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CONFIRMATION, FAITH, AND VOLUNTEERISM

A Longitudinal Study on Protestant Adolescents
in the Transition towards Adulthood
European Perspectives

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Introduction

I. Introduction

FRIEDRICH SCHWEITZER, THOMAS SCHLAG, HENRIK SIMOJOKI, KATI TERVO-NIEMELÄ AND WOLFGANG ILG

1. Protestant Adolescents in the Transition towards Adulthood: The Relationship between Confirmation Work, Faith, Church and Volunteerism

Many who are active in confirmation work tell the same story. After confirmation, most Protestant youth will not be seen in church anymore, at least not for a long time. That the adolescents, at least in most cases, seem to have enjoyed their confirmation time, does not appear to change the picture. After confirmation, the impressions and experiences seem to wear off rather soon. For the majority of the young people, the positive experiences with confirmation time do not seem to contribute to any kind of enduring relationship to the church. Yet there are also different tendencies to be observed. In some of the countries participating in the study presented in this volume, becoming a volunteer after confirmation has become a widespread option for many youth. Often they become involved with confirmation work, no longer as participants but as young voluntary workers.

Confirmation work, faith, church, and volunteerism are connected in many ways. This is one of the main findings of the study presented in this book which, at the same time, builds on earlier research on confirmation work also from the present project (cf. Pettersson/Simojoki 2010; Porkka et al. 2015). In fact, confirmation work that is carried out with 13 to 16 year old adolescents, often seems to be an important entry to voluntary work in general. In many cases, the motives for becoming a volunteer have a religious background or even are explicitly religious. Moreover, the participation of volunteers has become a vital part of confirmation work in most of the countries participating in the study.

The research on confirmation work conducted over the last 10 years (for an overview, see p. 233 ff.) offered a unique opportunity for an innovative type of study that has rarely been carried out, at least in the field of religion in adolescence. The present study has been designed longitudinally so that it will be possible to follow young people's expectations and experiences over time, from the age of approximately 13 or 14 to the age of approximately 16 or 17 years. Consequently the results promise clearer information concerning what comes after confirmation and, of special interest to church leaders, how the adolescents' relationship to the church changes after confirmation and in the transi-

tion towards adulthood. Moreover, the study entails new insights into religious change over several years, not only at a group level but for every individual adolescent taking part in the study. Such results have not been available before, especially not for a larger sample and at an international level, and certainly not in the field of research on youth and religion.

Finally, the study can be considered further evidence of the pressing need for knowing more about religion in middle and late adolescence. Traditionally, it was the transition from childhood to adolescence that received most attention in the psychology of religion, for example, by asking about the impact of adolescence on beliefs acquired during childhood (cf., for example, Erikson 1980; Fowler 1981; for an overview cf. Schweitzer 2016). Many studies from the sociology of religion have shown no special interest in differentiating between different segments or phases of adolescence (cf., for example, Shell Deutschland Holding 2015; EKD 2014). With its focus on the time between 13 and 16 or 17 years, the present study can offer new insights in this respect as well. These are very important years when young people typically experience major changes in respect to social relationships and to cognitive development. During these years young people often make first choices related to their future professional career, sometimes have first experiences with work life, etc.

1.1 The Challenge of Coming of Age Religiously in Contemporary Western Societies

There are many indicators from previous research that the second decade of life is of special importance for many religious biographies (to only mention some classics, Erikson 1980; Fowler 1981; Oser/Gmünder 1984). Sociological surveys as well as psychological accounts describe the growing distance that adolescents tend to develop in relationship to the religious beliefs acquired during childhood and that their distance to the church is increasing in that time of life (cf. Smith 2009; Shell Deutschland Holding 2015; Maschke et al. 2013). Critical thinking directed against, for example, faith in God the creator often plays an important role in this context, and often the issue of theodicy comes into play (why does God allow bad things to happen?). Most of all, however, it is the church as an institution that adolescents find less and less attractive the older they are. Even if older adolescents, what often seems to be the case, find religion to be of interest to them, they often do not cherish the church and do not participate in programs offered by the church.

At present, only the studies carried out by Christian Smith and his team in the United States offer detailed and reliable longitudinal accounts of the religious change occurring during later adolescence (Smith 2005; Smith 2009).

Smith identified some kind of moralistic and therapeutic deism to be the most widespread orientation of American adolescents today. Moreover, his results indicate that there are major changes in religious outlook in later adolescence. In the United States, the age of leaving for college seems to mark a major transition and often the point where religious biographies take new turns, in many cases away from the church one has been part of during childhood. The findings from the United States certainly are of interest for European readers as well, although one has to keep in mind the differences between Churches in Europe and in the United States.

Smith's results are so impressive and convincing because he was able to follow the religious trajectories of adolescents longitudinally. So far, there are very few European studies that make use of a longitudinal design in the field of religion. One of these studies was conducted by one of the authors of the present text, Kati Tervo-Niemelä who followed former confirmands into their third decade in Tampere/Finland (Niemelä 2015; cf. also Niemelä 2008). Her findings also show that there were major changes in later years, especially after the age of 20 years. In the present context, it is of special interest that her results indicate that there are indeed long-term effects of confirmation work and of how it was experienced by the confirmands. Such experiences seem to exert a lasting influence on their relationship to the church, positively as well as negatively.

The present study promises an important improvement in terms of valid results by offering truly longitudinal data based on an international sample. In most cases, comparisons in earlier research concerning different age groups and their relationship to the church, for example, after confirmation, are based on surveys that work with a one-time questionnaire. The most recent study on church membership in Germany, for example, reports that older people remember more intensive forms of religious socialisation and more closeness to the church than younger people (EKD 2014). The conclusion offered by the authors of this study is that one must assume an alarming decline of religious affiliation and interest the younger the age group in question is. The problem with such comparisons is that they must assume that what people say about their past, is really accurate. Yet as is well known, human memory is deceptive. This is why longitudinal data are needed for such comparisons. Only longitudinal data allow for reliable results on how religion develops over the years. It is obvious that the results will be far more reliable with a truly longitudinal design that follows the same individuals over a longer period of time.

The present study does not cover the whole age range that would have to be considered for understanding the process of coming of age religiously. To follow adolescents over a period of ten or even more years would have been the task of a long-term research project that, aside from Tervo-Niemelä's results for Finland and the study conducted by Smith and his team mentioned above, will

have to wait for the future. The present study only covers three years, from the beginning of confirmation time to two years after confirmation which, depending on the country, means from the age of 13 years to 16 or 17 years. Yet according to the data reported in this book, exactly these years may be of special interest. They are the years right after the last educational program which the Protestant Churches foresee and offer for the whole age group. All later programs are more informal, not only today but from their whole history and format. Christian youth work, for example, goes back to individual initiatives that started during the 19th century and sometimes even later (cf., for a summary account, Deresch 1984). In most cases, such programs may be very important to the participants but, for example in Germany where respective data are available, they only reach a small part of the Protestant adolescents, especially in later adolescence (Ilg et al. 2014; Fauser et al. 2006). This is one of the reasons why it is so important to ask what comes after confirmation – the last church-related biographical marker event in which most Protestant adolescents take part in most countries of the study.

1.2 What Comes after Confirmation? An Open Question in the Context of Christian Youth Work

As mentioned above, the question what comes after confirmation, often is posed ironically and with a sense of open frustration. It then refers to the experience that for many youth, confirmation is not the starting point for further or even more intense participation in the church. Instead, many adolescents seem to turn their backs to the church. If one views the years following confirmation as a formative period in the process of developing into adulthood such observations become even more frustrating and, for the Churches, quite alarming.

Yet what is really known about the age group of the 14 to 16 (or 17 and 18) year old adolescents? Many studies on youth or on church membership tend to group them together with older adolescents, thus making statements about 14 to 25 year old adolescents (cf. Shell Germany Holding 2015, EKD 2014). The samples used in such studies rarely allow for more detailed observations or special results concerning adolescents of a certain age as a distinct group. Taking into consideration that most adolescents at the age of 16 are still living at home with their parents and have not moved away for purposes of further education or professional training, it is clear from the beginning that it makes little sense to neglect the differences between them and adolescents at the age of 18 years or even young adults who will have a very different life-style and probably different outlooks as well. Moreover, the fact that most 16 year old adolescents still are living in the neighborhood of the parishes where they were confirmed

implies that, at least theoretically, they are still comparatively easy to reach for the Churches.

With its focus on the years from the beginning of confirmation time to two years after confirmation, the present study offers research results and insights that can be very important for new initiatives from Christian youth work and the Churches. As it turns out in this study, these adolescents are quite open for such initiatives, provided that they meet their interests and fit their needs. One example of successful work with youth after confirmation certainly deserves much more attention – voluntary work especially in the context of confirmation work – a topic which is therefore given special consideration in the present study.

1.3 Young Volunteers and Religion: A Neglected Field of Research

Becoming a volunteer in confirmation work is one of the answers to the question what comes after confirmation. At present, this is most likely the most promising answer in many of the countries participating in the study. In Finland, it is almost one third of the confirmands who become volunteers after confirmation. Germany has an especially high number of volunteers active in confirmation work – with 60 000 volunteers in this field per year.

It is easy to see that such developments are not only of interest to the Churches; they are also important for society at large. With the increased appreciation of civil society, volunteerism has become a general interest in many societies (cf. the foundational view of Cohen/Arato 1992; for the context of confirmation work see Pettersson/Simojoki 2010; Porkka et al. 2015). It is considered part of vital democracies and their self-understanding, and is considered indispensable for the flourishing of societies. Many tasks could not be fulfilled without the continued commitment of volunteers as, for example, the refugee situation has shown most recently in a number of European countries. Consequently, voluntary work and especially the motives of the volunteers have become a topic of research in many places, including the role of religion and the Churches (cf., for example, Gensicke/Geiss 2010; Hustinx et al. 2015; international-comparative Arnesen et al. 2013). The main emphasis on this research, however, has been on older adults who, often after their retirement, become active with new tasks that can benefit from their expertise. Adolescents have rarely been the focus of research in this context, although it has been shown that the experiences during adolescence also are important in terms of voluntary commitment (cf. Dux et al. 2008).

According to the results of the present study volunteerism begins early in life, at least in some cases and possibly exactly for those who remain active as

volunteers over many years in later life. Moreover, becoming acquainted with volunteerism through one's parents or friends of the family seems to be an influential factor with those who become volunteers. It is hard to understand why the beginnings of voluntary commitment have not received more attention in the past. It is well known that many young people are in fact active as volunteers, not only in Finland where this is especially well known. Yet very little research has become available concerning the pathways into voluntary work in adolescence.

The present study also is of special interest in another related respect. It includes responses from many adolescents who are not active as volunteers. What are their reasons for not becoming volunteers? The answers to this question may hold another key for productively working with this age group.

Finally, the study sheds more light on the role of confirmation work in relationship to becoming interested in voluntary work – a topic that has been discussed before on the basis of data from the confirmands (cf. Pettersson/Simojoki 2010; Porkka et al. 2015) and which can now be taken up again with the adolescents' responses two years after confirmation. This question will be taken up in the next section, together with other aspects.

1.4 The Role of Confirmation Work for Faith, Church Membership and Volunteerism

With its longitudinal approach, the present study offers a number of possibilities and perspectives for gaining insights into the meaning and the role of confirmation work beyond the experience of confirmation time itself. Saying this, it is important to keep in mind that it would not be legitimate, neither educationally nor theologically, to functionalise confirmation work for purposes other than this program itself. Confirmation work must be offered for the sake of the confirmands, not for the sake of the Church or of society's needs. Yet it is easy to see that this point of view can also become one-sided. Not to be willing to look beyond the time of confirmation would imply that the future life of the confirmands should not matter. Yet it must indeed be kept in mind that whatever confirmation work may have to contribute to faith in later adolescence and to the adolescents' relationship to the Church or to voluntary commitment must always be viewed and evaluated not just in terms of external demands on youth but from their own perspective and in relationship to their own needs. This was one of the reasons why it was so important for the present study to ask the young people themselves about their own views, rather than just doing a study with ministers or other experts in the field.

Concerning the Christian faith, the first question to be asked in a study with

adolescents two years after confirmation will be how they, in retrospect, evaluate their confirmation time as well as the celebration on the day of confirmation. Has it stayed important to them or have the experiences connected to it lost their importance? Very little is known about such questions. Consequently, it is of special interest to consider the results of the present study which included a number of questions about looking back to one's confirmation time, as well as to the day of confirmation (see p. 30 ff.). It will probably be encouraging to many who are active with confirmation work to learn how important especially the day of confirmation has remained to many of the adolescents in the present study as well as the lasting appreciation which again many of the adolescents express for their confirmation time.

The next question must be about the adolescents' faith which the study addressed with a number of items relating to religious attitudes, for example, faith in God, faith in creation or in an afterlife. From the earlier studies it is clear that the adolescents tended to indicate more assent to these beliefs at the end of confirmation time than in the beginning (Niemelä 2010; Christensen et al. 2015). Yet what happens after confirmation in this respect? Did the values drop, maybe even to a level below the time when they first joined confirmation work? Both, the psychology as well as the sociology of religion support the expectation that there will be a clear decline concerning adolescents' relationship to the Christian faith (cf., for example, Fowler 1981; Shell Deutschland 2015). On the whole, this general expectation also holds true for the adolescents in the present study. Yet this study goes beyond earlier quantitative research in that it included a whole series of items related to religious attitudes and also differentiated between adolescents' relationship to the church on the one hand and to the Christian faith on the other. In this way the study allows for a more differentiated and a more adequate understanding of what faith may mean for older adolescents (see p. 46 ff.). There are faith-related items concerning, for example, faith in creation that indicate a clear – some would say, an alarming – decline after confirmation. Yet there are other items, most of all the belief in an afterlife, that become more important after confirmation. Interestingly, there are also beliefs that become especially important during confirmation time but tend to lose this importance after confirmation. It seems quite obvious that these results will be of special interest, both for designing programs that may be attractive for adolescents after confirmation, as well as for reconsidering what topics should be addressed during confirmation time and in what manner.

One of the possibly most surprising results of the studies with the confirmands was the very positive views of the church that were found with an overwhelming majority of them (from the earlier studies of this project cf. Niemelä 2010; Niemelä et al. 2015). Shortly before confirmation, 73 % of the respondents of the second study showed themselves convinced that the »church does

a lot of good things for the people«. Although the respective values were high even at the beginning of confirmation time, they still increased considerably during confirmation time. However, the positive image of the church was not paralleled by an equally positive view of one's own church membership. With the adolescents in the survey two years after confirmation, the results were similar, although on a lower level (cf. p. 61 ff.). It is difficult to say what confirmation work contributes to the adolescents' relationship to the church after confirmation. Strictly speaking, one would need to have a control group in order to measure this influence. What is obvious, however, is the lasting influence of positive – and consequently also of negative – experiences with confirmation work (cf. p. 121 ff.).

In any case, the studies on confirmation work and on the time after confirmation clearly show that confirmation work contributes to adolescents' interest and motivation in relationship to volunteerism. The data reveal a clear increase in many of the confirmands' interest in becoming a volunteer (Pettersson/Simojoki 2010; Porkka et al. 2015). Not all of those who had indicated a respective interest at the time of their confirmation had actually become volunteers when they responded two years after confirmation (cf. p. 102 ff.). Yet the number of those who actually had, was also considerable. The data show that additional efforts must be made if adolescents are to be won for voluntary work. In the first place, and most naturally, voluntary work must be attractive to young people in terms of how it is organised and what it offers to young volunteers. Important aspects in this respect are the availability of respective opportunities in the parishes, experiences in the group of volunteers as well as chances for having responsibilities of one's own. Moreover, there is a clear need to actually ask adolescents after confirmation if they are willing to become volunteers. This need must be emphasised because many of the adolescents in the study reported that no one ever asked them if they wanted to become involved. This is just one of the results which show that becoming a volunteer after confirmation is an important answer to the question what comes after confirmation, but that much more should and could be done to make this option even more attractive in the future. Given the ethical and political importance of voluntary work there are many reasons for giving more emphasis to this task in the future.

1.5 Establishing a European Horizon in Researching Religious Education and Christian Youth Work

The present study is part of a larger enterprise that started about 10 years ago, when the first international study on confirmation work in Europe began (Schweitzer et al. 2010). Five years later, the second study was launched

(Schweitzer et al. 2015a). The present volume holds the results of the final step of this second study which goes beyond confirmation time itself in order to include adolescents two years after confirmation. The studies on confirmation work should also be understood as part of the attempt to establish international research and cooperation on a European level in a field in which such work is still quite unusual and innovative. It is probably fair to say that this is the first study of its kind, not only in relation to confirmation work but also concerning educational programs offered by the Churches in Europe.

International and European cooperation in research on youth and religion is clearly becoming more important. Even thirty years ago, researchers from the sociology of religion and from theology started to bring their results together and to investigate possibilities for comparative interpretation (for example, Nembach 1987). Considerable efforts have been made since then to develop international schemes for studying youth and religion in Europe (Ziebertz/Kay 2005 and 2006; Ziebertz et al. 2009). International research in religious education has also made progress but it is still most often related – and limited – to schools and to teaching religion there (Jackson et al. 2007; Ziebertz/Riegel 2009). Compared to these studies, educational programs related to the Church and taking place in connection to the parishes or Christian youth work have received very little international attention.

Against this background, the studies on confirmation work, including the present study with older adolescents, acquire additional meaning. They demonstrate that research in this field is both possible and meaningful. Moreover, one of the most important experiences for the group of researchers behind the studies on confirmation work certainly was a new kind of ecumenical exchange and cooperation – what could be called practical *ecumene* and which can be appreciated by the Churches and by theology as an important motive for this kind of international research. *Ecumene* in this case referred to international cooperation between Churches in different countries. It also referred to inter-denominational cooperation in that Lutheran and Reformed Churches as well as the German Methodists took part in the study. It should also be mentioned in this context that conversations with Roman Catholic colleagues played a role at various stages and that the studies on confirmation work found a parallel in a study on First Communion (cf. Forschungsgruppe »Religion und Gesellschaft« 2015).

An overview of the central findings of the different studies on confirmation work conducted over the last ten years is given at the end of this book (p. 233 ff.).

2. Research Questions and Research Approach

Against the background described so far, the research questions resulting from it had to be formulated in ways that fit with an empirical study. This was done in conversation with an international group of experts from within and beyond the project as well as on the basis of the findings of the preceding studies on confirmation work.

The following main questions were chosen for guiding the research:

- How do adolescents retrospectively view and evaluate confirmation work and the day of confirmation two years after confirmation?
- What experiences with the Church after confirmation are reported by the adolescents?
- What changes can be found in the religious attitudes of the adolescents between the ages of roughly 13 and 17 years (depending on the country)?
- What is the influence of religious socialisation during childhood?
- How does the relationship to the Church and the commitment to the Church develop after confirmation?
- How can the pathways into voluntary work, especially in confirmation work itself, be described? What reasons can be identified for becoming or not becoming a volunteer?
- What are the adolescents' experiences with voluntary work?
- What reasons can be found behind different developmental patterns among Protestant adolescents in relationship to beliefs, church and volunteerism?

Each of these questions is of interest in itself. Moreover, possible connections between the different questions and the respective results will be important. Most likely it is such connections that will be of special importance for the practice of confirmation work as well as for programs offered to adolescents after confirmation.

All these questions will be treated in a longitudinal perspective, with responses at the beginning and at the end of confirmation time as well as two years after confirmation. This can be considered the special strength of the present study. The longitudinal approach corresponds to longstanding demands of social-scientific research. Truly longitudinal data offer the only reliable access to insights referring to change, for example, in adolescence. Most of the existing studies on youth or on church membership only allow for such insights in a very general and preliminary sense. They are most often based on a single questionnaire administered at a certain time which implies that the data produced are not suitable to reliably trace change. Comparisons based on results from different studies remain helpful and were also used with the studies on confir-

mation work (cf. Schweitzer et al. 2010; Schweitzer et al. 2015a). Yet more and more the approach to changes over time should be based on truly longitudinal data. It is in this sense that the present study can be considered a decisive step ahead.

Another advantage of the data from the present study comes from its dual reference to both changes at the group level as well as to changes at an individual level. The study was planned and carried out such that each confirmand could be followed and his or her responses from the beginning and the end of confirmation time could be connected to the responses two years after confirmation. Again, this can be appreciated as further supporting the validity of the results. Moreover, the dual approach adds a whole new dimension to the analysis and interpretation of the data. As will be shown in the different chapters of the book, the changes at the individual level did not always correspond to those at the group level. Instead, it often turned out that there were numerous changes at the individual level that followed a different pattern or direction than the changes at the group level. This result is of special importance for education which always has to refer to individual people and not to abstract averages. The changes at the individual level can be interpreted as evidence of educational influences or, at least, as evidence of the possibility of such influences. Tendencies at the group level obviously do not determine individual development, at least not for each individual. At the same time, individual change can also refer to special challenges in that they show that working with adolescents does not mean working with a homogenous group but with individuals with different needs, different interests, etc.

The longitudinal approach chosen for the present study is connected to another important point that must be kept in mind concerning the research questions described above. While the earlier studies on confirmation work aimed for representative data, the present study does not. Representative data are necessary when one wants to generalise the results to a certain population – with confirmation work, this population would be the confirmands in the different countries. A longitudinal study has its focus on individual paths of development or change. The longitudinal results and insights are not important because they would be representative but because they are valid on a group level as well as on an individual level. For research on youth and religion, this implies the so far unique chance to go beyond data based on one-time surveys. For Europe, this is a new approach that follows the model of the studies carried out by Christian Smith in the United States (Smith 2005; 2009). Smith has shown how longitudinal studies can lead to new and deeper insights into adolescents' religious orientations and adherences.

Finally, any long-term approach to youth and religion must also have an eye on the influences of childhood religious socialisation. For this reason, the

present study makes constant reference to religious upbringing by the parents and also to contacts with Christian youth work and other programs offered by the Churches before confirmation time. In this sense, of what the adolescents remember and report, experiences during childhood could be included, although not in a truly longitudinal manner. As the results clearly show, experiences from childhood continue to exert an important influence, during confirmation time as well as beyond. Yet it is also evident that later experiences before and after confirmation also play a role, in part by further strengthening earlier effects, in part by giving the adolescents new impulses.

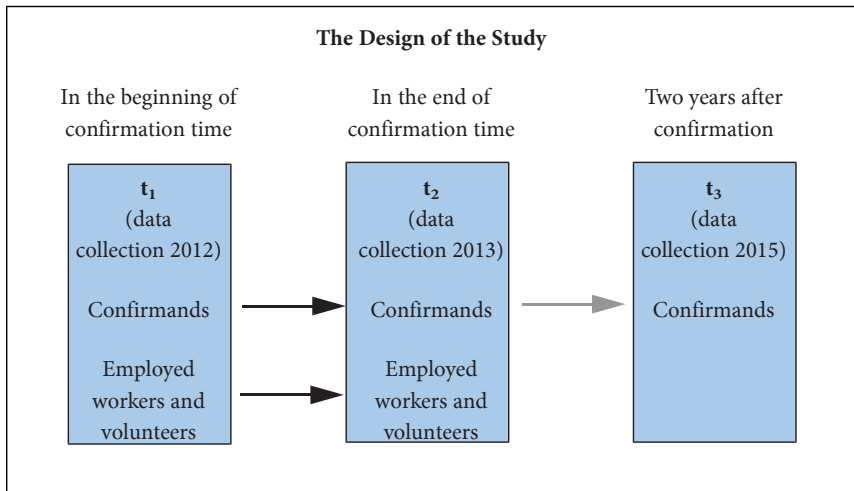
3. The Design of the Study

The study is based on a longitudinal design that aimed at capturing the expectations and experiences of Protestant adolescents between the ages of approximately 13 and 16 or 17 years, depending on the country. From an institutional point of view this means that responses were gathered first from confirmands at the beginning (t_1 , 2012) and at the end of confirmation time (t_2 , 2013) and then two years after confirmation (t_3 , 2015). This design builds upon the earlier study on confirmation work (Schweitzer et al. 2015a) in that the confirmands included in this study were asked if they were willing to also participate in the study two years after their confirmation. Figure 1 gives an overview on the different parts of the study.

The study was based on written questionnaires, in part in pencil and paper form, in part using digital versions of the questionnaires. The questionnaires included a standard form used for all participants, although with a different ending. Respondents who indicated that they were active as volunteers or who had been volunteers after confirmation but had already stopped before the time of the t_3 -study, were given another questionnaire with additional questions referring to their experiences with voluntary work. Those who had never been volunteers, were asked to answer questions relating to what spoke or speaks against them becoming volunteers. The appendix (p. 262 ff.) holds additional information about how the study was carried out (for more details on the research in the different countries see the respective reports, pp. 130 ff.).

The study was carried out in seven European countries, Germany (Protestant Church in Germany/DE EKD), Austria (AT), Switzerland (CH), Denmark (DK), Finland (FI), Norway (NO), Sweden (SE). Moreover, the Methodist Church in Germany (DE EmK) also took part. Compared to the earlier study on confirmation work which included nine countries, this means that Hungary and Poland only took part in the t_1/t_2 -study but not in the t_3 -study two years

Figure 1: Design of the study



after confirmation. These two countries were not able to collect the necessary data, mostly for organisational and financial reasons.

The sample comprises respondents from all seven countries but in different proportions. Table 1 gives an overview on the total sample and its composition.

The samples in the different countries correspond to the emphasis on longitudinal change. Since the samples in the different countries are not representative, international comparisons in a strict sense are not possible (this was different with the earlier studies on confirmation work). Correspondingly, data analysis and interpretation will be on longitudinal aspects throughout the book. Nevertheless, the international composition of the sample provides a broader basis for the results. Occasionally, the differences between the countries can be interpreted as indications of different tendencies, without making claims to representative comparisons.

4. How the Study Developed

Concerning the group of researchers who were responsible for the present study, the description given in an earlier book can be repeated:

»The group of researchers, who carried out the study [...] has worked together for almost ten years. Many of the group members first came together in 2006, and many meetings in all of the participating countries followed. Early on, the group decided to form its own network, the International Network for Research and Development

Table 1: The total sample and its composition

	Total ^a	DE EKD	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE EmK
t ₁	26842	10191	495	7217	2024	2436	2337	1381	761
t ₂	23347	9096	463	6437	1507	2298	2166	779	628
t ₃	5373	2588	82	1229	334	154	189	570	227
t ₁ -t ₂ -t ₃	3149	1937	82	662	83	83	115	x ^b	187
Valid questionnaires from volunteers within the t ₁ -t ₂ -t ₃ - sample	493	354	10	91	–	24	14	x ^b	–

^a In this case, the total includes the German Methodists while it does not in other cases, due to the special structure of this Church (see p. 204 ff.).

^b The sampling in Sweden was different from the other countries so that no figure is given here.

of Confirmation and Christian Youth Work« founded in 2007. It was the shared interest in doing empirical research on confirmation work and to make possible international exchange and comparison that brought this group together.

In addition to electronic means of communication that played an important role for this group of researchers, a number of meetings took place in most of the participating countries. These meetings gave the group a chance to get at least a glimpse of the different situations in the countries where the meetings took place. The meetings were supported and facilitated by the local Churches in very generous ways. We are very grateful for this generosity that was extended to the researchers in a truly ecumenical spirit.« (Niemelä et al. 2015, 26)

In addition to the researchers who are the authors of the present book, a number of additional colleagues must be mentioned as well as several institutions that supported the study and acted as sponsors, financially but also in many other ways. In the following, the teams and sponsors are listed in the order of how the countries are presented in this volume. Marianne Martin (Tübingen) was responsible for the language editing.

More information about the authors of this study can be found in the appendix.

Germany:

Team: Friedrich Schweitzer, Georg Hardecker, Christoph Maaß, Wolfgang Ilg, Henrik Simojoki, Katja Lißmann, supported by a team of student workers (especially Mirjam Rutkowski), GESIS (Mannheim), in cooperation with the Comenius-Institute.

Sponsors: the Regional Churches, EKD, Comenius-Institute, University of Tübingen.

Switzerland:

Team: Thomas Schlag, Muriel Koch, Christoph Maaß, Jonas Stutz, Silvio Liesch.

Sponsors: Cantonal Churches, Conference of the German-Swiss Churches (Deutschweizerische Kirchenkonferenz [KIKO]), Faculty of Theology, University of Zurich.

Austria:

Team: Stefan Grauwald, Dagmar Lagger, Karl Schiefermair.

Sponsors: Evangelische Kirche A.B. (Lutheran Church) and Evangelische Kirche H.B. (Reformed Church), University College of Teacher Education of Christian Churches Vienna/Krems, Austria (Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien/Krems).

Denmark:

Team: Leise Christensen, Henrik Reintoft Christensen, Birthe Jakobsen, Helle Sangild Qvist, Church of Denmark-Center for Further Education of Research, Eberhard Harbsmeier (Loegumkloster), Hans Vium Mikkelsen.

Finland:

Team: Kati Tervo-Niemelä, Jouko Porkka.

Sponsors: Church Research Institute, Tampere, The Church Council, Helsinki.

Norway:

Team: Ida Marie Høeg, Bernd Krupka.

Sponsors: KIFO, Institute for Church, Religion, and Worldview Research and KUN, Northern Norway Educational Centre of Practical Theology.

Sweden:

Team: Erika Willander, Jonas Bromander, Peter Brandberg, Andreas Sandberg.
Sponsors: Unit for Analysis, located at the Archbishop and General Secretary of the Church of Sweden.

Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche in Deutschland (German Methodists):

Team: Tobias Beißwenger, Achim Härtner.

Sponsors: Theologische Hochschule Reutlingen (Reutlingen School of Theology), Kinder- und Jugendwerk der Süddeutschen Jährlichen Konferenz der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche (Department for Children and Youth

Work of the Southern Annual Conference, United Methodist Church in Germany).

5. Explanation of the Terminology

For most of the items, the answers were measured by a scale of 1 to 7, with wordings given in the questionnaire like 1 = »not applicable at all« and 7 = »totally applicable«. In order to reduce the complexity of the tables in this publication, the answering levels 1, 2 and 3 are summarised as »No«, 4 »Middle« and 5, 6 and 7 as »Yes«. In computing the data (e. g., for correlations), the original answering levels have been kept. When reporting results, usually »percentages yes« are reported which is easier to understand than mean values.

The following statistical abbreviations will be used throughout the book:

- *Items* are the questions within a questionnaire.
- *Percentages (%)* refer to valid percent. The number of missing answers is usually about 1-4% of all answers and will not be stated for every item. Rounding accounts for deviations of percentage sums not equaling 100 %.
- *Percent points* indicate the differences between percentages.
- The *scale level* of the Likert-scales (rating scales) is metric.
- *Sample size (N)* stands for the number of valid answers to a certain item.
- *Mean value (M)* is the average of all answers for a certain item.
- *Standard deviation (SD)* indicates the spread of the answers to a certain item.
- *Level of significance (p)*: In this book a level of 5 % (* = $p < 0.05$) or 1 % (** = $p < 0.01$) or 0.1 % (***) = $p < 0.001$) is used. Due to the sometimes large number of questionnaires, not all significant differences can be considered relevant. As the sensitivity of significance test is connected to sample size, even small differences become statistically significant in countries with large sample sizes. All differences reported are significant at least on a 0.05-level. Statistical details (F-values, degrees of freedom, etc.) are mostly not reported in order to make the book more accessible to readers without statistical training.
- *Correlation coefficient (r)* states the degree of interdependence of two variables. It ranges from -1 to +1. The closer it is to 0, the smaller the interdependence between the variables.
- *Cronbach Alpha (α)* measures the degree of internal consistency of the items in an index.

- When presenting data, the following order of countries is used, which is no more than a technical convention: Germany (DE), Austria (AT), Switzerland (CH), Denmark (DK), Finland (FI), Norway (NO), Sweden (SE). The data from the German Methodists (EmK) are presented last and generally are set off with a double line because of the different structure of this Church.

**From the Beginning of Confirmation
Time to Two Years after Confirmation:
Longitudinal Perspectives**

II. From the Beginning of Confirmation Time to Two Years after Confirmation: Longitudinal Perspectives

1. Confirmands Looking Back to Their Day of Confirmation

LEISE CHRISTENSEN AND BERND KRUPKA

1.1 Introduction

Traditionally, confirmation time has carried many features of a rite de passage, marking the transition from adolescent to adult. In some countries involved in the study, important civil rights – and even economical rights – were connected to the status of being confirmed, and the dress code of young persons could include markers of confirmation status. In many countries, Protestant confirmation has been linked to the end of compulsory education and the beginning of work life, and has been compulsory itself.

In all the participating countries, confirmation has lost most, but not all, of its implications for the civil status of adolescents, both within and outside the church. It has also lost its role as a marker of the end of compulsory education. However, the celebration of confirmation is still an event covering a substantial part of the age group, thus achieving a high degree of public visibility and importance. To varying degrees, it has retained several other informal markers of a passage to adulthood. It is still quite common in the participating countries, for example, that a boy confirmand will get his first suit for confirmation day, in some countries it marks the families' consent to participation in adult celebration habits, for example, the consumption of alcohol. Confirmation presents traditionally have adult life as their horizon, both in the type of present, but also in terms of monetary value, and confirmation plays an important role as a family gathering. Each year at confirmation season, newspaper articles and readers' comments refer to the material aspects of confirmation in the form of expensive presents, clothes and ways of celebration, and question its moral validity. All this adds up to the impression that in some countries, confirmation day still has some kind of ritual momentum of its own that does not translate into purely theological understandings of confirmation.

In order to describe this ›ritual momentum‹, this article will analyse the data provided by the t₃-survey on three aspects of confirmation day as a rite: the experiential-formative aspect, the social and the material aspect.

Church youth workers sometimes experience a certain tension between con-

firmation time and confirmation day. In school type confirmation work (Krupka/Innanen 2010, 224-225), there was a duality of formative confirmation class and the ritual experience of confirmation day. The concept of confirmation *work*, along with the emphasis on confirmation *time* as a whole that can be found in some curricula, underlines the intention to present confirmation time and day as an integrated experience. Workers often underline the importance of *the whole* confirmation work as a time of religious education (Hardecker et al. 2015), while the families' focus and also the adolescents focus can be directed to the day of confirmation at an early stage in confirmation work (on confirmands motives for attending, see Høeg 2010), focussing on the ritual aspect of confirmation (sometimes calling the church office about details on confirmation day months in advance). The religious scientist Danièle Hervieu-Léger (2000) describes religious learning as a »chain of memory« consisting of religious practice loosely interlinked with its religious discourse of interpretation. While a renewed understanding of religious practice is necessary to keep up with societal changes, the claim is that the momentum of religious learning and tradition lies with the ritual practice. This distinction sheds light on the tension between confirmation time as a learning discourse which teaches the meaning of the rite, and confirmation day as ritual practice. This article will therefore investigate the momentum of confirmation day compared to the importance of confirmation time.

Is there a formative side to confirmation day, too? How does confirmation day as ritual practice contribute to religious formation? The religious scientist Harvey Whitehouse (Whitehouse 2004, 70-74, 105-118) describes a specific type of religious learning related to rituals characterised by a once-in-a-lifetime status, high visibility and involvement of the religious community. Whitehouse describes such rituals as religion in the imagistic mode. Religious learning in this mode is cognitively based on an intense sensual experience of participating in a ritual, with the rite de passage being the original example of such a rite. Even though confirmation does not, and never has shown the sensual atrocities of the rites de passage that Whitehouse uses as examples (even taking into account that confirmands sometimes faint during confirmation service), the history of confirmation clearly includes the characteristics of a passage rite, as described above. The rite has also retained a high visibility within the local community in most of the countries participating in the study, and in the extended family network. It also functions as a focal point for other church youth work. Many churches offer programs for mini- or junior-confirmation for the age group between 9 and 12 years. It is also quite common that older adolescents revisit the confirmation experience as young volunteers participating in confirmation work, some of them for several years. To explore the experiential-formative aspect of confirmation day further, this article will therefore investi-

gate the connection between satisfaction with confirmation time and the importance assigned to confirmation day.

For the confirmands, the social aspect of confirmation time is most important. At least in some countries, this also applies for the families of the confirmands that put high stakes into the celebration of the family's beloved adolescent. According to the cultural anthropologist Roy Rappaport (1999), the importance of rituals lies in the fact that they visualise social bonds that exist between participants. Especially in the absence of contracts and other formal, more modern expressions, they may be the only visualisation, manifestation and guarantee of the existence of such bonds. It is easy to argue that increasing social mobility, individualisation and changes in family structure boost the ritual importance of whatever is left in terms of gatherings and shared experiences between family and kin, implying an increase in the ritual importance of confirmation. This article will therefore look into the social importance of confirmation day for the confirmands.

Confirmation gifts are much debated amongst adults and the source of both outright envy and of concerns about the moral and religious corruption of adolescents. According to the theologian Jone Salomonsen (2003, 144), confirmation gifts participate in the triadic structure of all gifts, being tokens of social relations amongst siblings and friends over the generations. If that is true, confirmation gifts become an important aspect of the ritual as validation of social relations amongst the celebrating family.

The experiential-formative (Hervieu-Léger, Whitehouse), the social (Rappaport) and the material (Salomonsen) aspects of confirmation imply that confirmation day exerts a lasting impression on the confirmand. The t_3 -data allow for looking at the impression of confirmation day retrospectively two years later in a quantitative and longitudinal perspective and thus can shed some light on the following aspects:

1. What is the importance of confirmation day for the confirmands two years later?
2. What importance do the confirmands assign to the spiritual, the social, the material dimension of confirmation day?
3. How do the spiritual, social, and material aspects of confirmation in retrospect relate to the perceived importance of the rite and its meaning?
4. How is the relation between confirmation day as a ritual and confirmation time as a period of formation perceived?
5. How does the experiential-formative aspect of confirmation day interact with confirmation year?

1.2 The Perception of Confirmation Day and Background Variables

How important do young people regard confirmation day two years after confirmation? Approximately half of the t_3 -participants experience confirmation day as a very important event in their life. Geography, gender and educational background only account for small variations. There is no difference in appreciation of the day between male and female adolescents, even though female confirmands throughout the confirmation study are shown to be more religious than males. While one may speculate about higher appreciation of confirmation day by female adolescents due to the experience of being 'princess for one day', at least in retrospect, this aspect does not seem to play a large role in the view of the event and its importance. On the contrary: female respondents are a whole 14 percent points less oriented towards the material aspects of confirmation, but more oriented towards its social aspect than boys (see below).

Familiarity with religion is the most important background variable: appreciation of confirmation day is most common amongst t_3 -respondents who consider their parents to be religious (66%). Items that are closer to the adolescents' own former religious practice concerning their experience of bedside prayer (57%) and church contact in childhood (54%), have somewhat less impact on the appreciation of the day. The perception of a religious home increases also the social importance of confirmation day (see below): 77% percent of the t_3 respondents who consider their parents to be religious, are preoccupied with the social aspect of confirmation, while the figure is 6 percent points lower for respondents who do not feel the same about their parents. These results are in line with the social function of a rite described by Rappaport; one can expect a familiarity with the codes to increase a feeling of the importance of the rite in general and also of its social importance. Moreover, family values are an important aspect of Christian practice which can underline the importance of family celebrations. However, there is little research on the celebration of confirmation as a family event.

Confirmands were asked in t_1 , t_2 and t_3 about their expectations concerning the social, the material and the spiritual side of confirmation day with the items C/K/QB09 (social aspect), C/K/QB10 (material aspect), and C/K/QB11 (spiritual aspect), as presented in Table 3. How do these aspects contribute to the importance of confirmation day?

Comparing the three aspects of confirmation day, the social, the material and the spiritual dimension, the importance of the social aspect is strongest: 72% of the t_3 -respondents consider the celebration with family and friends to be important.

In a longitudinal perspective, compared to pre-confirmation scores of the respondents in t_1 and t_2 , the social dimension of confirmation has increased

Table 2: Confirmation day and background variables (t_3 , 2015) in %

		Rural/ urban	Less/ more than 250 books	Male/ female	Parents' interest in reli- gion no/yes	Bedside prayer no/yes	Child- hood church contact no/yes	Total
		CM04	C/QM01	CJ01	CJ02	CM11		
QK20	It was one of the most important days of my life.	51/50	52/54	51/51	45/66	44/57	45/54	51
QB09	Having a beautiful celebration with family and friends was important for me.	65/70	69/72	70/74	71/77	72/72	72/72	72
QB10	The money and presents were important for me.	35/33	39/39	46/32	39/30	44/31	43/33	36
QB11	To receive a blessing was important for me.	50/49	47/51	44/48	41/63	36/56	37/50	47
N		≥ 1036/ ≥ 565	≥ 1511/ ≥ 1244*	≥ 971/ ≥ 2018	≥ 2130/ ≥ 784	≥ 973/ ≥ 1253	≥ 426/ ≥ 967	3004- 3064

The share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable). The compared categories from the background variables are not complete. For example, half of the confirmands could not be assigned to either rural or urban areas. * This column does not include Swedish confirmands, where the book question was not in the questionnaire. As shown in table 6, confirmation day scores quite low amongst Swedish confirmands.

its importance. 52% of the respondents considered it important at the beginning of confirmation time in t_1 , rising to 82% of the respondents in t_2 right before confirmation, and remaining high at 72% in t_3 , two years after confirmation. The material aspect has in t_3 lost 6 percent points compared to t_1 , with a top score of 62% just before confirmation day in t_2 . The spiritual aspect of confirmation had an intermediate top amongst the t_3 -respondents at t_2 , and is at the same level in t_3 as in t_1 . While all three aspects had a roughly similar importance for the participants in t_1 , the social aspect has in retrospect strongly increased its importance for the respondents, the material aspect has lost importance, and the spiritual aspect remains constant.

Table 3: Social, material and spiritual aspects of confirmation day: t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015) in %

	t_1 , 2012	t_2 , 2013	t_3 , 2015
C/K/QB09 Having a beautiful celebration with family and friends is/was important for me.	52	87	72
C/K/QB10 The money and presents are/were important for me.	42	62	36
C/K/QB11 To receive a blessing is/was important for me.	48	70	47

N = 3004-3007; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

Amongst respondents who regard their parents as religious, or share the experience of bedside prayer and church contact in childhood, the majority consider the blessing on confirmation day to be important, while the same applies to 36 to 41 % of their less religiously familiar mates. Apparently, the spiritual dimension is more accessible for female adolescents than for males (+4 percent points), and for those respondents with higher cultural capital (+4 percent points).

The material aspect of confirmation links negatively to both parents' religiousness and childhood religious experience. The more religiously socialised the confirmand, the more important is the spiritual aspect of confirmation in retrospect; the less religiously experienced the confirmand, the more important is the material aspect in retrospect. Appreciation for money or presents is 10 respectively 11 percent points more common amongst confirmands without the experience of bedtime prayer or childhood church contact. The perceived religiousness of the parents makes up for a difference of 9 percent points. Both gender and cultural background have a small, but statistically significant effect on the importance of the material aspect of confirmation. In absolute terms, the number of males who are preoccupied with the material side of confirmation is 14 percent points higher than the number of female respondents (see above). In terms of statistical significance, female respondents (Eta squared .024; Sig. .000) and respondents with a higher score in the book question (Corr. -.057**) tend to be slightly less preoccupied with the material aspect of confirmation. Keeping in mind that both tendencies are in line with cultural stereotypes of what common sense would expect of a female adolescent, and adolescents with a better educational background, the correlations are not astonishing.

1.3 The Correlation between Social, Material and Spiritual Aspects of Confirmation Day

How do the three aspects, the social, the spiritual and the material aspect of confirmation, relate to each other and to the meaning of confirmation day? Both the material and the spiritual aspect correlate positively with the social side of confirmation day. Respondents who are preoccupied with the material side of confirmation day, are also preoccupied with its social aspect, and vice versa. Gifts and presents on confirmation day are tokens of the social relations that the ritual displays. Thus, the appreciation of the one contributes to the appreciation of the other: appreciated gifts materialise and represent cherished social relations.

Table 4: Correlations between the social, the material and the spiritual aspect of confirmation day (t_3 , 2005)

		QK20	QB09	QB10	QB11
		It was one of the most important days of my life.	Having a beautiful celebration with family and friends was important for me.	The money and presents were important for me.	To receive a blessing was important for me.
QK20	It was one of the most important days of my life.	1	.33**	-.04*	.59**
QB09	Having a beautiful celebration with family and friends was important for me.	.33**	1	.20**	.19**
QB10	The money and presents were important for me.	-.04*	.20**	1	-.13**
QB11	To receive a blessing was important for me.	.59**	.19**	-.13**	1
N		2995-3004	2963-3001	2966-3008	2995-3002

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Confirmation in religious terms and confirmation in social terms also support each other. The connection between gifts and social relations (-.20**) is slightly stronger than between blessings and social relations (-.19**) in the sample.

Table 5: The complementarity of spiritual and material tokens (t_3 , 2015)

	QB11: To receive a blessing was important for me.	QB10: The money and presents were important for me.
Index iQE1: Christian Beliefs (t_3)	.67**	-.21**
Index iQP1: Number of volunteer activities	.12**	-.08**
QB04: I made an important step in growing up.	.46**	-.10**
QB07: I was thinking about what is good or bad for me and my life.	.39**	-.19**
QB09: Having a beautiful celebration with family and friends was important for me.	.19**	.20**
QK20: It was one of the most important days of my life.	.59**	-.04*
QN01: I am satisfied with my confirmation time.	.30**	-.11**
QB11: To receive a blessing was important for me.	1	-.13**

N = 2935-3008.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Above, the spiritual dimension turned out to presuppose religious background (CJ01) providing a familiarity with religious codes, while the material dimension possibly is not only more closely linked to the private celebration of confirmation, it may also be more intuitive.

Also in correlation analysis, the material and the spiritual aspects are in tension with each other: their correlation is negative (-.13**). With increasing importance of the spiritual aspect of confirmation, the material aspect loses its importance and vice versa. The language of gifts and the language of blessings seem to be two different, mutually alternative frames of reference for confirmation day, both contributing to a good social experience. In absolute figures, the familiarity with religious codes proved its importance for the appreciation of confirmation day (QK20), and the same applies in the correlation analysis. As a biographical event, the importance of confirmation correlates strongly with the blessing, somewhat less strong with the social side of confirmation, but correlates slightly negative with the material aspect: respondents with a high appreciation of confirmation presents tend not to rate the importance of the day as

high as respondents with spiritual priorities. The material aspect of confirmation corresponds in t_3 negatively with Christian beliefs, the appreciation of confirmation time as a whole and church involvement after confirmation.

1.4 Confirmation Time and Confirmation Day

Looking at the perception of confirmation time and confirmation day amongst the t_3 -respondents: what is more prominent in retrospect – confirmation time as a time of formation or confirmation day as the performing of a social and religious ritual?

The appreciation for confirmation day varies in the different countries represented in the t_3 -survey: 67% of the Danish respondents, having experienced school-type confirmation work in 2012/2013 (Christensen/Krupka 2015), consider confirmation day to be one of the most important days in their life, while only 27% of their Swedish counterparts, looking back on a confirmation time with youth work-type character share that feeling. While the figures are too small to be statistically sound, it is worth noting that those participating Churches where the youth work paradigm with its focus on social and experiential learning is most common in confirmation work, namely Austria, Finland and Sweden, score lower than average concerning the importance of confirmation day.

Table 6: Confirmation day in retrospect, different Churches (t_3 , 2015) in %, in descending order

	DK	DE Emk	NO	DE EKD	CH	AT	FI	SE	total
QK20: It was one of the most important days of my life.	67	64	56	55	43	41	34	27	51

N (total) = 3064; N (countries) = 19-1652.

How does the view of confirmation time change during the two years after confirmation? One should expect confirmands to be most satisfied with confirmation time right at its end, and the effect of good memories from the year to wear off in the months to come. In the t_3 survey, the opposite is the case: the number of respondents satisfied with confirmation time increases between t_2 and t_3 . 82% of them are satisfied with their confirmation experience in t_2 (KN01), increasing to 85% in t_3 (QN01, see also Table 7). Has this increase anything to do with confirmation day?

How does confirmand satisfaction right before confirmation day and two years in retrospect correlate with the importance of confirmation day amongst the t_3 respondents? Does the ritual momentum of confirmation day account for some of this increase in satisfaction between t_2 and t_3 ? In other words: does the ritual experience of confirmation day have an experiential-formative effect, as Whitehouse's theory implies?

Amongst those respondents who in retrospect consider confirmation day as very important, satisfaction with confirmation time rises 7 percent points from t_2 to t_3 . Vice versa, amongst respondents who in retrospect do not consider their confirmation day as very important, satisfaction rate drops 9 percent points from t_2 to t_3 . This finding has to be controlled for background effects.

Table 7: Confirmation day and confirmation time in retrospect (t_3 , 2015) in %

		KN01: I am satisfied with my confirmation time. (t_2)	QN01: I am satisfied with my confirmation time. (t_3)
QK20: It was one of the most important days of my life.	Yes	85	92
	No	79	70

N = 2995-2996; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

Is it high satisfaction with confirmation time that accounts for a good confirmation day experience – or are confirmation work and confirmation day somewhat different matters? For the t_3 -sample, correlation analysis shows a stronger correlation between the importance of confirmation day and satisfaction with confirmation time in t_3 than in t_2 , indicating that confirmation day contributes in its own right to the satisfaction of the respondents. In earlier articles (Niemelä/Ilg 2015), it has been shown that the confirmands' satisfaction correlates strongly with the camp experience. Since confirmation camp can be understood as the embodiment of youth work-style confirmation work and as such strongly linked to an emphasis on confirmation time, it is of interest to compare the importance of confirmation camp and confirmation day in our sample. All t_3 respondents have taken part in confirmation, while they had weekend or camp experience of various length. The longer the confirmands have been to camp, the more satisfied are they with confirmation time. This has been one of the clearest results of the confirmation surveys in 2007/2008 and 2012/2013. Does the equation still apply two years after confirmation – and after the experience of confirmation day?

Among those respondents, who had no camp or only a weekend camp (max. 2 nights) during confirmation time, 81 % are satisfied with their general con-

firmation experience in t_2 (KN01), while among those who had the longest camps of 6 or more nights the rate is 86%. In t_3 however, the relation is reversed: in t_3 , 87% of the respondents with no overnight event or only a weekend camp are in retrospect satisfied with their general confirmation experience (QN01), an increase by 6 percent points, while the rate has dropped to 81% (-5 percent points) among the respondents who experienced longer camps. This increase/decrease obviously has other reasons than the camp experience. In other words: the correlation between confirmands' satisfaction and length of camp can still be found among the respondents in the t_3 -survey, but it applies only to t_2 and the immediate impression of confirmation time right before confirmation. Two years later, general satisfaction with confirmation time has increased for those confirmands with no or limited experience of camp, while it has decreased for confirmands with longer camp experience.

Table 8: Correlation between confirmation day experience and confirmation time experience

	QK20: It was one of the most important days of my life.	VQ05: Length of camp	KN01: I am satisfied with my confirmation time. (t_2)	QN01: I am satisfied with my confirmation time. (t_3)
QK20: It was one of the most important days of my life.	1	-.10**	.13**	.32**
VQ05: Length of camp	-.10**	1	.12**	-.02
KN01: I am satisfied with my confirmation time. (t_2)	.13**	.12**	1	.28**
QN01: I am satisfied with my confirmation time. (t_3)	.32**	-.02	.28**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N = 2075-3064

Where does this change come from? Is confirmation day, and its experiential-formative aspect, the cause for the changes in satisfaction amongst the respondents in t_3 ? Length of camp (VQ05; grouped to six values) and appreciation of confirmation day (QK20) in t_3 actually correlate negatively (-.97**). Thus, they

appear somehow complementary. The national differences in the appreciation of confirmation day point in the same direction (see above). The data indicate that something happens with the respondents' view of confirmation time in retrospect that is strongly related to confirmation day. Satisfaction with confirmation time (KN01/QN01) and the importance of confirmation day (QK20) are related (-.13** in t_2 and -.32** in t_3) and their correlation increases. In t_3 , in retrospect, confirmation day and confirmand satisfaction are more strongly connected than in t_2 . The opposite applies to the camp experience: the correlation between length of camp and confirmation time satisfaction from t_2 is gone in t_3 (KN/QN01) for the present sample.

Table 9: Satisfaction change between t_2 (2013) and t_3 (2015), confirmation day and religious background (%)*

	It was one of the most important days of my life. no/yes	Parents with interest in religion no/yes	Bedside prayer no/yes	Childhood church contact no/yes	Active as volunteer at t_3 no/yes
	QK20	CJ01	CJ02	CM11	QP51
KN01_DIFF Negative change in satisfaction between t_2 and t_3	46/38	76/24	50/50	23/78	73/18
KN01_DIFF Positive change in satisfaction between t_2 and t_3	29/51	74/26	52/48	23/77	76/14
N	152-351	133-569	195-283	91-483	136-400

Above, a relation between familiarity with the religious codes and the appreciation of confirmation day has been shown (p. 34f.). Can the described effect of confirmation day be reduced to this familiarity or to other variables – for example, as a deeper effect of religious socialisation, or as an effect of participation in church youth work after confirmation? Or is it the experience of confirmation day that brings about the change, in line with the experiential-formative effect of the rite described by Whitehouse? Table 9 compares the appreciation of confirmation day on the one hand, with religious background variables and church volunteer activity after confirmation on the other, concerning the satisfaction change between t_2 and t_3 amongst respondents in the t_3 -survey. What makes t_3 -respondents become more satisfied between t_2 just before their confirmation and t_3 , two years later? What makes them become

less satisfied in those two years? Is it religious background, ongoing or dropped church involvement or confirmation day experience?

The connection between change in confirmation satisfaction between t_2 and t_3 and religious background or volunteer work in church is not strong: respondents with declining satisfaction from t_2 to t_3 , and those whose satisfaction with confirmation time in retrospect increases, show no or minimal differences in religious background. Volunteer activity in church after confirmation has some effect: t_3 -respondents who are active as volunteers, tend a little more often to consider their confirmation experience more rewarding in retrospect than in t_2 , right before confirmation day. The difference (3 percent points) is statistically relevant (Chi-Square).

The connection between the appreciation of confirmation day and change in confirmand satisfaction in retrospect, however, is strong: 46 % of those who find confirmation less rewarding in t_3 than in t_2 , have little particular appreciation for their confirmation day. The same applies for only 29 % of those who consider confirmation day to be very important. Vice versa consider 51 % of those who experience a positive change in confirmand satisfaction between t_2 and t_3 their confirmation day to be very important, as opposed to 38 % of the t_3 -respondents with a strong impression of confirmation day who in retrospect show a decrease in confirmation time satisfaction.

1.5 Discussion and Conclusion

To sum up the results: half of the t_3 -respondents consider confirmation day to be very important. The appreciation of the day is linked to family religiousness. Respondents who consider their parents to be religious, are more inclined to experience confirmation day as a very important event in their life. Looking at different aspects of confirmation day, the social aspect of the day is strongest; its social importance correlates both with an appreciation of gifts and presents, the material side of confirmation, and the blessing, the spiritual side; confirmands with religious background appreciate the social aspect somewhat more than those without. The respondents' feeling of the high importance of the social aspect of confirmation is in line with Rappaport's understanding of rites as symbolic manifestations of social relations; confirmation day is cherished as a symbolic expression of the social relations between the confirmand, his or her family and kin, and his and her friends. The beauty of the day lies in the fact that confirmation celebration manifests social bonds between parents and relatives and thus performs the appreciation everybody has for the confirmand. With Salomonsen (2003), presents and gifts can be understood as a material token language expressing these social bonds and thus contributing to the so-

cial experience of the confirmands. However, the spiritual aspect of confirmation seems to imply a different and somehow complementary system of interpreting the experience. This spiritual aspect, connected to the religious meaning of the event, is shown to give the day a stronger impetus, with participants being at home in the religious language of the day, having a stronger experience. And the spiritual aspect correlates with a decrease in focus on the material aspect. In a longitudinal perspective, comparing the time at the beginning of confirmation year, at its end, and two years later, the social aspect increases its importance, the material aspect drops to below t_1 -levels and the spiritual aspect shows a slight increase in our sample. Thus, while confirmation day can be understood as a social rite in Rappaport's terms, its potential lies in the spiritual aspect. Only as a religious rite, will the social rite unfold its special character. The social importance and the religious meaning go hand in hand, giving those who are familiar with religious terms a more spiritual and stronger experience of the day and indeed of confirmation time.

For those who experience the day as an important ritual, its importance actually increases with time, colouring and focussing the appreciation of confirmation time as a whole. While the percentage of respondents satisfied with their confirmation time experience rises from t_2 to t_3 , the increase is more common amongst those who highly appreciate their confirmation day, while a decline is more common amongst those who do not. With Whitehouse, one can argue that the images of confirmation day validate and reinforce the experience of confirmation time, which as a whole improves through an appreciation for the ritual of confirmation day itself.

What is the relation between the formative effect of confirmation time and the ritual experience of confirmation day? There is evidence that the ritual experience of confirmation still centres around confirmation day. Compared to experiential efforts in youth work-type confirmation work, the experiential-formative effect of confirmation day possibly has more potential. With Hervieu-Léger, the formation of confirmation time, addressing the meaning side of the rite, becomes much more powerful by performing the practical side of the rite on confirmation day. Participating in the rite provides for an increased formative effect over time.

What practical consequences can be drawn from this? Firstly, all practical efforts made to make confirmation day an exceptional experience, is a very well spent effort. A good confirmation day experience will boost whatever good educational experiences confirmation time brings with it. Secondly, it is important to be aware of the complementarity of tokens, the material tokens and the spiritual tokens interpreting confirmation day. An understanding of the spiritual tokens correlates with a better confirmation experience as a whole, not only concerning confirmation day. This correlation is so strong that the appre-

ciation of the material tokens, gifts and presents, in retrospect at t_3 , almost appears as a defensive alternative for those who do not cope with the spiritual tokens. Both concerning confirmation day and confirmation time, it is very important to communicate the religious meaning of the experience wisely in order to make those feel at home who might not already be familiar with it.

2. Religious Trajectories in Adolescence: Beliefs and Attitudes

HENRIK R. CHRISTENSEN, DAGMAR LAGGER AND FRIEDRICH SCHWEITZER

2.1 Introduction

In many countries, there has been much concern about a possible loss of adolescents' religious orientation, about the weakening of their relationship to the church and about attitudes like religious relativism and fundamentalism (for example, Bertelsmann Stiftung 2013). It may be considered surprising that most of the corresponding debates are not based on any kind of longitudinal research but, apart from personal impressions and observations, only on general survey data gained through one-time questionnaires administered to the adolescents at particular times. Even if such studies are repeated after some years, they are working with different samples and cannot be called truly longitudinal.

Contrary to such surveys the present study offers the special – and concerning research on religion in Europe, unique – opportunity for insights that can be based on a longitudinal data set. In the research project on confirmands that is used as the basis for the present book, the adolescents responded three times, at the ages of roughly 13, 14 and 16 to 17 years or, in terms of the institutional context of the study, at the beginning and at the end of confirmation time as well as two years after confirmation. Moreover, the design of the study allows for comparisons not only at the group level but also at the individual level of every adolescent in the sample.

The analysis in the following can also be read against the background of general theories of religious development in adolescence (for example, Erikson 1968, Fowler 1981) as well as of other empirical studies on youth and religion that are typically based on national surveys (for example, Shell Deutschland Holding 2015). In terms of the longitudinal approach, the American study carried out by Christian Smith and his colleagues (Smith 2005 and 2009) served as a model for the present study, especially for the focus of analysis with its concern for different patterns of individual and collective change of religious attitudes.

Most of these studies emphasise that adolescents tend to become more religiously distanced during adolescence, with religious convictions acquired during childhood being questioned and the relationship to the church becoming more tenuous and increasingly tentative. Moreover, the influence of the peer group is seen as a major factor influencing these changes while the influences of religious upbringing in the family and of the institutional expectations of the church are waning.

The data from the study on confirmation work used here are especially apt for looking into such possible trajectories. Only complete data units form the basis of the following analysis, i. e., only the questionnaires from adolescents who responded at all three points of time. This is the decisive presupposition for a truly longitudinal approach.

The chapter starts out with a brief overview on the data and a first description of results concerning the changes between t_1 - t_2 - t_3 . The following research questions will receive special attention:

- What changes in beliefs can be observed between the beginning and the end of confirmation time as well as after confirmation?
- Are these changes the same for different aspects of the Christian faith?
- Is there a linear decrease in the adolescents' beliefs or does confirmation work lead to an increase?
- Do the changes at an individual level follow the same pattern as those at the group level?

