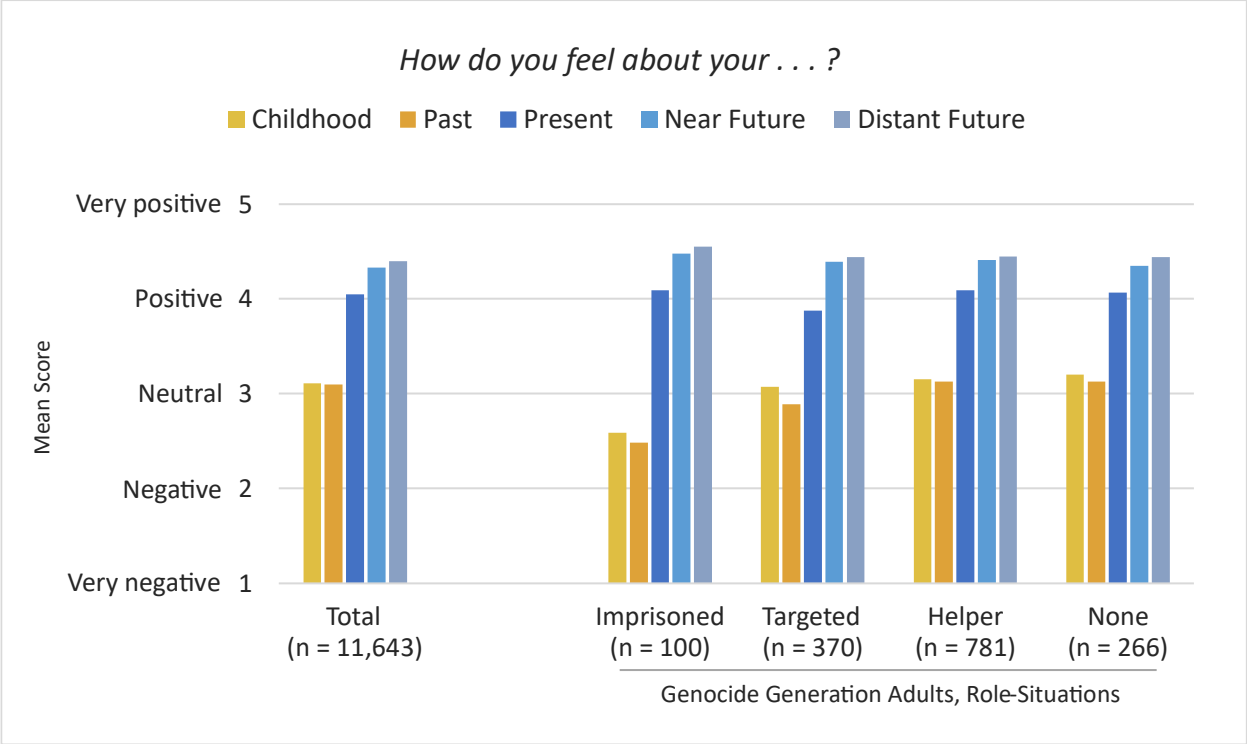
Table 6.17 (continued)

Years as Baptized Jehovah's Witness					
JW for 29 Years or More, Baptized in or Before 1994 (*n* = 545)	3.52 (1.13)	**3.52 (1.06)**	4.09 (0.82)	4.40 (0.70)	4.46 (0.68)
JW for 19 to 28 Years, Baptized 1995–2004 (*n* = 2,707)	3.19 (1.18)	3.20 (1.12)	4.03 (0.90)	4.37 (0.70)	4.43 (0.69)
JW for 9 to 18 Years, Baptized 2005–2014 (*n* = 4,530)	3.07 (1.18)	3.09 (1.13)	4.04 (0.85)	4.29 (0.73)	4.36 (0.73)
JW for 4 to 8 Years, Baptized 2015–2019 (*n* = 2,884)	3.09 (1.18)	3.02 (1.13)	4.05 (0.87)	4.32 (0.74	4.39 (0.73)
JW for 3 Years or Less, Baptized 2020–2023 (*n* = 977)	2.97 (1.22)	2.91 (1.16)	4.16 (0.82)	4.41 (0.71)	4.44 (0.71)
Interrupted or Continuous JW Association					
Interrupted JW Association (*n* = 1,084)	2.95 (1.26)	2.77 (1.16)	3.94 (0.93)	4.31 (0.73)	4.35 (0.74)
Continuous JW Association (*n* = 10,490)	3.13 (1.18)	3.14 (1.12)	4.07 (0.85)	4.34 (0.72)	4.40 (0.71)

As noted above, statistical differences were found in mean scores depending on the Genocide role-situations, with lower scores for those who had been Imprisoned for genocide acts compared with those in the Targeted, Helper, and None groups. Figure 6.21 shows the differences in more negative feelings about the past and the positive feelings about the future across all groups.

Figure 6.21

Temporality, Feelings About Different Time Periods, Total Sample and Genocide Generation Adults, Role-Situations



No statistical differences were found for any group's outlook for the future. In fact, all 21 subgroups listed in Table 6.17 rated the near future and distant future between positive to very positive feelings. The uniformity in outlook was evidenced by a difference of only 0.20 between the lowest and highest mean scores for feelings about the near future and the distant future. Even more remarkable than the invariability within the study population was that those who had been imprisoned for genocide acts had the highest mean score (most positive) and least variation in scores for their view of the near future ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.64$) and distant future ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.61$). Such consistent and positive future orientation—despite the diverse demographics and Genocide experiences—would logically have to be attributed to the one commonality of the 21 subgroups, their being Jehovah's Witnesses. The data show that Jehovah's Witnesses believe and

personalize the religion's belief in anticipating the impending end of evil by divine intervention and the prospect of living forever on a paradise earth. (See Section 3, Figure 3.10.)

Hope

Hope relates to future temporal orientation as a gauge of how positive and achievable one believes their future goals and outcomes are. More than optimism, hope is a motivational state in dealing with life's adversities. The survey used the Herth Hope Index (HHI), which has been widely used cross-culturally as a research tool (Herth, 1992). The validated measure consists of 12 items related to positive readiness and expectancy, interconnectedness, and temporality and future. The validated instrument uses a 4-point *agree-disagree* scale with a range from 12 to 48. The higher score corresponds to a higher level of hope.

In the first level of statistical analysis, data frequencies identified a translation issue for one item that resulted in high numbers of PNA responses and lower mean scores than other items. Rather than deleting the single item from analysis or adjust the data based on other responses, the decision was made to use the existing data. The consequence was that the mean scores would have been about 2 points higher without the compromised item.

Table 6.18 shows the breakdown of mean scores by groups: gender, age group, generation, Genocide role-situation, year baptized, and interrupted or continuous association. Like the findings on the positive view of the future, total mean scores for the HHI across all groups are consistent. The mean score for the total sample was 41.03. Mean scores and standard deviation were consistent across all 21 subgroups, with a range of scores from 40.50 to 42.44. There were no statistical differences within any groups.

