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# Between State and Market

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*Essays on Charities Law  
and Policy in Canada*

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### 3 Altruism in Comparative International Perspective

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Human beings are dependent on each other throughout life. However, human societies differ greatly in the ways in which family relationships, formal organizations, and states are structured to meet human needs and to encourage humans to discharge their obligations towards each other. Social psychologists who study the various ways in which individuals contribute to each others' well-being use the general term "prosocial behaviour" to refer to such actions. Within this very general realm, they use more specific terms, such as "altruism," "cooperation," and "helping." In this chapter, we review what is known about cultural (largely cross-national) differences in prosocial behaviour. For reasons to be explained below, we focus on helping behaviour towards strangers, the development of moral judgment, socialization into prosocial behaviour, and formal volunteering and donating.

We begin with an example that underscores the complexity of this topic. Four recent studies in western Europe examined social participation of various kinds: membership in voluntary organizations (excluding churches and unions), volunteering, willingness to give money to "Third World" countries, and blood donation.<sup>1</sup> Table 3.1 presents the data from these studies, indicating the percentage of individuals polled who participate, or say they are willing to participate, in each of these activities. Note that there is little or no consistency among societies across the various actions. The "best" country for blood donation, France, is the "worst" in willingness to give money for the support of the Third World. The highest-ranked country for volunteering, Norway, is near the bottom in giving blood. The Nether-

Table 3.1 Social participation of four types in western Europe

Country	Blood donation		Volunteering		Membership in voluntary organizations		Donations to Third World countries	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Belgium	20	10	29	4	25	6	46	11
Denmark	34	3	27	6	—	—	56	9
France	44	1	23	8	20	7	39	12
Great Britain	32	4	12	10	31	4	66	7
Greece	38	2	—	—	—	—	78	1
Ireland	27	7	28	5	26	5	74	3
Italy	21	9	24	7	18	8	70	5
Luxembourg	14	12	—	—	—	—	76	2
Netherlands	28	6	37	2	44	1	70	5
Norway	16	11	38	1	40	2	—	—
Portugal	16	11	18	9	—	—	53	10
Spain	24	8	—	—	17	9	70	5
West Germany	30	5	32	3	32	3	61	8

lands is consistently in the top half of the distribution; Portugal is consistently near the bottom. But beyond these outliers, the numbers demonstrate that we cannot make any strong statements regarding comparative altruism – even when defined as public participation of these four kinds.

Before proceeding further, we define some terms and provide a brief history of the scientific study of prosocial behaviour. First, prosocial behaviour is generally defined as actions that are “defined by society as generally beneficial to other people and to the ongoing political system.”<sup>2</sup> Paying taxes, following traffic laws, giving to charity, and giving directions on the street could all fall within this general definition. What most social psychologists claim to have studied is helping behaviour – “action that has the consequences of providing some benefit to or improving the well-being of another person.”<sup>3</sup>

Altruism is “a helpful act that is carried out in the absence of obvious and tangible rewards.”<sup>4</sup> Some authors further limit behaviour that may be counted as altruistic – for example, to that motivated by concern for the welfare of the other or requiring some self-sacrifice by the helper. A goodly proportion of prosocial behaviour and helping does not qualify as altruistic by such definitions.

The great majority of research on altruism, helping, and volunteering has been carried out by experimental social psychologists in the United States. Darley and Latané began research in the area in the

1960s in an attempt to understand theoretically the lack of intervention on the part of bystanders in New York City to a vicious criminal attack on a woman named Kitty Genovese.<sup>5</sup> Doubtless because of these origins, most studies have focused on responses to momentary problems or emergencies occurring to strangers, either in laboratory or field settings. The second largest area of research has examined the development of moral reasoning and prosocial behaviour in children; in this area, similarly, the focus is on understanding general processes of development. Only recently has there been any real attention to more institutional forms of helping, such as volunteering. Similarly, there have been few systematic attempts to compare such phenomena across cultures or between countries.

We thus look at those few major topics with enough cross-national comparison to permit us to draw some, albeit tentative, conclusions. We discuss them in descending order of similarity, from those topics in which cross-cultural similarities appear to predominate to those in which the most differences appear. We then discuss a cultural distinction that may lead us to a more general understanding of the source of cross-national differences – namely, the broad distinction between individualist and collectivist societies. We end with a specific comparison of Canada and the United States.

Before we examine the specific topics, however, we raise one more caveat – that the literature on comparative differences in altruism is not voluminous. There are two related reasons for this. First, researchers, who mainly emphasize testing of theories, have paid little attention to the influence of culture. They may thus have ignored, trivialized, or explained away many differences between cultures by reference to differences in method. Indeed, the inattention to cultural difference is in part the result of method; most investigators of helping behaviour are theoretically oriented experimentalists, who use rigorous procedures and measurement tools but are relatively unconcerned about representative sampling. Western researchers, especially psychologists, are interested principally in finding general patterns of psychological mechanisms and not in “culture” as such. Thus the nuances of how different cultures may foster different forms of behaviour has largely been ignored, as Sinha notes:<sup>6</sup> “The cultural, philosophical, and historical matrix in which the individual benefactor or recipient operates has been only generally taken into account. When different cultural groups have been compared with regard to different aspects of helping behaviour, cultural factors have been considered more or less in a blanket fashion without analysis of discrete aspects of a given culture that are directly related to altruistic behavior. In comparisons of different samples drawn from diverse cultures, only certain

similarities and differences have been highlighted with very little effort to interrelate them with the cultural, philosophical, and religious traditions of these societies."

Non-Western scholars, as is evident from this quotation, have quite a different perspective and have argued for the importance of cultural differences in civic participation, rates of volunteering and other forms of social participation, and particularly in the development of moral reasoning and socialization into helping behaviour. These are all topics in which the process or behaviour being examined occurs over a much longer period of time, and less rigorous methods are typically used to investigate them.

A second reason why cultural differences have not played a large role in research in this area is that in some contexts they indeed do not seem to matter much. The concept of "weak" versus "strong" situations is useful here.<sup>7</sup> An emergency provides a "strong" situation, one in which the stimuli are so compelling and people must act so quickly that personality differences, in contrast to the "pull" of the situation, have little effect on responses. Cultural norms and expectations may operate in the same way as personality differences; the situation may need to be less compelling for cultural considerations to override the power of the situation. Clearly there is something about an emergency that arouses a very primitive, perhaps even an instinctive, response, either to aid or to flee. Volunteer opportunities, in contrast, do not have such a strong emotional aspect.

Sinha has further argued that a good strategy for studying helping behaviour in cultural contexts would be "to analyze a particular culture in terms of prescribed norms, values, and socialization processes and then draw out specific hypotheses regarding prosocial behavior in that culture as against other cultures with different norms and practice ... [I]t would be advisable to analyze cultures with regard to the relative emphasis placed on aiding, helping, and sacrificing one's own good for the sake of others or of the community, and then identify the pattern of prosocial behavior in that culture and compare it with patterns from cultures with different or somewhat contrasting norms. Since cultures may vary in the extent to which they emphasize interrelatedness and mutuality among human beings and thereby foster concern and obligation toward others, it is essential to ascertain that factor in designing one's studies."<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, we are aware of no research in which this excellent and sensible strategy has actually been pursued.

In the remainder of this chapter we proceed from that area of research in which it appears that culture has the weakest effect – helping behaviour towards strangers in momentary difficulty – through to that area in which culture plays the greatest role – civil

society. We report our assessment of the role of culture based on the existing research, but the literature, for the most part, has not been designed for these comparisons, and variation in methods and measures renders them difficult to make systematically.

#### HELPING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS STRANGERS

As we have noted, there is a large volume of research concerning the response of individuals (often college students in laboratory studies) to the occurrence of apparent emergencies or momentary problems of strangers. These events occur rapidly, and a response must be made – if one is to be made – quickly, without the opportunity for much reflection. Some of this research has involved the "real world." Experimenters have feigned collapses, dropped groceries, pencils, or sheafs of papers, asked directions, requested change, pretended to be blind, deaf, or lame and in need of help, or even stranded themselves on highways. Various independent variables have been investigated, including the sex and attractiveness of the person in need.