2.2 Changes in Beliefs

A question that has only been rarely addressed in research on youth and religion refers to different aspects of religious faith in terms of different beliefs. Are the distancing effects observed with adolescents on the whole the same for all these aspects or are there differences concerning different aspects of this faith? In order to gain more detailed insights, the adolescents were given a whole series of questions referring to religious attitudes at all three times.

There are a number of points worth further discussion concerning Table 10. Generally the share of confirmands who agree to the questions is smaller at t_3 than at the time of their confirmation. Given the longitudinal nature of the data, it is not the differences between the national samples which are of interest but the patterns that can be detected in the overall changes. Two general expectations are plausible. On the one hand, one will expect a general decline of religious convictions during adolescence. On the other hand, depending on how influential educational programs like confirmation work are considered, the general expectation might be that the values rise during confirmation time from t_1 to t_2 and then go down again in t_3 two years after confirmation. This second pattern can indeed be observed in many cases in the table but not in all cases. The pattern of increase and decrease applies to the belief in creation, in the resurrection of Jesus, and in belief in God. However, looking at the development of belief in life after death, the share of confirmands who believe in an afterlife is actually larger at t_3 than at t_1 . This observation may also raise the question in what sense belief in afterlife can be considered religious – a ques-

Table 10: Agreement to belief-questions: t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013) and t_3 (2015) (total) in %

	Total		
	t_1	t_2	t_3
C/K/QE01 God created the world	43	44	34
C/K/QE02 There is life after death	56	60	63
C/K/QE03 God loves all humans and cares about each one of us	71	71	63
C/K/QE04 Jesus has risen from the dead	51	53	42
C/K/QE05 I am insecure what I should believe	34	34	35
C/K/QE09 I believe in God	66	68	60
C/K/QE08 Faith in God helps me in difficult situations	43	51	44

N = 2967-3016; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

tion that cannot be answered here but deserves special attention in future research.

Identifying the change as either increase or decrease between t_1 and t_3 , there is unanimity among the confirmands in the different countries on several items. Confirmands in all the countries show a decreased level of belief in creation, God's love, and resurrection, and an increased level of belief in afterlife. For the insecurity item («I am insecure what I should believe»), only Austrian confirmands show a decrease and for the belief in God item only the Swedish confirmands show an increase. The comfort item (if faith in God helps them in difficult situations) shows the most varied response with an increase in three countries and decrease in four.

Since the overall direction of change is similar in most countries, the remainder of this section will treat the data as one sample and not as seven national samples. The interest is not in national differences, but in developments from the beginning of confirmation time in 2012 to two years after confirmation in 2015. Figure 2 shows the development of the belief items for all the confirmands in relation to t_1 . As anticipated, five of the seven items decreased from t_2 to t_3 , but there are exceptions.

The figure shows that three items increased between 2012 (t_1) and 2015 (t_3): the afterlife item (C/K/QE02: «There is life after death»), the comfort item (C/K/QE08: «Faith in God helps me in difficult situations»), and the insecurity item (C/K/QE05: «I am insecure what I should believe»). Running a series of t-tests shows that belief in an afterlife increased during confirmation time. Although it increased even more in the two years after confirmation, this increase is not significantly different statistically from the level at t_2 when using the weighted data. The comfort item increased significantly between t_1 and t_2

Table 11: Agreement to belief-questions at t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013) and t_3 (2015) (countries) in %

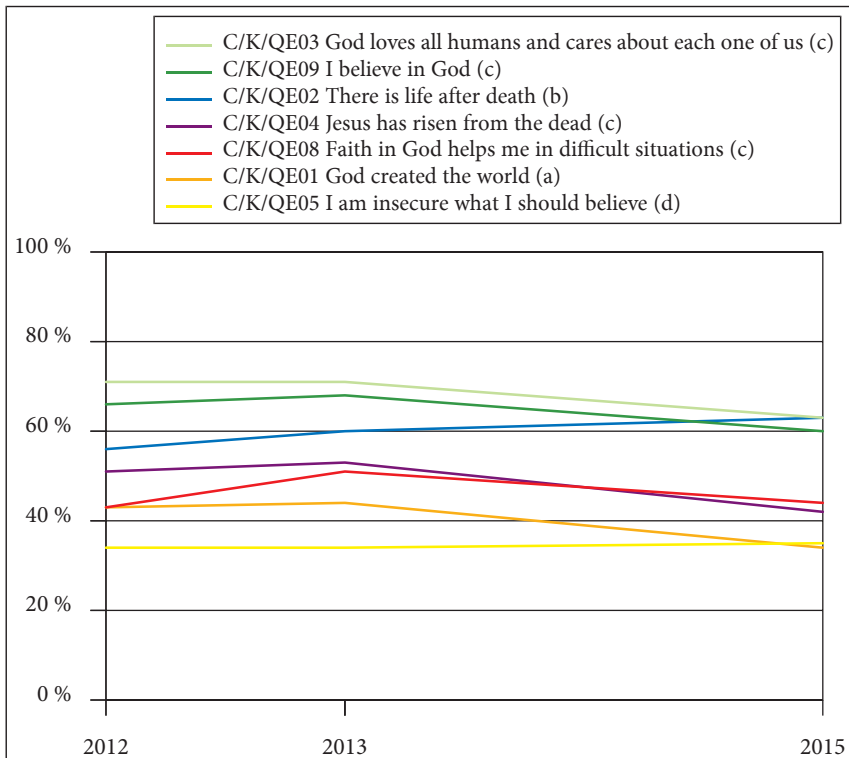
	DE, EKD			AT			CH			DK		
	t_1	t_2	t_3	t_1	t_2	t_3	t_1	t_2	t_3	t_1	t_2	t_3
C/K/QE01	48	48	39	46	48	35	49	38	32	33	30	28
C/K/QE02	58	64	67	68	63	69	59	63	61	56	60	60
C/K/QE03	74	73	65	80	80	69	70	71	59	57	58	55
C/K/QE04	57	59	51	52	50	43	58	54	50	40	38	31
C/K/QE05	31	31	35	36	33	33	36	35	43	36	39	36
C/K/QE08	50	55	47	44	54	40	42	58	48	41	43	40
C/K/QE09	75	74	67	75	84	65	73	72	55	54	56	49
N	1891			77			643			82		

	FI			NO			SE			DE, EmK		
	t_1	t_2	t_3	t_1	t_2	t_3	t_1	t_2	t_3	t_1	t_2	t_3
C/K/QE01	29	33	30	87	83	83	44	53	37	22	23	10
C/K/QE02	44	41	48	79	81	86	51	60	64	57	59	54
C/K/QE03	58	61	53	94	91	88	73	76	70	59	64	49
C/K/QE04	37	38	25	91	86	85	54	61	39	33	39	13
C/K/QE05	29	40	33	17	28	25	38	37	42	49	45	45
C/K/QE08	27	41	32	82	81	75	40	50	49	19	37	27
C/K/QE09	44	47	44	93	92	86	59	64	60	34	46	30
N	78			113			108			181		

The share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

and then dropped significantly between t_2 and t_3 . However, at t_3 it is still significantly different (and higher) than at t_1 . Finally, the differences in the level of insecurity are not significant between any of the three years. The confirmation preparation did not lower the confirmands' insecurity with regard to belief. Furthermore, the level of insecurity had neither increased nor decreased significantly compared to the 2012 and the 2013 levels. For all other belief items, there was a significant decrease. The small increases that can be detected between t_1 and t_2 , probably as a result of confirmation work, are often significant – except for belief in creation – but the decrease from 2013 to 2015 is stronger than the initial increase resulting in an overall decline in these belief items ($p < .001$ for all).

It is possible to examine even further which confirmands changed their be-

Figure 2: Development in agreement to belief questions: t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015) in %

$N = 3148$; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable). A number of paired samples t -tests were conducted on the weighted data. All significant changes were significant at the $p \leq .001$ level except the change between CE03 and KE03 which was $p = .030$. The changes were as follows: (a) indicates an insignificant difference between t_1 - t_2 , but significant differences between t_2 - t_3 as well as t_1 - t_3 , (b) indicates significant differences between t_1 - t_2 , and t_1 - t_3 , but not between t_2 - t_3 , (c) indicates significant differences between t_1 - t_2 , t_2 - t_3 as well as t_1 - t_3 , (d) indicates no significant differences between t_1 - t_2 , t_2 - t_3 or t_1 - t_3 . The figure shows the agreement to the statements, whereas the t -tests test the means.

liefs. With the data it is possible to examine how many confirmands agreed more (or less) to the items two years after confirmation than before confirmation. In such an analysis, the countries are again pooled together as it is the relative, not the absolute, difference from 2012 to 2015 for each individual confirmand that is of interest. Of the questions mentioned above, belief in afterlife and in creation are selected because they show the largest increase and decrease from t_1 to t_3 . In the questionnaire the confirmands could answer to what extent the belief questions apply to them on a seven point scale from »not applicable«

to »totally applicable«. With the longitudinal data it is possible to map the developments for the confirmands and for certain groups of confirmands.

The figure shows the answers to the two belief questions that increased and decreased the most, showing the most certain non-believers (the belief is not applicable) on the left and the most certain believers (the belief is totally applicable) on the right, with the most uncertain in the middle. Looking at the belief in creation, 681 (21 %) confirmands in 2012 found that this question totally applies to them. For them, it will not be possible to express more certainty at a later stage (i. e., in t_2 and t_3). They can only express the same degree of belief or that it has become less applicable to them, and vice versa at the other end of the scale.

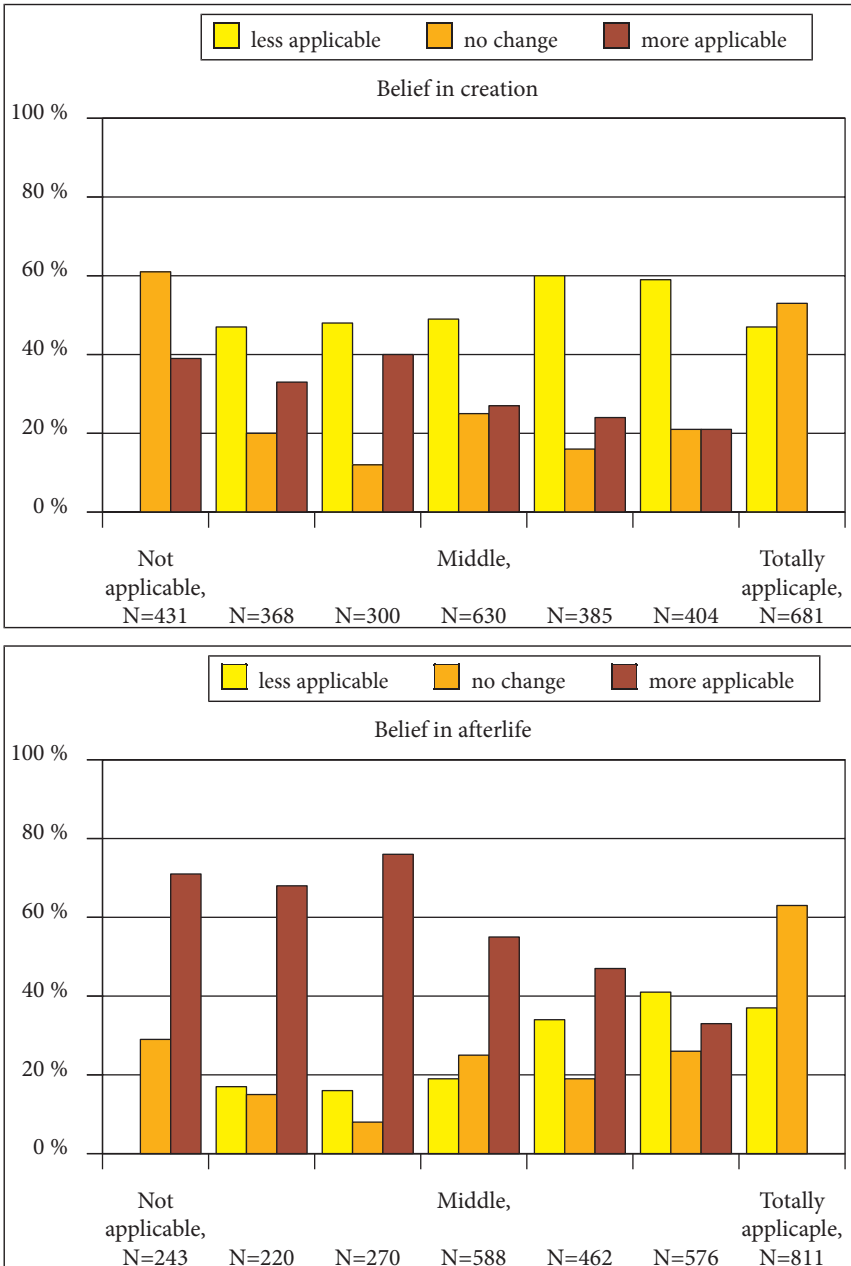
The brown bars show the share that find the belief more applicable at t_3 than at t_1 . The yellow bars show the share that find the belief less applicable at t_3 than they did originally, and the orange bars show the share of confirmands that have chosen the same degree of belief in 2015 as in 2012. Looking at the middle category of the belief in creation, it can be seen that of the 630 confirmands who originally chose this answer in 2012, 49% chose a less applicable answer in 2015 indicating that they had become more certain that this belief does not apply to them. At the same time, 27 % chose a more applicable answer in 2015 and were thus more certain that this belief applies to them. The remaining 25 % chose the same answer. For all categories not located at either end, more confirmands chose a less applicable answer in 2015 than in 2012.

Concerning belief in life after death, the figure shows, expectedly since this belief increased from t_1 to t_3 , almost the exact opposite pattern. For six of the seven groups it was more applicable in 2015 than in 2012. Furthermore, the development is more marked which can be seen from the fact that more confirmands moved in the more applicable direction on this question than confirmands in the less applicable direction on the creation question. The biggest development is found in the groups with the fewest confirmands.

As noted, the analysis above only considers the change from t_1 to t_3 , which was sufficient because the belief in afterlife had increased at t_2 as well as t_3 and because belief in creation did not change between t_1 and t_2 . However, there is one question, the comfort item, where the change is first a significant increase and then a significant decrease. Consequently it is important to include t_2 when examining the changes in more detail. In Table 12, the changes between t_1 and t_2 are plotted against the changes between t_2 and t_3 .

The table is a dense representation of all the various ways in which confirmands can change their level of belief in the idea that faith in God helps them in difficult situations. Take the development of a hypothetical confirmand. In t_1 back in 2012, she answered that the comfort item is neither applicable nor not applicable to her (ticked box 4). At t_2 , after confirmation time, she realised that

Figure 3: Changes in belief in creation and afterlife: t₁ (2012) and t₃ (2015) in %*



* A non-parametric Friedman test of differences among repeated measures in belief in creation mean values was conducted and rendered a $\chi^2(2, N = 3194) = 307.9, p < .001$. Similarly a non-parametric Friedman test of differences among repeated measures in belief in life after death mean values was conducted and rendered a $\chi^2(2, N = 3164) = 75.51, p < .001$.

Table 12: The development in the idea that faith in God helps in difficult situations from t_1 (2012) to t_2 (2013) and t_1 (2012) to t_3 (2015) in %

		Between t_1 and t_2 , the idea that faith in God helps me in difficult situations, became ...			
		Less applicable	No change	More applicable	Total
Between t_2 and t_3 , the idea that faith in God helps me in difficult situations, became ...	Less applicable	27	35	61	42
	No change	27	42	23	31
	More applicable	46	23	17	27
		100	100	100	100
		N = 932	N = 1047	N = 1194	N = 3173

the comfort question is somewhat applicable to her (ticked box 6). This would put her in the group of the 1194 confirmands who found the comfort item more applicable at t_2 than at t_1 . However, at t_3 , in 2015, she no longer feels that it is that applicable to her and she reverts back to her original view (ticked box 4). Consequently she ends up in the large group of confirmands who found the idea less applicable in 2015 than at the end of confirmation time in 2013.

Looking at the horizontal total, the table shows that 932 of the confirmands (29%) found the idea less applicable at t_2 than at t_1 and that 1194 (38%) found it more applicable at t_2 . 27% of the confirmands found it less applicable at t_2 than at t_1 , maintained this view at t_3 while another 27% of those who found it less applicable at t_2 , considered it even less applicable at t_3 . Thus 54% of those who found it less applicable at t_2 than at t_1 did not find it more applicable at any time. Additionally it can be seen that of the confirmands who did not change their view between t_2 and t_1 , 35% ended up finding it less applicable in t_3 than they did in t_1/t_2 . Overall, 41% (the 1309 confirmands in the four lower right cells in the table) never found the idea that faith in God helps in difficult situations more applicable than at the beginning of their confirmation time.

As the results at the other end of the table show, 37% (the 1159 confirmands in the four upper left cells) never answered that the idea that God helps in difficult situations, is less applicable than at t_1 . Although fewer confirmands found the idea that faith helps applicable at t_3 than at t_2 , the increase from t_1 to t_2 (the 1194 confirmands who found it more applicable) means that the over-

all result is a small but significant increase in the share of confirmands who affirmed that faith in God helps them in difficult situations.

The previous study (Christensen et al. 2015) examined the gender differences with regard to the belief questions. All the above belief questions were added to a comprehensive belief-index which showed that the girls had a significantly higher overall belief-score at t_1 than the boys in several countries (Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Finland, and Norway). Additionally, that study also showed a significant increase among the girls from t_1 to t_2 in these countries as well as in Sweden. The boys had a lower score than the girls at the outset, and the confirmation time did not change that. Only in Finland did the study find a significant increase in this comprehensive belief-index of the boys (ibid., 39-40).

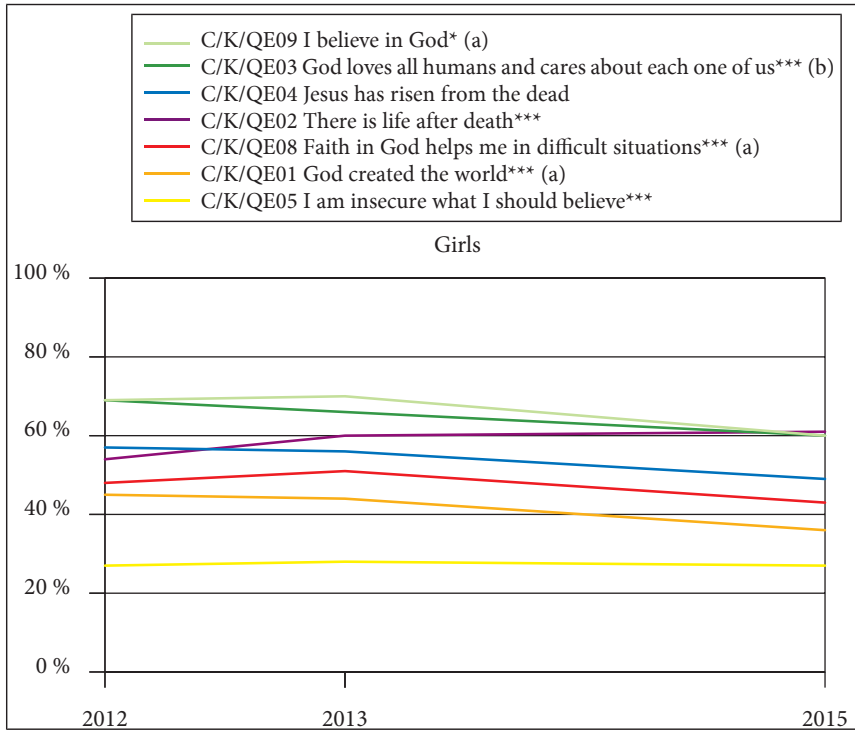
Repeating the analysis on the development of the belief items for boys and girls for the present data, the differences between the two groups are not that obvious. Figure 4 shows this development at all three points in time for boys and girls respectively.

Although the figures look similar, differences can be found upon closer examination. First the differences between boys and girls at t_3 are examined. T-tests show that boys and girls are significantly different on all belief items except the belief in resurrection. Some of the items are barely different, for instance belief in God ($t[1861] = 1.994, p = .046$) while others are clearly different, which is also visible in the figure itself. It is obvious that the afterlife item scores higher among girls than among boys ($t[1844] = 4.525, p < .001$), and that this is also the case for the insecurity item ($t[2966] = 5.927, p < .001$). The rest of the items are placed somewhere in between. Overall, girls score significantly higher on all belief items at t_3 than boys.

Second, the figure illustrates the change that has happened among the boys and the girls from t_1 to t_3 . All changes among boys and girls from t_1 to t_3 are significant at the $p < .001$ level except for two instances. The insecurity item did not change significantly among boys or girls. It is, in other words, at the same level as before confirmation time. The third exception is the comfort item. Although it increased, the increase is not significant from t_2 and t_1 ($t[2010] = .773, p = .44$). The belief in afterlife is the only one that increased.

Finally, it is also possible to hypothesise why the decrease is different among boys and girls. Since the girls scored higher at the outset as well as during confirmation time itself, it is possible to imagine three scenarios. First, the effect of confirmation work might have worn off so that the girls lost what they gained. This would suggest that the biggest loss would be found among the girls. Second, since the boys scored lowest at t_1 and gained the least from confirmation work, they may be even more prone to continued decrease and the biggest loss will be found among the boys. Third, there is no gender difference. Time has the same effect on both boys and girls and since the girls have the highest belief

Figure 4: Changes among girls (left) and boys (right): t₁ (2012), t₂ (2013), t₃ (2015) in %

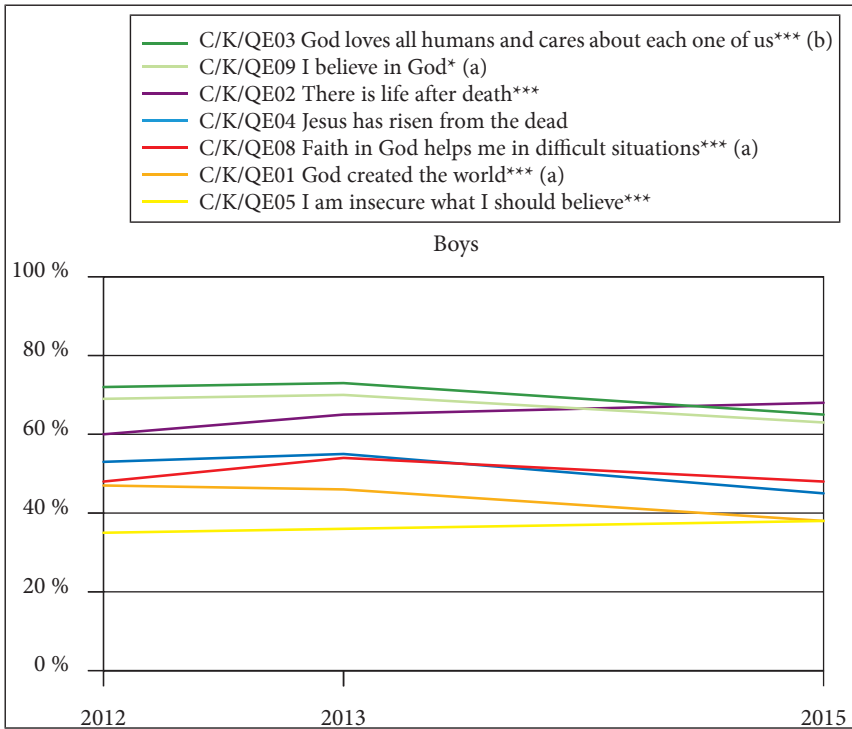


Explanation see next page.

values as a starting point for a decrease but the boys are most likely to continue losing their beliefs, there will be no differences between boys and girls. Which scenario holds true cannot be decided on the basis of the results of the present study but should be a question for future research.

2.3 Changes in Attitudes towards Christian Faith and the Church

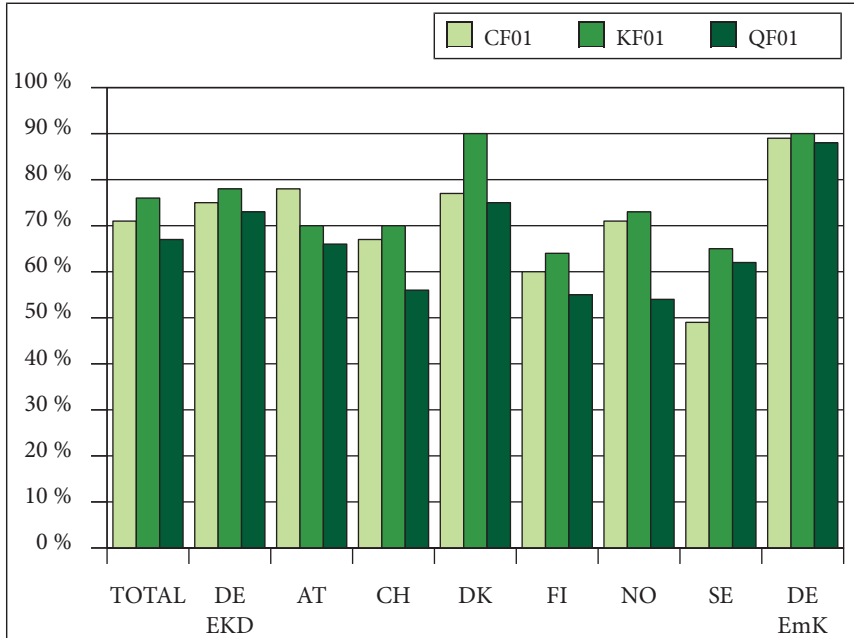
As a starting point the question can be used »How would you describe your current attitude towards the Christian faith in general?« (QF01). The adolescents responded rather positively to this question, with 67% expressing a »rather positive« or »very positive« attitude. With the earlier questionnaires, however, the response was 71% (t₁) and 76% (t₂) which indicates a tendency towards a more distanced attitude towards this faith. It is also important to note that there can be extreme differences between the data from the different coun-



N girls = 2041-2070, N boys = 1102-1124; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable). Note: (a) and (b) indicates differences using independent samples t-test for the change of that item among boys and girls at (a) $p < .001$ level, and (b) $p < .05$ level. *, **, and *** indicates differences in the attitude towards each belief item between boys and girls at t_3 at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .001$.

tries or Churches. In t_3 , the Norwegian adolescents indicated a positive relationship to the Christian faith only to 54 % while the highest values come from Austria (73 %) and Denmark (75 %), and the Methodist youth from Germany (not included in the calculation of the average) approved with 88 %. This example shows that results should not only be analysed in terms of international averages.

The adolescents respond differently to the questions concerning the Church and the Christian faith in some of the countries. The confirmands were asked about their general attitudes concerning both Church and Christian faith in t_1 , t_2 and t_3 . In all countries there was an increase of the respective values during confirmation time and a decrease after confirmation. Comparing the differences of the faith-item (see Figure 5) and the church-item (see Figure 6), similar

Figure 5: Share of confirmands with positive attitudes to the Christian faith: t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015) in %

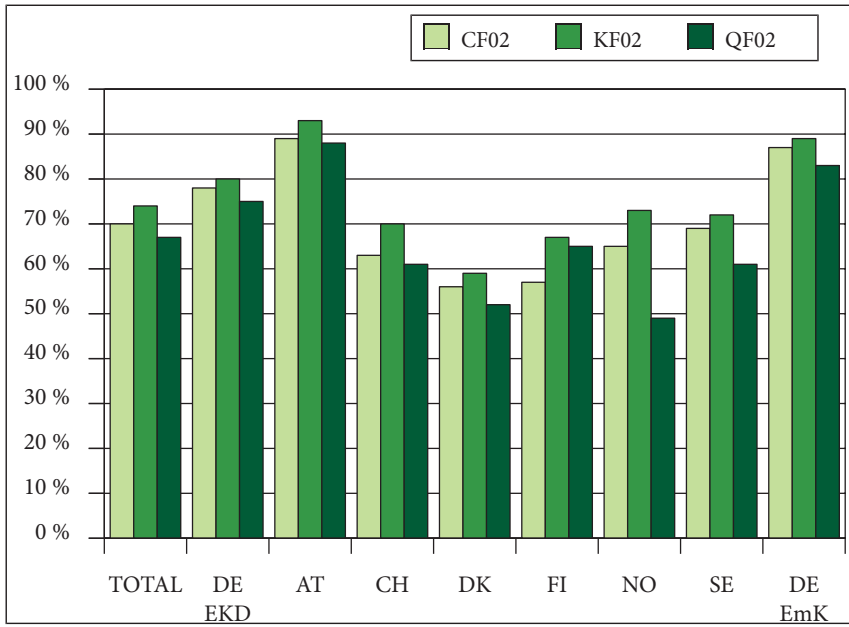
$N = 2858$, $t_1/t_2/t_3$ matched cases; the share of those answering »rather positive« and »very positive« on a 5-point-answering scale to the question »How would you describe your current attitude towards the Christian faith in general?«

results occur in the EmK and in Finland. In Denmark, the adolescents felt closer to faith and in Austria they had more positive feelings concerning the Church. Austria is the only country where a negative change between t_1 and t_2 can be observed concerning faith.

Since the distance to church and Christian faith is growing after confirmation, confirmation work seems to have weak long-term effects in this respect. In almost every country the values return to the starting point or fall below it. Exceptions may be observed in Finland where the attitude towards the Church went up from 57% in 2012 to 65% in 2015, and in Sweden where the positive attitude towards the Christian faith increased from 49% to 65%. Reading this result, however, one should keep in mind that the adolescents who took part in t_3 , generally show a church-friendly attitude.

Generally speaking, more female than male adolescents participated in the t_3 -survey (t_3 : 65% female; t_1 and t_2 : 52%). Concerning the changes between t_2 and t_3 , some gender-differences can be detected. Figure 7 gives an overview on the changes between t_2 and t_3 . Male confirmands considered belonging to the

Figure 6: Share of confirmands with positive attitudes to the church in general: t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015) in %



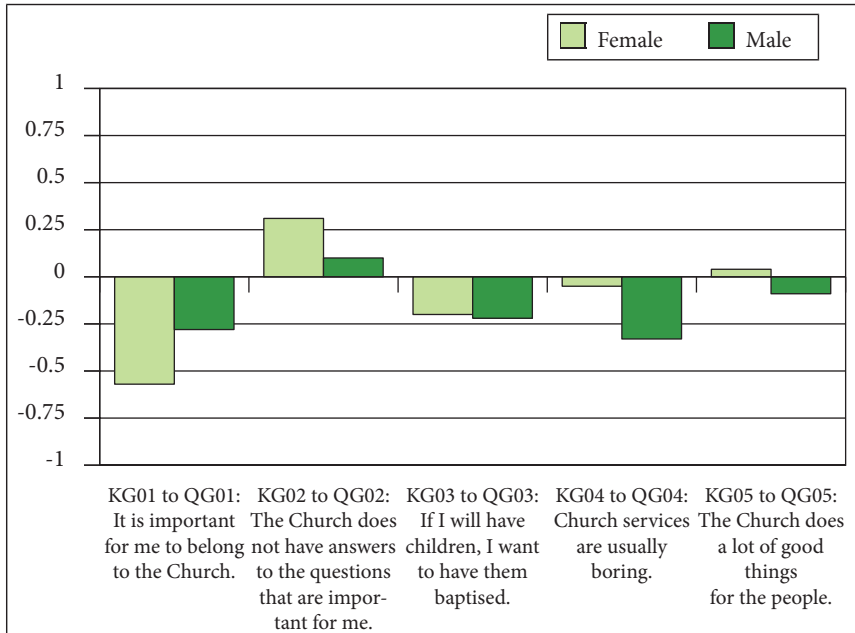
$N = 2837$, $t_1/t_2/t_3$ matched cases; the share of those answering »rather positive« and »very positive« on a 5-point-answering scale to the question »How would you describe your current attitude towards our Church in general?«.

church less important (QG01). The difference between male and female adolescents is smallest with the question about baptism of future children (QG03). Male adolescents found church services more boring (QG04). Contrary answers between boys and girls come up with the question about the image of the Church (QG05). In general in the life of a 16 year old girl or boy the relevance of the church is limited.

2.4 Conclusion

Concerning the beliefs and attitudes in adolescence, the present study is based on two methodological decisions that prove to be important. The first decision refers to a truly longitudinal approach that allows for looking into the adolescents' religious trajectories, at a group level as well as at an individual level. The second decision implies a differentiated approach to religion in adolescence

Figure 7: Changes from t_2 (2013) to t_3 (2015): gender-specific differences



N male = 1097-1130, N female = 2026-2073.

that is based on a number of items capturing religious beliefs of different kinds. The results presented above allow for new insights in both respects.

In terms of general tendencies at the group level, the results can be viewed as further confirmation of the expectation described in the introduction to this chapter that with increasing age, many young people become more critical of religious convictions and their affirmation of faith-related statements tends to become much more cautioned. This tendency clearly is in line with earlier (cross-sectional) survey studies on youth and religion as well as with the views of the psychology of religion. The older the adolescents, the less religious they appear to become. What is new in terms of existing research, however, is the general result that the developments between the ages of 13 and 16 or 17 years do not follow the expectation of a linear religious decline, at least not in the case of the Protestant youth included in the present study. Many or even most of the Protestant adolescents in the countries included in the present study take part in confirmation work, and the present study only included those adolescents who actually did participate. With these young people, one can observe an increase in religious consent during their confirmation time that results in higher values at the time of confirmation. After that, there is a general decline of the

respective values, often leading to a degree of religious consent below the values at the beginning of their confirmation time.

This could be interpreted as an indication that confirmation work is lacking in long-term effects. The increases achieved during confirmation time, most likely disappear after confirmation. However, the reality of Protestant adolescents' religion may not be so simple. One could hypothesise that the responses given by the approximately 16 year old adolescents in the present study could be even lower, had they not participated in confirmation work. In other words, the religious decline observed after confirmation could then have started earlier, and with the consequence of ending with much lower values at the age of 16 or 17 than is the case after having participated in confirmation work. Yet this interpretation must remain hypothetical at this point. The present study did not include adolescents who did not participate in confirmation work so that there is no basis for the comparisons needed for testing this hypothesis. The additional analyses of the current data, however, make it at least likely that confirmation work really makes a difference with the adolescents' religious attitudes (cf. p. 46 ff.).

The study combined its general longitudinal approach with the possibility of tracing religious change at an individual level as well. In this respect, the results show an interesting pattern. At the individual level, the developments are much less linear, not only concerning the changes during confirmation time (t_1 to t_2) but also concerning changes between the beginning of confirmation time and the results two years after confirmation (t_3) as well as between t_2 and t_3 . While with many adolescents, the changes follow the general tendencies described for the group level – otherwise the quantitative results would obviously be incorrect – there also are many others who either go back and forth in their responses, sometimes answering more negatively and sometimes more positively, or whose trajectories are in contradiction to the general tendency of religious decline. This observation has, among others, encouraging implications in terms of education and confirmation work. General tendencies to be observed with contemporary youth should not be understood as an expression of some kind of law of nature that applies quite independently of human action. Instead, the changes at the individual level can be interpreted as possible openings for educational influence. In other words, even if the general pattern in the years following confirmation indicates religious decline, it is still possible that individual adolescents will follow a different path, depending on, among others, what kind of educational programs they encounter.

The attempt of capturing religion in adolescence in a differentiated manner by using a broad set of items also yields interesting insights. The results show different developments for different aspects of faith. Most of all, faith in God the creator comes under pressure with the adolescents in the study. The values in t_3 are

well below the values in t_1 , and even in t_2 the values had not increased in a significant manner during confirmation time. On the other hand, the item concerning belief in afterlife (»There is life after death«, C/K/Q02) shows a linear increase from t_1 through t_2 to t_3 . Moreover, the understanding that faith helps in difficult situations received more assent in t_2 than in t_1 , then the respective values dropped from t_2 to t_3 , but even two years after confirmation they remained higher than at t_1 . Just like the observations at an individual level, these results again indicate that religious decline in adolescence is not an undifferentiated phenomenon but is accompanied even by an increase in certain religious respects.

Another result also deserves special attention in this context. While the individual faith-related items sometimes received a rather limited assent from the adolescents – in the case of faith in creation, the values are well below 50 % in all countries (with the Methodists as the only exception) – the adolescents' attitudes towards the Christian faith in general remained much more positive (67 %). This is also less than in t_1 and t_2 but it shows that the general attitude towards this faith does not fully depend on specific credal convictions that may – or may not – be shared.

It should also be noted in this respect that religious uncertainty (»I am insecure what I should believe«, C/K/QE05) increased as well after confirmation, after a strong decrease during confirmation time. While this change can be interpreted as part of a general religious distancing – also in line with the adolescents' growing distance towards the church – it can also be viewed as an expression of religious individualisation. As such an expression it would show that the assent to predefined religious convictions becomes more tenuous but that this change should not be equaled to a general loss of religious interest.

This interpretation is further supported by the result that many adolescents distinguished between church and faith. Following theories of religious individualisation, one would expect that adolescents tend to favor faith – especially their own version of it – over the church. The responses from some of the countries fulfill this expectation but in some countries the respondents favored the church over the faith. Yet independently of this distinction, the general tendencies concerning the church parallel those concerning the Christian faith. In most cases there was a clear decline although the decline was not undifferentiated. And last but not least, important gender differences come into play, much more in relationship to the church than to faith.

3. Changes and Trends in Church Commitment after Confirmation

KATI TERVO-NIEMELÄ, THOMAS SCHLAG AND MURIEL KOCH

3.1 Introduction

Weakening attachment to religious institutions has been regarded as one of the key challenges for the traditional churches and organisations. Especially Protestant Christianity has been increasingly losing its position in the personal lives of people in Europe. It is visible in declining membership figures and declining participation rates in many countries, but has not necessarily meant decline in believing in general. Davie refers to this phenomenon as »believing without belonging« (Davie 1994; 2000). On the other hand, the relationship to religion especially in the Nordic countries has often been referred to as »belonging without believing« or »believing in belonging« (see, e.g., Riis 1994; Bäckström 1993), which refers to an attitude where people find it important to belong to their national Churches even if they do not believe in its teachings or participate in its services. However, recent studies are highly questioning these notions among the young generation: belonging without believing is increasingly criticised by the young generation (see Niemelä 2015).

Out of the countries in our study, the church membership rates have been declining especially in the Lutheran Churches in the Nordic countries and even more in former East Germany. During the 21st century, the church membership rates have declined from 2000 until the end of 2015 the most in Sweden (from 83 % to 63 %). In the other Nordic countries, the decline has been slightly more moderate, but still faster than ever before: in Finland from 85 % to 73 %, in Iceland from 89 % to 72 %, in Norway from 86 % to 73 % and in Denmark from 85 % to 77 %. Germany has a comparable decline: the membership rate in the EKD has declined from 33 % in 2000 to 27 % in 2015; the same applies to Switzerland (33 % in 2000, 26 % in 2013). Many studies indicate that especially the younger generation is increasingly likely to be skeptical of religious institutions. They no longer belong only because they have been raised to belong, but increasingly demand personal meaningfulness in order to stay members (Niemelä 2015; Mikkola et al. 2006). With these attitudes, young adults represent a challenge for churches and religious organisations. This is visible in high church drop-out rates among this age-group in some of the countries; for example, in Finland more than one fourth of the young adults are leaving the Church between the age of 18 and 30 (see Niemelä 2015).

In the previous study on youth and confirmation work, when analysing young people in the beginning and in the end of confirmation time, the results

showed that the attachment to or identification with the Church differs notably between the countries and Churches studied. The attachment is strongest in contexts where the Church is in a minority position and lowest in countries where church membership rates are high but have recently been clearly declining. Furthermore, the results show that in most countries confirmation work strengthens confirmands' commitment to church membership, but when it comes to confirmands' willingness to have their future children baptised, confirmation time does not seem to have any influence or if it does, the share of those planning to have their children baptised tends to decline during confirmation time. The results also showed that parents' religiosity and the presence of religion at home during childhood and youth are most influential in determining the confirmands' attitude towards church membership, even at the end of confirmation time. However, how the confirmation time was perceived, was also of influence: it is important that young people get the feeling of being welcomed in the parish, the feeling that one's own questions are addressed and that they can experience fun (Niemelä et al. 2015).

Relationship and commitment to the Church can be analysed from various perspectives. Researchers have for a long time distinguished various dimensions to measure commitment to religion (see, e.g., Stark/Glock 1965). Typically, these dimensions include at least the belief aspect, the ritual aspect, the experience aspect and the community aspect (belonging) (see, e.g., McGuire 2002, 15-22; Stark/Bainbridge 1980; Finney 1978). These aspects are closely linked; for example, shared experiences and rituals create a sense of togetherness and belonging and therefore, create the sense of community. Beliefs on the other hand, give meaning to rituals (McGuire 2000, 17, 20-21).

In the previous book (Schweitzer et al. 2015a) presenting the results during confirmation time (t_1 and t_2), the question about a possible development of a (religious) identity during confirmation time was discussed and the identity patterns used were »belonging and believing«, »believing without belonging«, »belonging without believing«, »explicit life orientation« and »non-explicit life orientation«. In order to measure the frequency of each pattern among the confirmands, the items CE/KE09 (»I believe in God«) as representative for the personal faith in the sense of believing and the item CG/KG01 (»It is important for me to belong to the Church«) showing the attitude towards the institutional church in the sense of belonging were used. Already there, it was a finding that the most attractive pattern for confirmands was the »belonging and believing«, the least »belonging without believing«. During confirmation time this tendency even improved (from t_1 to t_2), but this perception was related to the question of possible development of (religious) identity. And of course the orientation during confirmation time might differ a lot from the one two years after confirmation (see Schlag et al. 2015).

In this chapter the relationship to the Church among the young people two years after confirmation and developmental trends in their commitment are analysed. The commitment to the Church is measured by concentrating on belief and belonging aspects of their commitment. The aim is to find different types of commitment among young people and to find out what kind of developmental trends can be observed among these different types. The aim is to find answers to the following questions:

1. What kind of types can be found in church commitment measured in terms of believing and belonging among young Protestants two years after confirmation? How are these types represented in different countries and church contexts?
2. How has the church commitment changed from the confirmation time among young people with a different relation to »believing and belonging« two years after confirmation?

To get a broader understanding of the commitment to the Church two years after confirmation and to see what kind of developmental patterns have been typical for young people with different kinds of commitment, the young people were classified into different groups by cluster analysis based on their belief and belonging. The aim was to categorise the young people into different groups based on their commitment to the Church two years after confirmation and to see what kind of developmental patterns there had been earlier in their life. The other option would have been to categorise the young people in the beginning of confirmation time and then see where different types of commitment lead to during the coming years. However, here the focus is on their commitment two years after confirmation and the aim is to see what was before and what kind of developmental patterns can be distinguished among each of the types from earlier in their life.

The analysis is performed by using k-means clustering, which aims to partition respondents into different clusters (church commitment types) in which each respondent belongs to the cluster with the nearest mean, serving as a prototype of the cluster – in this case the prototype of different church commitment types. The advantage of a cluster analysis is that it allows to analyse commitment from multiple perspectives compared to just looking at it based on single items. Another important advantage of a cluster analysis is that it does not have any assumptions of potential groups in advance, but creates them mathematically based on which groups emerge most distinctively among the young people.

After various trials, the following three items were used in categorisation: item QE09 »I believe in God«, representing believing, QG01 »It is important

for me to belong to the Church» and QG11 »How often do you attend church services?« representing belonging in an imaginary level and in a practical level. It is important to point out that »belonging« here does not refer to the official membership in the church – almost all of the young people studied here are registered members of a church – but it refers here to their sense of belonging and actual attending church.

After various trials the four cluster solution transpired to be the clearest and most useful.

3.2 Four Types of Church Commitment

The following four groups were distinguished among the young people:

1. *Believing and belonging*: The biggest group consists of young people with both strong belief and strong sense of belonging. They tend to believe, regard membership as important and attend church services regularly or occasionally. Almost one third (30%) of the young people belong to this group.
2. *Believing but not belonging*: The second group consists of young people with strong belief, but a low sense of belonging both on imaginary level and on practical level. They do believe, but do not regard membership as important, and attend only seldom if ever. Of all young people 21% belong to this group.
3. *Moderate belief, moderate belonging*: The third group consists of young people with some belief and some sense of belonging and who occasionally attend services. One fourth (25%) of young people belong to this group.
4. *Distanced*: The fourth group consists of young people who do not believe nor have a sense of belonging and do not participate. Of the young people, one fourth (24%) belong to this group.

Table 13 presents the standardised group centroids among each of four groups which helps to make the differences between the four groups easier to follow. The original grouping variables (QE09, QE01 and QG11) are standardised when the mean value of each item is changed into 0 and standard deviation into 1. Zero-level means that the group centroid of a group is on an average level among the young people and values over zero mean that group centroids are above the average and values below zero that they are lower than average.

The figure reveals clearly that the group centroids of the group »believing and belonging« are all clearly above the average while all the group centroids of the group »distanced« are clearly below the average. When it comes to believing in God, the group centroid of the group »believing but not belonging« is

Table 13: Four types of church commitment among young people two years after confirmation (t_3 , 2015). Cluster centers (non-weighted data used for classifying) (mean values; see the scale in the table for each variable)

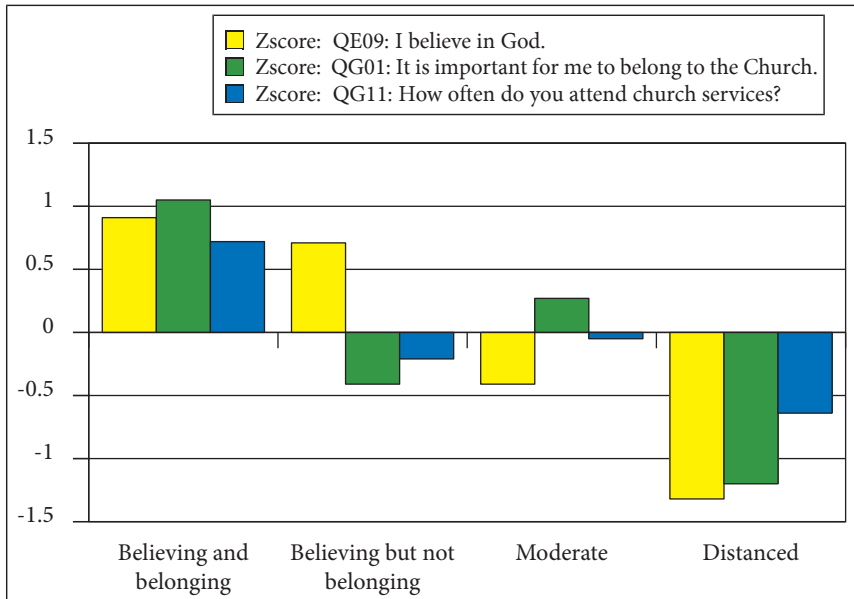
	1: Believing and belonging	2: Believing but not belonging	3: Moderate	4: Distanced
QE09: I believe in God. (1 = not applicable at all, 7 = totally applicable)	6.71	6.28	3.99	2.15
QG01: It is important for me to belong to the Church. (1 = not applicable at all, 7 = totally applicable)	5.96	3.29	4.47	1.82
QG11: How often do you attend church services? (1 = never, 5 = [almost] every week)	3.29	2.03	2.15	1.50
N = 3087	971	717	665	734
	Strong belief, strong belonging	Strong belief, weak belonging	Fairly strong moderate belief	Distanced
Size of the group	30 %	21 %	25 %	24 %

N = 3087.

almost as high as among those »believing and belonging«, but their sense of belonging and actual service attendance is below the average. The group centroids of the »moderate« group are closest to the average on all three measures; however, the group centroid of believing in God is slightly below the average and the group centroid of the importance of membership is slightly above the average which means that some of the respondents belonging to this group also represent an attitude of »belonging without believing«, or more precisely and more often »belonging more than believing«. Such an attitude, i.e., that a young person has a strong sense of belonging without believing is rare among the young people two years after confirmation as well as in the beginning and in the end of confirmation time (see Schlag et al. 2015). Two years after confirmation only 2.5 % of the adolescents did not believe in God (answered 1-3), but still regarded membership as important (answered 5-7). The share of young people not believing but with both a strong sense of belonging and active practising is even lower – less than 1 %. This implies that the group who belongs

(both on an imaginary and on a practical level) but does not believe is very small and therefore it does not make sense to analyse it as a separate group. This means that if the concept »belonging« is understood as including more than just formal membership and the sense of belonging and if actual linkage to the Church (i. e., attending) is taken into account as in the present analysis, the traditional notion of »belonging without believing« does not get much support from the data.

Figure 8: Four types of church commitment and their standardised group centroids (t_3 , 2015)

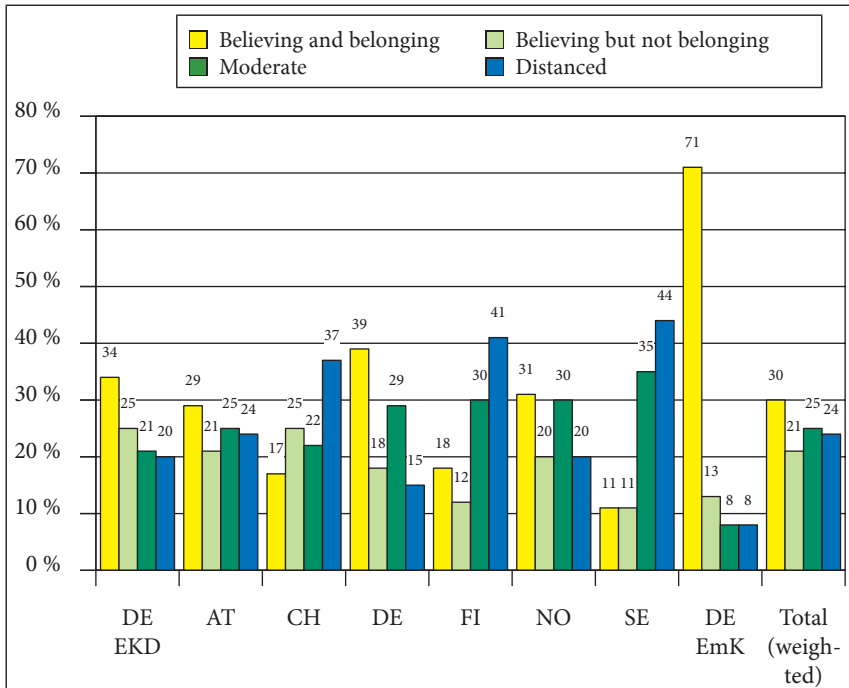


N = 3087; standardised means: a value below 0 means that the value is below the average and values above 0 mean that they are above the average.

The four groups were very differently represented in different countries and church contexts. The share of those belonging to the group »believing and belonging« was especially high among German Methodist youth (71 %), but very low among the Swedish adolescents (11 %). The share of those »believing but not belonging« was not high in any of the contexts, but it was notably low in Finland and Sweden as well as among German Methodists (11-13 %). The attitude with »moderate belief, moderate belonging« was more typical among young people in the Nordic countries than in the German-speaking countries. The share of »distanced« young people was especially high in Sweden (44 %),

Finland (41%) and Switzerland (37%), and low among German Methodist (8%), Danish (15%) and German EKD (20%) youth.

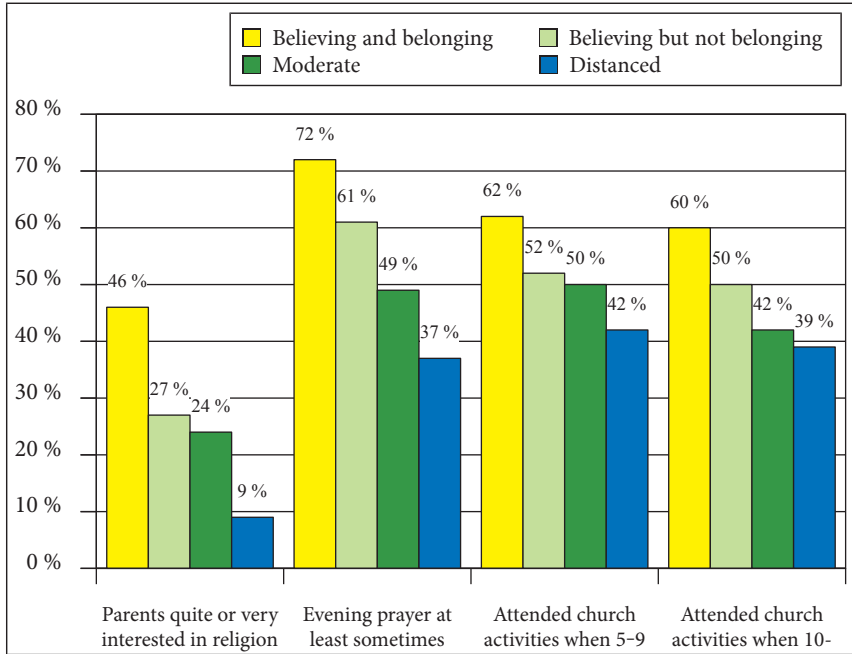
Figure 9: Four types of church commitment among young people two years after confirmation (t₃, 2015) in different countries (%)



N = 3087; (DE EKD = 1840; AT = 75; CH = 624; DE = 80; FI = 74; NO = 111; SE = 103; DE EmK = 180)

The »distanced« young people are slightly more likely to be boys, while those »believing and belonging« are slightly more likely to be girls. Young people belonging to that group also tend to have slightly more books at home than the other groups. However, both the gender differences and differences in the book-question are not very clear. Regarding religious upbringing in childhood and at home, there are clearer differences that follow the basic assumptions: those »believing and belonging« have attended church activities most often in their childhood, while those »distanced« have attended them least often (see Figure 10). Also the evening prayer has been more common among those »believing and belonging«. 40% had an evening prayer every night, while only 17% of those who were classified as »distanced« two years after confirmation time.

Figure 10: Parents' religious interest, childhood religious attendance and evening prayer among the four groups of church commitment (%) (weighted)



N = 3087.

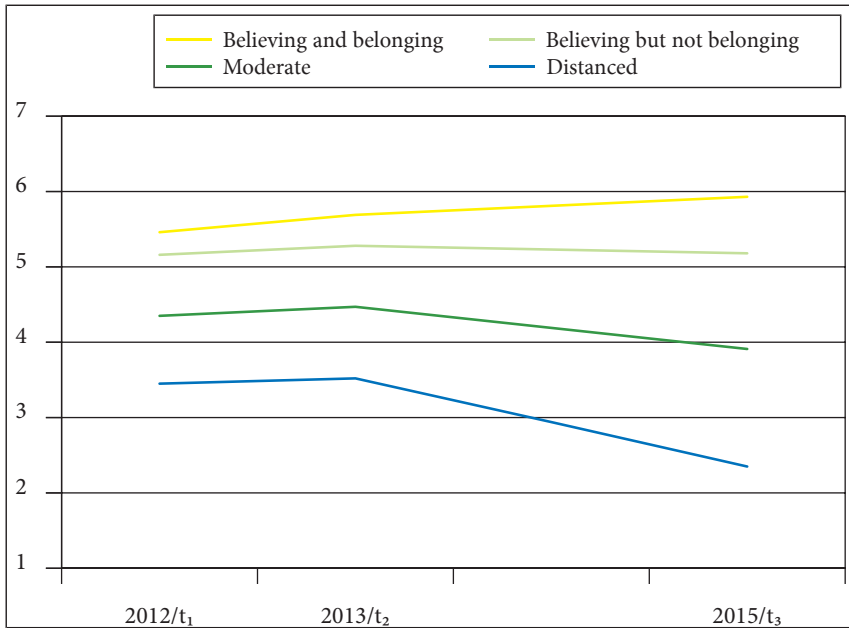
When it comes to confirmation satisfaction among the four groups, there are some differences: 87 % of those »believing and belonging« were satisfied with their confirmation time (answered 5-7 on a scale 1-7), while it was 78 % with the »distanced«. The two other groups were in between.

3.3 Developmental Trends in Church Commitment

The next aim is to find out what kind of developmental trends are found among these four groups of commitment when comparing their answers in the beginning and in the end of confirmation time and two years later.

When comparing the changes in commitment among these four groups in the beginning of confirmation time, in the end of confirmation time and two years later by comparing the mean values at these three measuring points interesting differences and continuities are found. Those who belong to the »believing and belonging« group have typically been strengthened both in their belief

Figure 11: Average Christian belief (index CE/KE/QE1) among the four groups of belonging and believing: t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015) [weighted]



N = 2907; mean values on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable)

and sense of belonging after confirmation. They were also typically strengthened in them during confirmation time.

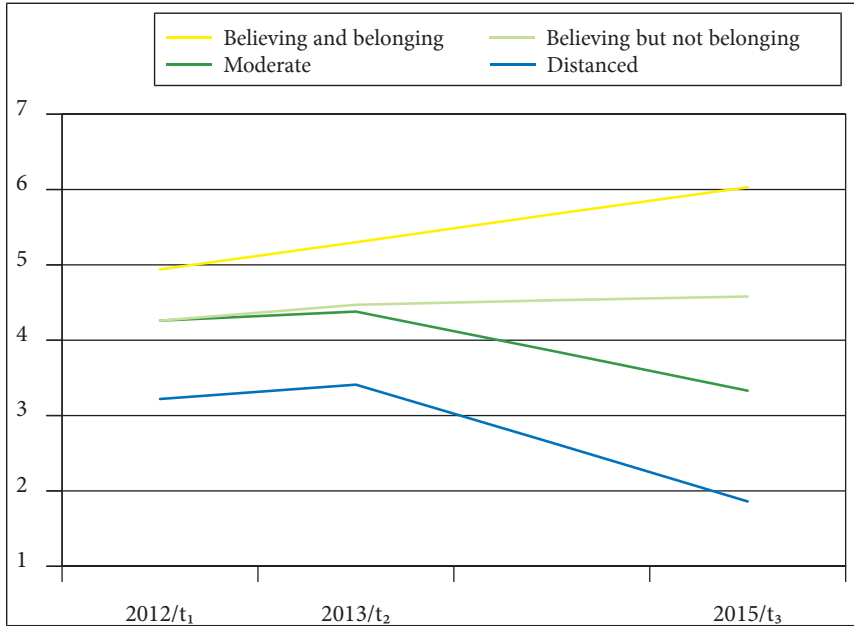
The group with »believing but not belonging« has typically neither changed their attitudes towards membership nor experienced changes in their belief during confirmation time or after it.

The moderate group has typically been strengthened slightly both in their belief and belonging during confirmation time, but the attitudes have become lower after confirmation to a level that is below the starting point.

The attitudes of the »distanced« group towards both belonging and believing were already typically fairly low in the beginning of confirmation time. After confirmation time both believing and especially the sense of belonging has become notably lower among these young people.

Regarding young people's view whether the Church does a lot of good things for people, there are only small differences between the groups both in the beginning and in the end of confirmation time as well as two years later. These high figures after confirmation time as well as the relatively stable figures in most countries show that the Church is here seen as an important societal and

Figure 12: Average importance of church membership (CG/KG/QG01) among the four groups of belonging and believing: t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015) [weighted]

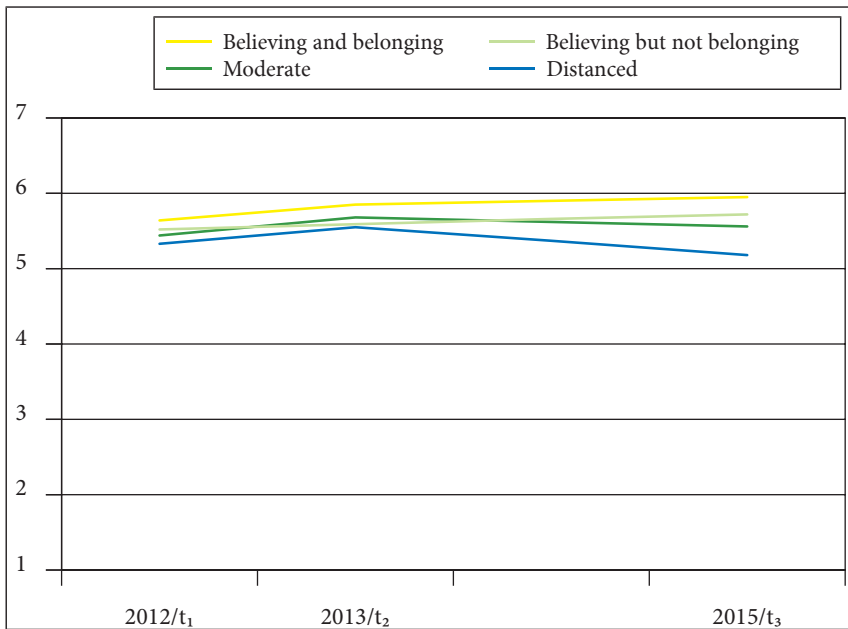


N = 2907; mean values on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

institutional force even when young people have distanced themselves from it on a more personal level.

