The Relational Dynamics of Religion and Volunterism:

The Case of Hatice Dilruba

(Din ve Gönüllüğün İlişkisel Dinamikleri: Hatice Dilruba Örneği)

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Abstract: This research examines the reciprocal relationship between religion and volunteering. Studies indicate a complex interplay between these two concepts. Quantitative research explains how and why religious elements influence participation in volunteer activities. However, these studies tend to be reductionist and fragmentary, focusing primarily on its relationship with variables such as age, gender, and occupational group, and overlooking the experiences, emotions, and relationships of the actors. This research uses the qualitative method and the data is organized using a narrative research design. It aims to explain religion's contribution to volunteering at the discursive, practical, and objective levels within a relational dimension. In this context, the narratives of Hatice Dilruba, who institutionalized her volunteer activities that began at a young age, were subjected to content analysis on various YouTube channels. The data were analyzed through relational sociology, emphasizing the importance of social interactions and relationships. The research will seek to address the following research questions: What is the impact of religion on volunteer activities? What is the contribution of religion to the spiritual, social, and political relationships that constitute volunteerism? What is the effect of volunteerism on the perception of religion? The following conclusions were reached: First, it was determined that volunteer activities are shaped by the individual's inner dialogues and social relationships. Two, the positioning and transitional experiences provided by religious teachings, advice, and commands are the motivating factors for the formation of these interactions and relationships. Three, volunteer activities are identified with symbolic boundaries created through religious understanding. It is hoped that the results of this research will increase the efficiency of the activities of individuals and institutions engaged in volunteer activities.

Keywords: Sociology of Religion, Relational Sociology, Narrative, Religion, Volunteerism, Narrative.

Din ve Gönüllülüğün İlişkisel Dinamikleri: Hatice Dilruba Örneği

Öz: Bu araştırma, din ve gönüllülük arasındaki karşılıklı ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Araştırmalar, bu iki kavram arasında karmaşık ve karşılıklı bir etkileşim olduğunu göstermektedir. Nicel araştırmalar, dini unsurların gönüllülük faaliyetlerine katılımı nasıl ve neden etkilediğini açıklamaktadır. Ancak, bu çalışmalar genellikle yaş, cinsiyet, meslek grubu gibi değişkenler açısından açıklayarak indirgemeci ve parçalıdır, aktörlerin deneyimlerine, duygularına ve ilişkilerine yeterince yer vermemektedir. Bu araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanmakta ve veriler anlatı araştırma deseni kullanılarak organize edilmektedir. Araştırma dinin, gönüllülüğe ilişkisel boyut içinde söylem, pratik ve nesne düzeyinde katkısını açıklama amacındadır. Bu bağlamda, genç yaşta başlayan gönüllülük faaliyetlerini kurumsallaştırmış olan Hatice Dilruba'nın çeşitli YouTube kanallarındaki anlatıları içerik analizi yöntemiyle incelenmektedir. Veriler, sosyal etkileşimlerin ve ilişkilerin önemini vurgulayan ilişkisel sosyoloji perspektifinden analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma şu araştırma sorularına cevap aramaya çalışacaktır: Din, gönüllülük falliyetlerini nasıl etkilemektedir? Din gönüllülüğü oluşturan manevi, sosyal, politik ilişkiler için ne tür bir katkısı sunmaktadır? Gönüllülük, din algısını nasıl etkilemektedir? Araştırma sonucunda aşağıdaki sonuçlara ulaşılmıştır: Bir, gönüllü faaliyetlerin bireyin iç diyalogları ve sosyal ilişkileri tarafından şekillendiği belirlenmiştir. İki, dini öğretilerin, tavsiyelerin ve emirlerin sağladığı konumlandırma ve geçiş deneyimleri, etkileşimlerin ve ilişkilerin oluşmasının motivasyon faktörleridir. Üç, gönüllülük faaliyetleri, dini anlayış yoluyla oluşturulan sembolik sınırlarla özdeşleştirilmektedir. Bu araştırmanın sonuçlarının, gönüllülük faaliyetlerine katılma konusunda bireylerin ve kurumların etkinliğini artırması umulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din Sosyolojisi, İlişkisel Sosyoloji, Anlatı, Din, Gönüllülük.

Introduction

The widespread individualization, increasing economic inequality, and rapid technological advancement of today have led to profound changes in traditional structures and relationships. Social scientists are describing this transforming society as "insecure," "anxious," and "apathetic."[1] In this context, problems such as the weakening of social bonds and the increase in humanitarian, social, and economic difficulties have significant impacts, especially on disadvantaged groups. Societies are undertaking various actions to find solutions to these problems and increase social awareness. The goal is to develop human, social, cultural, and moral values as well as skills. For example, in Turkey, social responsibility projects and volunteer work have begun to be encouraged in universities through courses such as "community service applications" and "voluntary work." These courses aim to strengthen the values of empathy, altruism, and responsibility in society, and thus contribute to the continuity of society through volunteering, which means working for the public good without expecting any material reward[2]. This study aims to restore social values and bonds by examining the reciprocal relationship between volunteering and religion. It will investigate the effects of volunteering on individuals' internal dialogues and social relationships, how religious teachings motivate these interactions, and how volunteering is identified with symbolic boundaries.

To understand volunteerism, it is essential to consider the concept of altruism. It is crucial to comprehend the altruistic sentiments that underpin volunteer endeavors, as volunteerism is regarded as the epitome of altruism[3]. Scholars from different disciplines have addressed the concept of altruism in various ways. For example, biologists posit that human genetics are based on helping others[4], whereas psychologists define altruism about empathy and related emotions such as compassion and mercy[5]. In contrast, sociologists posit that altruism is shaped by social norms, values, and transmissions[6]. It can thus be argued that the concept of volunteerism intersects with numerous fields, grounded in the fundamental principle of altruism.

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[1] Please see Zygmunt Bauman'ın *Akışkan Modernite* Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge & Malden: John Wiley & Sons, 2013)., Richard Sennet'in *Karakter Aşınması* Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011)., Erving Goffman'ın *Kamusal Alanda İlişkiler* Erving Goffman, *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order* (New York: Basic Books, 1971).

[2] Sevde Düzgüner, 'Pro-Sosyal Davranışlarda Diğerkâmlığın (Özgecilik) Tanımı ve Konumu', *Bilimname* 2019/40 (31 December 2019), 351–373; Hamit Palabıyık, 'Gönüllülük ve Yerel Hizmetlere Gönüllü Katılım Üzerine Açıklamalar', *Yönetim Bilimler Dergisi* 9/1 (2011), 82–114; Zeynep Sağır, 'Özgecilik ve Dini Tutum: Farklı Meslek Grupları Üzerine Nicel Bir Araştırma', *Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi ,285-319.* 7/13 (2020), 285–319.

[3] Debbie Haski-Leventhal, 'Altruism and Volunteerism: The Perceptions of Altruism in Four Disciplines and Their Impact on The Study of Volunteerism', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 39/3 (2009), 271–299.

