CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON PROSOCIAL NORMATIVE BEHAVIOR:
A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED STATES
AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

A Thesis
Presented
to the Faculty of
California State University, Chico

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Psychology
Psychological Science Option

by
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Summer 2013
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my husband Richard, who has given me the opportunity, support, and encouragement, to continue my scholastic career.

In addition, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my daughter Natalie, with the thought - 

All things are possible with imagination and perseverance.
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ABSTRACT

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The study of prosocial action requires a cross-cultural journey to unravel antecedents that contribute to the phenomena of cooperative behavior. This research examines elements that would augment our understanding of personal behavior and the societal norms that contribute to the development and continuance of these behaviors within the cultural context. The variables - altruism, responsibility, empathy, and social desirability - serve to address the individual, the society, and thus the culture, on issues related to prosocial normative behavior. In this study, I examined normative behavior using the Schwartz Norm Activation Model and examined two determinants of prosocial behavior, empathy, and responsibility against Rushton’s Self-Report Altruism
scale. I implemented Batson’s Empathy-Altruism hypothesis and an ascription to responsibility scale which enabled the understanding of responsibility within four individual dimensions, traditionally focused responsibility, socially diffused responsibility, exercised responsibility, and inner-directed responsibility. By examining these variables I measured patterns of association between two Western cultures of similar economic and political prowess, Germany and the United States. The German student sample (97) and the Western United States student sample (178) completed four questionnaires, an altruism scale, a responsibility scale, an empathy scale and a social desirability scale. Pearson’s product-moment correlations were calculated to determine definable developmental factors of empathy and responsibility contributing to cultural normative behavior. The results indicated that Germany demonstrated predictable factors of empathy and responsibility related to altruism. Conversely, the results did not demonstrate similar predictable factors of empathy and responsibility related to altruism within the United States.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The study of prosocial action requires a cross-cultural journey to unravel antecedents that contribute to the phenomena of cooperative behavior. To pursue this question scientifically, we must not only examine the specific act of helping others; we should also consider the motivation necessary to participate in this prosocial behavior. Lewin (1951, as cited by Bierhoff & Rohmann, 2004) states “prosocial behavior is a function of the person and the environment” (p. 351). This research examines elements that would augment our understanding of personal behavior and the societal norms that contribute to the development and continuance of these behaviors within the cultural context. The variables I have chosen in pursuit of this understanding include altruism, responsibility, empathy, and social desirability, which will serve to address the individual, the society, and thus the culture on issues related to prosocial normative behavior.

Many theorists of prosocial behavior (often referred to as altruism) argue that the nature of a motive is defined by its ultimate goal, which in the case of altruism must be enhancing the welfare of another or others. Batson (1991) suggested that benefiting others might in some cases be an instrumental goal on the way to the ultimate goal of benefiting oneself. This particular issue continues to dominate much of the research and will be discussed throughout this thesis. However, many researchers agree that although
self-benefits could follow a cooperative or helpful act, it does not prove that these self-benefits are the intended goal (Batson, 1991). Consequently, in the self-report measures implemented and explored, both instrumental and ultimate goals have one defining result: the understanding of prosocial behavior.

The contemporary concept of “culture” has its roots in classical antiquity, Cicero’s “cultura amimi.” German sociologist Georg Simmel referred to culture as “the cultivation of individuals through the agency of external forms” (Levine, 1989, p. 164). In 20th century America, anthropologists labeled “culture” as the distinct way in which people living in different parts of the world classified and represented their experience. However, psychology has been described as culturally “blind,” ignoring the influence the role of culture has in shaping the development and display of human behavior (Berry, 2013). Cross-cultural comparison in the social sciences is plagued by what is considered the “inside-outside” problem (Bond, 1988), particularly when members of a culture share a complex system of decoding meaning of behavior inaccessible to outsiders, as well as, a strong ethnolinquistic identity. Ethnolingistic identity refers to the relationship between language and culture, and the influence language has on the culture (Palmer, 1996). However, beyond these peripheral forces, the emerging necessity of a global worldview dictates research on the similarities and differences that exists psychosocially between cultures. International cooperation on pertinent issues of prosocial cooperative behavior pervade the politics, economics and environmental issues that affect us globally.

Social psychology and anthropology share an extraordinary link through culture. Hoebel (1954) described this link as the “integrated system of learned behavior patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society and which is not a result of
biological inheritance” (p. 16). The observation of non-human altruistic behavior has alerted many disciplines of science to produce a significant volume of literature hypothesizing a genetic origin to certain prosocial prescribed behaviors, but cross-disciplinary approaches remain difficult to reconcile. Recently, prosocial behavioral research has drawn significant attention in its obvious departure from the Darwinian self-interest criteria of Hobbes and Freud, and developed many new and exciting approaches to this analysis. Some of these approaches include the exchange approach proposed by Homans (1961; 1958, as cited in Bar-Tal, 1976), Berkowitz and Connor’s (1966, as cited by Bar-Tal, 1976) normative approach, which includes concepts of social responsibility, Campbell’s cultural approach (1965), the personal normative approach (Schwartz, 1973), and many theorists’ consideration of the developmental approach (Aronfreed, 1968; Rosenhan, 1969, as cited in Bar-Tal, 1978). Taken together, the measures I have chosen in this cross-cultural analysis attempt to systematically explain the behavioral and motivational origins of prosocial behavior through a framework that envelopes many of the developmental, social, and cultural approaches suggested above.

The most popular model, the Schwartz Norm Activation Model (NAM), has often been used in predicting a diversity of prosocial intention and behaviors, and suggests that people engage in prosocial behavior when personal norms are activated (Schwartz, 1970). Studies using this model include bone marrow donation (Schwartz, 1970, 1973), blood donation (Zuckerman & Reis, 1978), pro-environmental concerns (Condano, Welcomer, Scherer, Pradenas, & Parada, 2010), helping in emergency situations (Schwartz & Clausen, 1970; Schwartz & David, 1976; Steg & deGroot, 2010), and volunteering (Schwartz & Fleishman, 1981).
The premise of Schwartz’s personal normative activation model identifies three individual aspects of behavior prediction: ascription to responsibility, awareness of need, and consequence of action. Although this model has been used successfully in the prediction of prosocial intention, it does not account for the important socio-cultural antecedents of prosocial behavior addressed in this study. For example, while Schwartz identifies ascription to responsibility as a necessary feature within his model, he does not specifically identify those individual attributes which would contribute developmentally to personal or social responsibility in a cross-cultural analysis. Indeed, what if familial or societal influences predispose our identification or culpability of responsibility? Therefore, while acknowledging Schwartz’s theoretical premise, I have chosen to incorporate a more refined measure where biographical, demographic, and attitudinal self-report encompass the foundation and development of responsibility. Suedfeld, Hakstian, Rank, and Ballard’s (1985) Ascription to Responsibility Scale (ARS) outlines four unique factors: traditionally focused, socially diffused, exercised and inner-directed responsibility, as identifiable and critical elements in our understanding of the individual and subsequent societal origins of prosocial behavior. The secondary element of personal normative behavior within the NAM is the awareness of need involving the extent to which the person is focused on the existence of the needs of others. Batson’s (1991) empathy-altruism hypothesis suggests that empathy evokes altruistic motivation. The existence and magnitude of the perceived need are a function of this same factor, where perceiving the other’s need leads to a unique internal response called empathy. To address the awareness of need as a visceral/emotional reaction, I have chosen a modified version of the Davis Empathy Scale (1980). Davis (1983b) applies a multidimensional
approach to empathetic reactions towards others, specifically measuring constructs of “self-oriented” feeling and “other-oriented” feeling, which should prove useful in cultural prosocial analyses.

The final aspect of the NAM, consequence of action, cannot be explored directly within the context of this study, yet can be subtracted from identified responsibility and one’s empathic response. However, the inclusion of a short homogeneous version of the Marlow-Crowne measure of Social Desirability (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972) allows for an important element of prosocial behavior to be approached and measured. The Marlowe-Crowne scale self-report scale describes highly desirable behaviors with a determined low probability of occurrence. This survey measures the tendency to present oneself in a socially desirable fashion, which is likely an important element of social representation in self-report measures for cross-cultural analysis, particularly for the investigation of prosocial behavior.

The analysis presented in this study allows for an extensive examination of the attributes of cross-cultural prosocial behavior. In past research, prosocial behavior is often equated with altruistic motivation. Indeed, ‘altruism’ and ‘prosocial behavior’ are often used interchangeably in the literature. Consequently, in addition to the variables of responsibility, a dimensional understanding of empathic attributes, and social desirability, I have included Rushton, Chrisjohn, and Fekken’s (1981) Self-Report Altruism Scale. This scale is critical in my overall assessment of cultural prosocial behavior and will be a valuable asset in evaluating the validity of other scales that are assumed to represent the factors associated with prosocial behavior, empathy, and responsibility.
Previous research on prosocial behavior has involved strangers being asked for help or specific situational conditions and temporary psychological states of the actors. Experimenters have investigated situations that may increase or decrease the likelihood of prosocial behavior. These studies were often carried out by isolating a specific act in a laboratory, with only a few being carried out in a ‘real world’ situation. Although a large volume of literature has been established in relation to personality and demographic variables, none of it addresses specifically these combined antecedents of prosocial behavior (e.g., altruism, empathy, social desirability, and ascription to responsibility) on a cultural level in a cross-country analysis between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany.

It is important to note the reason for choosing the culture of Germany to compare to the culture of the United States regarding prosocial behavior. These two cultures are considered highly developed Western societies of similar political and socioeconomic prowess. However, the writing of Irving Kristol (1976, as cited in Love 2009), demonstrate a new cultural outlook for the United States based on a resurgence of global awareness. His vision looked towards 21st century socioeconomics necessitating an increased global outlook that looked beyond economics to embrace an intellectual dimension reflective of the roots of the United States, specifically, social and cultural stability. This “neo-conservatism” ideology focuses on the preservation of economic freedom and individual responsibility, while affirming support for traditional sources of authority, including religious beliefs and family values (Love, 2009, p. 449). The United States political landscape changed in the 1960s to embrace the new ideology of former socialist emigrants from Nazi Germany in opposition of liberal secularism. This new
intellectual elite ideology “neo-conservatism” focused on the preservation of economic freedom and individual responsibility, while affirming support for traditional sources of authority, including religious beliefs and family values (Love, 2009, p. 450).