Table 6.18

Hope by Group Comparisons

Group	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Total	9,933	41.03	4.46
Gender			
Male	4,618	41.21	4.41
Female	5,315	40.87	4.51
Age Group			
Early Young Adults	2,443	40.74	4.44
Young Adults	2,794	40.80	4.56
Middle-Aged Adults	3,672	41.22	4.40
Older Adults	1,024	41.66	4.39
Generation			
Genocide Generation Adults	2,750	41.45	4.38
Genocide Generation Minors	3,553	40.99	4.49
Returnees	810	40.77	4.56
Post-Genocide Generation	2,443	40.74	4.44
Genocide Role-Situation of Genocide Generation Adults			
Targeted	324	41.32	4.38
Helper	696	41.79	4.29
Imprisoned	79	42.44	4.13
None	232	41.05	4.56
Years as Baptized Jehovah's Witness			
JW for 29 Years or More (Baptized in or Before 1994)	464	41.50	4.38
JW for 19 to 28 Years (Baptized 1995–2004)	2,276	41.28	4.39
JW for 9 to 18 Years (Baptized 2005–2014)	3,896	40.85	4.46
JW for 4 to 8 Years (Baptized 2015–2019)	2,465	40.95	4.53
JW for 3 Years or Less (Baptized 2020–2023)	832	41.15	4.50
Interrupted or Continuous JW Association			
Interrupted JW Association	942	40.50	4.29
Continuous JW Association	8,947	41.09	4.47

Note. Hope was measured using the Herth Hope Index, total score ranging from 12 to 48.

The findings show moderate to high levels of hope even with the effect of the item that respondents did not clearly understand. The findings are consistent with the empirical literature that shows a positive relationship between hope and religion. For the sampled Jehovah's Witnesses

in Rwanda, hope and faith appeared integral, as reflected in the uniformity of positive hope responses among the various socio-demographic groups.

Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms

To measure the extent to which respondents experienced posttraumatic stress symptoms (PTSS), the survey instrument included the PTSD-8, derived from the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (Hansen et al., 2010). The measure focused on the three core symptom criteria for PTSD used in the DSM-IV and ICD-11 (intrusion, avoidance, and hyperarousal) and positively correlated with the SCID-I interviews and Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (Anderson et al., 2018). As an abbreviated measure, items in the DSM-V related to dysphoria were not included in the PTSD-8 (Andersen et al., 2018; Hansen et al., 2010). The short inventory of eight items was appropriate for nonclinical purposes in an online, self-reported questionnaire.

The survey question for PTSS was broadly framed: *Traumatic events sometimes cause symptoms long after people experience or witness some traumatic or troubling event. Please read the next 8 statements and indicate how much each has bothered you, if at all, in the last month*. Items were scaled from 1 to 4 (*not at all*, *rarely*, *sometimes*, and *most of the time*), with a total score ranging from 8 to 32. The eight items had three subscales: Intrusion with four items (score ranging from 4 to 16); Avoidance with two items (score ranging from 2 to 8); and Hypervigilance with two items (score ranging from 2 to 8). A total score of 21 or higher indicates a possibility of PTSD.

The scale is not intended to diagnose PTSD with a fixed cut-off score and is used here as a research tool to measure PTSD symptoms. Importantly, because the measure was not Genocide-specific, it allowed analysis of cohort differences in posttraumatic symptomatology experienced by both those born before and after the Genocide. Additionally, analysis could explore possible

generational trauma effects (e.g., comparison of personal Genocide role-situations of Genocide Generation respondents with family's Genocide role-situations of Post-Genocide Generation respondents).

For all respondents, of the three subscales, the two Avoidance items had the highest frequency of occurrence: *avoiding activities that remind one of the event* ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.18$) and *avoiding thoughts or feelings associated with the event* ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.16$). Hypervigilance items occurred the least often: *feeling jumpy, easily startled* ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 1.04$), and *feeling on guard* ($M = 1.95$, $SD = 1.04$). Of the four items in the Intrusive subscale, the most common single item was *recurrent thoughts or memories of the event* ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 0.98$).

Table 6.19 shows the cumulative mean score and standard deviation for the total sample and subgroups: gender, age group, generation, targeted or not targeted, Genocide role-situation, year of baptism, and interrupted or continuous association. Statistically significant differences in PTSS cumulative mean scores were found for all groups with the exceptions of group differences for Post-Genocide Generation who reported distinct family role-situations and those depending on the respondent's year of baptism or if the respondent had interrupted their association with Jehovah's Witnesses at any time.

Table 6.19 lists two targeted subgroups. The first targeted subgroup included all Genocide Generation Adults who self-identified as targeted but may have also selected other possible role-situations (e.g., helper). The distinct, single targeted subgroup included those who only self-identified as *targeted to be killed* in the list of role-situations. In both cases, the two targeted groups had similar PTSS scores and the highest PTSS scores compared with all subgroups analyzed.

Table 6.19

Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms, Group Comparisons

Group	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Significance
Total Sample, PTSS Cumulative Score (Range 8 to 32)	8,785	17.41	5.95	
Gender				
Male	3,937	16.40	5.65	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .023$
Female	4,848	**18.23**	6.05	
Age Group				
Early Young Adults	2,194	16.05	5.77	
Young Adults	2,472	16.83	5.93	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .031$
Middle-Aged Adults	3,232	**18.53**	5.80	
Older Adults	887	**18.27**	6.03	
Generation				
Genocide Generation Adults	2,404	**18.56**	5.93	
Genocide Generation Minors	3,257	17.49	5.81	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .024$
Returnees	672	17.39	6.10	
Post-Genocide Generation	2,194	16.05	5.77	
Targeted, Not Targeted (Total Genocide Generation Adults)				
Targeted	386	**21.05**	5.70	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .035$
Not Targeted	1,948	18.06	5.87	
Distinct Genocide Role-Situation, Genocide Generation Adults (for Self)				
Targeted	325	**21.12**	5.73	
Helper	628	18.47	5.62	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .085$
Imprisoned	66	18.32	5.81	
None	200	15.68	6.28	
Distinct Genocide Role-Situation, Genocide Generation Minors (for Family)				
Targeted	524	19.31	5.49	
Helper	673	17.33	5.58	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .054$
Imprisoned	117	16.66	6.07	
None	170	15.16	5.86	
Distinct Genocide Role-Situation, Post-Genocide Generation (for Family)				
Targeted	301	16.35	6.22	
Helper	208	16.41	5.36	$p = .102$; $\eta^2 = .011$ (*ns*)
Imprisoned	44	15.75	5.56	
None	35	13.89	5.57	

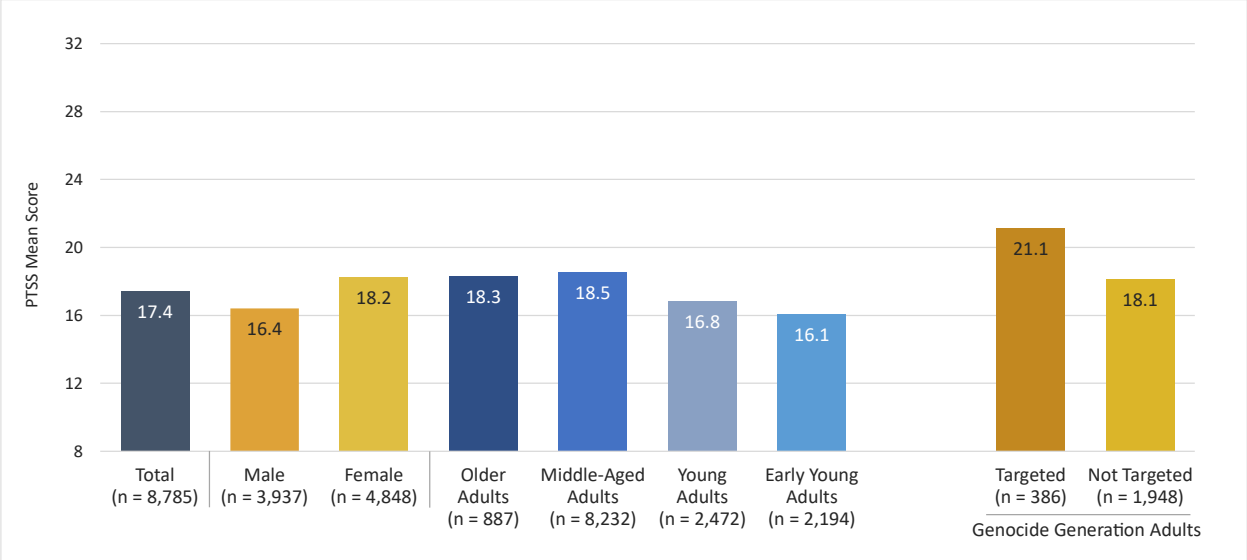
Table 6.19 (continued)