Changes in both believing and belonging reveal a similar trend: the differences between the groups are strengthened after confirmation. However, it is interesting to see that the same does not apply to a more general perception of the church; that tends to remain the same among all four groups. On the other hand, especially the differences in the importance of church membership have grown: especially the attitudes of those »believing and belonging« have become increasingly different from the attitudes of those who are »distanced«. This hints at the importance of community for creating a sense of belonging; those who have been attending have been strengthened in their sense of belonging while those not attending have been increasingly losing that sense of belonging. Those »believing and belonging« have also often been active as volunteers in the church after confirmation. Almost half of those »believing and belonging« (46%) are or have been active as a volunteer in church or Christian youth work, the share of volunteers equals the share of those planning to attend church youth work after confirmation (47%). Among the other three groups, the share

Figure 13: Average responses to »The Church does a lot of good things for the people« (CG/KG/QG05) among the four groups of belonging and believing: t₁ (2012), t₂ (2013), t₃ (2015) [weighted]



N = 2830; mean values on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

is notably lower (13-20%). Also the interest in taking part in a Christian youth group was already notably higher among those »believing and belonging« in the beginning of confirmation time (41 %) than among the other groups (8-19%). In all groups the share of those interested in attending a youth group increased about the same amount during confirmation time (+6-7 percent points). However, it is noteworthy that among all the other groups except those »believing and belonging« about half of those who started a voluntary activity did not continue it any longer when they answered the questionnaire two years after confirmation. Among those »believing and belonging«, only one fourth of those who started a voluntary activity no longer continue it.

Table 15 shows the percentage of those who believe and do not believe in God and the share of those who regard church membership as important in the beginning and in the end of confirmation time, and two years after it. It shows that the share of those who believe in God has increased after confirmation both among those »believing and belonging« and »believing but not belonging«, while the importance of church membership has increased only among those »believing and belonging«. At the same time, non-believing as

Table 14: Interest in church youth work before and after confirmation and voluntary activity after confirmation among the four groups of believing and belonging (%)

	1: Believing and belonging	2: Believing but not belonging	3: Moderate	4: Distanced
CG08: I am interested in taking part in a Christian youth group after confirmation (t ₁) (5-7)	41	18	19	8
KG08: I am interested in taking part in a Christian youth group after confirmation (t ₂) (5-7)	47	24	25	15
KP01: I can imagine working in the Church as a volunteer after confirmation time (t ₂) (5-7)	49	31	40	28
QP51: Is or has been active as a volunteer in Church or Christian youth work (1 or 3)	43	18	21	16
QP51: Is still active as a volunteer in the Church or Christian youth work (1)	33	10	13	8

N = 2857-2868; CG08/KG 08/KP01: the share of those with a positive response (indicated in the table) either on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable) or on a nominal scale 1 to 3 (1 = yes, 2 = no, 3 = not anymore).

well as non-believing has been increasing strongly among the »distanced«. In the end of confirmation time, 43 % of them did not believe in God, but two years later the share was 85 %. In the beginning and in the end of confirmation time, the sense of belonging was already low among this group, only 21-23 % felt that it is important to belong to the church, in the end of confirmation time the share was 0 %. A similar trend was visible in a Finnish 10-year-longitudinal study which followed the confirmands from their confirmation time until they were 25 years old. Non-believing had increased strongly among a certain group of young people and these were strongly distancing from both belief and belonging after confirmation time. They accounted to about one fourth of the confirmands; these young people also very often ended up resigning from church membership (Niemelä 2015).

When looking at the change in belief on an individual level, the change can be tracked by comparing the responses from the beginning of confirmation time until the end of it, by comparing the responses from the beginning of confirmation time until two years after, and by comparing responses from the

Table 15: Belief in God and importance of church membership: t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015) [weighted %]

	1. Believing and belonging	2. Believing but not belonging	3. Moderate	4. Distanced	5. Total
Believed in God (CE/KE/QE09: answered 5-7)					
In the beginning of confirmation time	89	80	58	35	66
In the end of confirmation time	89	87	61	34	68
Two years after confirmation time	100	100	35	0	60
Did not believe in God (God CE/KE/QE09: answered 1-3)					
In the beginning of confirmation	6	8	20	43	19
In the end of confirmation time	4	4	20	41	17
Two years after confirmation time	0	0	25	85	27
It is important for me to belong to the Church (CG/KG/QG01: answered 5-7)					
In the beginning of confirmation time	68	45	43	21	46
In the end of confirmation time	76	48	46	23	50
Two years after confirmation	98	16	48	0	44

N = 2907; scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

end of confirmation time until two years after. All of these three different measuring points offer interesting results.

First of all, when looking at the developmental trends more clearly and also on an individual level, it becomes clear that there are also diverse patterns within each group and diverse patterns at each measuring point. In each group there is development both towards a stronger sense of belonging and belief as well as weakening of them.

The comparison of the change patterns reveals more of the phenomenon that was noticed above when comparing the mean values and percentages at each of the three measuring points: after confirmation the four groups are increasingly different from each other. The »distanced« group as well as the

Table 16: Change in belief in God during confirmation time and from the beginning and from the end of confirmation time until two years after among the four groups of commitment (%)

	1. Believing and belonging	2. Believing but not belonging	3. Moderate	4. Distanced	Total
Change in belief in God from beginning of confirmation time until two years later (a change from CE09 to QE09)					
Positive (> 1)	33	37	22	9	25
No change	55	42	18	22	35
Negative change (< -1)	12	21	60	69	39
Change in belief in God from the end of confirmation time until two years later (a change from KE09 to QE09)					
Positive (> 1)	31	32	20	7	23
No change	58	42	19	22	36
Negative change (< -1)	12	26	61	71	41
Change in belief in God during confirmation time (a change from CE09 to KE09)					
Positive (> 1)	23	30	29	33	28
No change	58	45	39	36	45
Negative change (< -1)	19	24	31	32	26

N = 2907; a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

»moderate« group are the ones often experiencing negative development in relation to both belief and to the sense of belonging.

The »believing and belonging« group is the one which has most often remained the same concerning belief both during confirmation time and after it. If one compares the responses in the beginning of confirmation time and two years after confirmation time, more than half (55%) of those »believing and belonging« have responded similarly, whether they believe in God or not, one third (33%) has responded as believing »more« and only 12% as believing »less«. Of those who were classified as »moderate« or »distanced«, as many as 60% and 69% responded as believing »less« two years after confirmation than in the beginning of it. This means that the slight positive development which had been taking place among these groups during confirmation time had clearly faded away after confirmation time.

Table 17: Change in in the importance of church membership during confirmation time and from the beginning and from the end of confirmation time until two years after among the four groups of commitment (%)

	1. Believing and belonging	2. Believing but not belonging	3. Moderate	4. Distanced	Total
Change in the importance of church membership from the beginning of confirmation time until two years later (a change from CG01 to QG01)					
Positive (> 1)	61	18	42	11	35
No change	25	22	25	22	24
Negative change (< -1)	14	60	34	68	42
Change in the importance of church membership from the end of confirmation time until two years later (a change from KG01 to QG01)					
Positive (> 1)	49	13	37	9	29
No change	33	27	25	18	26
Negative change (< -1)	18	60	39	73	45
Change in the importance of church membership during confirmation time (a change from CG01 to KG01)					
Positive (> 1)	41	38	40	37	39
No change	35	30	32	31	32
Negative change (< -1)	24	33	29	32	29

N = 2907; a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

Changes on an individual level concerning the importance of church membership after confirmation show very clear patterns within the groups. Of those who belong to the group »believing and belonging«, as many as 61% had a more positive response to the question of the importance of church membership than in the beginning of confirmation time. At the same time, about two thirds of those »believing but not belonging« (60%) and of those »distanced« (68%) had a more negative response two years after confirmation than in the beginning of confirmation time. This means that these two groups have strongly been distancing themselves from the Church as an institution, the one still finding faith important at a personal level, the other very distant from faith and the Church.

3.4 Conclusion

Examining these results, it is obvious that the development after confirmation may take very different patterns among the young people. While some of them tend to distance themselves from the Church and its beliefs, some tend to become more attached to the Church after confirmation. Whereas the attitudes in the end of confirmation time are mostly positive throughout the different groups, there is clearly a growing distance to the Church after confirmation; this is very visible both in belief and in the attachment to church membership, while the general attitude towards the Church seems to remain quite stable.

By using cluster analysis, the young people were categorised into four groups based on their commitment to the Church two years after confirmation. These groups were named: 1) believing and belonging (30%), 2) believing but not belonging (21%), 3) moderate believers (25%) and 4) distanced (24%). There were clear differences among the youth in different countries: young people believing and belonging were most common in Churches in a minority position while the distanced youth were most common in some of the Nordic countries and in Switzerland.

Comparing the development in church relation and beliefs, the results show interesting differences between the four groups. The »distanced« and the »moderate« young people tend to experience a negative development in relation to both belief and the sense of belonging after confirmation while the young people with both a high sense of belonging and believing two years after confirmation tend to be strengthened in their faith and belonging after confirmation time. The developmental patterns seem to be strongly dependent on the young people's experiences with church and religion before and after their confirmation time. Among those »believing and belonging«, almost half had been active as volunteers in the Church while among all other groups the share of volunteers is notably lower. The same applies to home religious upbringing.

The results in general show that the very often given statement that the younger generation is not interested in faith, religion or the Church at all definitely has to be differentiated. Many of the young people are strongly committed to the Church both in their beliefs and sense of belonging. The results show that it is obvious that a core factor of young people's willingness to stay a member of the Church, not to mention their willingness to engage as volunteers, is highly dependent on positive personal experiences with religion and the Church, be it in the sense of their religious upbringing in the family, be it of early contacts with the Church, with its central messages as well as the ritual practice.

4. Models for Working with Young Volunteers in the Different Countries and Churches

JOUKO PORKKA, FRIEDRICH SCHWEITZER AND HENRIK SIMOJOKI

4.1 Introduction

More and more, the involvement of volunteers is considered decisive for successful confirmation work. The confirmands' responses in the earlier parts of the present research project indicate that this involvement contributes to a positive experience of confirmation time in many important ways. It seems that encountering older adolescents is not only important in terms of the social relationships which develop but also in terms of the Christian faith. To see that there are older adolescents who embrace this faith and take the related practical work seriously enough to devote major parts of their free time to volunteering in the context of confirmation work, can make this faith more plausible to the confirmands. Moreover, the young volunteers can probably be viewed by the confirmands as possible role models for also becoming a volunteer after confirmation.

Not all countries and Churches involved in the present study put equal emphasis on the involvement of volunteers in confirmation work. Finland has played a pioneering role in this respect (cf. Porkka 2006) while Germany now has an especially impressive number of volunteers active in this field – with 62 000 people, counting younger as well as older volunteers (cf. Schweitzer et al. 2015b). Moreover, at least in part, the countries and Churches have developed special programs for working with young volunteers and, among others, for offering them special training. The results presented in this volume and especially in the next chapter reflect different attitudes and orientations of the adolescents who, for the most part, are active as young volunteers. However, motivations and experiences in this field also depend on what programs are offered to the adolescents and how young volunteers are welcomed – or not welcomed – by the churches or by other institutions. For this reason, brief descriptions of these programs will be given as a background for understanding the empirical results.

4.2 Working with Young Volunteers¹

In general it can be stated that the involvement of young volunteers is increasingly considered an important and very valuable contribution to confirmation work. This is even true for countries like Denmark or for the Methodist Church in Germany where there is no tradition of volunteers in this field but where, nevertheless, efforts are being made to involve more volunteers in the future (for interesting beginnings in this direction see p. 212f.). The appreciation of volunteers can also be seen from the fact that many new guidelines for confirmation work explicitly mention and encourage the involvement of volunteers in confirmation work (cf. the country reports in Schweitzer et al. 2010 and Schweitzer et al. 2015a). In some countries, most of all in Finland and in Sweden, special studies on young volunteers have become available (cf. Porkka 2004; 2010; 2012, 2016a; 2016b; Niemelä 2008; Tervo-Niemelä 2016; Pettersson 2008; Eek et al. 2008; Grahn et al. 2011; Eek et al. 2012). In addition to its function as a background for the present study, this research can be seen as further evidence of the new interest in volunteers in confirmation work. The same is true for the models described below.

The percentage of confirmands who become volunteers after confirmation varies from country to country. Most often, however, there are no reliable statistics concerning this percentage. Only rough estimates are possible. On the one hand, there are countries like Finland where the statistics show that about 30% of the confirmands become young volunteers after confirmation. On the other hand, the percentage in Denmark is very low, probably not even reaching the level of 1%.

The lack of reliable statistics probably is indicative of the relative newness of the interest in volunteers in confirmation work. It seems important that the data should be collected in the future, among others, as a starting point for making better use of the potentials of voluntary work.

Training programs for young volunteers are not only offered by the Protestant Churches but also by other institutions and in other fields. In Germany, for example, programs offered by the Catholic Church also play an important role. Moreover, workers' unions, political parties and groups often offer special programs for young people that may include some training in the respective field. In terms of numbers, sports is another field in which many volunteers are active, again sometimes after having completed special leadership training programs.

1. We would like to thank our colleagues from the international team of researchers for making available the information on which this section is based.

4.3 General Models for Working with Young Volunteers in the Churches

The span of different models for working with young volunteers in the Churches is rather broad in the countries involved in the present study. In some of the countries there are training programs for young volunteers in general youth work that are not especially directed at confirmation work but which may also include volunteers from this field. Consequently, there is some overlap between models for young volunteers in different fields. In Germany, for example, about 30 % of the young volunteers in confirmation work participated in some kind of special training for confirmation work. An additional share of 30 % attended training units for general youth work. This overlap between different target groups and fields of work can be of advantage if it allows for additional contacts and for an exchange of ideas between different fields but it can also be of a disadvantage if programs are lacking in specific orientation. Volunteers in confirmation work and volunteers in other fields of Christian youth work will not always have the same tasks and perspectives.

The following example of a general program for young volunteers comes from Switzerland (St. Gallen):

Modules:

Module for beginners/adolescents around the age of 13 (7th grade)
 Continuing module for adolescents around the age of 13 to 14 (7th-8th grade)
 Continuing module for adolescents around the age of 14 to 15 (8th-9th grade)
 Module for »late beginners« (young adults)
 Continuing module for young adults

Topics:

Playful approaches to leadership
 Leadership, my role and communication
 Forming groups, conflict management
 Style of leadership and group dynamics
 Leadership in difficult situations

In Norway, as another example, the most common program for young volunteers is MILK (Mini-leader-course) developed by the Norwegian YMCA/YWCA. The program consists of five evenings and a weekend addressing topics like faith, relations and basic leadership and organisational skills. MILK started in the 1990s and now exists in many local and regional variations and adaptations, some of them still connected to the YMCA/YWCA, others arranged by the local parish. MILK is the first step in YMCA/YWCAs leadership training program, to be followed up by another program called LIV (Leaders in Growth). Other training schemes in Norway are connected to the Scouts or to fields like Christian music and Christian sports.

In Germany, general youth work has been successful in establishing training for young leaders. After having taken part in such training that typically lasts for several days, the future young leaders receive a certificate which provides evidence of their proficiency. Other kinds of training in the context of youth work refer to special tasks, like the acquisition of skills for resolving conflicts between young people. There also are forms of training in connection to Sunday school that are less formalised but have a strong basis in training institutes related to this field of work. Finally, specific training modules for voluntary workers in confirmation work have been developed (Adler et al. 2007). Many of them are also applicable for young volunteers.

4.4 Special Training for Young Volunteers in Confirmation Work

Even with models specifically addressing young volunteers in confirmation work, there is a lot of variation between the countries involved, sometimes even within the countries themselves. As a rule, in the countries and Churches with a strong emphasis on volunteers in confirmation work, there also is special training available for them.

Some countries, for example, Denmark, have no model for this purpose at all. The Methodist Church in Germany is in the process of developing such a model. Other countries, for example, Finland and, to a lesser degree, Sweden, have models that are firmly institutionalised and are regulated by nation-wide or diocesan guidelines. The third option is somewhere in between, with no general rules and consequently mostly local or regional developments that differ from parish to parish. In this case, there can also be models that are quite elaborate, for example, in some Swiss cantons or in some German parishes but these models depend on local or regional initiatives, sometimes of individual pastors and sometimes of institutions in the field of general Christian youth work. It is, of course, the second option with firmly established models that offers the most reliable programs for volunteers but not all countries or Churches work with central regulations in this respect.

Two examples show what this kind of training can imply.

In Finland, a country with an especially strong emphasis on volunteers, all young volunteers participate in a training course (YCV/Young Confirmed Volunteers training) after their own confirmation. These courses are organised by local parishes and they consist of approximately 50 hours of teaching (up to 100 hours in larger parishes). The course takes place over a period of one to two years, sometimes even three or four years (cf. Porkka 2004, 79-89).

Special training of young volunteers became available there already in the 1950s when the camp-form confirmation work gained popularity. There are national guidelines for the training but they are more like suggestions than central regulations. In the guidelines from 1966 and 1979 the emphasis was on training assistant workers for camp-form confirmation work which was gaining popularity at the time. The YCVs were called group leaders based on their tasks in confirmation work. In addition to practicing group work skills, the training included topics aimed towards supporting the adolescents' personal development, especially spiritual growth (Porkka 2006, 44-46). Today the training of YCVs consists of topics like camp work skills, parish life, Christian theology, young persons' own growth and how to live as a Christian. In the three and four year models, the older YCVs become peer leaders for their younger counterparts. Altogether, however, the emphasis of YCV training has shifted towards the personal and spiritual growth of YCVs (Porkka 2006, 49). The latest guidelines (2016) even list the same goal for both, confirmation work and YCV programs: »YCV activity aims towards strengthening the faith of young people to God as the Holy Trinity and to equip them to live as a Christian« (Isoja ihmeitä 2016, 9). According to these guidelines, the main emphasis should be on the parish as a community and the adolescents' ties to it. In this model social learning is the main form of learning when YCVs are volunteering, not only in different forms of Christian youth work but also in diaconal work, worship life and parish events (Isoja ihmeitä 2016, 6-11).

There is an increasing number of parishes with separate programs for YCVs. In these parishes, the older YCVs act as peer leaders and teachers in the training of the younger YCVs. The older YCVs may also form groups in parish elections and get their representatives in the parish administration. They might also organise youth diaconia groups to try out helping adolescents who get into trouble, for example, on the streets or in festivals. This is also one of the main points in the 2016 guideline when it speaks of the importance of the YCV program building a bridge towards adulthood. Understanding the importance of being a member of the Church is a goal in itself. However, the YCV program should also help the young volunteers to find their own place in their life and in the world. Volunteerism is seen as one meaningful calling after their time as YCVs in the guidelines: »The YCV program is like sending waves. Like waves carry far onwards all the way to the coast, so too can the effect and the meaning of our work carry far, and through countless encounters reach countless people. This is the nature of God's work in this world.« (Isoja ihmeitä 2016, 67-68)

In Sweden, programs for young volunteers in confirmation work are offered by dioceses or parishes. They can also be rather elaborate as the following three-year program from the Härnösand's diocese shows:

Step 1 – The Basics

In step 1 the confirmed young person aiming to be a young leader is tutored by a supervisor in the parish. Each parish decides on the exact details. However, there is a textbook with five subject areas that can be used as teaching materials.

Step 2 – Continued Education

Step 2 is planned for the fall after confirmation (approximately one year after confirmation). At this time the persons that want to become young leaders meet for a weekend at the diocese level. For this course there is a new textbook with subjects that deepen and add to the subjects in step 1 textbook.

Step 3 – Deepening Education

Step 3 takes place at the diocese level and in the local parish. Again new subjects are introduced to the participants. In the spring (at least 1.5 years after confirmation), the group participating travels together. The journey is called »a journey of a lifetime« and lasts for approximately one week. For this level, there exists a separate textbook and the participants are also given material via email.

To say it again, the fact that training models for young volunteers in confirmation work are less established in other countries should not be taken to imply that young volunteers do not receive any training there. Yet since there are no central regulations for this training, its availability and content depends much more on local initiative. For this reason it is not possible to render the respective practice here.

4.5 Main Tasks of Young Volunteers

The most common tasks for young volunteers wherever they are involved in confirmation work, seem to relate to activities that are especially attractive for the confirmands, like games, music and sports. Young volunteers are especially active at camps and during retreats. The extent of this involvement varies from country to country and also from parish to parish.

In some cases, the young volunteers are also responsible for certain segments of the program at camp, for example, for the evening programs. Sometimes, the involvement of the young volunteers includes teaching as well as planning and conducting worship services.

Although there is no clear pattern to be observed in this respect, the different experiences show that young volunteers are in fact willing and able to take over a fair amount of responsibility and that they can develop skills in a number of fields. Given these experiences there is no doubt that young volunteers deserve attention and appreciation and that they can make a difference in confirmation work. Finally, working with young volunteers seems to have the potential to develop into its own kind of Christian youth work, with an age-group that often is hard to reach for the churches.

4.6 Conclusion

The short overview presented in this chapter shows that the existing models for working with young volunteers vary very much from country to country and, in many cases, also within the countries. First of all, there are considerable differences in the extent to which young volunteers are actively involved in confirmation work. In some countries confirmation work is still mainly a matter for the pastors, youth workers and, at best, adult volunteers. In other contexts young volunteers have become one of the most important features of confirmation work.

Obviously, volunteerism in confirmation work requires adequate training. Young people already possess impressive competences but they should be supported in refining them and in developing new ones. Concerning such training, a broad spectrum of different forms can be observed, ranging from more general programs connected to Christian youth work, scouts, etc., to specialised schemes, which specifically address young volunteers in confirmation work. Another important factor is the degree of institutionalisation. In many cases, the range of the training programs is rather limited. In Churches with a particularly strong emphasis on youth volunteerism in confirmation work, more comprehensive curricula and structures have been developed. Where this is not yet the case, the Churches should feel encouraged to develop such programs. However, the key to an adequate training of young volunteers does not lie in just formulating curricula and standards but in making the programs which are carried out truly effective. This observation points to a relatively uncharted field of research. Until now, research on impact and effectiveness is underdeveloped in this specific segment of voluntary activity – and should therefore receive more attention in the future.

Regardless of the many differences, the influence of young volunteers in confirmation work has increased markedly over the last few years. As mentioned above, this also holds true for countries and contexts where there is no tradition of youth volunteerism in confirmation work. Given the growing importance of young volunteers in confirmation work, one of the main research interests of this study is to empirically identify pathways to volunteerism before, during and after confirmation time – a task that will be addressed in the next chapter.

5. How Confirmands Become Volunteers

JOUKO PORKKA, FRIEDRICH SCHWEITZER AND HENRIK SIMOJOKI

5.1 Introduction: Pathways into Volunteerism

The first study on confirmation work in Europe showed that the willingness of young people to volunteer in the church clearly rises during confirmation time (cf. Pettersson/Simojoki 2010, 273-274). This result was confirmed by the findings of the second study. At the end of confirmation time almost twice as many confirmands stated that they were interested in volunteering in the church than in the beginning (cf. Porkka et al. 2015, 99-102). For many of the young people participating in confirmation work seems to be an important pathway into volunteerism.

Such observations and results from research on confirmation work must also be appreciated in the broader context of developments concerning voluntary work in church and society in general. Especially the new appreciation of civil society as a presupposition of strong democracies has also led to new understandings of voluntary commitment (Brudney 2010). This commitment is now seen as both: as a consequence of a vital civil society and as a way of strengthening civil society. Working with young volunteers can then be interpreted as education for civil society. This is one of the reasons why researchers in many countries have developed an interest in finding out more about the different motives and experiences involved in becoming and being a volunteer.

The existing studies in this field, however, tend to focus more on adults than on younger people. Especially young volunteers under the age of 18 years are rarely given special attention. This is somewhat surprising in that decisive entry points into voluntary activities seem to come rather early in life, in many cases clearly before the age of 18 years, as the results in the following indicate. Confirmation work could actually be one of the major entry points in this respect, at least in some of the countries involved in the present study, with implications not only for confirmation work or for volunteerism within the church but in society at large as well as. The data reported in the present book can naturally not be considered full proof of this assumption because their focus is not on voluntary work in general but only on volunteers in the field of confirmation work. Yet they clearly indicate that being a volunteer in confirmation work is attractive to many adolescents, that the number of adolescents involved in this work is quite substantial and that the involvement seems to be an experience which, at least potentially, has a long-term effect on young people.

There are many reasons then for the interest in gaining further insights into

the views, expectations and experiences of young volunteers in confirmation work. The questionnaire administered two years after confirmation in the present study included a number of questions.

- All respondents were asked if they were presently active as volunteers and if so, in which field or fields.
- If they were active as volunteers in the church, they were given another set of questions concerning how they became volunteers and their motives for doing this.
- If they were not active, they were asked about the reasons for not having become a volunteer in the church or Christian youth work.

It is of course only a certain percentage of the confirmands who become volunteers after confirmation. Therefore, the number of respondents who completed not only the general questionnaire in t_3 but also the additional questionnaire for volunteers was rather small in some of the countries. This is why the analysis in the following will mainly concentrate on the general questionnaire from t_3 referring to the question of who is active as volunteer and who is not and what prevents them from being active. In the case of two countries, however, Germany and Switzerland, due to the number of responding volunteers from these two countries, additional analyses will be possible, referring to motives and experiences connected to becoming and being a volunteer.

In interpreting the results, one has to again keep in mind the longitudinal approach that has been taken for this research. The aim was not to have results for the whole age group but to gain insights into the trajectories of becoming and being a volunteer in confirmation work, both at an individual and then also at a collective level. This is why the analysis in the following will have its main emphasis on the relationship between the responses given by the confirmands in the beginning and at the end of their confirmation time and their later involvement or non-involvement as volunteers.

In the following, the main findings concerning pathways into volunteerism are described and analysed.

In a first step, the period of confirmation time is focused on, with two central research questions:

- Were the confirmands given opportunities to try out volunteering during their confirmation time?
- Did the opportunities to volunteer have any connection to young people's willingness to volunteer?
- How did their willingness to volunteer in the church change during this period?

In a next step, the period after confirmation is highlighted. Here, the main research questions are:

- How much and in which fields do young people volunteer after their confirmation time?
- To what extent is the decision to volunteer in the church shaped by experiences *before* and *during* confirmation time?
- What happens to those who are (not) motivated to volunteer in the church after their confirmation time?
- Which former confirmands drop out from volunteerism in the church – and what are their characteristics?

The final research question is based on case studies from Germany and Switzerland: what are the main motives for volunteering in the church and Christian youth work?

5.2 Volunteerism in Confirmation Work

Experiences with Volunteerism during Confirmation Time

In many European countries, churches are a prominent field of civic engagement. They offer their members a wide range of possible voluntary activities, not only within their congregations but also in the broader context of civil society (Liedhegener 2010). Therefore, it is of interest to know to what extent confirmands have had the opportunity to try out such activities during their confirmation time. Table 18 (p. 87) shows that slightly more than a third of the confirmands were offered such opportunities. The share of those who had this chance was highest in Norway and Austria and lowest in Sweden and Finland. This result can be interpreted positively or negatively. On the one hand, confirmation work clearly is a context which fosters volunteer involvement. On the other hand, in all countries, it is only a small share of the confirmands who had access to voluntary work during their confirmation time.

Volunteerism is not a classic topic of confirmation work. Therefore, it is rather encouraging that almost half of the confirmands who filled out all three questionnaires, discussed the importance of voluntary work for church and society.

Changes in Attitudes towards Volunteering in the Church during Confirmation Time

As stated above, the overall data of the second study on youth, religion and confirmation work in Europe showed that the attitude towards volunteering changes considerably during confirmation time. This shift is clearly mirrored by the answers of those confirmands who participated in all three surveys. Table 19 shows that at the beginning of confirmation time one fourth of the respondents stated that they could imagine working in the church as a volunteer after confirmation. At the end of confirmation time, the share of those

Table 18: Voluntary work during confirmation time (t_2 , 2013) in %

During confirmation time	Total	DE EKD	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE EmK
KK57: I was given the chance to try out voluntary work.	36	38	44	28	43	24	47	22	39
KK58: We discussed the importance of voluntary work for church and society.	44	45	51	–	27	63	48	25	46

N (total) = 3026/ 2384; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable). KK58 was not included in the Swiss questionnaire. In some of the countries the item included some examples for voluntary activities, which may be the reason for the higher values.

willing to volunteer in the church had risen by 13 percent points. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, the increase is particularly strong in the countries with the highest initial values. Here, among other factors, the influence of the organisational setting is obvious. In Finland and Sweden, volunteerism of young people is a central feature of confirmation work, whereas Danish confirmands have very little prospect of participating as a volunteer after their confirmation time.

The main aim of the present study is to explore developments in a longitudinal perspective. Figure 14 describes individual developments in the confirmands' willingness to volunteer between t_1 and t_2 .

On the one side, the findings reveal a rather high stability of individual attitudes towards volunteering in the church. 57% of the respondents maintain their initial position. On the other side, there is a clear tendency towards more positive orientations. With 13% of the respondents in the t_3 -sample, the attitude shifted from a negative to a positive view on volunteering in the church. Movements in the opposite direction are much more seldom: only 4% changed their originally positive view on volunteering to negative.

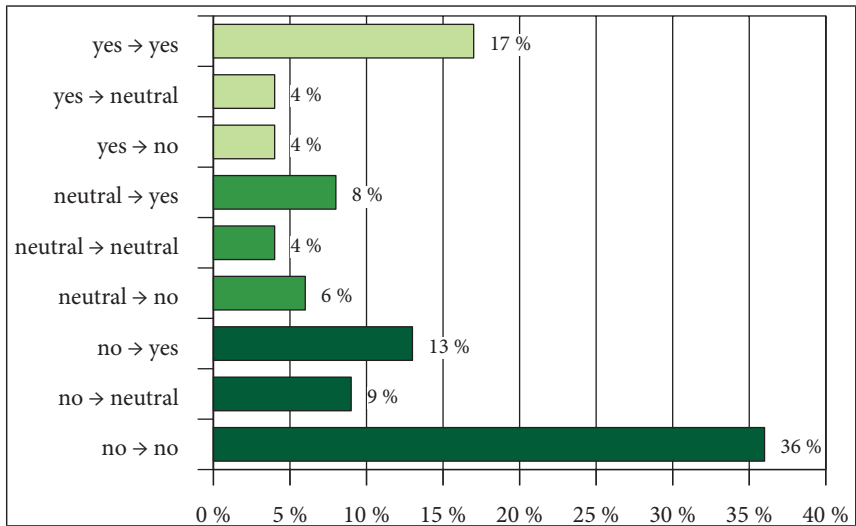
A final point: voluntary engagement depends on prosocial attitudes. The assumption that confirmation work fosters prosocial attitudes is strongly supported by the responses from the adolescents who participated in all surveys in this study. At the end of their confirmation time, almost two out of three stated that they had experienced that their »commitment to other people is important« (KK44).

Table 19: The confirmands' willingness to volunteer in the church in the beginning (t_1 , 2012) and at the end (t_2 , 2013) of confirmation time (%)

	Total	DE (EKD)	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE (EmK)
t_1	25	25	24	20	14	35	19	27	52
t_2	38	39	38	26	17	62	30	43	56
Change (in percent points)	+13	+14	+14	+6	+3	+27	+11	+16	+4

N = 3010; CP01/KP01: I can imagine working in the church as a volunteer after confirmation time; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

Figure 14: The confirmands' willingness to volunteer in the church in the beginning (t_1 , 2012) and at the end (t_2 , 2013) of confirmation time. Changes at an individual level (%)



N = 3010; the share of those with a positive (yes: 5, 6, 7), neutral (4) or negative response (no: 1, 2, 3) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

5.3 Volunteerism after Confirmation

The Young Volunteers and Their Activities in Different Fields

It has often been assumed that adolescents are not willing to engage in NGOs and institutions as volunteers for a longer time because of the individualisation of the present era and the breakdown of »grand narratives«. However, this is not the whole truth: adolescents need a communal basis for their lives. They are looking for personal engagement, meaningful activity and communal identity from where they volunteer (Hokkanen/Liikanen 2010, 8). This is a challenge particularly on the recruitment end. E.g., in Finland two out of three (67%) non-volunteer young people between 15-24 years would like to begin volunteering if only someone would ask them (Yeung/Grönlund 2005, 171). Many studies have shown that recruitment methods based on personal and face-to-face contact are the most effective for finding new, involved volunteers (Nylund/Yeung 2005, 31). Voluntary work often starts from receiving information about the opportunity for such work (Yeung/Grönlund 2005, 173).

Quite often voluntary activity involves characteristics which can be described as »individualistic communality« (Harju 2005, 74). This means that volunteerism is often closely related to something which is fun for that individual. It is related to one's hobby or some other activity which the person considers important. Young people are also often looking for a forum where they can share their experiences because they might desire to make their activity visible to others. They can find talking about their activities empowering (Piiirainen/Kettunen 2013, 24).

Adults responsible for these voluntary activities act as concierges: they have a very important role in assisting the adolescent to enter and start volunteering. The only thing needed for a successful launch into the world of volunteerism is an adolescent finding an interesting forum with a pre-existing organisation and an understanding »conciierge« (Piiirainen/Kettunen 2013, 53-54). All of this is offered by the church and by Christian youth work. The consideration of who these volunteers are and what motivates them will follow. The role of the employed workers in helping the adolescents find this path is also evaluated.

The majority of the t_3 respondents were involved in voluntary activities (QP74-QP81). Two out of three (67%) were volunteers in some field. This is a rather high percentage because on the average only every fourth young European was involved in voluntary activities in 2011. According to the Eurobarometer survey (2011), the level of youth engagement is similar to that of the total population (Voluntary Work 2011, 247). The data suggest that adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age are the most likely to engage in volunteering (Voluntary Work 2011).

Among those who replied to the survey under analysis, the most common

fields of volunteering were sports (31 %) and school (28 %). Other major fields include music (19 %) or »other youth work« (21 %), i. e., youth work which was organised by municipalities or NGOs. Every sixth (18 %) was a volunteer in some Christian-based child or youth work: 12 % in Christian youth work, 9 % in confirmation work and 6 % in Sunday school. Every tenth (11 %) was a volunteer in some other field such as scout activities.

These figures are significantly lower than the figures collected at the start of their confirmation time (t_1 , CP09-CP14) – among those participating in the study, a clear decrease in the number of people engaged in voluntary activity can be detected. The fields where the decrease was strongest were school (47 % in 2012; 28 % in 2015) and sports (47 % in 2012; 31 % in 2015). The percentage of respondents volunteering in music had decreased only a little (23 % in 2012; 19 % in 2015). However, the fields of »other youth work« (10 % in 2012; 21 % in 2015) and Christian youth and child activities (12 % in 2012; 18 % in 2015) had grown (see Porkka et al. 2015, 98-99.) This development is quite natural because the respondents have changed school between t_1 and t_3 and they have grown up, which enables volunteering in youth work. Also sports activities tend to become more involved and professional during these years, and many consequently end their sports activities.

However, it is important to recognise that the development is not unidirectional. While a large number of young volunteers quit their volunteering in the activities above, there also is a smaller amount of adolescents who start such activities. E. g., every fourth of the respondents (24 %) had ended volunteering in sports but at the same time every tenth (11 %) had started it. The same phenomenon can be seen in school (35 % ended; 10 % began) and in music (19 % ended; 9 % began). The same was recognised among those who were volunteering in the church or Christian youth work: almost every sixth of the respondents (15 %) had ended his/her volunteering and 13 % began it after the first survey in 2012.

When comparing the respondents by sex, it was recognised that females were slightly more active in volunteering than males (69 % of females and 65 % of males). The same difference was also recognised among those who volunteered in the church or Christian youth work (20 % of females; 15 % of males). The relative portion of males was bigger only in sports (30 % of females; 35 % of males). The same result was received already in the analysis of t_1 (Porkka et al. 2015, 97-101) and is in line with many other studies on youth volunteering (e. g., Bittman/Fisher 2006; Pääkkönen 2010).

Volunteering is often cumulative: one third of the respondents (33 %) do not volunteer at all and every fourth (27 %) volunteer only in one field, but almost every fourth (22 %) volunteers in two fields and almost a fifth (19 %) in three or more fields. The same is also true among the church volunteers: among those

18% who volunteer in the church or Christian youth work, four out of ten (40%) volunteer at least in two fields in the church. The church volunteers are often also involved in secular voluntary activity. More than every third (35%) of them also volunteer in »other youth work«, a similar amount (33%) in school, every fourth (26%) in sport and an almost equal amount in music (24%). Actually among the church volunteers, there are the most industrious volunteers: more than every fourth (27%) of the ones volunteering in the church or Christian youth work are involved in four or more voluntary activities while the corresponding number is only 5% among those volunteering only in secular fields. The cumulative nature of volunteerism fits with the findings of some youth surveys. For example in the Finnish Youth Barometer, only 5% of the youth volunteered in only one activity while 12% were active in at least five different activities simultaneously (Myllyniemi 2012:18-22; Porkka et al. 2015, 101-103).

These results also fit well to the episodic model of volunteerism which has emerged during the last decades. This means that individuals volunteer for specific events on a sporadic basis and for limited time (Beder/Fast, 2008; Macduff 2008). Nylund/Yeung (2005, 28) have fractioned episodic volunteerism into three sub-groups:

1. Sporadic volunteerism, which means short-time activity.
2. Volunteerism as training, which is a regular activity, e. g., as a part of education which lasts less than half a year.
3. Occasional volunteerism, which is an activity that occurs every now and then – e. g., once a year.

Adolescents do not concentrate that much on one given organisation or institution. According to Piironen/Kettunen (2013) only one half of the adolescents are typically engaged in one organisation or community while the other half volunteer in several places and are not that closely tied to any of these organisations. Those who feel that they belong to only one organisation, still typically volunteer in several places simultaneously. Therefore, it is important to ask if the operational models of the institutions offering voluntary activities for young people are flexible enough or if there is a need for new models which allow young people to have an influence instead of doing something to or for them (Piironen/Kettunen 2013, 56-57). These matters need to be taken into account while assessing the voluntary activity offered by the church and Christian youth work.

The episodic participating model of the adolescents and their increasingly limited free time has brought up new challenges for the models offered by NGOs and other institutions. Therefore, low-threshold models and project-models are needed in order to make the participation of young people possible (Yeung/Grönlund 2005, 188).

The Influence of Experiences before Confirmation Time

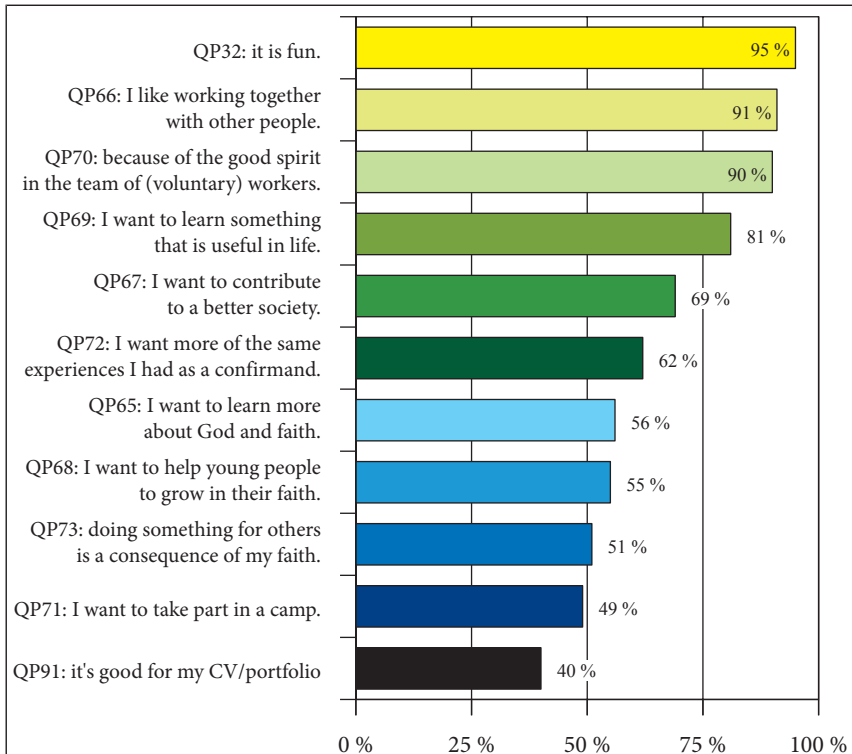
The reasons for adolescents beginning their volunteering in the church or Christian youth work are a very important topic to analyse. In this chapter, the focus is on looking for factors predicting which confirmands are likely to enter the world of voluntary work. Already in Porkka et al. 2015, the data unveiled a close positive correlation between the confirmands' own previous experiences with volunteerism (either in school, youth work, sports, music, or church), and their interest to volunteer in the church or elsewhere in society after confirmation. The conclusion presented in that article was that the more previous experiences the confirmands had with volunteerism, the more interest they had in new fields of volunteering. According to the findings, the confirmands who had been volunteering in several fields before their confirmation time were much more likely to be aware of young peoples' volunteering options and therefore they also recognised these possibilities in the church already in the beginning of their confirmation time (Porkka et al. 2015, 101-102).

The results supported the idea that social capital grows among those confirmands who were already volunteers before their confirmation time. For confirmands who had no previous experience with volunteering, however, confirmation time seemed to offer a good opportunity to begin such an activity, which in turn appears beneficial both in terms of their personal development and the development of civil society (Porkka et al. 2015, 101-102).

As Figure 15 shows, the most important reason to volunteer is the fact that young volunteers find it fun (97%). More than nine out of ten also said that they were volunteering because they like working with other people and because of the good spirit in the team of voluntary workers. Also the willingness to learn something that is useful in life (82%) and willingness to contribute to a better society (72%) were reasons for volunteering for the majority of the young volunteers. Faith-related reasons to volunteer were mentioned by more than half of the young volunteers. Least important reasons were the willingness to take part in a camp (36%) and get useful experiences for their CV/portfolio (31%).

To facilitate the analysis of the reasons for volunteering, two indexes were formed. These were named according to their content: »Altruistic reason and togetherness« (including variables QP32; QP66; QP67; QP70; QP71 and QP72, Cronbach's alpha .66) and »Religious reasons« (QP68; QP65 and QP73, Cronbach's alpha .88). These indexes were formed following the results of the factor analysis in Porkka 2009 where four indexes were formed out of 32 variables measuring the motives and expectations of the Finnish YCVs. Because most of the variables in t_3 were included in those indexes, these new indexes could be formed. Porkka 2009 also included two other indexes labelled »Own growth« and »External motives« which come close to the remaining two vari-

Figure 15: The reasons for volunteering in church or Christian youth work two years after confirmation (t_3 , 2015) in %



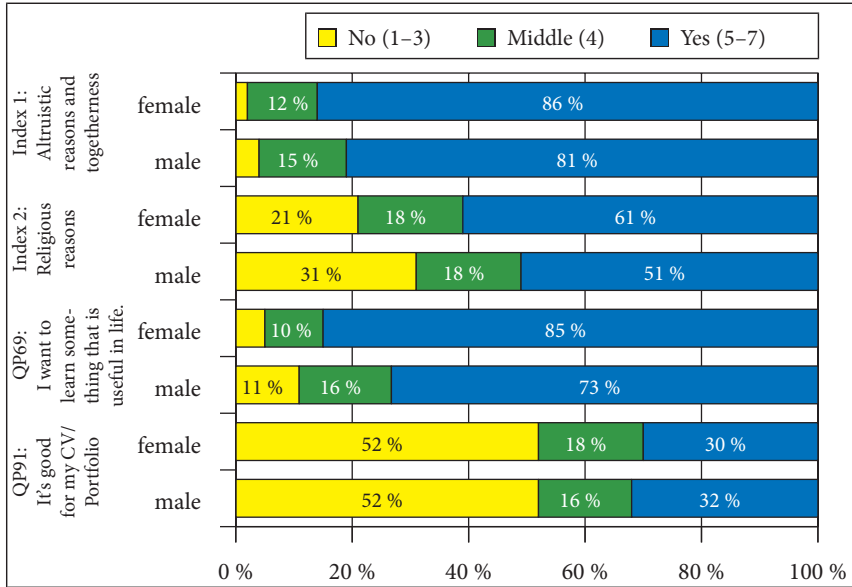
N = 493-508; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

ables of »I want to learn something that is useful in life« (QP69) and »Because it's good for my CV/portfolio« (QP91).

Figure 16 shows that female volunteers had stronger religious motivations (female 61 % and male 51 % scored 5-7 on scale 1-7) and they had a stronger desire to learn things of use in life than male volunteers (QP69: female 85 % and male 74 % scored 5-7 on scale 1-7). Interestingly, Figure 16 looks rather similar to the motivation matrix of the Finnish YCVs in 2012 where 95 % scored 5-7 on index 1 »Altruistic reasons and togetherness«, 51 % on index 2 »Religious reasons« and 74 % on index »Own growth« (Porkka 2016b).

The ones with the stronger religious motives in volunteering were typically volunteering only in Christian youth work (60 % of those who scored 5-7; 40 % who scored 1-4) and confirmation work (46 % of those who scored 5-7; 41 % who scored 1-4). Correspondingly, volunteers with lower religious interest

Figure 16: The reasons for volunteering in the church or Christian youth work two years after confirmation (t₃, 2015) by gender (%)



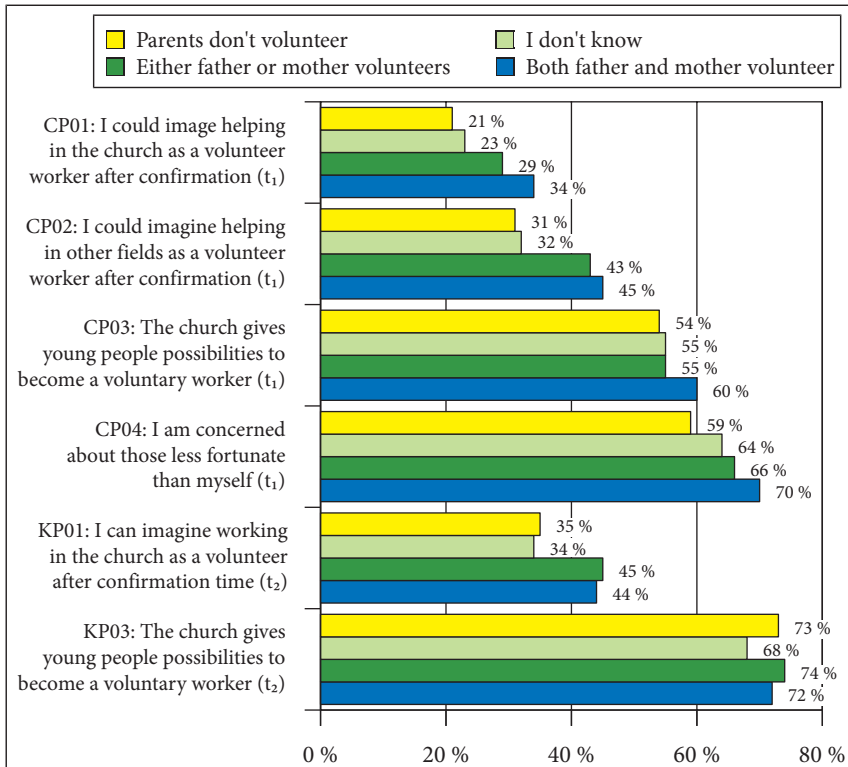
N = 490-505. Scale: 1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable.

were more often volunteering in other youth work (41 % of who scored 5-7; 53 % of those who scored 1-4) or sports (24 % of those who scored 5-7; 31 % who scored 1-4).

The data show that beginning voluntary activity is not some kind of an isolated event affected only by one's own interests and the nature of the organisation offering the opportunity to volunteer, but the choice is influenced by the person's whole life. The following analysis concerns the effect of the parents' example on the adolescents' decisions about volunteering.

Figure 17 shows that the volunteering activity of the confirmands' parents (CP17) also has a similar positive correlation with the confirmands' motivation to volunteer in the church and elsewhere in society (CP01; CP02). Confirmands, who have at least one parent involved in volunteering, are more often aware of the opportunities to volunteer in the church (CP03) in the beginning of their confirmation time. The parents' volunteering also appears to be connected with the confirmands' empathy towards those less fortunate (CP04). The confirmation time equalises these groups regarding awareness of the opportunities to volunteer in the church (KP04). However, the confirmation time does not erase the difference between these groups regarding their willingness to volunteer in the church after confirmation (KP01).

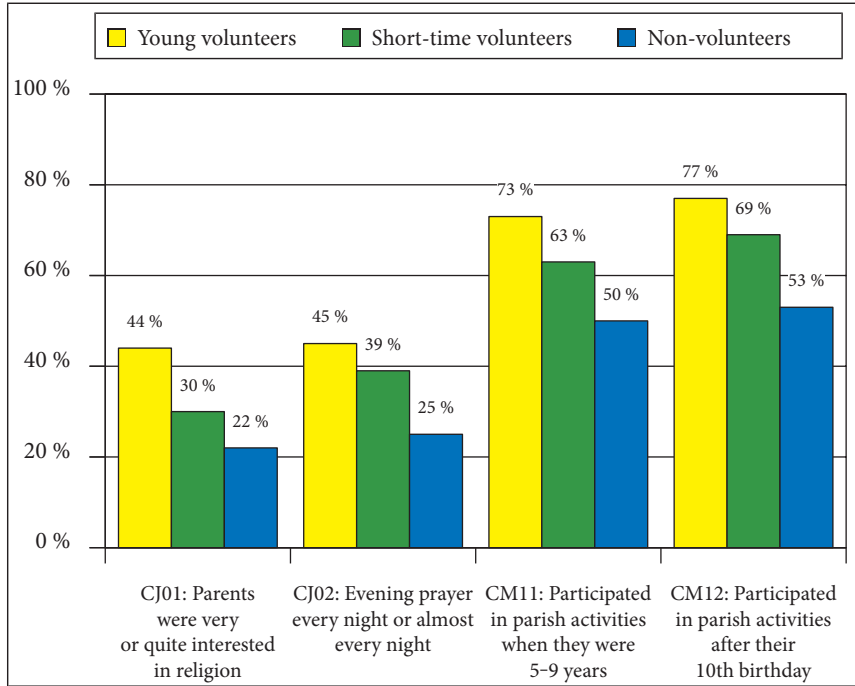
Figure 17: The connection between the volunteering of the confirmands' parents with the confirmands' own interests in volunteering either in the church or other fields (%)



N (total) = 2653-3049: CP01-CP04, KP01, KP03; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale of 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

Parents' volunteering can be seen as a clear predicting factor for the confirmands' own volunteering in the church or Christian youth work after confirmation. In order to see the childhood's impact on volunteering as a wider phenomenon the respondents were split in three groups according to their post-confirmation volunteering (QP51). Three out of four (74%) of the respondents had not been volunteers after confirmation – they were named »non-volunteers«. Almost every tenth (9%) had volunteered but already quit before t₃ – they were named »short-time volunteers«. 17% were volunteering two years after their confirmation – they were named »young volunteers«. The parents' volunteering (CP17) and the confirmands' post-confirmation volunteering had a strong positive correlation – 49% of the young volunteers, 37% of the short-time volunteers and 29% of the non-volunteers had come from a family where at least one parent was active as a volunteer.

Figure 18: Respondents' Christian upbringing grouped by their post-confirmation volunteering category (%)



N (total) = 2461-3173: CJ01-CJ02 and CM11-CM12; the share of those with positive response.

When comparing the respondents' Christian upbringing in these three groups, evident connections appear. Figure 18 shows that the young volunteers' parents were more often interested in religion than parents of the other groups. They had had a bedtime prayer more often and they had been more active in the parish when they were 5-9 years old, and also after their 10th birthday.

Comparing the motivations and expectations of the confirmands of these three groups, it turns out that it is possible to view motivations and expectations as factors predicting becoming post-confirmation volunteers in church or Christian youth work. In the analysis, the indexes formed by Hardecker and Bromander when they analysed confirmands' expectations, motivation and experiences in the data of 2007 and 2012 were used (Hardecker/Bromander 2015, 59-70). However, the indexes were renamed.

These four indexes were formed summing up the variables which measured the confirmands' motivations and expectations related to their own confirmation time in the beginning of their confirmation time in fall 2012 (t_1). The first index was named »Faith and maturation« (iCB08). It was constructed from the variables

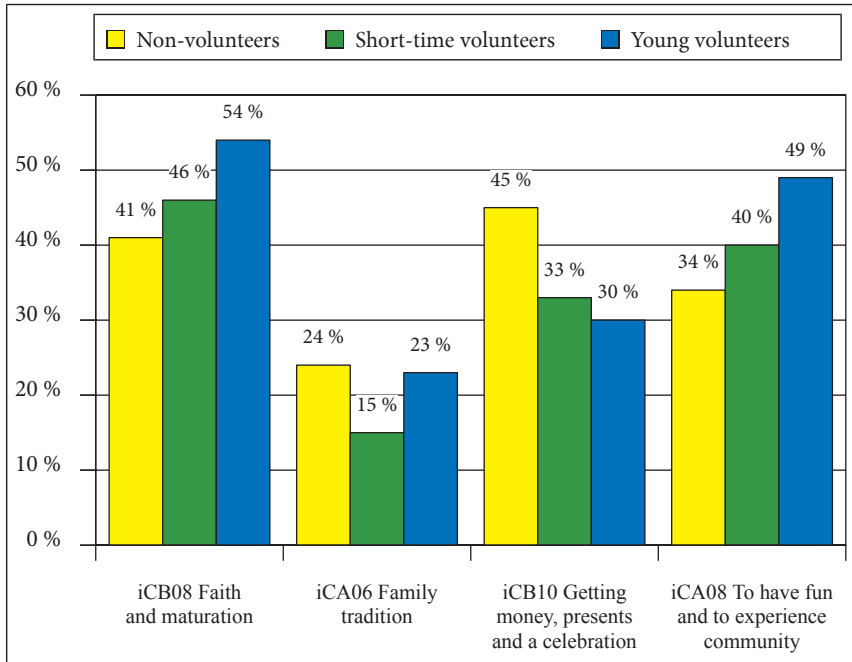
CB08 »[I registered for confirmation work in order] to learn more about God«, CB01 »[I registered ...] to receive a blessing at the day of confirmation«, CB11 »[I registered ...] to come to my own decision about my faith in God«, CB07 »[I registered ...] to think about what is good or bad for me and my life«, CB04 »[I registered ...] to make an important step in growing up« and CA11 »[I registered ...] because I wanted it myself«. The Cronbach's alpha of this index is .83.

The second index was named »Family tradition« (iCA06) and it was constructed from the variables: CA06 »[I registered ...] because my family wanted me to do so«, CA05 »[I registered ...] because I felt obliged to take part«, CA03 »[I registered ...] because it has always been like that in my family« and CA04 »[I registered ...] because I was baptised when I was a child«. The Cronbach's alpha of this index is .68. The third index, »Money, presents and a celebration« (iCB10), was constructed from two variables, CB10 »[I registered ...] to get money or presents at the end« and CB09 »[I registered ...] to have a beautiful celebration with family and friends on the day of my confirmation«. The Cronbach's alpha of this index is .73. The fourth index (iCA08) was constructed using only two variables, CA08 »[I registered ...] because I have been told that confirmation time is fun« and CB02 »[I registered ...] to experience community in the confirmation group«. It was named »To have fun and experience community«. The Cronbach's alpha of this index is .59. Contrary to Hardecker/Bromander, CA01 (»[I registered ...] because my friends did so as well«) was excluded because it lowered the alpha to .49. In Hardecker/Bromander 2015 this variable had a strong side-loading on factor one in the factor analysis but the authors assumed that it stands for expectations of »fun and friendship« during confirmation time and included it in the index iCA08 (Hardecker/Bromander 2015, 61-62).

Figure 19 shows that the motivations and expectations of these three groups in the beginning of the confirmation time differed a lot. Motivations of the non-volunteers were more probably extrinsic: many of them were interested in getting money, presents and a celebration. Family tradition motivates them slightly more often than the others. Instead they had low expectations related to the confirmation time: only a few of them expected to have fun or experience community with the other confirmands or learn about faith or grow more mature over its course. The young volunteers were more often intrinsically motivated. They were looking forward to their confirmation time more than to the confirmation day with its presents and money. Learning about topics related to faith, becoming more mature, having fun and experience community in the confirmation group were more often the expectations for them than the other confirmands. Money, presents and a celebration were seldom the factors motivating them compared to the other groups. Interestingly, the short-time volunteers were already in-between these groups at the start of their confirmation time.

Young volunteers expect much more that they learn about Christian faith during their confirmation time. A larger percentage of them also agree with

Figure 19: Expectations and motives for attending confirmation work in 2012 (t₁) in %



N = 2782-2993: iCB08, iCA06, iCB10, iCA08; the share of those with positive response (≥ 4,5) on a scale 1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable.

the Christian beliefs compared to the other groups. This becomes evident when looking at the index of Christian beliefs (CE01) between these three groups. The index contains variables CE01 »God created the world«; CE02 »There is life after death«; CE03 »God loves all humans and cares about each one of us«; CE04 »Jesus has risen from the dead«; CE08 »Faith in God helps me in difficult situations« and CE09 »I believe in God«. More than two out of three (70%) of the young volunteers gave a positive response on iCE01 while the percentage was 58% among the short-time volunteers and 51% among the non-volunteers (≥ 4.5 on a scale 1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

5.4 The Influence of Experiences during Confirmation Time

The question of the influence of the experience of confirmation work on the adolescents' decision to become a volunteer with confirmation work after confirmation can be viewed in two different perspectives in the present context.

First, it is important to understand how confirmation work and later voluntary activities are connected. Given the strong role that experiences before confirmation time as discussed in the preceding section play for this decision, it is of high interest to see what can actually be done during confirmation time itself. Factors operative before confirmation time can often not be influenced by the workers in the church. Experiences during confirmation time, however, are more open to intentional planning and organising.

The second perspective on the effects of experiences during confirmation time on the decision to become a volunteer after confirmation refers to what is called the long-term effects of confirmation work in a later chapter in this book. In this case, the focus is on experiences during confirmation work as predictors of such effects, concerning faith and the church but also voluntarism.

Inevitably, there is considerable overlap between the two perspectives and consequently, also between the respective chapters. In order not to present the same analyses twice, it was decided that the present chapter will only describe the respective results while the methodological background and the statistical analysis will be explained in a later chapter. Among others, some of the questions to be considered in this section require more complex statistical procedures, like contrasting sub-groups and multi-level-analysis which, in turn, will be explained in some detail there (cf. p. 114 ff.).

According to the analysis of their responses, six aspects play a crucial role for those adolescents who were active as volunteers two years after confirmation (t_3):

(1) The first and most important experience refers to the parish. Later volunteers felt much more welcome and accepted in the parish during confirmation time than those who did not become volunteers after confirmation (34% vs. 25%; KK37).

This result can be interpreted in two respects. On the one hand, it seems to imply that the effects of confirmation work depend on the parish in which it is located. In other words, confirmation work can only be successful in terms of motivating confirmands to later become volunteers if there also is a welcoming parish in which this work takes place. On the other hand, however, the confirmands' positive experience in the parish could also be due to confirmation work. While confirmation work will normally not be able to change a whole parish, it is still possible for this program to make sure that the confirmands will have a chance, for example, to meet welcoming people of different age groups within the parish.

In any case, the insight to be gained from the correlation between the experience of the parish and becoming a volunteer after confirmation must be that confirmation work should not be seen in isolation. Its effects inevitably also depend on how the parishes on the whole present themselves to young people.

This insight is no surprise in that the parish always is the wider context in which the voluntary work takes place, even in case of the volunteers with confirmation work as a special context.

(2) The second aspect to be considered here is more concrete and refers directly to what is offered – or what is not offered – to the adolescents during confirmation time. Confirmands who become volunteers after their confirmation, very often had the opportunity to try out voluntary work during confirmation time (32 %; KK57). Such opportunities appear to be a very suitable way of introducing young people to voluntary work. This raises an important question concerning educational methods. How does trying out voluntary work compare to discussing it? Two items capture the adolescents' respective experiences (KK57 and KK58). Table 20 compares responses from the adolescents two years after confirmation (t_3) by dividing them into three groups, those who are not volunteers, those who were at some point but are not anymore, and those who are.

