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Published in:
The Diversity Of Worldviews Among Young Adults

DOI:
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-94691-3_10

Published: 01/01/2022

Document Version
Final published version

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Link to publication

Please cite the original version:
Erdis Gökce, H., Sjö, S., Nynäs, P., & Lagerström, M. (2022). Prosociality in an International Perspective: Civic Engagement and Volunteering. In P. Nynäs, A. Keysar, J. Kontala, B.-W. Kwaku Golo, M. T. Lassander, M. Shterin, S. Sjö, & P. Stenner (Eds.), *The Diversity Of Worldviews Among Young Adults: Contemporary (Non)Religiosity And Spirituality Through The Lens Of An International Mixed Method Study* (pp. 197-219). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-94691-3_10

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Chapter 10
Prosociality in an International Perspective: Civic Engagement and Volunteering

Habibe Erdiş Gökce, Sofia Sjö, Peter Nynäs, and Martin Lagerström

Abstract In many studies of young adults, prosocial attitudes and behaviors are on the agenda. The often reported decline in civic engagement among young adults is generally presented as a concern. Prosocial attitudes and behaviors have been linked to aspects of well-being; high scores on some prosocial attitude indicators are seen as a sign of positive adjustment. Prosocial attitudes and behaviors are also key in discussions of civic engagement, volunteering, and altruism – aspects, in a sense, of the well-being of a society, and they are also of interest in discussions of religion. Commonly, a link between prosociality and religion has been indicated.

In this chapter, we bring together findings from the research project Young Adults and Religion in Global Perspective (YARG) for an overview of prosocial attitudes and behaviors among young adult university students. We focus particularly on civic engagement and volunteering. Based on survey data, we first briefly explore who expresses prosocial attitudes and behaviors and the values connected to prosocial behaviors. This perspective offers only tentative answers. For a more in-depth view, we continue by exploring the data from the Faith Q-Sort. Finally, we zoom in on two examples, Turkey and Sweden, and compare the views on civic engagement and volunteering among young adults in these two contexts.

Keywords Prosociality · Civic engagement · Young adults · Volunteering · Sweden · Turkey

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P. Nynäs et al. (eds.), *The Diversity Of Worldviews Among Young Adults*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-94691-3_10

10.1 Introduction

In many studies of young adults, prosocial attitudes and behaviors are an essential concern. Prosocial attitudes and behaviors have been linked to aspects of well-being; high scores on some prosocial attitude indicators are seen as a sign of positive adjustment (Smart & Sanson, 2005). Prosocial attitudes and behaviors are also key in discussions of civic engagement, volunteering, and altruism. The often reported decline in civic engagement among young adults is generally presented as a concern (Sloam, 2013). The topic is also of interest in discussions of religion, as a link between prosociality and religion has been indicated (e.g. Vermeer & Scheepers, 2012).

In the international project Young Adults and Religion in a Global Perspective (YARG), prosocial attitudes and behaviors were touched upon in all the different forms of material gathered. The mixed-method study was conducted in thirteen different countries and included a survey, the Faith Q-Sort and semi-structured interviews. In the survey, the participants were queried about broad forms of volunteering. The survey also included the Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) (Schwartz et al., 2012; Schwartz, 2017), which helps to identify the respondents' value profile in relation to prosocial behavior. In the Faith Q-Sort (FQS) (Wulff, 2019), a method for assessing and studying secular and religious worldviews used for the first time on a cross-cultural scale in YARG, statements relating to prosocial behaviors are included. They bring up themes such as the extent to which one gives time or money to religious organizations or worthy causes, and to what extent one primarily expresses one's own religiosity in charitable acts or social action (for more on the FQS see Chaps. 1 and 3 of this volume). Finally, in the semi-structured interviews following the FQS, we have brought up questions about civic engagement, namely in the sense of taking part in groups and organizations, and volunteering.

In this chapter, we bring the different findings together for an overview of prosocial attitudes and behaviors among the participants in our study, focusing particularly on civic engagement and volunteering. First, we briefly explore who expresses prosocial attitudes and behaviors among our participants in the survey, and the values connected to prosocial behaviors. Due to small sample sizes on country level and the dominance of a positive answer to the question used, the survey offers primarily some tentative observations. For a more in-depth view, we continue by exploring the Faith Q-Sort prototypes that express aspects of prosocial behavior. Finally, we compare the views on civic engagement and volunteering among young adults in two different contexts, both chosen because of their similarities and differences: Turkey and Sweden.

10.2 Prosociality in Light of Previous Research

We begin with a brief overview of previous research that relates to this study, focusing particularly on studies of young adults. Different studies define civic engagement differently, which makes comparisons challenging. Generally, the term refers

to involvement in social and political life. This can entail everything from being an active member of a political party to organized volunteer work or, in some cases, just helping others in the community. In research, there is often to be found a normative perspective on civic engagement. Civic engagement is argued to be commendable by promoting democratic aspects (e.g. Banyan, 2016) and researchers are often interested in who engages and why, and how civic engagement can be strengthened (see e.g. Flanagan et al., 1998; Grönlund et al., 2011; Gil-Lacruz et al., 2016). Reasons or motivations for, for example, political activity and volunteering can, however, differ a great deal, though they may both capture aspects of prosocial attitudes.

In their study of young adults in North America, Christian Smith and Patricia Snell (2009) illustrate both a decline in religious engagement among young adults and a more general decline in civic engagement. Young people are "less involved in and committed towards a wide variety of other, non-religious social and institutional connections, associations, and activities" (2009, 92) and "[t]heir relatively lower degrees of religiousness are only one part of a larger package of lower levels of social and institutional concerns and involvements generally" (2009, 94), according to Smith and Snell. Decline in civic engagement is noticeable in European contexts too (Sloam, 2013). However, while researchers illustrate a decline in civic engagement among the young in many settings, they also point to how civic engagement is changing, not least due to new media (Sloam, 2014).