Years as Baptized Jehovah's Witness				
JW for 29 Years or More (Baptized in or Before 1994)	399	18.43	5.75	
JW for 19 to 28 Years (Baptized 1995–2004)	2,003	18.18	5.90	
JW for 9 to 18 Years (Baptized 2005–2014)	3,477	17.25	5.97	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .008$ (*ns*)
JW for 4 to 8 Years (Baptized 2015–2019)	2,169	16.90	5.92	
JW for 3 Years or Less (Baptized 2020–2023)	737	16.99	5.88	
Interrupted or Continuous JW Association				
Interrupted JW Association	822	18.39	5.97	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .008$ (*ns*)
Continuous JW Association	7,919	17.31	5.93	

Figure 6.22 shows the mean scores for gender and age groups for the total sample that included the Genocide Generation and Post-Genocide Generation, and the mean scores for those targeted or not targeted for the Genocide Generation. The PTSS mean scores were statistically significantly higher for females than males. Likewise, middle-aged adults and older adults had higher PTSS scores than young adults and early young adults. The most notable differences were the mean scores for those who made up the Genocide Generation, which were higher than other subgroups. The mean scores for all groups fell below 21 except for those targeted. Although the PTSS measure was not Genocide-specific, the findings show higher PTSS patterns not just for those who experienced the Genocide but for those who were targeted to be killed during the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Figure 6.22

Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms by Gender, Age Group, and Genocide Generation Targeted and Not Targeted

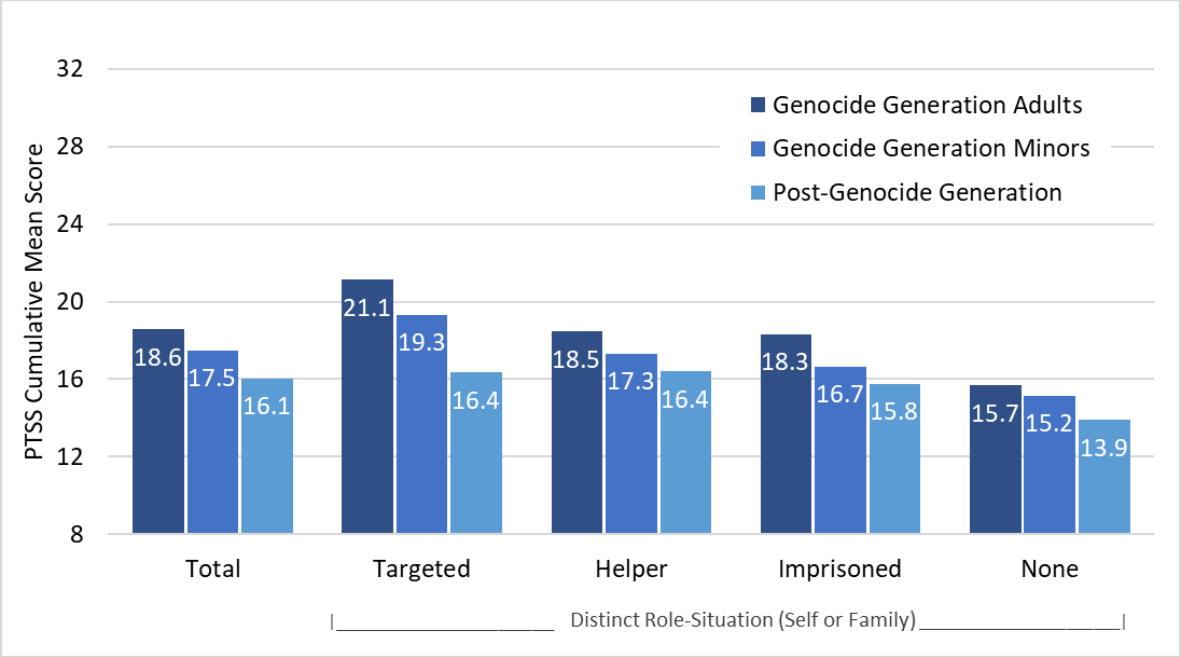


Note. The brief measure of PTSS provided a nonclinical assessment of factors related to PTSD, namely intrusion, avoidance, and hypervigilance. Total scores range from 8 to 32.

Figure 6.23 shows similar results. As described earlier, from a list of role-situations, respondents could select more than one option (e.g., targeted, refused to betray targeted, helped those targeted). In order to eliminate multiple role-situations, analysis of PTSS scores was based on those who self-identified with only a single role-situation (Targeted, Helper, Imprisoned, or None). PTSS mean scores by generation and by distinct role-situations (which were listed in Table 6.19) are shown in Figure 6.23.

Figure 6.23

Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms by Distinct Role-Situation



Note. For the total sample, the *n* value for each generation was as follows: Genocide Generation Adults, *n* = 2,404; Genocide Generation Minors, *n* = 3,257; Post-Genocide Generation, *n* = 2,194. Genocide role-situations for each generation were distinct, not overlapping, groups with a different *n*. The *n* value for each of the 12 distinct groups by generation was as follows: (a) Genocide Generation Adults: Targeted, *n* = 325; Helper, *n* = 628; Imprisoned, *n* = 66; None, *n* = 200; (b) Genocide Generation Minors: Targeted, *n* = 524; Helper, *n* = 673; Imprisoned, *n* = 117; None, *n* = 170; and (c) Post-Genocide Generation: Targeted, *n* = 301; Helper, *n* = 208; Imprisoned, *n* = 44; None, *n* = 35.

Analysis showed several key findings related to PTSS: (a) Generational differences exist between the older and younger cohorts—highest for the Genocide Generation Adults, lowest for the Post-Genocide Generation, with the Genocide Generation Minors in between; (b) Post-traumatic stress symptoms vary by Genocide role-situation, with those targeted to be killed during the Genocide most likely to have posttraumatic stress symptoms; (c) PTSS involves multiple interrelated factors, as evidenced by the lower PTSS scores across generations for those in the None group who were in Rwanda during the Genocide but were not targeted, later imprisoned, or involved in helping others during the Genocide; (d) For the study population, the mean scores for PTSS across all groups were relatively low, at or below 21 on a scale of 8 to 32; and

(e) Congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda include those who suffer with posttraumatic stress symptoms. The findings provide a general assessment of how individuals may be affected by past traumatic experiences—not just from the Genocide, but also from other possible hardships.