The responses show that the adolescents who were not active as volunteers two years after confirmation, report the least opportunities to try out voluntary work during confirmation time and also the least emphasis on discussing this kind of work during their confirmation time. The highest values in both respects, however, are not found with those who actually were volunteers in t_3 , but with those who, two years after confirmation, had been volunteers but were no longer active in t_3 .

Further analysis suggests that the combination of both, trying out voluntary work and talking about it has the strongest effect concerning the actual commitment as volunteers two years after confirmation. This is an observation that should definitely be pursued in future research.

In this context, yet another aspect has to be addressed. If confirmands are given the chance to try out voluntary work during their confirmation time, depends on the decision of the workers, most likely of the main responsible ones in the first place. Yet what the confirmands will actually encounter in trying out this kind of work is dependent on the actual kinds of voluntary activities in the respective parish or its neighborhood. Such encounters can always be more or less motivating, depending on who is active there and what kind of work is organised in which manner. Again, the close connection between confirmation work and the parish appears in this respect.

(3) In most cases, the interest in becoming a volunteer in confirmation work after confirmation seems to develop during confirmation time (KP01). This result is in line with the two aspects just discussed. The influence of a parish which is welcoming to young people, and the opportunity of trying out voluntary work, if available, are part of the confirmation time. Their effects will be felt at the end of confirmation time, not after it.

Table 20: Discussing voluntary work and trying out voluntary work in confirmation time in relationship to those who are not volunteers, those who were at some point but are not anymore, and those who are (t_3 , 2015)

QP51: Are you active as a volunteer in church or Christian youth work	KK57/KK58 in three groups	KK57: I was given a chance to try out voluntary work	KK58: We discussed the importance of voluntary work for church and society
Non-volunteers	No (1-3)	50 %	37 %
	Neutral (4)	17 %	22 %
	Yes (5-7)	33 %	41 %
Short-time volunteers	No (1-3)	35 %	31 %
	Neutral (4)	19 %	15 %
	Yes (5-7)	46 %	53 %
Young volunteers	No (1-3)	41 %	36 %
	Neutral (4)	17 %	16 %
	Yes (5-7)	43 %	48 %

N = 3023 ($t_1/t_2/t_3$ -matched); scale: 1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable.

(4) The decision of becoming a volunteer after confirmation does not only depend on the specific aspects considered so far but also on the general satisfaction with one's confirmation time in general (expressed in the index $iKN3$). Confirmands who later become volunteers typically show high satisfaction with their confirmation time.

(5) The different studies on confirmation work consistently show the strong influence of camps and outings concerning the confirmands' satisfaction with confirmation time in general (cf. Niemelä/Ilg 2015). The importance of outings with three or more nights also shows up in respect to the decision to become a volunteer after confirmation. 21 % of those who experienced such outings during confirmation time later became volunteers while only 12 % of those who did not have this experience later became volunteers. This has, naturally, to do with the camp setting itself. Running a camp is a complex endeavor which strongly relies on voluntary effort.

(6) An additional question refers to the influence of the respective aims of the workers. Does it make a difference if the workers motivated the confirmands for voluntary work during confirmation time (WP13)? This question can only be answered by comparing different groups of confirmands – groups in which the workers did this, and other groups where this was not the case. Such a comparative analysis refers to what is called nested data. Data are nested

if they are not just randomly distributed among a group of respondents but if the respondents are part of different groups, for example, in schools which most often organise the pupils in groups or classes led by certain teachers. The results of this analysis show that the motivation for voluntary work during confirmation time as reported by the leaders (VC17) indeed had a very strong effect on the confirmands' respective decision. For example, this effect clearly exceeded the influence of outings and camps.

The multi-level analysis also shows the influence of the availability of youth groups suitable for young people after confirmation which is another group-dependent factor. This result confirms the influence of how the parish is experienced and viewed by the adolescents. Becoming a volunteer does not only result from personal motivations but also from what a parish has to offer – or what it does not offer to young people. However, judging from the responses from those adolescents in t_3 who were not volunteers, negative experiences with their own confirmation time were only seen as a reason for not becoming a volunteer in a very limited number of cases (7%; QP44, although with 13% in Finland). The same is true for the lack of respective opportunities in one's parish (7%; QP95, although with 11% in Austria and 12% in Switzerland).

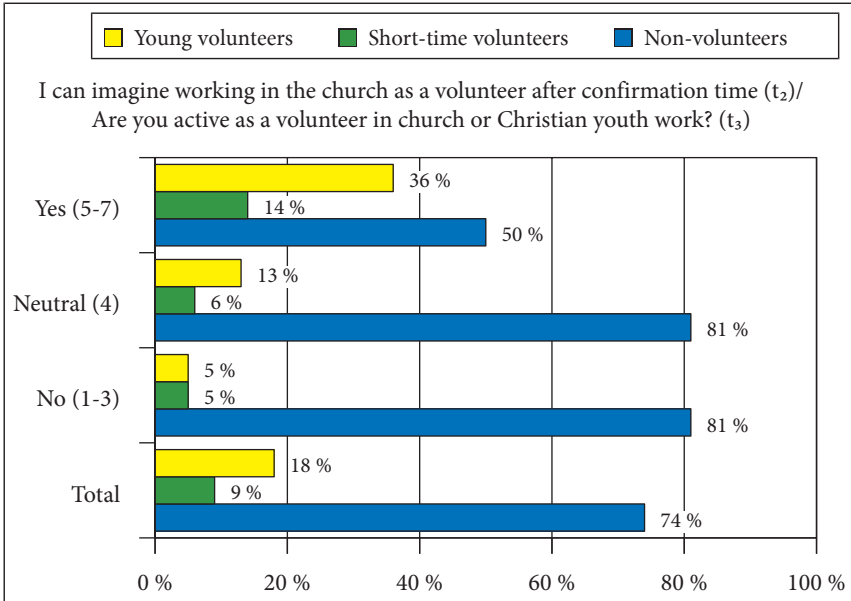
Taken together the results concerning the influence of experiences during confirmation time on the decision of becoming a volunteer after confirmation show that confirmation work does matter, even if the influence of the experiences before confirmation time turn out to be stronger. In terms of education and, in the present context, in terms of confirmation work this implies that it is quite worthwhile to improve the programs for adolescents in the directions described in this section. Childhood experiences have lasting consequences but they are not the only factor that defines interests and orientations in adolescence.

5.5 Motivation to Volunteer at the End of Confirmation Time and Voluntary Engagement after Confirmation

It has already become clear in this chapter that the willingness of young people to volunteer in the church increases significantly during confirmation time. Considering this potential, the question arises: what happened to those who were motivated – or not motivated – to volunteer in the church after their confirmation? How many of them were actually active in voluntary activities in the church or Christian youth work two years later? With the data collected in the t_3 -survey, it is now possible to address this question empirically.

As already shown, 38% of the participants in t_3 had stated two years earlier (in 2013) that they could imagine working in the church as a volunteer after

Figure 20: Voluntary engagement in the church or in Christian youth work, two years after confirmation (t₃, 2015) in %

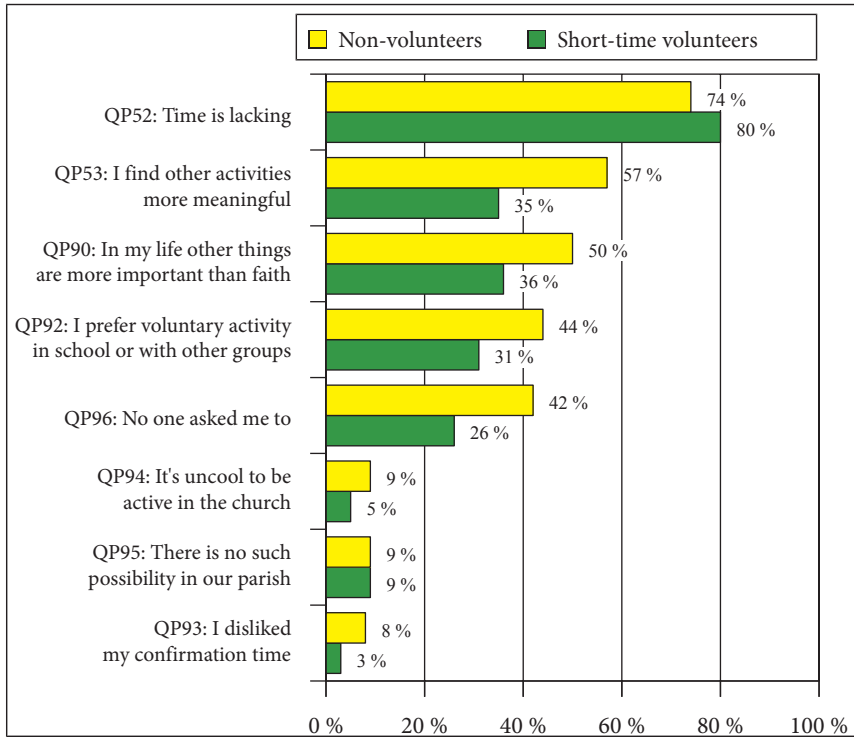


N = 3024 (t₁/t₂/t₃-matched). KP01: »I can imagine working in the church as a volunteer after confirmation time (for example in youth work or confirmation work)«; QP51: »Are you active as a volunteer in church or Christian youth work?« The scale: 1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable.

confirmation. With 45% the share of those who denied this, is even bigger, whereas 17% were undecided.

How have things developed in the succeeding two years? On an overall level, the numbers seem to be rather sobering. Of those who filled out all three questionnaires, almost three out of four of the respondents had not been engaged in voluntary work in the church or in Christian youth work at all after confirmation. 17% were active as a volunteer at the time the survey was conducted. Noticeably, almost one out of ten was initially volunteering but ceased to do so in the course of the two years after confirmation. Obviously, the percentage for actual volunteering lags considerably behind the percentage of general willingness to volunteer after confirmation time.

At first sight, it seems as if the contribution of confirmation to volunteerism were not that big at all. On a closer look, the picture changes significantly. As Figure 20 shows it does indeed make a difference whether confirmands are motivated to volunteer in church or Christian youth work or not. About half (50%) of those who could imagine engaging in such volunteerism at the end of

Figure 21: Reasons for not volunteering in church or Christian youth work (t_3 , 2015) in %

N = 2402-2424 ($t_1/t_2/t_3$ -matched); the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable.

their confirmation time (KP01), actually did so. Every third (36%) of them was active as a volunteer two years after confirmation. Bearing the decline in civic participation in some of the European countries in mind, these numbers are in fact rather impressive. However, they also show that confirmation work does not automatically contribute to youth volunteerism in church and Christian youth work. If the confirmands are not motivated to volunteer at the end of their confirmation time, they in all likelihood will not do so, in spite of their having taken part in confirmation work.

Figure 20 also shows that the confirmands' interest in volunteering at the end of confirmation time does not always become reality – only half of them (50%) start volunteering and only one third were still active as volunteers in church or Christian youth work when the t_3 survey was done two years after their confirmation time. However, this goes the other way as well – 10% of the confirmands who were not interested in volunteering (value 1-3 in scale 1-7) and 19% of those who were neutral (value 4 in scale 1-7) at the end of their con-

firmation time, actually began to volunteer in church or Christian youth work. 13% of the respondents who had chosen value 4 and 5% of those who had chosen 1-3 in t_2 , were still active volunteers at the time of the t_3 survey.

In the t_3 -survey, those who were not active as a volunteer in church or Christian youth work were asked for the reasons for not volunteering. Here too, the differences and commonalities between the initially motivated and non-motivated participants are quite telling (see Figure 21).

The following observations seem to be of particular relevance. Firstly, lack of time is the major reason for not volunteering in church and Christian youth work. This applies irrespective of whether the respondents were initially motivated to volunteer or not. However, in all other cases the reasons for not volunteering are significantly influenced by the initial degree of willingness to volunteer. Each of these reasons is emphasised more by those who could not imagine volunteering in church at the end of their confirmation time. In two cases the gap between the motivated and the non-motivated is particularly large. When asked for the reasons for not volunteering, the lesser motivated tend to state more often that other things are more important in their life than faith. This connection between the personal importance of faith and voluntary engagement is not that surprising. If young people do not consider faith a relevant part of their life, they are presumably less inclined to volunteer in a faith-related context. The other case merits more consideration. Considerably more of the non-motivated youth stated that they were not active as volunteers because no one asked them to. That is understandable insofar as motivated persons are more likely to be included in voluntary activities than persons who show little willingness. One does wonder however, what the reaction would have been if these confirmands indeed had been encouraged to volunteer after confirmation.

5.6 The Short-Time Volunteers

As reported above, almost every tenth (9%) respondent had been acting as volunteer in the church or Christian youth work after confirmation but quit before t_3 . Short-time volunteers already differ from the young volunteers and the non-volunteers significantly in childhood: they fell between these two groups in terms of Christian upbringing. Strong Christian upbringing in turn has a strong positive correlation with attitudes to Christian beliefs, the church and Christian faith. Similar differences between these three groups were found concerning the parents' active volunteering – short-time volunteers' parents were in-between young volunteers and non-volunteers. Similarly, their expectations regarding confirmation time differed from the expectations from the

other two groups (cf. Figure 19). They placed less emphasis on family tradition (iCA06) and considered the material reasons and celebration (iCB10) less important for their participation than the non-volunteers. Their expectations on both faith and maturation (iCB08), fun and community (iCA08) were in-between the young volunteers and the non-volunteers.

Short-time volunteers also appear in the middle concerning the question of interest in volunteering in the church in t_1 (CP01, positive attitude: young volunteers 51 %, short-time volunteers 35 %; non-volunteer 17 %). However, the short-time volunteers became much more favorable towards the idea of volunteering during confirmation time (CP01/KP01, positive change: young volunteers +23 percent points, short-time volunteers +25 percent points and non-volunteers +7 percent points). At least one reason for this trend was that they were given an opportunity to try out voluntary work and to talk about its importance during confirmation time – short-time volunteers reported opportunities for this more often than other confirmands.

Table 21 shows that the short-time volunteers were still the middle group at the end of confirmation time concerning satisfaction with various aspects of confirmation time. Their replies came close to those of the non-volunteers when asked about satisfaction with the minister (KN07), working methods (KN20), and content of lessons (KN03). They scored close to young volunteers reporting their satisfaction with other workers (KN08), camp(s) (KN11), and the whole confirmation time (KN01).

The results concerning short-time volunteers can be explained partly by episodic volunteerism, a term describing that it has become fairly common for adolescents to volunteer only for a limited time. They typically do not invest all their resources in one given organisation or institution (Beder/Fast, 2008; Macduff 2008). At least this would explain the finding that every third of the short-time volunteers said that they found volunteering at school (QP92) or other activities more meaningful (QP53), or some other activities in their life had become more important (QP90).

Another explanation can be found in prior research on short-time volunteers in Finland (Niemelä 2002, 2008, Tervo-Niemelä [in press]; Porkka 2004, 2009, Porkka/Huhanantti 2012). These studies have shown that friends play an important role in the decision to start or quit the YCV activity – typically the friends make the decision to begin or quit the activity together (Porkka 2004, 92-93). This is especially true among socially and externally motivated YCVs (cf. Porkka 2009). They are not interested in spiritual or personal growth, but they become YCVs mostly because it enables them to be together with their friends and to extend their social network (Porkka 2009). They are typically highly interested in volunteering at the end of confirmation time but the motivation already fades before they even start the training. Even if they finish YCV training and proceed to volunteer, they usually

Table 21: Confirmands' satisfaction with various aspects of confirmation time (t₂, 2013) in the groups of their later volunteering (t₃, 2015) in %

	Non-volunteers	Short-time volunteers	Young volunteers
KN01: the whole confirmation time	79	86	90
KN03: content/topics of lessons in confirmation work	66	69	74
KN07: minister/person primarily responsible for confirmation work	80	80	84
KN08: other teachers/workers	76	86	88
KN10: church services	62	67	71
KN11: camp(s)	80	86	88
KN14: music, songs and singing	60	69	74
KN20: working methods (for example, working with biblical texts, group work, etc.)	62	64	69

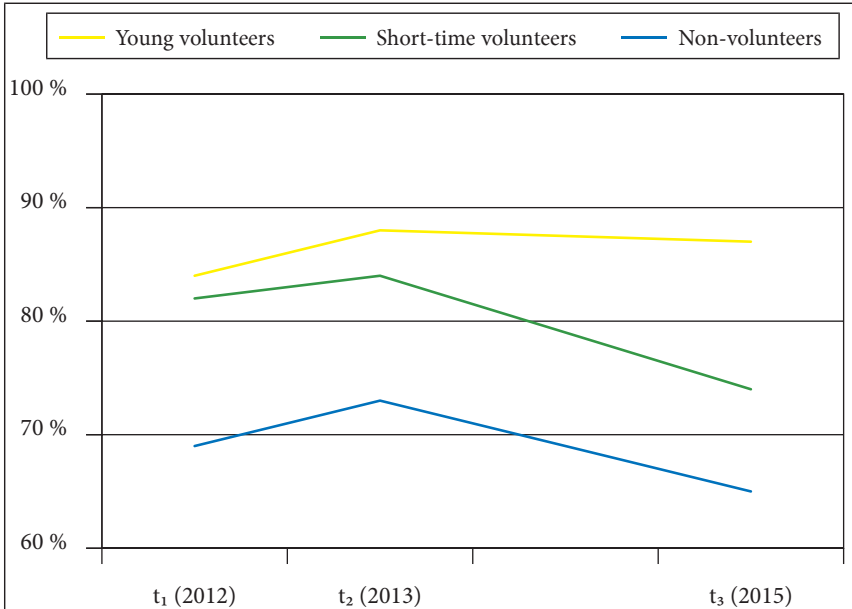
N = 2850-3239; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

only volunteer once before they quit while the spiritually motivated YCVs are likely to volunteer for several years (Niemelä 2007, 117-118).

Many findings on the short-time volunteers match the description of the socially and externally motivated volunteers. They are not interested in faith and the lessons but in camp and friends. This assumption is also supported by the finding that when asked about the importance of different topics in confirmation time, the short-time volunteers considered two topics more important than the other confirmands: friendship (CL09) and justice and responsibility for others (CL08). At the end of confirmation time the short-time volunteers scored highest in KK56 »I made new friends within the group«. Because socially and externally motivated volunteers are also very active in many fields, it is natural that they are running out of time and find new topics which are more interesting than volunteering in the confirmation work as Figure 21 above shows.

Quitting voluntary activities in church or Christian youth work is connected to a negative change in attitudes towards the church as can be seen in Figure 22. Similar developments can be found in their attitudes, e. g., towards the Christian faith, to Christian beliefs and their willingness to baptise their children. It is hard to say in this case what is the cause and the effect, and to what degree: whether the negative attitudes infringe upon the volunteering or if they are par-

Figure 22: The confirmands' attitudes towards the church: t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015), grouped by their post-confirmation volunteering category (%)



N = 3017 ($t_1/t_2/t_3$ -matched): values 4-5 on a scale 1 = very negative; 5 = very positive.

tially caused by it. The correlation, however, is clear. Overall, the results seem to follow the »Matthew effect«. However, the positive change in attitudes during confirmation time is strongest among those without Christian socialisation in childhood. Several years of active parish connection, however, made the differences from childhood Christian socialisation practically disappear (cf. p. 178 ff.). This finding challenges the parishes to pay special attention to those with shaky motivation because if lost, such a connection is unlikely to be rekindled. When the parish connection ends, it will affect the whole future of these short-time volunteers.

5.7 Case Study: Motivations for Volunteering in Confirmation Work (in Germany and Switzerland)

The adolescents who responded to the questionnaires two years after confirmation were given an additional questionnaire they were asked to complete if they were active as volunteers at that time. It was expected from the beginning that

the number of respondents for this additional questionnaire would be small, in line with the percentages of confirmands becoming volunteers after confirmation. Yet for two of the participating countries there are enough questionnaires for evaluation – from Germany (354 questionnaires) and Switzerland (91). For both countries there are separate publications with the results from these countries (cf. Schweitzer et al. 2016; Schlag et al. 2016).

Two questions formed the core of the volunteers' questionnaire. The first question referred to the person or persons who influenced the adolescent's decision to become a volunteer, the other was about the reasons for being a volunteer.

The results show a similar pattern in most respects. The young volunteers almost unanimously stress that it was themselves who was most responsible for the decision to become a volunteer (88 % in both countries). They also agree that the influence of the minister was least important, although it is higher in Germany (31 %) than in Switzerland (26 %). The influence of friends or peer groups is also viewed as strong, in this case more in Switzerland (73 %) than in Germany (64 %). The most striking difference refers to the family which, according to the adolescents' responses, is much higher in Switzerland (51 %) than in Germany (34 %) – a difference that cannot be explained on the basis of the results available and should be taken up in future research.

Clearly three reasons stand out, with very high approval of 90 % or more in both countries. The main reasons for being a volunteer are that it is »fun«, that the adolescents »like working together with other people« and that they find a »good spirit in the team of (voluntary) workers«. Not quite as strong but still with more than 80 % approval follows the motive »to learn something that is useful in life«. The idea of contributing to »a better society« also plays a major role (72 % and 74 %) but somewhat less than the motives mentioned first. The most extrinsic motive (»It's good for my CV/portfolio«) receives least approval.

Explicitly religious motives are affirmed less by the respondents and, in part, also differently in the two countries. »To learn more about God and faith« is affirmed by 60 % (Germany) and 56 % (Switzerland) which makes it a majority motive in both countries. »To help young people to grow in their faith« is important to 64 % of the German respondents but only to 48 % of the Swiss respondents. A similar difference shows up with the item »Doing something for others is a consequence of my faith« with 57 % (Germany) and 40 % (Switzerland).

These results can be interpreted in the light of general research on volunteerism that shows that today, volunteers are often motivated by the positive experiences connected to their work and that having fun and being part of a group or community are crucial in this context. This does not mean, however, that altruistic or religious motives would no longer be of importance but the traditional altruistic motives must be accompanied by other motives related to

Table 22: Young Volunteers: the influence of certain persons and groups on their decision to volunteer (t₃, 2015) in %

How much was your decision to become a volunteer influenced by ...? DE (EKD) CH	DE (EKD)	CH
QP60: The pastor or other church workers.	31	26
QP61: Other young people.	64	73
QP62: My family.	34	51
QP63: Myself.	88	88

N = 347-353 (Germany), 88-91 (Switzerland); the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not at all; 7 = very much).

Table 23: Young volunteers: reasons for being active as a volunteer (t₃, 2015) in %

I am a volunteer because ...	DE EKD	CH
QP66: I like working together with other people.	92	97
QP67: I want to contribute to a better society.	72	74
QP 68: I want to help young people to grow in their faith.	64	48
QP69: I want to learn something that is useful in life.	81	86
QP32: it is fun.	97	97
QP70: of the good spirit in the team of (voluntary) workers.	92	96
QP65: I want to learn more about God and faith.	60	56
QP71: I want to take part in camp.	32	24
QP72: I want more of the same experiences I had as a confirmand.	60	38
QP73: doing something for others is a consequence of my faith.	57	40
QP91: it's good for my CV/portfolio.	29	24

N = 340-353 (Germany), 90-91 (Switzerland); the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

the self. Both aspects can be found in the responses of the present study. Experiences related to the adolescents themselves are the most important reasons but altruistic and religious reasons also play a strong role, although somewhat less in Switzerland than in Germany – probably due, among others, to less emphasis on faith-related questions in Swiss confirmation work.

It may be considered surprising that the motives related to the adolescents' own experiences during confirmation time are not affirmed more strongly. To have the chance to go to another camp is not a strong motive (32%/Germany, 24%/Switzerland). Nor is the wish to have »more of the same experiences I had as a confirmand« which only 38% of the Swiss respondents affirm while 60% of

the German respondents find this motive important. The analysis of predictors for becoming a volunteer presented in the next chapter (p. 121 ff.) show that both, satisfaction with one's own confirmation time as well as outings and camps indeed influence this decision. Yet they do not seem to work as reasons that the young volunteers describe as important for themselves.

The motivations stated by the young volunteers have a number of important implications for how to work with them. It will be most important to take seriously their wish for having fun and to experience good community within the group of fellow workers. Consequently, the task of keeping the young volunteers motivated over time implies that the volunteers should not only be viewed as a presupposition for improving confirmation work (which remains important) but also as a group of young people who have rights, interests and needs of their own. From this perspective it will be decisive if the volunteers are given a chance to experience community in their own group of workers, for example, because they are offered a special place to be together in the parish, or because they are offered the chance to go on outings for young volunteers. In brief, there is a need for programs addressing young volunteers – not as workers who are being trained, but as participants. The work with the confirmands will profit from this as well.

5.8 Conclusion

Confirmation work contributes to volunteerism in a multitude of ways. During their confirmation time young people often have the opportunity to try out and reflect on voluntary work. Depending on the context, they interact and have meaningful encounters with young volunteers. Thus it is no surprise that their willingness to volunteer themselves clearly increases over the course of their confirmation time. However, the question of how the confirmands get involved with volunteerism and what factors play a positive or negative role has not been explored sufficiently in prior research. Therefore, this chapter set out to trace »pathways into volunteerism« in the field of confirmation work.

In the following, the most important findings are summarised by focusing on factors that point to developments *before*, *during* and *after* confirmation time.

First of all, the analysis indicated that the decision (not) to volunteer in the church after confirmation is strongly influenced by the confirmands' social and religious background. The results confirm that girls are more likely to volunteer than boys and that religious upbringing enhances the probability of post-confirmation voluntary engagement in the church and in Christian youth work. Furthermore the findings in this chapter support the assumption that there is

a particularly strong correlation between the parents' volunteering and the confirmands' own voluntary activity. These findings present a considerable challenge for the churches: they have to find ways to address and motivate those confirmands who, by context or disposition, are less inclined to volunteer.

The decision to volunteer is influenced by experiences during confirmation time. Interestingly, the atmosphere in the parish seems to be of central importance. Confirmands are more likely to volunteer in the church if they feel welcome and accepted in the parish. This is an important insight for practitioners: to attract and activate young people, parishes need to establish a culture that is open and supportive to young people's needs, views and preferences. It is also important to give adolescents opportunities to try out voluntary work, and to organise confirmation work in a way that meets the confirmands' satisfaction (for more details see p. 86 f., 121 ff.). All these findings confirm the important role of the workers because their intentions and aims largely shape the confirmands' decision whether to volunteer in the church or in Christian youth work after confirmation.

According to the results in this chapter, the post-confirmation volunteers themselves most commonly cite social and altruistic motivations for their volunteering. Faith-related motivations are of major importance too, especially for the girls. As expected, lack of time is by far the most important reason for not volunteering in the church. Not expected was another – and somewhat troubling – central finding: almost half of the non-motivated adolescents in the study stated that they did not volunteer because they were not asked to. This finding should be taken as important feedback for the parishes: young people want to be needed. If the parish does not need their contribution for confirmation and youth work or other parish activities, there is no reason to ask why young people are so rarely present in the congregations.

This leads on to a final and particularly pressing issue: volunteers are not a homogeneous group. Different subgroups deserve special attention and support. This holds particularly true for those post-confirmands who volunteer only for a short time in the church or in Christian youth work. The analysis above shows that these volunteers have their own profile which differs considerably from the long-time volunteers. Many of them are motivated more extrinsically and come from a less religious background. They place more emphasis on fun, friends and togetherness, but are only slightly interested in faith and in the lessons. In a way, they seem to fall between the cracks. All motivations for starting the post-confirmation voluntary activity should be considered equal. However, the workers should pay more attention to those with insecure motivations because they are more likely to quit. Many of them have not had much Christian socialisation in their childhood and parish activity is a new experience for them as well as, in many cases, for their family. A number of positive

changes in their attitudes have already taken place during confirmation time. But they need more positive experiences with the church. The results of this study show that volunteering in the church or in Christian youth work gives them something for their whole life, not only in relationship to the church. Correspondingly, if they quit, such chances are lost.

6. Believing, Belonging and Volunteerism in Adolescence. Predictive Factors from Childhood and Confirmation Time in a Multi-Level Framework

WOLFGANG ILG, KATI TERVO-NIEMELÄ AND CHRISTOPH H. MAASS

6.1 Introduction

Previous research has repeatedly shown that parents' religiosity has significant effects on children's religiosity and there is a strong tendency that people's religious beliefs and practices formed within their family persist from childhood into adulthood. Other factors, including various meso and macro level influences from religious groups, school, peers, the media and wider society are seen as secondary to family influences (see, e. g., Bengtson et al. 2013; Bengtson et al. 2009; Beit-Hallamy/Argyle 1997, 99; Hood et al. 1996, 74; McIntosh/Spilka 1995; Chatters/Taylor 2005). Recent studies suggest that also non-religious orientation is increasingly a matter of continuity and the transmission of non-religion from parents to their children can be seen to a far greater degree than in the past (Bengtson et al. 2013, 151-164, see also Zuckerman 2011, 2; Pasquale 2010). Also the earlier international study on confirmands showed that family is a key factor in explaining youth's religious attitudes both in the beginning and at the end of confirmation time. However, confirmation experiences were also important in explaining the relationship to church and to faith at the end of confirmation time (see Schweitzer et al. 2015a; Schweitzer et al. 2009). But do the influences of confirmation time persist? The expectations (from church leaders, from workers in confirmation work, or from families) go far beyond those short-term effects: it is hoped that confirmation time and experiences of encountering the Church shape their attitudes and behaviour for a longer time, especially during the phase when they turn into young adults. However, the previous research raises the question, if and to what extent confirmation time can have an influence on young people in a longer run. Is the confirmation experience producing lasting effects or are there mostly other factors which tend to be meaningful in determining young people's later relation to church and faith?

In practise, for many church members, confirmation time is the most intensive encounter with the Church during their entire life span. A 10-year-longitudinal study among Finnish confirmands suggests that confirmation time can also be a very meaningful factor in determining young people's later relation to church and faith, at least according to their own estimation. The study showed that as young adults they rated confirmation experience as the most meaning-

ful factor in influencing their religious thinking both 5 years and still 10 years after confirmation time; meaning that they regarded it as more important than influences from their own family or as more important than any other church activity (Niemelä 2008; Tervo-Niemelä [in press]).

The chapter on church commitment and changes and trends in it showed that the development after confirmation time may take various patterns (see p. 61 ff.). While some are clearly distancing themselves from the Church, other adolescents are highly strengthened in their commitment after confirmation time. The chapter also shows that differences among the young people are amplified after confirmation time: those distant seem to become increasingly distant while some of those committed become increasingly committed (see p. 68 ff.). A similar trend was visible in the 10-year longitudinal study among Finnish confirmands (Niemelä 2015).

In the present chapter the aim is to distinguish factors that explain differences in commitment to the Church two years after confirmation. One special focus is the question of in what way volunteerism can be predicted. The aim is finding out which factors explain the relationship to church, faith and volunteerism two years after confirmation. Are confirmation time experiences still meaningful in determining young people's commitment to the Church? What about background factors: gender and home religious background, are they still equally meaningful? Are the childhood influences so determining that experiences during confirmation time can hardly change these presuppositions?

6.2 Methodology

The analysis is based on data from all seven countries of this research project (see p. 246 ff. for background information and a description of the sample).

The investigation of predictive factors is based on multi-level analysis, a method suitable to investigate relationships within nested data often used in empirical education research: in a 3-level data structure students are nested within classes, and classes are nested within schools. In the context of confirmation work confirmands located on the micro-level, confirmation groups located on the meso-level and churches on the macro-level are the units of investigation (for an introduction into multi-level methodology in the field of confirmation research: Ilg/Schweitzer 2010). Within the 3-level framework of confirmation work, the multi-level analysis investigates first what proportion of the variance of the dependent variable can be explained by differences between churches on a macro-level, by differences between groups on a meso-level and by differences between the single confirmands on the micro-level. Then it can be asked which predictors that can be located on all three levels (e. g., predictors

measuring the social climate on the macro- or meso-level, pedagogical measures on the meso-level, personal characteristics of the confirmands like religious socialisation on the micro-level) have an effect in explaining the respective variance proportions of the dependent variable (e. g., attitudes and beliefs of the confirmands) that is always located on the micro-level (for detailed methodological background information see Heck et al. 2012 and 2014).

The most influencing factors predicting such personal convictions are expected within the individuals (micro-level). As groups of confirmands share the same experiences and also the same social climate, it can also be expected that the group-level is of relevant influence (meso-level). The uppermost level attributed with predicting factors is the macro-level, consisting of the respective church.

For a multi-level analysis typically only such cases can be used that have valid answers to all of the respective variables. Altogether 3073 adolescents from 784 groups (usually every parish has one group) in 43 Churches could be used for the analysis. The size of the Churches differs very much. Some countries only have one Church (as it is the case for the Scandinavian countries in the study), whereas Germany and Switzerland each have 19 Churches. The analytical level for the Churches is not the country, but the respective Church, this leads to the number of 43 Churches in 7 countries.

A set of altogether 22 variables (2 on macro-level, 12 on meso-level, 8 on micro-level) have been tested for their predictive power. The following variables yielded significant results and are thus part of the result tables below:

Confirmands' background factors (t_1):

- Gender (reference category 0: male) (micro-level)
- CP07: How many people working in the Church as voluntary workers do you know (for example, in youth work or in the parish)? (micro-level)
- CJ01: How interested are your parents in religion? (micro-, meso- and macro-level)
- CM11/CM12: Have you previously (more than three times) participated in any group activity offered by the Church (Sunday school, children's group, youth group etc.)? (micro-level)

Confirmands' evaluations about their confirmation time (t_2):

- KK57: I was given the chance to try out voluntary work. (micro-level)
- Satisfaction with confirmation time: Index iKN3 (t_2): Satisfaction with confirmation time (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.88). The index is computed as the mean value of the following t_2 -items:

To what extent are you satisfied with ... ? (micro-level)

- KN01: the whole confirmation time
- KN03: content/topics of lessons in confirmation work

- KN07: minister/person primarily responsible for confirmation work
- KN08: other teachers/workers
- KN10: church services
- KN11: camp(s)
- KN14: music, songs and singing
- KN20: working methods (for example, working with biblical texts, group work, etc.)

Workers' reports about the setting and the aims of confirmation work in their parish (t_2):

- VQ05: Number of overnight events in the context of trips/outings/camps (meso-level)
- VC17: The confirmands were encouraged to do voluntary work within the Church (youth work, confirmation work, etc.). (meso-level)
- VL01: In our parish there are youth groups that are suitable for newly confirmed adolescents. (meso-level)

In addition to the listed variables, the following variables were tested for their predictive power, but were considered not relevant for the analysis due to the statistical outcomes: Index WB1: Faith related aims (t_1 , meso-level), Index WB2: Aim of focusing services (t_1 , meso-level), Index WP1: Encouraging voluntary work (t_1 , meso-level), WC06: get to know what the youth work of the Church offers to them (t_1 , meso-level), VL02: If a confirmand wants to become a volunteer in our parish after confirmation, there are opportunities to do so (t_2 , meso-level), VC18: were encouraged for voluntary work outside of the Church (sport clubs, music, etc.) (t_2 , meso-level), VU04_05: number of volunteers (t_2 , meso-level), CP17: civic engagement of parents (t_1 , micro-level), KK58: we discussed the importance of voluntary work for church and society (t_2 , micro-level). Details on the measurement scales and the exact wordings can be found in the appendix (p. 262 ff).

The dependent variables come from the questionnaire t_3 which was administered two years after confirmation. There are various ways to measure commitment to religion. Following the same model as in other chapters (cf. p. 61 ff.), the commitment to the church is measured by concentrating on belief and belonging aspects of commitment among the young people two years after confirmation time (see also Niemelä et al. 2015). The belief-aspect is measured by young people's commitment to various statements about Christian faith. Belonging is operationalized by their sense of belonging (importance of membership) and by their practical commitment to volunteering in the church.

6.3 Factors Predicting Christian Beliefs

In the first analysis, the aim is to find out which factors explain young people's commitment to the Church when measured in terms of their relation to Christian beliefs. The dependent variable is the Christian belief-index iQE1, which measures the approval on the 7-point Likert scale to six basic Christian beliefs (Alpha = 0.90):

- QE01: God created the world.
- QE02: There is life after death.
- QE03: God loves all humans and cares about each one of us.
- QE04: Jesus has risen from the dead.
- QE08: Faith in God helps me in difficult situations.
- QE09: I believe in God.

The aim is to find out which are meaningful factors in explaining young people's Christian beliefs two years after confirmation: to what extent it can still be explained by various micro-, meso- and macro-level influences. These include, for example, religious background in micro-level (religiosity of the parents of the respondent), in meso-level (religiosity of the parents of the confirmation group in general) and macro-level (the general level of religiosity among parents in the church/the social climate supporting religious socialisation). Furthermore, they include, for example, items like gender and satisfaction with confirmation experiences. Table 24 presents the results (only relevant influence factors are printed).

Altogether, 7% of the variance can be attributed to the macro-level, 29% to the meso-level and 64% to the micro-level. It is remarkable that on all the three levels the religiosity of the parents (as stated by the adolescent at the age of about 13 years) is a significant predictor for the religiosity of the adolescent at the age of about 16. Parents' religiosity on an individual level is an indicator for the religiosity of family background. The mean value of parents' religiosity for all parents of one parish group/church is taken as an indicator of the religiosity of the respective parish/church setting. The results show that not only the individual religious sphere at home is shaping the individual trajectories concerning personal beliefs, but also the living environment (parish) and even the broader church context in the country/region. The setting in which one is raised does make a big difference concerning the development of Christian attitudes. This hints to the importance of plausibility structures in maintaining beliefs: all religious traditions require specific communities of believers for their continuing plausibility (Berger 1967, 46). If one is surrounded by others who believe similarly, it strengthens the ability of individuals to believe (McGuire 2002, 37). The results show that if the young people are surrounded

Table 24: Predictors of Christian beliefs (iQE1)

	Standardised effects
Macro-level	
(ICC = 7%)	
<i>Social context</i>	
CJ01: Religiosity of parents (church means)/social climate supporting religious socialisation	0.20**
Meso-level	
(ICC = 29%)	
<i>Social context</i>	
CJ01: Religiosity of parents (parish/group means)/social climate supporting religious socialisation	0.20**
Micro-level	
(ICC = 64%)	
<i>Socio-demographic & biographic background</i>	
CJ01: Religiosity of parents	0.28**
CM11/CM12: Church contact before confirmation time	0.12**
<i>Experiences during confirmation time</i>	
iKN3: Satisfaction with confirmation time	0.11**

Multi-level linear model. Estimation method: REML. Random intercepts are computed. Meso-level predictors are church-centered; micro-level predictors are group-centered. Predictors and dependent variable are z-standardised on the respective levels. Levels of significance: 5% (* = $0.01 > p \leq 0.05$) or 1% (** = $p \leq 0.01$). N = 3073.

by others who belief similarly, not only in their homes, but in their broader surroundings, they are more likely to believe and maintain their beliefs than those who are surrounded by people who do not share the same worldview.

There are only two other variables with a significant predictive effect: the church contact before confirmation time and the satisfaction with confirmation time. This result suggests that both, participating in Christian children's programs before confirmation time as well as a positive confirmation time contribute to a positive attitude towards Christianity in the later course of adolescence. This means that church contact has predictive power independent from parents' religiosity in micro-, meso- and macro-level, although parents' religiosity has clearly a stronger influence. Therefore, church contact will hardly be able to fully compensate for a non-religious family background.

Table 25: Predictors of the importance of belonging to the church (QG01)

	Standardised effects
Macro-level	
(ICC = 5 %)	
<i>Social context</i>	
CJ01: Religiosity of parents (church means)/social climate supporting religious socialisation	0.18**
Meso-level	
(ICC = 27 %)	
<i>Social context</i>	
CJ01: Religiosity of parents (parish/group means)/social climate supporting religious socialisation	0.16**
Micro-level	
(ICC = 68 %)	
<i>Socio-demographic & biographic background</i>	
CJ01: Religiosity of parents	0.20**
CM11/CM12: Church contact before confirmation time	0.16**
<i>Experiences during confirmation time</i>	
iKN3: Satisfaction with confirmation time	0.14**

Multi-level linear model. Estimation method: REML. Random intercepts are computed. Meso-level predictors are church-centered; micro-level predictors are group-centered. Predictors and dependent variable are z-standardised on the respective levels. Levels of significance: 5 % (* = $0.01 > p \leq 0.05$) or 1 % (** = $p \leq 0.01$). N = 3073.

6.4 Factors Predicting Sense of Belonging

A similar multi-level analysis was conducted for the dependent variable QG01: »It is important for me to belong to the Church« with which the sense of belonging to the Church was measured.

The picture looks quite similar as in the analysis above. The proportions of variance assigned to the three levels are close to those in the multi-level analysis for Christian beliefs. Again the religiosity of the parents is a significant predictor on all three levels, again suggesting the importance of plausibility structures. As before, church contact before confirmation time and the satisfaction with confirmation time also have a significant predicting power. When comparing the standardised effects, it becomes visible that these church-related experiences are of greater influence concerning the importance of belonging to the

Church than they were concerning Christian beliefs. In other words: a good experience with the Church in childhood and adolescence can shape the long-term development of personal religiousness, but it can shape even more the loyalty towards the Church.

6.5 What Predicts Becoming a Volunteer in the Church?

After confirmation time some adolescents find their way into volunteerism in the Church, others do not. Are there predictors from the time before or during the confirmation time that make it more or less probable that an adolescent two years after confirmation time will commit her-/himself to voluntary work? The analysis is based on the answers to the question QP51: »Are you active as a volunteer in church or Christian youth work?« as dependent variable. 17% of all confirmands who filled in a t_3 -questionnaire ticked the box »yes«, 9% ticked »not anymore«, the other 74% answered »no«. In the dichotomised version of QP51, the answer category »not anymore« is treated as a positive answer so that the question if the adolescents had been engaged in voluntary work after confirmation regardless of if they had quit or not until t_3 is the focus of interest. The following analysis also comes back to some of the questions raised in the chapter on volunteers (see p. 84 ff.).

The model of multi-level analysis has a reduced number of respondents as not all participants in the study gave valid answers to the respective questions. The multi-level analysis in Table 26 is based on 2576 cases. In this reduced sample the baseline probability for a positive answer to QP51 is 18%. As the dependent variable is dichotomous, a special variant of multi-level analysis with binary logistic regression was used (see explanations under Table 26).

Table 26 can be read as follows: if one assumes that an adolescent shows the mean values on all predictors, then the baseline probability that she/he will be active as a volunteer after confirmation is represented by the indexed value 1. If, for example, the predictor »CP07: Contacts with people working in the Church as volunteers (church means)/social climate supporting volunteerism« is increased by 1 standardised unit on the macro-level, the probability of volunteerism increases by factor 1.46 or increases by 46% compared with the baseline probability (indexed value 1); if predictor »CP07: Contacts with people working in the Church as volunteers« is increased by 1 standardised unit on the micro-level then the probability of volunteerism increases by the factor 1.36 compared with the baseline probability (value 1).

According to the intraclass correlation (ICC), measuring the variance proportions between the analysis levels, 4% of the overall variance of QP51 go back to the differences between Churches on the macro-level; 16% of the overall

Table 26: Predictors of volunteer commitment in the church after confirmation (QP51; dichotomised)

	Change in probability of volunteer commitment
Macro-level	
(ICC = 4 %)	
<i>Social context</i>	
CP07: Contacts with people working in the Church as volunteers (church means)/social climate supporting engagement	1.46**
Meso-level	
(ICC = 16 %)	
<i>Social context</i>	
CP07: Contacts with people working in the Church as volunteers (Parish/group means)/social climate supporting engagement	1.22**
<i>Pedagogical measures & settings</i>	
VC17: were encouraged for voluntary work within the Church.	1.27**
VQ05: Overnight events in the context of trips/outings/camps; ln [N +1])	1.13*
VL01: In our parish there are youth groups that are suitable for newly confirmed adolescents.	1.12*
Micro-level	
(ICC = 80 %)	
<i>Socio-demographic & biographic background</i>	
CP07: Contacts with people working in the Church as volunteers	1.36**
Gender: female	1.21**
CJ01: Religiosity of parents	1.20**
<i>Experiences during confirmation time</i>	
KK57: I was given the chance to try out voluntary work.	1.20**
iKN3: Satisfaction with confirmation time	1.11*

The table reports the change in probability of later volunteerism if increasing the predicting variable by one standardised unit and simultaneously holding all other predictors constant. Results are based on a Generalised Linear Mixed Model (GLMM) method: binary logistic regression. Random intercepts are computed. Meso-level predictors are church-centered; micro-level predictors are group-centered. All predictors are z-standardised on the respective levels.

Levels of significance: 5 % (* = $0.01 > p \leq 0.05$) or 1 % (** = $p \leq 0.01$). N = 2576. For the methodological background of the analysis see Heck et al. 2012.

variance go back to differences between groups on the meso-level; 80 % of the overall variance go back to differences between adolescents on the micro-level.

The religiosity of the parents again is an important influencing factor on the micro-level. But there is one exceptionally important predictor on all three levels: the number of contacts with people who are active as volunteers, as it was estimated by the confirmands in the beginning of their confirmation time, has by far the most predicting power on all the three levels. It seems that a surrounding of volunteers is highly stimulating for a later involvement in volunteerism by the respective adolescents. In addition, there are more interesting predictors to discover in this analysis.

The predictors on the micro-level are worth a closer look: girls are more prevalent in volunteerism than boys, which is hardly surprising. Again, the satisfaction with confirmation time (iKN3) predicts later voluntary work. In addition to this, an important predictor on the micro-level is the question to what extent confirmands were given the chance to try out voluntary work during their confirmation time (KK57). It can be assumed that many confirmands have no real idea what voluntary work in the church feels like. By trying this out, the probability of later being involved in it oneself is significantly rising.

On the meso-level, there are three variables connected to the conceptual frame of confirmation work that yield a significant contribution towards volunteer activation.

First, the length of confirmation camp (VQ05) has a positive influence. A reason for this probably is the fact that camps are a perfect opportunity for confirmands to see young volunteers »in action«. The longer they observe the fun these workers have with the camp, the more they can imagine becoming one of them later.

Second, the workers' estimation in how far the confirmands »were encouraged for voluntary work within the church« (VC17) is highly connected to the probability that the confirmands will become active later. This underlines the assumption that workers' aims are of predicting value for the »outcomes« of a pedagogical setting like confirmation work (for a broader explanation of the underlying theory see Ilg/Lüdtke 2011).

Thirdly, the workers' report about the existence of suitable youth groups for adolescents right after confirmation (VL01). This underlines the importance of a broader field of youth work for the aim of activating adolescents for voluntary work.

6.6 Becoming a Long-Time or Short-Time Volunteer: A Comparison of Contrasting Groups

As the method of binary logistic regression yields rather abstract numbers, the following presentation shows a more lucid way of comparing different sub-groups. Figure 23 compares sets of two contrasting groups and their respective share of later volunteers. In addition to the dichotomous presentation of volunteerism in the multi-level analysis above, the figure divides volunteers into those who are still active two years after confirmation and those who had started a volunteer activity but were no longer active when asked for it in t_3 .

The first set of comparisons shows how the answers of boys and girls differ: while 19% of the girls are active as a church-related volunteer two years after confirmation, and another 10% had at least started to do so, the respective share of the boys is only 14% and 7%. The bars at the top of Figure 23 show the average levels for the whole t_3 -sample: 17% yes, 9% not anymore. It must be kept in mind that for some of the analyses only the »extreme« ends of contrast groups are part of the analysis (see the description in the figure for details of how groups were defined).

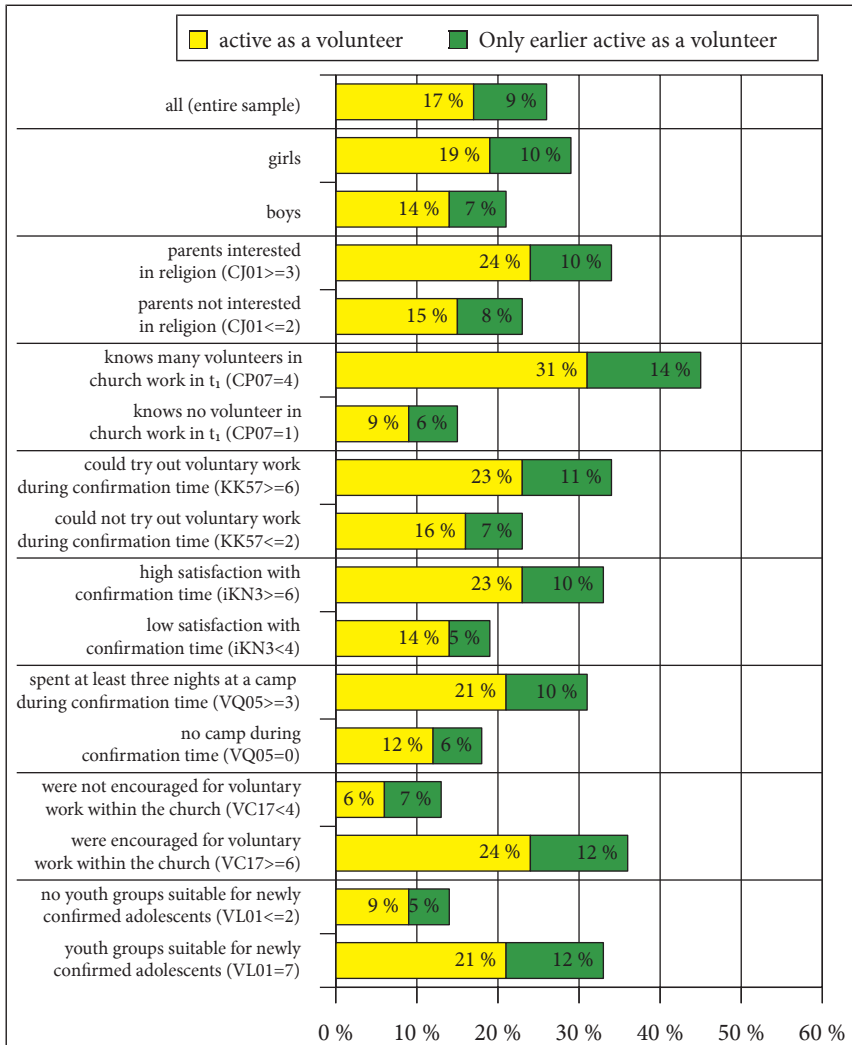
6.7 Short-Time Volunteers

The green bars in Figure 23 display the share of confirmands who started volunteering in the church after confirmation, but stopped before t_3 (which is two years after confirmation). It becomes clear that it is a relevant amount of the volunteers that only remain for a relatively short time. By comparing the proportion of »short-time volunteers« among those who started volunteering after confirmation, it can be seen which factors predict the termination of volunteerism. Figure 24 displays the respective proportions.

The figure shows that the differences are low for most contrast groups. Two markable differences refer to the social setting: those adolescents who come from families with low religious interest and from backgrounds not used to volunteerism are more likely to end their voluntary work soon after they started it (for this question also cf. above, p. 105 ff.). With other words: it is not only unlikely that these adolescents start voluntary activities – their risk of dropping it is also higher than that of adolescents who come from backgrounds that are typically more related with later volunteerism.

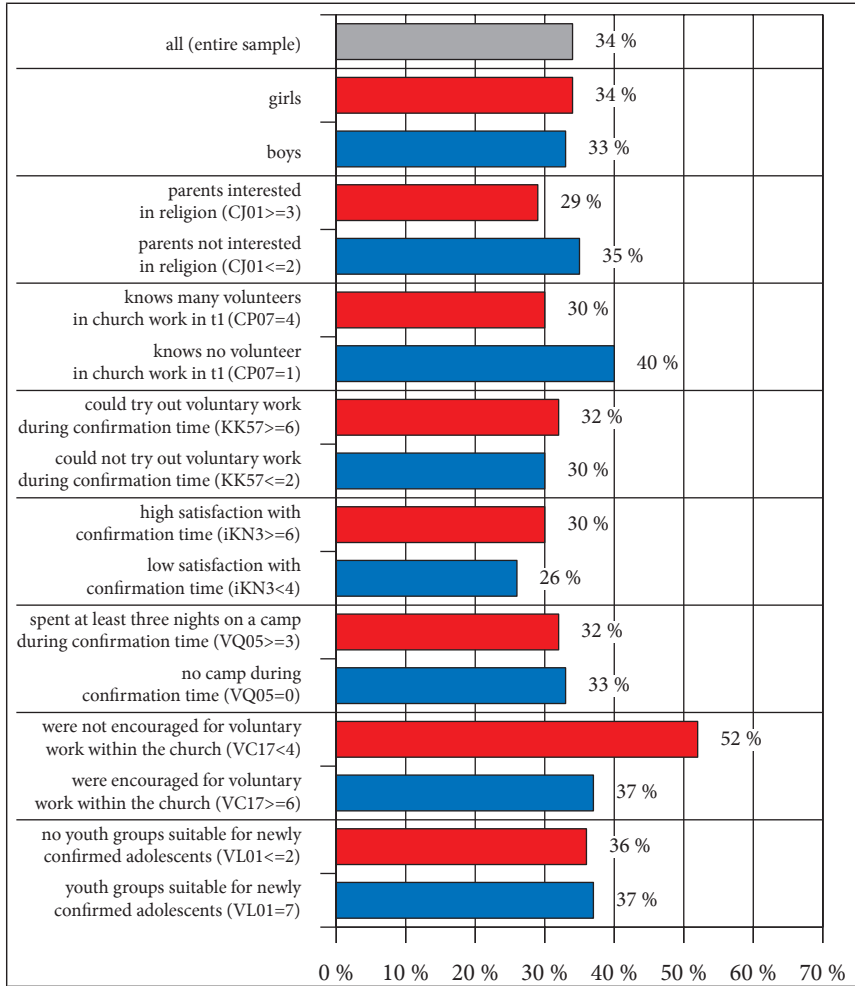
A strong predictive power can be seen in the item VC17: confirmands in groups, where workers perceived that only a small amount of encouragement for voluntary work has taken place during confirmation time are much more likely to end their voluntary work soon after beginning it.

Figure 23: Share of confirmands that are active in volunteer work after confirmation time (QP51), depending on various predictors



N = 517 (still active = yes), N = 261 (only earlier), N = 2246 (not active). Note that this figure has a slightly different database than Table 24 and Table 25: all cases were included that had valid answers for the respective item. In order to highlight the differences, the contrast groups were not always defined by a split-half procedure. Sometimes only the »extreme groups« were used – see the definitions in the brackets. The N in the respective comparisons differs due to these extreme groups.

Figure 24: Share of »short-time volunteers« of all volunteers who started volunteering after confirmation



N = 517 (still active), N = 261 (only earlier). See remarks under Figure 23.

6.8 Conclusion

The results of this study support the notions of earlier research of the importance of family background. However, the research also points out the importance of broader religious and social surroundings. The research showed that the religiosity of parents had an influence both on young people’s beliefs and

on how important church membership was for them two years after confirmation on all three measured levels, meaning that not only the individual context, but also the religious climate in the parish and even the larger context of society and the respective church matter. All of these were more important in explaining later attitudes than confirmation experiences which, however, also showed significant importance. This supports the earlier notions of the importance of plausibility structures in maintaining beliefs. If one is surrounded by others with similar beliefs and worldviews in general, one is much more likely to maintain his/her meaning systems. The influences from the primary socialisers are of most importance. However, also the general religious climate both at a group level (religiosity of confirmands' families in general) and at a broader societal or church level (religiosity of parents in this church in general) are important. However, this also raises questions for the future. If parents' religiosity is continuously decreasing as some recent studies suggest (for example Germany: Bedford-Strohme/Jung 2015; Bucher 2009; Voas/Doebler 2011), it is highly probable that this will affect future religiosity of the adolescents in the next decades.

However, there is more to say than just reflecting the high dependency of the parents' formative role. In all three analyses, satisfaction with confirmation time had a significant impact on the effects two years after confirmation. Confirmands who enjoy their confirmation time are more likely to maintain their attachment to Christian faith, regard church membership as important and have a higher probability of starting into a volunteer activity.

Especially concerning the stimulation of volunteerism, the analysis shows the important role of experiences during confirmation time. A confirmation time that aims at encouraging confirmands to do voluntary work is in fact a good predictor for this result, especially when confirmands have the chance to try out voluntary work and if youth groups are available for the time after confirmation. The number of nights in camps is an additional predictor for volunteerism – camps can be regarded as the »observatory for volunteerism« in which confirmands see what volunteering means in practice and become motivated to get active themselves.

The analyses show that it is difficult to gain confirmands from »untypical backgrounds« (i. e., unreligious families, no church volunteers in their surrounding). It is also likely that those few who do start a voluntary activity will drop it within the first two years. For church leaders this means that it takes a lot of effort to guide these young people not only into becoming volunteers but also during their time as volunteers. And as the number of adolescents without strong prior church background might increase in the coming years due to changes in society, it seems very advisable to strengthen the forces in confirmation work and youth work that are willing and able to foster voluntary work among young people.

After Confirmation: Country-Specific Articles

III. After Confirmation: Country-Specific Articles

1. After Confirmation: Results for Germany

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1.1 Background Information

In Germany, the idea of conducting a study that refers to the time two years after confirmation was welcomed warmly by the Church. The idea of looking beyond the time of confirmation and taking account of more long-term effects clearly corresponds to the German Church's experience of growing drop-out rates from church membership as well as to the realisation that successful programs like confirmation work must also be evaluated concerning their effects in terms of adolescents' relationship to the Church. For example, church leaders consider it very important to find out what the experience of confirmation time means for the future attachment to the Church for those who participate in this program. Moreover, the earlier studies on confirmation work in Germany (Ilg et al. 2009, Schweitzer et al. 2015b) resulted in a clearer awareness of the Church that volunteers have come to play a vital role in many parishes and that an increasing number of confirmands are interested in becoming volunteers after confirmation. In 2012/2013 when the respective data were gathered, 62 000 volunteers were active in confirmation work in Germany, many of them adolescents themselves. To gain more insights into the volunteers' expectations and experiences, therefore, made sense to the Church as an endeavor important for the future (background information on the study: www.konfirmandenarbeit.eu).

In terms of general background, the situation of the Protestant Church in Germany can be characterised as stable but, at the same time, clearly under a certain pressure. For the last 50 years, there have been continuous losses in membership. More recently, in addition to the drop-out rates, demographic factors have become another source of concern. The German birth rate is especially low with Protestants. The dwindling number of children born to Protestant parents also makes itself felt in terms of the number of confirmands among adolescents. Between the first and the second study on confirmation work in Germany (2007/2008-2012/2013), the number of confirmands dropped by 10%, not due to lower participation rates but due to demographic change. In the longer run, such developments will naturally affect church membership in

general as well, which explains why the Church is very interested in trying to provide good experiences for adolescents.

1.2 How the t_3 -Study Was Conducted

Procedures in Germany built upon the sample and the questionnaires in t_1 and t_2 . More specifically, when the confirmands received the questionnaires shortly before their confirmation, they were asked if they would be willing to fill out another questionnaire two years after confirmation. If so, they had to provide their contact information (email, postal address) so that it would be possible to reach them at a later time (2015).

In Germany, the second study on confirmation work was conducted by a team of researchers at the Theological Faculty of the University of Tübingen – in a manner very similar to that of the first study (Ilg et al. 2009). Again all of the regional Churches took part in it. The original sample of parishes was selected by an independent social science institute (GESIS – Leibniz Institute for Social Sciences). The resulting random sample can be considered representative. 583 parishes had the questionnaires filled in by the confirmands resulting in a return rate of almost 45 % of the original sample. The details of the t_1 - and the t_2 -study can be found in a separate publication (Schweitzer et al. 2015b). The t_3 -study was conducted in spring/summer 2015, with a reduced sample of only those who responded at all three times, at the beginning and at the end of confirmation time as well as two years after confirmation. The sample is fully longitudinal.

Table 27 shows the sample sizes for the three times that the confirmands filled out a questionnaire.

The response rate of 28 % in t_3 makes it necessary to consider the composition of the sample in more detail. It should be clear from the beginning that the sample was not representative. The results can not be generalised. Instead, the evaluation and interpretation of the data has its focus on longitudinal developments. Therefore only the responses from those questionnaires were used that could be matched for all three times when they were administered.

The composition of the t_3 -sample shows a special profile in a number of respects. Table 28 describes the sample according to a number of background factors.