Regarding who engages, research points to a number of factors. Gender has been shown to play some role in civic engagement (e.g. Einolf, 2011), and civic engagement also seems to be connected to education and social class (e.g. Sloam, 2013) and to some demographic factors, such as community connections (e.g. Duke et al., 2009). Flanagan and Levine argue that "colleges have become perhaps the central institution for civic incorporation of younger generations. But no comparable institution exists for young adults who do not attend college" (2010, 159). This thus means that the young adult university students we study in YARG may express more civic engagement than other groups of young people.

Several studies consider volunteering to be a form of prosocial behavior (e.g. Penner, 2002; Marta & Pozzi, 2008). Research has reported mixed evidence of young adults' engagement in volunteering with both decline (e. g. Caputo, 2009; Smith & Snell, 2009) and stable and increasing rates (Alexander, 2006; Galston, 2007). Research also point to a change in younger generations' voluntary behavior. Compared to adult volunteering that has been reported as motivated by altruistic values, solidarity with the community and a more lifelong commitment (e.g. Cornelis et al., 2013), young adults demonstrate more informal, temporary and individualistic forms of volunteering (Hustinx & Lammentyn, 2003). Young adults' participation in voluntary action has been shown to be motivated by, among other things, concern for individual advancement (Hustinx & Lammentyn, 2003), self-realization (Hustinx, 2001), socialization (Hibbert et al., 2003) and career development (Holdsworth & Brewis, 2013). However, much is still unknown about the motivations underlying young adults volunteering behavior across cultures (e.g. Marta & Pozzi, 2008).

Studies have also explored how prosociality relates to values (e.g. Caprara et al., 2011; Juujärvi et al., 2012; Kinnunen et al., 2016), with somewhat different results depending on the studied forms of prosocial behaviors. Exploring three different forms of volunteering – hospice work, missionary activities, and sport volunteers – Śliwak et al. (2018) have illustrated that different values correlate with different forms of volunteering:

> Both [success and power] are most highly valued by sports volunteers, and are less important for hospice volunteers. Similarly, hedonism and stimulation are the most preferred values for sports volunteers, but are least valued by hospice volunteers. Tradition is the highest value for mission volunteers […] and least of all by the sports volunteers. Universalism is a greater value for mission volunteers than for sports volunteers […] mission volunteers are more self-directing than hospice volunteers. (Śliwak et al., 2018, p. 103)

This highlights that when exploring values and volunteering, the type of volunteering matters.Many studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between religion and different forms of prosocial behavior such as giving to charity, volunteering and helping strangers (Ruiter & DeGraaf, 2006; Putnam & Campbell, 2010; Saroglou et al., 2005). But questions have been raised regarding whether or not religious individuals *actually* behave more prosocially than non-religious individuals (Norenzayan & Shariff, 2008; Preston et al., 2010; Galen, 2012). Compared to empirical survey results, laboratory studies controlling for contextual variables and conditions provide less conclusive results. Religious primes have been shown to increase prosocial behavior (Pichon, et al., 2007; Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007; Tan & Vogel, 2008), but other studies found no significant correlation between religiosity and prosocial actions (Ahmed & Hammarstedt, 2011; Ahmed & Salas, 2011; Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007). Religiosity and religious conditions have also been associated with prosocial behavior towards some targets, but less towards other targets (Pichon & Saroglou, 2009; Ben-Ner et al., 2009).

10.3 Volunteering and Young Adults from an International Perspective

The concept of volunteering has been shown to have different meanings according to the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of a society, and it has been hard to agree upon a universal definition. The “State of the world’s volunteerism report, 2011: universal values for global well-being”, prepared by the United Nations Volunteers Program, deals with the universality of volunteering, its areas of activity, its scope, and its role and contribution to peace and development in the world (Leigh et al., 2011). The United Nations has adopted an “umbrella” approach in describing volunteering with three criteria: (1) volunteerism is *not* an obligation imposed by a contractor; (2) it *is* an activity carried out by someone free of charge and; (3) it is done without expecting any financial contribution (Leigh et al., 2011).

In order to capture the broad meaning that volunteering may have in different sociocultural and religious contexts, an inclusive definition of volunteering was used in the YARG project, namely volunteering as (1) activities which contribute to the work of comparatively large and formal organized agencies in the broad field of social welfare (see e.g. Paine et al., 2010) and (2) activities in small scale and informal organizational settings in such areas as advocacy, culture and sport. The last mentioned is of a special interest, since previous research demonstrated that 'unorganized' acts of volunteering are rarely acknowledged (Paine et al., 2010). Furthermore, the project needed to define the phenomena based on common principles which underlie the general understanding of volunteering both within and across countries. This resulted in an understanding of volunteering as an act (1) without pay, (2) performed accordingly to an individual's free will, and (3) which benefited someone else than the volunteer. In order to cover this definition of volunteering, the following question was used in the survey: *In the past year, have you volunteered to help someone other than your family and close relatives, done something good for other people, or done some charity work?* The respondents were presented with a list of five answer options: Definitely Yes; Probably Yes; Probably No; Definitely No; and I don't Know.

The YARG survey (appendix 3), which was run in 2016, included 4964 university students from thirteen countries: Canada, China, Finland, Ghana, India, Israel, Japan, Peru, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Turkey and United States of America. Figure 10.1 illustrates the percentages of people volunteering and not volunteering in each country involved in the YARG project. As the figure illustrates, most of our participants report that they have volunteered or that they have probably done so in the last year. The exception that stands out is Japan, but the small samples size means that this exception should not be overinterpreted. The generally high numbers likely reflect the way the question was put, with a focus on both organized and unorganized volunteering. However, the numbers might also highlight that we are dealing with university students. As previous research has shown, a university does often provide possibilities to volunteer and take part in different kinds of civic engagement (e.g. Flanagan & Levine, 2010). The fact that so many of our respondents report that they volunteer, makes it difficult to identify differences between those who volunteer and those who do not, but our survey does allow us to explore some characteristics.