The first published work to explore cross-national differences is the pioneering study by Feldman, who compared the help offered to strangers in cities in three countries – Boston, Paris, and Athens. He found a number of significant cultural differences, but the results differed with the context and the nature of the favour being asked. One consistent finding emerged: in Athens foreigners who asked a favour received more help than did natives; the reverse was true in Paris and Boston – foreigners were treated less well than natives. Post hoc, he explained the findings by reference to the "ingroup versus outgroup" concept and particular historical developments in each of the countries, most specifically the "hospitality" norm in Greece.<sup>9</sup>

Feldman's work aside, the issue of cultural differences in helpfulness to strangers has largely been ignored. Only one variable has been explored in enough countries that we are able to make cross-cultural comparisons: the urban-rural distinction. Indeed, it is one of the more robust findings of social psychology in recent years that there is less helpfulness in urban than in non-urban environments. There have now been more than 60 comparisons of the level of helpfulness observed in urban and non-urban settings, and despite some variations,<sup>10</sup> recent reviews have been all but unanimous in confirming this behavioural characteristic of the urban environment.<sup>11</sup>

There appear to be two kinds of possible explanations for a rural-urban difference: dispositional variables (that is, urban people are just different from rural people)<sup>12</sup> and situational variables (that is, there is something about living in the urban environment that leads

to less helpfulness). Research has consistently demonstrated more support for the latter than for the former. Yousif and Korte summarize the literature: "The best supported explanation is Milgram's input overload hypothesis, which sees the unhelpfulness shown toward neighbors and strangers in urban settings as an inevitable adaptation to a situation of excessive demands. This has been confirmed in several studies, which have shown that the level of helpfulness declines as a direct function of increasing levels of environmental inputs (e.g., sights, sounds, demands). Other analysts have argued for the explanatory role of specific community characteristics such as crime rate, salience of deviant subcultures, prominence of tourism, and neighborhood norms. Yet, except for crime rate, these community variables have not been shown to be related to observed levels of helpfulness."<sup>13</sup>

This is an area in which cross-cultural research would greatly increase our understanding. Yousif and Korte put it as follows:<sup>14</sup> "Our present state of knowledge about urban unhelpfulness seems to be that it is a fairly reliable finding but with only limited evidence in support of the various explanations for it. One type of evidence that would seem quite relevant to the explanation of this phenomenon is its cross-cultural generality. If urban conditions produce reduced sociability and helpfulness, and that reaction is evident across a variety of cultural settings, then urban unhelpfulness would appear to be the result of processes intrinsic to urban environments such as adjustment to input overload or deindividuation."<sup>15</sup> If, in contrast, the urban unhelpfulness effect proved less reliable in other cultural settings, then such a finding would strengthen arguments that explain helpfulness in terms of culture, community, and norm variables.<sup>16</sup>

What work has been done suggests that the urban-non-urban difference is fairly consistent cross-culturally. A review of the research on six countries (Australia, Canada, Israel, the Netherlands, Turkey, and the United States) found the difference significant in all these countries except the Netherlands.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the Netherlands seems to be exceptional among developed Western countries in this regard, with helpfulness equally high in all city districts and in rural areas. This phenomenon has been attributed to a strong norm of "civility" in Dutch society.<sup>18</sup> But whatever its cause, the finding does suggest that cultural differences can matter.

Perhaps more important, the broad similarities among Western countries are arguably not reproduced in some less Westernized societies. Yousif and Korte note that "several analyses of cities in the developing world have argued that the Western model of urban social behavior and urban social characteristics does not apply to such settings, where cultural norms and strong social organization prevent the

impersonality, distrust, alienation, and unhelpfulness often associated with urbanity ... The limited amount of relevant cross-cultural data presents a somewhat mixed picture."<sup>19</sup>

This "mixed picture" is shown, for example, in data from Papua-New Guinea, where buyer-seller interaction appears to be less positive in the urban settings, but no urban-non-urban differences emerged in the helpfulness shown towards tourists.<sup>20</sup> Also, although less helpfulness was found in Turkish cities than in smaller towns, helpfulness in the urban squatter districts of the cities was equivalent to that found in the towns. In fact, the variation in helpfulness within the urban settings was equivalent to that between city and town.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, the authors of two recent studies comparing the Sudan and the United Kingdom suggest that "[t]he Islamic culture of the Sudan is quite different from Western cultures, and the fact that urban size, urgency, and cost differences in helpfulness in the Sudan were comparable to those found in the United Kingdom suggest that the same processes may govern the decision on whether or not to help in the type of situations investigated."<sup>22</sup>

The complexity of findings suggests that the predictable urban-rural differences found in the West may not apply straightforwardly to the developing world, where cultural factors may intervene to change the outcome. Data from more cultures than those that have been examined would be invaluable in suggesting the answer to when we do and do not find the "urban unhelpfulness effect."<sup>23</sup> Following Sinha's suggestion for a research strategy,<sup>24</sup> cultures where the effect does not obtain would be very illuminating and should be examined to see what is different about those cities (or those cultures) that makes them an exception to the usual pattern. Among Western countries this suggests the need for an intensive study of the Netherlands, the outlier, which has been found to be different from other Western countries in other respects also.<sup>25</sup>

#### MORAL DEVELOPMENT

The study of how children develop patterns of moral reasoning has also been widely examined cross-nationally. By moral reasoning, we mean "the principles people use when they make ... decisions about what is the right way to act."<sup>26</sup> The psychological study of the development of moral reasoning started with Jean Piaget, a psychologist whose academic training was in biology. Given his background, it is not surprising that he proposed that cognitive abilities develop according to a sequence of culturally invariant stages. That is, he saw cognition, including moral reasoning, as a universal biological process in the

human species, which develops in the same way and on the same timetable everywhere. Kohlberg later modified and extended Piaget's developmental model. The model involves three stages: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional morality. In the first stage, the person sees actions as right or wrong depending on whether they bring rewards or punishments. In the second, the person determines morality by whether the actions receive social approval or are in conformity with rules and laws. In the final stage – which most people never reach – internalized personal moral standards are the basis for moral decision-making.<sup>27</sup>

Even within Western culture, the theory has been extensively researched and critiqued. Specifically, Kohlberg has been criticized for his apparent theoretical bias in favour of males. Carol Gilligan has emphasized gender differences in moral reasoning and has argued that females in American society develop an interpersonal "caring-based" morality rather than the abstract morality of justice favoured by males.<sup>28</sup> However, comprehensive reviews of empirical studies on moral reasoning have suggested that structural gender differences in moral judgment tend to be rarely prevalent in early and middle adolescence<sup>29</sup> and frequently favour female respondents over males.<sup>30</sup>

Claiming invariance naturally brings attempts at cross-cultural replication; Kohlberg's claim has been subjected to considerable scrutiny and has been shown to be valid for a number of societies.<sup>31</sup> Even very recent research supports his general development patterns of moral reasoning. Two recent studies, for example, compared adolescents in the United States and children and adolescents in Brazil on the correlates of prosocial moral reasoning (PMR). It was found that the "underlying structures of moral reasoning and its relationship to helping in both the U.S. and Brazil's adolescents are similar" and that "[i]n general, age and gender differences in PMR were similar for both Brazilian and U.S. adolescents."<sup>32</sup> The study concludes: "Overall, the present findings extend our prior understanding of individuals' thinking of care-based, interpersonal-oriented social dilemmas. There was further evidence that prosocial moral reasoning is linked to prosocial behaviors in some Western cultures. Specifically, self-focused, hedonistic concerns were negatively associated with helpfulness and generosity, whereas abstract, other-oriented internalized concerns were positively associated with helpfulness and generosity. Furthermore, femininity was correlated with approval-oriented and internalized prosocial moral reasoning in a theoretically expected manner and consistent with findings from U.S. samples."<sup>33</sup>

Thus, both across cultures and across genders, there seems to be some invariance in moral development. When considering this and

most other studies, however, we must remember that we are essentially comparing only different Western cultures.