Another interesting reason stems from past conceptualizations of altruism and Germany’s place in history. Several authors have suggested that the most exemplary of 20th century altruists are those who protected Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. For example, Monroe (1996) divided people into 4 different classifications in ascending order of altruistic motivation: the entrepreneur, the philanthropist, the hero and heroine, and the rescuer (of Jews during the Holocaust). Although the current study does not include these classifications described by Monroe due to the type of respondents (students), the identification of “rescuer” suggests further inquiry.

German society has endured many changes in the wake of post-World War II, particularly regarding education and religion. One is the mandatory service, recently ended, of 23 months by German males following high school, in addition to other socially structuring mandates, one of which requiring compulsory institutional education, and not homeschooling, until age 18 years (German Culture, 2012). United States compulsory education mandate which varies by state, requiring 10-12 years of education (Education Bug, 2013). Additionally, Germany, like other European nations, participates in culturally unique methods concerning religious tithes which are not collected in churches through envelopes disbursed to participating community families; rather, they are considered income tax, withdrawn from employment wages in the form of Church Tax (Kirchensteuer), factors that differ significantly from the United States. Because religion and education are fundamentally linked to the development of cultural ideals, these
customs obviously present themselves within the cultural landscape of social attitudes. The similarities and differences between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany may indeed be culturally represented by our prosocial motivation and subsequent behavior. Therefore, within this cross-cultural analysis I will use the measure of altruism to examine patterns and associations within the variables of responsibility, empathy, and social desirability, to determine antecedents of personal normative behavior representative of prosocial behavior between these two cultures.

Hypotheses

The motivation for a particular prosocial act may or may not be altruistic. Altruism is defined as an instinctive cooperative behavior that is detrimental to the individual but contributes to the welfare of others. However, true altruism is a difficult concept to define and therefore we must look at prosocial behavior on a continuum of altruistic and egoistic motivation and behavior. On a societal level, we can examine concepts of responsibility and empathy that are identified as predictive and determine if these characteristics can define attributes of prosocial behavior. This can be highlighted by examining other cultural beliefs and practices. In this cross-cultural analysis I will explore altruism, empathy, social desirability and four individual ascriptions to responsibility: traditionally focused, socially-diffused, exercised, and inner-directed. My research will attempt to identify and interpret these variables as societal determinants of prosocial behavior while identifying patterns of association between the United States and Germany.
Traditionally focused responsibility is characterized by adherence to the historically dominated norms of traditional authority figures (God, parents, governments and school administration). My first hypothesis predicted that (a) this factor would be significantly positively associated with altruism for the United States sample but not for the German sample, and (b) this factor’s association with empathy would be similar for the two samples. My hypothesis was based on the writing of Irving Kristol (1976, as cited in Love 2009), whose ideology focuses on the preservation of economic freedom and individual responsibility, while affirming support for traditional sources of authority, including religious beliefs and family values (Love, 2009). Empathy, I predicted, would be similar among all factors, within each sample reflecting the early developmental process of emotional growth within the family, school, and community, agents of personal normative behavior for both cultures.

The second factor, socially diffused responsibility, reflects a tendency to view the social group, such as the State or smaller groups as locus of authority and unlike factor 1, has a more diffused concept of specific authority figures. My second hypothesis predicted (a) Germany would exhibit a stronger association between socially diffused responsibility and altruism than the United States, and (b) this factor would show similar associations with empathy for both countries. I hypothesized Germany, considered a modern European community, would reveal a strong socially diffused sense of responsibility relative to prosocial behavior. This consideration is based on the highly structured organizational institutions and demonstrated by an apparent progressive climate within the educational, socioeconomic, and social practicality of their pro-environmental culture.
The third factor, exercised responsibility, assesses how much a person has exercised authority rather than how a person views authority based on seven biographical items: “I have often been a group leader,” “I enjoy taking charge of things,” “I have held many positions of responsibility in the past in my job(s) and extracurricular activities,” “I prefer following rather than leading” (reverse-scored), “I often make suggestions,” “I was given a lot of responsibility as a child,” “I have a lot of responsibility in my present job and extracurricular activities.” My third hypothesis predicted that (a) exercised responsibility would be more strongly associated with altruism among German students than among American students, and (b) this factor would be similarly associated with empathy for the two samples. Schwartz’s (2006) theory of cultural value orientation suggests that institutional arrangements and policies, such as those prevalent in Germany, can translate into the promotion of a highly competitive economic system and child rearing practices that emphasize societal success.

The fourth factor, inner-directed responsibility, reflects an individualistic ethic of responsibility relative to concepts such as, meritocracy. My fourth hypothesis predicted that (a) there would be a stronger association between this factor and altruism for the United States students than the German students, and (b) this factor would be similarly associated with empathy for the two samples. Additionally, in comparing cultures, it would seem likely that the United States would have a stronger correlation than Germany in inner-directed, merit driven responsibility, due to its autonomous ideals. Schwartz’s (2006) theory of cultural value orientation suggests that the culture of the United States emphasizes “mastery,” which encourages self-assertion to master, direct, and change, the natural and social environment to attain personal goals (p. 141) unlike
Germany, which he suggests demonstrates a significant equalitarian influences derived from a strong civic organizational structure (p. 143).

Social desirability will be included as a variable in this study for exploratory purposes. Past research has suggested that social desirability may mediate responses to questions about prosocial behavior and altruism, particularly in self-report measures of cooperative and helpful behaviors. Altruism and associated variables in self-report measures tend not to evoke the empathic arousal seen in situational emergency or non-emergency measures and therefore the inclusion of this measure may identify valuable reference criteria to the respondent’s frame of mind. Additionally, as this is a cross-cultural analysis, it is important to identify the stability of reporting between the two cultures.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding Prosocial Behavior and Altruism

Prosocial behavior comprises actions that are the antithesis of negative forms of behavior such as aggression, destruction, and selfishness. Children who learn to respond aggressively are likely to behave aggressively; conversely, children who are trained to behave cooperatively will behave cooperatively (Barrett, 1979). The term, prosocial behavior, devised in the 1970s, describes beneficial acts carried out voluntarily in situations where the individual has the freedom to decide to act (Batson, 1991). However, it is recognized that motivations for this behavior differ, and thus we must first understand altruism to understand prosocial behavior. Researchers agree that three conditions must be met to establish altruism: the action must be carried out voluntarily, the aim must be to benefit another, and the action must be carried out without expectation of reward (Batson, 1991; Berkowitz, 1972). The advancement of our understanding of altruism was the central focus of J. P. Ruston’s work, which culminated in his influential and widely used altruistic measurement scale. Although controversial, Rushton led the field of study away from the traditional foci of human behavior that fixated on the self-serving models including aggression, cheating, and stealing (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Barrett, 1979; Bowman, Schultheiss, & Schumann, 2012;
Eron & Huesman, 1984) and embraced generosity, helping, and prosocial consideration. At the time, the social climate necessitated theoretical advances in the field of social psychology, particularly with the emergence of the postwar peace movement, growing acknowledgement of the limitations of earth resources, and the global cry for humanism (Perry, 1981).

Rushton, like Batson (1987), viewed prosocial behavior on a motivational continuum from altruistic to egoistical, not previously proposed by social psychologists. He understood altruism to be a “pervasive part of human society” that “constitutes a universal value” (Rushton, 1980, p. 10). In addition, he recognized the value of prosocial behavior to be a basic tenet of most world religions, social reform, and revolutions (Rushton, 1982). Moreover, he believed altruism as a necessary learned value could be improved through the social environment (Hur, in press). Flescher and Worthen (2007) also viewed altruism “more as a skill than a talent, intrinsically valuable to the human experience and can spring from several sources” (p. 51). Like other social-learning theorists, Rushton (1980) viewed our engagement in the process of social learning through a number of factors, stating “Our society can increase the amount of altruistic behavior engaged in though a judicious use of the agencies of socialization it has at its command” (p. 34). Rushton concurred with other social psychologists in considering the family as the primary socialization agent. He viewed educational systems and the mass media as potential observational learning experiences that could alter societal norms towards increased altruistic behavior. Moreover, he suggested the engagement in altruistic behavior and the underlying motivation are directly correlated with the degree to which the behavior has been learned (Rushton, 1983, as cited by Hur, in press). The
motivation to act can only occur upon recognition of other’s needs, interests, and rights, along with the individual’s capacity and freedom to be motivated to act or react (Glannon, 1998). Child development researchers Pellegrini et al. (2007) have found a significant positive correlation between the amount of time a child spends at school and the acquisition of prosocial cooperative skills.

Rushton, like social learning theorist Albert Bandura (1997, as cited by Powell, Symbaluk, & MacDonald, 2005, p. 219), believed in the principles of reinforcement and modeling, where the degree of reinforcement associated with the behavior influences whether the behavior would be repeated. Modeling would be represented through observation of parental involvement in prosocial behaviors, such as volunteering or blood donation (Ackerman, Kashy, Donnellan, Conger, & Rand, 2010; DeGroot & Steg, 2009; Eisenburg, 2000; Steg & DeGroot, 2010). In his seminal work, Rushton (1980) viewed altruism through many models in existence such as the requirements for acts of bravery defined by the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission (1977, as cited by Rushton, 1982), the Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, Japanese kamikaze pilots, and Fellner and Marshall’s (1968, as cited by Rushton, 1982) research of organ donation. In addition, like other researchers, he incorporated everyday experiences, such as requests for money (Darley & Latané, 1968; Rushton, 1980), studies carried out by Piliavin, Rodin, and Piliavin (1969) involving strangers being helped in a subway when injured, and many studies conducted by Stayer, Wareing, and Rushton (1979) involving preschool children and cooperative behavior. Through his research, Rushton acknowledged one defining principle that incorporated both an intention and a behavior:
“Behavior carried out to benefit another without anticipation of rewards from external sources” (1982, p. 427).