Building on findings from previous research, we have paid interest to variables measuring religiosity, demographic background, family income, and gender. We used a binary logistic regression model to determine which variables increased the odds of participating in prosocial behavior (yes or no) or the broad sense of volunteering queried in the survey.

Religiosity has often been linked to prosocial behaviors such as volunteering (Ruiter & DeGraaf, 2006), but not all measurements of religion reveal similar results. We have therefore included measures of self-assessed religiosity, family religiosity, public religious practice and private religious practice. Self-assessed religiosity was probed with the question "Regardless of whether you consider yourself as belonging or close to a particular religious group, community, or tradition,

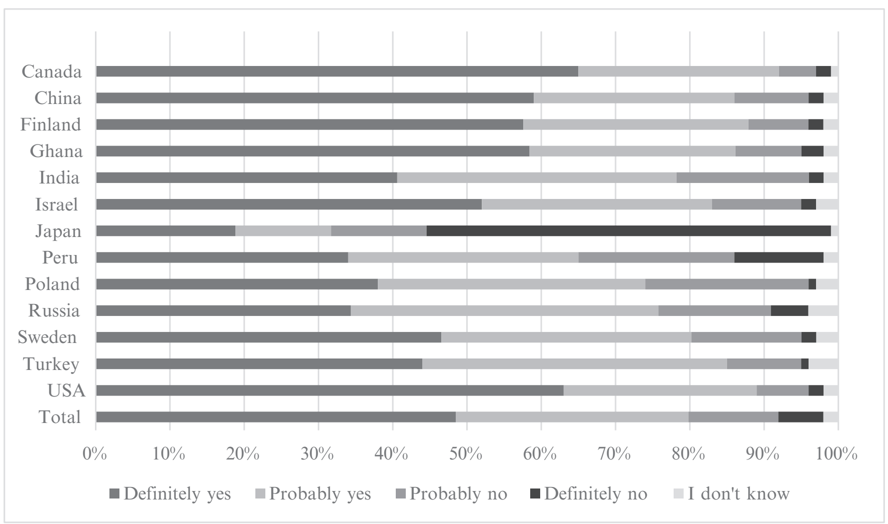

Fig. 10.1 Answers to the question "In the past year, have you volunteered to help someone other than your family and close relatives, done something good for other people, or done some charity work"

how religious would you say you are?" and family religiosity with the question "How religious would you say the family you grew up in was?", both measured on a scale from 0 to 10. Public and private religious activity were measured with the questions "apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how often do you take part in religious ceremonies or services these days?" and "apart from when you are at religious ceremonies or services, how often do you engage in private religious or spiritual practices, such as worship, prayer, or meditation?" respectively. Both were measured on a seven-grade ordinal scale ranging from "Never" to "Every day" and were treated as a continuous variable. Higher scores on all four religiosity variables indicated higher perceived religiosity.

Gender has been linked to prosocial behavior (e.g. Einolf, 2011), though not always revealing a clear connection. The gender variable included the alternatives "Male", "Female" and "Other", with participants answering "other" being excluded due to a low number of respondents ($n = 25$). The community one grows up in can also shape prosocial engagements (e.g. Duke et al., 2009). In this case, our survey did not give us a great deal of options, but we decided to explore the impact of a rural or city upbringing. This was assessed with the question: "At the age of 15, did you live in a city or in the countryside?" Socioeconomic status is also known to have an impact on civic engagement (e.g. Flanagan & Levine, 2010). In this case, we chose to focus on family income. Family income was measured on a six-grade ordinal scale by comparing the mean income in a country ("In considering your family's monthly income relative to the average in your country, is it?"), with answers ranging from "Much lower than average" to "Much higher than average". Family income was approximately normally distributed and was treated as a continuous variable.

Table 10.1 The effect of religiosity and demographic variables on prosocial behavior

	B	*SE*	*p*	*OR, 95% CI [lower, upper]*
Intercept	1.24	0.20	< .001***	
Self-assessed religiosity	−0.04	0.02	.033*	0.96 [0.92, 1.00]
Family religiosity	0.04	0.02	.021*	1.04 [1.01, 1.08]
Public religious practice	0.04	0.04	.321	1.04 [0.97, 1.12]
Private religious practice	0.16	0.03	< .001***	1.17 [1.12, 1.24]
Female	0.25	0.03	.002**	1.28 [1.09, 1.50]
Countryside	−0.00	0.09	.964	1.00 [0.84, 1.18]
Family income	−0.10	0.04	.009**	0.91 [0.85, 0.98]

Note. *B* Log-odds, *SE* Standard error, *OR* Odds ratio, *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$, *CI* lower and upper limit for the 95% confidence interval

The questions on public and private religious practice as well as the questions of countryside and family income all included an “I don’t know”-option, participants answering “I don’t know” on any of the measured variables were excluded from all analyses, making the final sample size n = 4308.

The overall logistic regression model was significant $\chi^2(7) = 112.31$, $p < .001$, Nagelkerke’s $R^2 = .04$. Table 10.1 displays the effects of individual predictors on prosocial behavior.

The results indicate that being female, reporting more private religious practice and a more religious family background were associated with higher odds of participating in prosocial behavior, when controlling for the other variables in the model. In contrast, self-assessed religiosity and a higher family income were associated with lower odds of participating in prosocial behavior. Having lived in a city or in the countryside at the age of 15 had no association to prosocial behavior. These results could indicate that self-assessed religiosity is not linked to prosocial behavior, but rather to the values one was brought up with. We cannot neglect the low R^2 value in this case that underlines the fact that these data do not allow us to make predictions. Yet, low R^2 values are not necessarily problematic and can still reflect a significant trend within the frame of a study with high-variability data. Hence, we need to underline that there are many other substantial variables that affect prosocial behavior outside the ones used in our model. There is thus a need for upcoming studies to delve deeper into this topic than space allows here.