Posttraumatic Growth

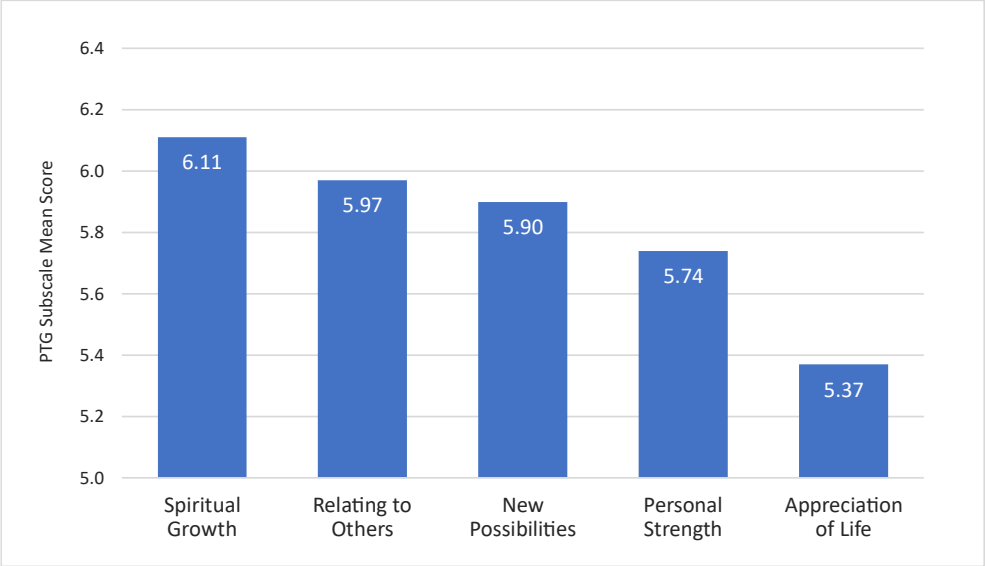
The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory–Short Form was used to measure the level of positive changes that individuals experienced following a traumatic event (Cann et al., 2010). As with the PTSS measure, the posttraumatic growth (PTG) measure was not Genocide-specific but was broadly framed in the survey: *Next are changes people might experience after a traumatic or stressful event. Please indicate the extent to which you have experienced any of the following 10 changes after a traumatic or stressful event in your life*.

The scaled choices for the 10-item measure were reduced from the original 6 to 5: 0 = *no change*, 1 = *small change*, 2 = *moderate change*, 3 = *great change*, and 4 = *very great change*, with a total cumulative score ranging from 0 to 40. The measure consists of five factors of two items each. The five subscales were as follows: Appreciation of Life, New Possibilities, Relating to Others, Personal Strength, and Spiritual Change.

Figure 6.24 shows the mean scores for each subscale for the total sample. For the JW sample population, Spiritual Change (i.e., having stronger faith and better understanding of spiritual matters) had the highest PTG rating. Relating to Others (i.e., closeness to others and compassion for others) was the second-highest-rated subscale. For context, the lower-scored subscale Appreciation of Life did not mean respondents did not appreciate life, only that they did not experience as much of a change in this dimension.

Figure 6.24

Posttraumatic Growth Subscale Mean Scores



Note. *N* = 8,717. PTG was measured using the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory—Short Form (Cann et al., 2010), consisting of five subscales.

Table 6.20 compares the mean scores within subgroups (i.e., gender, age group, generation, Genocide role-situation, years as a Witness, and interruption of association). Within the JW sample population, PTG scores were consistently high regardless of demographic groups with different ages and Genocide experiences. No significant differences were found for any of the groups, suggesting that how those in the faith community perceive posttraumatic growth is similar regardless of demographic characteristics or situational differences.

As found in responses to other measures in this study, differences in PTG between males and females were negligible. Although the differences were not statistically significant, it is noteworthy which groups had the highest PTG scores within group categories: older adults, Genocide Generation Adults, Imprisoned, those baptized most recently, and those whose association with Jehovah's Witnesses was never interrupted. In the case of older adults and Genocide Generation Adults, these groups had significantly higher PTSS scores than younger cohorts; these older Witnesses also had higher PTG scores.

Table 6.20

Posttraumatic Growth, Group Comparisons

Group	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Significance
Total Sample, Cumulative Score (Range 0 to 40)	8,717	29.09	9.15	-
Gender				
Male	3,807	29.12	9.31	$p = .800$; $\eta^2 = .000$ (*ns*)
Female	4,910	29.07	9.02	
Age Group				
Early Young Adults	1,948	28.24	9.49	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .004$ (*ns*)
Young Adults	2,307	28.76	9.42	
Middle-Aged Adults	3,486	29.54	8.80	
Older Adults	976	**29.92**	8.83	
Generation				
Genocide Generation Adults	2,677	**29.88**	8.75	$p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .005$ (*ns*)
Genocide Generation Minors	3,117	29.09	9.17	
Returnees	672	28.62	9.55	
Post-Genocide Generation	1,948	28.24	9.49	
Genocide Role-Situation, Genocide Generation Adults				
Targeted	337	30.45	8.71	$p = .069$; $\eta^2 = .005$ (*ns*)
Helper	679	29.46	9.41	
Imprisoned	77	**31.87**	7.33	
None	211	29.40	8.85	
Years as Baptized Jehovah's Witness				
JW for 29 Years or More (Baptized in or Before 1994)	392	27.80	10.77	$p = .003$; $\eta^2 = .002$ (*ns*)
JW for 19 to 28 Years (Baptized 1995–2004)	2,061	29.29	9.25	
JW for 9 to 18 Years (Baptized 2005–2014)	3,381	28.92	9.24	
JW for 4 to 8 Years (Baptized 2015–2019)	2,110	29.10	8.71	
JW for 3 Years or Less (Baptized 2020–2023)	773	**29.91**	8.66	
Interrupted or Continuous Association				
Interrupted JW Association	876	28.88	8.98	$p = .512$; $\eta^2 = .000$ (*ns*)
Continuous JW Association	7,792	**29.10**	9.18	

Note. Bolded numbers highlight groups with the highest mean scores.

Subjective Wellbeing Since Becoming Jehovah's Witnesses

As previously discussed about the influence of the exosystem on subjective psychological and social wellbeing, in the aftermath of the Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwandans have benefited from numerous government and community programs (cf. Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement, 2024). The research objectives of this study focused on the perceived influence of the religion on the study population. To determine Jehovah's Witnesses' subjective assessment of religious affiliation on their wellbeing, the survey asked respondents to rate how they compared themselves to the time before they became Jehovah's Witnesses on the following five items related to psychological wellbeing: *my emotional and mental well-being*, *my hope for the future*, *my life in general*, *my opinion of myself*, and *my self-worth*. The response options and coding used for calculating a sum score were *significantly worse* (−2), *slightly worse* (−1), *same/neutral* (0), *slightly better* (+1), and *significantly better* (+2). Respondents were also given the option to select *prefer not to answer*.