If one compares these characteristics with the representative samples in t_1 and in t_2 , it is clear that the fully matched t_3 -sample has certain characteristics that need to be borne in mind. The results reflect more the views of the girls than of the boys and more the religiously socialised than the ones without such experiences.

Table 27: German sample sizes in t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013) and t_3 (2015)

	t_1	t_2	t_3	$t_1-t_2-t_3$	Valid questionnaires from volunteers within the $t_1-t_2-t_3$ -sample
N	10191	9096	2588 (28 % of t_2)	1937 (21 % of t_2)	354

Table 28: Background factors of the German sample (%)

	Sex: boys/girls	Contact to the Church* age between 5-9 years/ more than 9 years	Parents interested in religion	Bedside prayer	More than 250 books at home	Parents active as volunteers**
	C/QM01	CM11/12	CJ01	CJ02	CM04	CP17
$t_1/t_2/t_3$	36/64	58 / 60	29	47	43	34
t_1/t_2 only	49/51	47 / 51	25	40	35	27

* at least 3 times; ** at least one parent who is volunteering.

1.3 Main Results

Aside from general insights on the age group in question, the main results of the quantitative study refer to four topics in particular: view of the confirmation time and of the day of confirmation in retrospect; development of religious attitudes; relationship to the Church; pathways into volunteerism (for a more detailed account cf. Schweitzer et al. 2016).

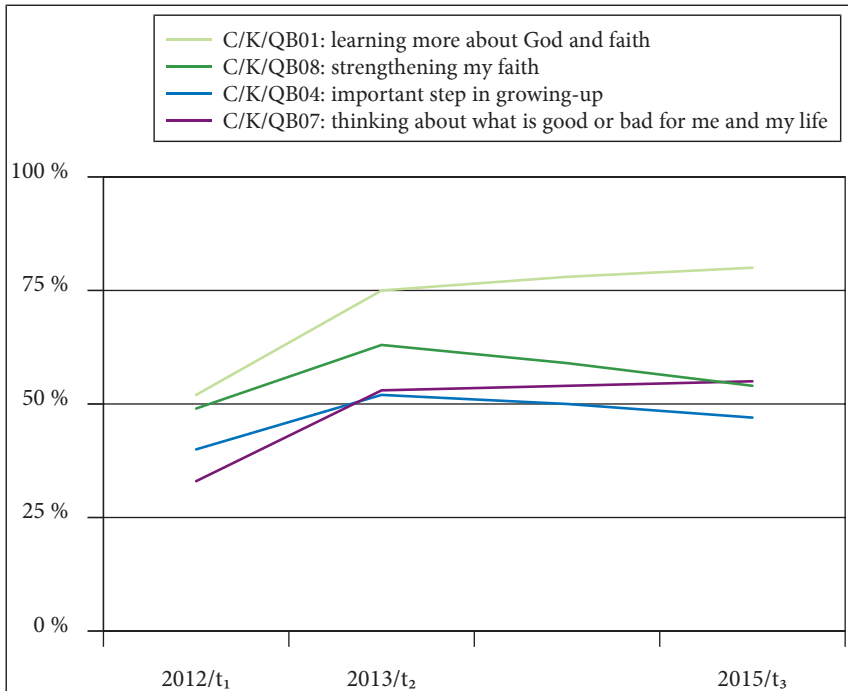
Views of confirmation time and confirmation day in retrospect

In the following, some of the answers given by the adolescents in free text fields are reproduced.

»My Confirmation time was a very important step for me on my way to adulthood.«
(m)

»My confirmation time was a lot of fun. I think of this special time very often, where I learned a lot and was quite active. I am not the kind of guy who was doing the confirmation time because of the money. I did it, because my parents were pleased with it.« (f)

Figure 25: Confirmands' views of confirmation time (Germany): t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015)



$N = 1892-1919$; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable). The original item wording can be found in the appendix, p. 262 ff.

Concerning the view of the day of confirmation in retrospect, the adolescents' responses indicate that this day of celebration has left a lasting impression on many of the Protestant youth in Germany. This is of interest in itself in that very few data on the experience of the day of confirmation were available in Germany before the present study. It is well-known, however, that in most cases, there is a special church service on this day with many members of the extended family taking part, some of whom sometimes travel long distances in order to be present for the celebration. Moreover, most families celebrate in private for the whole day after the church service.

Against this background, the German adolescents' responses are very interesting (see Table 29).

First of all, these results indicate that the majority of the respondents highly appreciate and value the day of confirmation. Given the many things that are going on in today's young people's lives, this is an impressive result. Moreover, it is quite obvious that the dimension of the celebration with the family is the

Table 29: Confirmation day in retrospect (t_3 , 2015), Germany

		Yes
QK20	It was one of the most important days of my life.	55 %
QB09	Having a beautiful celebration with family and friends was important for me.	66 %
QB10	The money and presents were important for me.	34 %
QB11	To receive a blessing was important for me.	55 %

N = 1902-1930; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

most important aspect for the adolescents. The material dimension of gifts, etc. is not as important, at least not for these respondents. A comparison with their earlier responses before confirmation shows that this motive has lost some of the importance from the time before confirmation. This is not equally true for the importance of the blessing received during the service which remained high after confirmation.

The Development of Beliefs and Religious Attitudes

For the following, readers should be aware that there were many changes at the individual level as well as at the group level, and that the individual changes took different directions not always following the patterns of the whole group under study.

Concerning *developments during the two years after confirmation* (changes from t_2 to t_3), tendencies measured by the items concerning religious attitudes were generally negative. This applies to faith in creation (-9 percent points, QE01) as well as to the belief in a loving God (-8, QE03) or in God in general (-7, QE09). The decrease concerning the belief in the resurrection of Jesus is marked at -8 percent points (QE04). Changes in a positive direction occur concerning the familiarity with the Christian faith (+8, QE10) and the belief in an afterlife (+3, QE02).

These changes must be seen against the background of the respective level of agreement. With the German adolescents responding in t_3 , roughly three different levels can be distinguished in this respect: about two thirds affirm faith in God and an afterlife; about 50 % believe in the resurrection of Jesus or say that faith in God helps them in difficult situations; there is much less agreement in respect to faith in creation (39 %, QE01). This indicates that faith in creation appears especially questionable and difficult to these adolescents. Some statements from the confirmands can illustrate the main tendencies:

»Christian faith doesn't seem too bad to me, but the older I am, the stronger my doubts become.« (f)

»I come from a not very religious family, so my confirmation time was important for coming in contact with faith for the first time and for getting interested in it. I only hope that I am not the only one, whose confirmation time was influential.« (f)

»Today, the origin of the earth for example can be explained by the theory of evolution and a lot of dubious phenomenons by logical and scientific facts.« (f)

Concerning developments from the beginning of confirmation time through two years after confirmation ($t_1 - t_2 - t_3$), the general picture does not change much. The positive and negative tendencies remain the same. Yet there are two observations that deserve a closer look:

- Only in the case of the item »Faith in God helps me in difficult situations« (C/K/QE08) is it possible to speak of a return of the adolescents to the values at the beginning of confirmation time (t_1 : 50 %, t_2 : 55 %; t_3 : 47 %), with the positive responses in t_3 with -3 percent points lower than in t_1 . In this case, it is likely that confirmation time had a positive effect that disappears after confirmation.
- The increase with belief in an afterlife (C/K/QE02) between t_2 and t_3 is even more marked compared to t_1 (+9 percent points in t_3).

Relationship to the Church

The relationship to the Church is characterised by small positive changes during the confirmation time and by an increase of critical attitudes two years after that. First, there is the positive image of the Church: 76 % affirm that »the Church does a lot of good things for people« (C/K/QG05); shortly before confirmation, the positive responses reach 78 %, in t_3 80 %. Results concerning the general attitude towards the Church (C/K/QF02), however, show a different pattern. Although the positive responses increased between t_1 and t_2 by two percent points from 78 % to 80 % in this respect, in t_3 the value decreased to 75 % concerning the attitude towards the Church in general.

This pattern also holds true for the importance of *belonging to the Church* (C/K/QG01) – although on a distinctly lower level. While the increase between t_1 and t_2 reaches 5 percent points (from 48 % to 53 %), the agreement to this question decreases to 45 % in t_3 . The positive image does not result in a stronger feeling of belonging.

In the beginning of confirmation time, 30 % of the respondents said that »the Church does not have answers to the questions that are important to me.« (C/K/QG02). Shortly before the day of confirmation, the agreement to this statement increased by two percent points, and in t_3 , even 38 % of the adolescents affirmed

this critical view. This attitude can be seen in the following statement from a confirmand:

»The Church was always too conservative and its history is also not that kind of good. Even more, the stories are stupid rubbish.« (m)

42 % of the adolescents said in t_1 that church services were »usually boring« (C/K/QG04). Shortly before their confirmation, even 50 % said so. Two years after confirmation, this value decreased by about 5 percent points to 45 %. Accordingly, the views of worship services become more positive after confirmation. Yet although more rarely, the confirmands also express attitudes like the following:

»Being part of the Church is an honour and a beautiful thing. Due to certain circumstances I can't attend the service regularly. Nevertheless, I will stick with the Church.« (f)

Pathways into Volunteerism

Two important insights of the first study on confirmation work in Germany refer to the role of volunteerism for confirmation work and to the fact that confirmation work can be considered as education for civil society in general because it strengthens volunteerism (see Schweitzer et al. 2015a, 93-105).

In the present study, adolescents who had not been active in Christian youth work after confirmation as volunteers were asked about their reasons for not having done so (see Figure 26).

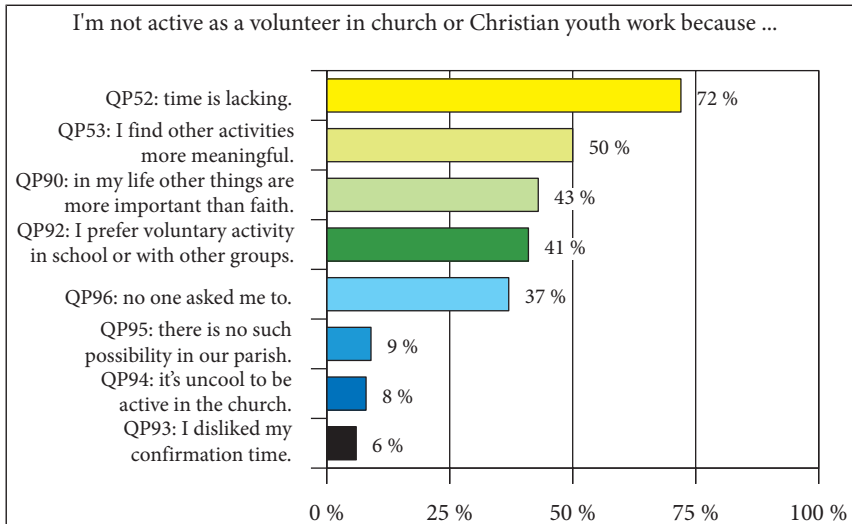
It is important to note that 37 % said they were not asked to do voluntary work, and this is why they did not become involved (QP96). It is obvious that confirmation work entails many potentials for voluntary work that have not yet been realised.

That confirmation work is indeed an important pathway into volunteerism is underlined by the agreement to the question if the adolescents could imagine becoming volunteers after confirmation which clearly increased during confirmation time. Moreover, the adolescents also increasingly affirmed that the church offers opportunities for adolescents' voluntary work.

Who had the strongest impact on the volunteers' decision to become a volunteer? Volunteers emphasised their own decision to do so (QP63: 88 %) and the influence of their peers (QP61: 64 %). Distinctly lower is the impact of pastors or other church workers or of family members (QP60: 31 % resp. QP62: 34 %). The different impacts are obviously not mutually exclusive but interact with each other.

Almost all volunteers state that their voluntary work is fun (QP32: 97 %). The social dimension is another strong motive. The adolescents liked working

Figure 26: Reasons for not volunteering in church or Christian youth work (t₃, 2015), Germany



N = 1529-1544; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

with other people (QP66: 92%) and enjoyed the good spirit of the team (QP70: 92%).

»With the help of my confirmation time I got involved in the life of my congregation, and now I am glad to be active in the congregation and in youth work. I got to know a lot of people and made some of my most important friends. I really learnt to appreciate my faith and myself.« (f)

1.4 Additional Studies

Qualitative Study with Young Volunteers

The study aimed at the experiences of young volunteers at the age between 14 and 18 years. It included group interviews with adolescents in a number of locations selected on the basis of the quantitative study. The aim was to capture different experiences which was the reason for selecting locations in different parts of the country, both in rural and urban contexts, in eastern as well as in western Germany. Altogether, eight interviews were conducted with groups of two to nine adolescents. A detailed account of the results of the study can be found in Schweitzer et al. 2016.

Qualitative studies can rarely be summarised in brief points. Their particular strength that also shows up in the present study lies in rich contextual insights to be gained by carefully listening to individual people or groups and by trying to render their experiences in a manner that is as faithful to their own views as possible. Since the interviews were conducted with adolescents who, at the time of the interviews, were active as volunteers in the context of confirmation work, all results of this part of the study refer to this context.

The results of the qualitative interviews and their interpretations can be seen in relationship to how they became volunteers, their motivations, experiences and what competences developed in their work, visions for confirmation work.

Altogether, the interview material includes many encouraging impulses for voluntary work in the field of confirmation work. According to the young voluntary workers, it is not only the confirmands who enjoy the participation of young volunteers. The volunteers themselves also appreciate the experience of working with younger adolescents and of being responsible for their own work. Moreover, they enjoy working together in a group of peers as well as with pastors who take them seriously as partners in this work.

While the adolescents' vivid reports make it clear that the involvement as volunteers has many potentials and can be quite attractive to all parties involved, they also indicate a number of problems that should be addressed in future work. A few examples can make this clear. Some of the young volunteers feel that the confirmation work they encountered in their parishes should be more oriented towards the needs and interests of the confirmands. Others feel that the respective pastor tends to make use of the volunteers for aims and purposes that were not discussed with the volunteers or agreed upon together with them beforehand.

Such critical observations and remarks do not change the overall picture that is also very positive from the perspective of the qualitative part of the study. Instead, they show that the interviewees were willing to share the whole range of their experiences and insights, instead of only drawing ideal pictures. Moreover, the critical suggestions from the young workers are of value for future work.

Research on Confirmation Work and Volunteerism with 18- to 26-Year-Old Germans

At this point, this study is still under way. The results will become available in 2017 and will be published in a later volume in this series. Three sets of questions are guiding the study:

- What are the possible long-term effects of the confirmation work experienced in terms of religious practice and relationship to the Church?
- What are the presuppositions for becoming active as a volunteer in terms of having encountered volunteers in confirmation time or other experiences?

What are the trajectories of voluntary commitment within and beyond the Church? What are the motivations of young people active or non-active as volunteers?

- What are the differences between different groups in society of those who participated in Protestant confirmation work and of those who did not, in terms of motives, values, beliefs, etc.? What are the effects of possible equivalents in other denominational or religious traditions (like Catholic confirmation, etc.)?

The study involves young Protestants who are active as volunteers as well as young people with different religious backgrounds.

1.5 Challenges for the Future

The different studies on confirmation work in Germany (Ilg et al. 2009; Schweitzer et al. 2015b) resulted in a number of perspectives for how confirmation work should be improved in the future. The present study has its focus on the time after confirmation. It indicates that there also is a need for asking about possible improvements from what comes after confirmation and that there are implications of these perspectives for confirmation time itself as well.

Concerning the time after confirmation, the results of the study indicate a clear need for new programs addressing the adolescents at this time of their lives. In many cases there seem to be no programs available for them that they would consider attractive. It is true that not all Protestant adolescents express an interest in staying in touch with the church and in participating in such programs. Yet the number of those who, according to their responses, would in fact be interested appears to be higher than the number of those who report that, from their perspective, such programs are actually available.

In many respects the growing number of former confirmands who become active as volunteers after confirmation is a very hopeful development. Yet it is also obvious that many of the adolescents who do not become active in the church after confirmation, also feel that they have never been asked to do so. More efforts should be made to include more young people in this work, including the training programs offered for young volunteers which, at the same time, should also become more widespread in the future.

Concerning implications for confirmation time itself the results show that whatever is to come after confirmation should be in view before confirmation, not only in general but in terms of concrete activities. In other words, if the aim is more participation in Christian youth work after confirmation, for example,

the confirmands must be familiarised with respective possibilities and programs during their confirmation time.

Altogether then, two challenges can be identified: there is a clear need for making the years immediately after confirmation the focus of new initiatives from the Church. At present, the day of confirmation is treated too much as the end of confirmation time and not as the beginning of something new. Another challenge is to improve confirmation work, for example, in regard to cooperation between confirmation work and youth work.

2. After Confirmation: Results for Austria

STEFAN GRAUWALD AND DAGMAR LAGGER

2.1 Background Information

Protestants in Austria are a religious minority, making up nearly 4 % of the total population. The Churches, the *Evangelische Kirche A.B.* (Lutheran Church) and the *Evangelische Kirche H.B.* (Reformed Church), were interested in more information and details about confirmation work and decided to take part in the actual survey. The new focus on what young people think and say after confirmation should help to gain more understanding about their commitment to the Church and their religiosity. Over the past years a phenomenon has been observed: young people leave the Church before they reach their 20th birthday, i.e., the year when they get a request to pay church taxes. The Protestant Churches try to maintain their members because they strive to maintain their traditional importance in society and in the dialogue with other Churches and religious denominations.

Confirmation work seems to be a rather stable sector of education in the Church and in almost all parishes a confirmation day is celebrated every year. The number of adolescents, who take part in confirmation, has dropped to 70 % of this age group. But the importance of confirmation work is still high. When the number of confirmands in a single parish is too small, this parish organises confirmation time for two age groups together or cooperates with another parish. Another reason for the cooperation of two or more parishes lies in the improvement and pooling of competences that the different pastors and workers can offer.

The subject of volunteerism has attracted the attention of the Austrian Protestant Churches. In many parishes the confirmed adolescents show interest in church work. They want to get active in youth work and especially in confirmation work. Their motivation, what they like and dislike in this essential field of church work could give impulses to the education of volunteers – and further opens perspectives for increasing the church membership rate among adolescents.

For the time between the first study (2007/2008) and the second study (2012/2013-2015) the research results provide a deeper insight in confirmation work as a whole. The time of preparation, the celebration and the time after confirmation are used as references for the inquiry. The statistical findings include data about the confirmands' experiences, impressions and opinions. They can be used for evaluation and give indications for the further conception of confirmation work in Austria.

Table 30: Austrian sample sizes in t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), and t_3 (2015)

	t_1	t_2	t_3	$t_1-t_2-t_3$	Valid questionnaires from volunteers within the $t_1-t_2-t_3$ -sample
N	495	463	82 (18% of t_2)	82 (18% of t_2)	10

Table 31: Background factors of the Austrian sample (%)

	Sex: boys/girls	Contact to the church* age between 5-9 years/ more than 9 years	Parents in- terested in religion	Bedside prayer	More than 250 books at home	Parents active as volunteers**
	C/QM01	CM11/12	CJ01	CJ02	CM04	CP17
$t_1/t_2/t_3$	34/66	58/56	32	52	63	26
t_1/t_2 only	50/50	48/45	31	41	51	24

* at least 3 times; ** at least one parent who is volunteering.

2.2 How the t_3 -Study Was Conducted

As with the first study, the research team at the University of Tübingen sent the questionnaires to the confirmands and was responsible for the data-handling. The t_3 -study was conducted in spring/summer 2015 with the confirmands from 2013. In spring 2013 many confirmands (317 out of 463) belonging to 25 units provided their email- or/and postal addresses when they filled in t_2 . Two years later 82 confirmed girls and boys from 24 units – 21 Lutheran and 3 Reformed – responded to t_3 . In 2012, at the starting date of this survey, 28 units with 495 confirmands participated. So only 4 Lutheran units were lost during the four years of research. The additional questionnaire about volunteerism was filled in by 10 confirmed adolescents, belonging to 7 different units. In spite of the broad regional distribution, the results are not representative. The main emphasis in the following lies on the longitudinal perspective.

The final sample consists of data from 82 confirmands. The matching-rate of 18% means that these 82 adolescents filled in the questionnaires in fall 2012, in spring 2013 and in spring 2015. The following selection of background factors gives a first impression about the whole sample regarding $t_1/2012$, $t_2/2013$ and $t_3/2015$.

The share of female adolescents increases from half to two thirds in t_3 (CM/QM01). The t_3 -data show even more the perspective of young women. Those girls and boys, who had more contact with the Church during their childhood, also tend to participate in t_3 (CM11/12). The same effect can be observed concerning the stronger commitment to religion of their parents (CJ01, CJ02, CP17). Parental homes with a higher level of education nurture the young people's commitment to the Church (CM/QM04). The influence of the parents, both their interest in religion and the bedside prayer with their children, fosters interest and importance of confirmation and confirmation work.

2.3 Main Results

The focus on longitudinal perspectives in the present research allows an interpretation especially of the development and changes during the defined time period. Four main topics of confirmation work will be regarded more in detail: views of confirmation in retrospect, development of beliefs and religious attitudes, relationship to the Church and pathways into volunteerism.

Views of Confirmation in Retrospect

A typical confirmation day in Austria depends on the individual family background and the regional rites. Confirmands with an extended family mostly of Protestants celebrate confirmation day with about 30 persons. After the church service they stay together for the whole day. Some of the relatives travel long distances, possibly from other Austrian states (*Burgenland, Kärnten ...*) or even from foreign countries (Germany, Hungary ...). However, the confirmands with smaller families or less Protestants in their extended family have only the church service and then a day like an adolescent with a Catholic confirmation (e. g., in Vienna they might go to the Wiener Prater). While in some small villages with a high percentage of Protestants the whole community celebrates this

Table 32: Confirmation day in retrospect (t_3 , 2015), Austria

	Yes
QK20 It was one of the most important days of my life.	41 %
QB09 Having a beautiful celebration with family and friends was important for me.	63 %
QB10 The money and presents were important for me.	21 %
QB11 To receive a blessing was important for me.	52 %

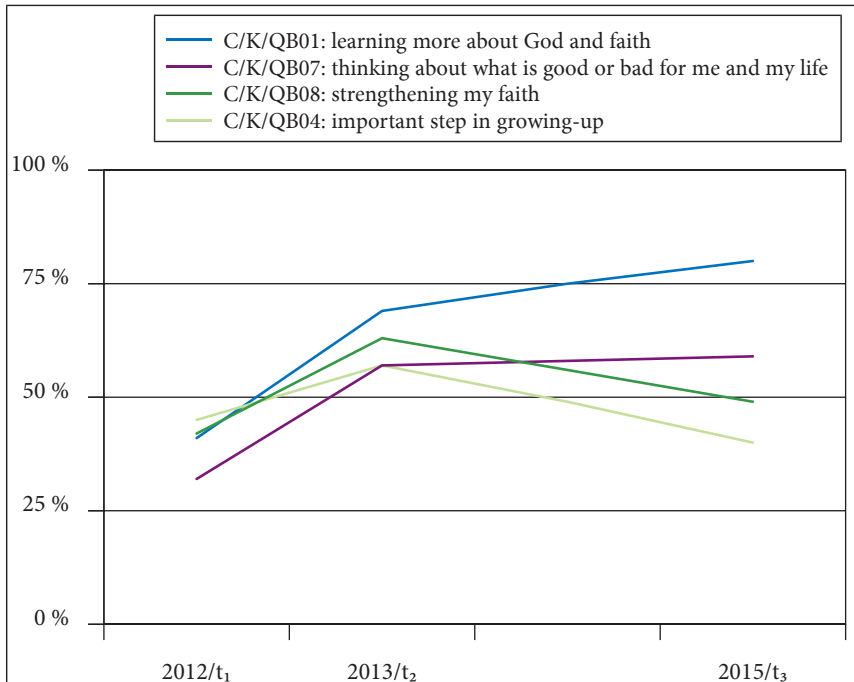
N = 80-81; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

day, in large cities it is only a festivity for the people involved. In most parishes confirmation day takes place on Ascension Day. In some regions, Palm Sunday or Pentecost are traditional dates for confirmation.

Concerning the view of confirmation and in particular the day of confirmation in retrospect, the adolescents' responses indicate that they have a rather positive view of confirmation. 41 % of the confirmed young people say it was one of the most important days in their life. The celebration with their family and friends scores highest and the blessing outweighs the presents in any case. No significant differences between female and male adolescents are evident.

The young people make interesting developments which are presented in the following figure. During confirmation time a positive shift in all issues happened. Confirmation work reached its aims. The general impression is rather homogenous. But after confirmation a more differentiated picture appears. Two years after confirmation, the adolescents view their confirmation time less emotionally and more reasonably. Their interest in knowledge about God and faith was the most important subject in contrast to the formation of faith. The confirmed young people want to enhance their religiosity independently.

Figure 27: Confirmands' views of confirmation time (Austria): t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015)



N = 79-81; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

The following comments in a free text field (QM16: »What else do you want to tell us?«) supports the impression of general satisfaction with confirmation time:

»The confirmation has helped me in my life, although I went to church not so frequently.« (f)

»In this time I had a lot of fun and I got to know many incredible persons. Thanks!« (f)

Some critical voices refer to the unused opportunities of confirmation work:

»Church services for young people with guitar and modern songs would be cool.« (m)

»Nicer singing; texts for the youth; nobody can sing in our church!!! Church ends! The old people die! The young people don't want to go to church any longer! Pressure by the parents!« (f)

»I wanted to continue my commitment to the church after confirmation time, but there were no offers. It's a pity that the Protestant Church cares for elderly people and small children, because my age group is excluded. ...« (?)

The Development of Beliefs and Religious Attitudes

The belief-index shows a small negative change in general (iCE1_DIFF_t₁-t₃, M = -0.5, N = 81). But the differentiated view onto the individual items permits an interesting impression. Therefore, the differences between t₁ and t₃ become important. The strongest increase can be detected at:

- »I know what the Christian faith entails.« (CE/QE10: 57 % to 78 %), followed by
- »I am insecure what I should believe.« (CE/QE05: 36 % to 43 %),
- »There is life after death.« (CE/QE02: 59 % to 61 %).

With growing knowledge also the uncertainty about faith rises. A decrease can be observed with the following items, which refer to basic statements of faith:

- »God loves all humans and cares about each one of us« (CE/QE03: 70 % to 59 %);
- »God created the world« (CE/QE01: 49 % to 32 %);
- »I believe in God« (CE/QE09: 73 % to 55 %);
- »Jesus has risen from the dead« (CE/QE04: 58 % to 50 %).

On the one hand, there obviously is a positive change concerning the knowledge about the Christian faith and on the other hand, there is a negative change regarding items about specific questions of faith.

One free text answer expresses the limited meaning of faith:

»An active faith is not crucial for being a good person or for acting ethically correctly. I accept any kind of faith, if it is exercised moderately and someone of another religion does not get disadvantaged/annoyed/disturbed. ...« (m)

Relationship to the Church

The relationship to the Church is characterised by the fact that throughout t_1 , t_2 and t_3 the »attitude towards the Christian faith in general« gets a lower agreement (CF/KF/QF01: 78 % to 70 % to 66 %) than the »attitude towards our Church« (CF/KF/QF02: 89 % to 93 % to 88 %). The attitude towards »our Church« rises throughout the confirmation time, which indicates, that one aim of the contents of confirmation time is fulfilled. In t_3 , however, one can observe that the confirmed adolescents feel even less »connected« to the Christian faith in general than they were at the beginning of their confirmation time. Both items show the same pattern: after a peak of church-affinity at the end of confirmation time, the connection becomes weaker (again).

The adolescents regard the Church as an institution rather generously. 78 % want to have their children baptised (QG03) and also 78 % think, that the Church does a lot of good things for the people (QG05). Nearly half of the confirmed young people state »It is important for me to belong to the Church« (QG01: 46 %). About a third state a critical distance and that the Church does not offer them answers to important questions (QG02: 39 %). And last but not least, 35 % find church services boring (QG04).

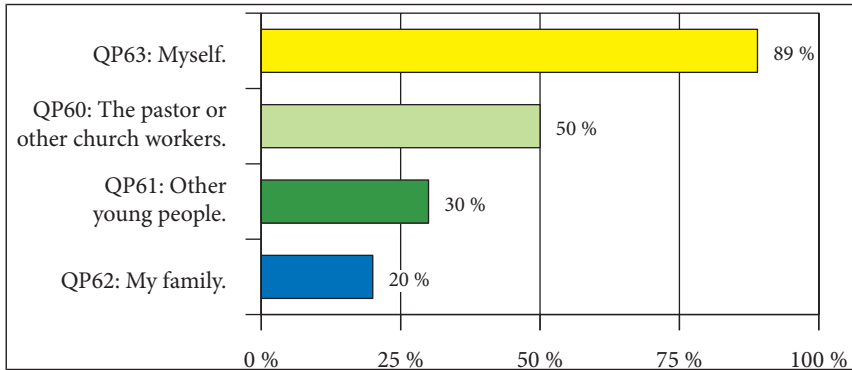
Looking back at the developments during this survey period an effect can be observed: the more contact the young people have with the Church, the less critical they are. The differences are rather small, but this tendency can be identified.

Pathways into Volunteerism

10 voluntary workers – 7 female and 3 male – from 2013 filled in the additional questions about volunteerism. What is astounding and surprising is that the families of the confirmands had the least impact on volunteerism. They rather claim the decision was their own.

Due to the small number of returned questionnaires about volunteerism, the statistical impact is not of importance. Therefore, only some general observations will be reported about the additional questions concerning volunteerism. The team spirit within the group of workers is of vital importance for the young confirmed volunteers. They want to share their experiences of their own confirmation time with the younger adolescents and go through confirmation time again. The volunteers are open for useful – in the sense of meaningful, reasonable and worthwhile – contents, as well as for gaining qualifications that can be documented in their CVs. Volunteers like the group-feeling, not only fun. This is expressed in the answers in a free text field (QM40: »What were your most important experiences as a voluntary worker?«):

Figure 28: Influence for becoming a volunteer (Austria)



N = 9-10; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not at all; 7 = very much).

»In the group everyone is there for each other. If you want, you can share your problems with others and maybe they can help you.« (m)

»I work with primary school children teaching playfully about God. How they absorb the stories and keep them in mind is really great to experience.« (f)

»Music group with confis [confirmands], we played at confirmation service and it counted for a project of the confis (they do not need to do any other)« (m)

All in all, one can summarise that volunteering in confirmation time is a fun useful teamwork experience but only for a few young people!

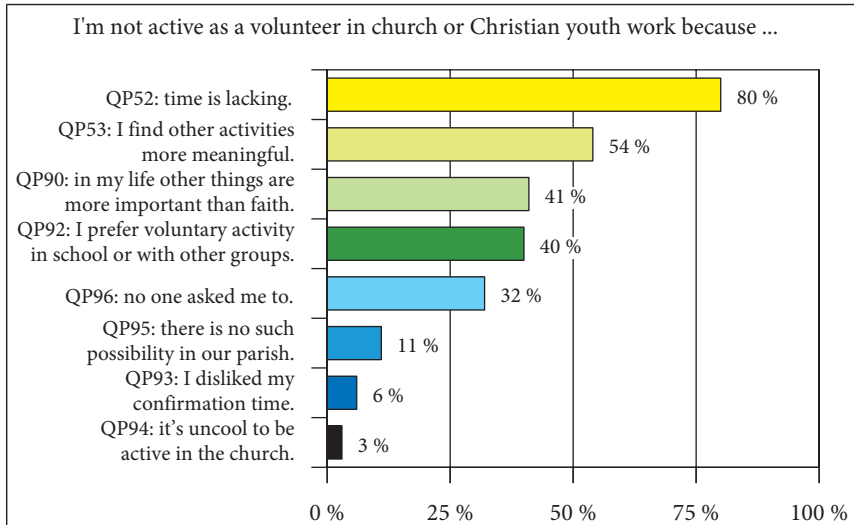
The adolescents who had already stopped (QP51: 17%) or had not started (QP51: 70%) volunteering after confirmation, were asked about the reasons why. Not the image of the church causes the non-participation, but rather the lack of time.

Only 6% of this group disliked their confirmation time and only 3% consider it uncool to be active in church – however, 32% have never been asked. It is obvious that churches can not afford not inviting and not asking one third of their possible future volunteers.

2.4 Additional Analyses

The possibilities of conducting such studies are limited in this specific minority situation. Therefore the international project was warmly welcomed and supported by the Austrian Church. Being part of the international study has helped to understand the national strengths and weaknesses. The reflection on the very

Figure 29: Reasons for not volunteering in church or Christian youth work (Austria)



N = 70-82; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

small data from this study, compared with the large shares in other countries, gives some insights into the specific context of confirmation work. Although most of the results show an analogy to the other German speaking countries, differences can be discovered with a few topics. In the present study, the Austrian and the German (EKD) results seem very similar in general. Due to the same language, the scholarly connections and cooperation in the scientific field of religious education, the German conceptions and materials are well known to Austrian confirmation workers. Yet it may still be interesting to take a closer look at selected differences between Germany (EKD) and Austria.

Austrian confirmands pay a lot of attention to the Church as an institution. The general attitude towards the Church in general (QF02) in Austria at t_3 with 88% agreement is higher than in Germany with 75%. Also at t_1 and t_2 , based on the data from 2012 and 2013, the values are higher for the Austrian confirmands (CF02: AT 84%, DE 70%; KF02 AT 88%, DE 75%).

Another difference can be discovered with the item VB16, where the leaders tell about »the overall view of the Christian tradition, like symbols, festivals, art, etc.« of the confirmands (DE EKD: 86%; AT: 69%). The focus of Austrian confirmation work lies on Protestant Christianity, i.e., a Lutheran or Reformed understanding and not on Christianity in general.

Learning texts by heart was traditionally a central method of confirmation

Table 33: Volunteerism in the view of leading workers, percentage of YES-answers, t₂/2013 (Germany EKD, Austria)

	DE	AT
VU07: In our parish confirmation work is organised and prepared together with the volunteers.	49	68
VU08: In our parish, the volunteers can realise their own ideas in confirmation work.	51	64
VU09: The confirmation work in our parish greatly profits from the involvement of volunteers.	74	91
VU10: In our parish the volunteers are involved in the conceptualisation of the confirmation training.	36	52

N (DE EKD) = 359-381; N (AT) = 23-25; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

work. While in Austria only 67 % of the workers used this learning style, the corresponding figure in Germany was 90 % (VC03).

Table 33 shows the view of the leaders about volunteerism. Austrian workers express a little more appreciation for volunteer work than their German counterparts. In two thirds of the Austrian parishes, volunteers support confirmation work. They give important impulses and valuable input to the preparation of confirmation day.

2.5 Challenges for the Future

Confirmation time can be seen as an inspiration for adolescents for further engagement in voluntary work in the Church. 8 of 10 confirmands want to have »more of the same« (QP72). They like confirmation time and want to continue their experiences with the Church and church work in a similar way. The generally positive effects (see also former articles: cf. Lagger 2010; Grauwald/Lagger 2015) should not hide the fact that there are a lot of possible improvements.

A few of these improvements might be:

Develop qualifications – In order that the activity as a volunteer is not only a repetition of the volunteers' own confirmation time, education and qualification for volunteers must offer effective programs for the young people. With compulsory quality standards and contemporary recommendations, new voluntary workers can contribute to innovation and continuity.

Develop self-esteem – Confirmation work can give important impulses to

youth work in general. Many voluntary workers starting in the Church enrich other NGOs.

Develop possibilities – Parishes have to really think about the possibilities for adolescents and young voluntary workers to actually and meaningfully contribute and work in a parish. And then – simple enough – also have to ask and invite young people to do so.

Develop connections – The separation of confirmation work and youth work is not constructive. Confirmands reach the peak of relationship and affiliation with the Church, topics of faith and spiritual community at the end of their confirmation time with the opportunity to let it grow further. This is not true for all of them, but with some. It is not utmost uncool to work for Churches and the confirmands still want »fun«, »meaning« and »more of the same«. – How can the Church provide that even after confirmation day? How can church workers accompany the transformation of children's faith towards a critical, interested, active grown-up-faith?

Develop of a Start-Up – It is obvious that confirmation time actually starts at home and many years before the adolescents reach the age of 13 years. Confirmation work is not only embedded in Religious Education in school and other activities for younger children but starts when a child is born/baptised, with the child's interests, questions, relationships and aims. It may be a good idea to see the connection of a longitudinal relationship also as a task for school, parishes and playschool. Regarding the Austrian minority situation, one can also detect a lack of substitutes for Catholic celebrations like First Communion. Why not react to this with typical Protestant offerings? Several parishes already offer programs like »looking back to baptism« or »theology with children«.

Develop programs for parents – An important potential can be discovered in the homes. The religious attitude of confirmands depends strongly on the attitudes of their parents. A positive and church-friendly attitude of parents supports the religious development among the confirmands. Moreover, the parents can get involved with church activities. The parents should be considered more seriously and brought into the focus of confirmation work – why not think about programs in which the parents can participate, have their own »lessons« – or maybe just the chance to have a reasonable conversation about their children and the challenges of puberty?

The next and the following generations can have a confirmation time which is as good as the present one or even better, if the confirmands would be taken seriously concerning their attitudes and beliefs. The low connection of the content of confirmation time to every-day-life in comparison to the successful transfer of knowledge should be thought about. Finding a good path between tradition and target-group-specific orientation is a major challenge for workers involved in confirmation work.

3. After Confirmation: Results for Switzerland

THOMAS SCHLAG AND MURIEL KOCH

3.1 Background Information

As in other countries, the question of possible effects and of the sustainability of confirmation work is intensely and continuously raised by church boards and councils of the Swiss Reformed Churches as well as by the ministers and workers in the parishes. Due to the fact that in Switzerland the number of church members is steadily declining by about 1 % a year, one has to ask whether attractive forms of confirmation work could help to provide stronger ties between the younger generation and the Church to slow down this decline and process of de-institutionalisation. Looking at the results of t_1 and t_2 , one gets the impression that confirmation work in Switzerland is quite successful in terms of the satisfaction of the young people (Schlag/Koch 2015; Schlag et al. 2016; for the Zurich results in the context of the first European study cf. Schlag 2010 and Schlag/Voirol-Sturzenegger 2010). Core goals like personal and faith development, individual participation and responsibility seem to be fulfilled for the majority of the confirmands. The pedagogical and theological program of confirmation work in Switzerland is obviously successful in attracting many young people's interest and in encouraging them to stay or become an important part of church and parish life. But what is the situation two years after confirmation?

3.2 How the t_3 -Study Was Conducted

In summer 2015, two years after confirmation, all former confirmands that had participated and declared in t_2 to be willing to participate in a next survey, were contacted again by the Zurich team. They received a questionnaire either by mail for a »paper and pencil«-procedure or by email and an invitation to participate in the online-survey. The Swiss survey consisted of 60 items and variables and gave space for one open answer (»What else I would like to say ...«). Another 17 items and variables were offered for the ones engaged in church youth work with space for another open answer (»What I would need to be even more satisfied with my involvement in voluntary church work ...«). Anonymity was guaranteed. As an incentive to participate there was a lottery of iTunes-vouchers worth a total of 1000,- CHF.

As it could be expected, the number of responses was – with about 1400 out

Table 34: Swiss sample sizes in t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), and t_3 (2015)

	t_1	t_2	t_3	$t_1-t_2-t_3$	Valid questionnaires from volunteers within the t_3 -sample
N	7217	6437	1229 (19% of t_2)	662 (10% of t_2)	91

Table 35: Background factors of the Swiss sample (%)

	Sex: boys/girls	Contact to the Church* age between 5-9 years/ more than 9 years	Parents in- terested in religion	Bedside prayer	More than 250 books at home	Parents active as volunteers**
	C/QM01	CM11/12	CJ01	CJ02	C/QM04	CP17
$t_1/t_2/t_3$	36/64	54/69	21	49	25 %	33
t_1/t_2 only	51/49	48/63	17	41	15 %	26

* at least 3 times; ** at least one parent who is volunteering.

of 4000 mails sent out – much lower than in t_1 and t_2 due to the fact that the group setting of confirmation time no longer existed.

To secure the standards of the longitudinal survey only such items were integrated into the analysis which were answered by the young people who took part in t_1 , t_2 and t_3 . Due to the fact that in Switzerland the postal codes were not asked for in t_3 , the matching of all received questionnaires was only possible for about 660 out of 1400. In the following presentation of the results only the matched data are integrated.

It can be supposed that the questionnaires have been filled out by the confirmed with higher motivation and probably with a more positive perception of confirmation work and the church. So even if the lottery-incentive might have influenced the motivation to participate in t_3 , the results concerning the background factors show the drift from t_2 to t_3 . It also showed that the level of education was higher than in t_1 with 44 % aiming for a Matur/Gymnasium in t_3 and only 29 % in t_1 and that in t_3 more girls (64 %) than boys (36 %) participated.

Concerning the Swiss data-set, it must be mentioned that certain items were only asked in Switzerland, mostly in t_2 and t_3 to gain special insights into the attitudes among the adolescents and their relationship towards the Swiss Re-

formed Church including ethical orientation. This article does not consider these additional results in detail, but they are occasionally mentioned (they are marked in *italics*).

3.3 Main Results

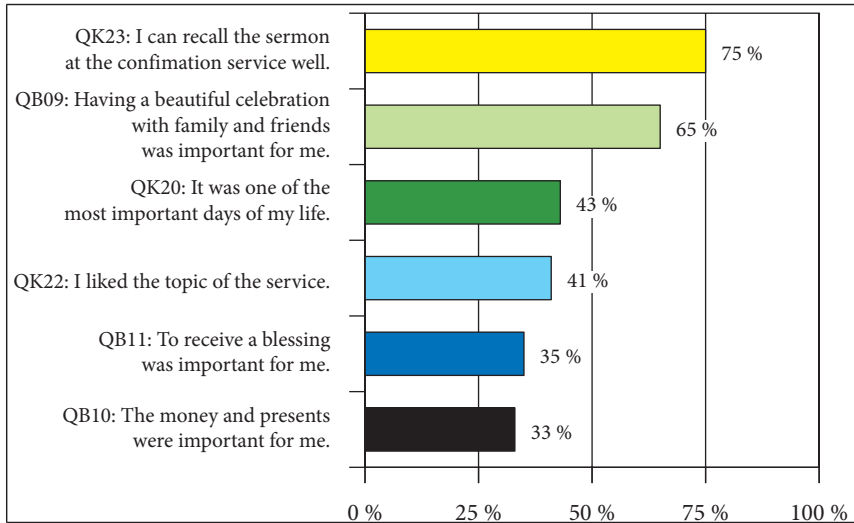
Looking back at Confirmation Time and the Confirmation Day

The confirmed young people have been asked to look back to their confirmation time and day of confirmation: 83 % are at t_3 satisfied with their whole confirmation time (QN01), and 77 % would recommend to others to take part (QK21). As one girl states:

»Confirmation time and the confirmation itself were a very thrilling and exciting time. It was my first step in becoming an adult, because I noticed, that in the view of the church I was almost a grown-up. I would recommend it to everybody. One doesn't need to be very faithful, but during this time one learns to know oneself better.« (f, t_3)

The confirmation itself was for 43 % something they consider as one of the most important experiences in their life (QK20). Concerning the service, 67 % remembered the topic of the service well and in a positive sense (QK22). It has to be mentioned here that in almost all Swiss Reformed parishes the topic of the confirmation service is decided at least together with or even completely by the confirmands themselves. Even with the two year's time between t_2 and t_3 , 65 % of the youth state that the family celebration on the day of their confirmation was important for them (QB09).

Less intense are the memories or the importance of the presents they received (QB10), which was only important for 33 % in comparison to 52 % in t_1 (CB10) and 64 % in t_2 (KB10) – which can hardly be a surprise: once the presents – probably especially the »material ones« – were received, they seem to lose their importance for the adolescents and play retrospectively a much smaller role. In Switzerland the former confirmands were asked if they remember the sermon at the confirmation service positively (or well) (QK23) which 33 % affirmed. The rather low number might be explained by the fact that in Reformed confirmation services the sermon of the minister is very often reduced to only a brief sequence – almost a kind of short reflection or response – due to the fact that the confirmands contribute widely to and are highly responsible for this service.

Figure 30: Remembering the confirmation day (t_3 , 2015), Switzerland

$N = 644-662$; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

The Development of Beliefs and Religious Attitudes

Concerning their faith, 33 % say that they have the impression of having been strengthened in their faith by and during their confirmation time (QB08): A girl states:

»Confirmation time has offered me the opportunity in many different areas of life, to widen my horizon. Sometimes interesting discussions developed, which were very inspiring. Therefore I would say that confirmation time has not necessarily strengthened my faith, but enlarged my general knowledge and drew my attention to topics like e.g. Martin Luther King.« (f)

Looking at it in a longitudinal perspective, three developments from t_1 to t_3 can be examined:

Firstly, a certain stability concerning faith or a slight decrease can be noticed because the percentages in t_1 , t_2 and t_3 are very close to each other. This is true for: »There is life after death« (CE02), which has 60 % agreement in t_2 and t_3 . The same can be said for »Faith in God helps me in difficult situations« (CE08) with t_1 : 41 %, t_2 : 43 % and t_3 : 40 % and »God loves all humans and cares about each one of us« (CE03) with t_1 : 57 %, t_2 : 58 % and t_3 : 55 %. Similar results can be found for »God created the world« (CE01): t_1 : 33 %, t_2 : 30 %, t_3 : 28 %. Thus, certain statements about faith, especially when they concern the Christian faith

(like CE02) and personal faith show a certain kind of stability (CE08) – and obviously the faith in God is still of importance, or to quote:

»Just recently things were not easy for me, I had much stress and some other things. But God has helped me to go through these times, I prayed a lot.« (m)

Also concerning the question about wanting one's own children to be baptised, stability can be noticed: »If I will have children, I want to have them baptised« (CG03) finds 84 % approval in t_1 , 87 % in t_2 and again 84 % in t_3 . But looking at t_3 on the whole, it is only a small number of items showing slight or no changes.

Secondly, there are certain topics which in the perspective of the young people lose their importance and find much smaller approval in t_3 than in t_1 or t_2 . As mentioned above, the importance of presents and the family celebration on the day of confirmation declined after confirmation which can easily be explained by the fact that this event just simply is over. But also for the aspect of a successful and sustainable learning a decline has to be noticed. That they have learned »more about God and faith« (KB01) is said by 65 % in t_2 , in t_3 by only 34 % (QB01). It seems as if the Swiss confirmands consider their own learning success in the long run as rather low – by the way, also compared to other European countries.

Thirdly, there are some topics and items which show a clear increase from t_1 over t_2 to t_3 . For example, two years after confirmation 15 percent points more of the young confirmed say that they know »what the Christian faith entails« (CE10): t_1 : 50 %, t_2 : 59 %, t_3 : 65 %. But this does not necessarily mean that this knowledge is of any higher importance for them. It seems that they differentiate between a certain knowledge about faith and a (critical) knowledge of orientation in terms of their own religion and confession. In direction of this interpretation the following result can be seen: the statement »The church does not have answers to the questions that are important for me« (CG02) is applicable in t_1 and t_2 for 40 %, and in t_3 for 47 %.

This can be illustrated by a quotation from the open answer sections in t_3 :

»Confirmation work should pay more attention to the young people's questions and not just push through a stubborn program, about things, which I already know. I miss the Christian ›values‹. Sadly, I often notice that the faithless are the better ›Christians‹. [...]« (f)

A gain in interest can be noticed in the field of ethical conscience. Statements like »Christian faith motivates to care about others« (CP/QP27) show from t_1 to t_3 a much higher approval: t_1 : 47 %, t_2 : 54 %, t_3 : 61 %. This affects also the question of moral consequences. The statement »Faithful people shall act as good examples« (CP/QP29) finds in t_1 50 %, and in t_3 63 % approval. But it seems as if during these two years also a certain critical and sorrowful attitude has been

developed and they seem to be increasingly worried. »I often worry about the future of the whole world« (KP/QP40) raises from 57 % in t_2 to 68 % in t_3 .

Relationship to the Church

The topics »Christian faith« and »attitudes towards the Church« are worth a closer look. There are positive as well as negative developments from t_1 to t_3 . The generally positive attitude towards the Christian faith (CF01) rises slightly from 67 % in t_1 to 70 % in t_2 , but drops down in t_3 to 56 % and loses therefore 14 percent points. Similarly, even if less dramatical, is the case with the item »How would you describe your current attitude towards our Church in general?« (CF02). 63 % approve of this in t_1 , even 70 % in t_2 , but in t_3 only 61 %. To illustrate the critical 39 %:

»Faith in God for me is something private. I don't need any institutions to believe in God.« (m)

Especially having in mind that the attitude of the young people participating in t_3 is probably more positive towards the Church, this longitudinal result of a strong decline from t_1 to t_3 has to be taken very seriously. The European average shows in 70 % of the cases and the German share even in 78 % a positive attitude towards the Church; the Swiss former confirmands appear in fact less connected to their Church.

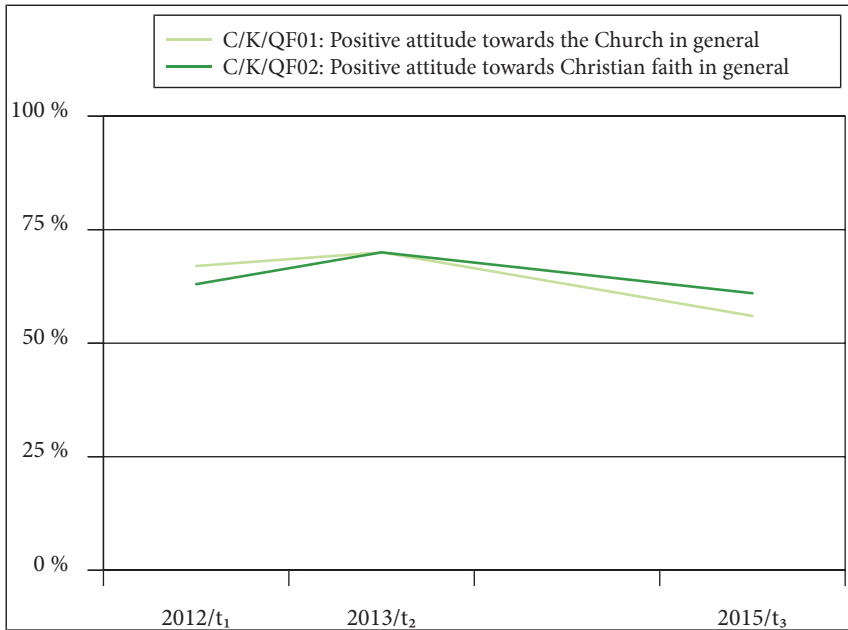
Of course it is not surprising that »Christian faith« and the »Church« are not as present in the daily lives of the confirmed as they were during confirmation time. So whether these results derive merely from this fact or whether the young people now consider faith and church really as less meaningful and attractive, can not be told clearly from these results.

But in any case, strong and intense assessments can be found in this respect:

»It looks as if the number of young people that believe in God is decreasing. What I personally approve of. We slowly wake up and understand that we can't gain anything with faith. We think more logically and to not believe all of what is presented to us. Who believes in God must be very naive, it is about the same as reading a children's book story and believing that this is reality. The Bible is nothing but fictitious stories, which mankind should believe in so that money can be made from it. The church is part of the system and I hope that it soon goes down the tube. We will not let ourselves be fooled:« (f)

Church attendance after confirmation is low. A very small percentage of only 3 % attend Sunday services regularly, 45 % go to church one to four times a year, 40 % »almost never« and 9 % five to eleven times a year (QG11). A certain sceptical attitude towards the institution can be assumed, if one looks at the item: »My faith will always play a role in my life« (KP47). In t_2 43 % have affirmed this positively, whereas in t_3 it is only 38 %. Having in mind the results on the per-

Figure 31: Positive attitudes towards the Church and Christian faith in general (Switzerland): t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015)



N = 631/621; the share of those answering »rather positive« and »very positive« on a 5-point-answering scale.

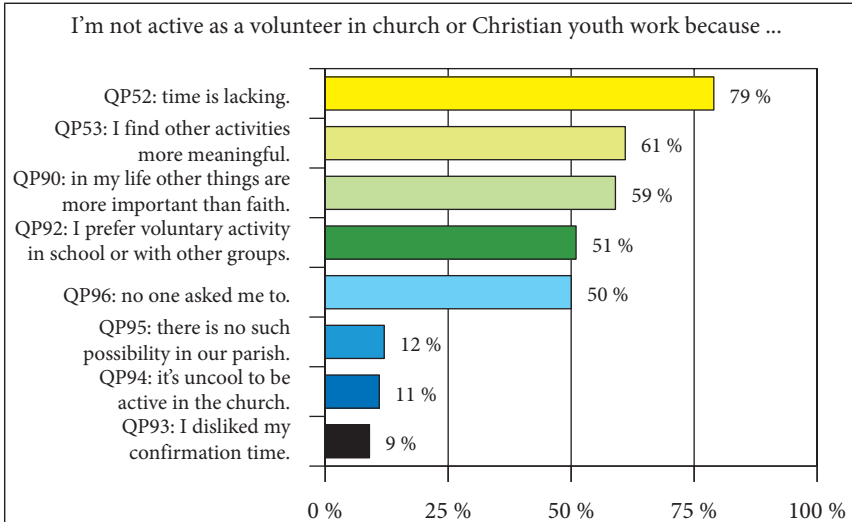
sonal faith (in the sense of a *fides qua*), it can be supposed that the personal and internal attitudes are less variable than the attitudes towards the institution or certain dogmatic statements (in the sense of a *fides quae*). The item »Jesus has risen from the dead« (CE04) functions as an example for the latter which finds a continuously declining approval from t_1 with 40%, to t_2 38%, and finally t_3 with 31%.

Pathways into Volunteerism

In terms of their perception of the Church, 55% say that they have lost contact with the Church after confirmation (QG20). This is in line with the result that only 24% found programs within the Church (for example, youth work) that were »interesting to me« (QK08). 79% of the young people participating in t_3 are or were not engaged in church children's or youth work (QP51).

The challenge for the Church to improve its presence can be underlined by the result that only 24% »felt that there is nothing new to learn in the Church anymore« (QG21). The young people show a general interest in the Church and a certain share of them can well imagine participating in church programs,

Figure 32: Reasons for not being active as a volunteer in church or Christian youth work (t₃, 2015), Switzerland



N = 552-561; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

but this is obviously not adequately addressed by the Church. Just to mention it here: multi-level analyses show that these results are much more positive for the ones having experienced a stronger religious socialisation in their families whereas the experience of certain creative forms of confirmation work is not as important for these attitudes.

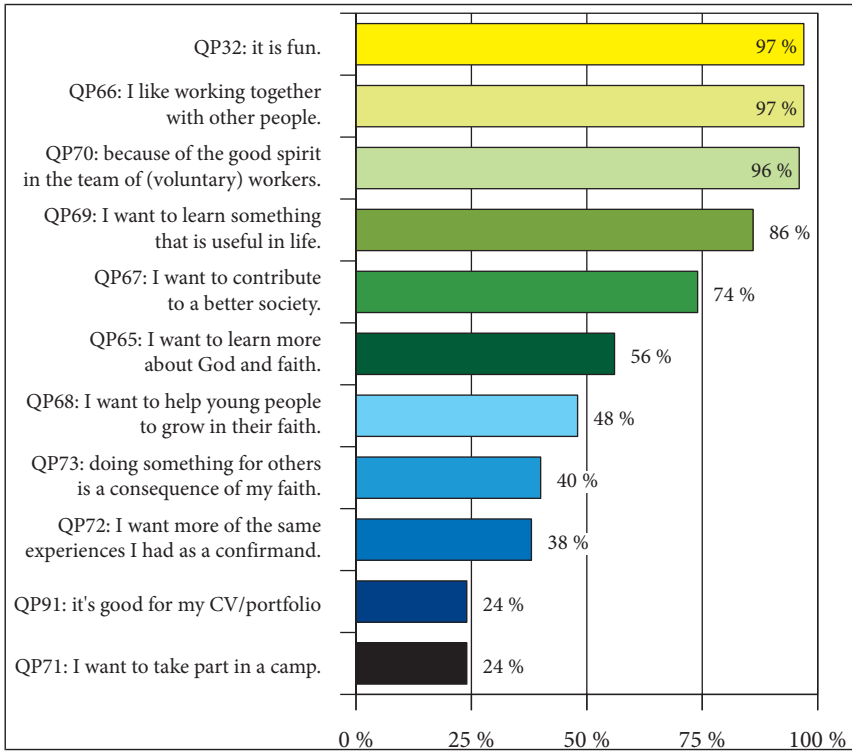
The confirmed young people had also been asked to tell the reasons for not being a volunteer in church children's or youth work: 79 % say that they just do not have the time for it (QP52), which is understandable due to the age of the Swiss confirmands; many of them have already started vocational training or are in the middle of preparing their final school exams, or as one boy puts it:

»I would love to do more for the church, but beside my vocational training there is almost not any time left.« (m)

Figure 32 shows the respective reasons. Many factors from the daily life of the adolescents seem to prevent them from participating as a volunteer, but not the fact that confirmation time made a bad impression on them (QP93).

Once the young people have decided to participate, the reasons for being a volunteer are various. The highest consent is found for the motives like »I like working together with other people« (QP66). The social environment and the

Figure 33: Motives for being a volunteer (t₃, 2015), Switzerland



N = 90-91; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

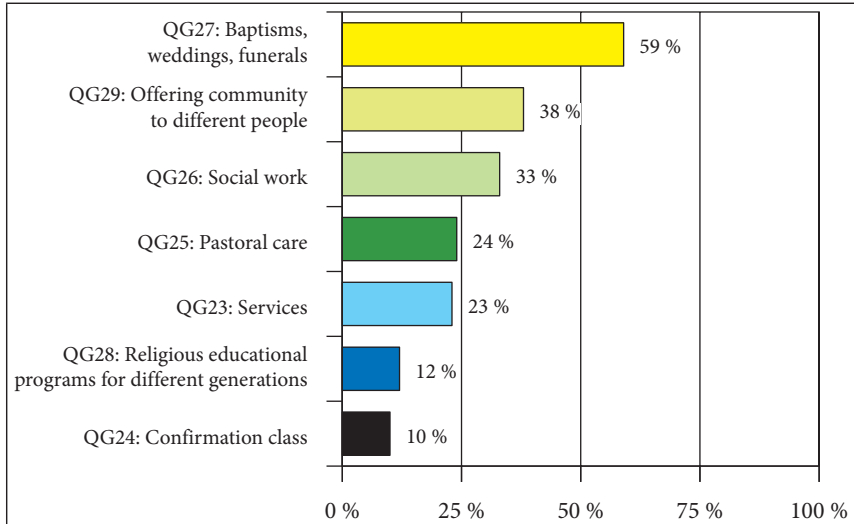
contact to other young people with the same aims seem also to be very important for the decision to participate and stay.

Not so important are motives like having the possibility to take part in another camp (QP71) with only 24 %, which is surprising because of the high estimation of camps in t₁ with 80 % (CS09) and very high satisfaction in t₂ with 87 % (KN11).

About half of the adolescents who work as volunteers have not only a higher interest in experiencing community and fun, but also in developing and sharing faith.

Being asked what they see as the core duties of the Reformed Church in the Swiss survey, only 10 % of the young people consider confirmation work as of high importance (QG24) whereas worship services (QG23) and pastoral care (QG25) are estimated by 23 % resp. 24 % as more important. With 59 % ceremonies like baptism, wedding and funeral (QG27) are seen as most important

Figure 34: Most important tasks of the Reformed Church according to the view of the former confirmands (t₃, 2015), Switzerland



N = 656. Reading aid: 59% of the confirmands thought in t₃ that baptisms, weddings and funerals belong to the most important tasks of the Reformed Church.

core duties of the church. Interestingly 38% find it crucial that the churches offer community to different people (QG29). Or as it is stated:

»... In my opinion church has its right to exist, when it comes to defend social values and to fight against injustice.« (m)

In comparison to these results, the educational work of the churches finds a much lower relevance with only 12% of the confirmed that see this as the most central duty.