We have also explored the results of the regression model for each context. However, due to the small sample sizes and the fact that so many have answered yes to the question on volunteering, interpreting the results becomes difficult. Many of the significant effects we see for the whole sample disappear when the individual cases are explored. The small samples also make generalizations regarding the contexts problematic. In most cases though, the effects are similar, as for the whole YARG-sample. Regarding Turkey and Sweden, the results point in the same direction as for the total sample in YARG, with the exception of gender (being female has a slight negative effect, in other words it leads to lower odds of expressing prosocial behavior), but the results are for neither case significant. In the case of Finland, the results for both private religious practice and gender are significant and in line with

the results of the whole sample, but there are also countries that show somewhat different results. In Peru, private religious activity, but particularly public religious activity, is associated with higher odds for prosocial behavior. In India, in turn, being female is negatively associated with prosocial behavior, while in Israel having lived in the countryside is positively associated with prosocial behavior. These varied results highlight the need to explore the contexts further.

Next, we examined if there were differences in the values between the two groups based on Schwartz's (1992, 2017) theory of basic human values. The theory is based on the idea that values are a set of beliefs about what is desirable and what means are appropriate for pursuing the desires and categorizes values based on their motivational goals. According to Schwartz (1992), values are organized along a motivational continuum, and the boundaries between them are blurry, forming a circular value structure (Schwartz, 2017). This structure (see Fig. 10.2) describes the relationship between the motivational goals, or value types. Neighboring types are comprehended as complementary or compatible motivational goals. For example, the conformity and tradition values share the goal of stability. Value types placed at the opposite poles of the circle are seen as incompatible values, such as conformity and self-direction. An important aspect of the theory is that the relative order between the values is stable and represents a value hierarchy.

A refined theory of basic values (Schwartz et al., 2012; Schwartz, 2017) provides a more nuanced categorization of values and a model based on 19 value types in contrast to the initial ten. This does not include new values, but the benevolence value is divided into caring and dependability, security into societal and personal etc. and the new categorization was present already in the definition of the ten

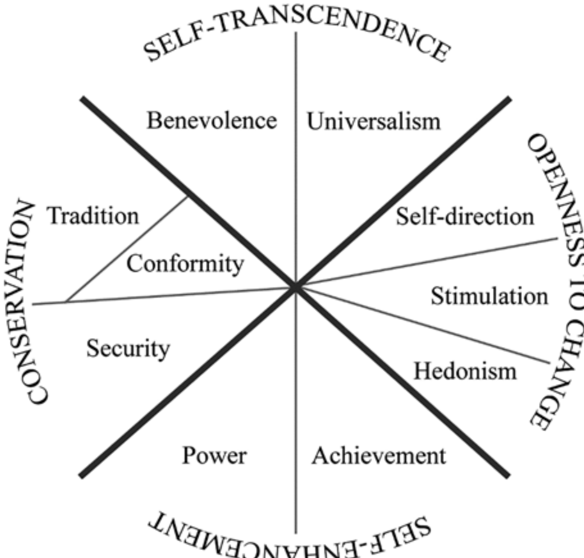

Fig. 10.2 Schwartz, 1992 value structure. See also Lassander (2014) and Lassander and Nynäs (2016)

values. Table 10.2 displays mean scores for each of the 19 values included in the Schwartz PVQ-RR scale. In the sample, scores on all values ranged from −4.60 to 3.68 are included. Positive scores indicate that the group held the particular value to a higher regard than the mean of all 19 values, while negative scores indicate the opposite. Values were tested for significance using Welche's t-test, correcting for false discovery rate with Bonferroni correction. Significance tests are based on adjusted p-values, $\alpha = .05$.

Examining the value differences with the largest effect sizes, benevolence, power and universalism stand out. Those who participate in prosocial behavior held benevolence and universalism to a higher regard than those who do not participate in such activities. In addition, they held power to a lower regard than those who do not volunteer. These results are partly in line with previous studies of some forms of volunteering (Śliwak et al., 2018). Although broad, the question of volunteering used does seem to highlight a form of volunteering where a general welfare of others is essential. The sample sizes are again too small for anything but a very tentative analysis. The contexts express many similarities, but there are also some variations, indicating the need for further exploration. Regarding Sweden and Turkey, the results are in line with the total sample when it comes to benevolence and power; however, in the case of Turkey, there is no difference between the groups in regards to universalism.

10.4 The FQS-Prototypes and Prosocial Behavior

As part of our study, a smaller sample of participants in the survey was selected to take part in the Faith Q-Sort with a following interview. In accordance with Q-methodology, these participants had to rank all 101 statements of the Faith Q-set according to how well they identified with them. It is of particular relevance here that there are statements in the Faith Q-set that relate specifically to questions of prosocial behavior. They are the following: "Gives substantial amounts of time or money to some religious organization or worthy cause" (FQS1); "Expresses his or her religion primarily in charitable acts or social action" (FQS27); "Actively works towards making the world a better place to live" (FQS51); "Embraces an outlook that actively seeks to change societal structures and values" (FQS56); and "Is profoundly touched by the suffering of others" (FQS77). In this section we explore the relevance of these statements, first by investigating to what extent the statements are central to the prototypes identified in YARG, and then by exploring the types of prototypes which the statements constitute a part of. For an extensive presentation and discussion of these prototypes, we refer to Chaps. 1, 3, 4 and 5 and appendix 2.