Social and Conditional Learning Theories

In the relationship between cognitive development and altruistic behavior investigators measured morality, egocentrism and altruism. Bar-Tal (1976) suggests “The more altruistic behavior the child acquires the better his decentration skills are and the higher the level of moral judgment” (p. 17). Rushton (1982) saw prosocial behavior “from a social learning perspective, people abstract standard of appropriate conduct from the environmental contingencies in which they are exposed” (p. 438). Additionally, Rushton (1982) proposes “the process of positive classical conditioning such as Pavlovian procedures, have been used to develop empathy” (p. 435). Hoffman (1976) suggests that children exhibit increased tendencies towards cooperative behavior, helping, and sharing relative to cognitive development particularly during the first ten years of life (Bar-Tal, 1976; Hoffman, 1976). In childhood, the development of responsibility also occurs at a cognitive and behavior level through modeling and reinforcement. Many social and cognitive learning theorists suggest that providing a child with the opportunity to witness actions of responsibility influences executive function, empathy, identity, and emotional regulation, thus augmenting the child’s ability to internalize these qualities. Many researchers (Crandall, Crandall, & Patkovsky, 1965; Leung, Cheung, Lau, & Lam, 2011; Schmidt, Rahoczy, & Tomasello, 2012) attribute the internalization of these aspects of development to the socialization process and the child’s increasing awareness of social norms.
Piaget (1932, as cited in Lourenco, 2012) proposed two broad stages in the development of morality: moral realism and autonomous morality. Within the first stage, the development of moral realism, the child’s obligation to external authority is based on the outcome of the act, the consequence of punishment and conformity to established rules. The realism of his thinking leads to his/her confusion between subjective experiences and personal thought processes. Subsequently, the child lacks the necessary empathic reaction and egocentrism diminishes initiation of a prosocial act. During the second developmental stage, autonomous morality, with established social rules the child negotiates with peers, personal judgments, and perceived intentions. Vygotsky’s (1978, 1988, as cited in Lourenco, 2012) also, clearly addresses the developmental process of prosocial motivation through his cognitive development theory. Vygotsky’s general law of cultural development identifies two stages of adaptation, the first on a social level and later on an individual level. Cognitively, on an intra-psychological level the emergence of this adaptation along with all other higher functions originate as actual relationships between human individuals. Rosenblatt (1989, as cited by McVee, Dunsmore, & Gavelek, 2005) supports this transactional approach, and considers all human activities and relationships to be transactions “in which the individual, social, cultural, and natural elements interfuse” (p. 536).

Social Biology Meets Social Psychology

Darwin’s theory of ‘natural selection’ and ‘survival of the fittest’ presented him with a significant predicament when considering altruism. At the time, Darwin (1871, as cited by Warneken & Tomasello, 2008) was aware of eusocial insects (e.g.,
termites) would regularly sacrifice themselves for another. Darwin clearly realized that this phenomenon needed explanation. In subsequent work, Darwin proposed viewing this behavior at a group level and not at an individual level (Warneken & Tomasello, 2008). However, it was not until modern genetics that the explanation was made available. Social biologists examined animal behaviors such as mutual defense, rescue behavior, cooperative hunting (Bshary & Bergmüller, 2007; Rushton, 1982), warning calls (Broom, 2006), sharing food (Rushton, 1982), and they eventually recognized a solution to this paradox through survival of the common gene called *kin selection* (more recently called *Inclusive Fitness*). William D. Hamilton was first to consider the theory of *Inclusive Fitness* in the 1960s, which is referred to as the “fitness of an individual organism measured in terms of the survival and reproductive success of its kin” (“Inclusive fitness,” 2013). The theory of inclusive fitness led to the elaboration of a number of other theories, such as Wilson’s theory of multilevel processing within the cultural evolution (Wilson, 1975). Wilson argues that socially transmitted traits could be spread to benefit the group in less than a generation, and suggested these traits could occur even in the presence of migration. However, he stipulates that the abandonment of one’s old customs must occur with the replacement of new societal customs.

In contrast to Wilson (1975), Richard Dawkins (1987) proposed the concept of the “selfish gene,” which received mixed reviews in the literature, suggesting a limitation of our ability to promote morally based assumptions due to our biological gene structure. Therefore, it is impossible to consider selfishness as the motivation (genes themselves have no awareness). Pinker (2002) suggests that Dawkins should not be denied his metaphor: “sometimes the most selfish thing a gene can do is wire unselfish
motives into a human brain” (Pinker, 2002, p. 191). Broom (2006) suggests the “selfish gene” would be better stated as “subject-benefit at the expense of others.” Research by biologists de Waal (1996, as cited by Broom, 2006) and Wilson (2011) proposed that the concept of morality—considered the basis of altruism—is specifically biologically based. For those who question this theory, Midgley (1978) argues the perception of ‘having a nature’ does not impede our freedom; rather “it is essential to it, if we were genuinely plastic and indeterminate at birth, there would be no reason why society should not stamp us into a shape that might suit it” (p. 23). These converging theories of altruism remain difficult to reconcile in the context of human behavior and motivation when explicated within the social sciences, revealing the varied approaches common to the topics of cooperation and prosocial behavior. Bshary and Bergmüller (2007) propose that problems always exist in interdisciplinary approaches and propose that explanations often become marred when different disciplines present varying methodologies, concepts, and terminologies, specific to their individual fields.

Schwartz Norm Activation Model

Several models of prosocial behavior described previously cover altruistic based motivation and egoistic based assumptions. These models include the exchange approach, which highlights the term reciprocal altruism. Reciprocal altruism refers to the act of doing something for future benefit and the principle of maximizing reward and minimizing cost in human interaction. The empathic-joy hypothesis and other models are examples of this egoistic-motivation model. The developmental approaches view altruism as a learned behavior according to the principles of social learning theory, while
the cultural approach looks at the cultural conditions on a societal level that may enhance altruistic behavior. Campbell (1965, as cited by Bar-Tal, 1976) suggested that the cultural approach is based on both a biological and social evolution process. This process describes how an increase in “ethnocentric self-sacrificial loyalty” increased the group’s chances of survival relative to those groups who could not command such loyalty (Bar-Tal, 1976, p. 48). Batson (1991) agrees with Campbell and finds these situations particularly true in wartime where self-sacrifice is identified in the willingness to risk death in warfare. They suggest that altruism is a product of societal indoctrination and developed as a byproduct of the sociocultural reality in which the individual lives (Cohan, 1972). Campbell, Cohan, and Batson agree that the presence and persistence of altruism has “survival value” only for the group that maintains such beliefs (as cited by Bar-Tal, 1976). “Whether or not it exists, and to what extent, lies in the nature and evolution of the socio-cultural system, which then has effects on the motivation and behaviors of individuals” (Cohan, 1972, as cited by Bar-Tal, 1976, p. 49).

The personal normative approach used in the current research explains altruistic behavior as a product of the social norms; therefore, it will encompass developmental and cultural models proposed previously. Norms refer to a set of expectations members of the group hold concerning behavior (Homans, 1961). Norms are stable antecedents that are passed down generationally and persist due to sanctions imposed to enforce conformity. Some, researchers suggest that most individuals follow norms not because of socially enforced conformity; rather, they are internalized during early developmental strategies of socialization (Vygotsky, 1978, 1988, as cited by Lourenco, 2012).
Schwartz expanded this premise to include the individual’s self-expectation that encompasses early developmental strategies between learned expectation of societal norm and personal experience in the socialization process (Schwartz, 1973). Through this we can see how the influence of culture has a significant bearing on the society the individual is exposed to in shaping normative value. Schwartz identifies this self-expectation within the Schwartz personal normative activation model. The model examines the two fundamental requirements for prosocial normative behavior: empathy and responsibility (which I have outlined in the Introduction).

DeGroot and Steg (2009) and Steg and DeGroot (2010) examined Schwartz’s model and determined four variables of influence in prosocial behavior. The variables included personal norms (which include moral obligation to engage in prosocial behavior), awareness of adverse consequences, ascription of responsibility (for negative consequences), and perceived control over the situation. However, unlike DeGroot and Steg (2009), I have utilized a refined scale of measurement to identify personal characteristics of responsibility and control as well as implementing the Batson empathy-altruistic hypothesis to examine the motivation of responsibility related to prosocial behavior. This strategy will enable me to recognize the development of these factors of prosocial behavior—responsibility and empathy—which are essential to the explanation of cultural differences.

Responsibility: Origins and Confusion

“Responsibility is a term that can function as a bridge between what is and what ought to be” (Moran, 1996, p. 28). Many researchers agree that the concept of
responsibility plays a fundamental role in the motivation and action of prosocial behavior (Bar-Tal, 1976; Batson, 1991; Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley, & Birch, 1981; Broom, 2006; Bshary & Bergmüller, 2007; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990; Rushton, 1982, 1991; Schwartz, 1970; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). The etymology of responsibility is traced back to early biblical traditions as the ‘address’ and subsequent ‘response’ to God’s commandments (Moran, 1996, p. 14). This explanation dominated centuries of debate between theologians and philosophers, who, like Nietzsche, questioned the premise of responsibilities as ‘responses’ to God. However, this highly developed sense of personal responsibility remained central to Western societies’ moral code throughout the nineteenth century until it was further undermined by revelations of Freudian concepts that swept Europe. Max Weber, a leading German scholar and founder of modern sociology, attempted to explain the confusion of modern day responsibility by dividing it into two fundamentally opposing maxims in the ethic of responsibility (Moran, 1996); these include ‘ethic of ultimate ends’ (Gesinnungsethik), known as good intention but with disregard of immediate effect, and ‘ethic of responsibility’ (Verantwortungsethik) which explained the accounting of one’s action (Moran, 1996). By dividing the original meaning, the Christian emphasis was obscured, and the latter ‘ethic of responsibility’ remained the major social issue which today addresses global politics, ecology, and humanitarianism. Cross-culturally, the question of responsibility remains a complicated and emotionally charged issue. The World War II era is particularly controversial with events such as Auschwitz, Pearl Harbor, the Iron Curtain, and Hiroshima (Moran, 1996). Still the question remains, if the concept of responsibility grew out of Western religious ideals, would it be difficult for Eastern cultures to understand Western culture’s concept
of guilt within Eastern culture’s concept of shame? These and other philosophical issues are important issues to modern day global psychologists. However, the present cross-cultural analysis examines two Western societies where Christian influences are an integral part of the societal and political landscape.