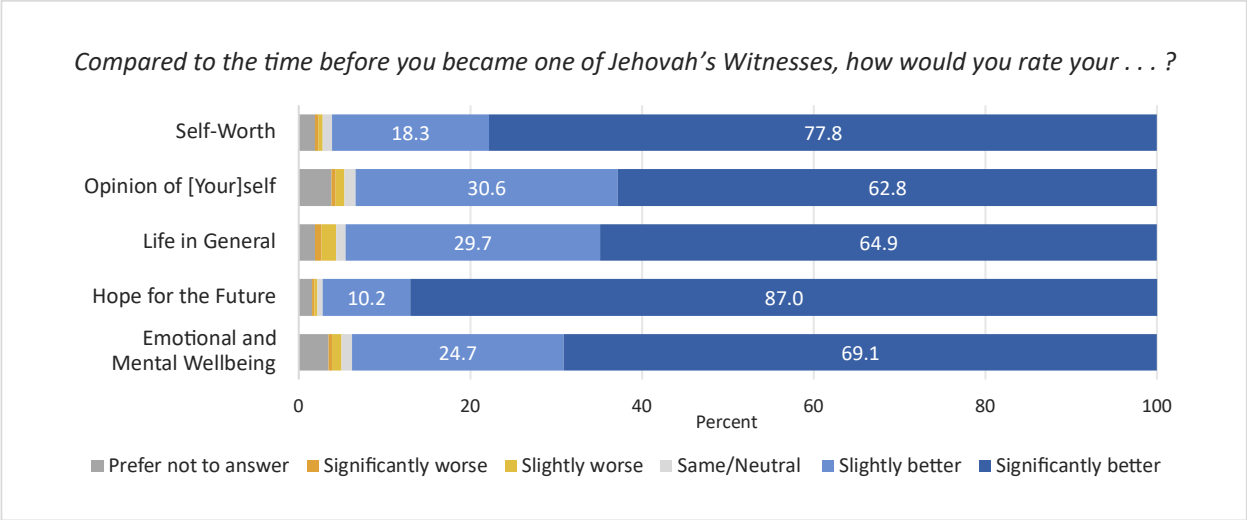
The question set corresponded with a similar question set on perceived changes in interpersonal and conflict relations since becoming one of Jehovah's Witnesses that was reported in Section 4 on Forgiveness and Prosocial Behaviors. The findings on relationship changes found that 85% or more indicated they had better relationships since becoming Jehovah's Witnesses. A similar high percentage was found for subjective wellbeing.

As shown in Figure 6.25, a high percentage of the sample population indicated that their wellbeing had improved since becoming Jehovah's Witnesses. With the percentages of those selecting *slightly better* and *significantly better* combined, the percentages who viewed their wellbeing as better for each item were as follows: *my self-worth*, 96.11%; *my opinion of myself*,

93.36%; *my life in general*, 94.55%; *my hope for the future*, 97.19%; and *my emotional and mental well-being*, 93.80%.

Figure 6.25

Perceived Change in Subjective Wellbeing Since Becoming One of Jehovah's Witnesses



Note. *N* = 13,586, total sample minus missing data.

Table 6.21 gives a breakdown of the mean for the total score of changes in the subjective wellbeing measure. Across all subgroups, total mean scores were over +8 on a scale of −10 to +10. No statistical differences were found within any group.

Table 6.21

Change in Subjective Wellbeing, Group Comparisons

Group	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Total Sample, Cumulative Score (Range: −10 to +10)	12,611	+8.53	2.21
Gender			
Male	5,657	+8.57	2.16
Female	6,954	+8.50	2.25
Age Group			
Early Young Adults	3,057	+8.62	2.19
Young Adults	3,501	+8.62	2.14
Middle-Aged Adults	4,805	+8.45	2.24
Older Adults	1,248	+8.43	2.31
Generation			
Genocide Generation Adults	3,508	+8.43	2.23
Genocide Generation Minors	4,481	+8.60	2.14
Returnees	965	+8.45	2.42
Post-Genocide Generation	3,057	+8.62	2.19
Genocide Role-Situation, Genocide Generation Adults			
Targeted	412	+8.13	2.89
Helper	865	+8.66	1.99
Imprisoned	102	+8.63	1.95
None	294	+8.37	2.12
Interrupted or Continuous Association			
Interrupted JW Association	1,182	+8.21	2.52
Continuous JW Association	11,347	+8.57	2.17

Scriptures to Cope With Thoughts of Genocide

The JW-RWA study identified several ways in which Jehovah's Witnesses might cope with stressful events and life challenges. Section 3 reported on the Witnesses' strong religious identity that involved an integrated sense of belonging, bonding, believing, and behaving, and that contributed to feelings of support and resilience. Section 4 reported on forgiveness and other prosocial attitudes that are conducive to social and psychological wellbeing, benefiting not only the self but the larger community. Section 5 reported ways in which Witnesses were affected by Genocide and trauma events and how they demonstrated emotion regulation and proactive helping

behaviors under adverse situations. For the surveyed Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda, the Bible is logical and provides a hope for the future.

Given that the sample population are known to rely on the Bible as a moral guide—as is the case for many religious Rwandans—the survey asked respondents: *When you think about the Genocide against the Tutsi, what scriptural thoughts help you?* The response options included biblical verses that are familiar to most Witnesses and would have salience in many contexts. However, the question asked respondents to choose three scriptures that specifically aid them in coping with thoughts related to the Genocide.

From the list of selected scriptures below, respondents could select up to three paraphrased scriptures (as well as the option *none of the above*).

Return evil to no one. Vengeance belongs to God. (Romans 12:17, 19)

Pray; the peace of God guards your heart. (Philippians 4:6)

The meek will possess the earth. (Psalm 37:11)

Forgive us as we forgive others. (Matthew 6:12)

Love your enemy. (Matthew 5:44)

Death, pain, and sorrow will be no more. (Revelation 21:4)

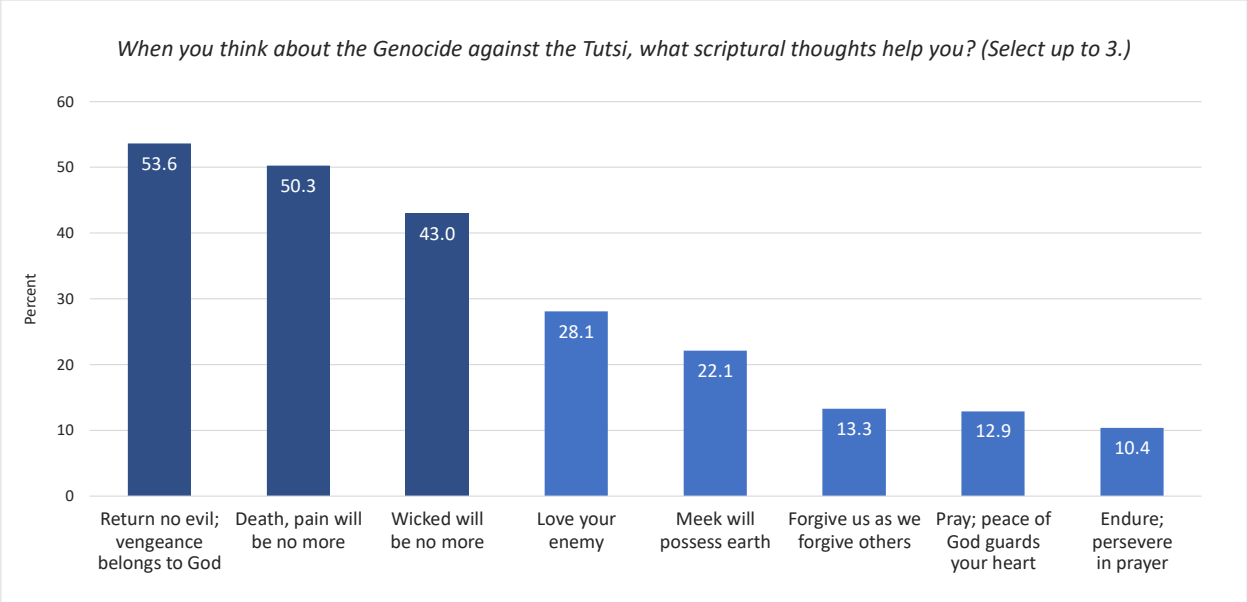
Endure under tribulation. Persevere in prayer. (Romans 12:12)

The wicked will be no more. (Psalm 37:10)

Figure 6.26 shows the percentages of those who selected each scripture as one of their top three choices, with these being the overall top three choices: *Return evil to no one. Vengeance belongs to God* (53.62%); *Death, pain, and sorrow will be no more* (50.26%); and *The wicked will be no more* (42.99%).