[4] Recep Batu Günör, 'Siyasi ve Etik Bir Kavram Olarak Özgecilik Düşüncesi', *Felsefelogos* 20/61 (2016), 49–61.

[5] Ali Ayten, *Empati ve Din Türkiye'de Yardımlaşma ve Dindarlık Üzerine Psiko-Sosyal Bir Araştırma* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2010).

[6] Gary S. Becker, *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior* (University of Chicago Press, 1976).

Nevertheless, the majority of studies examining the relationship between religion and volunteerism in Turkey have been conducted by psychologists of religion. Applying quantitative methods to research in this field has yielded findings indicating that religion promotes altruistic behaviors and attitudes, including helping others, consideration of others, charitable giving, and forgiveness[7]. Furthermore, the relationship between religion and volunteerism has been confirmed by studies conducted on various occupational groups, including university students[8], hospital employees[9], and doctors[10]. These quantitative studies concentrate on the interrelationships between dependent and independent variables. To illustrate, a study conducted by Sağır with four distinct occupational groups (AFAD employees, nurses, preschool teachers, and religious officials) revealed that religious officials exhibited higher levels of altruistic attitudes than other occupational groups[11]. These findings offer significant insights into the influence of religion on altruism and the motivational factors underlying volunteerism across diverse occupational groups.

On the other hand, such studies generally explain the relationship between religion and volunteering in terms of variables such as age, gender, and professional group. While these studies confirm that there is a relationship between religion and volunteering, they ignore the complexity of the relationship between them and the competence of the actor. However, volunteering activities include decision-making and meaning-making processes, and the decision-making of the actors (such as volunteers, target audience, and sponsors) is not dependent only on the current time and place. In addition, these activities are also affected by the past and future experiences of the people who carry out volunteering activities. Religion offers this spatial and temporal connection to believers. In this context, the religion-volunteering relationship will be examined as an intertwined area in the study, and the actor-society relationship will be taken into consideration.

Accordingly, the study will address the connection between religion and volunteering from the perspective of relational sociology. Relational sociology, which has become widespread in social sciences since 2010 and has been constantly developing, focuses on the relationships between people, objects, and concepts. This approach assumes that social life is based on relationships and interactions[12]. In this context, the relationship between religion and volunteering is considered mutually dependent elements that construct each other together. In other words, the mutual relationship between these two concepts stems from and shapes broader

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[7]   Sağır, 'Özgecilik ve Dini Tutum: Farklı Meslek Grupları Üzerine Nicel Bir Araştırma'.

[8]   Mehmet Sait Az - Muhammet Cevat. Acar, 'Dindarlık Ile Özgecilik Arasındaki İlişki: Üniversite Öğrencileri Ile Yapılan Bir Araştırma', *Pamukkale Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 7/1 (2020), 742–773.

[9]   Mustafa Uslu, *Hastane Çalışanlarında Dindarlığın Empati ve Özgecilikle İlişkisi Üzerine Bir Araştırma (Konya Eğitim Araştırma Hastanesi Örneği). Konya: 2019.* (Yayınlanmamış: Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi, Yüksek Lisans, 2019).

[10] Ayten, *Empati ve Din Türkiye'de Yardımlaşma ve Dindarlık Üzerine Psiko-Sosyal Bir Araştırma.*

[11] Sağır, 'Özgecilik ve Dini Tutum: Farklı Meslek Grupları Üzerine Nicel Bir Araştırma'.

[12] Mustafa Emirbayer, 'Manifesto for a Relational Sociology', *American Journal of Sociology* 103/2 (1997), 281–317.

political and social interactions. This perspective will allow for a rich understanding of the complex relationship between religion and volunteering and reveal the effects of social dynamics on this interaction.

The research data has been obtained from Hatice Dilruba's videos on the YouTube sharing site and her interviews on various TV channels regarding her various volunteer activities. In this context, the study aims to answer the following research questions: What is the impact of religion on volunteer activities? What is the contribution of religion to the spiritual, social, and political relationships that constitute volunteerism? And what is the effect of volunteerism on the perception of religion?

1.2. Conceptual Framework: Relational Sociology, Religion, Volunteerism

This section will present an overview of relational sociology, which serves as the fundamental basis for the study. Subsequently, the relationship between religion and volunteerism will be investigated from the standpoint of relational sociology. The Turkish sociologist Mustafa Emirbayer[13] first employed the relational sociology concept, and has since become a prominent and diverse field within the social sciences. As defined by Pierpaolo Donati[14], relational sociology is "a sociology that studies social realities as relationships." As described by Nick Crossley[15], this approach can be understood as "a network of social relationships and interactions among social actors." Powell and Dépelteau[16] define relational sociology as "a sociology that researches by examining social life and social relationships." Crossley underscores the necessity of comprehending and analyzing the social world through the lens of interactions, viewing this process as one that emerges among social actors[17]. In this context, it can be summarized that the most fundamental principle of relational sociology is that all abstract and concrete formations result from the relationships[18].

The relational perspective attempts to achieve a balance between the two extremes of scientific approaches. On one side are realism and positivism, and on the other are constructivism and deconstructivism. While realism argues that reality is directly and objectively perceivable, positivism argues that scientific knowledge can only be obtained through observation and experimentation. In contrast, constructivism asserts that reality is entirely socially constructed and is not a fixed reality. Deconstructivism, however, adopts the view that there are no fixed and universal truths, and meanings must be continually deconstructed. The relational paradigm aims to offer a more balanced approach by moving beyond these two extremes. It accepts neither a wholly objective and unchanging reality nor an entirely constructed and continuously

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[13] Emirbayer, 'Manifesto for a Relational Sociology'.

[14] P. Donati, *Relational Sociology. A New Paradigm for the Social Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2011), 21.

[15] Nick Crossley, *Towards Relational Sociology.* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011).

[16] Christopher Powell, - François Dépelteau, *2013. Applying Relational Sociology: Relations, Networks & Society* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1.

[17] Crossley, *Towards Relational Sociology.*, 21.

[18] Hasan Şen, 'İlişkisel Sosyoloji ve Din', *Strata* 1 (2019), 50–74.

deconstructed reality. Instead, it attempts to understand reality through dynamic relationships and interactions[19].

In addition, the aspects of this approach that differ from traditional sociology should be explained for a better understanding of relational sociology. First, traditional sociology views social phenomena as structures that exist at a certain moment within history, independent of individuals, while relational sociology focuses on processes, relationships, and interactions[20]. Secondly, traditional sociologists frequently reduce behaviors to identities such as gender, ethnicity, religion, role, status, and class. In contrast, relational sociology evaluates these identities in the context of relationships and networks of relationships. Accordingly, practices, objects, and expressions are shaped by the relationships people form[21]. The preceding information delineates the general framework of relational sociology. With this framework, the present study will examine religion and volunteerism in a relational context.