Among the statements of interest, two are among the most often identified with among all the FQS-participants. Almost every second participant in the total sample (N = 562) from twelve countries (43%) have ranked the statement "Is profoundly touched by the suffering of others" (FQS77) within one of the two highest categories, namely as either +4 or + 3. Almost every third participant (33%) has similarly

Table 10.2 Mean scores on PVQ-RR per prosocial group

	Non-prosocial *M* (*SD*)	Prosocial *M* (*SD*)	*p*	*D*		Non-prosocial *M* (*SD*)	Prosocial *M* (*SD*)	*p*	*d*
Achievement	0.30 (0.78)	0.21 (0.73)	.111	0.12	Self-direction – action	0.67 (0.79)	0.61 (0.74)	1.00	0.08
Benevolence – Caring	0.43 (0.77)	0.70 (0.63)	< .001	−0.38	Self-direction – thought	0.57 (0.83)	0.57 (0.73)	1.00	0.00
Benevolence – Dependability	0.57 (0.74)	0.71 (0.69)	< .001	−0.20	Security – personal	0.38 (0.70)	0.25 (0.67)	< .001	0.19
Conformity – interpersonal	−0.16 (1.06)	−0.30 (0.99)	.023	0.14	Security – societal	0.35 (0.89)	0.37 (0.81)	1.00	−0.02
Conformity – Rules	−0.33 (0.98)	−0.47 (1.04)	.011	0.14	Stimulation	−0.10 (0.94)	−0.05 (0.90)	1.00	−0.05
Face	0.13 (0.93)	−0.02 (0.89)	< .001	0.16	Tradition	−0.92 (1.14)	−0.88 (1.20)	1.00	−0.03
Hedonism	0.38 (0.84)	0.29 (0.82)	.129	0.11	Universalism – Concern	0.36 (0.84)	0.61 (0.79)	< .001	−0.31
Humility	−0.39 (0.87)	−0.26 (0.87)	.001	−0.15	Universalism – Nature	−0.48 (1.04)	−0.14 (1.02)	< .001	−0.33
Power – dominance	−1.18 (1.05)	−1.46 (1.11)	< .001	0.26	Universalism – tradition	0.31 (0.91)	0.49 (0.81)	< .001	−0.21
Power – resources	−0.90 (1.10)	−1.23 (1.13)	< .001	0.30					

Note. *p* p-values adjusted for false discovery rate using Bonferroni correction, *d* Cohen's d

ranked the statement "Actively works towards making the world a better place to live" (FQS51) in the same highest categories (for more on this, see Chap. 7 of this volume). The fact that many participants strongly identify with these notions is also evident from how being "profoundly touched by the suffering of others" (FQS77) is defining for 20 of the approximately 60 prototypes we acquired from our study in all countries. Seeing oneself as a person who "actively works towards making the world a better place live" (FQS51) was defining in twelve of these.

Being "profoundly touched by the suffering of others" (FQS77) does not necessarily say that much about prosocial behaviors, while the idea of working "towards making the world a better place" (FQS51) more clearly points in a prosocial direction. Yet, it does not give us much of an idea about what the behavior entails. Also the notion that one "embraces an outlook that actively seeks to change societal structures and values" (FQS56) is an indicator of prosocial behavior, if one assumes that changing societal structures and values is done for the sake of a common good. Two statements clearly indicate a prosocial approach. These are "Gives substantial amounts of time or money to some religious organization or worthy cause" (FQS1), and "Expresses his or her religion primarily in charitable acts or social action" (FQS27). Both of these statements can be understood as primarily referring to a religious outlook, but looking at the prototypes they are included in, we find some variations.

Prototypes that include a prosocial perspective are found in all twelve countries studied, but they are more common in some of the countries, and also differ in kind depending on context. The statement "Actively works towards making the world a better place to live" (FQS51) is a consensus statement in many contexts, and does not distinguish the prototypes from one another. It can also be a defining statement for many prototypes in one context, without being a consensus statement that is embraced by most. Among the prototypes we extracted from the Canadian data, both "Actively works towards making the world a better place to live" and (FQS51) "Is profoundly touched by the suffering of others" (FQS77) are consensus statements. In the case of Ghana, the previous statement (FQS51) is also a consensus statement, though with a somewhat lower grading and the latter statement (FQS77) is graded +4 in three out of four prototypes. There are thus some similarities when it comes to Canada and Ghana. Nevertheless, at closer inspection, the prototypes differ a great deal, for instance in the way that religiosity and belief are at the surface in the Ghanaian prototypes, whereas the Canadian prototypes are defined more by secular and spiritual views.

The fact that these shared ideas acquire somewhat different meanings in different contexts can be exemplified further. In the case of China, the statement "Actively works towards making the world a better place to live" (FQS51) is ranked +4 in three out of six prototypes, but in only one prototype is this statement combined with another prosocial statement, more specifically "Embraces an outlook that actively seeks to change societal structures and values" (FQS56). The ranking of the statements in the six Chinese prototypes is described in Table 10.3.

The Chinese participants have generally identified positively with being "profoundly touched by the suffering of others" (FQS77) and the aspiration to actively

Table 10.3 Ranking of prosocial statements in the prototypes from China

	Prototypes from China					
Faith Q-set statement	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Is profoundly touched by the suffering of others (FQS77)	2	2	1	1	2	2
Actively works towards making the world a better place to live (FQS51)	4	2	3	4	0	4
Embraces an outlook that actively seeks to change societal structures and values (FQS56)	4	1	1	2	0	0
Expresses his or her religion primarily in charitable acts or social action (FQS27)	0	−2	0	−1	−2	−2

Table 10.4 Ranking of prosocial statements in the prototypes from Israel

	Prototypes from Israel					
Faith Q-set statement	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Is profoundly touched by the suffering of others (FQS77)	3	3	3	3	4	2
Actively works towards making the world a better place to live (FQS51)	2	3	4	1	0	2
Embraces an outlook that actively seeks to change societal structures and values (FQS56)	0	4	4	1	2	2
Expresses his or her religion primarily in charitable acts or social action (FQS27)	1	0	−1	3	−1	−2

work for a better world (FQS51) is valued highly by them. Both viewpoints seem to be integral to the prototypes in China. However, the prototypes differ in regards to what extent this can be associated with societal work and activism (FQS56), and in none of them has the association between “charitable acts or social action” and religion (FQS27) been positively ranked. In comparison, the Israeli prototypes follow the same pattern. Table 10.4 demonstrates the ranking of prosocial statements in the prototypes from Israel. Nonetheless, the notion to be committed to working “towards making the world a better place to live” (FQS51) seems to divide people more, and in contrast, there is a greater tendency to embrace the idea to “change societal structures and values” (FQS56). Further, in Israel the association between religion and “charitable acts or social action” (FQS27) is integral to one prototype.