Figure 6.26

Scriptures to Cope With Thoughts of Genocide

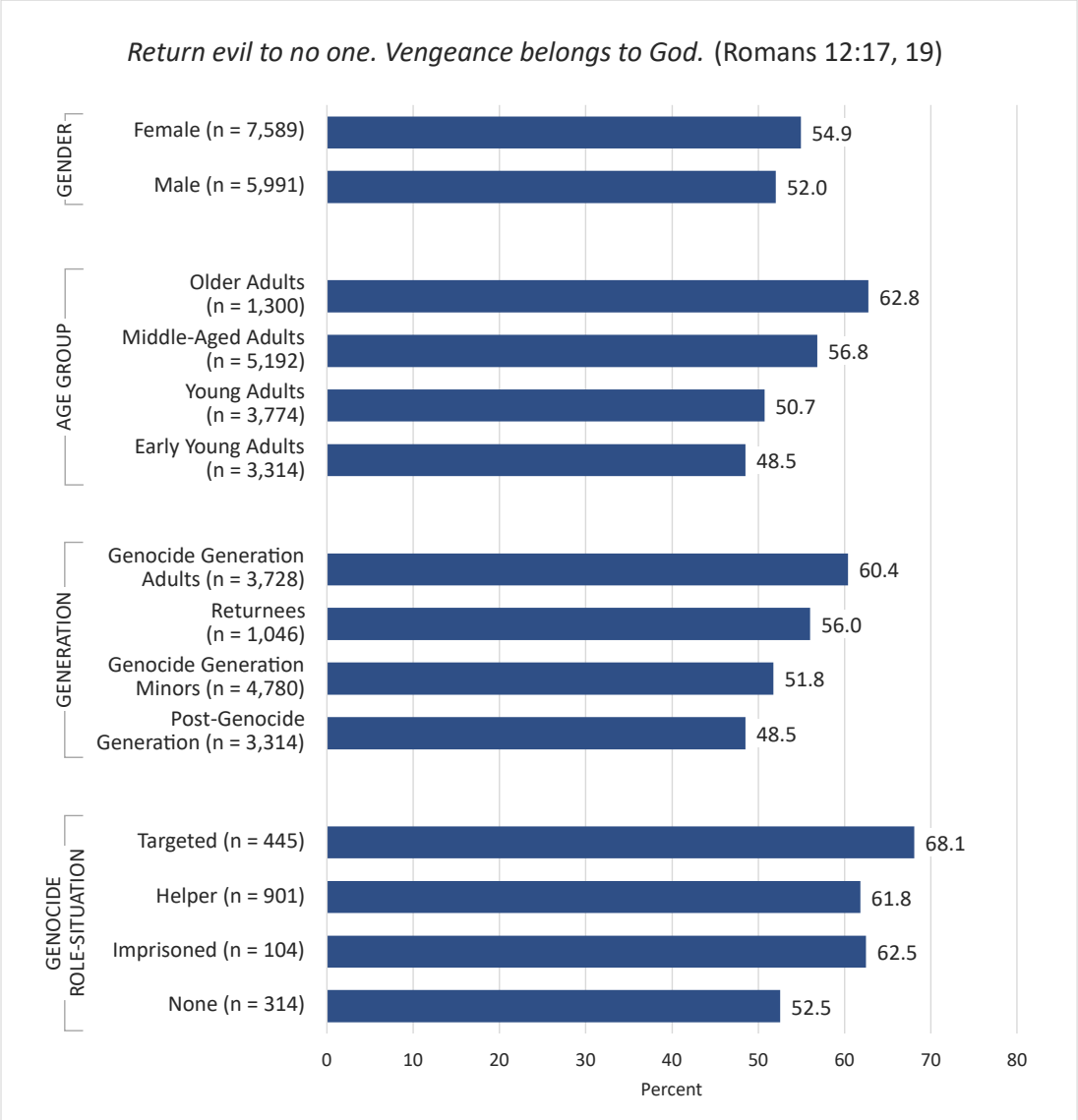


Note. *N* = 13,580, total sample minus missing data.

The most frequently chosen scripture has two distinct but related concepts: behavioral and emotional self-constraint (*Return evil to no one*) and a cognitive rationale related to divine justice (*Vengeance belongs to God*). Group comparisons found that this scripture was favored by a higher percentage of some subgroups than others, as shown in Figure 6.27. For example, over 14% more older adults than early young adults selected this scripture as one of their top three coping scriptures. Out of all the groups, those targeted to be killed had the highest percentage (68.09%) who coped with thoughts of the Genocide against the Tutsi with this scripture.

Figure 6.27

Scripture to Cope With Thoughts of Genocide, Return No Evil; Vengeance Belongs to God