Relational sociology offers a distinctive lens for analysing social phenomena, rooted in three fundamental principles. One, the notion of interconnected social practices: Social practices are situated within complex networks of relationships, involving a range of resources, locations, and identities. This emphasis on relationality draws attention to the complex interconnections between individuals and their environments, underscoring the notion that practices are shaped by these dynamic networks. Two, the role of individual agency: Relational sociologists acknowledge the significance of individual agency in influencing social interactions. Although cognizing, emoting, and perceiving factors are acknowledged as influencing human behavior, this perspective avoids reductionism. Conversely, it posits that these intrapersonal phenomena are shaped by social processes, indicating that individuals' subjective experiences are collectively constituted through their social interactions. Three, the integration of agency and structure: Relational sociology serves to bridge the gap between individual agency and structural determinism. By relating social events to both internal motivations (such as feelings and thoughts) and external structures (including the economy, politics, and religion), this approach offers a comprehensive understanding of the interrelations between individual agency and structural determinism. This enables a detailed examination of how individuals and societal structures interact and influence each other. By employing this comprehensive framework, relational sociology provides a more profound understanding of the reciprocal relationship between individual experiences and broader social contexts[22].

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[19] Volkhard Krech, 'Relational Religion: Manifesto for a Synthesis in the Study of Religion', *Religion* 50/1 (2 January 2020), 1.

[20] C. Powell, - F. Dépelteau (eds.), *Conceptualizing Relational Sociology. Ontological and Theoretical Issues.* (New York: Palgrave, 2013).

[21] Powell, - Dépelteau, *2013. Applying Relational Sociology: Relations, Networks & Society*, 18.

[22] Nick Crossley, 'Networks, Interactions and Relations', *The Palgrave Handbook of Relational Sociology*, ed. F. Dépelteau (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2018), 611.

In this regard, the perspective of relational sociology posits that even seemingly isolated and individual practices are shaped by and indebted to relationships. To illustrate, when an individual engages in piano performance alone for their own pleasure, they evaluate themselves in relation to their past experiences, draw upon past social interactions, are influenced by their target audience, and convey political or religious messages. This exemplifies that the practice is shaped by a multitude of interactions and relationships[23]. In this manner, relational sociology diverges from the reductionist, atomistic perspective that perceives social phenomena merely as the aggregate of individual actors, or the holistic perspective that considers society as an autonomous entity transcending individual action. Relational sociology eschews both of these approaches, instead focusing on the relationship between the actor and society. In line with the aforementioned characteristics, this study will examine the connection between religion and volunteering from a relational sociological perspective and conduct an analysis aimed at understanding the interactions within a social context.

Relational researchers consider relational and interactional concepts the most significant for comprehending social reality. Similarly, scholars of religion posit that religions should be studied through the lens of their interactions and relationships[24]. Thomas Tweed advocates for a dynamic and relational theory of religion, defining religion not as a fixed and unchanging entity but as a process in constant motion and interaction. On the one hand, religions can be linked to geographical, cultural, and social movements (such as identity shifts and religious conversions)[25]. On the other hand, religion(s) enable believers to settle in a place, put down roots, and develop a sense of belonging. In this context, Tweed posits that religions exert a broad range of impacts, from the search for meaning by believers to social revolutions. In other words, religions connect believers to the body, the afterlife, and other entities, positioning them within a broader cosmic context [26].

The relational approach was selected in preference to other methodologies for its ability to accommodate the data without recourse to pre-existing theoretical frameworks. Rather than fitting the data into such frameworks, the relational approach allows new patterns and connections within the data to be discovered. This approach emphasizes the necessity of moving beyond the limitations of predetermined categories when conceptualizing religion. It suggests that religion can be better understood as a dynamic and relational entity composed of self-producing and interrelated subjects. Consequently, this approach facilitates a more comprehensive comprehension of religion's dynamic and relational character[27]. The present

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[23]   Crossley, 'Networks, Interactions and Relations'.

[24]   Krech, 'Relational Religion'; Yusuf Yaralıoğlu, '"Yapı-Fail" Bağlamında İlişkisel Din Sosyolojisi Paradigması ve Sanal Dini Cemaatler', *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 20/2 (30 September 2020), 1429–1451.

[25]   Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Harvard University Press, 2006).

[26]   Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling.*

[27]   Krech, 'Relational Religion'.

study will examine the relationship between religion and volunteering in conjunction with the aforementioned relational dimension of religion.

However, some scholars of religion posit that the relational nature of religion is constituted by a relationship between the following four dimensions: perception (intuition and emotion), action (worship and rituals in the sense of planning, organizing, and achieving goals), cognition (mental dimension), and physical objects (nature, resources, and artifacts)[28]. A relational approach to religion posits that these dimensions are interlinked and constitute religious spheres that interact with other social spheres. In this sense, the cognitive, experiential, action-oriented, and material dimensions of religions are interconnected, as are the social spheres of politics, law, economics, science, medicine, education, and the arts. Accordingly, from the perspective of relationality, the study of religion permits a synthesis of disparate theoretical and methodological approaches, facilitating the integration of intellectual and practical elements alike[29].

In light of the information presented thus far, it is necessary to examine the connections between religious attitudes and behaviors associated with volunteering, such as altruism, solidarity, and selflessness, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between religion and volunteering. Indeed, research has demonstrated that individuals with higher levels of religious attitudes exhibit a greater inclination toward altruism[30]. Furthermore, research has indicated that religious institutions, communities, and faith-based non-profit organizations facilitate voluntary activities such as social assistance, education, and health[31]. However, the research does not sufficiently address the issue of religious motivations, internal interactions, and relationships with bureaucracy. This study aims to identify the relationships and interactions that constitute voluntary activities, specifically between volunteers, target groups, sponsors, and bureaucracy, toconsidering to consider the relational dimension of religion. Therefore, this study will examine the impact of religion on voluntary activities and its role in the spiritual, social, and political relationships that emerge during the volunteering process. Thus, the effect of religion on volunteering activities and its role in the spiritual, social, and political relations that emerge during the volunteering process will be examined. The methods used to collect and analyze the study data will be explained in the next section.

2. Method

This study was designed as qualitative research. YouTube, a video-sharing site that provides researchers with rich data on topics not typically discussed in real life and allows users to

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[28] Krech, 'Relational Religion'.

[29] Krech, 'Relational Religion'.

[30] Sağır, 'Özgecilik ve Dini Tutum: Farklı Meslek Grupları Üzerine Nicel Bir Araştırma'; Mevlüt Sanlav, *Özgeciliğin Yordayıcısı Olarak Affedicilik ve Dini Tutumlar* (Tokat: Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans, 2016); Murat Şentürk, *Gönüllülük ve Gönüllülerle Birlikte Çalışmak* (Istanbul University Press, 2022).