It is also possible that the lack of differences found cross-culturally may result from problems in measurement. Some observers have argued that the instruments usually employed – those developed by Kohlberg – are simply insensitive to existing cultural (and gender) differences.<sup>34</sup> Their central point is usually that the instruments simply assume the universal, justice-based form of moral reasoning and thus do not allow respondents to display a more interpersonal, relationship-based moral reasoning.

A second issue strikes at the heart of cross-cultural differences. Piaget and Kohlberg do assume that the individual's development of moral reasoning requires some commerce with a social environment that challenges his or her views; this allows, then, for possible differences in the ages at which children reach different stages. As Comunian and Gielen point out, research has shown that "participation in prosocial activities stimulates and is stimulated by the development of mature and autonomous forms of moral reasoning. Exposure to diverse social experiences and to the needs, values, and viewpoints of others seems to contribute to the development of a more mature, broad-based socio-moral perspective, reflected by a higher state of moral reasoning."<sup>35</sup>

However, allowing that social experiences can differ across cultures leaves open the possibility that cultures that provide greater, or different, exposures to prosocial situations may have different sequences, or even different endpoints, to moral development from those in the Western societies within which the theories were developed. As Eisenberg and Mussen have noted, "[c]hildren in different cultures differ ... in the reasons they give when they explain why someone should assist or not assist another in hypothetical situations." And as an example they offer the fact that "in their moral reasoning, children from an Israeli kibbutz focused more on internalized norms or values related to helping and on the importance of human beings than did urban Israelis and American children. Such reasoning is consistent with the ideology of the Kibbutz."<sup>36</sup>

There has been relatively little research conducted on moral development in non-Western cultures, especially on explicitly communal cultures such as those in South and East Asia. One study assessed the effect of interpersonal relationships on two aspects of Japanese university students' moral judgment: manner of application and the content of helping norms. It concludes: "Female Japanese students showed strong relation-based morality on these two dimensions" and "tended to make judgments without reference to the principle of uni-

versality or justice even when they knew the principle." This, the study argues, "suggests a relation-based moral orientation rather than a justice orientation."<sup>37</sup> Similarly, a recent review of research on moral development in Japan suggests that studies show that Americans tend to analyse problems in more abstract terms than the Japanese, who "saw life embedded in human networks." The author argues as a result for new ways of thinking about "principled moral reasoning in a culture where relationships are emphasized," including "relationships to others, society, the 'life-world,' and the universe."<sup>38</sup>

Research comparing Indian and American samples reveals similar cultural differences in moral reasoning. In the work of Miller, Bersoff, and Harwood, researchers presented scenarios to second- and sixth-grade children and college students in which the person requesting help was a close relative, friend, or stranger, and the need was extreme, moderate, or minor. In the case of extreme need there were no cultural differences; everyone said that they would help.<sup>39</sup> But in the case of minor need, the differences were substantial. For example, the minor need-friend scenario involved asking a friend for directions to a store; the friend refused to interrupt reading an exciting book and thus did not help. 93 per cent of the Indians thought the friend had an obligation to help, but only 33 per cent of the Americans thought so. In the case of strangers requesting help, the difference was 73 per cent (Indians) and 23 per cent (Americans).<sup>40</sup>

Miller summarizes this research cogently:

There exists not one universal morality of caring contrasting with the morality of justice but, rather, alternative types of interpersonal moralities that reflect the meaning systems emphasized in different cultural groups. Both the supererogatory view of interpersonal morality held by Lawrence Kohlberg and the morality-of-caring framework developed by Carol Gilligan are shown to be culturally bound. Research conducted among American and Hindu Indian populations supports the claim that an individually oriented interpersonal moral code develops among Americans, stressing personal freedom of choice, individual responsibility, and a dualistic view of individual motivation. In contrast, a duty-based interpersonal moral code develops among Hindu Indians, stressing broad and socially enforceable interpersonal obligation, the importance of contextual sensitivity, and a monistic view of individual motivation.<sup>41</sup>

#### SOCIALIZATION INTO PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Children receive socialization for prosocial behaviour in addition to simply developing moral reasoning. Long ago Margaret Mead argued,

in regard to socialization in general, that "human nature is almost unbelievably malleable, responding accurately and contrastingly to contrasting cultural conditions."<sup>42</sup> Mead compared two tribes in New Guinea, describing one, the Arapesh, as gentle, co-operative, generous, and responsive to the needs and feelings of others, and the other, the Mundugamor, as ruthless, aggressive, uncaring, and lacking in generosity and co-operation. Others have similarly argued for significant cultural differences in attitudes towards others. Turnbull, for example, compared the hostile Ik and the gentle, humane Hopi.<sup>43</sup> More recently, Robarchek and Robarchek contrasted the Waorani people of the Amazon (warlike) and the Semai Senoi, an Aboriginal people of the Malaysian rain forest, who enjoy a much more harmonious existence.<sup>44</sup> Other studies have highlighted the fact that both traditional societies and more modern socialist countries (for example, the Soviet Union at the time) value co-operation, social responsibility, and consideration for others as personal qualities.<sup>45</sup>

Some research suggests that one explanation for differences in the development of prosocial behaviour can be found in children's early experiences and responsibilities in their societies. Whiting and Whiting, for example, studied children aged 3 to 11 in six countries (India, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, the Philippines, and the United States). From numerous five-minute field observations of groups of children interacting in unsupervised settings they found considerable cross-cultural differences in helpfulness. Filipino, Kenyan, and Mexican children scored highest on the scale of prosocial behaviour, while U.S. children scored lowest. The Indian and Okinawan children were in a middle range.<sup>46</sup> Helpfulness was least likely in communities where children competed in school and were seldom assigned responsibilities for family farming or household chores. Prosocial behaviour was most common in cultures where children must co-operate with other family members in performing many chores and, in particular, where older siblings shared in the care and raising of other children. These researchers' interpretation of their findings is consistent with social learning theory: children learn both from what they observe others doing and from their own actions. Also supportive of a social learning interpretation is research on parents and teachers on Kibbutzim, showing that they reinforce each other in inculcating co-operative values and orientations and in discouraging competition among children.<sup>47</sup>

The work of Stevenson seeks to bring these comparisons into a larger context by discussing Eastern and Western ways of socialization and the merits and disadvantages of each system for the development of proso-

cial behaviour.<sup>48</sup> He analyses how three societies – China, Japan, and Taiwan – foster the development of children's prosocial behaviour. These societies are very different from Western nations and are of special interest here because they place extraordinary emphasis on children's socialization into prosocial behaviour. Stevenson argues that while the Asian concept of altruism is similar to that of the West, "Asian considerations differ from those in the West because of their conception of the role of the individual in relation to family and society."<sup>49</sup> He summarizes his findings about the differences between Eastern and Western ideas on socialization as follows: "Chinese parents focus primarily upon their child's moral development and academic achievement ... There is little concern for personality development ... Parents are considered to be successful if their child has a high moral character as reflected in proper conduct, good manners, humility, and respectfulness – and receives good grades at school ... [S]upreme among the typical Chinese and Japanese citizen's goals for society is the preservation of order and harmony ... The Asian orientation, then, is consistently directed toward the group. The individual is typically defined through participation in family, school, community, company, and the nation."<sup>50</sup> He later concludes: "Children's attitudes and behavior reflect what is valued by the societies in which they live. The emphasis in Asian cultures on group harmony, with the accompanying concern for prosocial behavior, stands in sharp contrast to the individualism of the West.... [I]t is evident that strong, explicit efforts are made in Chinese and Japanese societies to transmit positive attitudes about group loyalty and participation and about the critical role of prosocial behavior for the advancement of members of these groups."<sup>51</sup>

#### THE INDIVIDUALISM/COLLECTIVISM PARADIGM: THE CORE CONCEPT FOR COMPARATIVE ALTRUISM?

To this point we have considered a variety of social and cultural differences and how they may affect aspects of, and the level of, prosocial behaviour in different societies. But since Hofstede's *Culture's Consequences*<sup>52</sup> appeared in 1980, the principal focus of cross-cultural research in regard to altruism and prosocial behaviour has been the distinction between individualist and collectivist societies. As we saw in the section on socialization above, most Western nations tend to value individualism, with an emphasis on personal responsibility and achievement. Collectivist societies such as China stress the obligations of children to their families and of citizens to their community, valuing loyalty, trust, and co-operation. These cultural orientations have con-

sequences for socialization, leading to an emphasis on self-reliance for the individualist cultures and on social conformity for the collectivist.