**Ascription to Responsibility**

The Ascription to Responsibility Scale (ARS) uses attitudinal, autobiographical and demographic self-report to identify determinates of personal responsibility. The ARS is divided into variables that identify conformity, depersonalization, and moral based assumptions of responsibility using four factors: traditionally focused responsibility, socially diffused responsibility, exercised, and inner-directed responsibility.

Suedfeld, Epstein, and Yakov (1973) questioned previous research on responsibility that failed to identify characteristics of focused or diffused responsibility. Their initial introduction to the issues surrounding responsibility focused on research conducted by Kelman and Lawrence (1972), related to the massacre at My Lai, the fate of the commanding officer, and specifically, the reaction of the American public in ascribing responsibility. Suedfeld et al. (1973) reported a significant divide in the public perception of individual responsibility and socially diffused responsibility, unexplained in the literature. Specifically, they questioned whether United States ‘policy’ could actually be diffused responsibility. Moreover, why was it so intertwined with aspects of personal responsibility, while in other matters of tyranny, social diffused responsibility could be readily ascribed, such as the German Nuremberg trials following World War II?
Suedfeld et al. (1973) argued that a situational explanation did not adequately explain attributes of personal responsibility. Therefore, they wanted to create a useful and predictive tool that would examine stable personality differences that could access individual responsibility and control. They believed that societal and family influences could offer significant insight into the individual’s predispositions in accepting responsibility or culpability for their actions. Moreover, if understood, these predispositions would generalize to a wide range of specific situations (Suedfeld et al., 1985), such as global and domestic policies on environmental matters, health-care, economics, foreign affairs, and political elections. The four factors are explained next.

Factor one identifies traditionally focused responsibility and is characterized by adherence to the historically dominated norms of traditional authority figures: God, parents, government, and school administration. Tedeschi and Bonoma (1972) describe the willingness to ascribe responsibility to “identifiable figures” with socially legitimized power, “whose roles confer the right to exercise control and the concomitant responsibility that goes with it” (p. 156). Wray-Lake and Syvertsen (2011) suggest that belonging to something larger than oneself is a fundamental human need and the development of responsibility is rooted in this relationship with others. Religion, family, and schools foster this development, adding cohesive value to personal identity through support and community. Therefore, when we see ourselves as part of a larger entity, we are able to see ourselves beyond “the self” and therefore, able to replace self-interest with “other” oriented focus.

Factor two identifies social diffusion of responsibility and is characterized by depersonalization of responsibility and replaces factor one’s specific figures wielding
authority with the belief that the social group is the acceptable locus of authority.

Diffusion of responsibility describes a phenomenon where people in groups are less accountable for their actions. This phenomenon occurs in both, emergency or non-emergency situations where responsibility is diffused or spread over the group (Freeman, Walker, Borden, & Latané, 1975, as cited by Jones & Foshay, 1984). In previous studies of responsibility, social psychologists had focused on emergency situations where internal versus external attribution to responsibility (e.g., locus of control) was deemed critical determinant of helping behavior. Specific focus was given to situational factors rather than the dispositional factors of the actors, as seen in research concerning obedience to authority (Milgram, 1974), attributions to harmful situations (Kelman & Lawrence, 1972) and numerous studies of the bystander effect (Darley & Latané, 1968; Fischer, Geitemeyer, Pollozek & Frey, 2006; Latané & Darley, 1970) popularly exemplified by the murder of Kitty Genovese. The bystander effect identifies causes surrounding the intervention in an emergency situation by the bystander’s attribution of specific intentions and dispositions to the victim based on observed behavior (Heider, 1958; Jones & Davis, 1965, as cited by Bar-Tal, 1976). The judgment involves attribution to external causes, which may be beyond a person’s control (e.g., a man falling who has a cane), or internal causes (e.g., a man falling because he is intoxicated) (Piliavin et al., 1969). Low or high ambiguity is also a critical factor in the bystander effect; several experiments have confirmed that when an event occurs that appears ambiguous, the interpretation of the situation by an individual is significantly influenced by the way in which other bystanders react (Bickman, 1972, as cited by Bar-Tal, 1976; Darley &
Latané, 1968; Latané & Darley, 1970). The bystander effect is a phenomenon where a person is less likely to provide help when there are other bystanders (Myers, 2008).

Factor three is defined by a number of biographical items that describe the respondent’s exercised authority and responsibility and not specifically how responsibility is viewed. The addition of this factor enables us to view the extent to which individuals have experienced situations of responsibility and authority within the home, workplace, or community that may influence their attitudes towards responsibility, empathy and control, central to this research.

Factor four defines inner-directed responsibility, while acknowledging other philosophical ideals of meritocracy and libertarianism associated with this factor (Hakstian, Suedfeld, Ballard, & Rank, 1986). This individualist view represents internalized concepts of responsibility, such as those developed during early social learning practices. The Confusion concept of meritocracy has its roots in the Chinese Han dynasty, where the first known policies of meritocracy where established in the population by the concept of leadership, judged by personal merit (Casey, 2009). Individualist philosophers like Friedrich Nietzsche opposed ideas of equalitarian conformity and emphasized individual liberty as a primary objective (Casey, 2009).

Hakstian et al. (1985) identified the ‘ethic of responsibility’ as the central tenet in understanding diffused or individual responsibility within the ARS. Each factor identifies concepts and beliefs held by the respondent to understand specific characteristics of personal normative behavior predictive of the societal understanding of responsibility. Therefore, the importance of this scale in identifying aspects of conformity, depersonalization, and autonomy, allows us to clearly understand the
particular association to responsibility present within each culture. Societal laws play an important role in the development of personal norms and cannot be ignored when addressing cross-cultural analysis, specifically laws concerning education and military service. Compulsory policies regarding mandatory service are not implemented in United States during peace time, yet other Western societies have mandates and civic organizational structures that cannot be overlooked in the cultural context of normal social behavior. For example, in the United States, states vary in the duration of time compulsory education is implemented, ranging from 10 years to 14 years of education (Education Bug, 2013). In 2008, the United States held a 77% high school graduation rate, below most developed countries (Education Bug, 2013). The United States 12 years average falls short of Germany’s 13-year compulsory education, or until 18 years of age. In Germany education is the second largest item of public spending after social security and welfare (MapXL, n.d.). However, Germany too, has strict policies concerning homeschooling which has become international news and the focus of the United States 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in the refusal to allow a German family to seek asylum in the United States because of German school policies. “The court ignored mountains of evidence that homeschoolers are harshly fined and that custody of their children is gravely threatened-something most people would call persecution (Donnally, 2013 as cited by Starnes, 2013, p. 1). In Germany, from 1955 to 2011 mandatory service of 23 months following high school (Gymnasium) was compulsory for German males. Additionally, these and other policies were enacted in post-war Germany and were considered “a necessary means to ensure the defense forces maintain a close relationship to civil society in order to prevent a repeat of the way in which the Nazi party was able to
Societal mandates are important considerations that affect overall cultural conditions. According to Schwartz (2006), culture joins with social structure, demography, and history in a multifaceted reciprocal relationship, influencing every aspect of how we live. In revealing the true orientations of a culture we must look to systems of law, organization of economic exchange, and the practice of socialization (Schwartz, 2006). This organization is outlined in the theory of cultural value orientation, which evolves within each society as it confronts rudimentary issues in the regulation of human activity. In cross-cultural comparison, the way societies respond identifies fundamental differences between cultures and is an important element to distinguish in our interpretation of cross-cultural prosocial motivations.

Understanding Empathy

The human capacity to respond to others in need is considered an essential element of the human condition; it enables us to form individual attachments, social bonds, and harmonious relationships, thereby enhancing the “greater good” (Burks, Youll, & Durtschi, 2012; Eisenberg & Faves, 1990; Hoffman, 2000; Krebs, 1970; Sze, Gyurak, Goodkind, & Levenson, 2012). Empathy is considered one of the most important mediators of helping, cooperation, and other prosocial behaviors (Batson, 1991; Burk et al., 2012; Krebs, 1970). It is regarded as “an affective response that stems from the apprehension or comprehension of another’s emotional state or condition and is similar to what the other person is feeling or would be expected to feel” (Eisenberg, 2000, p. 671). Indeed, the reference to ‘affective response’ is noteworthy; it identifies the arousal of an
emotion that might otherwise be activated in a range of different ways. Researchers have confirmed a considerable level of participant variability using functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI), specifically in the actual ability to empathize among participants sampled (Singer, Kiebel, Winston, Dolan, & Frith, 2004). However, the primary debate among researchers focuses on the behavioral and motivational origin of the empathic response. Is it a product of a controlled thoughtful process? Or is empathic response an uncontrolled automatic process? This question is addressed in many models of empathy, particularly, Batson’s (1991) empathy-altruism model which is relevant to Davis empathy scale used in this research.

Davis (1980), in the development of the Davis Empathy Scale, acknowledged centuries of debate by philosophers such as Adam Smith (1759) and Herbert Spencer (1870) regarding the cognitive (thoughtful) and visceral (uncontrolled) aspects of empathy. Davis’s (1983a) empathy scale offers a multidimensional approach to motivation and behavior, which includes both empathic concern (“other-oriented”) and personal distress (“self-oriented”) indices. Although Davis’ scale includes four individual characteristics of empathic reaction to others in need, a modified version was utilized in the current study. The original characteristics included a perspective-taking scale which identified the tendency to spontaneously adopt others’ point of view. However, because Hoffman (1977) suggested that age was a significant theoretical predictor of this characteristic and that perspective-taking was mediated by the gradual developmental shift from “self-orientation” to “other-orientation,” it was not applicable given the mean age of those in my sample. In addition, the fantasy scale, which described the individual’s imagination of fictitious characters from books and films as the motivator (Davis, 1983b)
was also excluded in the modified version. These excluded scales did not envelop the empathic criteria of cognitive and emotional features necessary for our correlation. The remaining scales included, empathic concern “other-oriented,” and personal distress “self-orientation,” were associated with Batson’s (1991) empathy-altruism hypothesis. Davis (1983a) considered personal distress negatively related to aspects of social functioning and crucial to understanding empathic motivation in the context of prosocial behavior.