[31] Mahmut Bilen - Cüneyt Özdemir, 'Çocuk Yoksulluğunu Önlemeye Yönelik Bir Sivil Toplum Girişimi: İHH'nın Yetimleri Destekleme Programı', *İslam Ekonomisi ve Finansı Dergisi (İEFD)* 8/2 (31 December 2022), 247–290.

comment and share their thoughts, was used as a data source. This study focused on the narratives of Hatice Dilruba, the founder of the Dilruba Foundation, with the expectations of obtaining in-depth data on religion and volunteering and providing a broad understanding of the subject. In this context, the study employed a narrative research design, and the data were obtained from the interviews conducted by Hatice Dilruba on various YouTube channels. The data were examined using the content analysis method. The narratives were obtained from national channels such as TRT news[32], Ülke TV[33], Habertürk[34]; individual video channels such as Bekir Develi[35]; and channels of non-governmental organizations such as Hatırası Aziz İnsanlar[36], Salih Amel Yolcuları[37], Genç TV[38], and Dilruba Vakfı[39]. The shortest of the selected videos is 3 minutes long, and the longest is 150 minutes.

In the context of the purpose and questions of the research, the purposeful sampling method which provides access to a rich data source was preferred in selecting the videos[40]. The example of Hatice Dilruba was preferred because it provides rich information about the role of religion in volunteering activities and shows how individual volunteering activities occur in daily life and social, political, and financial relations. Dilruba's narratives provide rich and detailed information about the relationship between religion and volunteerism. To contextualize the subsequent analysis, a brief life history of Hatice Dilruba is presented below.

Hatice Dilruba was born in 1973 in the Domaniç district of Kütahya province. In 1989, she relocated to Bursa due to her father's transfer for employment purposes. She initiated her volunteer activities in the village of Bursa, where her father was employed, providing meals to older people needing care. In the following years, she continued her work by providing essentials for needy individuals with assistance from local businesses. Following her marriage in 1994, she continued caring for older people in her neighborhood[41]. In subsequent years, she adopted the principle of "continue doing good until death finds you" and, with the support of her husband, initiated activities in various settings, including nursing homes for the elderly, childcare facilities, soup kitchens, and women's shelters. In 2007, she established the Dilruba Evleri Mutual Aid

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[32] TRT Haber, 'Bursa'nın Iyilik Meleği: Hatice Dilruba Duman - YouTube', *Youtube* (2022).

[33] ÜLKE TV, 'Gönül İşi | Hatice Dilruba Duman' (28 May 2022).

[34] Habertürk TV, 'Türkiye'de Ilk İnsanlık Köyü' (12 September 2018).

[35] Dilruba Vakfı, 'Bekir Develi Ile Peynir Gemisi, Çığ Gibi Büyüyen İyilik Hareketi Dilruba Evleri Yardımlaşma Derneği', *Dilruba Vakfı 'İyiliğe Devam Et'* (22 January 2024).

[36] Hatırası Aziz İnsanlar, 'Türkiye'ye Gidin Onu Bulun! - Hatice Dilruba (Tek Parça)' (8 September 2023).

[37] Salih Amel Yolcuları, 'Dilruba Evleri (Hatice Dilruba)', *YouTube* (14 April 2021).

[38] GençTV, 'Müslümanın Cebinde Proje Daima Hazır Olmalı! - Hatice Dilruba' (29 March 2022).

[39] Dilruba Vakfı, 'Bekir Develi Ile Peynir Gemisi, Çığ Gibi Büyüyen İyilik Hareketi Dilruba Evleri Yardımlaşma Derneği' (22 January 2024).

[40] W. P. Vogt, et al., *When to Use What Research Design.* (New York & London: The Guilford Press, 2012).

[41] Ülke Tv, 'Gönül İşi' (28 May 2022).

Association and the Dilruba Nursing Home and Elderly Care Centre in Bursa[42]. The nursing home opened in 2021 and is operated under the Ministry of Family and Social Services in Bursa.

Additionally, in response to the influx of refugees in Turkey in 2011, she established a soup kitchen, an education center, and a living center at the border. She founded a village called "Humanity Village" in Orhaneli for individuals struggling with substance abuse[43]. In the aftermath of the 2023 Israeli assault on Gaza, Dilruba Vakfı initiated the provision of services to individuals who had relocated from Gaza to Egypt, renting houses in Egypt for this purpose[44]. Following a detailed account of Hatice Dilruba's life and work, it is now appropriate to proceed with a description of the methodology employed in the study and the manner of data collection.

In recent years, there has been a notable global expansion in the internet and social media use. As indicated in the Digital 2023 report and the Global Overview Report published in January 2023, a considerable proportion of the global population has access to the Internet[45]. Türkiye, in particular, exhibits a high internet usage rate, with users spending considerable time online daily[46]. The fact that people now spend most of their time in digital environments has resulted in these environments becoming an integral part of daily life. The abovementioned circumstances have given rise to novel social and cultural dynamics that have profoundly impacted social science research. This phenomenon has transformed social phenomena and cultural formations within the context of the 21st century. In response to this shift, social scientists have increasingly used digital environments to collect data pertinent to many social issues. By leveraging the affordances of digital environments, researchers have been able to access data more expediently and cost-effectively, thereby uncovering a host of previously uncharted research avenues[47].

In this study, a narrative research design was employed. Narrative is how individuals convey their experiences through the stories they create, as perceived by themselves[48]. Narratives differ from everyday conversations in that they have a strategic order, purpose, and function. Indeed, narratives provide researchers with an understanding of turning points regarding a topic, the narrator's goals, and the individual, cultural, and social conditions underlying events[49]. It would

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[42] Dilruba Vakfı, 'Bekir Develi Ile Peynir Gemisi, Çığ Gibi Büyüyen İyilik Hareketi Dilruba Evleri Yardımlaşma Derneği' (22 January 2024).

[43] Hatırası Aziz İnsanlar, 'Türkiye'ye Gidin Onu Bulun! - Hatice Dilruba (Tek Parça)' (8 September 2023).

[44] Dilruba Vakfı, 'Bekir Develi Ile Peynir Gemisi, Çığ Gibi Büyüyen İyilik Hareketi Dilruba Evleri Yardımlaşma Derneği' (22 January 2024).

[45] Simon Kemp, 'Digital 2023: Global Overview Report', *DATAREPORTAL* (2023).

[46] Adalet Aydoğdu G. - Erol İlhan, 'Alternatif Bir İletişim Aracı Olarak YouTube: 2019 Yerel Seçimlerinde Sokak Röportajları Yapan Siteler Üzerine Bir İnceleme', *Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Meslek Yüksekokulu Dergisi* 23/2 (2020), 433–442.

[47] Reyhan Kulluk, 'Sosyal Bilimlerin Araştırma Yaklaşımlarında Yeni Yönelimi: Dijital Etnografi Deseni', *İletişim Çalışmaları Dergisi* 10/1 (2024), 95–115.

[48] H. Albayrak, 'Sosyal Hizmetin Anlatı Araştırması Ile Buluşması', *Toplum ve Sosyal Hizmet* 31/4 (2020), 1719–1745.