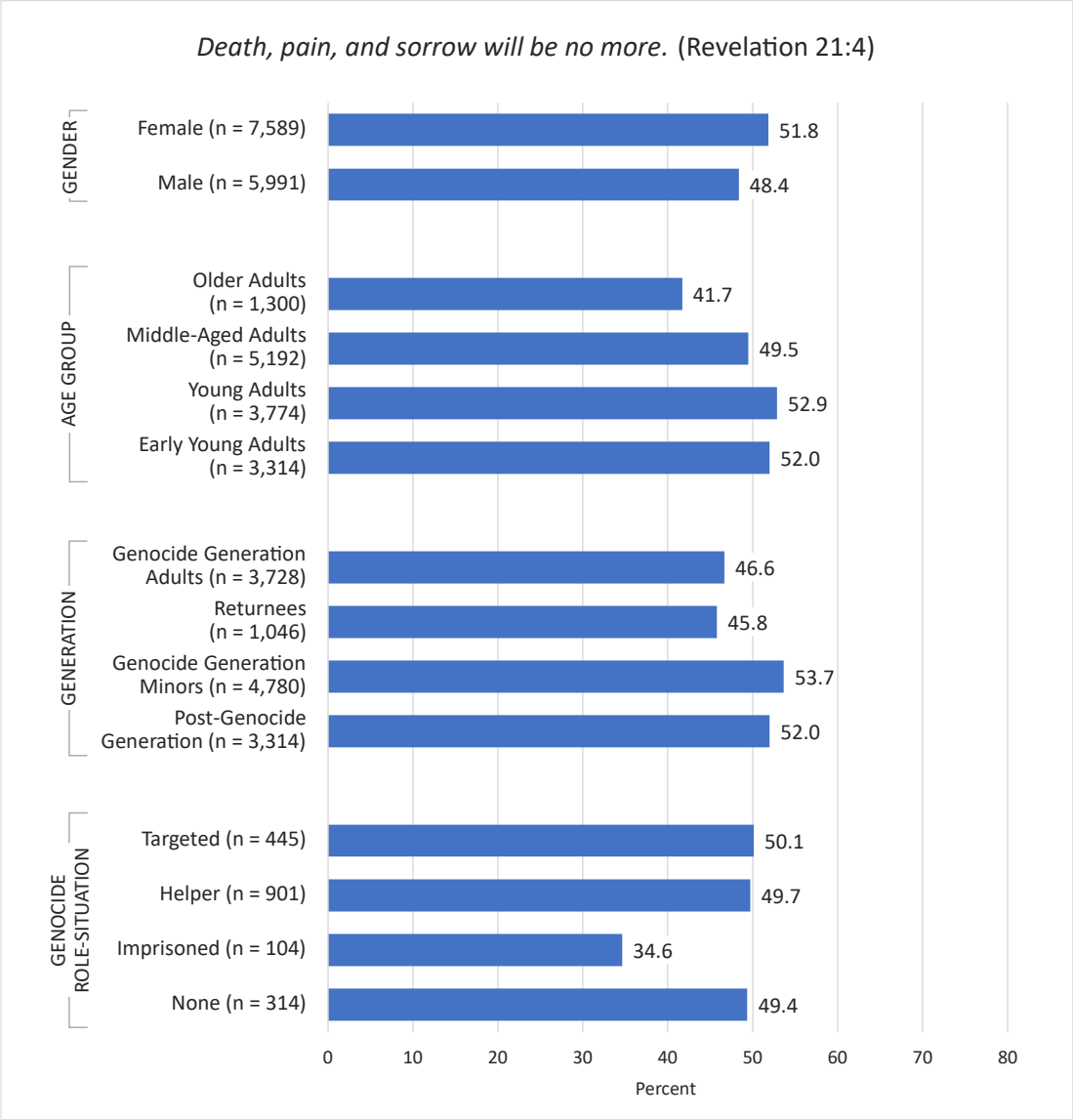


The scripture ranked second in the list was *Death and pain will be no more*, taken from Revelation 21:4. It encompasses two related beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses: the future resurrection of the dead to life on earth and the reward of everlasting life for the righteous. For the sample population, the scriptural thought about the end of death was more helpful in dealing with thoughts about Genocide than were other scriptures related to core Christian concepts such as love, forgiveness, and prayer.

The percentages of those who selected this scripture varied somewhat by demographics and background, as shown in Figure 6.28. Curiously, a higher percentage of young adults (52.86%) selected this scripture compared with older adults (41.69%). Returnees who were outside Rwanda during the Genocide were less likely to select this scripture than were Genocide Generation Minors (45.79% compared with 53.66%). Consistently, across all groups, Revelation 21:4 made the top two choices except for one group. In contrast to all others, the second most frequently selected scripture to cope with thoughts of the Genocide against the Tutsi for those who had been imprisoned for genocide crimes (41.35%) was *The wicked will be no more* taken from Psalm 37:10.

Figure 6.28

Scripture to Cope With Thoughts of Genocide, Death and Pain No More

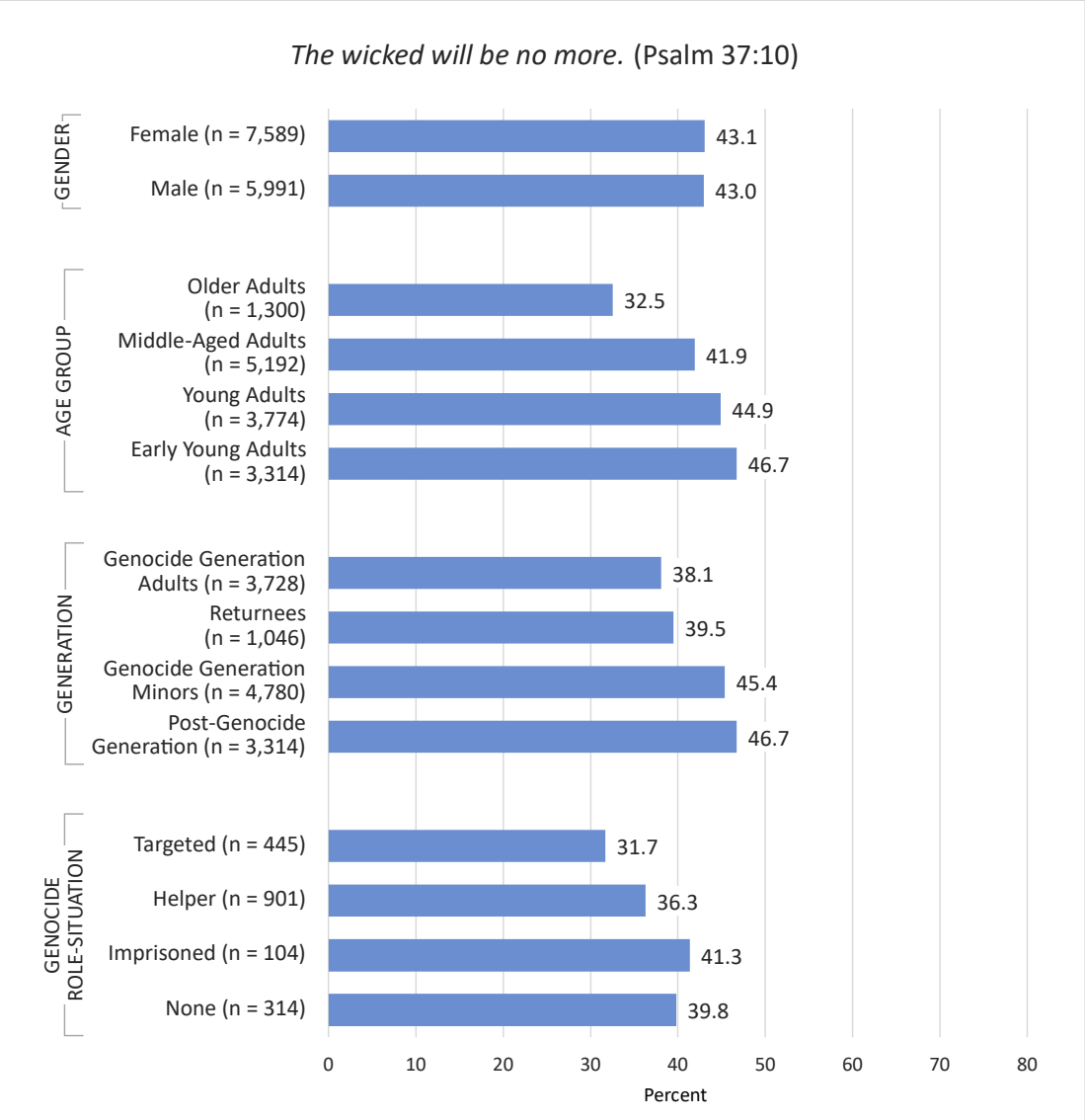


Finally, the scripture chosen as their third choice was *The wicked will be no more*, taken from Psalm 37:10. (See Figure 6.29.) The scriptures in the survey from which respondents could choose included the adjoining verse at Psalm 37:11, *The meek will possess the earth*. For the total sample, 22.10% chose Psalm 37:11 as one of their three coping scriptures. Almost twice as many (42.99%) found help with thoughts about the Genocide in the Bible prophesy at Psalm 37:10 regarding divine justice—there would no longer be wicked people on the earth. A contrast with the

two scriptures was found for early young adults with 18.82% choosing Psalm 37:11 and 46.71% choosing Psalm 37:10.