In a brief explanation of his theoretical premise regarding perspective-taking in children, Hoffman (1977) contends that ‘sympathetic concern’ is the early intercorrelation of empathic concern, perspective-taking, and personal distress. In early development, the understanding of self and others remains elusive by the lack of differentiation; therefore, the child will experience distress when observing another in distress. Through the development of role-taking skills, Hoffman states, the child will learn other-oriented concern. Developmental social learning theories associated with prosocial behavior are essential for our understanding of prosocial behavior.

Empathy activation, whether a controlled thoughtful process, or an automatic one, can be thwarted in certain situations. Social exclusion theories suggest that rejection from a group can temporarily interfere with our emotional responses, thereby impairing our capacity for empathic understanding and decreasing our ability for prosocial behavior (Twenge, Baumeiter, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Bartels, 2007). This important concept is notable when one examines altruistic motivation and prosocial behavior in the “within group” and “outside group” context. Within the realm of cross-cultural analysis, we highlight the divergence of social normative behavior relative to culture. The United
States and Germany are individualistic societies, yet unlike the United States, Germany has a rich ethnolinguistic identity, which is both objectively and subjectively based. The strong Germanic Kultur is straightforward, direct, and without small talk. The vitality of their identity can be measured in terms of its acceptance to the “outside group” (Bond, 1988) in this case, those not fluent in the German dialect. This is similar to theories of inclusive fitness, which refer to favoring others who are genetically related, and social identity theories may also account for behavior biases to those “outside” the group.

Recent neuroscientific studies suggest that while observing another person’s actions, specific neurons are activated. These neurons, referred to as ‘mirror neurons,’ are situated within the ventral prefrontal cortex of the brain. Ramachandran (2006) states “Giaccamo Rizzollati's discovery holds the key to many enigmatic aspects of human evolution including ‘mind- reading,’ empathy, imitation learning, and even the evolution of language” (p. 2). Empathy therefore can be linked to the psychological phenomenon known as “theory of the mind.” Physiologically, the loss of these specific mirror neurons may explain the childhood disease autism, where the inability to empathize, or understand “others” emotions is present among the diagnosable symptoms (Ramachandran, 2006).

Similarly, Preston and De Waal (2002) developed the perception-action model of empathy in motor behavior and imitation where observations of others’ pain have been shown to trigger activity in the pain centers of the observer’s brain. Additionally, in fMRI studies, other simple emotions experienced by others, such as anger, fear, sadness, joy, and even more complex ones such as disappointment, shame, or guilt, can activate similar representative states in the observer. Subsequently, Singer et al. (2004) found the
empathic response to be automatic and therefore not requiring any form of engagement of judgment about the other person’s emotional state. We can conclude that neuroscientific research suggests that true empathic concern is an automatic response.

The Empathy-Altruism Model

The empathy-altruism model carefully distinguishes empathy-induced altruistic motivation from various egoistic motivations to participate in prosocial behavior (Batson, 1991). Three elements distinguish these two motivations within this model: personal distress, reinforcement, and empathic concern. Personal distress and reinforcement are considered to be egoistic motivators for prosocial behavior because both entail self-interest as the primary motivational factor. Personal distress describes helping behavior that is not motivated to alleviate others’ needs, but rather to alleviate the distress felt by the observer. Reinforcement, from a social learning standpoint, is further subdivided into two egoistic motivations, reward-seeking and punishment-avoiding (Batson, 1991). Only empathic concern represents true altruistic motivation, with the unique function of internalizing the needs of others and adopting their perspective (Krebs, 1975; Stotland, 1969). However, to initiate any of these factors, the ‘perception of need’ must be understood. Batson describes three influences in the perception of need: perceived discrepancy (real or apparent) between other’s current state and some dimension of well-being (Batson, 1991), prominence of well-being discrepancy (Clark & Word, 1972, 1974, as cited by Batson, 1991; Darley & Latané, 1968), and the observers intentional focus towards person in need and not the environment or self (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). Batson suggests that all of these issues must be satisfied before
perception of need is fulfilled. In the empathy-altruism hypothesis this internalizing of 
the other’s perceived need distinguishes empathic concern from other egoistically 
motivation factors.

Batson and colleagues have conducted a substantial volume of research on 
people’s willingness to decrease the suffering and distress of others at a considerable cost 
to themselves when empathy was activated (Batson, 1987, 1991; Bierhoff & Rohmann, 
2004). In a definitive study, using only women, as Batson was accustomed to doing, 
Batson et al. (1981) tested the empathy-altruism hypothesis in a stressful learning 
condition were ease of escape from the situation was manipulated. The observers, after 
reading of a short caption on Elaine (a confederate) watched her doing a ten trial tasks 
were she would receive random electrical shocks on each trial. Among the ten 
participants, nearly all traded places with her, when Elaine’s values and interests were 
considered similar to their own. This was elicited by high levels of empathy, even in an 
ease-escape situation. Low-level empathy was also recorded, when responding 
participants considered Elaine’s values different from their own. Empathic concern is 
assumed higher if a person indicates warmth and compassion when faced with the 
suffering victim. Specifically, adopting another person’s perspective and initiating 
empathy involves more than just focusing attention on another person in need, rather, 
genuine empathic concern involves imagining how the person is being affected by the 
situation (Stotland, 1969). Although several experiments of this nature have been 
conducted and complementary manipulation of empathy continued to elicit the same 
response (Batson et al., 1991; Bierhoff & Rohmann, 2004; Van Lange, 2008).
Additionally, contrary to expectation, egoistically motivated person were as helpful in the
difficult-escape condition, but their level of helpfulness was considered lower in the easy-escape condition (Batson, 1991, as cited by Bierhoff & Rohmann, 2004). The original empathy-altruism hypothesis (1981) was tested in an empathy and ease-escape condition where prosocial behavior is predicted likely in conditions independent of situational constraints. In an ease-escape condition empathic concern predominates and in a difficult-escape condition, personal distress predominates (Bierhoff & Rohmann, 2004).

When personal distress was stronger than empathic concern, the observer often chooses the lesser cost with the higher reward, leading to a reduction of her own vicarious distress. This suggests that the thoughtful process involved in the helping behavior was not to benefit others specifically, rather to benefit oneself. These lower-level controlled, subjective processes are considered products of emotional reactivity and contagion (Eisenberg, 2000) as seen in the bystander effect (Darley & Latané, 1968). Alternatively, when empathetic concern was stronger than personal distress, the action of prosocial behavior was independent of any variables that may compliment the motivation (Bierhoff & Rohmann, 2004). Empathic concern is thought to rely on higher-level cognitive processes such as the consideration of other’s perspective, self-control, and willpower (Batson et al., 1991; Eisenberg, 2000; Sze et al., 2012).

Another hypothesis, proposed by researchers Smith, Keating, and Stotland (1989) and known as the empathic-joy hypothesis, contends that our empathic emotions are activated by vicarious joy. In contrast to Batson’s (1991) model the empathic-joy hypothesis allows us to relieve our feeling of empathy by helping others in anticipation of the benefit we would receive by the action. Another hypothesis, the negative-state relief model, suggests that helping behavior is activated by our desire to elevate a negative
mood (Batson, 1991; Miller & Carlson, 1990). According to the negative state relief model, we are more likely to engage in prosocial behavior during a negative state to enhance our mood. However, our altruistic action must be balanced by the anticipated relief state we will experience and we can choose not to act if, we believe, our action will not accomplish this goal. Again, like the empathic-joy hypothesis, we gain relief by our actions. These explanations view our empathic arousal as an instrument, where the action of helping the distressed individual is primarily motivated by the subsequent benefits we would receive. Unlike the empathy-altruism model, both of these latter models assume that people are egoistically motivated.

Many theorists and researchers contend that our understanding of empathy can be improved only by explicit recognition of both its affective and cognitive component (Hoffman, 1977). The understanding of these components is central to our explanation of the operational variables of behavior and motivation associated with prosocial actions. The empathy-altruism model clearly represents the distinction of benefiting others at a cost to oneself, while other models highlight how benefiting “oneself” is a decisive factor in helping others. As empathy is a motivating component of prosocial behavior, it is important to understand how these cognitive distinctions operate in the normative and social context (e.g., culture) we are examining.

Could ‘Social Desirability’ Be a Problem?

The study of prosocial behavior and altruism as cooperative, helpful motivated behaviors presents methodological concerns in the design of self-report inventories. Social desirability refers to potential sensitivity to the experimenter’s
demand characteristics, considered prevalent when personal normative questions are addressed (Robinette, 1991). This is particularly true when the subjects are motivated to present a favorable view of their own culturally desirable traits, in a cross-cultural analysis. The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) is commonly used by researchers and is made up of items describing highly desirable behaviors that have a low probability of occurring. Many studies fail to examine the possibility of response style tendencies, citing the length of the Marlowe-Crowne scale (Robinette, 1991), and arguing that several items contribute little to the overall measure (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972). Therefore, several alternative shorter versions have been created. Strahan and Gerbasi (1972), proposed a series of three homogeneous scales that they considered useful in achieving the desired outcome of the original 33-item scale. Of these scales, M-C 1(10) used in the current study offers similar measurements of social desirability and variables in subject composition that would appeal to the cross-cultural context of this research.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Prior to conducting this study, approval was sought and obtained from the Human Subjects in Research Committee—the University’s official Institutional Review Board (see Appendix C), as per departmental and university legal policies and regulations. Permission to conduct the study was granted on November 15, 2012. Approval for use of the German student sample was requested and approved by Headmaster, Jürgen Fischer (Atlas School, Sable School of Languages, Eilgutstrasse 10, 90443 Nürnberg, Germany; see Appendix D), as per departmental and legal policies and regulations. Permission to use this institute of higher education student body in advanced English was received on November 2, 2012. This investigation was designed to gather data pertaining to the hypotheses utilizing relevant self-report psychological scales, as outlined and described in the measures section below.