[49] M. Tekindal - Arsu Ş. Uğuz, 'Nitel Araştırma Yöntemi Olarak Fenomenolojik Yaklaşımın Kapsamı ve Sürecine Yönelik Bir Derleme', *Ufkun Ötesi Bilim Dergisi* 20/1 (2020), 153–182.

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be appropriate to mention some of the characteristics of narrative research used in this study. Narratives focus on individuals, their identities, and their experiences of an event. Narratives include various data collection methods such as documents, images, and interviews. Narratives have a chronological order. Additionally, political and social contexts shape the narrative style. On the one hand, this situation reflects the identity of the place where the narratives are lived. On the other hand, it allows understanding the social contexts to which the narratives are related[50].

The most significant advantage of content analysis is that it permits the examination of the intangible and the unseen.[51] In this context, before commencing data analysis, the videos were viewed in their entirety, significant turning points and relationships were identified, and all text was transcribed. Subsequently, sentences and paragraphs were labeled per the research questions, conceptual framework, and the purpose of the study. The aforementioned labels were then coded by a predefined category scheme[52]. The transcripts were then coded manually, and similar and repetitive patterns emerged as themes. An evaluation of the suitability of the identified themes to the research questions and purpose revealed the need for some to be divided while others were combined. Accordingly, the concept of 'relationship' was selected as a general and inclusive theme, given its compatibility with the theoretical framework and the research questions[53]. Sub-themes were identified as follows: "religious connectedness" (in spatial and temporal terms), "target audience selection," "administrative, financial, and political relationships," and "boundaries." As can be seen, the coded data revealed sub-themes aligned with the research questions and the purpose of the study. In this context, content analysis was employed to uncover the video's coded meanings. The following section will present quotes that represent the themes that most comprehensively and deeply address the relationship between volunteering and religion. The analysis process will be conducted through the concepts and expressions in these quotes.

3. Findings

3.1. State of Religious Connectedness

This section will concentrate on the basic religious aspect that emerges in Hatice Dilruba's accounts when she describes her voluntary activities. An analysis of Hatice Dilruba's narratives reveals that volunteering is an action that can be performed for, from, and with God. This illustrates that Hatice Dilruba views volunteering as an essential component of her religious

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50 Tekindal - Uğuz, 'Nitel Araştırma Yöntemi Olarak Fenomenolojik Yaklaşımın Kapsamı ve Sürecine Yönelik Bir Derleme'.

51 Osman Metin - Şükriye Ünal, 'İçerik Analizi Tekniği: İletişim Bilimlerinde ve Sosyolojide Doktora Tezlerinde Kullanımı', *Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 22/Özel Sayı 2 (31 December 2022), 273–294.

52 D. Silverman, *Nitel Verileri Yorumlama*, trans. Erkan Dinç (Ankara: Pegem Akademi, 2018).

53 Ali Yıldırım - Hasan Şimşek, *Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri* (Ankara: Seçkin, 2021).

convictions. To illustrate, when she describes the timing of the aid she received from Şeker Kuyumculuk, she articulates her relationship with God as follows:

We are one day away from Ramadan and still haven't found a place. Şeker Kuyumculuk kept their promise; they delivered all the supplies to the house. The car is ready, the driver is ready[...] I even found the cook, but there is no place! 'Oh Lord, I promised these people, don't let us be embarrassed!' I keep praying... Why did this happen, did I make a mistake somewhere? Oh Lord, if you do not help me, I cannot do it. Help me so the supplies are not wasted. I would be at fault for those who brought the supplies[54].

In addition to the contribution that comes from Allah, she expresses that her activities reflect her being with Allah and receiving spiritual support in the following ways:

In large organizations for 1000, 2000 people... I put on my apron, with Allah's permission. We enter together with our big partner and set the menu. Of course, I am not the one doing it there. I am just making an effort, but I don't forget the one who makes it happen. He is in my heart, I love him very much for collaborating. He has opened a market. [In that market] I want to set up a stall[55].

In another account, where her connection with Allah is expressed in words, she describes her work with the injured who came to Egypt after the Israeli attacks as follows:

(While describing the transfer of needy Gazans to Egypt and how the Egypt visit took place) "Of course, we got to know the area during this visit. Well, Allah opened a door for us... He said, 'Go ahead, my servant.' We were never embarrassed there. Well, we tried to do whatever was necessary. We got a five-story building in Egypt that was like a hotel. A wealthy Egyptian businessman who saw our effort and willingness gave us a five-story building there as a gift[56].

Finally, she explains that the spiritual connection she has made with the Creator is the main reason why her activities have reached the point they have reached:

[While talking about how the elderly guest she hosted at her home prayed for her] "My child! May the Lord open doors for you like the inn doors of your ancestors. May there be children inside, may soups boil, may there be elderly, may there be Dilruba houses," he prayed. Years later, when we decided to establish the Association, this prayer came to our minds[57].

The aforementioned statements posit that Dilruba's religious connectedness situates her in a distinctive cognitive, spiritual, and moral position, establishing a direct correlation between her actions and her faith. This case demonstrates how relational sociologists can apply the claim that

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54 Hatırası Aziz İnsanlar, 'Türkiye'ye Gidin Onu Bulun! - Hatice Dilruba (Tek Parça)' (8 September 2023).

55 GençTV, 'Müslümanın Cebinde Proje Daima Hazır Olmalı! - Hatice Dilruba' (29 March 2022).

56 Dilruba Vakfı, 'Bekir Develi Ile Peynir Gemisi, Çığ Gibi Büyüyen İyilik Hareketi Dilruba Evleri Yardımlaşma Derneği' (22 January 2024).

57 Dilruba Vakfı, 'Müsiad Türkiye'nin Gücü Sosyal Sorumluluk Projeler Ödülü', *YouTube* (2022).

any practice performed from the intersection of social relations, individual desires, drives, emotions, and social institutions to the relationship between volunteering and religion. In this example, Dilruba indicates that her connection with a creator (through prayer, for instance) has been instrumental in gaining bureaucratic and financial support, thereby positioning religion as a force that influences social life and institutional structures. This situation contributes to relational sociology's understanding of the formation of the relationship between religion and volunteering, by avoiding a reduction to individual factors and instead considering the influences of social institutions and social relations. An analysis of her narratives demonstrates a symbiotic relationship between religion and volunteerism, whereby both elements reinforce and support each other. Moreover, she views her volunteer work as a concrete manifestation of her religious dedication. In other words, Hatice Dilruba exemplifies her religious beliefs through her service to others, perceiving her actions as a form of worship and a means of fulfilling her religious obligations. This understanding highlights the significant impact of religious faith on her motivations and practices in volunteerism.

What strategies might be employed to effectively navigate a crisis in challenging circumstances? In such a situation, what course of action should be taken? In the event of a crisis, war, or oppression occurring within one's lifetime, it is crucial to ascertain one's position to these events. In the event of witnessing such occurrences, I will likely be held to account for my actions on that day. He will assert that the Gaza conflict occurred during the individual's earthly tenure. "What did you do?" intention intend to be able to respond clearly and coherently rather than offering an incoherent or evasive reply[58].