Figure 6.29

Scripture to Cope With Thoughts of Genocide, Wicked Will Be No More



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Conclusion

The JW-RWA study investigated factors related to the view of Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda toward their (a) past self—the centrality of the Genocide and posttraumatic stress symptoms (PTSS); (b) future self—temporal orientation and view of the future; (c) narrative self—conversations about Genocide and trauma events; (d) family identity—satisfaction with family functioning; and (e) collective identity—perceived psychological changes since becoming Jehovah's Witnesses and scriptures as religious coping. Together these present a collective image of the subjective social and psychological wellbeing of those within the faith community. The large data set allowed multiple group comparisons to assess the effect of gender, age group, generation, Genocide role-situation, and the number of years someone was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, either continuously or with interruption. The following are highlights from the findings.

Past Self

The Genocide against the Tutsi affected Jehovah's Witnesses to varying degrees, as evidenced by how often they thought about the Genocide and how they thought it affected them. The frequency of posttraumatic stress symptoms was another indicator of how much the Witnesses were affected not only by the Genocide but also by other possible traumatic events.

Centrality of Genocide

The extent to which the Genocide was central to the thoughts and lives of Jehovah's Witnesses varied widely for different age groups, generations, and Genocide role-situations. For over half of Jehovah's Witnesses, the Genocide is an occasional or rare thought, but for about 15% of the Witnesses, even 30 years after the event, the historical event is a frequent or persistent thought. There were age and generational differences, but not gender differences, in the frequency

of Genocide-related thoughts, with older ones thinking more frequently about the Genocide than younger ones, particularly if the older ones had been targeted or later imprisoned.

The question about how the Genocide affected them appeared difficult for many to answer, with about one fourth responding that they preferred not to answer. Most recognized that the Genocide affected how they viewed the world and their lives, and one third thought that the Genocide was central to their family identity.

PTSS

The PTSS measure allowed analysis of cohort differences in posttraumatic symptomatology and possible generational trauma effects (e.g., comparison of personal Genocide role-situations of Genocide Generation respondents with family's Genocide role-situations of Post-Genocide Generation respondents). Although the measure was not limited to Genocide traumas; it was those who had lived through the Genocide, particularly those targeted, who reported the highest frequency of symptoms of all the subgroups. The highest-scored single item in the PTSS measure was having *recurrent thoughts or memories of the event*. Hypervigilant symptoms (i.e., feeling jumpy or on guard) were the lowest-scored items. Avoidance items had the highest PTSS scores, suggesting that avoiding thoughts and activities associated with the trauma event is a common coping strategy for those with posttraumatic stress symptoms.

The challenges of PTSS that some Jehovah's Witnesses face add further meaning to their view of the congregation as a community able to provide comfort and support when needed.

Importance of Education About the Genocide

The majority of Jehovah's Witnesses believe that education about the Genocide is important and that young people need to learn the history of the Genocide against the Tutsi. Awareness of this part of Rwandan history serves as a bridge between generations. The Post-

Genocide Generation of Witnesses believed Genocide education was important but to a lesser extent than those who experienced the Genocide, either as adults or minors. Education about the Genocide would include how genocides happen and what can be done to prevent them. Of all the subgroups analyzed, those who were formerly imprisoned for genocide crimes and who later became Jehovah's Witnesses felt most strongly about teaching young people about this history.

Future Self

Overall, Jehovah's Witnesses think less about their childhood or past and are more focused on the present and the future. A forward-thinking orientation has therapeutic benefits that can minimize the time and mental space given to unproductive ruminations about the past. Having both a present and future orientation is conducive to setting goals that have short- and long-term objectives. Contrary to expectations that older adults might think more about the past and young adults more about the future, no age differences were found. In fact, across all groups—gender, age group, generation, Genocide role-situation, years as a Witness, or continuous or interrupted religious affiliation—Jehovah's Witnesses had a remarkably uniform pattern of how much they thought about the past and the future.

The same was true about how they viewed their past and future. Hardships during childhood and the past were reflected in the one third who had negative feelings about their past. Yet, the past did not dictate how most felt about their present or future lives, with well over three fourths feeling positive about their current lives in post-Genocide Rwanda and also how they imagine their future self. Although the pattern was identical across all groups, the contrast between view of the past and future was most stark for those who were previously imprisoned for genocide crimes and later became Jehovah's Witnesses. Of all the groups analyzed, the Imprisoned group

had the most negative effect score for their childhood and past, and the most positive effect score about the near and distant future.

The one common denominator for the various demographic and situational groups is their chosen religion. Jehovah's Witnesses' hope is rooted in a belief system that they believe logically explains why suffering exists and what the future holds. The temporal orientation of Witnesses in Rwanda indicates that such beliefs are personalized, influencing their self-identity and subjective wellbeing.

Narrative Identity

The study reveals how much the Genocide or other past traumas make up the narrative identity of Jehovah's Witnesses. Talking about the Genocide and past traumatic events is difficult. Over half of Jehovah's Witnesses indicated that it was painful to hear about their family's experiences during the Genocide. Most were more comfortable talking with those in similar age groups. Developmental and generational differences were seen in that three fourths of the Genocide Generation Adults were comfortable talking with someone younger; and while over half of the Post-Genocide Generation were comfortable talking with someone older, the gap in percentages for the two generation age groups was noticeable, but not surprising.

Over 80% of Jehovah's Witnesses indicated that they were comfortable talking with those in their family and congregation about traumatic experiences. About personal or family Genocide experiences, approximately half had talked with someone in their family and one third had talked with someone in their congregation. In addition to the social and emotional support from families and congregations, the study shows that Jehovah's Witnesses also use outside counseling support, as did some 6% of the Genocide Generation Adults and 16% of those who had been targeted to be killed during the Genocide.

Those who lived through the Genocide either as adults or minors were more likely to talk about Genocide experiences than those who were either outside Rwanda during the Genocide, were born after the Genocide, or did not experience the Genocide as being targeted, helping others, or later imprisoned. In general, Jehovah's Witnesses do not use their public ministry as a forum to share their personal narratives, but a few have shared personal or family experiences with others while in the ministry.

Posttraumatic growth changes the self-narrative with a reframing of past hardships into successful life changes. Jehovah's Witnesses recognize changes especially in their spiritual growth and relationships with others. Despite the diverse backgrounds and experiences, those in the faith community generally view past traumas from the vantage point of positive, personal change.

Family Identity

The composition of the family affects social roles, interactions, and identity. The Genocide devastated family life, forcing merging and reconfigurations of what constituted a family. Three decades later, family life is more normative. Still, family functioning and satisfaction can be challenging for years after the Genocide. Males and females report similar satisfaction with how their family functions. Married couples with children report the highest family satisfaction compared with other household types. Households in which all adult members are Jehovah's Witnesses are more satisfied with their family life than those in divided households. However, the most significant finding was that there were no differences in family satisfaction depending on gender, age group, generations, or Genocide role-situation. Despite past traumas, personal failings, and life stressors, the family identity of Jehovah's Witnesses is generally characterized as having cohesion, flexibility, and good communication.

Collective Identity

Jehovah's Witnesses strongly identify with their religion (reported in Section 3) and perceive positive changes in their interpersonal relationships since becoming Jehovah's Witnesses (reported in Section 4). Most Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda adopted the religion as adults. Over 90% of Jehovah's Witnesses in Rwanda perceive that their social and psychological wellbeing improved ***after*** they changed their religious affiliation. This was their subjective assessment of their self-worth, opinion of self, life in general, hope for the future, and emotional and mental wellbeing.

As a religious people, Jehovah's Witnesses find comfort in scriptures relating to divine justice and promises for a restored earth without wickedness. The study presents a composite portrayal of how Jehovah's Witnesses see themselves—a people who face challenges, have the support of family and fellow believers, and view their future with optimism.

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