Participants

Participants were students at The Atlas School; Sabel School of Languages, in Nuremburg, Germany and undergraduate psychology students at California State University, Chico, California, USA. Participants consisted of males and females students ranging in age from 16 to 62 years with a combined mean age of 19.97 years, \(SD = 4.3\). The participants from the German student sample consisted of 97 male and female
students with a mean age of 19.69 years, \(SD = 3.2\). The participants from the United States student sample consisted of 178 male and female students with a mean age of 20.20 years, \(SD = 5.6\). The analysis did not distinguish between male and female respondents. Ethnicity was determined in the United States 178-student sample: 117 (65.7\%) were Caucasian, 6 (3.4\%) were African-American, 40 (22.5\%) were Hispanic, 12 (6.7\%) were Asian, with 3 students not responding to the question. In Germany, ethnicity is an unfamiliar concept of identification, unlike the United States, and many of the German students identified religious affiliation, such as “Muslim” or “Christian,” some answered “Russian,” “French,” “African,” or “Turkish,” most answered “European.” Due to the confusion in translating the concept of ethnic classification, I will not presume ethnicity of the German student sample. Perhaps this point is notable for the cultural difference between the United States and Germany with respect to the amount of attention paid to ethnicity. When I inquired about the diverse answers received, I was informed that once students had a German passport they were considered German. Due to the generous class time given in the organization and disbursement of this study, I did not pursue the question further. However, it is important to understand that The Atlas School of Languages attracts a diverse student body from Germany and other countries pursuing academic excellence in the understanding of the English language.

Measures

Participants were administered four self-report questionnaires in English that consisted of scales and subscales from four different measures: the Self Report Altruism Scale (SRAS; Rushton et al., 1981), which measured altruistic tendency and was used as
the primary scale against which I correlate two other variables related to prosocial behavior, as proposed by Schwartz (1973) in his Personal Normative Activation model, responsibility and empathy. These variables were measured using the Ascription to Responsibility Scale (Suedfeld et al., 1985) and a modified version of the Davis Empathy Scale (Davis, 1980). A short, homogenous version of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972) was also used to assess social desirability for the sampled population, referred to as M-C 1(10).

**The Self Report Altruism Scale**

The Self-Report Altruism Scale (SRAS; Rushton et al., 1981) is designed to measure altruistic traits within a 19-item scale, and was used as a primary tool from which other antecedents of prosocial behavior could be measured. The items use a Likert scale ranging from 1 - 5, where 1 = “never” and 5 = “very often.” Sample items from the 19 item scale include, “I have pointed out a clerk’s error (in a bank, at the supermarket) in undercharging me for an item” and “I have done volunteer work for a charity.” Rushton et al. (1981) reported the Self-Report Altruism Scale Cronbach alpha coefficient ranging from .78 to .87. Gouveia, Athayde, Gouveia, de Brito Gomes, and de Souza (2010) also provided research evidence of construct validity in their two studies carried out in the University of João Pessua, Brazil. The researchers found that factorial structure and reliability coefficients were constant across both studies. In the two studies, a general factor of altruism was identified by an exploratory factor analysis with Cronbach alphas of .85 and .83, respectively, with an average consistency of .29 (Gouveia et al., 2010). In the current study, the Rushton et al. (1981) Self-Report Altruism Scale had a good internal consistency with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .77.
Ascription to Responsibility Scale

The purpose of developing this scale was to understand the implicit focuses of responsibility along several dimensions (Hakstian et al., 1986). In this cross-cultural analysis, my objective was to understand these implicit focuses as explanations of individual antecedents of responsibility, a necessary and stable identifier of prosocial behavior. Each factor was represented by a scale which was interspersed throughout the 40 question measurement tool using a Likert scale 1 – 5, where, 1 = “false”, 5 = “very true.” The 40-item scale was constructed by summing up the scores with the four factors.

According to Hakstian et al. (1986), the 10-item traditionally focused responsibility measure of the Ascription to Responsibility Scale had good internal consistency with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .90. In the current study, this measure has a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .59. Typical items in this scale were, “My parents attended church often when I was a child” and “My family was always willing to give me advice on things that were important to me.” These questions represented a concept of responsibility which focused on a single recognized figure of authority such as God, parents or central State leaders.

The second measure, diffused social responsibility, consisted of 12 items which according to Hakstian et al. (1986) had good internal consistency with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .83. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha on this measure was observed at .64. A typical item from this scale is, “When a country has done its utmost, but does not have the resources to maintain itself, it is the responsibility of others countries to come to its aid” and “All decisions should be made by the group.” These
items determined a diffusion of individual responsibility and a belief in social responsibility as the diffused authority.

The third factor was represented by 7 biographical items to determine exercised responsibility with items such as “I have a lot of responsibility in my present job and extra-curricular activities” and “I enjoy taking charge of things.” Hakstian et al., (1986) reported a good internal consistency on this scale with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .88. In this current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .67.

The final measure consisted of 11 questions identifying independent or inner-directed responsibility with items such as, “Society does not owe you a living” and “If a child insists on having a pet, he should be responsible for its care.” According to Hakstian et al. (1986), this inner-directed responsibility measure has a Cronbach alpha of .74. However, in the current study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was a disappointing .33 on this measure.

On a final note, the authors caution against using this scale in the general population as both study samples are taken from university student populations and generalization to others in low socio-economic or education status has yet to be explored in the research (Hakstian et al., 1986).

Davis Empathy Scale

The modified version of the Davis Empathy Scale (Davis, 1980) consisted of seven questions of the original 28-item scale to measure two specific categories of empathy: personal distress and empathic concern. Two additional scales—the fantasy scale and the perspective taking scale—were excluded for reasons explained in the literature review. Empathy was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where, 1 = “false”
and 5 = “very true.” Two of the items were reversed-keyed: “Other people’s misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal” and “When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don’t feel very much pity for them.” Among items representing empathic concern were, “I often have tender concerned feeling for people less fortunate,” and “I am often touched by things that I see happen.” Personal distress was measured using sample questions, such as “When I see a friend who is very upset and badly needs help, I go to pieces.” The psychometric properties of all scales in the original design were reported by Davis (1983b) to have satisfactory internal reliability ranging from .71 to .77 and test-retest reliabilities range from .62 to .71. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .75. Although Davis (1983b) identifies that there are significant sex difference in his Empathy Scale, no sex differences were examined in this study.

**Short Version of Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (M-C 1 (10))**

The original Marlowe-Crowne Desirability Scale (MC-SDC; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) is a 33-item true/false measure demonstrating either social desirable or unsociably desirable responses, with an internal consistency reliability coefficient of .73 to .88. However, in this study I used the 10-item short, homogeneous version (MC-1(10)) developed by Strahan and Gerbasi (1972), who proposed that several items in the original scale could be eliminated from the overall measure, if time limitations were a consideration. This scale was transformed in this research from a true/false measure to a Likert scale of 1 – 5, where, 1 = “false,” and 5 = “very true,” where the higher score indicates the individual’s need for higher social approval and a lower score indicates less desire for social approval. Five of the items were true-keyed, such as “I’m always willing
to admit it when I make a mistake” and “I never resent being asked to return a favor,” and 5 items were reversed-keyed, such as “I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone’s feeling” and “There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.” Reliability coefficients .80 to .90 were reported between MC-1 (10) and MC-SDC (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972). The MC-1(10) is considered by Strahan and Gerbasi as “shorter and reasonably parallel to MC-SDS when administration time is limited” (p. 193). According to Strahan and Gerbasi (1972), the short homogenous version MC-I(10) has a good internal consistency with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .85. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .77.

Procedure

For the German student sample, 200 packets of questionnaires, consent forms and debriefing forms were mailed to The Atlas School: Sabel School of Languages, Eilgutstrasse 10, 90443, Nürnberg, Germany. This German school of higher education had requested to participate in the English language as an exercise in translation, understanding of an American-English questionnaire, and to further advance their understanding of the nuances of the English language. Three classes in advanced English translation were chosen by Mrs. Bernadette Wiesinger, a teacher and native English speaker of Irish descent, living in Germany, who had agreed to act as proxy in this research.

Participants were provided with informed consent (see Appendix A), which was translated in class by Mrs. Bernadette Wiesinger before taking the survey. This served to introduce students to the behavioral science aspect of the questionnaire’s
content. This document indicated that all responses were anonymous, confidential, and withdrawal was permissible at any time. The questionnaire was disbursed to those who agreed to participate and translation was provided, if requested. The debriefing form (see Appendix B) was distributed upon completion, to enlighten students to the cross-cultural analysis of prosocial behavior that was the purpose of the study; this also was translated for each class. Students in Germany were not pressured in any way to participate in the study.

For the United States student sample, three classes in undergraduate psychology were offered to participate in this research with organization from Dr. David Hibbard and Dr. Cynthia Selby. The classes sampled were ‘Research Methods in Psychology and ‘Principles of Psychology.’ Students in each class were offered extra-credit participation points. Participants were provided with an informed consent form (see Appendix A) before taking the survey and a debriefing (see Appendix B) following completion of survey. Students in the United States were not pressured in any way to participate in the research. The average time taken to complete the questionnaires was approximately 30 minutes.

Raw data from each of the questionnaires were entered into the statistical analysis computer program: PASW, 2013 (Predictive Analytics Software; formerly known as SPSS, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Data were entered with necessary modification (e.g., score reversals), and analyses were performed on all measures to examine the hypothesized criteria of analysis between cultures.
Limitations

The paramount aspect of validity in cross-cultural comparison is construct comparability where the constructs of interest should be measured on the same scale. The four scales of interest in this study—altruism, ascription to responsibility, empathy, and social desirability—were compared between two countries; one non-English speaking culture and the United States, considered an English speaking culture. Although language offers a distinctive framework for cultural understanding and communication, the Sabel School of Languages (Nuremberg, Germany) insisted on maintaining the measurements in the original English language, used in the scale creation. Participants were drawn from advanced studies in the English language and additional translation was available from the proctor within the classroom. However, specific nuances of the American-English nomenclature may not have been realized, thus affecting the interpretation of the scales and subsequent research conclusions. While, issues in translation could be construed as a serious limitation in this study, all forms were translated by the proctor on-site and student participants were chosen from advanced English classes. However, students may not have wanted to admit a lack of understanding of the questions among their peers and therefore results may have been adversely affected.