3.4 Challenges for the Future

Even if the Swiss t₃-results cannot represent the views of all the young people that had been confirmed two years earlier, some tendencies can be depicted which might also be fruitful for developing and improving confirmation work (more in detail cf. Schlag et al. 2016, 343-365). Some aspects shall be highlighted here again:

Confirmation time and the confirmation service are remembered positively. Retrospectively, the confirmed only partly remember what they have learned or say that they have not learned a lot which is now still important for them. Ob-

viously, the Church as an institution and the Christian faith in the sense of a *fides quae* lose over the years their relevance amongst the confirmed. A large number of the confirmed still show a certain uncertainty concerning questions of faith – which must not necessarily be interpreted as something negative. It might well be the case that this uncertainty derives from intensive considerations or personal thoughts. Although these young people have experienced a lot of the church's educational work, they do not consider this as the most important element of church work – but again, this does not necessarily mean that they consider education as unimportant. Rather it might hint at the fact that other fields of church work are just being estimated as even more important. It should not be underestimated that only every fourth of the young people says that there is nothing to learn in the church anymore. The ethical dimension of the church as well as the personal relation to questions of the social and ecological environment have developed positively since confirmation time. Whether confirmation time itself has contributed to these developments or whether these are mainly dependent on age, the current political situation or the educational factor can not be determined clearly. But at least these individual attitudes can be estimated as possible links for the Church keeping in touch with its younger members. Therefore, these results also open up the window for the question of voluntary work. If it is true that the reason for participating in voluntary church work lies mainly in the positive experience of community with others – with faith questions included! – voluntary work in itself should clearly be developed into this direction.

To summarise: the general situation of a severe decline in membership should enforce the Swiss Reformed Churches to improve and enlarge their educational and ecclesiological programs and offers as intensely as possible. The results from all three studies impressively show the young people's potentials to think constructively about the »big questions« in life and also their willingness to participate wherever they feel needed with their personal abilities and competences. Thus, a convincing and professional pedagogical and theological work will firstly contribute to the Church's positive reputation, secondly and most crucial, it will hopefully help young people to orient themselves and to deal successfully with the complexities of personality, their personal spirituality and religion and plurality in modern society.

4. After Confirmation: Results for Denmark

HENRIK R. CHRISTENSEN AND LEISE CHRISTENSEN

4.1 Background Information

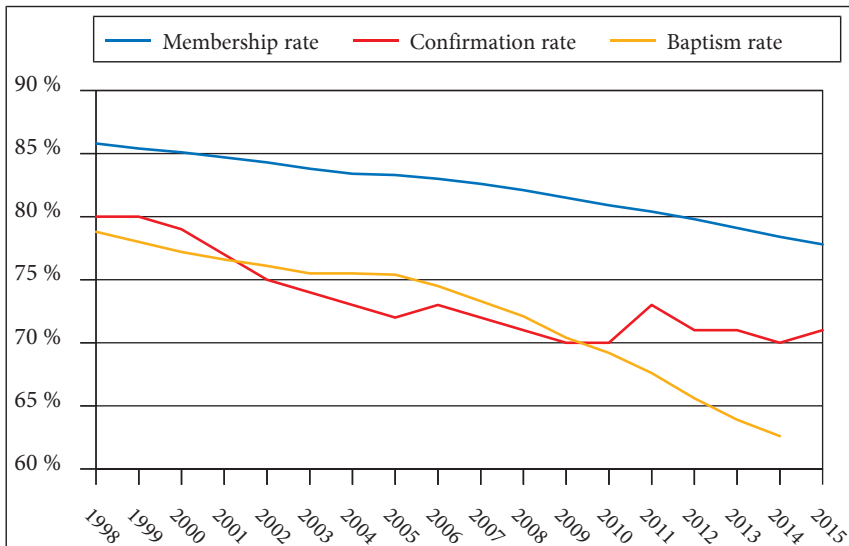
Confirmation is a huge event in Denmark. Parents and especially girls start planning it years in advance. The girls because it is a special day where they can wear *that* special dress and the parents plan it years in advance because it is a logistical challenge to plan a large confirmation scheduled to take place at the same time as that of all the other confirmands. The church statistics show that 48334 adolescents were confirmed in 2015, which is 71 % of the adolescent population in Denmark (including adolescents of others faiths). In 2013, the year the adolescents of this study were confirmed, the number was 48501.

Confirmation is also a significant event in Denmark because it involves a lot of people. Imagine 48000 parties taking place on certain days within a few weeks of May every year. One of the largest banks in the Nordic countries, Nordea, made a representative survey of the economy of confirmation asking parents who had a child confirmed in 2015 about the costs. At the average celebration there are 37 guests. With two parents and a single child (the confirmand), it is possible to estimate that about 1.93 million participants celebrated confirmations in 2015. Naturally there is a cyclical effect that makes some families attend more confirmations at certain times in their lives and less at others, but this still shows that in a country with a population of 5.7 million, confirmations are huge events with far reaching consequences for local economies like book shops, catering services, hotels, clothes stores, florists, banks, and for other areas like traffic and work schedules. The survey shows that the average celebration party costs the equivalent of € 3300 for food and clothes (in 2016 prices), and then comes the gift from the parents which on average costs the equivalent of 800. The differences between the high and low income families are not that big. In fact, the low income group spends more on confirmation celebrations than the second lowest income group with regard to clothes, presents, and the celebration itself (Nordea Confirmation Economy 2016).

Confirmation is more than a family thing, and it is also more than business, it is a cultural event of national proportions. One confirmand states:

»Confirmation preparation became a bit boring in the long run but it was worth everything after the confirmation – I had a truly wonderful day.«

Figure 35: Confirmation rate 1998-2015 in Denmark (%)



Source: Statistics, Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs, www.km.dk.

However, the share of adolescents being confirmed is decreasing and part of a general trend where the membership rate and the number of baptisms are also in decline which is shown in Figure 35.

As can be seen from the above figure, the membership rate has decreased steadily during the last 17 years from a membership rate of more than 85% to around 78% in 2015. Also the confirmation rate has dropped even if it seems that this rate is in fact the most stable with a drop from 80% to 70% of the entire population of the age group in question, although it seems to have stabilised during the last few years. However, the rate of baptism has dropped the most during the last 17 years from around 78% to 63% of all infants and this will of course have implications for confirmation in the longer run. The baptisms of confirmands who were not baptised as infants do not at all make up for the drop in infant baptism.

4.2 How the t_3 -Study Was Conducted

The above section implicitly signals that the Church uses significant resources to maintain statistics and keep track of things. However, this is not always the case, especially not with regard to confirmation. The preparation time usually takes place during school hours and due to unforeseen circumstances when the

Table 36: Danish sample sizes in t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), and t_3 (2015)

	t_1	t_2	t_3	$t_1-t_2-t_3$
N	2024	1507	334 (22% of t_2)	83 (5,5% of t_2)

t_2 data was collected, the response rate ended up being much worse than hoped for. This has consequences for the t_3 response rate as well. In 2015, the Danish research team sent out information to each pastor that participated in 2012/2013 and asked if they would be willing to provide the team with addresses. Some pastors were on leave, others had changed job, and still others did not want to provide the team with the addresses. In total, the pastors provided the team with 1857 addresses. These include all their confirmands that year, also the ones that did not participate in t_1 or t_2 due to illness, vacation or other reasons for not being present on the day the questionnaires were answered. Table 36 shows the number of responses and how many of them that could be matched.

The 334 responses for t_3 are in themselves few compared to the two previous studies, and the response rate is low as only 18% of the confirmands contacted responded. The table also shows that the matching rate is low. Only 25% of the 334 responses from t_3 can be matched to both a t_1 and a t_2 response. The longitudinal analysis in this chapter will be based on those 83 confirmands who can be matched to a questionnaire in all three studies, which is equivalent to 4% of the confirmands who participated in t_1 . In some analyses, the confirmands that can only be matched to t_1 and t_3 will be included raising the share to 5%. The low response rate and the low matching rate make it necessary to consider the approach to the data and the analyses in more detail. For instance, girls have shown to be much more likely to participate in both t_2 and t_3 than boys. The focus will be on longitudinal developments in order to explore possible trends among adolescents.

Looking at some of the background questions from the first questionnaire, it is also possible to see whether the confirmands who participated in all three waves are different from the ones that did not participate in more than the first round.

These background questions show that the final sample is not representative. The former confirmands who chose to respond to the t_3 survey do not answer the way confirmands who only participated in t_1 do. The rows of matched data show how the matched confirmands answered in t_1 , and those answers can be compared with the group of confirmands who only participated in t_1 – shown in the first row. The confirmands that helped the study along and filled in ques-

Table 37: Various background questions at t₁ (2012), t₂ (2013), and t₃ (2015), Denmark (%)

	Contact to the church age between 5-9 years/more than 9 years	Parents very or quite interested in religion	Always or often bedside prayer	Important to belong to the church	N =
	CM11/CM12	CJ01	CJ02	CG01	
t ₁ only	19/24	25	17	25	1.261-1.284
t ₁ /t ₂	19/26	24	19	29	707-721
t ₁ /t ₃	26/36	29	23	36	135-141
t ₁ /t ₂ /t ₃	24/34	31	25	37	81-83
Diff*	5/10	6	8	11	

* The difference shows how many percentage points the confirmands who can be matched in all three questionnaires scored higher on that question in t₁ than the confirmands who only participated in t₁.

tionnaires at t₂ and t₃ already scored higher on most of the questions of t₁. It is possible though that this difference is, in fact, a difference between boys and girls because the girls are so dominant in t₂ and t₃.

4.3 Main Results

This section examines three dimensions of confirmation. The first concerns the confirmands' retrospective account of their confirmation time, including the day of confirmation. The two first waves both took place before their confirmation, and it has not been possible to examine the confirmation itself before now. The next sections examine their beliefs and their attitudes towards the Church.

How the Adolescents View Their Confirmation Time

As mentioned above, confirmation is a significant event in Denmark, and this is also the case for the confirmands who have answered the questionnaire in t₃. Two years after confirmation, 70 % of the 334 respondents say that it was one of the most important days of their life (QK20). The respondents were also asked if they found the celebration party (QB09), the money and presents (QB10), and the blessing (CB11) important to them. 92 % say that »having a beautiful celebration with family and friends was important for me«, 57 % agree that »the money and presents were important for me« and 52 % agree that »receiving a blessing was important to me«. A large majority of confirmands appreciate

Table 38: The importance of the celebration, presents, and blessing (t_3 , 2015), Denmark (%)

		Celebration was important (QB09)	Money/presents were important (QB10)	The blessing was important (QB11)
My confirmation day was one of the most important days in my life	Agree	97	63	63
	Neither agree/disagree	89	44	30
	Disagree	70	50	23

N = 334; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

their confirmation two years later, and they especially seem to appreciate the celebration with family and friends. As shown above in the survey made by Nordea, this is also one of the biggest celebrations in the history of a family. Even among the respondents of t_3 , who were found to be more religiously socialised than the general respondent of t_1 , 48 % of them do not think that receiving the blessing was important to them. The answers to what the respondents found important about their confirmation combined with the national character of the confirmation show that confirmation in Denmark is as much a cultural as a religious event.

Table 38 shows, quite naturally, that for all confirmands the celebration, the money and presents as well as the blessing were more important if the confirmation day was one of the most important days in their life. Even the celebration party itself, which is very important in general, was more important for the group to which this applies ($r_s = .36, p < .001$). Money and presents are not that differently distributed among the groups. In fact, their importance is not significantly different among the confirmands that agree and disagree that confirmation day was one of the most important days. Finally, the biggest difference is found with regard to the importance of the blessing. It is much more important to the confirmands who find the confirmation important, and this indicates that although confirmation is a very national and collective event, for some confirmands there is a personal and religious dimension to it as well ($r_s = .40, p < .001$). Two confirmands state:

»Confirmation time was a fantastic and educational time where you became more conscious about your own existence and the meaning of life.«

»It was a time in my life which was difficult to find a way around in. As a descendant of a Christian family it is difficult not to say yes to the entire Creed. That means that you are in danger of being bullied or looked down upon as weird. It was a time where

you tried to find yourself. It was also difficult to believe in things that were not facts. However I have reflected upon matters after these two years and I have now reached a conclusion with regard to my faith.»

Examining boys and girls respectively, it turns out that the association between the importance of confirmation day and of celebration is stronger among girls than among boys. Conversely, the association between the importance of celebration day and of the blessing is stronger among boys than among girls. In a longitudinal perspective it turns out that the boys who find confirmation day to be important do so more because of the blessing ($r_s = .51, p < .001$) than the celebration and the money and presents whereas the girls do so more because of the celebration ($r_s = .43, p < .001$) than the blessing and the money and presents.

These questions were also posed to the confirmands back in t_1 , and t_2 , and then it was obvious that they became more important in t_2 because the confirmation day was rapidly approaching. Comparing their answers in t_3 with the ones they gave in the beginning, the analyses show that in retrospect, the celebration and the money and presents have become more important to the confirmands than they found originally at t_1 whereas the blessing has not become more important.

The Beliefs of the Adolescents

Some of the adolescents have experienced changes in the way they perceive their beliefs and Christianity and two years after their confirmation time have given this some thought. Here are two examples of such views:

»I was happy about my confirmation time – I still am – but today I do not believe that I was old enough to make such a decision and to know what it was all about. I was confirmed in 7th grade and had not as yet formed a lot of opinions. I did as everyone else and liked the fellowship. But I would now prefer that I had been just one year older and then I am not sure that I would have made the same choice. At least I would have posed more critical questions concerning the matters I was confirming. Today I hold opinions which I am not sure that I share with my pastor and the church. I do not believe that I was old enough or mature enough to know what happened and what a confirmation really was and meant. Today I am sure that I do not – right now – believe in God's existence which I did not know at that time.»

»Confirmation time was really good fun and it made me more sure in my beliefs even if it was not quite in the direction that my pastor could have wished for. I certainly do believe that confirmation preparation is something that one should attend – if nothing else just for the experience as it is something that I still think back on with joy.»

These two adolescents took the time to tell in words what many of them did by ticking boxes in the surveys, i. e., voice a general decline in many of the belief items. In all three samples of the study, the confirmands were asked to indicate

Table 39: Differences in beliefs from t_1 (2012) to t_3 (2015), Denmark (paired t-test), % agree

	t_1	t_3	$p. =$
C/QE01: God created the world	40	31	< .001
C/QE02: There is life after death	65	68	.673
C/QE03: God loves all humans and cares about each one of us	77	72	.121
C/QE04: Jesus has risen from the dead	52	40	.014
C/QE05: I am insecure what I should believe	33	36	.695
C/QE09: I believe in God	72	63	< .001
C/QE08: Faith in God helps me in difficult situations	36	47	.401

$N = 142$; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable). The paired t-test compares the mean values of these answers from the confirmands who can be matched in t_1 and t_3 .

how much they agree to a range of belief questions. Table 39 lists the agreements to these items at t_1 and t_3 .

In the previous study on Denmark (Christensen/Christensen 2015, 219), it was shown that none of the changes in the belief items between t_1 and t_3 were significant. In the above table the effect of the confirmation time itself has been omitted and instead the pre-confirmation beliefs at t_1 are compared to the post-confirmation beliefs at t_3 . Agreement to four of the seven belief items have decreased while it has increased in the last three. However, only the changes in three of the seven items are significant. The beliefs in creation (C/QE01) and in God (C/QE09) have decreased most significantly but the belief in resurrection (C/QE04) has also decreased.

Examining the belief items in relation to gender reveals that there are some dynamics hidden in the above table. It turns out that the change in the belief in creation (C/QE01) is driven by the girls, and that the decrease found among the boys from t_1 to t_3 is not significant. With regard to the belief in life after death (C/QE02) and that God loves all of us (C/QE03), these items are the most polarised among boys and girls. 55% of the boys and 76% of the girls agree to a belief in an afterlife in t_3 , and 55% of the boys and 83% of the girls believe that God loves all of us. This decrease among the boys is significant while the increase among the girls is not. There is, however, one belief item that has increased between t_1 and t_3 . More boys agree that faith helps in difficult situations (C/QE08) in t_3 than t_1 . Examining the gender difference shows that for some items, especially belief in creation and belief in God, the two sexes agree and the combined decrease is stronger than when looking at each sex. Concerning some of the other items, the changes go in opposite directions leaving the overall development insignificant. This is true for the significant increase in the

Table 40: Differences in beliefs from t_1 (2012) to t_3 (2015), Denmark (paired t-test), % agree

	t_1	t_3	p
C/QG05: The Church does a lot of good things for the people	75	73	.632
C/QG01: It is important for me to belong to the Church	36	46	.491
C/QG04: Church services are usually boring	43	59	.007
C/QG03: If I will have children, I want to have them baptised	94	91	.026
C/QF01: Positive attitudes towards Christianity	75	70	.433
C/QF02: Positive attitudes towards the Church	58	56	.573

N = 138-141; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable) or on a 5-point-scale (C/QF01 and C/QF02). The paired t-test compares the mean values of these answers from the confirmands who can be matched in t_1 and t_3 .

belief that faith helps among boys and the significant decrease in the belief that God loves all of us also among boys. Both of these changes disappear in the general results which are strongly influenced by the female respondents leaving the overall change not significant.

Relationship to the Church

Having looked at the developments in beliefs, time has come to look at changes in the relationship to the Church. In the total t_3 -sample (N = 318) 73 % find that the Church does a lot of good things for people (QG05). On the other hand, only 43 % of the total t_3 -sample find it important to belong to the Church (QG01). In contrast to this, 89 % agree that they want their future children baptised in the Church (QG03). Clearly both boys and girls want their children baptised and neither thinks that baptism and belonging overlap. Baptism is something more than belonging to the Church. It is possible that it indicates how the individual belongs to an imagined community – not of fellow believers, but of fellow Danes. This is perhaps also shown in the attitudes towards the Church and Christianity. 55 % are positive towards the Church, and while that is a majority of the adolescents in the sample, it is smaller than the 69 % who are positive towards Christianity. The changes between t_1 and t_3 are found in Table 40.

In contrast to the belief items, there are not a lot of significant differences between boys and girls or between t_1 and t_3 . There is a significant increase in the share of respondents who find church services boring in t_3 compared to t_1 (C/QG04). This is probably in line with much of what these adolescents think in general. Many are in a period of their lives where most of what they do – or are forced or obliged to do – is considered boring. The unanswered question is whether church services are even more boring than, for example, homework

and chores at home. There is also a slight decrease in the share who think they will have their future children baptised in the Church (C/QG03), but it is still above 90 % of the adolescents who agree to this even if only half as many find it important to belong to the Church in the first place.

The differences between the sexes were important in a number of belief questions, but with regard to the attitudes towards the Church and to Christianity there are fewer differences. There is a significant difference between boys and girls with regard to belonging to the Church (C/QG01) ($p < .01$). 36 % of the boys find it important in t_3 in contrast to 52 % of the girls, but since they pull the change in opposite directions, the overall change between t_1 and t_3 is not significant.

Overall, it seems that the adolescents value the confirmation, the celebration, and what the Church does in society, but at the same time they do not find it that important to belong to the Church nor do they identify with the Church as much as with Christianity. This is one of the biggest challenges for the Church.

4.4 Challenges for the Future

This chapter started out showing some population data on church membership, and confirmation and baptism rates. They are all in decline and have been for many years although the confirmation rate is more stable than the others. The confirmation celebration is a big event in most families and on a national scale as well. Nevertheless, the Church faces a number of challenges in general but also with regard to confirmation.

Obviously the decrease in baptism rates will mean something for confirmation in the Church of Denmark. That a number of young people choose to get baptised at some point during their confirmation time does not at all make up for all those who do not get baptised as infants. If the Church does not manage to make baptism into a probable and reasonable choice for the young parents, confirmation rates will drop significantly in the future. Therefore the big – maybe the biggest – challenge for the Church is to make baptism relevant for the younger generations of parents; make it into an important matter that carries meaning for them. Another challenge is maintaining a relationship with the members after confirmation. Many individuals do not return to the Church again until it is time get married or baptise their children. Compared to most of the other Churches in this study, the Church in Denmark does not make much use of volunteers in their youth work for instance. Third, the Church has to consider the terms that individualisation sets for peoples' understanding of their own choices and belonging to a traditional institution such as the Church. As the Church can not expect its members to be taken for granted, it has to

develop strategies for maintaining its relevance for people and at the same time to carry an ancient tradition into the future. Perhaps inadvertently one of the confirmands wrote about this in the t_3 questionnaire when describing her confirmation time and the years since:

»I met some new friends who came to mean a lot to me in my life. I became far more devout. This has however faded somewhat. But confirmation time did teach me a lot about loving my neighbor and human decency and I do believe in the good advice and the principles behind Christianity.«

This statement reflects very well the general developments among most of the confirmed adolescents that has been examined in the Danish confirmation study. The confirmation time increased their awareness of being Christians although it did not increase their agreement to a range of belief items. After their confirmation it is possible to identify a general decline on most accounts even among the respondents who at t_1 already identified themselves more as Christian, and who indicated a more Christian socialisation than the rest of the respondents. Nevertheless, even as these faith elements have faded, the adolescents still want their children baptised and are positive towards Christianity. In that sense they seem to demonstrate nicely that there is an overlap between subscribing to general Christian values and being Danish, perhaps most aptly said by one of the Danish bishops: »Danes don't have to go to church on Sundays because they wear their Danishness every day« (Gundelach et al 2008, 219). In that way, it seems as if the Church as an institution is facing more challenges than Christianity as a religion.

5. After Confirmation: Results for Finland

JOUKO PORKKA AND KATI TERVO-NIEMELÄ

5.1 Background Information

In Finland, the crucial development related to young people's relation to the Church seems to take place after confirmation. Confirmation itself has remained very popular with about 83 % of all young people attending each year – higher than the church membership rate of the 14-15 year olds. Also the experiences of confirmation time are positive. After confirmation time, the development seems to take two distinctive paths. While a fairly high number, about 30 % of the young people, become volunteers in the Church, the same amount seems to move away from the Church. Between the age of 18 to 25 about one fourth of the young people leave the Church, and exactly during the year when young people turn 18 and are able to leave the Church independently, about 4-5 % do this. In an international comparison, these church leaving rates among the young generations are high in Finland.

When conducting the t_3 -study, the primary interest is related to the change after confirmation: what happens to young people's relationship to the Church and their faith after confirmation?

5.2 How the t_3 -Study Was Conducted

The t_3 -study in Finland was built upon the sample and the questionnaires of t_1 and t_2 . When the confirmands received the questionnaires shortly before their confirmation, they were asked if they would be willing to fill out another questionnaire two years after confirmation. If so, they had to provide their contact information (email, postal address) so that it would be possible to reach them at a later time (2015). Altogether a little more than 600 gave their contact-information, comprising one fourth of the t_2 -respondents overall.

In Finland, the t_3 -survey was collected by email, and of the contact-information that the confirmands had given two years earlier, 592 had a valid email address. Of those 592 to whom the t_3 -questionnaire was sent, 154 replied, a response rate of 26 %. Of the 154 responses, it was possible to match 120 either with t_1 or t_2 , 83 of which were successfully matched. As Table 41 shows, the number of fully matched responses corresponds to 3.6 % of all t_2 respondents. Of the fully matched cases, 24 were such that the respondents were volunteering in the Church at the time of their replying the questionnaire.

Table 41: Finnish sample sizes in t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), and t_3 (2015)

	t_1	t_2	t_3	t_1 - t_2 - t_3	Valid questionnaires from volunteers within the t_1 - t_2 - t_3 -sample
N	2436	2298	154 (7% of t_2)	83 (4% of t_2)	24

Table 42: Background factors of the Finnish sample (%)

	Sex: boys/girls	Contact to the church age between 5-9 years/ more than 9 years	Parents in- terested in religion	Bedside prayer*	More than 250 books at home	Parents active as volunteers**
	C/QM01	CM11/12	CJ01	CJ02	CM04	CP17
$t_1/t_2/t_3$	20/80	50/22	16	44	36	9
t_1/t_2 only	50/50	37/13	20	42	21	12

* at least sometimes; ** at least one parent who is volunteering.

The composition of the t_3 -sample shows a special profile in a number of background factors.

When comparing these characteristics with the representative samples in t_1 and t_2 , it becomes evident that the fully matched t_3 -sample has some limitations that need to be kept in mind. Most importantly, the results mostly reflect the views of girls because only every fifth of the t_3 respondents was male while the share was fifty-fifty in both t_1 and t_2 . That the table could appear skewed concerning the results for religious socialisation is due to girls being overrepresented in the t_3 -sample. The girls' t_1/t_2 numbers (47% of the girls had contact with the Church between 5-9 years and 18% after the age of 9 years) are nearly equal to the overall t_3 -percentage. Another limitation is made apparent in Table 42: the respondents with more than 250 books at home were overrepresented in t_3 . Because this item measures the cultural background of the parents, it is clear that adolescents from homes with higher cultural capital are overrepresented in the sample. Due to these limitations, the sample is not representative and the results cannot be generalised. However, the data offer great possibilities to analyse the longitudinal development among those respondents, for whom it was possible to match their replies to the t_3 -survey with their t_1 and t_2 replies. However, the characteristics of the t_3 data need to be kept in mind during the analysis.

5.3 Main Results

Views of Confirmation in Retrospect

The focus of the present study is on longitudinal aspects. In addition to this, the t_3 -questionnaire included questions related to experiences of the confirmation day itself. Since the t_2 -questionnaires were completed before the confirmation celebration, there was no way to include such items in that questionnaire.

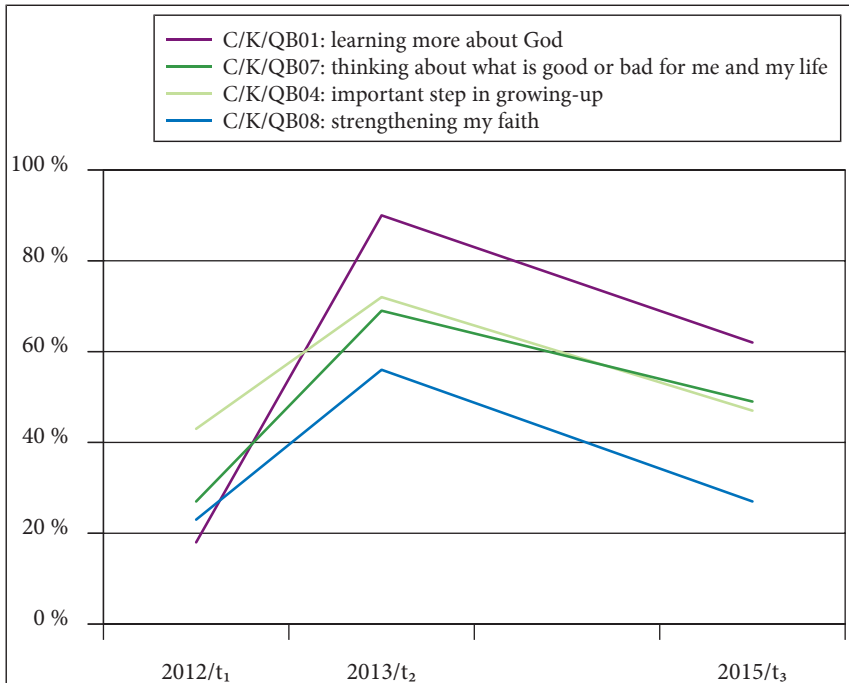
Of the t_3 -respondents, 34 % replied that the confirmation day was one of the most important days of their life up until that point. This figure is lower than in most of the other countries in the study (average 51 %), being lower only in Sweden (27 %). Finnish confirmands also scored lower than average on the importance of the blessing in the confirmation service. Only 30 % responded that it was important for them to receive a blessing (average 47 %). Again only in Sweden was the percentage lower (20 %). On the other hand, money and presents had been more important to Finnish confirmands (51 %) than to confirmands in general (36 %).

The Religious Attitudes and Beliefs of the Adolescents

Next, the focus is on the longitudinal development among the confirmands, using the responses of those whose answers could be matched with their responses to the t_1/t_2 surveys. Figure 36 shows that the expectations concerning faith, God, growing-up and thinking about what is good or bad for oneself are also low among the Finnish confirmands in the beginning of the confirmation time. However, they seem to have received a lot more than they expected during the confirmation time. Out of all the countries in the study, the positive change is the strongest in Finland, and Finnish confirmands gave the highest values to all of the items of Figure 36 aside from KB08 »strengthening my faith«. For the Finnish confirmands, the opinion of the importance of their confirmation time grew much more critical during the two years after the confirmation in t_3 . Especially the view concerning their strengthening in faith (QB01) dropped lower than in any other country.

The slight increase regarding beliefs that often takes place during confirmation time tends to level down two years after confirmation. At the same time there is a slight trend towards losing faith. After the confirmation time there is an increase in the number of those who did not believe in God (i. e., who chose the option 1 = not applicable at all) (t_1 : 20 %, t_2 : 16 %; t_3 : 23 %). There is also a clear decline visible in the belief in Jesus's resurrection (C/K/QE04) after confirmation (t_1 : 37 %, t_2 : 38 %; t_3 : 25 %). Accordingly the percentage of those who chose option 1 (totally disagree) increased after confirmation (t_1 : 20 %, t_2 : 13 %; t_3 : 29 %). A similar declining trend is visible in the general attitude towards

Figure 36: Confirmands' views of confirmation time (Finland): t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015)



N (total) = 77-79 the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

Christian faith (C/K/QF01) after confirmation (positive attitude in t_1 : 60%, t_2 : 64%; t_3 : 55%).

However, the development may take different patterns as the following answers given by the adolescents show:

»During and right after confirmation time I felt that I believed in God, but I don't believe any more« (f)

»After confirmation I feel that I have been strengthened in my faith through the parish activities and feel that through the parish I have gotten a chance to be closer to God than before« (f)

»My faith has remained the same after confirmation time; confirmation time strengthened my faith and since then it has remained the same« (m)

»I have not experienced any change in my faith or beliefs. I don't believe and have never believed« (f)

Attitudes towards the Church

While the general attitude towards the Christian faith grows increasingly critical after confirmation, the attitudes toward the Church (C/K/QF02: positive attitude in t_1 : 57 %, t_2 : 67 %; t_3 : 65 %), church membership (C/K/QG01: membership is important: in t_1 : 39 %, t_2 : 44 %; t_3 : 44 %) and the statement »The Church does a lot of good things for the people« (C/K/QG05, agree to the statement t_1 : 86 %, t_2 : 89 %; t_3 : 89 %) were on the same level two years after confirmation as at the end of confirmation time.

Volunteers

»Being a volunteer at a confirmation camp was an important experience to me, I mentally grew a lot during that week, I learned a lot new and useful, for example how to lead a group.« (f)

»The best thing about being a volunteer is that in the end of confirmation time the young people really start to be interested in Christianity and in the Bible even though in the beginning they could have not been less interested.« (f)

Among those who replied to t_3 , 30 % were currently and 13 % had previously been active volunteers in the Church or other Christian youth work (QP51). Because the number of respondents is so small, any further analysis on this sample alone is unreliable. However, combined with t_1 and t_2 , separate data was collected from the young volunteers (YCVs) with 510 respondents in t_1 and 506 in t_2 , with a matching rate of 73 % (Niemi/ Porkka 2015). Some results from that survey will be reported in the following section.

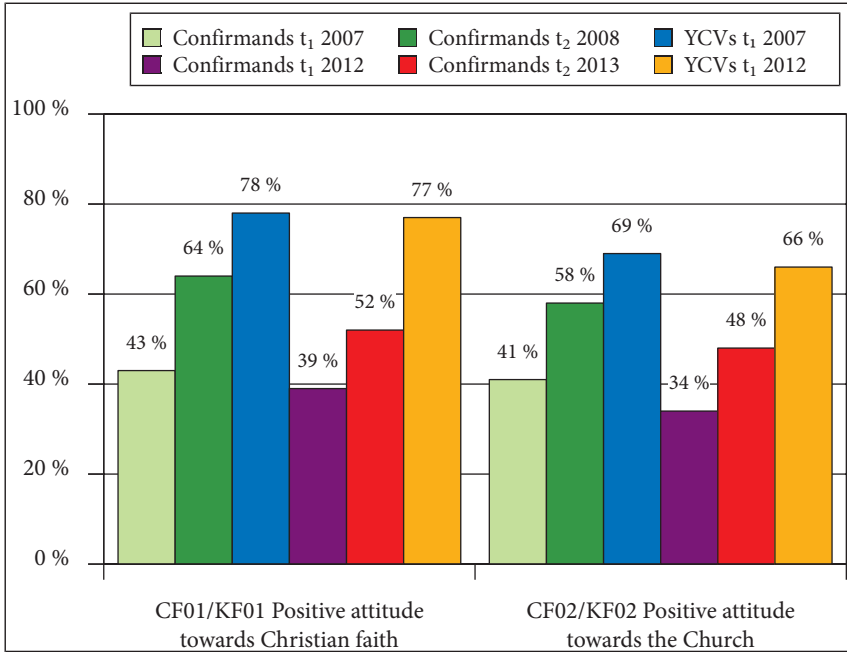
5.4 Additional Studies

In addition to the international confirmation study, the results below are based on an earlier 10-year-longitudinal study among confirmands in Finland and two separate YCV surveys which were carried out together with t_1 and t_2 in Finland.

Results from the YCV Surveys 2007/2008 and 2012/2013

According to the 2012/2013 study, YCVs were very active in parish life: four out of five (81 %) participated in parish youth work, two out of three (59 %) in worship services and every third (38 %) in other parish activities several times a year. Only 2 % of the YCVs did not participate in parish life at all. YCVs were also active in their personal spiritual life: half of them (53 %) prayed in private, every fourth (25 %) read the Bible and every third (37 %) listened to gospel music privately at least once a month (Porkka 2016b). These figures are much

Figure 37: Confirmands and YCVs' attitude towards the Christian faith and the Church in a cross-temporal comparison (both for t_1 and t_2 and 2007/2008 and 2012/2013), Finland (%)



N (confirmands t_1 2007) = 2139-2154; N (confirmands t_2 2008) = 1726-1731; N (YCVs t_1 2007) = 336; N (confirmands t_1 2012) = 2224-2293; N (confirmands t_2 2013) = 2262; N (YCVs t_1 2012) = 503-505. The share of those answering »rather positive« and »very positive« on a 5-point-answering scale.

higher than among the confirmands or Finns in general (Ketola 2011, 18-20; Niemelä 2009, 297-298).

When comparing the 2007/2008 study with the 2012/2013 study, the development among YCVs seems to have partly taken a different path than among the confirmands. While the confirmands' attitudes had also grown more critical from 2007/2008 to 2012/2013, the YCVs' attitudes towards Christian work seem to have remained positive and their attitudes towards the Church had even grown more so. Three out of four (77%) of the YCVs had a positive attitude towards the Christian faith (CJ01) in 2012 and two out of three (66%) towards the Church (CJ02).

Due to the differing development among the confirmands and the YCVs, the attitudinal gap between the confirmands and the YCVs grew bigger as can be seen in Figure 37. The confirmands' positive attitudinal change during confirmation time towards both the Christian faith and the Church was much less

pronounced in the 2012/2013 survey than it was in the 2007/2008 survey. On the other hand, the YCVs' attitude towards Christian faith and the Church was almost as positive in the 2007 survey as in the 2012 survey (Porkka 2016b).

The Matthew Effect

According to the previous studies, religious socialisation in childhood is highly correlated with beliefs in adolescence and also with a positive experience of the confirmation time (e.g., Krupka et al. 2015). The »Matthew effect« also seems to apply to confirmation work: »For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them« (Matthew 25:29 New International Version). However, many of the theories on socialisation nowadays state that socialisation is a polymorphic, life-long process where an individual is an agent who also affects his/her environment (Himberg/Jauhainen 1998, 12-16). In addition to the childhood family, there are plenty of other important actors and contexts in an adolescent's life including school, friends, media, and youth culture. Studies suggest that the influence of school and home has decreased, and the social media together with the entertainment industry have partly replaced them as the primary socialisation agents during the last years (Raitanen 2001, 190).

To extract more information on the role of early childhood socialisation, the confirmands' and YCVs' religious attitudes were analysed from the perspective of how long the informant had been active in the congregation: confirmands in the beginning and in the end of confirmation time and YCVs whether they are volunteering for the first, second or third time (see Porkka 2016b). Because the YCVs begin their training immediately after their confirmation, they represent the age cohort right above the confirmands rather well. The results of this analysis can be seen in Table 43. First, according to the analysis, parents' interest in religion predicts higher scores on topics related to faith and the Church for both confirmands and YCVs. Correspondingly, adolescents whose parents lacked an interest in religion considered items related faith or the Church less important.

However, the biggest attitudinal change was measured among those confirmands whose parents had practically no interest in religion. This result can be explained partly by the fact that these confirmands were more critical towards religion and faith in the beginning of the confirmation time (t_1). Because of this critical attitude they had more room for positive attitudinal change than those with a more positive initial attitude.

It is also possible to explain the attitudinal change using the theories of developmental psychology: the parents' influence will grow less significant naturally as the children get older. This also explains why the YCVs' attitude towards the Church and Christian faith have remained more stable: because of

Table 43: The connection between the parents' interest in religion and the confirmands' and YCVs' attitude towards faith and the Church (Finland)

	CJ01: Are your parents interested in religion	Confirmands (M)		YCVs (M)			Change from confirmands t ₁ to 3 rd time YCV
		t ₁	t ₂	1 st time	2 nd time	3 rd time	
CG01: It is important for me to belong to the Church.	very/quite	4.47	4.52	5.14	4.78	5.05	0.58
	somewhat	3.72	3.98	4.68	5.04	4.96	1.24
	not at all	2.61	3.15	3.98	4.62	5.06	2.45
CE02: There is life after death.	very/quite	4.63	4.85	5.56	6.05	6.00	1.37
	somewhat	3.92	4.31	4.80	5.16	5.42	1.50
	not at all	3.30	3.68	4.52	4.71	5.46	2.16
CE09: I believe in God	very/quite	4.90	5.13	5.38	6.05	6.35	1.45
	somewhat	3.83	4.14	4.84	5.22	5.58	1.75
	not at all	2.63	3.10	4.21	4.64	5.31	2.68

N (confirmands t₁, 2012) = 2284-3309; N (confirmands t₂, 2013) = 1634-1647; N (1st time as a YCV in 2012/2013) = 245-247; N (2nd time as a YCV in 2012/2013) = 133-134; N (3rd time or more as a YCV in 2012/2013) = 110-113: mean values on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

their own church experiences their perception of the Church and faith are not so strongly dependent on the social media or the public opinion but instead form their opinion based on their own experiences.

The analysis of the YCVs' attitudes showed that the development, which already started during the confirmation time, continued during the post-confirmation YCV activity. The positive attitudinal change was biggest among those YCVs whose parents had no interest in religion. Among the YCVs who were volunteering in confirmation work for the first time, a clear distinction was measured between those whose parents had been interested in religion and those who had not. However, among the more experienced YCVs the differences shrunk. When the YCVs were volunteering for their third or higher time, the differences had disappeared on the church-related attitudes. Also on faith-related topics the difference had disappeared. The results suggest that a long-term congregation connection and participation in congregational activity will compensate for weak religious socialisation in childhood.

What Happens in the Transition to Adulthood? Results from the 10-Year Longitudinal Study on Finnish Confirmands

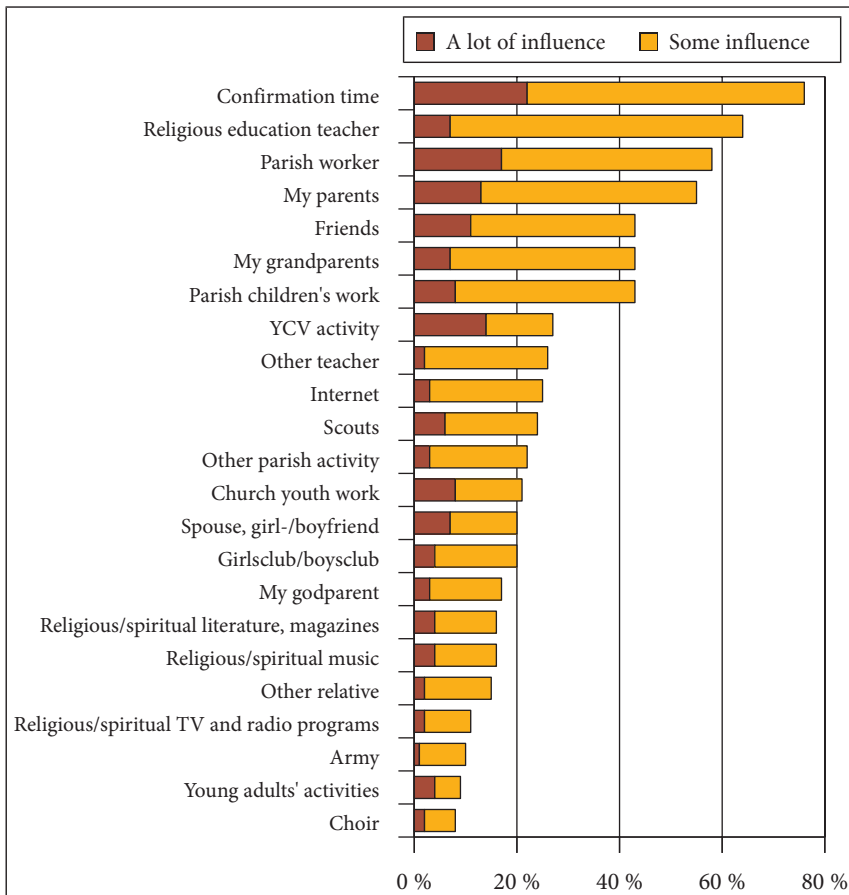
In Finland, the young people are leaving the Church in unusually high numbers during the transition period to adulthood. Recently as many as one fourth of the young adults left the Church between the ages of 18 and 25. The starting point of this phenomenon can be traced back to the new law of religious freedom passed in 2003 according to which a person can leave the Church simply by sending an email. Between 2003 and 2015, more than 0.5 million Finns have left the Church. This amounts to more than 10% of the total number of church members; most of them young adults (Niemelä 2007; 2015).

The high number of young adults leaving the Church has led many to question where the cause might lie, particularly if their church leaving was somehow linked to their confirmation time. A 10-year longitudinal study that followed the confirmands in the city of Tampere from the age of 14/15 until they were 25 years old has produced data that enables one to scrutinise this question (see Niemelä 2015; 2008). The study shows that at the age of 25, young people still consider their confirmation time as important. It is still rated as being the most important single factor influencing their religious thinking, more important than parents, school teachers, friends or other church activities (see Figure 38).

Furthermore, the results of this study as well as results from nationally representative studies show that this generation thinks of church membership in a different manner compared to previous generations. The young generation does not want to belong to the Church if they do not believe in what the Church teaches. This differs from the former understanding of the role of church membership in the Nordic countries. For the Nordic people, belonging to the national Churches has been regarded as something special and their relationship to the national Churches has often been described as »believing in belonging«. However, the young generation is actively challenging this notion. The tradition and culture are not enough to motivate them to remain members. They primarily make individual decisions based on their own beliefs and life-views. They search for deeper personal meaning and if they do not experience it, they are likely to leave the institutions even if they do not have anything specific against them (Niemelä 2015).

Furthermore, the study shows that leaving the Church does relate to the confirmation experience in some way. The results of the study also show that it is clear that negative confirmation experiences increase the likelihood of leaving the Church. However, those who end up leaving the Church are typically not especially dissatisfied with their confirmation experience, but the experience just did not have any deeper meaning for them. They often did have fun at the confirmation camp, but on a more personal level it did not give them that

Figure 38: Young people's estimates of sources of influence on their religious thinking at the age of 25. Source: A 10-year-longitudinal study of confirmands in Finland (see more of the study Niemelä 2015; Tervo-Niemelä in press)



N = 226; scale: 1-3 (1 = no influence, 2 = some influence, 3 = a lot of influence).

much. It did not typically strengthen their faith or make them feel more grown up (Niemelä 2015).

At the same time, it is important to highlight that the relationship to the Church and how one experiences the confirmation time are both linked to earlier experiences, home religious background, and expectations attached to confirmation attendance. First of all, the basic attitude of those who end up leaving the Church was already different in the beginning of the confirmation time: they were not so excited and without active interests, and they were more likely to have been raised in homes with no religious upbringing. Those with a

weaker bond with the Church and its faith in the beginning of the confirmation time tend to be more critical of the confirmation time while those with a religious upbringing tend to experience confirmation time in a more positive manner, regard it as spiritually more rewarding, see church membership in a more positive light, and are also more likely to remain church members (Niemelä 2015; Niemelä 2008).

5.5 Challenges for the Future

Confirmation work itself is doing very well in Finland: it is popular among the young people and highly respected by the young people's parents, church workers and the Church alike. Confirmation work forms a strong basis for youth work with the popular YCV-activity after confirmation time. Like confirmation time itself, volunteer activity is very popular among the young people and there are many more parishes that have too many rather than too few volunteers after the confirmation time.

However, one main challenge is related to what happens to YCVs after they feel they are too old for the activity. Young adults are in general very passive in attending church activities, and many of them are leaving the Church as well. The Church should continuously consider new ways to attract this age cohort and to develop similar volunteer opportunities in other areas of church work as in confirmation work and YCV-activity.

The other main challenge for confirmation work comes from the outside, brought about by changes in family settings and religious upbringing. Religious upbringing in homes has been in clear decline and there are fewer children who take part in church activities in their childhood. Thus, there are an increasing number of young people whose only contacts with the Church after baptism has been in school.

The overall decrease in religious interests and church membership has brought about declining baptism rates, which predicts decline in confirmation rates in the future. An even sharper decline is visible in the share of church weddings which may also influence the confirmation rates in the future: confirmation is a prerequisite for a church wedding in Finland, and for years the chance to have a church wedding has been the most important reason for participating in confirmation time among the Finnish confirmands. The decline in the popularity of a church wedding may lead to a decline in the popularity of confirmation time.

Also the general attitudinal change in society towards the Church and its teaching poses challenges. The general attitude has grown more demanding and to some extent also more critical, partly linked to the new media: the social

media offer an unlimited platform for various critical (as well as supportive) voices. An increasing number of people are distant from the Church and there is also a significantly higher portion of atheists while the share of those who are committed to Christian beliefs has declined. These changes partially explain the high figures of people leaving the Church in Finland.

The other big challenge is in finances. The confirmation system with long camps has been mostly paid for by the parishes; the confirmands and their parents paid only a minor part of the expenses. However, following the decline in church membership rates, an increasing number of parishes are experiencing financial problems. This has, for example, led to a shortening of the camp-periods in some parishes. Many parishes also experience problems with maintaining their camp-centers. Without the parishes' own camp-centers, the organisation of the camp-system becomes more complicated, and then often, also more expensive for the families.

6. After Confirmation: Results for Norway

IDA MARIE HØEG AND BERND KRUPKA

6.1 Background Information

The Church of Norway is one of the Churches in the study that has undergone major curricular changes within recent years (Christensen/Krupka 2015). The Faith Education Reform (2003-2013) implemented a new curriculum Plan for Christian Education in 2010, covering church children and youth work for those 0-18 years old (Krupka/Leganger-Krogstad 2013). So far, the reform succeeded in establishing a number of educational schemes for children in the age range from baptism to confirmation with participation rates of up to 54% of Church of Norway members in this age group in the non-urban regions of the country (Botvar et al. 2013, 32). Post-confirmation leadership training is the only program for the age group after confirmation that has established itself in a statistically interesting size, gathering 16% of the Church of Norway confirmed members in the respective age group in 2015 and 14% in 2013. Except for the leadership training program, the impression is that the age group of 15-18 poses a challenge to Christian Education in the Church of Norway. Even in parishes that were early in implementing the reform, both the total number of offered programs and the total number of participants from this age group has declined (Morvik/Høeg 2012, 162-163, 166, also for a discussion of other Christian programs for the age group). However, following a request from the synod in 2009 (KM 5.1.1/09), the main focus concerning young people in the Church of Norway lies for the time being on the age group of 18-30 years (www.kirke18-30.no; Livsnær, relevant, tilgjengelig 2013).

The demographical background for developments in church youth work shows a slow decline in church membership. In 2015, 73% of the Norwegian population belonged to the Church of Norway, a decline of 4 percent points during the last four years. 62% of the age group participated in confirmation, a corresponding decline of 4 percent points during the last four years. In church debate, one has high focus on the dropping rate of baptisms: in 2015, 58% of the newborns were baptised into the Church of Norway, a decline of a whole 9 percent points for the last 4-year-period, indicating changes in baptismal practice amongst the younger part of the population (the rate of funerals being stable in the same time period; all figures from ssb.no). The changes concerning baptism are strongest in the urban areas, especially in Oslo (Høeg/Gresaker 2015).

While the demographical backdrop for the data of the present study shows a

slow decline in membership figures and more significant changes in the baptismal rate, the Norwegian Church is also undergoing major changes in its structure. In 2012, the Church of Norway lost its status as a state church, with all administrative changes expected to be implemented by January 2017. At the same time, church elections have also led to a major change in representatives in the general synod and the Church Council, the elected body leading the Church. At the church election of 2015 (www.kirken.no/valg), a new platform called *Åpen folkekirke* (Open people's church) with a liberal theological profile and allowing for same-sex-marriage in the Church as their main objective, earned a landslide victory, almost wiping out the ranks of often long-standing synodal and church council representatives from Christian organisations and more conservative groups. With many of the new representatives having broad experience from various political and cultural contexts in society and few bonds to the traditional networks and alliances in the Church, changes in the organisational culture of the Church are to be expected in the years to come, that probably will also become relevant for church children's and youth work by challenging the dominating role of the conservative lay movement in running and developing new programs for these groups.

6.2 How the t_3 -Study Was Conducted

The procedure for gathering t_3 -data, approved for by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data in terms of data security, was to append a form to the t_2 -questionnaire asking for each confirmand's permission to send them a new questionnaire in 2015, and for their email-address and postal address. Addresses were handled by IKO – Church Educational Centre, one of the participating institutions, without the researchers having access to them. A total of 629 confirmands agreed to participate in t_3 (367 girls and 262 boys), 29% of the sample in t_2 . The contact details given for 62 persons were not valid in 2015. To stimulate the response rate the respondents were informed that those who returned the questionnaire participated in a lottery of an Iphone. 566 received the t_3 -questionnaire. 23% of the questionnaires were returned before a reminder, after the reminder the response rate increased to 33% (188 participants). 115 could be matched with t_1/t_2 -questionnaires. Of these, 14 were volunteers in the church at the time of the survey (another 9 had been active before).

Table 44 shows the sample sizes for the three times that the confirmands filled out a questionnaire.

The composition of the t_3 -sample shows a special profile in a number of respects. Table 45 describes the sample according to background factors.

The differences in geography are also worth mentioning: 32% of the respon-

Table 44: Norwegian sample sizes in t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), and t_3 (2015)

	t_1	t_2	t_3	$t_1-t_2-t_3$	Valid questionnaires from volunteers within the $t_1-t_2-t_3$ -sample
N	2337	2166	189 (9% of t_2)	115 (5% of t_2)	14

Table 45: Background factors of the Norwegian sample (%)

	Sex: boys/girls	Contact to the church* age between 5-9 years/ more than 9 years	Parents' interest in religion	Bedside prayer	More than 250 books at home	Parents active as volunteers**
	C/QM01	CM11/12	CJ01	CJ02	CM04	CP17
$t_1/t_2/t_3$	24/76	58/35	66	74	37	44
t_1/t_2 only	46/54	36/22	22	43	32	23

* at least 3 times; ** at least one parent who is volunteering. N = 90-115.

dents live in rural areas, and 18% in urban areas, as opposed to 34%, respectively 52% in t_1 . As a whole, compared to the study on confirmands in 2013, the t_3 -sample overrepresents females, adolescents with religious upbringing from more educated families active within their community, living mainly in ›mid-dletown‹ (Lynd/Lynd 1929) or rural areas.

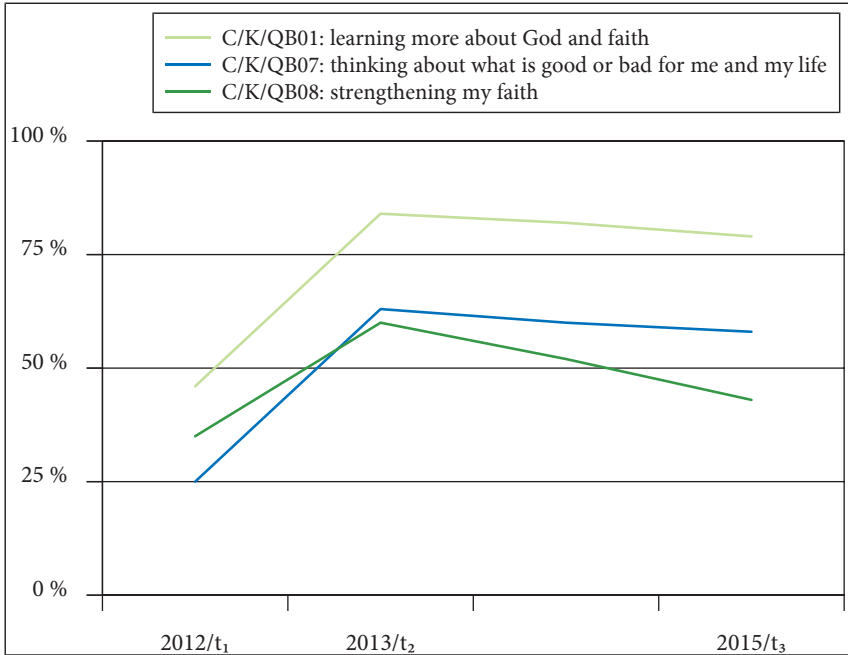
6.3 Main Results

Aside from general insights on the age group in question, the main results of the quantitative study refer to four topics in particular: view of confirmation time and of the day of confirmation in retrospect; development of religious attitudes; relationship to the Church; pathways into volunteerism.

Views of Confirmation Time and Confirmation Day in Retrospect

Where do the respondents see an effect of confirmation time themselves? Firstly, they describe a knowledge-increase. In t_2 , 84% of the t_3 -sample feel that they have learned more about God and faith in confirmation time. Two years later, 79% still have this impression (the t_1 -percentage for the item ›I registered

Figure 39: Confirmands' views of confirmation time (Norway): t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015)



The Norwegian sample contains no data for the t_2 -item KB04: I made an important step in growing-up. The percentages for the respective t_1 - and t_3 -item are: CB04: 44%; QB04: 55%; $N = 110$ - 112 ; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

for confirmation time to learn more about God and faith' is 46 % of the Norwegian t_3 -sample, C/K/QB01). Accordingly, the number of t_3 -participants who feel they know what the Christian faith entails, rises from 62 % in t_1 via 71 % in t_2 to 85 % in t_3 (C/K/QE10). While Norwegian adolescents get more insecure about what to believe (see below), they are quite confident concerning learning and understanding the teachings of the Church.

Secondly, confirmation still retains the character of a rite of passage for some of the adolescents. More than half of the Norwegian t_3 -sample shares the feeling that the confirmation experience marks an important transition. 58 % of the Norwegian respondents in t_3 feel that they have been thinking about what is good or bad for them in their lives (C/K/QB07, 63 % in t_2 and 25 % in t_1), while 55 % feel that they have made an important step in growing up (C/QB04; 44 % expected this in t_1 at the beginning of confirmation time; t_2 -figure not available

Table 46: Confirmation day in retrospect (t_3 , 2015), Norway

		Yes
QK20	It was one of the most important days of my life.	56 %
QB09	Having a beautiful celebration with family and friends was important for me.	89 %
QB10	The money and presents were important for me.	27 %
QB11	To receive a blessing was important for me.	39 %

N = 110-114; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

for Norway). 56 % of the Norwegian t_3 -sample felt that confirmation day was one of the most important days of their life.

The importance of confirmation as an experience of transition – a celebration of physical, spiritual and mental growth and maturation in the framework of family and local community is supported by the increasing significance of confirmation itself for the participants in the study. The importance of the celebration of confirmation day with friends and family has risen from 65 % in t_1 to 82 % in t_2 , right before confirmation, and to an even higher 89 % in t_3 . According to the t_3 -sample, Norwegian young people regard confirmation celebration as more important than young people in the international study in general, measuring 17 percent points higher than the international average, with only the Danish young people rating the celebration of the event as more important. In retrospect, confirmation day gains importance as a symbol of transition: the confirmation blessing increases its importance from 35 % in t_1 to 39 % in t_3 (with a peak of 65 % in t_2), money and presents are in retrospect considered to be important by only 27 %, a figure lower than the t_1 -rate of 41 % and less than half of the t_2 -figure of 66 % for the t_3 -respondents. The importance and attractiveness of the confirmation event to young people in the years after confirmation is well known to church workers. In Norway as in several other countries, confirmation leadership training has established itself as an important aspect of post-confirmation youth work, giving adolescents the opportunity to take part in the confirmation experience in a different role (cf. p. 77 ff. in this volume; also Porkka 2012). In 2012, 34 % of the parishes in Norway offered leadership training to their confirmands (Høeg 2012a, 26; for participation rates see the introduction to this chapter).

The Development of Beliefs, Religious Attitudes and Relationship to the Church

Adolescence is considered to be a period of declining attachment to formerly prevailing attitudes and values (Allport et al. 1948; Karcher 2013, 72). In terms

of religious attitudes, this change can be understood as an effect of general social and cultural phenomena like secularisation and/or individualising changes in religiousness that lower commitment to religious institutions and increase a »reliance« on individual, often private religious experience and thought, sometimes described as the subjective turn (Heelas/Woodhead 2005). A decrease of adolescent religiousness is thus understood as a function of societal change over time, individuals participate in ongoing trends more or less regardless of their age, with younger individuals often exposing new trends earlier than the whole population.

Another approach understands changes in religious attitudes in adolescence as a consequence of individual development. Here, religious change is an effect of psychosocial and/or developmental changes in adolescence, where processes of becoming independent from parental fostering and care, together with cognitive developmental changes of increasing rational capacity help the adolescent to achieve critical and independent accountability on religious conventional views and attitudes absorbed during the childhood years (Hunsberger et al. 2001).

A third approach describes a link between social processes of religious change and individual processes of religious development as an accommodation process from a more religious, less complex worldview dominating childhood environment to a both more secular and more sophisticated worldview of the adult world, driven by the necessity to avoid cognitive conflict between different understandings of reality (Festinger 1957; Harbo 1989).

Even though the Norwegian t_3 -sample mainly consists of adolescents with a stronger affiliation to religion than the average confirmand, there are a number of indications that the decline of religiosity also applies for them: the data show how the insecurity of what to believe increases with age in the sample (C/K/QE05: 38%-37%-42%). The Norwegian respondents have become less positive towards the Christian faith in general (C/K/QF01: 71%-73%-54%), and towards the Church (C/K/QF02, 65%-73%-49%), they are less preoccupied with having their children baptised (C/K/QG03, 93%-90%-84%). 61% of the Norwegian respondents in t_3 feel that in their life, other things than faith are more important (QP42).

In terms of religious beliefs, the convictions of the Norwegian respondents have dropped from a peak at the end of confirmation time to the vicinity of pre-confirmation levels or below. In t_3 , 37% of the respondents believe that God created the world, as opposed to 53% in t_2 and 44% in t_1 (C/K/QE01). 39% believe that Jesus has risen from the dead, whereas 61% held the same belief in t_2 and 54% in t_1 (C/K/QE04). In t_1 , 59% of the Norwegian t_3 -respondents believed in God, the figure rising to 64% in t_2 – and dropping back to 60% in t_3 (C/K/QE09). One of the favourite items of the confirmands, the statement that

»God loves all humans and cares about each one of us«, decreases but still keeps a high level compared to the other belief attitudes: in t_1 , 73 % of the Norwegian t_3 -sample are in favour of this statement, by the end of confirmation time, this has risen to 76 % and dropped to 70 %, two years later in t_3 (C/K/QE03).

Does this imply that the confirmation experience only has an intermediate effect on religious attitudes and belief amongst Norwegian adolescents? That would be a hasty conclusion. Other items show convictions that rise within confirmation time and stay higher than in t_1 . In t_3 , 49 % of the Norwegian sample feel that faith in God helps them in difficult situations: an increase of 9 percent points from t_1 and a minimal decrease of 1 percent point from t_2 (C/K/QE08). In t_1 , 44 % of the Norwegian t_3 -sample consider it important to belong to the Church, while the same applies to 55 % in t_2 and 53 % in t_3 (C/K/QG01). Similarly, 83 % of the t_3 -respondents felt that the »Church does a lot of good things for the people« in t_1 ; in t_2 , 89 % shared this feeling, and in t_3 , 92 % (C/K/QG05). In some aspects, faith and church are seen in a more positive perspective in t_3 than in t_1 at least. Likewise, some other faith- and church-related attitudes show an increase: the Norwegian t_3 -respondents seem to be more inclined to believe in an afterlife at the age of 17 than at the age of confirmation. Support for this statement rises from 51 % among the t_3 -participants in t_1 , via 60 % in t_2 to 64 % in t_3 (C/K/QE02). Also, the impression that church services are usually boring, declines from 52 % and 53 % in t_1 and t_2 , to 46 % in t_3 in the t_3 -sample – an interesting figure, keeping in mind that exposure to church services most certainly declines strongly in the period between t_2 and t_3 .