What is your intention regarding these virtuous actions, Ms. Hatice? In conclusion, it can be stated that the world is the marketplace for the afterlife. It is a marketplace where transactions are conducted. It can be reasonably assumed that the availability of financial resources influences one's choice of vacation destination. Various accommodation options are available, including camping, caravans, 5-star hotels, and even 7-star hotels. Heaven is prepared for those who work hard in this world[59].

The aforementioned quotations emphasize the concept of the afterlife, which signifies the continuation of life after death. This belief not only engenders emotional responses such as anxiety, fear, and hope concerning actions in the present world but also gives rise to concerns about being questioned, punished, or rewarded in the afterlife. Consequently, this belief enhances a person's sense of responsibility towards humanitarian crises in their vicinity, cultivating a desire to help without expecting anything in return and increasing their motivation to engage in acts of kindness and benevolence. Indeed, research indicates a significant and robust relationship

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[58] Dilruba Vakfı, 'Bekir Develi Ile Peynir Gemisi, Çığ Gibi Büyüyen İyilik Hareketi Dilruba Evleri Yardımlaşma Derneği' (22 January 2024).

[59] Dilruba Vakfı, 'Bekir Develi Ile Peynir Gemisi, Çığ Gibi Büyüyen İyilik Hareketi Dilruba Evleri Yardımlaşma Derneği' (22 January 2024).

between the belief in the afterlife and volunteerism[60]. Hatice Dilruba approaches social issues such as the Gaza War and the refugee crisis with the conviction that her actions will have consequences in the afterlife. This approach shows that volunteer activities were motivated by temporal and spatial imaginations and a sense of connectedness with the future (beyond) presented to Dilruba by religion.This elucidates the complex interconnection between her religious convictions and her engagement in volunteerism, wherein her spiritual beliefs serve as the bedrock and driving force behind her humanitarian endeavors. By addressing crises with a sense of divine responsibility and viewing good deeds as a pathway to spiritual fulfillment, Dilruba exemplifies how volunteerism can be deeply rooted in and inspired by religious convictions.

The temporal and spatial spiritual connection provided by religion seems to play a crucial role in Hatice Dilruba's ethical reorientation towards social issues. Her belief in the afterlife drives her to volunteer and see these actions as part of her moral duty and religious obligation, anticipating divine accountability. It is, therefore, essential to highlight the role of belief in the afterlife in motivating volunteering. The following section examines the role of religion in determining the target group for volunteering.

3.2. Target Audience Selection

Hatice Dilruba's narratives underscore the significance of a sense of religious connectedness in determining the target group for her volunteering activities. She underscores this point by recalling a hadith of the Prophet, which she believes is pertinent for those who wish to engage in volunteering, like herself:

They ask who we should help. Surely, there are needy people within our close surroundings, among our neighbors. When the Prophet was asked who should be treated kindly, he said: 'Your mother, then your mother, then your mother again, and then your father.' That means your parents, your children, your relatives, and your neighbors[61].

Furthermore, she states that she deliberately selects the elderly as the focus of her volunteering activities. She attributes this choice to the religious concept of "barakah" (blessing). Moreover, she indicates that her decision to concentrate on the elderly was shaped by the religious narratives she encountered during her upbringing, as recounted by her parents:

In the stories of kindness we heard in our childhood, there was always an elderly person sitting in the corner. When that person was shown compassion, there would be abundance and wealth in that household. Now, the elderly are abandoned in nursing homes[62].

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[60] Saeed Rezvani Nejad et al., 'Belief in an Afterlife Influences Altruistic Helping Intentions in Alignment with Adaptive Tendencies', *Evolutionary Psychology* 19/2 (2021).

[61] Dilruba Vakfı, 'Bekir Develi Ile Peynir Gemisi, Çığ Gibi Büyüyen İyilik Hareketi Dilruba Evleri Yardımlaşma Derneği' (22 January 2024).

[62] Dilruba Vakfı, 'Bekir Develi Ile Peynir Gemisi, Çığ Gibi Büyüyen İyilik Hareketi Dilruba Evleri Yardımlaşma Derneği' (22 January 2024).

Hatice Dilruba underscores her concern regarding the rising prevalence of substance abuse among the younger generation of devout individuals, whom she refers to as "our children." She asserts that this group has been selected as the primary focus of her efforts.

Our children are falling into this addiction. Their names are Yasin, Ahmet, Mustafa. It makes me very sad. Each of them had stayed in Quran courses. Many of them started [using drugs] after leaving the Quran courses. First, they started smoking, then this. This made me think: What are we doing to these children? Why are we bringing our children to this state? I think we need to update our approach; we need to put our heads together and reconsider[63].

[Speaking about the Village of Humanity in Orhaneli] We envisioned it as a life workshop. That is, the Village of Humanity Life Workshop where people could learn patience and reflection. We wanted people to embark on their inner journeys here. We wanted it to be a personal development village. We worked on this for more than a year[64].

Hatice Dilruba has participated in a multitude of voluntary activities in Akçakale, ranging from meeting basic needs to providing healthcare services for refugees. She states that her decision to focus her efforts on refugees was influenced by the historical and religious concept of the Ansar-Muhajir Brotherhood.

God tested them with a trial (refugees). And while they suddenly became migrants, we became their helpers. Or, as they began to learn to be migrants, our journey of learning to be helpers brought us closer together. You are the host. So, what can I do, I thought. I wanted to greet these people, who arrived with dust on their feet, by singing 'Taleal Badru' to them[65].

The excerpts demonstrate the significant influence of Islamic principles, teachings, history, values, and the concept of Muhajir and Ansar on Hatice Dilruba's selection of a target audience for her volunteer activities. The references to the time of the Prophet, the mention of hadiths, and the temporal and spatial connections established through stories heard from her parents have collectively created an imaginary community in Dilruba's mind, including the elderly, relatives, substance abusers, Gazans, and Syrian refugees. This imaginary community has delineated the boundaries of who is inclusion and exclusion. In other words, religious memories, teachings, and practices have determined the target audience for volunteer activities and even social relationships for believers like Dilruba, defining a spiritual group and simultaneously contributing to social change. This is because Dilruba has targeted those within the Islamic geography for her volunteer activities, excluding those outside of it. This case serves as an example of how religion can influence individuals' choices of target audiences in volunteer activities. The excerpts indicate that religious beliefs influence the identification of target audiences and shape the nature of the activities undertaken. Indeed, the personal experiences and

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63 GençTV, 'Müslümanın Cebinde Proje Daima Hazır Olmalı! - Hatice Dilruba' (29 March 2022).

64 GençTV, 'Müslümanın Cebinde Proje Daima Hazır Olmalı! - Hatice Dilruba' (29 March 2022).

65 Dilruba Vakfı, 'Bekir Develi Ile Peynir Gemisi, Çığ Gibi Büyüyen İyilik Hareketi Dilruba Evleri Yardımlaşma Derneği' (22 January 2024).

views of Hatice Dilruba, who is examined as an exemplar, align with the aspiration of a society founded on values such as compassion, empathy, benevolence, solidarity, and shared responsibility associated with Islam.