Looking at the more strictly prosocial statements such as “gives substantial amounts of time or money to some religious organization or worthy cause” (FQS1) and “expresses his or her religion primarily in charitable acts or social action (FQS27), we do generally find these as parts of religious prototypes. In the case of Ghana, for example, we have prototype 4, Security-Oriented Altruist Believer, in the case of India prototype 6, Privately Religious and Socially Engaged and in the case of Sweden prototype 2 Confident and Committed Believer. There are, however, also exceptions. In Canada, prototype 4 has ranked the statement “Gives substantial amounts of time or money to some religious organization or worthy cause” (FQS1) high and has been labeled Socially Engaged Open-Minded Altruist. This prototype expresses a positive interest in other people’s beliefs, embraces personal choice in matters of faith and cannot identify with the idea that religion should have political

influence. Another exception is the Turkish prototype 1, Socially Concerned Universalist. Also this prototype indicates a belief in all religious traditions pointing in the same direction, personal self-realization as a spiritual goal in life and little doubt in deeply held convictions. This seems to reflect the association between universalism and prosociality.

Taken together, the survey and the FQS indicate that prosocial attitudes and behaviors are fairly common among our participants, but we can also see that prosociality is configured differently from one context to another, and between prototypes. To what extent one associates prosociality with societal activism or religion divides people in general. Regarding our case studies, Turkey and Sweden, we find both differences and similarities. In both contexts, the statement "Actively works towards making the world a better place to live" (FQS51) is a consensus statement, ranked relatively high in all prototypes. In Sweden, we also find that the statement "Embraces an outlook that actively seeks to change societal structures and values"(FQS56) is ranked high, and two out of three Swedish prototypes seem to indicate a prosocial bend, while only one of the five Turkish prototypes does so. Still, in the case of Sweden, the statement that is so common to many prototypes "Is profoundly touched by the suffering of others" (FQS77) is ranked high in only one prototype. As a contrast, the statement that is highly ranked by most prototypes in Turkey is the statement "Expresses his or her religion primarily in charitable acts or social action (FQS27).

To further explore how and why young adults engage in prosocial behavior in the form of civic engagement and volunteering, we turn to the interviews from our two case studies.

10.5 Civic Engagement and Volunteering in Turkey and Sweden

The social structure in Turkey is in a process of rapid development, and the society is facing economic, political, and social challenges. Volunteering is an emerging social concept and not well established. Volunteer rights, for instance, are not defined in the Turkish legal system (Mathou, 2010). The relatively small number of NGOs in Turkey is another relevant issue, since it leads to an absence of channels for volunteering. Financial worries and the misperception of the volunteer's role in society are also obstacles.

According to the Education Volunteers Foundation of Turkey, only 5% of the urban youth took part in volunteering activities, and this was seen as proof of the problematic image of volunteering in Turkey (TEGV, 2008). Another study shows that 66.9% of Turks have never participated in voluntary work in their lives. However, when voluntary work was done it happened in relation to education (49.2%), environment (26.8%), health (23.2%), and culture (18.4%) (Özel Sektör Gönüllüler Dernegi, 2005). More recent studies also indicate low numbers of volunteering. According to the 2018 World Giving Index survey by Charities Aid

Foundation (CAF, 2018), only 9% of the population of Turkey are active in volunteering, 12% make donations to a civil society organization, and 40% help strangers in need. However, recent studies indicate that young people make up a considerable number of those who volunteer. According to a national report, most of the volunteers in Turkey are between the ages of 15 and 24 (TUSEV, 2014) which is reflected in the results from the YARG study.

The overall numbers for volunteering are low in Turkey, but it is necessary to draw attention to the distinction between formal and informal forms of volunteering. The data we can refer to is generally not based on informal forms of volunteering. In Turkey there are no comprehensive reliable statistics covering both formal and informal volunteering activities. This makes it difficult to identify what thematic issues the Turkish citizens are interested in, but the thematic distribution of non-governmental organizations gives some ideas. Sports organizations, religious groups and social service charities have a dominant position in the field, while rights-based organizations and support groups tend to rank relatively low.

When we turn to the case of Sweden, we find several relevant contrasting features. Sweden is known for its many voluntary associations with a comparatively high level of membership and participation. From an international perspective, “membership and activity levels are extraordinarily high” (Vogel et al., 2003, p. 3). However, studies have also pointed to a decline in both membership and activity, in particular among the younger generation and this may be an effect of changing values, but it can also be related to social change and that people enter work and family life later (Vogel et al., 2003). Regarding religiosity, research has found a small correlation between self-identifying as religious and volunteering (Grizzle, 2015; Gil-Lacruz et al., 2016). Regarding other aspects relating to the question of who volunteers, in Sweden, individuals with higher education are more likely to volunteer and take part in associational life, and so are men and married individuals (Vogel et al., 2003; Grizzle, 2015). For young people, attitudes, groups and peer pressure affect the likelihood of an individual to volunteer (Gil-Lacruz et al., 2016).

Because the Swedish welfare system guarantees extensive health care services, volunteering in these areas are unusual in Sweden. A study from 2004 (Sundeen & Raskoff, 2004) shows that the most common area for volunteering is sports (24.5%), followed by culture (10.6%), student associations (8.8%) and religious groups (5.1%). Other forms of volunteering are practiced by less than 5% of the studied group of young people ages 16–24.

What forms of civic engagement do young adults in Turkey and Sweden take part in? According to wave six of the World Values Survey (Inglehart et al., 2014), in Turkey, those 29 years old or younger report the following forms and amounts of active memberships (from highest to lowest): art, music and education 2.3%, political parties 2.2%, sports or recreation 2%, religious organizations 1.4%, environmental organizations 1.3%, self-help or mutual aid group 1.1%, charitable or humanitarian organizations 1%, labor groups 1%, other organizations 0.5%, professional organization 0.4% and consumer organizations 0.2%. For Sweden, the results are somewhat different: sport or recreation 24.4%, other organizations 15.5%, art, music and education 9.8%, labor movement 4.3%, charitable or humanitarian

organizations 3.9%, consumer organizations 3.9%, political parties 2.7%, church or religious organizations 1.8%, professional organizations 1.6% and self-help or mutual aid groups 1% and environmental organizations 0.6%.