The importance of a collectivist ethic has been stressed by research on socialization in the Israeli kibbutz, probably the most prominent example of conscious collectivism in an individualist nation. That research suggests that the kibbutz does indeed promote co-operation to a larger extent than do the mainstream cultures of North America or Europe. Indeed, kibbutz children appear much more like those from "traditional" societies.<sup>53</sup> In contrast, the children of one of the leading individualist cultures, the United States, are regarded by some observers as "singularly deficient in prosocial development."<sup>54</sup>

What are the implications of the individualism-collectivism distinction for adult social behaviour? Are the differences as clear there as in the research on children? Some research suggests that this is the case. Work that preceded Hofstede, which did not specifically use the concept of individualism-collectivism, concluded that Chinese subjects were more likely to imitate the behaviour of a helping model than were Americans.<sup>55</sup> It argued that the Chinese tradition of caring for aged relatives and others might suggest that the norm of social responsibility is stronger in China than in the United States, where there may be an implicit norm of looking out for oneself.<sup>56</sup>

It would, however, be too simplistic to generalize that Americans necessarily show less prosocial behaviour than people in other cultures. For example, a laboratory study of students playing decomposed "prisoner's dilemma-type" games found no significant differences in social motives between the United States and the Netherlands.<sup>57</sup> Stevenson, in his article on differences in socialization between East and West, says: "[C]ultures of the East may help the West to gain insight into some of the problems of individualism. At the same time, there are many contradictions in a society's efforts to foster prosocial behavior. These efforts are often accompanied by problems: The ethnocentrism that often accompanies strong identification with a group, the lack of individual initiative that occurs when advancement of group has greater priority than individual achievement, the frustration that exists at viewing the conflict between the ideal behaviors of the mores and the realities of everyday life, the conflicts that arise between ingenuity and obedience to rules and authority, and the tension produced by pressure for individual achievement and the simultaneous need to work for the advancement of the group."<sup>58</sup>

Most commonly, consistent with Stevenson's comment on ethnocentrism, research suggests that prosocial behaviour is distributed differently between individualist and collectivist societies. Bond criticizes Western social scientists, "steeped in an unconscious philosophy of



individualism," for seeing altruism as all-or-nothing behaviour, for assuming that "an altruistic person ... will be generous towards beggars, colleagues, spouses, tourists – the lot." In consequence, he argues, "Western social scientists place great emphasis on measuring individual dispositions." This approach contrasts with the way of thinking in a collectivist society, which "is dramatically different" and "pays close attention to the target of a person's social behaviour and the context of the interaction, historically and socially."<sup>59</sup> The author of another study argues that in Chinese society, "with strangers one ensures that there is a constant ratio between both parties' inputs and gains. With family members, however, one does whatever is needed. In other words, resources are allocated according to need, not fairness."<sup>60</sup> In other words, we might expect not overall more "altruism" or helpfulness in collective cultures, but rather different patterns of helping in the two kinds of societies.

A good deal of research bears out this expectation, making a particular distinction between assisting outsiders and helping the "in-group." One study, comparing India and the United States, found that Indians showed an overall lower level of helping, although Brahmins (a high caste) showed more helping towards other Brahmins.<sup>61</sup> To similar effect, a study of Chinese and Japanese subjects found that they gave more help to those whom they perceived to be insiders than Americans did, but less to those whom they saw as outsiders.<sup>62</sup> Moghaddam states that "[c]ross-cultural comparisons suggest that under some conditions people in the United States tend to be more helpful than people in traditional societies toward outgroup members." He attributes this to "the higher mobility and individualism of U.S. society," which make Americans "interact more with outgroup members and be both dependent on and helpful toward strangers generally." In contrast, in "less mobile and more collectivistic societies, interactions with outsiders are less frequent, and less help is offered to them."<sup>63</sup>

These findings, and a good number of other studies,<sup>64</sup> suggest that, particularly in cross-cultural comparisons, it is essential to distinguish between help given to in-group and to out-group members. As Triandis states, "[i]n all cultures people are more likely to help an in-group member than an out-group member. However, the difference in the probability of helping in-group versus out-group members is larger in the case of collectivist than in the case of individualistic cultures."<sup>65</sup>

There is also some evidence that the nature of altruistic actions themselves becomes more collectivistic in collective societies, involving groups rather than individuals. Drawing on the work of the economist

Albert Hirschman, for example, which described grassroots development projects involving very poor people in six Latin America countries,<sup>66</sup> Moghaddam suggests: "Perhaps the most important benefit of people helping one another was the dispelling of isolation and mutual distrust and the emergence of stronger, healthier social networks." And he notes similar processes elsewhere: "The same kinds of patterns emerge in some aspects of Western life, such as among the grassroots organization that have grown in response to the AIDS epidemic. This indicates that changes in circumstances are associated with different patterns of altruism."<sup>67</sup>

The dimension of need may also evoke different responses in collective and individualistic cultures. A study of willingness to give money to hypothetical recipients, comparing India and the United States, shows that "Indian respondents distributed more on the basis of need and less on the basis of merit or equality than did the American respondents." But within this tendency there were gender differences: "the Indian males and the American males and females distributed more to the needy recipient and less to the meritorious recipient when money cutbacks rather than rewards were involved."<sup>68</sup> Indian females, in contrast, gave most to the needy in all cases. The authors conclude that "culture does seem to have a significant impact on how individuals evaluate the fairness of different allocation plans. Indian respondents tended to favor need much more than did the Americans who tended to favor equality or equity."<sup>69</sup>

Although these authors offer no conclusions, they suggest two possible explanations. Perhaps when the level of resources is low, need becomes more salient as an allocation strategy. Alternatively, collectivist and individualist societies may place different emphases on need; allocating on the basis of need may predominate in a more collectivistic society because of the greater stress placed on interdependence. "Members of a more individualistic society such as the U.S. ... may be less apt to favor need as a distribution strategy because of the cultural importance of independence and self-sufficiency."<sup>70</sup>

The collectivist-individualist paradigm also reminds us that social relationships are quite important in any discussion about helping behaviour. Several studies show the role of social relationships in the more interactive and dynamic sense, and Moghaddam summarizes this literature: "A cultural perspective leads us to view helping behavior as part of a larger moral system binding individuals together in social relationships. Reciprocity becomes more than just give-and-take between individuals, because the help exchanged has to be appropriate for a given context. The goal of exchange becomes much more than just maximiz-

ing material rewards because the value of help is not just material.... This is clearly shown by research in Sweden, Japan, and the United States demonstrating that people appreciate help more when there is an opportunity or obligation for them to reciprocate.... If the goal of such exchange was to maximize material rewards, it should not matter if reciprocity is impossible or if the donor is a rival – but it does.”<sup>71</sup>

The extensive role that helping plays in establishing social relationships becomes clear in Yang’s lengthy field study of *guanxixue* (“doing favours for people”) in China. *Guanxixue* involves “the exchange of gifts, favours, and banquets, the cultivation of interpersonal relationships and networks of mutual dependence, and the manufacturing of obligations and indebtedness. What informs these practices and their native descriptions is the conception of the primacy and binding power of personal relationships and their importance in meeting the needs and desires of everyday life.”<sup>72</sup> These practices have survived the enormous political and social changes of the twentieth century; as another study notes, “[d]espite official opposition, *quanxixue* continues to thrive in China and seems destined to outlive communism.”<sup>73</sup>

Thus we can say that in Eastern cultures, especially the Chinese, collectivism appears to be specific to role relationships:<sup>74</sup> “Chinese culture places strong emphasis on altruism and the maintenance of harmony, values presumed to be conducive to integrative social organization.”<sup>75</sup> The Confucian ideas of maintaining personal harmony and social order among persons situated in hierarchically structured relationships are still operating.