Additionally, it should be noted, the student population in the United States was gathered from undergraduate classes in the Department of Psychology, making it likely that they were familiar with the Likert format and general survey design. The German sample from The Atlas School: Sabel School of Languages does not offer psychology in its curriculum and therefore respondents may not have participated in or have been familiar with similar survey design.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Many researchers have identified empathy and responsibility as predictive of prosocial motivation and behavior (Bar-Tal, 1976; Batson, 1991; Batson et al., 1981; Broom, 2006; Bshary & Bergmüller, 2007; Eisenberg, 2000; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990; Rushton, 1980, 1982, 1991; Schwartz, 1970; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). Within this cross-cultural analysis I have used Rushton et al.’s (1981) Self-Report Scale of Altruism to examine patterns of associations between the variables of altruism, responsibility (Suedfeld et al., 1985), empathy (Davis, 1980), and social desirability (Strahan, & Gerbasi, 1972). These variables were used to determine antecedents of personal normative behavior representative of prosocial behavior in the United States and Germany.

Ascription to Responsibility Factors and Altruism

In the ‘Ascription to Responsibility Scale’ (Suedfeld et al., 1985), four factors were examined: traditionally focused responsibility, socially diffused responsibility, exercised responsibility, and inner-directed responsibility. Bivariate correlations (Pearson $r$) were calculated between altruism and each factor of the ARS, as well as with empathy and social desirability.
Traditionally focused responsibility is characterized by adherence to the historically dominated norms of traditional authority figures (God, parents, governments, and school administration). My first hypothesis predicted that (a) this factor would be significantly positively associated with altruism for the United States sample but not for the German sample, and (b) this factor’s association with empathy would be similar for the two samples. Contrary to predictions, traditionally focused responsibility was not significantly correlated with altruism among students in the United States ($r = .089$, $p = .327$), but it was significantly correlated among German students ($r = .441$, $p = .000$). However, as predicted, traditionally focused responsibility and empathy were significantly associated in both student samples (Germany, $r = .395$, $p = .001$ and the United States ($r = .282$, $p = .002$). Although no specific predictions were made, social desirability was also significantly associated with this factor for both German and United States students sampled ($r = .259$, $p = .035$ and $r = .183$, $p = .043$, respectively).

The second factor, socially diffused responsibility, reflects a tendency to view the social group, such as the State or smaller groups, as a locus of authority and unlike factor 1, it has a more diffused concept of specific authority figures. My second hypothesis predicted (a) Germany would exhibit a stronger association between socially diffused responsibility and altruism than the United States, and (b) this factor would show similar associations with empathy for both countries. Consistent with my predictions, socially diffused responsibility was associated with altruism for the German sample only ($r = .322$, $p = .008$), the United States did not reflect this association ($r = .155$, $p = .088$). Contrary to my predictions empathy revealed a significantly association with empathy for the German sample only ($r = .394$, $p = .001$), while no significant association was found
within the United States sample \((r = .154, p = .088)\). Additionally, this factor was also positively associated with social desirability for the German sample \((r = .380, p = .002)\) and not associated with the United States sample \((r = .140, p = .122)\).

The third factor, exercised responsibility, assesses how much a person has exercised authority rather than how a person views authority, based on 7 biographical items. My third hypothesis predicted that (a) exercised responsibility would be more strongly associated with altruism among German students than among United States students, and (b) this factor would be similarly associated with empathy for the two samples. Consistent with predictions, significant correlations were found between exercised responsibility and altruism for Germany, however exercised responsibility also showed a significant correlation with the United States samples, where the association was slightly stronger among the German students \((r = .574, p = .000)\) then the United States student sample \((r = .340, p = .000)\). There were no significant associations between this factor and empathy or social desirability for either sample (Germany, \(r = .094, p = .449\) and United States, \(r = .145, p = .110\)) and (Germany, \(r = -.112, p = .367\) and United States, \(r = 146, p = .107\)) respectively.

The fourth factor, inner-directed responsibility, reflects an individualistic ethic of responsibility relative to concepts such as meritocracy. My fourth hypothesis predicted that (a) there would be a stronger association between this factor and altruism for the United States students than the German students, and (b) this factor would be similarly associated with empathy for the two samples. Contrary to expectations, no significant positive association between inner-directed responsibility and altruism was identified for either the United States or German student samples \((r = .034, p = .710\) and \(r = 164, p =\))
.185, respectively). However, a negative correlation between this factor and empathy was identified in the United States sample only ($r = -2.26, p = .012$), no correction was found in the German student sample ($r = .21, p = .868$). Also, no correlation was observed between this factor and social desirability for either sample.

Independent Sample T-Tests

Although my hypothesis did not predict comparative results between the United States and Germany, independent samples $t$-tests were performed. Each variable: altruism, empathy, traditionally focused responsibility (ARQ1), socially diffused responsibility (ARQ2), exercised responsibility (ARQ3), inner-directed responsibility (ARQ4), and socially desirability, was compared between each culture (see Table 1).

Table 1

Independent Samples T-Tests Comparing the United States and Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>3.97 (.57)</td>
<td>3.56 (.72)</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Desirability</td>
<td>3.28 (.53)</td>
<td>3.07 (.59)</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>.012*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARQ1</td>
<td>3.33 (.85)</td>
<td>3.04 (.72)</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.004*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARQ2</td>
<td>3.15 (.53)</td>
<td>3.21 (.52)</td>
<td>-.98</td>
<td>.329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARQ3</td>
<td>3.70 (.57)</td>
<td>3.27 (.66)</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARQ4</td>
<td>3.67 (.67)</td>
<td>3.53 (.50)</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>2.71 (.57)</td>
<td>2.45 (.64)</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>.005*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ARQ1 = Traditionally-Focused Responsibility; ARQ2 = Diffused Social Responsibility; ARQ3 = Exercised Responsibility; ARQ4 = Inner-Directed Responsibility. Empathy scores range from 1-5; Social Desirability scores range from 1-5; ARQ scores range from 1-5; Altruism scores range from 1-5. *$p < .05$
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to explore antecedent differences in personal normative factors applicable to prosocial behavior, using in a cross-cultural analysis of two Western societies, the United States and Germany. Prosocial behavior was examined through the lens of altruism and correlated with two predicting features: empathy and responsibility. In this study, I predicted specific patterns of association between altruism and the variables of responsibility, empathy, and social desirability that contribute to personal normative behavior. Responsibility was examined through an ascription to responsibility scale, which allowed developmental, social, and ideological characteristics to be identified. Additionally, empathy was explored through models of personal distress and empathic concern. These patterns of association can decipher antecedents pertinent to each culture that contribute to prosocial behavior. This was accomplished by examining altruism through the Self-Report Altruism Scale (Rushton et al., 1981), relative to four factors of responsibility in the Ascription to Responsibility Scale (Suedfeld et al. 1985), empathy (Davis, 1980), and social desirability (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972).

Many theorists of prosocial behavior have argued that the nature of altruistic motivation is defined by its ultimate goal, benefiting others; however, Batson (1991) suggested that an instrumental goal may be achieved on route to this goal benefiting oneself. In the self-report measures implemented and explored, both instrumental goals
and ultimate goals have one defining result–prosocial behavior. The theoretical debate was examined in this study, as it has been throughout the centuries, and I have been able to define specific societal norms within each culture that serve to augment our knowledge of developmental and societal differences within this cross-cultural comparison.

My first hypothesis determined that the United States student sample would have a stronger correlation between altruism and traditionally focused responsibility than the correlation seen in the German student sample. This factor is characterized by adherence to historically dominated norms of traditional authority figures: God, parents, governments, and school administration. This consideration was made based on the 21st century focused on the necessity of an increased global outlook that looked beyond economics to embrace an intellectual dimension reflective of the roots of the United States, specifically, social and cultural stability. Conversely, I hypothesized Germany, considered a modern European community would be less traditional focused in the development of responsibility relative to prosocial behavior. This consideration is based on the highly structured organizational institutions and demonstrated by an apparent progressive climate within the educational, socioeconomic, and social practicality of their pro-environmental culture. Subsequently, this modern cultural climate would reveal a strong socially diffused sense of responsibility relative to prosocial behavior.

Contrary to my prediction, the United States student sample did not produce a significant correlation between altruism and traditionally focused responsibility, unlike Germany, which did demonstrate a significant correlation with the above mentioned factor. The lack of significant correlation to altruism and traditionally focused responsibility in the cultural norms of United States and the strong correlations with
responsibility represented within German cultural norms may be accounted for by a number of social factors within each society: family, religion, and education.

These social variables emphasize the community within which the family and education is considered an important aspect in the development of prosocial normative behavior, as implicated in the research of Rushton (1982) and Batson (1991) and observed through statistics on divorce rates and religious affiliations. It is interesting to note that statistics on divorce rates within the two cultures are 2.3 per 1,000 in Germany and 4.5 per 1,000 in the United States (“World divorce statistics,” 2002). Religious affiliations in Germany are estimated at 37% Evangelical Protestants, 34% Roman Catholics, among other affiliations (German Culture, 2012) and in the United States, 26.5% Evangelical Protestant and 23.9% Roman Catholic (The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2010) among other affiliations. These figures are identified as possible contributions to the variables of religion and family relative to those identified within traditional focused authority and not post hoc ergo propter hoc. The familial aspects of reinforcement and modeling in the development of personal responsibility are identified by Batson (1991), Bandura et al. (1996), and Rushton (1982). Additionally, as described earlier, Wray-Lake and Syvertsen (2011) also identified prosocial development as rooted in the relationship with others, where religion, family, and schools foster a cohesive value of personal identity. This study suggests that the development of prosocial behavior in Germany is positively correlated to the development and nurturing of traditionally focused elements of responsibility, identified through school administration, parents, God, and State.
As described in the introduction, Monroe (1996) classified interviewees within four categories: the philanthropist, the entrepreneur, the hero/heroine and the rescuer (of Jews during the Holocaust). Through numerous interviews, Monroe attempted to identify commonalities among the “rescuers”, including, religion, family size, socioeconomic status and education; however, none were considered discernible characteristics of the altruist. She pointed out that although religion is believed to influence altruism, it was not consistent and for most “irrelevant to their altruistic acts” however, “all good religions teach the same social morality, which stresses the importance of working together” (Monroe, 1996, p. 112).