Data from the YARG project does not provide us with exact numbers of group membership, but we do see some similar trends such as the ones coming out of WVS. In neither Turkey nor Sweden is religious group membership very important or given a lot of attention by the participants, but this is for different reasons. In the case of Sweden, some participants report belonging to the Church of Sweden, but this often more of traditional or family reasons, than for strictly religious ones. In the case of Turkey, reporting being religious is more common (4.3 on a scale from 0–10, compared to 2.04 for Sweden), but, membership as such is not the essential aspect. Although 37.18% report belonging to a religious group (compared to 16.16% for Sweden), religious group belonging as such does not come across as very essential in the interviews.

Looking at secular group membership, we also see both similarities and differences. In the case of Sweden, the most common groups are sport groups or groups related to sport activities, student groups or unions or groups related to student life and ideologically driven groups that work for the rights of, for example, animals or different minority groups. We come across the same kinds of groups in the Turkish interviews. However, among the Turkish participants, being active in ideologically driven groups sometimes with and sometimes without a connection to religion is much more common. Most common would seem to be activity involving working together with children.

As part of the YARG mixed method design, 37 interviews were conducted in Turkey and 30 interviews in Sweden. These were all recorded, transcribed, and translated into English. The interviews provide some further insights into volunteering in these two cases.

10.5.1 Volunteering for Religious/Spiritual Purposes

In general, volunteering linked to religion is more often discussed by the Turkish participants. Volunteering and social action are frequently described as a way of expressing religiosity or spirituality among the interviewees from Turkey, whereas this is less common in Sweden. The first citation below is from Turkey and points to civic engagement as “a fundamental cornerstone” of being religious, and the second is from Sweden and associates religion with being a servant:

> That is to say, religiosity has been taught to me as being related to what you do and how beneficial you can be for the society, rather than how you worship and how you look in the appearance. And at the moment, this is the most fundamental cornerstone of my identity, and my religious faith. (YTRHE338)

> Now for example there was a close, or not close but a friend in the congregation whose husband actually passed away. And then we all went and made sure she had food and didn’t

> need to think about that or her children. So a lot of those things. I don't know if it is thorough but I think it is still, that we, religious and spiritual people, that we serve. That is I think of being a servant then. (YSEJK017)

In the examples above, civic engagement is considered somewhat integral to being religious. In a similar vein, some Swedish participants also indicate that belonging to the Church of Sweden is for them a form of charity work:

> It [being a member of the Church of Sweden] gives me the opportunity to influence an organization that still has a lot of power and influence. Plus that it is an organization that helps many people in society. (YSEJK014)

10.5.2 Volunteering as Advocacy Work

For young adults in both Turkey and Sweden, volunteering is also often an important form of advocacy work. It allows them to engage with subjects and issues they find essential, like in the following example from Turkey about working for gender equality:

> Hmm, it was like the Association for Supporting Contemporary – to support the education of young girls or to support the working women. Mostly, an organization standing by the women and for the women while defending women's rights. […] I mean, according to me, the women should reach the same place in a society as the men. There was a card in relevance actually. "Thinks that men and women are by nature intended for different roles." [FQS54] There are different roles but from a social point of view they should not be differentiated. (YTRHE135)

Compared to Turkey, the ideological issues one works for in Sweden, are less focused on the welfare of, for example, children and more on for example animal rights or different minority issues such as the rights of sexual minorities. The wish to change society and make an impact is, however, similar. In the following example, an interviewee explains how activism through an organization has started from individual values and choices.

> But I've been a member of The Rights of Animals for a year. And it happened automatically when I chose to leave out animal food and cosmetics and clothes. And then it became natural also to join and support an organization that truly works actively. (YSEJK022)

10.5.3 Volunteering as Learning Activity

Participation in volunteering activities is known to offer individuals the chance to develop their talents, learn about teamwork, learn to organize, develop values and increase self-reliance (Mathou, 2010). This is also reflected in the interviews from both Turkey and from Sweden. Volunteering is generally described as a good learning path, like in the following citation:

> The most important point that affects my future, for instance, during that process, I, um, hmm, when I went to the Affection Houses […] I observe the children growing there, the later processes to come into their lives. I mean, how did it affect my life? For instance, it taught me that I should never abandon something I do half way through. If I am going there, then, I need to go. That person, I cannot create a bond with that person and then, leave. You see, the greatest effect was giving birth to this idea of "the things I do have to have consistency" was through being there. (YTRHE125)

On this point, the young Swedish adults report quite similar experiences, and underline how different forms of volunteering involve different skills. Particularly taking part in student organizations is seen as a good way of learning to engage with different people and learning how organizational life works, as in the following:

> The engagement in student activities has maybe been more, yes but how you work with people, people with different, I'm from [name of town] to start with. Just to end up with people from all over Sweden has also led to me understanding more about how people have different backgrounds and come with different things. (YSEJK014)

Some interviewees also specifically report how taking part in some voluntary activities is done with their future professional life in mind, or how it has inspired them to incorporate what they are doing with their career.

> I like talking about sexually transmitted diseases, menstruation, gender, sexuality and so on. And since there are no bachelor courses in sexology, I have to study other things and talk about it during my leisure time. So my engagement is entirely to do with what I see myself doing in the future. (YSEJK026)

10.5.4 Health/Well-Being Dimension of Volunteering

According to several respondents, participation in formal volunteering contributes to a number of well-being outcomes, and some report experiencing a sense of belonging by becoming involved in volunteering activities and associations. Diverse mechanisms are proposed by the Turkish respondents to explain the positive well-being effects of their own volunteering activity.