#### CIVIL SOCIETY AND VOLUNTEERISM

The extent to which members of a society exhibit a commitment to “civil society” may also vary greatly across cultures. Civil society is a difficult term to define. We use it here to mean those aspects of society “standing between the market and the state, embodying neither the self-interest of the one nor the coercive authority of the other ... a place of transition from the realm of particularism to that of the universal.”<sup>76</sup> The components of civil society include “families, communities, friendship networks, solidaristic workplace ties, voluntarism, spontaneous groups and movements.”<sup>77</sup> Wolfe argues that “[i]f there is one underlying theme that unifies the themes in sociology – such as organic solidarity, the collective conscience, the generalized other, sociability, and the gift relationship – it would be the idea of civil society.”<sup>78</sup> The term can stand for a broader sense of altruism in the society, for individuals’ willingness to join together and help others voluntarily.

Within this broad concept researchers usually study participation in voluntary organizations – churches, unions, political parties, charitable organizations, clubs, sports teams, musical groups, the PTA. In our discussion, however, we distinguish, as many writers have not, between membership in voluntary associations and volunteer work. Many voluntary associations have little if anything to do with providing social services, raising funds for charities, or otherwise attempting to improve society. Putnam’s now well-known article “Bowling Alone” uses as an example of voluntary association an activity – participating in bowling leagues – that has nothing to do with helping others.<sup>79</sup> A society could easily have high rates of membership in voluntary associations but low levels of volunteering in the sense of helping, although it is difficult to see how a society without a tradition of voluntary associations could be high in volunteer activity.

In the United States there are long traditions both of “rugged individualism” and of the development of social movements and associations. Both have roots in the broader cultural templates discussed over 150 years ago by de Tocqueville and more recently by Bellah and others in *Habits of the Heart*.<sup>80</sup> Tocqueville wrote that “Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions” were inclined to “constantly form associations,”<sup>81</sup> and recent research has borne out this assessment. In both local and national surveys, relatively large proportions of respondents (50 per cent or more) reported memberships in one or more voluntary associations.<sup>82</sup> None the less, some argue, like D.C. Swift, that “[t]here has been a sharp decline in a sense of community and an increase in selfish individualism” and that “[i]ndividualism has triumphed over the equalitarian ethos, with corrosive privatism and the deterioration of community values.”<sup>83</sup> We do not enter into this argument regarding the purported deterioration of civic participation or consider its causes<sup>84</sup> or solutions to the problem.<sup>85</sup> Suffice it to say that there is good evidence for (for example, the decline in voting) and against (the increase or at least stabilization of volunteer activity). Our interest here is in comparative questions.

As Curtis long ago noted, “the observation that Americans are joiners is a comparative statement.”<sup>86</sup> Perhaps surprisingly, however, there has been little comparative research on rates of association membership.<sup>87</sup> What is the evidence for cross-cultural differences in such membership? Some of the best research is now more than 30 years old and is reproduced in Table 3.2.<sup>88</sup> It suggests that Americans are indeed more likely to be joiners than are citizens of other countries. More recent data from a Canadian national survey suggest that Canadians equalled or exceeded Americans on certain measures. That is, 64 per cent of Canadians reported belonging to at least one volun-

Table 3.2 Organization membership in five countries

Number of Organizations	% of population belonging				
	USA	UK	Germany	Italy	Mexico
1	25	31	32	24	23
2	14	10	9	5	2
3	9	4	2	1	0
4 or more	9	2	1	—	—
Total — multiple memberships	32	16	12	6	2
Total — all memberships	57	47	44	30	25
Number	(970)	(963)	(955)	(995)	(1,007)

tary association, compared to 57 per cent of Americans. The percentages in the two countries were virtually identical, however, when union affiliations were removed from the analysis, and the percentages of respondents who reported multiple memberships were similar in both nations.<sup>89</sup>

We must make two other significant qualifications to the data contained in Table 3.2.<sup>90</sup> First, the differences between countries were greatest in membership in religious organizations, with 19 per cent of respondents belonging to them in the United States but only between three and six per cent in the other countries. Thus the "ranking" of American society drops substantially if such church affiliation is excluded.<sup>91</sup> Second, the U.S. ranking drops even further for active memberships: "In these instances, people from several countries, including Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, and Sweden, equal or surpass the membership levels of Americans."<sup>92</sup> Why are Americans more likely to join but less likely to be active in organizations? One possible answer is simply that the large number of organizations in the United States means that there is much greater opportunity for membership, and people simply join without any real intention of active participation.<sup>93</sup>

The analysis of various cross-national data conducted by Curtis et al. also found that some expected relationships did not occur. Protestant countries are not necessarily higher in involvement than Catholic countries. Levels of industrialization and urbanization also are not consistent determinants of civic involvement; Japan, France, and Germany are high on these variables and comparatively low in involvement; Austria is low in urbanization, but involvement there is also low. The authors suggest that centralized government control may account

for France, Japan, and Spain's low involvement.<sup>94</sup> Curtis et al. conclude: "While each interpretation merits some consideration, none provides a complete explanation for the pattern of national rankings in association membership.... [A]ll of these factors may have predictive importance for joining behaviour. In addition, unique features in the cultural and historical backgrounds of countries may be more significant than any of these influences in explaining levels of association involvement."<sup>95</sup>

#### VOLUNTEER WORK

Volunteer work has been taken as a prototypical instance of non-spontaneous helping behaviour,<sup>96</sup> or even of altruism. Psychological research, however, suggests that volunteering is motivated not totally by the helper's concern for the recipient but also by a desire to express values or gain social experiences, and a number of other needs.<sup>97</sup> Sociologists also understand the performance of volunteer work as determined heavily by one's location in the social structure. Wilson and Musick, for example, present an "integrated theory of volunteer work," based on the premises that "volunteer work is (1) productive work that requires human capital, (2) collective behavior that requires social capital, and (3) ethically guided work that requires cultural capital." They operationalized human capital with measures of income, education, and functional health, social capital with number of children in the household and informal social interaction, and cultural capital with religion. Using panel data from the United States, they found "that formal volunteering is positively related to human capital, number of children in the household, informal social interaction, and religiosity."<sup>98</sup>

A detailed analysis of this kind — of motives and social location — has not been done cross-nationally. There are, however, data on volunteering rates for a number of countries over time. Studies of western European countries, the United States, and Canada for both 1981 and 1990 show that the United States consistently had the highest proportion of volunteers in the population (47 per cent), while the United Kingdom and Portugal had the lowest. The Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands had relatively high percentage rates, in the high 30s. In only three countries was there statistically significant change over time: Austria showed a decline of 7 per cent, and there were increases in Canada (6 per cent) and the United States (10 per cent). In the United States, this increase was strongest among post-Second World War cohorts, including the supposedly selfish "Generation X."<sup>99</sup>