3.3. Administrative, Financial, and Political Connections

The formation of volunteering activities is significantly influenced by the provision of bureaucratic, political, and financial support. Hatice Dilruba illustrates that her religious affiliation has facilitated the accessibility of bureaucratic, financial, and political assistance for her volunteering endeavors. Indeed, Hatice Dilruba elucidates the role of religion in obtaining the backing of Sinpaş GYO Finans for the elderly care home in Özlüce, Bursa, where individuals requiring care may reside:

We were taking care of 50 elderly people in an old house. I was cleaning them up, feeding them, and running around. [During those days, we needed this building too, and I was praying] Oh Lord, don't you have any friends? Please send someone to build this building, I said, and He sent a friend. [Sinpaş GYO Finance Executive Board Chairman] Avni brother built this building for us (Bursa Özlüce Elderly Care Home)[66].

She elucidates the influence of the Minister of Health's assistance in the development of the İlkadım Life Center for refugees as follows:

[Since the then Minister of Health, Mehmet Müezzinoğlu, had previously visited the elderly care home in Bursa, he knew Hatice Dilruba. While telling how she called the minister when the state hospital building in Akçakale was being vacated and was about to be transferred to another institution] Can you give me the old state hospital in Urfa Akçakale? What are you going to do there, he said. Well, I came here. I established the First Step Life Center. I will allocate the orphans and widows here, I said. Okay, I gave it, he said[67].

She asserts that she spearheaded the Humanity Village Life Workshop for individuals struggling with addiction in Bursa with the backing of the local government.

The governor's appointment to Bursa had just been announced. When he came, he visited me. They came to the elderly care home that Avni brother built in Özlüce. While leaving after the visit, he said that our President wants a project related to addiction. He immediately said prepare a project. My dear Governor, I have a project ready [Humanity Village Life Workshop] but I don't have any money, I said. Well, you prepare the project, and the money is from us, he said[68].

The statements illustrate the pivotal role of bureaucratic, political, and financial relationships in the success of volunteer activities. In addition, it should be noted that volunteering is a concrete expression of one's religious beliefs in the narratives. For Hatice Dilruba, the volunteering

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[66]   Dilruba Vakfı, 'Müsiad Türkiye'nin Gücü Sosyal Sorumluluk Projeler Ödülü' (2022).

[67]   Salih Amel Yolcuları, 'Dilruba Evleri (Hatice Dilruba)' (14 April 2021).

[68]   GençTV, 'Müslümanın Cebinde Proje Daima Hazır Olmalı! - Hatice Dilruba' (29 March 2022).

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activities she carries out practically meet people's needs and embody the values and principles of her faith. For example, Dilruba reflects her complete belief that help will come from Allah whenever she is in a difficult situation in her volunteering activities, showing the importance of tawakkul (reliance on God) in her faith. Similarly, Dilruba's gratitude towards those who provide financial support exemplifies the Islamic concept of shukr (gratitude), and her acts of kindness in her activities for disadvantaged groups reflect the concept of ihsan (doing good deeds). In short, Dilruba's volunteering activities in this context make visible the fundamental values and principles of the Islamic faith, such as tawakkul, shukr, and ihsan.

Based on the information presented, it can be concluded that religious commitment positively contributes to volunteer activities. Hatice Dilruba's volunteer actions, which are deeply rooted in her religious beliefs, have fostered empathy, promoted social responsibility, and strengthened community ties. Moreover, she has effectively utilized her connections in the political and financial spheres to further her charitable endeavors. In this context, it can be argued that not only does religion influence volunteer activities, but volunteer activities also play a role in redefining or highlighting religious values and principles, thereby transforming individuals' and groups' perceptions and practices of religion. Bu durum Krech'in de belirttiği gibi ilişkisel bağlamda din bilişsel, deneyimsel, eylemsel ve maddi boyutlarının birbirleriyle ilişkili olması diğer yandan ise siyaset, hukuk, ekonomi, bilim, tıp, eğitim ve sanatlar gibi diğer toplumsal alanlarla ilişkilidir iddiasını desteklemektedir[69]. Bu yönüyle bu çalışma gönüllülük faaliyetlerinde bürokratik ve kurumsal boyutu araştırmalarda katkı sunmaktadır[70].

3.4. Boundaries

One of the key themes that emerges in Dilruba's narratives is the delineation of the boundaries that separate her activities from those of other individuals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and government institutions. The initial boundary that is identified is that of humanity and the indifference that is observed in children's behaviour towards their parents. In her narratives, Dilruba asserts that she finds this indifference morally reprehensible and posits that children should demonstrate mercy towards their parents:

I'll never forget, I went to a house. The grandmother was paralyzed, and the grandfather was blind. Their son and daughter-in-law live on the upper floor of this house. But because they are estranged, they don't even give them a plate of food. Humanity is in such a state![71]

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[69]   Krech, 'Relational Religion'.

[70]   Sağır, 'Özgecilik ve Dini Tutum: Farklı Meslek Grupları Üzerine Nicel Bir Araştırma'.

[71]   Halime Demireşik, 'Bir Hizmet Gönüllüsü Hatice Okur Hanımefendi İle Bir Hasbihâl Hizmetim, Mehrim Olsun!..', *Sebnem Dergisi* (2014).

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When the devil offers you evil, he first prepares its groundwork. He justifies all logical arguments. Then he packages the sin and says, 'Don't send your mother and father to a nursing home,' he says, 'they will be happier there. There, they will have peers like them.'[72].

Dilruba posits that Quran courses affiliated with religious communities, despite their emphasis on religious education, demonstrate inconsistencies in religious practice due to an overemphasis on consumption. Nevertheless, she underscores that this is not aligned with Islamic teachings:

We are at a Quran course. Brother, I can't tell you. Carpets on the floor that I can't even imagine... And chandeliers hanging from above from Damascus... I said loudly there, 'You are all not from that.' Because half of the village is hungry or one-fifth is hungry... the elderly are hungry. [...] That day I questioned a lot and said, 'Where am I?' I want to be from the religion of the man who said, 'He who eats while his neighbor is hungry is not one of us.'[73].

Furthermore, Dilruba asserts that it is unjust for the wealthy to allocate their resources exclusively towards their benefit and that of their progeny. She posits that those who possess considerable wealth should be inclined to disseminate their resources among the general public:

Poor things [the rich]! They give so that it can be distributed. They give so that they can be Allah's giving hand. Otherwise, Allah would distribute it through His angels[74].

Dilruba posits that associations are characterised by a tendency towards inertia, with a correspondingly slow pace of bureaucratic operations. However, she posits that there is a need for rapid and effective solutions to be produced for those in need: We wanted to place an elderly uncle who lived in a zinc shack somewhere, and we had to take care of some paperwork for him. My brother and I went to the foundation. The gentleman there said, 'Let us handle this, we will do some paperwork.' The system is sluggish[75].