> I mean, I think if I lose my spirituality, or if I lose making these, my sensitivity, it seems to me as if I cannot be a human being {LG}. […] I mean, I sleep in peace that day. I sleep happily. Or, how to explain, I mean, to touch them is a very beautiful feeling. You see, you feel how lucky you are. But, you also feel that you are creating a chance for them, too. (YTRHE125)

In the Swedish interviews too, volunteering is related to well-being. Many talk about the joy of getting to engage with different people, as already indicated in some of the quotes above. There is also clearly a joy to be found in engaging with people who share one's interests and concerns, or becoming emotionally touched. This is well reflected in the two following examples, first one from Sweden, followed by an example from Turkey:

> It's such a relief. It's the world's best group. It, we talk about a joint interest and there is just a lot of nice people. Nothing unpleasant. It is such a relief. (YSEJK021)

> I mean, I like helping someone. That is how it makes me feel good. You see, you feel that you can touch people there. That is how. For example, last year, as the Red Crescent Club, we used to visit the children who were being treated for leucemia at L Ö S E V. You see, just to give a hug to them, even just to say "We are here" used to make me unbelievably happy. (YTRHE143)

10.5.5 Volunteering as Making Leisure Time Meaningful

Volunteerism among young adults in the studied sample is frequently reported as a leisure time activity. This aspect is not necessarily characterized by being very devoted or engaged. Rather, like in the following example, volunteering in order to make leisure time meaningful is maybe more about occasional activities than regular commitment:

> When you become a member of something, you have to keep doing it. See, you have to organize this activity, do this, or do that. This is nonsense, you see. You do it if you want to. If someone approaches me directly like "Oh, well, we have such and such, would you like to help?" I would say "Of course! Willingly!" But, I would not organize it in that way; the same things month after month. I cannot do this. I would not want to. (YTRHE127)

The interviewees also bring up volunteering as an alternative way of making good use of the time left from other priorities, like in the following example where volunteering seems to add value to leisure time:

> During the first year I had attended the university, in a very intense, um, with the intention of "I must do stuff, I must make good use of my leisure time, I must do something to be beneficial to humanity". (YTRHE338)

10.5.6 Reasons for Not Volunteering

Not all of the young adults interviewed for this study engage in civic engagement or volunteering. We cannot of course always find reasons as to why people choose not to do something, but some interviewees shed some light on this. In some cases, like in the following example from Turkey, a lack of engagement follows from lack of time, and that studies require a lot from the interviewees. From the second example that comes from an interview conducted in Sweden, we can learn that also a general lack of motivation is a relevant factor.

> I have not had a chance to participate so far. Last year was my period of getting used to things. It was a bit hard for me to get accustomed to things. The studies were a little too hard for me. (YTRHE099)

> No, unfortunately I don't do anything, any ideological work. It demands an effort for me to just make up my mind to do and then look up an activity. And I kind of haven't done that. (YSEJK023)

The interviews reflect that volunteering also takes different forms depending on the social and cultural context. For instance, religion plays a more important part in Turkey, whereas secular ideologies are more on the surface in Sweden. For both groups though, and in line with previous research (e.g. Hustinx & Lammentyn, 2003; Holdsworth & Brewis, 2013), we see volunteering as mainly being essential from a personal perspective. Taken together, the interviews highlight a number of reasons why people get involved in voluntary work. They also give voice to an obvious wish to help others, and this, at the same time, means something to the volunteers themselves. Whilst one recognizes the good in working for society in general, this is not the sole driving point. Volunteering is a manifestation of what one finds personally meaningful.

10.6 Concluding Comments

The aim of this chapter was to provide a general overview of how prosocial attitudes and behaviors are reflected in the data from the YARG-project. There are several limitations to this study, such as survey samples, and we cannot make definite conclusions or generalizations. Yet, prosociality is manifest in different ways through the mixed method approach, and as a result, this chapter has been able to address the multifaceted character of prosociality, civic engagement and volunteering and make some observations.

On a general level, we can underline that although not all young adults in our study do express prosocial attitudes or engage in prosocial behaviors, many still do. Being touched by the suffering of others, helping someone who you are not close to, and working towards making the world a better place are all essential to many of our participants. Hopefully, one can see this as fundamental to the well-being and resilience of a society.

All our participants are university students, and our observation that prosociality, civic engagement and volunteering often form important parts of their lives is, like many other points we have made, in line with previous research. Education is a relevant background factor. We have also pointed to a link between prosociality in the form of volunteering and general values, such as benevolence and universalism. Being female, being brought up in a religious family, and practicing religion in private were also associated with higher odds of prosocial behavior. In contrast, 'seeing oneself as religious' was associated with lower odds, and so was a higher family income. Those who participate in prosocial behavior held power as a value to a lower regard than those who do not volunteer.

Our results confirm that socioeconomic status, gender, and basic values are all important in general, but the extent to which people associate prosociality with religion or societal activism seems to divide them and seems to distinguish worldviews from one another. Yet, it is important to avoid simplifications and, in contrast, approach these issues in a nuanced way. Being religious, secular or spiritual can be configured differently individually, culturally and societally, and such differences

seem to be essential also to the level of prosociality and how it is expressed. Hence, we want to emphasize the complexity at play in prosociality, civic engagement and volunteering and that this requires us to be attentive to contextual differences and how they change. Previous research has highlighted that prosocial behavior is changing. Social media, for one thing, is having a clear impact on how young people express civic engagement and take part in volunteering (Gökce & Sjö, 2020): prosocial views can today easily be expressed via online campaigns and 'clicking'. As argued in previous research, today's young adults may be more committed to personal needs and less likely to engage in organizations and groups (e.g. Smith & Snell, 2009), but this does not necessarily entail less prosociality. It might simply be a result of our inability to measure new and different ways to think and engage. Future research will need to look broadly at volunteering, meaning that the ambition has to be to capture complexity and variations, both formal and informal aspects within and outside organizations.

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