These figures, however, tend to overstate the level of U.S. volunteering because of one aspect of American "exceptionalism." As with membership in voluntary organizations, when one eliminates religious volunteering, "American rates (34 per cent) fall somewhat beneath those of Canada (38 per cent) and Sweden (38 per cent) and are virtually equal to those of Norway (34 per cent), Iceland (35 per cent), and the Netherlands (33 per cent)."<sup>100</sup> Analysis of the factors positively associated with volunteering makes the same point. Across countries, education (human capital) is positively related to volunteering, as is religiosity (cultural capital). Greeley delineates the relative importance of these and other factors: "[A]ge, sex, income, and education account for 36 percent of cross-national variation in volunteer rates. Adding secular organizational membership accounts for 11 per cent more.... Finally, adding the two religious items – church attendance and membership in religious organizations – reduces the unexplained variation to 15 per cent. Thus even after the social structural variables are taken into account, 38 per cent of the differences among the countries in propensity to volunteer is attributable to religious activity. When all of these are taken into account, significant differences exist between the United States on the one hand and only four other countries – Britain, Northern Ireland, Denmark, and Iceland."<sup>101</sup> Religious involvement also fuels participation in secular volunteering. In short, Greeley argues, "Religious structures generate social capital that motivates people to volunteer, especially those who already have idealistic orientations."<sup>102</sup>

#### BLOOD DONATION

There is only one piece of cross-cultural research on blood donation of which we are aware.<sup>103</sup> It seeks to explain differences in the frequency of blood donation across 13 countries of western Europe in terms of the organization of the blood collection system. Across countries, donation is associated with being male, being middle-aged rather than old or young, being better educated and in the top quartile on income, and knowing someone who has received a donation – all findings that confirm U.S. research.<sup>104</sup>

Despite these similarities, there are significant differences among nations in the frequency of donations, and the study argues that "institutional factors are an important part of what determines rates of blood donation, over and above individual characteristics."<sup>105</sup> Rates were consistently higher in the three countries where the state health service collects blood than in either the four countries where the Red Cross does so or the six that use blood banks. Type of collection system

also interacts with the characteristics of individuals in complex ways. The only hint (unmentioned) of a truly "cultural" effect is that the gender effect is particularly strong in most Mediterranean countries, where gender norms are still the most traditional. It is clear, then, that national differences reflect not only "culture" but, perhaps more important, differences in the organizational structure of collection. Thus we might not expect cross-national differences in blood donation to be similar to those in membership in voluntary associations, volunteering, or donating. This is, perhaps, another example of a "strong situation" overwhelming cultural propensities.

#### CANADIAN–U.S. COMPARISONS

Those aspects of the research discussed above on differences in joining voluntary associations and doing volunteer work that specifically involve U.S.–Canadian comparisons challenge the theories and empirical conclusions offered by the most influential commentator on the two countries, Seymour Martin Lipset. Lipset has argued that Canada's "counter-revolutionary" past led to the adoption there of more "collectively oriented" values than exist in the United States.<sup>106</sup> That is, Canadians, like the British, are "more disposed to rely on the 'state' for solving community problems, and thus less likely to emphasise voluntary activity."<sup>107</sup> But the data on volunteering do not bear this theory out, especially once we take religious organizations out of the equation.

Similarly, the data on charitable donation do not suggest large Canadian–American differences. A number of surveys have been carried out in both countries over the past decade or more,<sup>108</sup> and while differences in elements such as questions and sampling plans inhibit precise comparisons,<sup>109</sup> they are similar enough for us to draw some general conclusions. Overall, 78 per cent of Canadians sampled and 68.5 per cent of Americans reported having donated to charity in the previous 12 months. In both countries, respondents under the age of 34 gave least, and there was a slight decrease in giving after age 64 in Canada and 74 in the United States. Also in both societies married respondents gave more than the previously married, and singles gave least. Education and income are monotonically related to donation in both countries, and women were more likely to give than men. Full-time employed people give most, the unemployed give least (but 64 per cent of them in Canada give, and 61 per cent in the United States), and part-time and "not in the labour force" individuals place in between.

More distinctions emerge in destinations of donations (Table 3.3). The coding schemes used for recipient organizations, however, differ

Table 3.3 Types of organizations receiving donations, Canada and United States

<i>Organizational type</i>	<i>Canada 1997</i>	<i>USA 1995</i>
Religious	51	58
Health	17	8
Education and research	4	9
Social services	11	13
Philanthropic	6	2
Arts and culture	3	4
Environment	2	2
International	3	2
Other	2	2

\*Figures are percentages of all donations made.

notably; we have tried to equate them, but it is essentially impossible to do so. The largest disparities in the table appear to be in health and in education and research. We are sure, however, that this is the result of coding. In the Canadian data, "research" is put in with health; in the U.S. data, with education. When they are added together, the disparity is quite small. The only other large difference is in religion – a consistent theme in the literature on civil society. Americans declare themselves to be very religious, and here they appear to put their money where their mouths are.<sup>110</sup>

These surveys also examined volunteering activity, again with coding problems. Most critically, the U.S. survey included as "volunteering" the category of "informal helping" – in our opinion an entirely different category of behaviour; it is not "volunteering" in the sense of giving time to a formal organization. Thus the finding that 49 per cent of U.S. respondents, but only 31 per cent of Canadians, "volunteered" in the most recent survey year is not very meaningful. And it is impossible to disaggregate the U.S. data to remove these individuals. Since 13.5 per cent of the hours given went to such "informal helping," we can correct the figures for the average number of hours per volunteer, which are initially given as 149 for Canadians and 218 for Americans. When the correction is made, the U.S. figure is reduced to 189 hours. There is another complication, however – there is a category of "sports" in Canada, in which 11 per cent of the volunteer hours appear; there is no such category in the U.S. survey (there is a "recreation" category, but it is clearly indicated as volunteering.) If this means that participating in sports counts as volunteer activity in Canada, we have a similar problem in the other direction, and a subtraction might be in order. Thus here again we have a confusion between participation in voluntary associations and volunteering in the sense of doing good for others.

Regardless of these problems, we indeed find the same pattern of relationships between demographic factors and volunteering in both countries that we discovered for charitable donation. It is, however, essentially impossible to do the sort of comparison across types of volunteering that we attempted for charitable donation. The only really interesting finding here is that the percentage of total hours volunteered (with all the problems of what is considered "volunteering") that is devoted to religious organizations is essentially identical in the two countries: 18 per cent in Canada and 17.2 per cent in the United States.

In short, the great gulf that Lipset once saw between the "conservative," more collective, and more European perspective of Canada – that government should provide social services – and the more rebellious, individualistic, and privatized, uniquely American perspective seems to have narrowed. Even in the dimension in which the United States has been seen as exceptional – the prevalence and importance of religious participation – the difference no longer appears in the giving of time, although it remains in the giving of money.

## CONCLUSION

Even in the "global village," then, we still find cultural differences between the West and the East – and where communal forms of social organization exist, as in the kibbutz. How do we understand these differences? About thirty years ago, pioneers Latané and Darley argued that norms – a major element of a cultural analysis of differences in altruism and helping – could not explain the kind of helping at which they looked. Why not? They argued: "Norms ... seem to contradict one another. The injunction to help people is qualified by strictures not to accept help, to look out for yourself, and not to meddle in other people's business. In any specific situation it is hard to see how norms will be of much help to an undecided bystander.... A second problem with norms is that, even though contradictory, they are usually stated in only the most vague and general way."<sup>111</sup> Of course, Latané and Darley studied only responses to momentary problems or emergencies. We do not expect norms to have a strong effect in such circumstances, and we find no consistent cultural differences there.

These authors, however, are experimental social psychologists. We are sociologists, and after our review, we find that it is too simple to trivialize or explain away the influence of culture on helping behaviour more generally. Thinking more seriously about culture thus broadens our understanding of comparisons of human behaviour. As Miller and Bersoff argue, "A cultural perspective leads us to view

helping behavior as part of a larger moral system binding individuals together in social relationships."<sup>112</sup> Thus such an approach may be useful in relationship to considered, habitual helping and prosocial behaviour more generally.