Possibly, one could describe this development as an individualisation of the attitudes towards church and faith where some more individual features, such as the experience of being strengthened in faith or the general importance of belonging to the Church get a boost by the confirmation experience, while an identification with the Church and its doctrine decreases with adolescence: one's impression of church doctrine as such is getting more problematic and less positive than one's own individual convictions, just as it is easier to believe in some kind of afterlife and a loving God, but more difficult to believe that Jesus has risen from the dead.

What is the impact of the actual individual confirmation experience in Norway on these developments? Are there any effects of how confirmation time was experienced? A more detailed look gives an indication that the individual confirmation experience still plays an important role at t_3 , two years after confirmation. The data from QN01, measuring satisfaction with confirmation time at t_3 , were combined into three groups, group 1 of them assembling 22 respondents that rated their satisfaction with 5 or lower, group 2 (32 respondents) rating their satisfaction at 6 and group 3 (59 respondents) giving the top score of 7.

Table 47: Satisfaction groups and attitudes (Norway): t₁ (2012), t₂ (2013), t₃ (2015)

QN01: Satisfaction with confirmation time	Index C/K/QE1: Christian Beliefs			C/K/QG02: The Church does not have answers to the questions that are important for me.			CG01: It is important for me to belong to the Church.		
	t ₁	t ₂	t ₃	t ₁	t ₂	t ₃	t ₁	t ₂	t ₃
≤ 5	4.18	4.44	3.51	4.19	3.95	4.95	3.59	4.05	2.86
= 6	4.69	5.02	4.59	3.77	4.35	3.94	4.13	4.56	4.66
= 7 (totally satisfied)	4.78	5.02	4.82	3.45	4.17	3.71	4.47	4.88	5.02
total	4.64	4.91	4.50	3.68	4.18	4.01	4.20	4.63	4.50

N = 21-59; means on a scale from 1 = lowest to 7 = highest.

In terms of background variables, the three groups are fairly similar; their homes contain the same amount of books, the groups contain between 72% (group 2) and 78% (group 3) females, between 83% (group 2) and 67% (group 3) of the respondents have previous church experience. The exception is a clear difference between the satisfaction groups in terms of ritual experience in the family: 43% of group 1, 15% of group 2 and 25% of group 3 have grown up without bedside prayer experience. However, the majority of group 1 still shares this experience.

The development of attitudes from t₁ to t₃ is more negative for group 1 with the lowest score on satisfaction with confirmation time, especially between t₂ and t₃: the mean score on the index iQE1 Christian beliefs declines from 4.4 to 3.5 for the least satisfied confirmands in group 1, and changes from 5.0 to 4.8 for group 3, the most satisfied confirmands. The feeling that the Church does not have answers for questions that are important for them (C/K/QG02) increases for group 1 from a mean score of 4.0 in t₂ to 5.0 in t₃, while it drops from 4.2 to 3.7 for group 3. The importance of belonging to the Church (C/K/QG01) drops for group 1 from 4.0 in t₂ to 2.9 in t₃, while it is stable for group 3 from 4.9 to 5.0. Even though the t₃-sample is too small to for statistical generalisation, these results indicate that the Norwegian confirmation experience probably has an impact on religious attitudes of Norwegian adolescents, and that this attitude is strengthened over time by good confirmation time experiences. In other words: working hard to make confirmation time a good experience for the adolescents, is well worth the effort in Norwegian church youth work.

Pathways into Volunteerism

Volunteerism is an important aspect of Norwegian society and democratic culture. »Dugnad«, as Norwegians call community-based volunteer work, is considered to be a key aspect of the cultural and democratic heritage of the nation. The number of hours adolescents spend in activities organised by non-profit organisations is increasing; so is the focus on informal learning in the voluntary sector on behalf of politicians and researchers (Høeg/Krupka 2014). While the number of young people under the age of 26 who are members of a non-profit organisation has undergone a strong decline from nearly 900 000 in 1978 to just below 300 000 in 2002, the number of young volunteers in non-profit organisations outside sports in Norway has increased again to approx. 400 000 in recent years, according to figures from the national allocation committee (*Fordelingsutvalget*), Christian youth organisations, accounting for somewhat more than one fifth of the organisations receiving allocations in 2013, seem to participate in that trend (approx. 1.1 mill. of the population are below the age of 18; figures up to the age of 26 are not available ssb.no; www.fordelingsutvalget.no/element_db/28_Meldemutvikling_graf_1978-2013.pdf).

In the present study, adolescents who were not active in Christian youth work after confirmation as volunteers were asked about their reasons for not having done so (see Figure 40). While 75 % of the respondents find other activities more meaningful, only 27 % of the respondents actively prefer other voluntary work to church or Christian youth work. The number of respondents who find church youth work outright unattractive, amounts to 15 % of the sample.

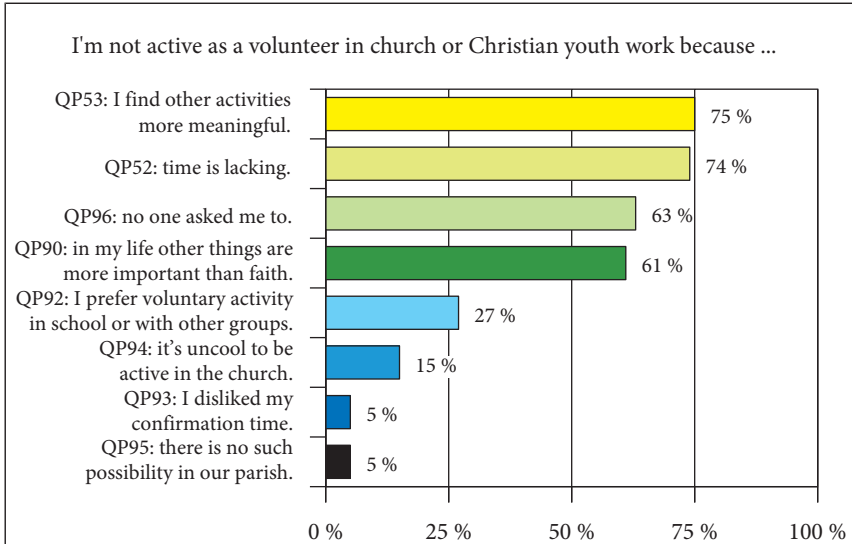
In all, the figures indicate more of a passiveness than a reluctance to volunteer in Christian youth work. While the large majority of respondents feel that their parish offers some forms of children or youth work, 63 % state that they were not encouraged to participate. Both findings in combination indicate that Norwegian parishes have some room for improvement in playing a more active role in informing and inviting young people to participate.

6.4 Additional Studies

In 2010–2012, the authors of this article conducted a study on 15–16-year-olds after confirmation (»What Comes After Confirmation«), combining 23 semi-structured interviews in 2010/11 with a survey amongst approx. 1200 adolescents aged 15–16, confirmed in the Church of Norway. Of the respondents, 67 % participated in church youth work programs.

Amongst those continuing in church youth work after confirmation, 57 % had grown up with the experience of bedside prayer, and 79 % had been participating in children's programs run by the church before confirmation, as op-

Figure 40: Reasons for not volunteering in church or Christian youth work (t₃, 2015), Norway



N = 69-70; the share of those with a positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable).

posed to 44/62 % amongst those not continuing. The ones who continued in Christian youth work, were more satisfied with their confirmation experience than average. They were more involved in volunteer activities outside church than the other group and scored somewhat higher in school exams. They also scored higher on indexes concerning social ethics, faith attitudes and individual ethical norms. However, adolescents not participating in church youth work more often tended to be politically active (Høeg/Krupka 2014).

Both the survey and the interviews underline the importance of relational aspects of Christian youth work (Høeg 2012b, Krupka 2012). The interviews show adolescents who construct their Christian identity as a Christian family identity, sometimes concealing family members with less Christian or other religious orientations. The interviews demonstrate the importance of adolescence for the construction of a Christian identity, and also how adolescents move between more and less Christian contexts at home, in school and in Christian youth work, and how they negotiate the differences by being strategic in exposing their faith orientations, and how they import school values and value language into their communication about and interpretation of the Christian tradition in church youth work, thus using Christian youth work as a simulator room for social learning (Krupka 2012).

6.5 Challenges for the Future

Norwegian adolescents change school at the age of 16, from a uniform compulsory lower secondary education to more specialised upper secondary education gathering pupils from larger areas. For a significant number of them, especially from rural areas, this implies moving to their own apartment, usually in the nearest town. Parish bonds that were established and maintained to the post-confirmation age often will not continue through higher secondary education. While church youth workers have long been familiar with this problem, and a variety of programs for youth work with the age group have been tested, none of them have been successful on a significant scale. With the separation between church and state gathering momentum and a general decline in church membership, the age group of 15 to 18 easily can become even less accessible for the church. This applies particularly for those adolescents who have less church experience than the others. A close monitoring of the development seems imperative, together with a reinforced focus on finding suitable approaches and programs for the age group, with its processes of individualisation and accommodation to a more complex adult world. While the Faith Education Reform has this on their agenda, the above mentioned figure of 63% of the t_3 -sample that were not encouraged to participate in church youth work underlines the responsibility of the parishes. The importance of good quality and large outreach in confirmation work is well established through this and other research.

7. After Confirmation: Young Leaders in the Church of Sweden

ERIKA WILLANDER

7.1 Background

This country report from Sweden has a specific title – »Young Leaders in the Church of Sweden«. This title refers to the focus of the chapter – »Young leaders« – which has been chosen due to this program's central role in confirmation work in Sweden. From the beginning it must be made clear that there are methodological consequences due to the focus on young leaders in this chapter. In comparison with the other country reports in this volume, the chosen focus means that percentages presented in this chapter may differ from percentages representing Swedish results in other chapters in this book. The reasons for these differences will be described in the methodological section of this chapter.

Why choose a specific focus? If the question »What happens after confirmation in the Church of Sweden?« is asked of someone working in the context of confirmation in the Church of Sweden, the answer is likely to be about the »young leaders« program. The narrow aim of this program is to educate confirmands to become »young leaders« for future generations of confirmands (for details about this program, see p. 81 f.). The broader aim of this program can be described as continued contact with the church after confirmation (cf. Grahn et al. 2011). The program can in this sense be described as a prolonged confirmation time.

The »young leaders« program is well known in the Church of Sweden because it is considered successful. Although initiated in the 1960s, the program of »young leaders« did not become popular until the beginning of the 21st century. In 2001, 4556 young members of the Church were active as »young leaders«. Almost a decade later, in 2013, when some of the confirmands participating in the present study became »young leaders«, the figure was 8756. This means that the number of »young leaders« has almost doubled from the time of the new popularity to the time when the confirmands studied in this chapter may have become »young leaders«. The increase of »young leaders« has continued since 2013 and in 2015 a total of 8975 individuals participated in the program. One way of expressing the magnitude of the increase is to relate the number of »young leaders« to the confirmands as such: a comparison shows that for every three confirmands there is now one »young leader«.

In the Church of Sweden the increase of »young leaders« is welcomed. Statistically, the Church of Sweden can be described as a majority church in recession: the number of members is declining as well as attendance at church ser-

vices. Participation in confirmation is following this pattern of decline and in 2015 a total of 28% of the 15 year-olds living in Sweden were confirmed. The increase of »young leaders« therefore represents a countertrend to the mentioned trends of decline and shows a way for the Church to establish relations with young members.

Because the »young leaders« program may deepen young members' relations to the Church of Sweden, questions about who participates in the program are important to this Church. Previous studies on the »young leaders« in the Church of Sweden have shown that the »young leaders« tend to be more religious than the confirmation group as a whole (e.g., Eek 2011; Straarup 1998). Because these studies have one-handedly focused on the members who become leaders, it is not known if the »young leaders« were more religious at the beginning of confirmation time or if they became religious during the confirmation time. Because of this knowledge gap about the »young leaders«, it is not known if it is socialisation occurring before confirmation time or the socialisation provided by the Church of Sweden that explains young members' prolonged commitment to this Church.

Because of the »young leaders« program central role in the Church of Sweden, results addressing differences in religiosity and socialisation are relevant for understanding broader trends of recruitment to this Church. In this case, recruitment includes both active church members and personnel in the Church of Sweden.

7.2 How the t_3 -Study Was Conducted

The international study presented in this book follows a longitudinal design. It is this longitudinal design that makes it possible to study differences between groups. The groups at issue are the confirmed who, two years after confirmation, are »young leaders« and the confirmed who are »not young leaders« two years after confirmation.

In Sweden the t_3 -study was conducted by a design that allowed for the same confirmands to be contacted three times (e.g., t_1 , t_2 , t_3). This was possible because of information available in the register of parishes and church members in the Church of Sweden. This register was used as a sampling frame. This frame made it possible to use random sampling techniques to achieve a representative sample of parishes. In the randomly selected parishes a total of 2316 individuals were registered as confirmands. These confirmands were asked to complete the questionnaire at the beginning ($t_1/2012$) and end ($t_2/2013$) of confirmation time in conjunction with activities associated with confirmation work. Two years after confirmation, the same individuals were asked to participate in a postal

Table 48: Information about the sample of confirmands in the Church of Sweden including t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015)

	t_0	t_1	t_2	t_3
Units (parishes)	80	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Confirmands (sample)	2316	2316	2316	2316
Total number of answers (non-matched)		1381	779	570
Response rate		60	34	25
Percentage matched (t_1 / t_2/t_3)			62	20

survey (i. e., t_3). Names and addresses for the t_3 survey were available through the register mentioned above. Accordingly, the same representative sample of individuals has been used three times in Sweden (t_1 , t_2 and t_3).

One consequence of the Swedish data collection is the use of additional categories of matched data in the Swedish data set. Importantly, it was possible for a confirmand to answer the survey in the beginning of confirmation time (t_1) and two years after being confirmed (t_3) (see Table 48). The answers of these individuals are referred to as matched t_1/t_3 in the Swedish study. The matched t_1/t_3 subset of data is used alongside the subset referred to as »matched« in other chapters of this volume (e. g., individuals identified in t_1 , t_2 and t_3).

Another consequence of the sampling procedure used in Sweden is that the response rate can be calculated in addition to the percentage of matched data. In Table 48 it can be observed that the total response rate drops from 60 % of the original sample in t_1 to 34 % in t_2 , to 25 % in t_3 . The matched data sets comprise 5 % of the original sample (i. e., matched $t_1/t_2/t_3$) respectively 7 % (i. e., matched t_1/t_3). Accordingly, if the response rate is used as an indicator for representativity, none of the subsets of data based on answers from the data collection after confirmation (t_3) is representative for confirmands in the Church of Sweden.

For the analysis presented here, the results for the variable called »young leaders« are of specific relevance. The numbers of confirmands that are expected to become a »young leader« after confirmation vary greatly between the dioceses. In the diocese of Härnösand, for example, the proportion of »young leaders« in 2013 is 45 % of the confirmed in 2012. In the diocese of Skara, by contrast, the number of »young leaders« in 2013 is 16 % of the confirmed in 2012. Because of these differences between the dioceses, the sample analysed here should cover as many dioceses as possible. The data collection here called t_2 was not comprehensive and therefore the fully matched dataset

($t_1/t_2/t_3$) does not cover the dioceses of Visby and Skara. If the country-specific matching from the Church of Sweden (i. e., t_1/t_3) is used in addition to the fully matched data, information from the diocese of Skara becomes part of the data material. Thus, using the two subsets of data together is justified because otherwise there would be a geographical bias concerning the key variable of young leaders in the Church of Sweden.

It should be clearly stated that the usage of two subsets of data means that the percentage shares presented in this chapter on the Church of Sweden may differ from percentage shares found in other chapters of this book. Also, adding the two subsets of data together does not make the data representative for the Church of Sweden.

7.3 Operationalisation: Young Leaders in the Church of Sweden

In the domestic context of the Church of Sweden, the program of »Young leaders« is the predominant form of volunteerism after confirmation (cf. Grahn et al. 2011). It can therefore be assumed that the confirmands asked to answer questions about volunteering in the Church of Sweden in the t_3 survey had the »young leaders« program in mind when answering. Moreover, since the »young leaders« program runs for several years (e. g., Frisell 2011), it is reasonable to add the groups answering that they are active as volunteers together with the group answering that they used to be active as volunteers in the Church of Sweden (see Table 49).

The empirical definition of »young leaders« in the Church of Sweden is set to the group answering that they are active as volunteers or that they have been active but are not active anymore (i. e., QP51). Confirmed young people that never have been active as volunteers are defined as the group »not young leaders«. In Table 49 it can be observed that the group of »young leaders« comprises 21 % of the adolescents who answered t_3 from the Church of Sweden.

Adding the answers »yes« and »not any more« together was justified on the basis of expectations about how large the group »young leaders« should be. In 2013, when the group studied here was first invited to become »young leaders«, the share of them is 29 % of those confirmed in 2012. This means that the respective group was expected to be about 30 % of the population answering in t_3 . Adding together the answers to active and not active anymore yields a total of 21 % »young leaders« in the t_3 data. This figure – 21 % of the survey sample – is lower than expected. Raw register data suggest that the group should be about 30 %, however, taking into consideration that »young leaders« can be active for several years after confirmation, it can be argued that the obtained figure (21 %) resembles the actual group size found in the Church of Sweden's official statistics.

Table 49: Young leaders in the Church of Sweden. t_3 (2015). % of matched data (t_1/t_2 and $t_1/t_2/t_3$)

	t_3 data, matched $t_1/t_2/t_3$ and t_1/t_2
Young leader	21
Not young leader	79
Total	100
N	268

Note: For the category young leader the answer »yes« and »not anymore« to the question QP51: »Are you active as a volunteer in church or Christian youth work?« has been added together. The category »not young leader« thus stands for the answer »no« to the question marked in QP51.

7.4 Analytical Strategy and Definitions of Commitment and Socialisation

The longitudinal design applied to the present study involves repeated measurements of the same variables over a period of time (e.g., 2012-2015). Intuitively, the forward looking mode of data collection in 2012, 2013 and 2015 may inspire a forward looking analysis (also see, for example, p. 46 ff. concerning changes in religious beliefs over the years). Because a confirmand first becomes a »young leader« after confirmation, the analysis in this chapter starts with the construction of the two groups »young leader« and »not young leader« from the t_3 data. It then uses the longitudinal features of the data to find out if these two groups already differ in the beginning of confirmation time (i.e., t_1). The analysis conducted here can therefore be described as backward looking. Also, since two subsets of data are used for the analysis (i.e., $t_1/t_2/t_3$ and t_1/t_2), comparisons occurring at the end of confirmation time (t_2) is outside the scope of this analysis.

In sociology, commitment to religion at an individual level is commonly measured as a package of affiliation (e.g., formal adherence and subjective identification with organised religion), beliefs (e.g., acceptance of creed) and practice (e.g., participation in religious services and worship) (cf. Willander 2014). The analysis presented here will follow this definition of commitment to religion at an individual level in its attempt to investigate if young leaders differ from the adolescents who are not young leaders.

In addition, the main results also include results on religious socialisation. Following Berger and Luckmann (1966), socialisation can be divided into primary socialisation occurring during childhood and secondary socialisation learned through training and specific rituals at later stages of life. Seen through the lens of primary and secondary socialisation, confirmation time in itself can

be viewed as a process of secondary socialisation. Nevertheless, the socialisation relevant for the backward looking approach for analysis used here is focussed on the primary socialisation occurring prior to confirmation (t_1) and the attitudes and beliefs of significant others (e. g., family, friends and religious community).

7.5 Main Results: The Young Leaders and Their Commitment to the Church of Sweden

Religious affiliation, belief and practices can be measured through a range of the questions used in the survey. Here differences in general attitude to Christian faith (CF01) and church (CF02) are used as a first indicator on commitment.

As shown in Table 50, the analysis did not reveal any significant differences in attitude to Christian faith or attitude to the Church. This means that at the outset, there do not seem to be *general* differences in commitment between the two compared groups in the Church of Sweden.

As previously mentioned, commitment is in the sociological literature understood as a combination of affiliation, beliefs and practice (see Table 51).

Scrutinising the findings presented in Table 51, it can be observed that the main differences between the confirmands who will become young leaders and the confirmands who will not choose this path, are related to affiliation to the Church. Beliefs did not differ significantly between the groups studied in the beginning of the confirmation time. (t_1). In addition, no significant differences were found in the practice of attending church services before confirmation time. For the purpose of the analysis of church attendance, religious practice was measured as a joint measure combining attendance at Christmas services (CQ01), baptism, weddings and funeral services (CQ03), children/youth services (CQ04) and regular Sunday services (CQ05) ranging from minimum 1 (= no attendance) to maximum 9 (= regular attendance at several types of church services).

When the statistical procedure is repeated (independent t-tests) for results two years after confirmation, significant differences are found for comparable variables. In Table 51, the findings presented make visible that two years after confirmation (t_2) the groups differ in attitudes concerning importance of belonging to the church (QG01), on belief in God (QE09) and regular church attendance (QG11). Therefore, it can be argued that the absence of difference found in the beginning of confirmation time (t_1) is transformed to differences in affiliation, beliefs and practices two years after confirmation (t_3).

Table 50: General attitude to the Christian faith and Church (t₁, 2012), Sweden (mean values)

	young leaders	not young leaders
CF01: General attitude to Christian faith	3.54	3.48
CF02: General attitude to the Church	3.74	3.72

N = 264-266. Scale: 1 = very negative; 5 = very positive.

Table 51: Affiliation, belief and practice. Young leaders and not young leaders at the beginning of confirmation time (t₁, 2012) and two years after confirmation (t₃, 2015), Sweden (mean values)

		t ₁			t ₃	
		young leaders	not young leaders		young leaders	not young leaders
Affiliation	CG01: It is important for me to belong to the Church	3.73*	3.18*	QG01: It is important for me to belong to the Church	4.98*	3.31*
Belief	CE09: I believe in God	4.11	3.77	QE09: I believe in God	4.38*	3.18*
Practice	Index: Attending services before confirmation time [^]	6.0	5.4	QG11: How often do you attend church services?	2.70*	1.53*

N = 244-265

* = significant differences; mean values not marked with * are not found to be significantly different from each other.

[^] = The index is a joint measure combining attendance at Christmas services (CQ01), baptism, weddings and funeral services (CQ03), children/youth services (CQ04) and regular Sunday services (CQ05) ranging from minimum 1 (= no attendance) to maximum 9 (= regular attendance at several types of church services).

7.6 Main Results: The Young Leaders and Socialisation into the Church of Sweden

Primary socialisation can be studied in different ways. For the present analysis, the results to the question about parents' interest in religion (CJ01) has been used. The analysis showed that no significant differences could be found between those who become »young leaders« and those who do not ($\chi^2(3) = 5.56, p < 0.136$). In contrast to these results, there was a difference between the groups in previous contacts with the Church (CM11 and CM12, see Table 52).

Table 52: Contact with the Church before confirmation time (e. g., participation in work for children 5-9 years or for youth 10 years and older), Sweden

CM11/CM12: Contact with the Church before confirmation time	young leaders	not young leaders
No	33	53
Yes	67	47
Total	100	100
N	57	207

$p = < 0.05$.

Because differences could not be found between the groups regarding the parents' perceived interest in religion (CJ01), it is argued that it might not be primary socialisation by significant others that differentiate those who will become young leaders from those who will not become young leaders. Instead, socialisation into activities organised by the Church of Sweden seems to make a difference.

7.7 Challenges for the Future

An increasing number of young members in the Church of Sweden become »young leaders« for confirmation work. The results presented in this chapter showed that becoming a »young leader« is dependent on the confirmands having a positive outlook on the Church as an organisation. A positive outlook is more important than being religious in the beginning of confirmation time. Religiosity in terms of attending church services prior to confirmation or accepting religious beliefs does not distinguish the group who will become »young leaders« from the group that will not become leaders. In a similar manner, the parents' interest in religion does not seem to make a difference for the decision to become a »young leader«. Over the period of confirmation time, the group that will become »young leaders« grows in faith in a manner that is not found in the group who will not become leaders. If all these findings are taken together, it seems like it is the socialisation that the Church organises that has an effect on whether or not a confirmand becomes a young leader or not. This finding complements previous studies on the group of »young leaders« (e. g., Eek 2011; Straarup 1998).

Against the background of the findings presented in this chapter, challenges for the future may be about church activities for children and young people. It seems to be of importance that the young become committed to the church as

an organisation at an early age in order to continue as »young leaders« after confirmation. However, at the present, the number of children and young people participating in activities organised by this Church is in decline. Thus, in order for the numbers of »young leaders« to continue to increase, the decline of participants in the youth work must be reversed: this can be viewed as a challenge for the future.

A more subtle, yet possibly important challenge for the future is about the long-term effects. If »young leaders« have a stronger commitment to the Church as an organisation while not necessarily being more religious in terms of beliefs and practices, this might imply biases in the selection process (e.g., who gets to become a »young leader«?). Expressed differently, the confirmands becoming »young leaders« might be known by church employees and, in a way, established in the church context, while the confirmands who do not become leaders are not established in the same way. If it is so, the results presented in this chapter open up a question: should recruitment to the »young leaders« program reach all, regardless of previous socialisation in church activities?

8. After Confirmation: Confirmation Work in the United Methodist Church in Germany

ACHIM HÄRTNER AND TOBIAS BEISSWENGER

8.1 Background Information

The *Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche* (United Methodist Church, EmK) in Germany is the only Free Church participating in the European study on confirmation work. The common self-description »Free Church« refers to denominations that have been independent from the state since their beginnings. The EmK has, like most Protestant denominations, an equivalent to »confirmation work«, called »Kirchlicher Unterricht« (KU, church instruction). At the end of KU time the adolescents receive an individual blessing in a special worship service, called »Einsegnung« (benediction), which in most respects can be understood as an equivalent of confirmation service (for details and theological backgrounds see: Härtner/Beißwenger 2015b, 280-292). Since the EmK in Germany is a very small church, adolescents who participate in KU are in a minority situation (cf. Beißwenger et al. 2015, 157-169). The first study within the EmK, having been carried out as a nationwide full-scale survey (t_1 - t_2 : 2012-14), has revealed that KU can be regarded as a fruitful field of Christian education, with an indication of some concerns for further development. The t_3 -study underlines both aspects and brings up new findings.

8.2 How the t_3 -Study Was Conducted

Procedures in the EmK in Germany built upon the survey and the questionnaires in t_1 and t_2 , details are published in Härtner/Beißwenger 2015a and 2015b. The first questionnaire was administered in 2012 (t_1). Since KU in the EmK generally encompasses a curriculum exceeding one year's time, the t_2 data consist of a t_{2a} (Einsegnung and t_2 in 2013) and a t_{2b} (Einsegnung and t_2 in 2014) sample; therefore in t_3 the questioning has taken place one or two years after the end of KU time and was conducted in spring/summer 2015. In t_2 the adolescents were asked to participate in the t_3 -study and if they agreed, to provide their contact information (email, postal address). From 452 t_3 -questionnaires that had been sent out, a total of 227 valid ones could be evaluated, 187 of them contribute to the matched data set of the t_1 - t_2 - t_3 -sample that is fully longitudinal.

The t_1 - t_2 - t_3 -sample is not representative, as the background variables of the

Table 53: Sample sizes in t_1 (2012), t_{2a} (2013), t_{2b} (2014) and t_3 (2015)*

	t_1	t_2	t_3	$t_1-t_2-t_3$
N	761	346 (t_{2a}) 282 (t_{2b}) 628 (total t_2)	227 (36% of t_2)	187 (30% of t_2)

* Due to the very low number of adolescent volunteers in KU the respective extra-questionnaire was not used in the Methodist t_3 -sample.

Table 54: Background factors of the Methodist sample (%)

	Sex: boys/girls	Contact to the church between 5-9 years/more than 9 years*	Parents' interest in religion	Bedside prayer	More than 250 books at home	Parents active as volunteers**
	(C/QM01)	(CM11/12)	(CJ01)	(CJ02)	(CM04)	(CP17)
$t_1-t_2-t_3$	39/62	79/82	86	90	62	68
t_1-t_2 only	47/53	71/71	77	81	56	59

N = 748-179; * at least 3 times, ** at least one parent who is volunteering.

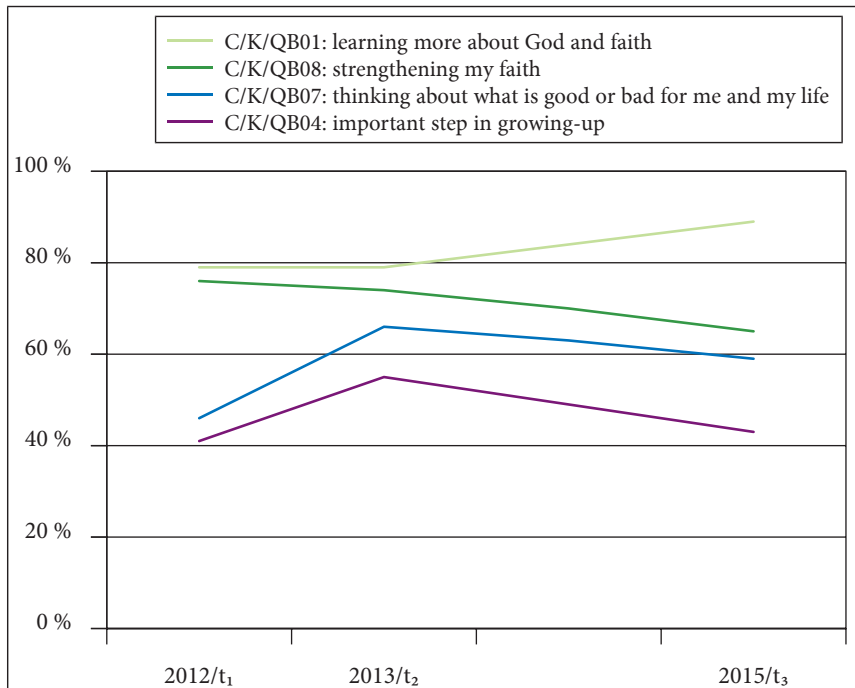
t_3 -sample clearly indicate: among the adolescents who returned the questionnaires there were 39% male and 60% female, while in t_2 the share was almost equal (47% male, 53% female). The majority of the adolescents in t_3 come from families with a higher level of education and a stronger religious background. Also, the adolescents themselves are more religious, have a closer relationship to the church and have better experiences with worship services. Those background factors (see Table 54) need to be taken into consideration for the interpretation of the t_3 -data.

8.3 Main Results: What Comes after Einsegnung (Benediction)?

KU Time and Einsegnung in Retrospect

The results for t_1 and t_2 reported in this article consequently are computed for the fully matched cases $t_1-t_2-t_3$; this is why values may differ from those presented in other publications.

In the international data set, 44% of the youth agreed to the statement »I made an important step in growing up« (QB01), in the EmK 43%. The latter

Figure 41: Views on KU time (EmK): t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013), t_3 (2015)

N = 179-184; the share of positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all, 7 = totally applicable).

value has dropped from 55% (KB01, t_2) during KU time, which indicates, that the adolescents, in retrospect, tend to return to their views at the beginning of KU time (CB01, t_1 : 41%). In this concern, the question arises if confirmation time (KU) and the day of confirmation (Einsegnung) can be considered as a *rite de passage* any longer. 65% of the Methodist adolescents say »I was strengthened in my faith« (QB08, international: 47%). This comparably high assent confirms the thesis, that adolescents with a more distinctive religious upbringing benefit most from church-related activities like KU (cf. Krupka et al. 2015, 117-124). Among the Methodist young people in t_3 , 68% of those who see their parents as being »quite or very interested in religion« felt that they were strengthened in their faith, while among those saying their parents were »not or somewhat interested« it is 55%. In t_3 the values for the satisfaction with KU are even higher than in t_2 , up from 76% to 87%. Also, 81% of the adolescents state »I can recommend taking part in KU time to others« (QK21). In comparison with the high values concerning satisfaction, one might have expected an even higher assent in this respect.

Table 55: Day of Einsegnung (EmK): t₁ (2012), t₂ (2013), t₃ (2015)

		M t ₃	Yes t ₁	Yes t ₂	Yes t ₃	Yes international average t ₃
QK20	one of the most important days of my life	4.88	–	–	64 %	51 %
C/K/QB09	Importance of having a beautiful celebration with family and friend	4.80	30 %	80 %	61 %	72 %
C/K/QB10	Importance of money and presents	3.24	19 %	43 %	23 %	36 %
C/K/QB11	Importance of receiving a blessing	5.47	75 %	86 %	76 %	47 %

N = 182-184; the share of positive responses (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all, 7 = totally applicable).

Once KU-time is completed, a ceremonial service is conducted; since the adolescents receive an individual blessing, the service is also referred to as »Einsegnung« (benediction). The adolescents are not expected to make a confession of faith. Although Einsegnung does not have relevance in terms of church-law (e. g., full membership), in t₃ it is a proportion of 64 % of the adolescents stating »It was one of the most important days of my life«. This surprisingly high value underlines the meaning of Einsegnung for the young people. This finding also correlates with the fact that receiving an individual blessing ranks far higher (76 %) than »Having a beautiful celebration with family and friends« (61 %) or »The money and presents were important for me« (23 %).

As stated above, the t₃-sample represents adolescents with a closer connection to the Christian faith and the church, as the high value for the statement »I have friends who are active in the church« (QG22: 66 %) confirms. This may be one factor that helps to explain why only 10 % of the Methodist adolescents state »After confirmation (Einsegnung) I have lost contact with the church«, while in the international sample it is 36 % that say so. The significant negative correlation between those items ($r_{QG20/QG22} = -.343^{**}$) underscores this assumption. Two more prominent factors for a continued connection to the church after Einsegnung may be seen in the high approval rate with the statement »I found programs within the church (for example, youth work) that were interesting to me« (QK26: 61 %, international: 30 %) as well as in the high con-

Table 56: Faith-related attitudes (EmK): t₁ (2012), t₂ (2013), t₃ (2015)

		M EmK t ₃	Yes t ₁	Yes t ₂	Yes t ₃	Yes international average t ₃
C/K/QE01	God created the world.	5.97	87 %	83 %	83 %	34 %
C/K/QE02	There is life after death.	6.18	79 %	81 %	86 %	63 %
C/K/QE03	God loves all humans and cares about each one of us.	6,18	94 %	91 %	88 %	63 %
C/K/QE04	Jesus has risen from the dead.	6.16	91 %	86 %	85 %	42 %
C/K/QE05	I am insecure what I should believe.	3.13	17 %	28 %	25 %	35 %
C/K/QE09	I believe in God.	6.20	93 %	92 %	86 %	60 %
C/K/QE08	Faith in God helps me in difficult situations.	5.37	82 %	81 %	75 %	44 %
C/K/QE10	I know what the Christian faith entails.	5.45	65 %	76 %	80 %	80 %

N = 181-187; the share of positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all, 7 = totally applicable).

sent to the item »I was asked to take over a task in the church« (QP50: 59 %, international: 31 %).

The Development of Beliefs and Religious Attitudes

A longitudinal comparison of the values of t₁, t₂ and t₃ indicates that among the Methodist adolescents faith-related attitudes remain rather constant, as Table 56 shows. In comparison with the international data, the EmK sample shows significant higher approval rates with conventional positions of Christian belief. With a value of 83 % approval of the item »God has created the world«, Methodist adolescents differ most from the international average of 34 %. A closer look, however, shows that the aspect of doubt during and after KU time also increased, especially when it comes to personal views of the matter. The item »I believe in God« goes down from 93 % (t₁) to 86 % in t₃ – still a high value compared to the international data (QE09: 60 %). A similar observation can be made for the item »Faith in God helps me in difficult situations« going down from 82 % in t₁ to 75 % in t₃ (QE18 international: 44 %). In t₃ it is one out of four adolescents who states »I am insecure what I should believe« (QE05

Table 57: Relationship to the Church (EmK): t₁ (2012), t₂ (2013), t₃ (2015)

		M EmK t ₁	Yes t ₁	Yes t ₂	Yes t ₃	Inter- nat. average t ₃
C/K/QG01	It is important for me to belong to the church.	4.97	75 %	75 %	64 %	44 %
C/K/QG02	The church does not have answers to the questions that are important for me.	3.55	23 %	24 %	27 %	36 %
C/K/QG03	If I will have children, I want to have them baptised.	5.39	76 %	75 %	66 %	86 %
C/K/QG04	Church services are usually boring.	3.65	28 %	33 %	34 %	48 %
C/K/QG05	The church does a lot of good things for the people.	5.69	83 %	83 %	81 %	82 %

N = 177-186; the share of positive response (5, 6, 7) on a scale 1 to 7 (1 = not applicable at all, 7 = totally applicable).

international: 35 %). This development is not surprising, since adolescents in general tend to critique their upbringing, including faith-related aspects.

Attitudes towards the Church (EmK)

Methodist adolescents hold the Christian faith and the Church (EmK) in high respect. This is true for all three samples of the study. While the valuation of the »Christian faith in general« is constant on a high level (C/K/QF01 »positive or very positive«: 89 % in t₁, 90 % in t₂ and 88 % in t₃), the assent »towards the EmK in general« in t₃ slightly declines (C/K/QF02: 87 % in t₁, 89 % in t₂, 83 % in t₃). The adolescents partaking in all three surveys see themselves in a rather close relationship with their local congregation and the EmK in general, as Table 57 shows. Yet, some details have to be considered as well. The number of young people stating »The church does not have answers to the questions that are important for me« increases to more than a quarter (QG02: 27 %). Also, a growing number of young people, 34 % in t₃ find church services »usually boring« (QG04). If they had children of their own, it is two thirds of the young people who state that they wanted to have them baptised. This comparably low value (international: 86 %) may have to do with the fact, that in the EmK a considerable number of parents decide to postpone the baptism of their children in order to have them make a decision of their own concerning their religious belonging (cf. Härtner/Beißwenger 2015b, 284).

In an additional t_3 -questionnaire the Methodist adolescents were asked to be more specific about their views of the EmK. The most thought-provoking findings concern the item »The EmK offers me a lot of great possibilities« (QZF18). The values decrease from 63 % (t_1) via 58 % (t_2) to 45 % (t_3). In the face of this finding, the moderate increase of the values for the item »The EmK is mainly a church for the elderly« (QZF19) from 17 % (t_1), via 18 % (t_2) to 22 % (t_3) is slightly surprising. Anyhow, almost every second respondent in t_3 states »In my parish, I have the possibility to share own ideas and thus have a voice« (QZF45: 48 %).

At a closer look, the study indicates significant differences between the adolescents who perceive their parents as being »quite or very interested in religion« and those who say their parents were »not or somewhat interested in religion«. In the first group there is a far higher consent »towards the Christian faith in general« (QF01: 91 % vs. 68 %), the same can be said about their attitude towards the church in general« (QFO2: 85 % vs. 72 %) and concerning the statement »It is important for me to belong to the church« (QG01: 69 % vs. 39 %). These correlations can be interpreted as an indication of the far-reaching relevance of a religious upbringing for the development of a religious identity during adolescence.

Volunteerism

A special research interest of the international t_3 -study lies on the question, if confirmation work encourages adolescents to volunteer work in church and society. Surprisingly, 92 % of the Methodist young people stated in t_3 to be involved in some kind of volunteer work. This may have to do with the fact that the respondents of the t_3 -sample in general show a higher interest both in religion and social concerns. Faith-based activities make up a significant share of the adolescents' activities: 32 % are involved in Christian educational work with children and youth, 26 % in Sunday school, 6 % as teamers in KU. However, the adolescents do not limit their engagement to church activities. 59 % of the Methodist adolescents state that they are volunteering in sports, 58 % in music. 29 % take over responsibilities in school (i.e., spokesperson for the class), 27 % in non-church-related youth work, and 18 % are active in »other« voluntary work.

In ecumenical circles, one of the common nicknames of the EmK in Germany is »the ants«, winkingly looking at the high level of engagement that can be found among many Methodist Christians. Given this background, it is astonishing that every fifth adolescent stated »I was asked to take over a task in the church« as being »not applicable at all« (QP50: 21 %). Obviously, the congregations, where this statement holds true, are missing a golden opportunity.

8.4 Additional Analyses

Changes Concerning Worship Services

One or two years after Einsegnung, a noticeable percentage of 52 % of the Methodist adolescents take part in worship services of their congregations (almost) every week, 26 % every month, less than 5 % (almost) never. This, again, indicates the relatively close relationship to the church of the adolescents partaking in the t_3 -study. Yet, the values for the item »Church services are usually boring« (C/K/QG04) rise from 28 % (t_1), via 33 % (t_2) to 34 % (international: 48 %), one adolescent says: »It is often too severe«.

Taking a closer look at the data behind this long-term development, a gender comparison does not bring up significant differences between boys and girls. Also, the educational background of the parents plays no noticeable role. It is the religious background of the parents that points to significant variances: only 31 % of the youth who see their parents as being »quite or very interested in religion« find church services usually boring, while among those with parents perceived as being »not or somewhat interested in religion« it is 56 % who say so.

In the additional t_3 -questionnaire the Methodist young people were asked: »When you think about worship services in your congregation: How important are the following points?« Again, there are noticeable differences corresponding to the adolescents' religious upbringing. Among the adolescents who see their parents as being less religious, it is the »readings from the Bible« that finds the lowest approval (QZF27: 32 % vs. 68 %), followed by »the sermon« (QZF28: 41 % vs. 78 %) and »the blessing« (50 % vs. 81 %); »prayer« is seen as being most important (QZF29: 68 % vs. 87 %) for both groups.

In a longitudinal perspective it is interesting, that the mean value concerning the importance of »the sermon« (K/QZF28) between t_2 and t_3 rises from 2.9 to 3.3 (scale 1-7), while »my own contribution in a church service« (K/QZF33) goes down from 3.7 to 3.3. This underlines the implication of relevant sermons and reinforces the demand of possibilities for the youth to actively participate with their own ideas (cf. Härtner/Beißwenger 2015b, 290).

Joining Full Membership in the United Methodist Church

»Free Churches« have an understanding of membership that differs from most historically state-related Churches. Joining the church is understood as a decisive act that is deliberately chosen within the individual's life-circle (details for the EmK in Germany can be found in: Härtner/Beißwenger 2015b, 291-292). The high respect for the Church among Methodist adolescents therefore does not automatically lead to a move toward joining the EmK as *professing members*. Among the young people partaking in t_3 the study brought forth

statements with a bandwidth from »I like it the way it is done in the EmK, that everyone can make an own decision«, to »I don't understand, why one does not become a full member at Einsegnung«. Only 11 % (t_3) of the youth have become full members during KU-time (C/K/QZF35), 23 % show no interest in becoming full members (t_1 : 5 %, t_2 : 10 %); 42 % say that they want to become full members in the future (t_1 : 42 %, t_2 : 50 %). Whether the latter is going to be realised in the future, is anything but sure, since professing membership is concomitant to a number of obligations (cf. Agende 2014, 66-69). The EmK should reconsider its ruling criteria and practice regarding professing membership if it wholeheartedly is up to reach the younger generation.

Minority Situation

Methodist adolescents are representing a small minority among the adolescents in Germany (cf. Beißwenger et al. 2015, 160-162). In a longitudinal perspective the assent with the item »It feels strange for me to belong to a Church that many in my environment don't know« (C/K/QFZ17) is decreasing: the values change from 34 % (t_1), via 33 % (t_2) to 25 % (t_3), indicating that for the majority of the adolescents, this is not a problem. In this concern, a longitudinal gender comparison shows interesting results that invite further research. Among the girls, 42 % find the minority situation problematic at the beginning of KU time (t_1), 31 % during KU time (t_2), and 29 % say so in retrospect (t_3). Among the boys the development looks quite different, starting with 24 % (t_1), rising to 37 % (t_2), and decreasing to 21 % (t_3). Supposably the awareness of belonging to a »different« church is more prominent during KU time, because it is the period when the profile of the EmK is being carved out and discussed.

Among the young people who consider the minority situation as problematic, many agree to the statement »The church does not have answers to the questions that are important for me« ($r_{QZF17/QG02} = 0,234^{**}$). A slighter, but significant correlation can be noted with the item »The EmK offers me many great opportunities« ($r_{QZF17/QZF18} = 0,155^*$). These findings suggest that in respect of the minority situation it becomes more and more important whether the EmK and its congregations offer desirable opportunities for the youth to find resonance with their own ideas and imaginations. If that is the case and for them »small« to some extent »is beautiful« (cf. Beißwenger et al. 2015, 167-169), the adolescents will decently cope with the fact of belonging to a minority church.

8.5 Challenges for the Future

The results of the longitudinal study on the one hand encourages the EmK in Germany to confidently continue with KU and pursue every endeavour of re-

forming it in terms of »Participatory Church«, »Relevant Worship Services«, »KU as Teamwork«, »Receiving Members« and »KU in a Church that is Growing Smaller« (see Härtner/Beißwenger 2015a, 274 and 2015b, 290-292). On the other hand, the survey points to a number of aspects that deserve special attention. Since the t_3 -data predominantly represent adolescents with a closer connection to the Christian faith and the EmK, further efforts are to be made to get the same sort of information from youth with a more loose or a lost connection to the Church. The study indicates that the religious upbringing has a huge influence on the adolescents' faith and church-related development. In this concern, those adolescents, who come from a less religious home deserve a higher degree of attention. This reinforces the importance of:

- Attentively including all adolescents in choosing the topics of KU,
- Consciously aiming at integrating all adolescents in volunteer work in the congregations during and after KU time,
- Decidedly improving worship services to be more relevant also to adolescents with a weaker connection to the church.

In the EmK, in which a large percentage of adolescents take part in church-related activities before and after KU, there is a danger of perceiving KU just as a means among others. The longitudinal study, however, accentuates the distinguished significance of KU in the lives of adolescents. This is why KU definitely provides a variety of prospects. The given opportunity to support young people in finding their own religious identity and belonging during »the difficult years« should not be taken for granted by the Church. On the contrary, it deserves mindful efforts in a long-term perspective, so that the positive experiences during KU – both for adolescents and leaders – will be more than a flash in the pan.

Conclusions

IV. Conclusions

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1. Main Results of the Longitudinal Study

1.1 Introduction

This part of the book offers a brief overview of the main results of the present study. The focus is on how adolescents responded two years after their confirmation. Following the main emphasis of this study, the approach is longitudinal. The adolescents' responses can be traced over three years because all of the respondents did not only complete one questionnaire but three questionnaires – at the beginning (t_1) and at the end of confirmation time (t_2) as well as two years after confirmation (t_3). Consequently, developmental tendencies can be identified which is a special characteristic of the present study. Moreover, such tendencies can be observed at a group level but also at an individual level. The data used in the study allow for following each individual adolescent over time. This truly longitudinal approach makes the present study an innovative contribution to research on youth and especially to research on religion in adolescence. While a comparable study has become available from the United States (Smith 2005 and 2009), the present study is the first of its kind in Europe.

The samples used in t_1 and in t_2 were representative for the confirmands in the participating countries and Churches – Germany (Protestant Church in Germany/EKD), Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, plus the Methodist Church in Germany (EmK) which is a Church with a different structure (a so-called Free Church, cf. p. 204 ff.; the Churches are named here in the order used in this book). The responses in t_3 were not representative, reflecting the fact that the data had to be collected on an individual basis because, after confirmation, there is no more group-setting in which questionnaires can be distributed. The value of the t_3 -data lies in their truly longitudinal character. The nature of the t_3 -data also implies that the sample is international but that comparisons between the countries are not possible or only to a very limited degree. However, the international scope of the sample strengthens the empirical basis of the study and gives additional support to longitudinal observations. Readers should keep this in mind by not looking for comparisons between the different Churches but for insights into the longitudinal developments of religion in adolescence. It is in this respect that new understandings can be gained that lead beyond prior research.

It should also be emphasised from the beginning that the longitudinal approach does not only fulfil longstanding social science demands for valid data on religious change but that it also is in line with practical educational aims, needs and interests. Most naturally, workers in the field of education want to make a difference, not only in the present – which remains important – but also for the future. Consequently, possible effects of educational programs should not disappear right after the end of a program. For the first time, the present study allows for questions referring to long-term effects of confirmation time. Even more, it offers a number of important insights into the question of how the efficacy of confirmation work can be improved. In other words, the present study holds the double promise of progress in a scientific sense and of new impulses for the practice of confirmation work, both due to the longitudinal approach.

The first section of this chapter which is on confirmation day is a certain exception to this general approach. The t_3 -study two years after confirmation was the first opportunity to receive responses from young people who were confirmed when they completed the questionnaires. Respective responses from the confirmands in t_1 and t_2 could only express expectations in this respect but were not based on actual experiences.

1.2 Confirmation Day

The results show that confirmation day is of very high importance for many confirmands. This is in line with general expectations, among others, of the Churches. In all the participating countries, the celebration on the day of confirmation is not only viewed as an important public cultural tradition but as the central ritual and symbolic peak of the whole confirmation time. The majority of the confirmands consider this day as an important event and relevant step in their biography, both for themselves as well as for their families, which is why it is well remembered for a very long time.

Of course, the adolescents appreciate the gifts and presents that are given to them on this occasion but they also highly value being the center of attention. Therefore the social or relational aspect characteristic of this day, that is, the celebration with their family is very important. At the same time, the special blessing received on the day of confirmation is also often mentioned by the young people as being very valuable. The results indicate a strong correlation between the religious family upbringing and the individual adolescents' appreciation of confirmation day. Respondents who consider their parents to be religious are more likely to experience confirmation day as a very important event in their life. Vice versa, for the ones who do not consider their parents

as religious, the material aspects of confirmation day have remained more important two years later. Confirmands with a strong religious background appreciate the social aspects of the confirmation celebration somewhat more than those without such a background.

Confirmation day can be considered a symbolic expression of the social relations between the confirmand, his or her family and other relatives, and his or her friends. Thus, while confirmation day can be understood as a social rite, its potential lies in the spiritual dimension as well. The social importance and the religious meaning go hand in hand, giving those who are familiar with religious rituals a more spiritual and stronger experience on the day of confirmation and also of confirmation time as a whole. There is also a close link between the experiences of the whole confirmation time and the day of confirmation. Especially the spiritual experiences connected to the day of confirmation validate and reinforce the experience of confirmation time, which is perceived more favorably by those with a strong appreciation of the ritual of confirmation day itself. Even more, if the rite of confirmation day is experienced as something positive, this experience also leads to an increased formative effect over time. A positive confirmation day experience boosts whatever good experiences confirmation time brought with it. In other words, confirmation day and the worship service celebrated on this day are obviously of high relevance for the long-term effects of the efforts made by the workers during confirmation time.

Consequently, confirmation day itself holds an enormous chance to bring together the pedagogical, theological and liturgical aspects implied by the deeper meaning of confirmation. Therefore, it is quite worthwhile for the ministers, in preparing the confirmation day, to establish a strong connection between the sermon, songs and prayers and the contents that were discussed and experienced during confirmation time but also to integrate the confirmands and their families in the preparation of the service and its different parts.

1.3 Beliefs

The question of the religious orientations and the faith of adolescents is of general interest not only for the Churches but also for society at large. Many studies on youth include this question, at least to some degree. In the case of studies from the social sciences or from general education, however, such studies often make do with a very limited number of items which do not allow for more detailed results. This limitation also explains why these studies are of limited value for practical purposes, most of all in the field of religious education where detailed insights are needed, for example, for designing effective programs.

The present study goes beyond earlier research in several respects. First of all, its longitudinal design which included three questionnaires over three years allows for insights into the dynamics of faith and religion in adolescence. The adolescents' religion obviously is not static but there are important changes that can be identified by following them over time. Moreover, since the present study includes the possibility of analysing the results on an individual level – or, in other words, to follow each individual adolescent over three years – the individual dynamics of religious development in adolescence could be captured. Finally, the study included a whole series of items relating to specific religious attitudes as well as to the church and to the Christian faith in general. Through this, the basis for the respective results is much broader than in earlier research and it leads to interpretations which are more differentiated concerning different aspects of faith and religion. As the results clearly show, there are important differences in relationship, for example, to faith in God in general on the one hand, and faith in God the creator on the other. Or, to mention another result, even if adolescents become more skeptical vis-à-vis certain contents of the Christian faith, they may still appreciate this faith in general. As long as one does not ask the adolescents in a differentiated manner about their faith, the results will not do justice to its complex reality.

Based on existing studies from the sociology and psychology of religion the general expectation will be that, with increasing age, adolescents become less religious and that the influences of childhood religious socialisation will become weaker or disappear altogether. The results of the present study show that there is a clear increase of the adolescents' affirmation of most religion-related items during confirmation time. Confirmation work can obviously strengthen the faith of the participating adolescents. After confirmation, however, the values decrease again, sometimes even below the level at the beginning of confirmation time. Yet this is not the case with all belief items. Especially the belief in a life after death received more agreement two years after confirmation than either in the beginning of confirmation time or at the end of confirmation time. This could mean that existential questions relating to this belief gain additional weight with age – an observation that could be helpful in designing educational programs offered by the Churches for older adolescents.

The data also show that there is a clear difference between the group level and the individual level. Many of the adolescents individually moved in directions that were different from the general tendencies. Moreover, their movements included some back-and-forth between the categories of the answers. This indicates that religious development in adolescence does not necessarily follow one and the same predefined pattern with all individuals. Influences, among others from religious education, can therefore make a difference.

It is also of interest to consider different items related to the adolescents'

faith. Belief in God the creator is one of the items which received much less affirmation two years after confirmation than at the time of confirmation. With a decrease of 11 percent points between the end of confirmation time and two years after confirmation, it is actually the item with the strongest decline. In the total sample, only 34% of the adolescents agree to this belief two years after confirmation.

An example for items with increases and decreases over time is the conviction that »faith in God helps me in difficult situations«. In the beginning of confirmation time, 43% of the confirmands agreed to this, at the end of confirmation time the number was up to 51%, two years after confirmation it was down to 44%.

On the whole, the results confirm the general assumption of a decline of the adolescents' religiosity over the years. Yet they also show that this decline is not linear with the 13 to 16 or 17 year old Protestants. The faith-related items clearly receive more assent at the end of confirmation time than in the beginning. It is also evident that the respective values decline after confirmation, at least in most cases. This result raises important questions about the long-term effects of confirmation work. Many of the positive effects of confirmation work do not last very long. It must also be emphasised, however, that the data from the present study do not allow for evaluating the long-term effects of confirmation work in comparison to adolescents who do not participate in confirmation work. The study only included the group of adolescents who actually participated in confirmation work – which, at least in some of the countries, comprised almost all of the Protestants at the respective age or, in countries with very high membership rates for the Protestant Church – even most of the whole population. It would be an interesting task for future research to compare this group with other adolescents. In any case, given the results from the study, the question what comes after confirmation is of core importance. Moreover, the results indicate that positive or negative experiences during confirmation time have an effect on the adolescents' attitudes towards the church after confirmation. In this respect, the present study is in line with earlier research: confirmation work does matter (cf. Niemelä 2008).

The adolescents' views of the church and also of the Christian faith in general remain very positive even two years after confirmation. More than two thirds of the adolescents express a positive attitude towards the church and the Christian faith in general two years after confirmation. The adolescents distinguish between the church and the Christian faith. In many cases, the view of the Christian faith is more positive than the view of the church but also the opposite occurs, i. e., that the church is valued more than the faith.

Concerning influences from childhood religious socialisation most results of the present study do not confirm the assumption that such influences become

weaker or disappear altogether during adolescence. In many respects, the opposite seems to be the case. The religious influence of the parents remains a main influence in the lives of the adolescents. While this result may be disappointing to some of the workers, it certainly is encouraging for the parents. Moreover, it should be understood as a reason for the Churches to develop programs for supporting parents in respect to nurturing their children religiously.

1.4 Relationship to the Church

Concerning commitment to the Church after confirmation and in later adolescence, it is obvious that the adolescents' development can follow different patterns. In the present study, using cluster analysis, the respondents were categorised into four different groups based on their commitment to the Church two years after confirmation. This analytical approach allows for analysing commitment to the Church from multiple perspectives, instead of just using single items. Another advantage of cluster analysis is that it does not start out with assumptions of potential groups but identifies them mathematically based on which groups emerge most distinctively from the analysis of the data.

The model with four groups turned out to be the clearest. The results show that the largest group among the young people in the study comprised those adolescents who had both a strong belief and a strong sense of belonging (»believing and belonging«, 30%). However, there were notable differences between the countries: young people of the first group were most common in minority Churches (for example, the Methodist Church in Germany) and less common in the Nordic countries, and the least common in Sweden. The other three groups into which the young people in the study could be categorised, were of almost equal size. One fourth of the young people had a moderate level of belief and sense of belonging (»moderate believers«, 25%) and about one fourth had distanced themselves from the Church (24%). A slightly smaller group consists of those who believed but did not have a sense of belonging (21%). The group with moderate belief and belonging was most typical for the Nordic countries. However, the distanced group was also very prominent in two of the Nordic countries (Finland and Sweden) as well as in Switzerland.

Furthermore, the results show that there is both stability and change in opposite directions concerning commitment to the Church after confirmation. While some of the adolescents tend to distance themselves from the Church, others become more attached to the Church after confirmation. At the same time, some of the adolescents seem to remain constant in their attachment to the Church. This applies to all four commitment groups but there are also

differences between them. The »distanced« and the »moderate« adolescents most often developed negatively after confirmation in terms of both belief and the sense of belonging, while two years after confirmation, the adolescents with a high sense of belonging and believing had been strengthened in their faith and belonging. Active church contact with positive experiences and volunteering as well as prior church contacts seem to play a crucial role for these effects.

At the same time, the results show that the adolescents' views of the Church remain typically very stable during the two years after confirmation. This means that even if the more personal attitude (including faith and sense of belonging as well as practicing) changes after confirmation, the less personal, i. e., the more general attitude towards the Church tends to remain stable.

The different commitment styles typically found in different countries and Churches entail some clear expectations for the future of the Protestant Churches in these countries. It is obvious that the strongest decline has to be expected in the future for Churches with many distanced young people after confirmation. However, when comparing different countries and Churches (from whatever perspective), one also must take into account whether confirmation is a majority or minority behavior among the young members of the Church. In most of the Churches in the study, confirmation is a majority behavior. For example in Finland, almost 100 % of the young people who belong to the Church in that age group participate in confirmation work. In Sweden, however, only about half of the young church members take part in confirmation time. This implies that in Sweden, even if participation in confirmation time is limited to those adolescents who seem to be attached to the Church the most, the share of distanced young people is highest.

1.5 Volunteerism

A main emphasis of this study is on volunteerism. Both in the first and in the second study on confirmation work in Europe, volunteerism was identified as a key feature of confirmation work (cf. Pettersson/Simojoki 2010; Porkka et al. 2015). The findings suggest that confirmation work and volunteerism can reinforce each other.

On the one hand, volunteerism has become an indispensable part of successful confirmation work. In contrast to the traditional model of confirmation instruction, today's confirmation work is characterised by participatory and experience-oriented learning methods that heavily rely on voluntary engagement – as do the camps which can not be run as a one-man or one-woman show. Especially young volunteers are most likely important and highly valued identification figures for the confirmands.

On the other hand, the studies also show that confirmation work strengthens young people's motivation for becoming active as a volunteer. By giving confirmands opportunities to try out voluntary work, by discussing the benefits of volunteerism and by motivating the confirmands to volunteer in the Church after confirmation, confirmation work can make voluntary engagement accessible to the young people. In the previous studies on confirmation work in Europe, this contribution was interpreted in the wider context of education for civil society.

However, the earlier studies were limited to the experiences, developments and expectations during confirmation time itself. With the t_3 -data gathered two years after confirmation, it was possible for the first time to trace »pathways into volunteerism« over a time-span of three years. As pointed out in the introduction to this book (p. 12 ff.), the results gained by this longitudinal approach are not only of interest to researchers or practitioners in the field of confirmation work. The longitudinal approach and the focus on later adolescence add important insights to the existing research on volunteerism in general because this age group has most often been neglected in this research.