The contradictions presented in Dilruba's narratives reveal the boundary and definition of her volunteerism. This context shows that she acts by a set of conflicting values, including empathy and selfishness, opulence and simplicity, individualism and collectivism. Dilruba reconstructs the relationship between religion and volunteering by creating symbolic boundaries using a comparative motif that juxtaposes the ideal with the reality. This allows her to reconstruct the relationship between the two concepts. Collectively, these boundaries form an idealised definition of religiosity within the framework of volunteering, which in turn forms the basis of an ideal social order[76]. As a result, it can be argued that Hatice Dilruba aims to contribute to the construction of

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[72] Dilruba Vakfı, 'Bekir Develi Ile Peynir Gemisi, Çığ Gibi Büyüyen İyilik Hareketi Dilruba Evleri Yardımlaşma Derneği' (22 January 2024).

[73] Salih Amel Yolcuları, 'Dilruba Evleri (Hatice Dilruba)' (14 April 2021).

[74] GençTV, 'Müslümanın Cebinde Proje Daima Hazır Olmalı! - Hatice Dilruba' (29 March 2022).

[75] Demireşik, 'Bir Hizmet Gönüllüsü Hatice Okur Hanımefendi İle Bir Hasbihâl Hizmetim, Mehrim Olsun!' (2014).

[76] M. Lamont et al., 'Symbolic Boundaries', *International Encyclopaedia of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, ed. J. Wright (Oxford: Elsevier, 2015), 850–855.

a just and compassionate world by emphasizingthe inconsistencies between religion and social action, encouraging her audience to reflect on their beliefs and actions.

Discussions and Conclusion

In the example of Hatice Dilruba, the multifaceted and multi-layered relational dimension of religion and volunteering is observed. It can be argued that, on the one hand, volunteering redefines religious life, and on the other hand, religion also affects volunteering. It has been noticed that religion motivates the selection of target audience, sponsors, supporters (family and friends), and bureaucrats for volunteering activities. In light of this observation, this situation gives rise to a new social field of volunteerism that is shaped by religious elements. The concept of volunteerism encompasses a wide range of areas, from individual identity to social relations, and it intersects with fields such as economics and politics. At this juncture, it is prudent to recall Blau's[77] perspective that an activity is shaped by both internal dynamics and external factors, including economics, politics, and society.

The objective of this study is to challenge the conventional wisdom that views volunteer activities as fixed, static, and predetermined concepts. Instead, it adopts a more horizontal approach to uncover new connections. Rather than treating religion as a fragmented entity by focusing on its cognitive, experiential, and behavioral dimensions using predefined concepts, this research examines volunteer activities on the assumption that these dimensions are interconnected. As illustrated in Hatice Dilruba's accounts, her introspective discourse concerning her past and convictions regarding the afterlife have shaped her interactions with target audiences, financial decisions, political engagement, and dealings with bureaucracy. These elements are intertwined with other dimensions of religion. This differs from the psychological perspective, which connects religion and volunteerism through variables such as religiosity and emotional dimensions. This relationship- and process-oriented study facilitates understanding the mutual shaping of religion and volunteerism. The findings demonstrate that volunteerism alters the nature of religious discourse when integrated with religious beliefs. Conversely, the religious dimension exerts a transformative influence on volunteerism, affecting its cognitive, experiential, and behavioral aspects. In this sense, the study exemplifies how different approaches can be synthesized to simultaneously consider theoretical and practical elements.

Moreover, the study places considerable emphasis on the involvement of institutional actors in volunteer activities. Institutional actors like municipalities and governorates typically possess greater resources than individual actors. Consequently, Hatice Dilruba's collaboration with administrative, financial, and political partners rapidly transformed her local efforts into a multi-layered movement with an international reach. In other words, Hatice Dilruba's volunteer initiative, which originated with respect and empathy for older people in Domaniç, now operates internationally.

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[77]   P. Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life* (Routledge, 1974).

One might posit that the impetus behind Dilruba's multifaceted volunteer actions is religious conviction[78]. This prompts how and why religion affects individuals' decisions to engage in volunteer activities. One potential explanation for this phenomenon can be found in the relationship between familiarity and trust. Familiarity with a person or group facilitates the formation of trust. Felder posits that individuals tend to form relationships with those who share similar social statuses, including religion, ethnicity, gender, income level, and education[79]. This is because discourses, places, and actions create familiarity and trust[80]. As evidenced by the case of Hatice Dilruba, shared religious beliefs foster familiarity among individuals through religious texts and historical events, facilitating their participation in volunteer activities[81].

Another topic of discussion to be mentioned under this heading is the boundaries that show that Hatice Dilruba's activities are not ordinary movements but have a certain identity and form. She does this by starting from a duality such as selfishness and empathy, opulence and simplicity, individualism and collectivism. Metcalf's[82] views can be considered on this issue, as she discusses this type of comparative approach by associating it with Eickelman's (1989) concept of 'objectification'. She explains the concept of objectification as the subject judging others while defining and examining himself. However, the comparison made with the past or the rest of society also constitutes the essence of a consciousness that shapes religious identity and lives[83]. Considering this definition of objectification, it can be said that Hatice Dilruba also defines her volunteering activities through these dualities. In addition, Dilruba's emphasis on values such as preferring others to oneself, empathy, simplicity, and collectivism also shows that her perception of religion is shaped by volunteering. In this respect, Hatice Dilruba's understanding of religion determines the framework and boundaries of her activities, thus defining volunteering and distinguishing it from others.

Moreover, an examination of Dilruba's narratives reveals that the relationship between religion and volunteerism is complex, encompassing a sense of religious connectedness, target audiences, administrative, financial, political partners, and boundaries. It concludes religion not only encourages volunteerism but also fosters relationships between the volunteer and the target audience, as well as between the volunteer and the various administrative, financial, and political partners. Besides, religion is a framework that guides individuals through life's transitions, connecting them to their past, future, and the creator. It demonstrates that the motivations for volunteering often extend beyond worldly concerns. Similarly, it can be argued that volunteering

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[78] Crossley, 'Networks, Interactions and Relations'.

[79] Maxime Felder, 'Felder, M. (2021) Familiarity as a Practical Sense of Place. Sociological Theory, 39(3). Https://Doi.Org/10.1177/07352751211037724', *Sociological Theory* 39/3 (2021), 180–199.

[80] François Dépelteau, 'Relational Thinking in Sociology: Relevance, Concurrence and Dissonance', *The Palgrave Handbook of Relational Sociology*, ed. François Dépelteau (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2018), 3–35.

[81] Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life*.

[82] Barbara Daly Metcalf (ed.), *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe* (Berkeley · Los Angeles · London: University of Califronia Press, 1996).

[83] Metcalf, *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe*.

is associated with religion, including relationships between the individual and society, the individual and the afterlife, and the individual and the transcendent.

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