We need to explore in more detail two aspects of this matter: how the patterns of prosocial behaviour may differ among cultures, and the nature of the process by which culture may influence helping behaviour. In addition, we should examine the cultural factor more broadly and in a more elaborated way. We should consider not only social norms, but also sociopolitical background (elements such as civic participation), principles of social interaction (such as individualism versus collectivism), and possibly unique cultural climates (such as that of the Netherlands). All these issues should be explored intensively in the future. Finally, to relate this chapter to the focus of the volume, we note that our academic concern about the influence of culture on helping behaviour has a quite pragmatic implication: namely, how might we increase the altruistic orientation of human beings in general? We may be able to learn, by comparing and contrasting helping behaviours in different cultural contexts, the limitations and advantages of each culture in fostering helping behaviour.

Sam and Pearl Oliner have written extensively on the lessons to be learned from those who helped individuals and groups in the Holocaust.<sup>113</sup> In *The Altruistic Personality* they argued that they had discovered a personality trait – extensivity – that they believe more likely to be present in rescuers than in those who did not help. They define this concept as “the tendency to assume commitments and responsibilities toward diverse groups.” Extensivity has two dimensions – attachment “which ranges from alienation or extreme detachment at one pole to love at the other,” and inclusiveness “which ranges from exclusion of all others except the self at one pole to the inclusion of the universe at the other.”<sup>114</sup> As a two-dimensional trait, extensivity thus can explain both why those who are highly “attached” and have great capability for altruistic behaviour could shut their doors in the face of supplicant Jews and why those who are intent on saving all humankind but are disconnected from real people may limit their options and become inured to the suffering of those around them.<sup>115</sup>

In their most recent book, the Oliners have offered eight lessons on how to improve people’s helping behaviour.<sup>116</sup> All these could be thought of as cultural mechanisms. The eight lessons are intended to increase either attachment or inclusiveness. For attachment, the lessons include bonding, empathizing, learning caring norms, and practising care and assuming personal responsibility. For inclusive-

ness, the lessons involve diversifying, “networking,” resolving conflicts, and “making the global connection.” Looking at cultures that we have called individualist – Western cultures – we suggest improvements along the attachment dimension. The more collective cultures – the cultures of the East – may need to focus more on fostering inclusiveness.

In short, prosocial behaviour and altruism are found in all cultures. The forms they take vary from culture to culture. Furthermore, there are types of helping situations in which culture matters more and others in which it matters less. Future research needs to zero in on cultural institutions related to civil society; cultural practices, such as socialization; and cultural contents, such as normative injunctions. Only thus can we come to understand the wide variations in prosocial behaviour that we find across societies and across types of prosocial action.

#### NOTES

- 1 On membership in voluntary organizations, see J.E. Curtis, E.G. Grabb, and D.E. Baer, “Voluntary Association Membership in Fifteen Countries: A Comparative Analysis,” *American Sociological Review* 57 (1992), 139. On volunteering, see A. Greeley, “The Other Civic America: Religion and Social Capital,” *American Prospect* (1997), 68. On willingness to give to Third World countries, see J.-C. Ting, “Experience, Interest, Modeling, and Being Asked to Help: A Four Factor Model of International Helping,” master’s thesis, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1992. On blood donation see K. Healy, “Embedded Altruism: Blood Collection Regimes and the European Union’s Donor Population,” *American Journal of Sociology* 105 (2000), 1633.
- 2 J.A. Piliavin, J.F. Dovidio, S. Gaertner, and R.D. Clark III, *Emergency Intervention* (New York: Academic Press, 1981), 4.
- 3 D.A. Schroeder, L.A. Penner, J.F. Dovidio, and J.A. Piliavin, *The Psychology of Helping and Altruism: Problems and Puzzles* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 16.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 19–20.
- 5 See J.M. Darley and B. Latané, “Bystander Intervention in Emergencies: Diffusion of Responsibility,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 8 (1969), 377–83, and *The Unresponsive Bystander: Why Doesn’t He Help?* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970).
- 6 D. Sinha, “Community as Target: A New Perspective to Research on Prosocial Behavior,” in E. Staub, D. Bar-Tal, J. Karylowski, and J. Reykowski, eds., *Development and Maintenance of Prosocial Behavior: International Perspectives on Positive Morality* (New York: Plenum), 445–56.

- 7 See, for example, D. Snyder and W. Ickes, "Personality and Social Behavior," in G. Lindzey and E. Aronson, eds., *Handbook of Social Psychology* (New York: Random House, 1985), 805-82.
- 8 Sinha, "Community as Target," 449.
- 9 R.E. Feldman, "Response to Compatriot and Foreigner Who Seek Assistance," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 10(1968), 202. See also R.E. Feldman, "Honesty toward Compatriot and Foreigner: Field Experiments in Paris, Athens, and Boston," in W.W. Lambert and R. Weisbrod, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Psychology* (Boston: Little Brown, 1967), 231-5.
- 10 For example, the urban-non-urban difference shows up only when the interaction involves strangers or neighbours; providing aid to family and friends does not seem to vary: see P. Amato, "Urban-Rural Differences in Helping Friends and Family Members," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 56 (1993), 249. In addition, "urban unhelpfulness" appears to relate to spontaneous and informal types of helping rather than to planned and formal versions of the behaviour: see P. Amato, "The Helpfulness of Urbanites and Small Town Dwellers: A Test between Two Broad Theoretical Positions," *Australian Journal of Psychology* 35(1983), 233.
- 11 See, among other things, Amato, "Urban-Rural Differences"; C. Korte, "Urban-Nonurban Differences in Social Behavior and Social Psychological Models of Urban Impact," *Journal of Social Issues* 36 (1980), 29; N. Steblay, "Helping Behavior in Rural and Urban Environments: A Meta-Analysis," *Psychological Bulletin* 102 (1987), 346.
- 12 See this argument advanced in L. Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology* 44 (1938), 1.
- 13 Y. Yousif and C. Korte, "Urbanization, Culture, and Helpfulness: Cross-Cultural Studies in England and the Sudan," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 26 (1995), 476. The principal work reviewed here is S. Milgram, "The Experience of Living in Cities," *Science* 167 (1970), 1461; C. Korte and N. Ayvalioglu, "Helpfulness in Turkey: Cities, Towns and Urban Villages," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 12 (1981), 123; C. Korte, I. Ypma, and A. Toppen, "Helpfulness in Dutch Society as a Function of Urbanization and Environmental Input Level," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32 (1975), 996; C. Fisher, *The Urban Experience* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984); J. House and S. Wolf, "Effects of Urban Residence on Interpersonal Trust and Helping Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 36 (1978), 1029.
- 14 Yousif and Korte, "Urbanization," 476.
- 15 Festinger, Pepitone, and Newcomb introduced the concept of "deindividuation" to refer to a process in which antecedent social conditions lessen self-awareness and reduce concern with evaluation by others, thereby weakening restraints against the expression of undesirable behaviour.