My second hypothesis predicted that the German student sample would have a stronger correlation between altruism and socially diffuses responsibility. Consistent with my predictions a significant correlation was revealed. Perhaps, it is important to reiterate Germany’s policy of compulsory schooling until age 18, unlike the varied state mandate that exists within the United States ranging from 10-13 years of compulsory schooling (Education Bug, 2013). Also, Germany’s second highest expenditure after social security and welfare is education (MapXL, n.d.). Furthermore, within the scholastic framework German students, at age 15 years, the opportunity to explore a variety of vocational, technical, and academic schools, in preparation for transition from high school to career advancement; this framework is not apparent in the mandatory policies apparent in the United States scholastic framework. In Germany, budgets, mandates, and other institutional polices may allow the individual to identify with a sense of order and future accomplishment in his or her career success. Additionally, we must reiterate the many changes in the wake of post-World War II, particularly regarding mandatory service,
recently ended, of 23 months by German males following high school and the church tax (*Kirchensteuer*), factors that differ significantly from the United States. Consistent with my hypothesis a significant correlation between altruism and empathy, and between altruism and socially diffused responsibility, was found with German students.

Exercised responsibility was also hypothesized to show a stronger correlation with altruism in the German student sample. Again, consistent with expectations, there was a slightly stronger relationship between altruism and exercised responsibility among the German students compared to the American students. This again may be accounted for by the strong social and institutional policies in Germany, promoting a security within the sociocultural community and equalitarian ideals which may allow prosocial sentiment to flourish. The United States also demonstrated a smaller but significant correlation between these variables, which may be explained by the societal orientation of autonomy and personal success.

In Schwartz’s (2006) theory of cultural value orientation, Schwartz viewed culture “as the rich complex of meaning, belief, practices, symbols, norms, and values prevalent among people in a society” (p. 138). He suggests that institutional arrangements and policies, such as those prevalent in Germany, can translate into the promotion of a highly competitive economic system and child rearing practices that emphasize societal success. Schwartz (2006) examines polarized concepts that exist between cultures and suggests that the culture of the United States emphasizes “mastery,” which encourages self-assertion to master, direct and change the natural and social environment to attain personal goals (p. 141). Conversely, Schwartz (2006) suggests that Germany (referred to as Western Europe) promoted “egalitarian and intellectual autonomy,” emphasizing
broadmindedness, curiosity, and creative pursuits. In addition, he emphasizes the recognition of all people as “moral equals sharing the basic interest as human beings” (p. 150). This theory may explain the personal and societal norms that have been found in this research. Perhaps, further study of cross-cultural antecedents of prosocial behavior should include Schwartz’s theory of cultural value orientations to specify how both mastery (described as a United States attribute) and egalitarianism (described as a German attribute) could be explained in more detail. Stankov (2010) research of cultural social norms which he describes as “perception of rules prevalent in the society” (p. 56), implemented measures of personality, attitudes, and values, and suggested Germany had a strong adherence to societal normative behavior. In contrast, Stankov (2010) suggested the United States low score on several social norm measures indicated “people have a somewhat cynical attitude towards institutions in their society” (p. 57), may be reflected in our study. However, further research may look to a broader sampling of subjects, beyond a university student sample and from other geographical locations, perhaps a larger sampling of countries within the Western hemisphere, rather than one European country from a specific area. This would also be beneficial in the United States population sample. Perhaps, further research could also look at socioeconomic variables, detailed family dynamics, and birth order, to explain the developmental origins of the factors identifiable in the promotion of prosocial behavior. Also, the use of media representations of situational specific acts could serve to precisely determine empathic arousal, thereby detailing concepts of automatic and thoughtful process examined in the literature. In addition, samples from collectivist societies and individualist societies would add significantly to the research in this area.
The theoretical debate to define specific societal norms that contribute to personal normative behavior within each culture serves to augment our knowledge of developmental and societal differences within this comparison. In defining the development of prosocial intention and action, I correlated two specific characteristics, responsibility and empathy. Each culture represented a unique developmental aspect to prosocial behavior: Germany showed a stronger correlation to altruism relative to traditionally focused, social diffused responsibility and exercised responsibility while the United States showed a significant but weaker correlation to prosocial behavior on the latter factor. However, Germany did show a significant correlation to social desirability within these relationships which could be explained by Schwartz (2006) theory of cultural value orientations attributing German civic adherence to egalitarianism. This classlessness, interestingly, observed in the German response to the question of ‘ethnicity’ may allow societal differences to dissipate in the promotion of cultural organizational stability, enabling us to identify antecedent differences pertinent to our understanding of the development of prosocial action. Whereas, in the United States, the classifications implemented within our divisive ethnicity protocol may indeed, lead to confusion in our identification of the antecedents of prosocial normative behavior.

Although, cultural comparison of specific antecedents using Persons correlation coefficient, sensitive to linear relationships between two variables was the objective of this study, further analysis using an independent samples t-tests were performed (see Table 1). These comparative results demonstrate that the United States student sample did indeed differ from the German student sample regarding a number of factors including, altruism, empathy, traditionally focused responsibility, exercised
responsibility, and social desirability. Perhaps further research would help us to discern the defining variables that could account for these favorable results within the culture of the United States, relative to prosocial behavior.
REFERENCES

doi:10.1037/a0025288


http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/22/germany-abolish-compulsory-military-service


APPENDIX A
Informed Consent for Research Participation

Title of Study: Social Behavior project
Principle Investigator: Sheila Dougherty, Graduate Student
California State University, Chico, California, USA

Purpose of Study: The present study is being conducted to better understand the multiple aspects influencing the development of social behavior through a cross cultural analysis among college students.

Duration: Your participation in this study will require approximately 30 minutes.

Procedures: You will be asked to complete several questionnaires, all of which are previously designed and thoroughly researched measures. The questionnaires will include items pertaining to your attitudes, personal perspectives, and your personality.

Potential Risks: It is anticipated that this study will pose no greater risk to you than you would experience on a daily basis, although there may always be the chance of an unforeseeable risk. If you feel uncomfortable answering any questionnaire item, you may skip the question without penalty. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to speak with the researcher or researcher representative conducting the study.

Potential Benefits: Participation in this study may cause you to have a better understanding of your own attitudes, perceptions and behavior. Also, the experience of acting as a participant in a research study may serve you well if you intend to conduct any research projects of your own in the future.

Protection of Confidentiality: When you receive your questionnaires, please do not write your name on them. Your packet will be collected and a randomly assigned number will be used to identify the data from each questionnaire as coming from the same participant, but will not identify you as that participant. Your responses will remain anonymous. Although your name will be recorded on this informed consent form, you will not be identified in any other way, nor will your name be in any way associated with your responses. This form will be kept separate from your questionnaire packet. Because of this confidentiality, you are encouraged to answer all items as honestly and completely as possible. This will allow for the most accurate and comprehensive data set. However, you may skip any item without penalty. Hard copies of data will be destroyed after data is saved and backed up on computer files.

Right to Refuse or to Withdraw from the Study: Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to begin your participation or continue your participation at any time without penalty. You may also refuse to answer some questions while you continue to answer others.

Questions and Results: You may ask the researcher or researcher representative any question about the study or your participation in it at any time during the course of the study. If the researcher or research representative cannot answer the question for any reason, you will be informed of that reason and allowed to withdraw your participation at your discretion. If you have questions, concerns, or comments about the study or the informed consent process, please contact the principle investigator, Sheila Dougherty (530) 680-3043. Any questions or concerns about the ethical conduct of this study should be directed to Dr. David Hibbard, Psychology Department, California State University, Chico, California at USA (530) 898-5147. Please contact Sheila Dougherty at USA (530) 680-3043 or e-mail sd@wcspro.com if you would like a copy of the results of this study.

Informed Consent: By signing below, you are indicating that you have read this form, understand its contents, and intend to participate in this study. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Please ask any questions you have about this study at any time.

I understand that by signing this form I acknowledge that I have received a description of my participation in this study, that I have read and understood that description, and that I am voluntarily agreeing to participate within this study. I am aware that I may choose to end my participation at any time without consequence.

Your Name - Printed
Your Name - Signed
Date
APPENDIX B
Debriefing

Thank you for participating in this study!

Data from your participation will be used to help understand personal influences within your society that determines pro social behaviors associated with altruism. In general, this study examines the possible cultural influences that may motivate pro social behavior and the differences between American and German cultures that influence this behavior.

For example, does pro social behavior extend from one’s personal sense of responsibility or a socially derived sense of responsibility? What role does empathy play? Is responsibility and empathy influenced by cultural determinants and if so in what way do we learn this behavior? Can we determine if altruism is culturally influence and are there notable cross culturally differences in how it is expressed between Germany and the United States of America?

Although research has attempted to measure pro social behavior and its influences among European and non-European participants, this is the first study to look at these specific influences of pro social behavior within, what is referred to as, individualist sociocits.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about this study, please contact Sheila Dougherty at sd@wcspro.com or (530) 680-3043 or Dr. Dave Hibbard at dhibbard@csuchico.edu. In Germany, please contact Mrs. Bernadette Wiesinger at the Atlas School of Languages, Germany (0911) 220-7130.

You may obtain results of this study by contacting Sheila Dougherty U.S.A. (530) 680-3043 or email sd@wcspro.com or Dr. Dave Hibbard at (530) 898-5430.
Dear Sheila Dougherty,

As the Chair of the Campus Institutional Review Board, I have determined that your research proposal entitled "CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR: A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY" is exempt from full committee review. This clearance allows you to proceed with your study.

I do ask that you notify our office should there be any further modifications to, or complications arising from, the study. In addition, should this project continue longer than the authorized date, you will need to apply for an extension from our office. When your data collection is complete, you will need to turn in the attached Post Data Collection Report for final approval. Students should be aware that failure to comply with any HSRC requirements will delay graduation. If you should have any questions regarding this clearance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John Mahoney, Ph.D.
Human Subjects Research Committee

Attachment: Post Data Collection Report

cc: David R. Hobbs (234)
APPENDIX D
Sheila Dougherty

From: Fischer <sabel-schule@nefkom.net>
Sent: Sunday, November 04, 2012 11:18 PM
To: sd@wcspro.com
Subject: Your Thesis Study

Importance: High
Categories: Thesis Information

Dear Ms Dougherty,

I hereby confirm that the ATLAS School, Nuremberg, approves of your thesis study and is very pleased to take part in it.

I look forward to your further communication and wait for your questionnaire which will be given to our students as soon as we receive it.

Yours faithfully

Jürgen Fischer
Headmaster

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