- One of those social conditions can be crowds in urban environments. See L. Festinger, A. Pepitone, and T. Newcomb, "Some Consequences of De-individuation in a Group," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 47 (1952), 382. See also P. Zimbardo, "The Human Choice: Individuation, Reason, and Order Versus De-individuation, Impulse, and Chaos," in W. Arnold and D. Levine, eds., *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), 237-308.
- 16 See Milgram, "Living in Cities."
  - 17 Steblay, "Helping Behaviour."
  - 18 See Korte, Ypma, and Toppen, "Helpfulness in Dutch Society."
  - 19 Yousif and Korte, "Urbanization," 476. This assertion draws on J. Abu-Loghod, "Migrant Adjustment to City Life: The Egyptian Case," *American Journal of Sociology* 67 (1961), 22, and P. Hauser, "Application of the Ideal-Type Constructs to the Metropolis in the Economically Less-Advanced Area," in P. Hauser and L. Schnore, eds., *The Study of Urbanization* (New York: John Wiley, 1965), 503-18.
  - 20 P. Amato, "The Effects of Urbanization on Interpersonal Behavior: Field Studies in Papua New Guinea," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 14 (1983), 353.
  - 21 See Korte and Ayvalioglu, "Helpfulness in Turkey."
  - 22 A. Hedge and Y.H. Yousif, "The Effect of Urban Size, Cost and Urgency on Helpfulness: A Cross-Cultural Comparison between the United Kingdom and the Sudan," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 23 (1992), 114; Yousif and Korte, "Urbanization."
  - 23 Yousif and Korte, "Urbanization," 476.
  - 24 Sinha, "Community as Target."
  - 25 See R.J. Taormina, D. Messick, S. Iwawaki, and H. Wilke, "Cross-cultural Perspectives on Foreign Aid Deservingness Decisions," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 19 (1988), 387, and J.C. Ting, "Analyses on Euro-Barometer 28: Relations with Third World Countries and Energy Problems," unpublished ms., University of Wisconsin, Nov. 1987.
  - 26 Schroeder et al., *The Psychology of Helping*, 133.
  - 27 J. Piaget, *The Construction of Reality in the Child* (New York: Basic Books, 1954); L. Kohlberg, *The Psychology of Moral Development: Essays on Moral Development*, 2 vols. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984).
  - 28 C. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).
  - 29 K.S. Basinger, J.C. Gibbs, and D. Fuller, "Context and the Measurement of Moral Judgment," *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, forthcoming, 2000.
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- 80 A. de Toqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Knopf, 1961); R.N. Bellah, R. Madsen, W.M. Sullivan, A. Swidler, and S.M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985). Note also Weber's description of the United States as "the association-land par excellence": M. Weber, "Deutscher Soziologentag" (German Sociology Today) *Verhandlungen* 1 (1911), 53.
- 81 Toqueville, *Democracy in America*, 141.
- 82 J. Curtis, R. Lambert, S. Brown, and B. Kay, "Affiliating with Voluntary Associations: Canadian-American Comparisons" *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 14 (1989), 143.
- 83 D.C. Swift, *Religion and the American Experience* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1998). See also Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart*.
- 84 Swift argues that "the serious deterioration of community and excessive emphasis upon individualism probably began with the market revolution in the early nineteenth century; these tendencies were accelerated by subjecting much of life to the demands of the marketplace. The tendencies toward egoism and diminished community are inherent in classical liberal thought; the market revolution unleashed them and accelerated their growth. Bellah and his associates correctly indicate that the resolution of these problems lies in large measure in strengthening the culture's ties to its two taproots, Jeffersonian political thought and the nation's religious heritage. It is argued that devotion to the nation's religious heritage and Jeffersonian egalitarianism can diminish human antagonisms and serve as a basis for community and a sense of mutual

- responsibility. Without these, there can be no long-term sociopolitical order or economic productivity." Swift, *Religion and the American Experience*, 289.
- 85 The so-called neo-Tocquevilleans have focused on how to increase civic engagement for American citizens or in general for democratic systems. Their answer has been to increase participation in voluntary associations: see Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart*; J.S. Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," *American Journal of Sociology* 94 (1988), 95; R. Putnam, "The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life," *The American Prospect* 13 (1993), 35. This suggestion stems from the conviction that "[t]he norms and networks of civic engagement also powerfully affect the performance of representative government": Putnam, "Bowling Alone," 66.
  - 86 J.E. Curtis, "Voluntary Association Joining: A Cross-National Comparative Note," *American Sociological Review* 36 (1971), 872.
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  - 88 The table is from G.A. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 320.
  - 89 See Curtis et al., "Voluntary Association."
  - 90 See *ibid.* for both these points.
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  - 103 Healy, "Embedded Altruism."
  - 104 See J.A. Piliavin, "Why Do They Give the Gift of Life? A Review of Research on Blood Donors since Oswalt (1977)," *Transfusion* 30 (1990), 444, and J.A. Piliavin and P.C. Callero, *Giving Blood: The Development of an Altruistic Identity* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).
  - 105 Healy, "Embedded Altruism," 24-5.
  - 106 Seymour Martin Lipset presents these ideas variously in *The First New Nation* (New York: Basic Books, 1963); "Canada and the United States: A Comparative View," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 1 (1964), 173; *Revolution and Counterrevolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1968); "Canada and the United States: The Cultural Dimension," in C.F. Doran and J.H. Sigler, eds., *Canada and the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1985), 109-10; "Historical Traditions and National Characteristics: A Comparative Analysis of Canada and the United States," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 11 (1986), 113; and *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of Canada and the United States* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
  - 107 Lipset, "Canada and the United States," 141. This great attachment to British traditions is also said to characterize Australia: see Lipset, *The First New Nation*, chap. 7.
  - 108 Every two years since 1987 the organization Independent Sector has done a survey in the United States asking about donation and volunteer behaviour. Statistics Canada carried out similar surveys in 1987 and 1997. We do not have access to the 1997 U.S. survey, so we are comparing the U.S. results from 1995 with the Canadian data for 1997. However, the variation among the 1987, 1989, 1991, 1993, and 1995 U.S. figures is not very large, and we have no *a priori* reason to believe that there have been major changes since 1995.
  - 109 For example, the Canadian sample begins with age 15, the U.S. sample at 18. Also, the U.S. survey sampled households and asked about contributions by household, although the analysis then breaks respondents down by individual characteristics. The Canadian publication does not indicate how sampling was done. The U.S. reports break down donation by race (72.6 per cent of whites donated to charities,

as compared to 51.8 per cent of non-whites), but the Canadian surveys do not do this.

- 110 The differences, however, are smaller than in prior years.
- 111 Darley and Latané, *The Unresponsive Bystander*, 20–1.
- 112 J.G. Miller and D.M. Bersoff, "Cultural Influences on the Moral Status of Reciprocity and the Discounting of Endogenous Motivation," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 20 (1994), 592.
- 113 S.P. Oliner and P.M. Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New York: Free Press, 1988); S.P. Oliner, "Introduction: Part Six," in P.M. Oliner, S.P. Oliner, L. Baron, L.A. Blum, D.L. Krebs, and M. Zuzanna Smolenska, eds., *Embracing the Other: Philosophical, Psychological, and Historical Perspectives on Altruism* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 363–8.
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- 116 P.M. Oliner and S.P. Oliner, *Toward a Caring Society: Ideas into Action* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995).

## 4 Altruism in Philosophical and Ethical Traditions: Two Views

WILL KYMLICKA

In his novel *Tom Jones*, written in 1749, Henry Fielding observes that

the world are in general divided into two opinions concerning charity, which are the very reverse of each other. One party seems to hold that all acts of this kind are to be esteemed as voluntary gifts, and however little you give (if indeed no more than your good wishes), you acquire a great degree of merit in so doing. Others, on the contrary, appear to be as firmly persuaded, that beneficence is a positive duty, and that whenever the rich fall greatly short of their ability in relieving the distresses of the poor, their pitiful largesses are so far from being meritorious that they have only performed their duty by halves, and are in some sense more contemptible than those who have entirely neglected it. To reconcile these different opinions is not in my power. I shall only add that the givers are generally of the former sentiment, and the receivers are almost universally inclined to the latter.<sup>1</sup>

Two hundred and fifty years later, I think that we can observe the same basic division of attitudes. Like Fielding, I make no attempt here to reconcile these competing views. What I try to do instead is to describe some of their philosophical roots and assumptions.

Fielding suggests that these two attitudes towards charity are rooted in self-interest and social position: rich people favour the view that charity is a praiseworthy voluntary gift; poor people tend to see charity as an obligatory duty. There is no doubt some truth in this (rather uncharitable) observation about human nature. But from a philosophical point of view, the situation is more complicated. The histori-