What are the main results of the present study regarding volunteerism? It is helpful to start with the distinction between the volunteers on the one hand and on the other hand, those adolescents who have never volunteered in church or Christian youth after confirmation or who have stopped being a volunteer. This question served as the central reference point of the present analysis. 17% of the respondents in t_3 were active as volunteers in the Church two years after confirmation. Almost every tenth had volunteered at some point but, for whatever reason, ceased to do so before t_3 . The other respondents – i. e., by far the majority – had never volunteered in church or Christian youth work after confirmation. In a longitudinal perspective, the t_3 -results indicate that not all chances for winning young people as volunteers were actually used. Two years earlier, at the end of their confirmation time, almost four out of ten had stated that they could imagine working in the Church as a volunteer after confirmation.

Against this backdrop, the present project's main research question related to volunteerism gains even more significance: why do some confirmands become volunteers after confirmation while others do not? In this study, different approaches were taken for finding answers to this question.

(1) Important factors could be discerned by comparing volunteers and non-volunteers. Some of the factors identified as influential are not related to confirmation work but point to differences in the social and personal context as well as in the religious and family background of the respondents. According to these findings, confirmands are more likely to become volunteers after confirmation if they:

- are female
- were brought up religiously
- have parents interested in religion
- have parents who are active as volunteers
- had been volunteering in several fields before confirmation time
- were intrinsically motivated in the beginning of confirmation time.

Again, the data reveal a pattern that is familiar from earlier research on the effects of confirmation work: »To them that hath shall be given« (Krupka et al. 2015). The respondents' willingness to volunteer is strongly shaped by their social and religious background. To put it negatively: the less familiar confirmands are with religion and volunteerism, the less likely they are to become active as volunteers after confirmation.

(2) Other factors refer to the (positive or negative) effects of experiences during confirmation time. Young people are more inclined to become volunteers after confirmation if they:

- felt welcome and accepted in the parish during confirmation time
- had the opportunity to try out voluntary work during confirmation time
- discussed the societal importance of volunteerism in confirmation time
- are satisfied with their confirmation time
- experienced camps and outings during confirmation time.

These findings include valuable insights for practitioners. If parishes want to motivate young people for volunteerism, they need to become active in this respect: by providing confirmands with the opportunity to try out voluntary work, by adapting their guidelines for confirmation work and, most importantly, by establishing a culture which appreciates the wishes, views and values of young people.

(3) Further insights were gained by using the more complex analytical tool of multi-level analysis. Here, the number of the confirmands' contacts with people who are active as volunteers turned out to be a particularly strong predictor. Again, the motivation to volunteer seems to be closely linked to the existence of a culture of volunteerism in the respective group or parish. According to the results of this study, such a culture is supported by:

- close interaction between volunteers and confirmands
- workers who are dedicated to encouraging voluntary commitment through example and encouragement
- the availability of groups and activities accessible for young people after confirmation.

(4) The respondents were also asked directly about their reasons for volunteering or not volunteering. For those who chose to volunteer, expectably, having fun plays a big role. But social, altruistic and, to a lesser extent, faith-related motives were important as well. Since almost three out of four respondents had not volunteered after their confirmation, their answers also were of special interest. Not surprisingly, lack of time is the reason for not volunteering mentioned most often. Others did not see why voluntary work should be important to them – a reason that was especially important for those who were not motivated to volunteer at the end of confirmation time. A particularly worrisome finding must also be reported here: for more than four out of ten of the non-volunteers the decision not to volunteer was influenced by the fact that no one ever asked them. Ideally, a culture of volunteerism should include as many interested young people as possible. Nobody with an interest to participate should have to feel excluded from voluntary engagement.

(5) The analysis also called attention to a group that is easily overlooked: the ones who were active as volunteers after their confirmation and then chose to quit. These short-time volunteers are more extrinsically motivated than the long-time volunteers and often come from a less religious background. Therefore, it was argued, they need special support and attention from the full-time workers which so far they do not seem to receive, at least not in all cases.

1.6 Confirmation Work as a Factor of Religious Socialisation

Traditionally, confirmation work has been an important part of catechesis in Protestant Churches. Its role in life-long religious learning and education was considered indispensable. The results of the present study show in various ways that confirmation time is indeed meaningful today as well. This applies to the individual level concerning, for example, young people's relation to faith and to their sense of belonging to the Church, and to a more general level, concerning knowledge and young people's view of the Church. However, confirmation time alone is not sufficient to secure effective religious socialisation.

The results of the study highlight the importance of plausibility structures in explaining young people's relation to religion and commitment to religion. The data show that the commitment to religion and faith as well as religious practice are mostly explained by the religiosity of the people around them. This applies not only at the micro-level (religiosity in one's own family) but also at the meso-level (religiosity at the peer group level) and the macro-level (religiosity in the society/in the wider church context in general). This means that religion is a social matter and is strongly linked to the community around an

individual. In many ways the results show that an individual's experiences with his or her parents and the core family are of crucial importance for the later relationship to religion but other people are also important. Religiosity of a young person is mostly supported in contexts where other young people, for example, in a confirmation group tend to be strongly committed to the church as well and where the general level of religiosity among the parents also is high. This supports the results of earlier studies by confirming the significance of parents' religiosity in explaining children's and adolescents' religiosity. Families have traditionally been significant contexts for religious socialisation and the transmission of religion from generation to generation. Religious behavior appears to carry across several generations. As shown in many earlier studies, parents' religiosity has significant effects on children's religiosity. All of these effects are corroborated by the present study as well.

At the same time, the results of this study also have new insights to offer. The multi-level analysis which refers not only to an individual level but also to a group level and the larger church level, shows that all these levels are important as such in explaining religious commitment. All three levels are more important in explaining young people's beliefs and sense of belonging than any other single factor that was measured in the present study. This means that it is not only the family which matters, but also the larger surroundings. This is an important result in explaining contemporary religious change. While recent studies still show a strong tendency for people's religious beliefs and practices formed within the family to persist from childhood into adulthood, they also suggest that these influences are weakening (e. g., Bengtson et al. 2013). The results of the present study also indicate that the effects of religious socialisation in the family are weaker if the religious upbringing is not supported by the larger surroundings. This means that in a social and cultural situation or atmosphere where a family is rather alone with its religious attitudes, the religious upbringing at home will most likely not carry into adulthood. Accordingly, when the general level of religiosity declines in a society, the rate of individual decline is likely to accelerate as well. This also becomes visible in international comparative studies (see, e. g., Bertelsmann Stiftung 2013).

However, confirmation time itself and how confirmation work is done, also plays a role in explaining young people's later religious commitment. Satisfaction with confirmation time clearly influences young people's later beliefs and sense of belonging as well as later voluntary engagement. Concerning later voluntary involvement, the model experienced during confirmation time is crucial: it is important that there were volunteers in confirmation work and that the confirmands had the chance to become familiar with young people working in the church as volunteers and through this, were encouraged to work as volunteers.

1.7 Benefits of a Longitudinal Approach: Methodological Considerations – Consequences for Future Research

In this study, young people's relationship to religion was studied from various perspectives based on longitudinal data. The data was collected during a period of three years: in the beginning of confirmation time, in the end of confirmation time and two years after confirmation time. The young people were studied during the years when they typically face important transitions in life. Their compulsory education comes to an end, they make their first vocational choices, get typically involved in first romantic relationships and take important steps towards a life more independent from their parents. Many studies also show that during these years people are more likely to make various religious choices than during any other life period, both in relation to religious commitment and to distancing themselves from religion. The results of the present study show that indeed many changes take place during these years among the adolescents and their relation to religion. On an individual level, there is development both towards distance from religion as well as development towards deeper religious commitment.

The study leads to several methodological considerations concerning research on adolescents and their relationship to religion, especially in a longitudinal perspective. The first consideration is related to collecting the data. It is always to be expected that follow-up studies involve notable drop-out rates. This implies that it is likely that the follow-up includes more respondents to whom the topic under study is personally more important, and less respondents who are indifferent to this topic. In this study, it was clearly visible that young people with a more positive relationship to religion were more likely to answer. When it comes to religion, however, also those who are negative about religion, may be more likely to respond than those who are indifferent. These considerations highlight the importance of being clear about the connections between the first data collection and later data sets and matching them. In this way, it becomes possible to recognise possible problems with the data and estimate the influence of one-sided sample compositions. Given the expected drop-out rates, it is important that the initial sample is large enough so that there will be sufficient respondents for the questionnaires at later times.

The second consideration involves the influence of age and how age influences the patterns of answering questions related to faith-related issues. For example, what does believing mean to young people after their cognitive capacities have expanded? Increase in age often also means wider cognitive capacities to relate to conceptual issues in measuring commitment to religion. Does believing or agreeing with belief-related items mean the same for young people at the age of 13 to 14 years as to those between 16 or 17 or even older? Many

changes take place during adolescence and when entering adulthood and these changes also involve cognitive development. This needs to be taken into account when planning studies that involve people at different ages and when interpreting the results, especially if the time-span is long.

The third consideration involves the time-span needed for longitudinal studies. This question has implications on several levels. Setting up a longitudinal study requires thorough planning, including practical aspects and funding as well as long-term commitment from the members of the research team. Regardless of the initial commitment there always is a risk of drop-outs in the research team as well. This calls for clear documentation during the research process so that valuable information will not be lost when members of the research team leave the project. Also, funding plans may not turn out to be feasible. It is rare for long-term studies that funding can be secured in advance for the whole time. This requires accepting uncertainties during the research process but also calls for funders to consider the commitment for long-term funding. Given the far-reaching importance of the results and insights to be gained, it must also be emphasised that longitudinal research deserves special funding from public sources, even if it applies to a field like confirmation work which is related to the Churches.

1.8 Perspectives for the Further Development of Confirmation Work

Again it has to be said that the research on confirmation work and the t_3 -study include many impulses for improving confirmation work. At this point, the whole range of such impulses will not be described again. Instead, two promising perspectives related specifically to the study carried out two years after confirmation will be developed in the following.

Promoting a Culture of Youth Volunteerism During and After Confirmation Time

The findings of this study suggest that youth volunteerism deserves particular attention in the further development of confirmation work and Christian youth work in general. From this point of view, the results on volunteerism summarised above have important implications for the ongoing discussion on the future shape and structure of confirmation work. Those who are engaged in this field of work should feel encouraged to foster and promote a »culture of youth volunteerism« as a central element not only of confirmation work but of church and parish development at large.

The benefits of such an approach have already been widely discussed in this study. They can be summarised in four points, each of which marks a fundamental perspective on confirmation work.

First, youth volunteerism clearly improves the quality of confirmation work. For the confirmands, young volunteers are important models of a lived faith they can relate to and identify with. They are more satisfied with confirmation work when young volunteers are involved. The positive impact of youth volunteerism becomes particularly visible in the camps which could not be organised without volunteers.

Second, youth volunteerism has great potential for the Churches. As described in the introduction of this book in more detail, the question of what comes after confirmation refers to a crucial tension or break-down in the relationship between Protestant Churches and their adolescent members. In spite of the high satisfaction with confirmation work among the participating young people, the day of confirmation in many cases marks not the beginning of a new phase of commitment to the Church but the end of the adolescents' participation in the Church. In the light of the findings of this study, youth volunteerism can provide a conceptual answer to the pressing question of how the relationship between the adolescents and the Church can be improved after confirmation.

Thirdly, youth volunteerism in confirmation work also is of importance beyond the Church. It is a contribution to the whole society. It fosters attitudes and competencies that are of vital importance for civic engagement in society. In this perspective, volunteerism in confirmation work can be understood as education for civil society.

Fourth and most importantly, the adolescents themselves benefit from volunteerism in confirmation work. Young volunteers can gain important pro-social skills and experience faith and church in a more participatory setting.

However, the results of this study also indicate that such effects can not be taken for granted. On the contrary, in many cases there are obstacles to volunteering in the Churches. In the countries participating in this study, adolescents are often already involved in different kinds of compulsory and non-compulsory activities and, as a consequence, have no or only little time for (additional) voluntary engagement. Moreover, faith and church are not of central importance to many of them, which, naturally, affects their willingness to be active as a volunteer after confirmation. Finally, it became very clear that the young people most often only volunteer if they really feel like doing it. In most cases, they do not become volunteers for conventional reasons or due to social expectations, but they decide for themselves if they want to volunteer or not. Hence, it is not enough to just offer them opportunities to volunteer. Instead, Churches and parishes need to find ways of developing programs, forms and settings of voluntary engagement that are attractive for young people.

As already highlighted in this chapter, the empirical findings point to some key factors that either enhance or diminish the appeal of voluntary engage-

ment. It became particularly clear that this question should not be seen in isolation from the broader context of confirmation work. Among young people, the willingness to volunteer is strongly influenced by their perception of the parish and parish life as a whole. They are much more likely to volunteer if they feel welcome and accepted in the parish during confirmation time. Consequently, youth volunteerism is also not related just to confirmation work. It is a more comprehensive task of parish development. Confirmation work should be embedded in a culture of youth volunteerism – a general climate that is appreciative of young people and attentive to their opinions, interests and preferences. Such a culture comprises many aspects of parish life, from Sunday services to parish leadership.

Based on the empirical findings, volunteerism should be included more systematically in the curriculum of confirmation work. Confirmands are more likely to be active in the church after their confirmation if they had the opportunity to try out voluntary work during confirmation time and to consider its meaning during confirmation time. Moreover, the respective aims and attitudes of the workers are of particular importance in this respect as well. Therefore, this dimension needs to be integrated in the professional training of pastors and youth workers.

Furthermore, a culture of youth volunteerism should comprise all confirmands. The empirical findings of this study draw attention to two groups that seem to be at least partly neglected in current programs of youth volunteerism in confirmation work. On the one hand, there seems to be a considerable share of confirmands who did not volunteer after confirmation because no one asked them. Second, more attention needs to be given to those confirmands who chose to quit volunteering during the first two years after confirmation. This seems to disproportionately apply to confirmands without strong religious upbringing and with a more extrinsic motivation.

Finally, it became clear that all these findings have to be situated in the existing plurality of concepts in different countries and Churches in Europe. The challenges regarding volunteerism vary considerably from context to context. Some countries have no tradition of involving young volunteers in confirmation work, others have established models, standards and curriculums for youth volunteerism, while still others are somewhere in-between. Consequently, the institutionalisation of training programs for young volunteers is a crucial task. In many cases, the range of the structures and training programs is still rather limited. It is also suggested that international exchange and comparative research should play an important role in future efforts to further develop and implement youth volunteerism in confirmation work.

The Need for Convincing Contents – Dealing with Difficult Questions

The results of the present study concerning the beliefs of the adolescents show a pattern that, on the one hand, could be expected from the beginning based on everyday experience with young people but which, on the other hand, must also be called critical. Some people would even refer to it as alarming. In many cases, the confirmands' assent to these items had grown during confirmation work – an effect that is certainly intended by this program – but two years after confirmation most of the increases had disappeared. This result is to be taken especially seriously because the study did not only use one question about the adolescents' faith but made use of a whole number of different items – including faith in God the creator, resurrection, afterlife, etc.

Most likely there are a number of possible reasons for the pattern identified for the beliefs of the adolescents. For many of the adolescents, contact with the Church or with programs offered by the Church for young people became much thinner during the years after confirmation. The group of the fellow confirmands with whom one could share the interest in the Christian faith at least in the sense that all of them took part in confirmation time, no longer exists after confirmation. New interests may come into play as the adolescents get older. Personal, social and affective factors offer plausible explanations for the decline of the values for most faith-related items two years after confirmation. Yet it is also plausible that this development has to do with how contents are treated in confirmation time. Creation faith is an example which allows for closer scrutiny in this respect.

It is important to remember that the responses to the item »God created the world« (C/K/QE01) showed 43% agreement at the beginning of confirmation time, 44% at the end and 34% two years after confirmation. There is not much increase concerning this belief during confirmation time, while the decrease after confirmation is very strong. It is actually one of the strongest decreases found with the faith-related items in the study. Another example with a strong decrease is the item »Jesus has risen from the dead« (C/K/QE04) with values of 51% (t_1), 53% (t_2) and 42% (t_3).

How can these decreases be explained? Faith in God the creator as well as the belief in the resurrection of Jesus have in common that they clearly are in tension with natural scientific worldviews. Theories of evolution describe the origin of the world differently from faith in creation. The relationship between creation and evolution has become the topic of a whole body of theological and philosophical publications as well as of popular books like Richard Dawkins' (2006) world-bestseller »The God Delusion«. Both, the small change in agreement to this faith during confirmation time as well as its strong decrease after confirmation may well mirror the influence of popularised natural science accounts of the origin and evolutionary development of the world.

Faith in resurrection can be seen in a parallel way. That death is not definite because dead people can come back into life contradicts all understandings of biology and medical science as much as people's own experience. Theologically, of course, resurrection does not mean resuscitation. People who could be resuscitated, for example, after an accident, will still die at a later point while resurrection refers to eternal life and to overcoming death, not only for today but forever. Yet is the difference between resurrection and resuscitation which theologians take for granted, also clear to the adolescents? Or are they caught in what remains a contradiction for them – to have to believe in something that they cannot reconcile with their taken for granted rational understanding of the world?

In any case, these findings speak for the need to also take the cognitive dimension of confirmation work very seriously. The transition from traditional instructional models and from rote learning to youth-oriented ways of doing confirmation work remains important, as can be seen, among others, from the high satisfaction rates among adolescents concerning confirmation work. Yet contents also matter! Good experiences in the group and opportunities for forming friendships which are often seen as the strongest assets of today's confirmation work should go hand in hand with convincing contents.

But is there even a chance for confirmation work to have an impact on beliefs like faith in creation? This question is quite important because it would certainly not be recommendable to invest time and energy into endeavors which, from the beginning, have no chance to make a difference. However, the longitudinal approach used in the present study does offer encouraging results in this respect. It shows the negative tendencies described above, for example, the decrease of young people's agreement to faith in God the creator. At the same time, it shows that underneath the tendencies at the group level, there are many changes at an individual level that follow different directions. In other words, the changes at the group level do not simply determine what happens at the individual level.

Concerning educational programs, including confirmation work, the results at the individual level can be viewed as encouragement. While the results of the study do not answer the question what kind of influences may actually be responsible for the changes at the individual level, they clearly show that such influences exist and that they make a difference. It is at least very likely that influences related to education count among these influences.

The responses two years after confirmation have implications not only for confirmation work and confirmation time but also for possible programs offered after confirmation. Such programs should be mindful of the decline of agreement with core elements of the Christian faith. Just like confirmation work, they should be open for critical questions posed by young people and

help them find ways for reconciling the Christian faith with, for example, views from the natural sciences. Research from the psychology of religion shows that the achievement of complementary thinking should be an important aim of religious education in adolescence – a way of thinking that understands that, at least in some cases, contradictory explanations make sense or even are needed, just like with the explanation of light in physics.

2. Main Results of the Different Studies 2006-2016

The findings reported in the present volume belong to a series of studies on confirmation work conducted over the last ten years. It therefore makes sense to explain the position of the present study in this series by bringing together, as far as this is possible in a few pages, the results of the different studies. For this reason, the studies will be briefly introduced and then be interpreted under different aspects. This may also be of help for readers who are not familiar with all volumes in the present series. The results presented allow for an empirically based understanding of the situation of confirmation work in Europe today. Moreover, they also include many indications of potentials that can be tapped in the future. At the end of the chapter, a number of strategies will be described that could be the starting point for further improvements in this field of work.

2.1 The Studies in Overview

An important beginning of the international research on confirmation work in Europe was a symposium at Tuebingen University (Germany) in 2007. The purpose of the symposium – and later of a volume developed from it (Schweitzer/Elisenbast 2009) – was an exchange on current research on confirmation work. This implied that the symposium also served as a basis for bringing together research traditions from different countries which explains why it also became the starting point for forming an international group of researchers in this field.

In 2010, the first study on confirmation work in Europe was published (Schweitzer et al. 2010). Its purpose was to gain a broad and detailed view of confirmation work in the seven participating countries – Germany, Austria, Switzerland (Zurich), Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. The study included data from the confirmands as well as from the workers, both full-time workers and volunteers. It used a design with two questionnaires, at the beginning and towards the end of confirmation time. It was an innovative study, among others because of the large sample sizes and the attempt of achieving

representativity as much as possible. Representative samples in the different countries are the presupposition for valid international comparisons which were another central aim of the study.

The second international study was published in 2015 (Schweitzer et al. 2015a). Nine European countries took part in it – in addition to the seven countries of the first study, Hungary and Poland joined the team. Moreover, the German Methodists (Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche) also took part, and there is a parallel project in the United States (cf. Douglass 2015). The focus of the second study was on long-term developments and tendencies that can be described in two respects:

- The study was carried out five years after the first study. This implies that comparisons over time became possible, especially since about two thirds of the items in the questionnaires remained the same. Consequently, the results from 2007/2008 and from 2012/2013 allow for valid comparisons. These comparisons show both, important changes as well as surprising continuities.
- The study used a third questionnaire for the adolescents two years after confirmation (in the year 2015). In this way it became possible to gain insights into the changes taking place after confirmation, at a group level as well as at an individual level.

The present volume mainly reports the results of this last part of the study, the survey with adolescents two years after confirmation. It carries further two main interests of the second study, finding out more about how young people become volunteers, especially in confirmation work but also in other fields, and investigating the relationship between experiences during confirmation time and adolescents' attachment to the Church.

The present study can be read and understood independently from the preceding studies, as a contribution to research on developments in adolescence concerning church and religion. It can also be viewed in the context of the earlier studies, shedding additional light on the experiences of confirmation time.

2.2 The Shape of Contemporary Confirmation Work: Success, Satisfaction and the Need for further Improvements

One of the main aims of the studies was to establish a basis for an empirical description of the current state of confirmation work in the participating European countries and Churches. It is of course not possible here to summarise all the details that the studies uncovered, although this would be of interest as

well. Instead, a number of basic tendencies will be identified. Moreover, it will not be possible here to do justice to the differences between the countries with their special presuppositions. The country-related chapters in the different publications of the project should be consulted for such aspects.

In most participating countries, confirmation work can be considered a vital and successful field of work. The new forms of doing confirmation work which, depending on the country, were introduced about 40 to 50 years ago, are well accepted – by the confirmands themselves but also by the workers and by the parents of the confirmands. In the first place, the high degree of acceptance seems to be due to the fact that the traditional models of instruction have been replaced by more youth-oriented models. Creative methods, games, outings and camps lasting for several days and nights have become a core characteristic of today's confirmation work. Moreover, the confirmands enjoy the experience of being together with their peers in a special group. Last but not least, confirmation work is most often carried out by a team of workers that includes a number of voluntary workers who often are only a few years older than the confirmands. This also implies that confirmation work has become much less hierarchical, since the traditional dominance of the minister has now been balanced by other influences within the group of the confirmands themselves but also with the volunteers. Such factors explain why 76 % of the adolescents said at the end of confirmation time that they were satisfied with this program (Schweitzer et al. 2015a, 379).

Yet it is easy to see that there is not only success or satisfaction with confirmation work. There also is the need for further improvements. A starting point for a more critical view can be the assets mentioned above. In most cases, these assets are not guaranteed – neither with the new methods nor the outings and camps or the availability of volunteers. It makes sense to consider these aspects as a benchmark for the quality of confirmation work. Each Church should think about ways to improve their confirmation work in order to live up to the respective criteria of successful confirmation work.

In many countries, worship services seem to be a special problem for the confirmands. Often, the adolescents are required to attend the services but they experience them as boring. One of the consequences is young people's dissatisfaction with worship services which increases during confirmation time.

Another problem has to do with the contents treated in confirmation work. Many confirmands doubt that the church has answers to the questions which are really important to them – and again, their doubts are stronger at the end of confirmation time than in the beginning. In other words, in this case, confirmation work does not seem to strengthen the adolescents' trust in the teachings of the Churches. Faith in God the creator probably is the best example for this. This faith is not shared by many of the confirmands from the beginning, and

the young people have clearly moved away from this faith, two years after confirmation.

Especially the results from the study two years after confirmation raise the question of how long the effects of confirmation time actually last. Confirmation time has positive effects on the beliefs of the young people but most of the increased values mirroring this influence have disappeared two years after confirmation. There is a clear need for attractive programs after confirmation. Or, to put it more critically, so far, the Churches do not seem to be interested enough in what comes after confirmation, at least in most of the participating countries. Having successful confirmation work is not enough in order to foster long-term interest and commitment with the adolescents.

It must also be noted that negative experiences with confirmation work have lasting effects. This can be seen very clearly, among others, from how such experiences influence young people's willingness to become volunteers in confirmation work after their own confirmation. Positive experiences during confirmation time support this willingness – negative experiences have the opposite effect.

Another weakness of confirmation work can be seen in its isolation as a field of work that is not connected with other fields and programs of the Church. In some of the countries, there still is a strong division between confirmation work on the one hand and general Christian youth work on the other – a division that mirrors the different histories of these fields. Yet in today's situation with its challenges, it hardly makes sense to continue this division. It would make more sense to work together and to bring the confirmands in touch with other programs from the beginning of confirmation time so that they might find their way into such programs after confirmation.

2.3 Potentials

The studies on confirmation work refer to potentials of this field of work in a number of ways. First, potentials that could be used more include the aspects called assets of successful confirmation work above, like youth-oriented models with creative methods, camps, etc. Second, one of the surprising results of the studies is related to the very positive views of the church and of the Christian faith which is characteristic of the majority of the adolescents participating in the studies. This result raises the question why the Churches are not more successful in relating to young people. According to the results from the studies on confirmation work this can hardly be explained, for example, by general theories of secularisation. The results show a rather stable picture concerning the adolescents' religious attitudes. At the same time, participation rates in the

countries of the study vary strongly and in some cases, there is a clear decline. In this case, the question of how the potentials of confirmation work can be used for reaching more young people becomes even more urgent. In all countries, belonging to the Church is an issue that must receive more attention – not only by addressing it in confirmation time but also – and possibly even more important – by making the Church a welcoming place that is attractive for adolescents before as well as after confirmation.

Another presupposition for making confirmation work more successful has to do with the contents treated during confirmation time. It is easy to see that the Christian contents should be presented in a manner that makes sense to young people today – an aim that does not seem to be achieved in a sufficient manner in many cases.

One of the most important potentials of confirmation work as well as of the time after confirmation has only been discovered over the last decades or, depending on the country, even more recently. The involvement of young volunteers in confirmation work appears to be a very promising possibility for improving confirmation work itself while, at the same time, making engagement in the Church more attractive for young people after confirmation. It is a very hopeful sign that many Churches have already come to benefit from the potentials of the combination of volunteerism and confirmation work and that other Churches are in the process of moving into this direction as well. Yet the results also indicate that even more should be done in order to make the participation of volunteers in confirmation work most effective. As the experiences most of all from Finland show, i.e., from the country with the longest tradition of young volunteers in confirmation work, it makes sense to give the young volunteers more independent responsibilities, to offer specific leadership training to them and to give them access to tasks, among others, in the context of worship services and teaching. Moreover, the group of young volunteers should not only be appreciated and welcomed because they can improve confirmation work. They should also be accommodated with their own interests and needs as a group of older adolescents. In many of the Churches participating in the present study much more could be done for the young volunteers which would presuppose the realisation that working with this group should be understood as a special kind of youth work itself.

2.4 Recommendations and Strategies for Improvement

Confirmation work in a particular Church typically follows special traditions and corresponds to specific presuppositions prevailing in the respective country or area. Although it can be described as a field of work with common basic

characteristics which identify this field across national boundaries, its concrete shape in any particular place depends on many additional factors. This is why it would hardly make sense to formulate strategies for improvement at a necessarily abstract international level. A minority Church, for example, in Austria or like the Methodist Church in Germany with its small membership has different needs and possibilities than, for example, the Church in Finland which comprises the majority of the population. Yet at the same time, all of the Churches participating in this study are working with a similar age group and in the context of contemporary Western societies. Their programs address adolescents growing up in comparable circumstances, at least to some degree. The distinction between recommendations and strategies in the title of this section tries to do justice to the commonalities across the countries and Churches on the one hand, as well as to the differences between them on the other. The results of the studies on confirmation work allow for formulating a number of general recommendations but the development of concrete strategies and action plans based on these recommendations must be left to the individual Churches.

In the following, eight recommendations will be described, not in the sense of an exhaustive program but as examples for how the empirical results of the research on confirmation work can be translated for improving the practice in this field. Readers should not forget, however, that empirical research is only one of the presuppositions for developing practical strategies. Unavoidably and more than can be explained here, normative judgments and theological orientations have to come into play in this context as well.

The Present Improvements of Confirmation Work Should Be Secured and Continued

The improvements of confirmation work which can be observed in most of the Churches participating in the studies on confirmation work truly amount to something like a shift in paradigms. The older paradigm was based on the idea of instruction and, more often than not, on rote learning, with the adolescents as objects of this instruction as it has come to be critically described. The contemporary paradigm follows the model of youth work, with creative methods, outings and camps as well as with a team of voluntary workers who often are not much older than the confirmands themselves.

The results of the different studies clearly show that it is this contemporary model which has made confirmation work so attractive and which explains the high approval rate with the adolescents. It is, therefore, recommended that the respective reforms should be secured and continued. This implies that the Churches should make every effort possible for supporting the parishes in their attempts of adopting the improvements in their own local contexts. Moreover, the regulations and recommendations issued by the Churches should clearly

reflect the obligatory character of what has been called the contemporary model of confirmation work here. The decision of involving young volunteers, for example, should not be left to the individual parishes but all parishes should be encouraged and, as far as possible, even be obliged to work in this direction. It is easy to see that this also implies respective changes in the training of future ministers who should be prepared for the changing tasks ahead of them.

Parishes Welcoming Young People

It is not only confirmation work which makes a difference but the whole parish plays an important role in how young people view the Church and for how they feel about the Christian faith. According to the results of the studies on confirmation work, there are strong differences in this respect. Not all respondents reported that they felt welcome in their parish.

Accordingly, the Churches and parishes should consider what can be done in order to show young people that their interests and needs as well as their questions and critical perspectives are indeed appreciated in the Church.

Worship Services Which are Attractive for Young People

The results of the studies show both, skeptical views of worship services and negative experiences during confirmation time but also encouraging responses in some of the participating countries and parishes. This implies that there is a clear need for giving young people more opportunities to experience forms of worship that they find attractive. The results also show that this is indeed possible. Worship services attractive for young people are not a hopeless case.

Taking Young People's Questions and Doubts Seriously

More than probably expected by many in the field, the results show that the contents addressed in confirmation time are of importance for the confirmands' religious attitudes and their experience of confirmation time. On the one hand, the adolescents often feel that the questions which are really important to them were not addressed. This is one explanation for their impression that the church does not have answers to such questions. On the other hand, there are topics especially from the Christian tradition that appear doubtful to many of the adolescents. Faith in creation is a prominent example for this, the belief that Jesus has risen from the dead is another. At the same time, topics like life after death are especially important to older adolescents.

The result that most of the higher values in the adolescents' responses at the end of confirmation time tend to disappear again after confirmation should be the starting point for thinking about ways of how such contents can be presented more convincingly and how they can be made more accessible to young people. It seems that the renewal of confirmation work has been more success-

ful in respect, for example, of the group experience (which remains quite important for the future as well) but that more remains to be done concerning the contents in relationship to the adolescents' and their understandings, questions and doubts.

Attractive Programs for Young People after Confirmation

Confirmation work clearly increases the adolescents' interest in taking part in programs and groups organised by the Churches. This is an encouraging result. Yet it is also obvious that by far not all those who show such an interest at the end of confirmation time, really come to participate in respective offerings. In part, this may be due to the adolescents' interests and intentions themselves which are not always stable and, after confirmation, certainly can change. In part, however, the adolescents interviewed two years after confirmation report that there are no programs organised by the Churches that would be attractive to them. This implies that the adolescents' interests are not taken seriously enough.

Of course, it must again be emphasised that the programs for volunteers and the involvement of volunteers in confirmation work and beyond is a hopeful sign for how effective answers can be found for what should come after confirmation. It should also not be overlooked, however, that the number of those who report that they have never been asked if they want to become involved with voluntary activities, is still very high. Clearly, more needs to be done in this direction.

The same is true concerning the programs organised for young volunteers. In the future, more emphasis should be given to the task of viewing such programs not only as preparation of future voluntary workers and not only as based on the intention that confirmation work can benefit from the involvement of young volunteers. The programs should also address the young volunteers themselves – as young people who have needs and interest of their own.

Thinking beyond Confirmation Work

The preceding recommendation concerning attractive programs for young people after confirmation already implies that the time after confirmation should receive more attention. In addition to this, a different critical observation must be mentioned here as well that refers to the time before confirmation. The renewal of confirmation work during the last 40 or 50 years has been called successful above because it has led to a new appreciation by all groups involved. Yet in retrospect, it is also easy to see that the strategies used in this process had their exclusive focus on confirmation time itself, at least in most of the countries. The efforts aimed at improving confirmation work which implied a concentration on the time before confirmation.

The suggestion for the future is not that these efforts should end – as stated above, they are still needed. Yet they should now be combined with a new point of view which allows for an eye on both, confirmation time and what comes after confirmation, as well as the implications of such a dual view for both periods of time. This recommendation can be expanded even further as will be shown in the next section.

Confirmation Work as Part of Christian Education in General

Again and again, the results from the studies on confirmation work show that the most powerful influences in religious socialisation have their roots in childhood. The influence of the religious socialisation experienced from the parents makes itself felt, for example, in how adolescents are motivated to participate in confirmation work. Moreover, the influences from early religious socialisation are also visible in what confirmands experience during confirmation time and in how they benefit from confirmation work. Such results are a reminder of the fact that confirmation work should not be seen in isolation. As described above, confirmation work makes a contribution to religious socialisation of its own. Yet it is easy to see that it remains important that confirmation work is prepared to meet the young people with their presuppositions developed and acquired in other contexts. This is why it makes sense to consider the different fields of religious socialisation and Christian education together. This applies to the parents, to programs for children and youth organised by the Churches, to Sunday school, possibly to Religious Education at school and, where available, to kindergartens sponsored by the Churches. In all of these cases, possibilities of co-operation and mutual reinforcement should be considered. Concerning the confirmands, it would be helpful if possible transitions between the fields – before and after confirmation time – would be kept in view, not only as a lucky coincidence but as planned forms of working together across different fields.

Confirmation Work as Education for Civil Society

Given that modern religion in Western societies has often taken on exclusively privatised forms it may be surprising that this recommendation is included in the present list. Yet the results from the studies on confirmation work clearly show that confirmation work does indeed hold the potential for major contributions to strengthening civil society. The studies indicate that confirmation work can be an important source of socially desirable values in general and that it specifically has a positive influence on young people's willingness to become active as volunteers. Getting to know young volunteers during one's own confirmation time, having the opportunity to try out voluntary work and thinking about the meaning of voluntary work in church and society obviously are powerful possibilities for introducing young people into this field.

For the Churches, the understanding of confirmation work as part of education for civil society holds an additional promise. This understanding can support the acceptance of confirmation work beyond the Churches and through this become a reminder of the fact that the Churches have an important role to play in society at large, not least through their educational programs.

From Recommendations to Strategies

The recommendations described above can and should be the basis for developing concrete strategies and plans for action. Such strategies will have to be more concrete than the general recommendations. Yet the recommendations can be used as a starting point for developing country-specific strategies (for an example referring to Germany, see the strategies described in Schweitzer et al. 2015b; for examples from Switzerland, see Schlag et al. 2016).

3. Looking ahead: The Third International Study on Confirmation Work

The present volume presents results from the second international study on confirmation work (also see Schweitzer et al. 2015a). The third study mentioned in the title of this section would be a continuation of the research which began with the first international study on confirmation work more than ten years ago (Schweitzer et al. 2010). It makes sense at this point to look ahead and consider why such a continuation appears desirable and what benefits can be expected from it.

The first international study on confirmation work in Europe which was conducted in seven countries has already been very well received, by practitioners as well as by researchers in the field of religious education. The results included many new impulses that were taken up at different levels, in confirmation work itself but also in the context of training future ministers and other workers as well as by institutions responsible for designing programs in this context or for the ongoing training of workers. Most of all, the results brought with them a new kind of awareness of the importance of confirmation work which, in turn, was experienced as very encouraging by many in the field. Concerning research, the study succeeded in developing perspectives for educational work in parishes that has often been neglected. Last but not least, the results were also taken up by church leaders in designing new programs and guidelines for confirmation work. In many cases, such guidelines are based, at least in part, directly on the results from the studies on confirmation work. Obviously, empirical research of the present kind can have an innovative influence.

In planning the second international study on confirmation work the question why another study was needed, was discussed extensively. In the end, against some doubts and insecurities in the beginning, the expectation prevailed that a second study would offer possibilities that had not been available in this field before – and at the end of the second study it can be said that this expectation turned out to be justified:

- comparisons over time which are methodologically valid because the studies were designed such that they would allow for such comparisons;
- identification of long-term developments and tendencies concerning youth and religion as well as the development of the practice of confirmation work;
- discernment of possible risks as a basis for church leadership;
- insights into possibilities for influencing or changing existing forms of practice in respect to further improvements;
- innovations based on comparing different models at an international level.

The third international study on confirmation work recommended here for the future can be expected to again fulfil all of the expectations mentioned above. Both, practical work as well as research would benefit from it, and so would church leadership. Most of all, it would be a decisive step towards giving such studies a permanent place in the field. The presuppositions which have become available through the first two studies can be considered an excellent starting point. There now is a culture of research that can be used as a basis for future studies. The form of practical *ecumene* experienced in the international research project was warmly welcomed in many places which, at a time of decreasing interest in ecumenical questions, also is of special value. All these experiences are a basis upon which a third study could successfully build. It must also be mentioned that a third study would increase the chance for the results to be noticed beyond the church and beyond theology, for example, in general research on youth and religion.

New possibilities are also developing in terms of conducting such research. Making use of the almost omnipresent smartphone would most likely allow for less expensive ways of data collection. The instruments developed for this purpose can also be used by the parishes for evaluating their work with the confirmands.

In sum, it can be said that a third international study on confirmation work should be carried out ten years after the second study, at the latest. The first round of questionnaires for the present study were distributed in 2012. The preparations for this step started one or two years earlier. Consequently, a new study is not a question only for the distant future. There is no concrete plan yet for a third study at this point but it certainly is a task and a challenge to be taken up together by the Churches and in research.

Methodology and Procedures

V. Methodology and Procedures

CHRISTOPH H. MAASS, GEORG HARDECKER, WOLFGANG ILG AND FRIEDRICH SCHWEITZER

1. Outline of the Study: Background – Research Question – Design

The study follows a longitudinal design. Protestant adolescents were surveyed three times, at the beginning of their confirmation time, shortly before their confirmation and two years after confirmation. The focus of analysis is on the developments the adolescents made between the beginning of their confirmation time and two years after confirmation.

The research questions of the project are described in detail in the introduction (p. 12 ff.). They refer to how the adolescents view and evaluate their confirmation time and especially the day of confirmation in retrospect, how their religious attitudes and their relationship to the church developed, and the possible role of being a volunteer especially in confirmation work.

The study is not only longitudinal but was designed such that changes can be captured at a group level as well as at an individual level. Compared to most earlier studies on youth and religion, this can be considered a decisive advantage because it allows for complex forms of analysis, again at a group level and at an individual level. Moreover, at least through the lense of the adolescents' responses, it was also possible to include the influence of childhood experience. Other levels included refer to the Churches participating in the study and to the countries (cf. p. 130 ff.).

The sample consists of the adolescents who completed all three questionnaires. A longitudinal interpretation requires a longitudinal sample. The general questionnaire used two years after confirmation was accompanied by another questionnaire to be completed by those adolescents who had been volunteers in Christian youth work.

2. Questionnaires

The study used a quantitative approach with paper and electronic questionnaires. Questionnaires were filled in at three points of time by the adolescents (in some countries, structural information on the parishes was collected beforehand, called t_0). The surveys t_1 (in the beginning of confirmation time) and t_2 (shortly before confirmation) were conducted within confirmation classes and

Figure 42: The longitudinal sample

<i>Person</i>	t_1 <i>Autumn 2012</i>	t_2 <i>Spring 2013</i>	t_3 <i>Summer/Autumn 2015</i>
A	1	2	3 3
B		2	3 3
C	1	2	
D	1	2	3

The figure shows the possible combinations of existing questionnaires: Person A and D filled in all questionnaires, person A additionally filled in the additional questionnaire for volunteers. The data of both persons can be used for the sample. Person B and C did not fill in all questionnaires, so their data could not be used for the sample.

had almost a 100% return rate. Two years after confirmation, those confirmands who agreed on taking part in t_3 at the end of their confirmation time (in Sweden, also all adolescents who took part in t_1) received a link to the online version of the t_3 -questionnaire and/or a paper version of it. The t_3 -questionnaire had two parts, one main part (on 3 pages) with general questions for all adolescents and one additional part (on one page) for those who were volunteering in Christian youth work or confirmation work. The main part included questions about:

- the confirmation day and the confirmation time in retrospect,
- the current attitudes towards Christian faith and the church
- the relationship towards the church (e.g., services).

The additional part was asking about influences on becoming a volunteer, reasons for volunteering and possibilities of taking part in volunteer trainings. Furthermore, the questionnaires contained some open questions. As in t_1 and t_2 , every item had an itemcode. There are two different numbering systems for the items. Each questionnaire has an ascending question-number, mainly for the use of those who complete the questionnaires. As the questionnaires differ slightly in each country, these ascending numbers could not be standardised for all countries. The item-names that are used for the interpretation of the data, consist of two letters and a two-digit number, e.g., CB07. The first letter indicates the questionnaire:

C = confirmands t_1

K = confirmands t_2

Q = confirmands t_3

W = workers t_1

V = workers t_2

The second letter indicates the section within the questionnaire. Sections with the same second letter in t_1 and t_2 correspond with each other, for example, CE01 corresponds with KE01 and QE01.

All questionnaires were printed in the languages of the participating countries. Because all members of the team speak English, this language was chosen for common communication. This allowed for direct exchange within the team but the translations always required an intermediate step from English into the vernacular. Experts in each country translated the questionnaires into their language from the common English versions, also making sure that confirmands could understand the wording. Some items turned out to be not appropriate for specific countries and consequently were left out in some countries; items used only in particular countries are called »country-specific« items. For some areas of special interest, the four Nordic countries as well as Switzerland incorporated additional items for their contexts. Altogether, the questionnaires in the different countries share more than 80 % of their items. They are identical concerning the layout and the order of item-sections. An English version of all questionnaires is available on the internet (www.confirmation-research.eu).

Finally, the results from the EmK (German Methodists) as a Church with different structures as described above (p. 204 ff.) raise special questions concerning possible comparisons. For this reason, the Methodist data were not included with the calculation of international means. In the tables and figures they are presented after the double line.

3. Size of the Sample and Country-Specific Shares

Due to the completely voluntary participation, the size of the t_3 -sample (including the adolescents of the German EmK) is smaller than the t_1 - and t_2 -sample: while 27 969 boys and girls were surveyed in t_1 , and 23 974 adolescents in t_2 , 5 423 (without EmK: 5 196) adolescents responded in t_3 . While Poland and Hungary participated in t_1 and t_2 , they did not carry out t_3 . For the special role of the Hungarian dataset see Schweitzer et al. 2015a, 331.

In consequence, the longitudinal sample – including only those who answered all three questionnaires – amounts to 3 260 adolescents (without EmK

Table 58: Participation rates of the countries in t_1 (2012), t_2 (2013) and t_3 (2014)

	Total*	DE (EKD)	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE (EmK)
N t_1	25980	10191	495	7217	2033	2326	2337	1381	761
N t_2	22734	9096	463	6437	1496	2297	2166	779	620
Send out (t_3)	11503	5012	243	4033	1037	592	586	2317**	450
N t_3	5196	2588	130	1229	334	154	191	570	227
N matched (t_2/t_3) (quota)	3520 (68%)	2129 (82%)	93 (72%)	759 (62%)	106 (32%)	118 (77%)	160 (84%)	155 (27%)	196 (86%)
N matched ($t_1/t_2/t_3$) (quota)	3073 (59%)	1937 (75%)	82 (63%)	662 (54%)	83 (25%)	80 (52%)	115 (60%)	114 (20%)	187 (82%)
N matched (ex-)vo- lunteers ($t_1/t_2/t_3$)	510	354	10	91	-***	24	14	17	-***

* = N of Total is not including the N of the German Methodists (DE EmK) because of their special status. ** = In Sweden, the same adolescents were addressed in t_3 as in t_1 and t_2 . In contrast, in the other countries only those adolescents were addressed, who explicitly expressed their will to take part in t_3 . *** = In Denmark and the Methodist Church in Germany, no extra questionnaires for volunteers were collected.

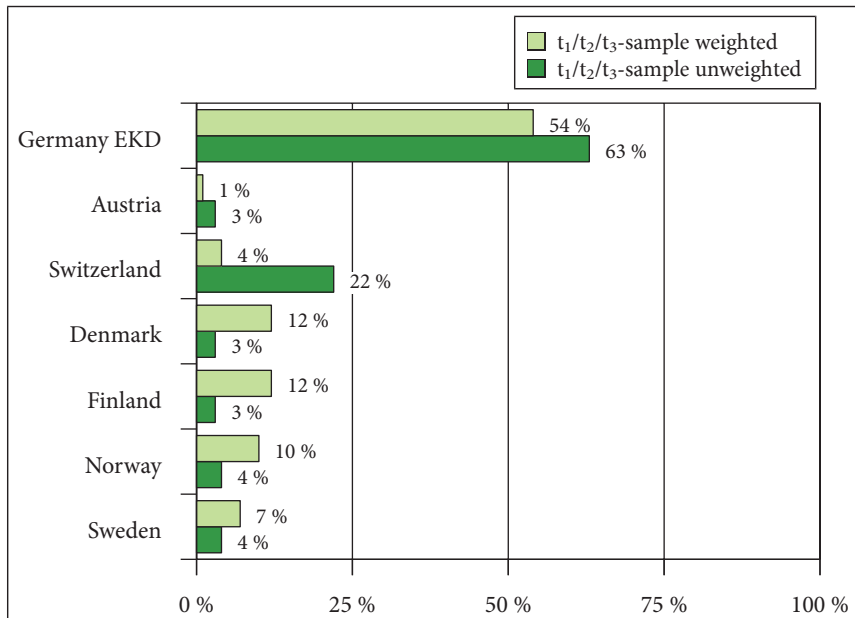
3073), including 510 who are active as volunteers and filled in the additional volunteer's questionnaire (for a detailed overview see p. 25, 108 ff.). More detailed information on the composition of the country-specific samples can be found in the country-reports in this book.

The participation rates are quite different (see Table 58). The share of the questionnaires from Germany and Switzerland are dominating the sample. To reduce this bias, a weighting factor was designed in cooperation with the Leibniz-Institute in Mannheim, Germany (GESIS) (see Figure 43 and Table 59). It is important to note that this weighting factor counterbalances the amount of t_3 -questionnaires according to the number of confirmands in the respective country (population size weights), but it does not generate a representative sample concerning design weights or post-stratification weights.

The quantitative investigation of t_3 builds upon the second study on confirmation work focusing on the two points of investigation at the beginning and shortly before confirmation (t_1/t_2). In t_2 , the adolescents were asked for their willingness to take part in a survey two years after confirmation. If the willingness was given, they were asked for their contact information (email, postal address) to enable contact at a later point of time (2015).

11 503 adolescents or 51 % of the adolescents (without EmK) surveyed in t_2

Figure 43: Country proportions of adolescents before and after using the weighting factor



N = 3073.

were willing to take part in a renewed survey and gave the contact information to the confirmation research project.

In order to ensure the anonymity of the respondents, contact information was surveyed within a separate form.

Two years after their confirmation the adolescents were repeatedly contacted within the t₃-survey. 5196 of them responded (without EmK) answering either online or paper-pencil questionnaires which is 45 % of the 11503 adolescents addressed and 23 % of the 22734 respondents in t₂ (without EmK).

All adolescents participating in t₃ except for those from the EmK and Denmark were presented an additional questionnaire for the case that they were engaging in confirmation work or other voluntary work. This additional questionnaire was answered by 510 respondents, which corresponds to 10 % of all those responding in t₃.

The t₃-dataset used in this study consists of those confirmands who responded both in t₁, t₂, and t₃. The questionnaires from t₁, t₂ and t₃ could be matched by using an individual but anonymous code, the confirmands filled in every time they filled in a questionnaire (third letter of the own first name, third letter of the mother's first name, month of birth, see Schweitzer et al. 2015a, 342). In this way it was possible to match a number of 3073 question-

Table 59: Country-specific shares of the samples

	Germany EKD	Austria	Switzer- land	Denmark	Finland	Norway	Sweden
Proportions of the number of confirmations (2011) N = 438280	54 %	1 %	4 %	12 %	12 %	10 %	7 %
Proportions of the t ₁ /t ₂ -sample (weighted; N = 31897)	48 %	1 %	4 %	15 %	11 %	10 %	11 %
Proportions of the t ₁ /t ₂ -sample (unweighted; N = 31897)	37 %	2 %	27 %	9 %	9 %	10 %	5 %
Proportions of the t ₁ /t ₂ /t ₃ -sam- ple (unweighted; N = 3073)	63 %	3 %	22 %	3 %	3 %	4 %	4 %
Proportions of the t ₁ /t ₂ /t ₃ -sam- ple (weighted; N = 3073)	54 %	1 %	4 %	12 %	12 %	10 %	7 %
Proportions of the t ₁ /t ₂ /t ₃ -vol- unteer-sample (unweighted; N = 510)	69 %	2 %	18 %		5 %	3 %	3 %
Proportions of the t ₁ /t ₂ /t ₃ -vol- unteer-sample (weighted; N = 510)	60 %	1 %	4 %		22 %	7 %	7 %

naires out of 5196 in total (without EmK). Only those who filled in all three questionnaires are »fully matched« and part of the current sample. In this sample, every questionnaire in t₃ could be connected with the answers of that person in t₁ or t₂.

4. Handling and Presentation of the Data

As described for the different countries above in more detail (see the country-reports), the adolescents were asked to fill in the questionnaires. They were assured that the results would be anonymous. The respective codes of ethics and judicial guidelines were observed.

All paper questionnaires were recorded either manually or by a scanning system into the software SPSS.

Most of the items in the study are listed with their detailed results in the appendix of this book (p. 262 ff.). Due to the large number of items, though, only the items with the (usually 7-point) Likert-scales typically used in the study are documented. Additional items that were used only in selected countries are not reported in the appendix.

The results in the appendix display all results for the individual countries as well as for the Total. The Total comprises the data from Germany, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, and is weighted according to the number of confirmands in these countries. In other words, the Total mirrors the weighted average answer of all confirmands in the named countries.

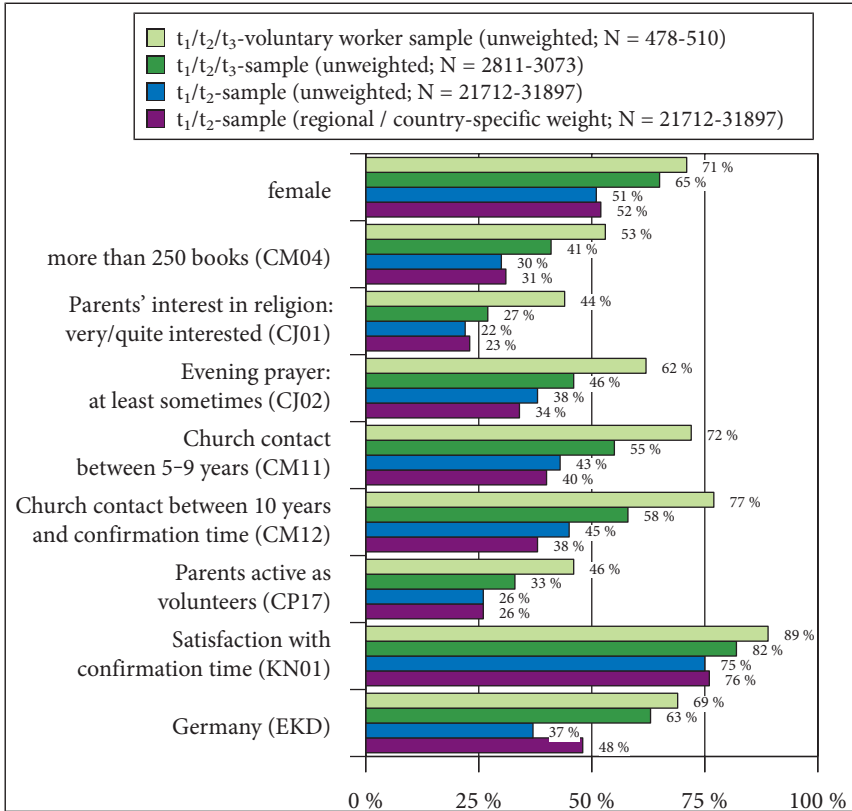
Due to reasons explained above, the data from the EmK was not integrated into the Total. This is the reason, why these results are printed in a separate column in the appendix marked off by the double line.

The tables in the appendix (p. 262 ff.) display the results for the »fully-matched«-dataset. This is the reason why the results of t_1 and t_2 differ slightly from the representative results in the appendix of Schweitzer et al. 2015a.

5. Characteristics of the Sample

The sample has a special profile, which can be seen by looking at the so-called background variables. These variables consist of the socio-demographic and biographical data the adolescents stated in their questionnaires, as well as geographical information obtained in the t_0 -survey and make it possible to compare the structure of the sample. The differences between the used $t_1/t_2/t_3$ -sample and the t_1/t_2 -sample (without the results for Poland, Hungary and German EmK) can be summarised as follows: stronger represented than in the t_1/t_2 -sample are the girls, and also adolescents with parental homes showing an affinity to religion and church, education and voluntary work. That means, that adolescents with this profile answered in t_3 more frequently (the profile of the single country-specific samples can be found in the country reports). The cur-

Figure 44: Sociodemographic, biographical and geographical differences between the t_1/t_2 - and the $t_1/t_2/t_3$ -sample



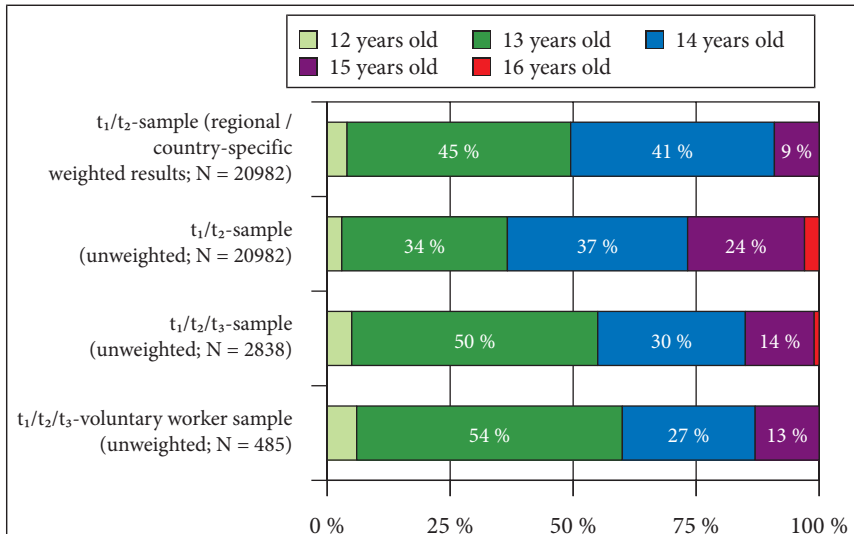
$N(t_1/t_2$ -sample, without Poland) = 18154-31897; $N(t_1/t_2/t_3$ -sample) = 2811-3073; $N(t_1/t_2/t_3$ -sample; volunteers) = 279-353.

rent sample consists of 65 % girls and 35 % boys (C/K/QM01), in the volunteer-sample, 71 % are girls and only 29 % are boys. Within the t_1/t_2 -sample, the share was 52 % to 48 % (in the following, the weighted t_1/t_2 -data is reported).

As Figure 45 shows, most adolescents are between 13 and 14 years old when they are confirmands (86 %). Consequently, in t_3 most adolescents are between 15 and 16 years old (80 %).

The affinity to education and culture was measured with the question »How many books does your family have at home?« (CM04). 41 % have more than 250 books at home. This is considerably higher than in the t_1/t_2 -sample, where 31 % stated that they have more than 250 books. Among the volunteers, the share of those with more than 250 books is 53 %.

Figure 45: Age of the confirmands / adolescents (in the confirmation period) in specific samples



Remark: The values are calculated without the data of Poland and the German Methodist church (DE EmK).

55% of the adolescents in the current sample had contact with the church when they were between five and nine years old (CM11), and 58% from the age to ten up (CM12). 72% resp. 77% of those, who were volunteering two years after confirmation, had contact with the church before their confirmation time. In the t_1/t_2 -sample, these values were considerably lower (40% resp. 38%).

The adolescents were asked »How interested are your parents in religion?« (CJ01). 27% of the adolescents describe their parents as very or quite interested, among the volunteers the share is 44% (t_1/t_2 -sample: 23%). 46% of the adolescents report, that there was at least sometimes an evening prayer (CJ02), and 62% of the volunteers can tell this. In comparison with the t_1/t_2 -sample, the percentage is higher (34%).

33% of the boys and girls state that at least one of their parents is volunteering (CP17: »Are your parents active as volunteers?«), within the group of volunteers this share is 46%. The t_1/t_2 -sample consists of 26% of adolescents with voluntary engaged parents.

47% of the adolescents (t_1/t_2 : 41%) live in the countryside, 24% (t_1/t_2 : 26%) in an urban context. Among the volunteers, the distribution is almost similar (46% resp. 25%). A clear distinction was not possible for the remaining adolescents.

The differences in the composition of the t_1/t_2 -sample and the $t_1/t_2/t_3$ -sample show that the fully matched sample cannot be looked at as representative.

6. Comparisons

The earlier studies on confirmation work were designed as international comparative studies. This was one of the reasons why the samples in the participating countries had to be representative for t_1 and t_2 . The present study follows a different logic. It was designed as a longitudinal study based on the samples from the study carried out in 2012/2013. As described above, this implies that the samples in the countries are not representative because they only comprise those adolescents who were willing to participate. Moreover, the adolescents had to be contacted individually because there is no program in which all of them would take part two years after confirmation. In working with the data one has to keep in mind that international comparisons must not claim representativeness on such a data basis.

The most interesting comparisons in the present study refer to the developments or changes between the beginning of confirmation time, the end of confirmation time and two years after confirmation. In this respect, the data offer a very solid basis because they allow for data analysis and interpretation both at the group level and at the individual level. It is one of the innovative results of the present study that it could be shown that results can be quite different at these levels. Not surprisingly (but often not documented or included in earlier survey studies), not all individuals follow the pattern of the group. This result is also of special interest in respect to education because it can be interpreted as showing, at least among others, the influence of religious education.

The number of volunteers in the study is, of course, much lower than the total number of the adolescents who completed the general questionnaire in t_3 . This is also not surprising because the adolescents who become volunteers, are only one part of the whole group. For interpretation and analysis of the data this has a number of important implications. In some of the countries the number of volunteers in the study is too low for further analysis. Comparisons on a country-level are only possible for two of the countries, Germany and Switzerland (for these comparisons see p. 108 ff.).

7. Indexes

Indexes are computed in order to facilitate analyses and comparisons and to improve the validity of interpretations. The present indexes were created by using factor analysis (Varimax with rotation). They are computed as the mean values of all the items enclosed in the index. Only indexes with Cronbach Alpha > 0.7 for the whole dataset and additionally with Cronbach Alpha > 0.6 in each of the participating countries were used. The index-name starts with an »i«, followed by two letters indicating the relevant item-section and a number (e.g., iCB1). The complete list of all indexes is given below. The overall Cronbach Alpha is stated in brackets. Cronbach Alpha for the individual countries is reported in Table 60. The results of the indexes of each country are printed in the appendix (p. 262 ff.).

iQP1: Number of volunteer activities (t_3) (based on QP74-QP81)

- QP74: sports
- QP75: music
- QP76: school (e.g., as a spokesperson for the class)
- QP77: confirmation work
- QP78: Sunday school
- QP79: Christian youth work
- QP80: other youth work
- QP81: another field

iCB1: Faith-related motives (t_1) (0.79)

- CB01: to learn more about God and faith.
- CB03: to come to my own decision about my faith in God.
- CB08: to be strengthened in my faith.

iKB1: Experience of growth in faith (t_1) (0.72)

- KB01: I have learnt more about God and faith.
- KB03: I have been enabled to come to my own decision about my faith.
- KB08: I have been strengthened in my faith.

iCE1: Christian beliefs (t_1) (0.88)

- CE01: God created the world.
- CE02: There is life after death.
- CE03: God loves all humans and cares about each one of us.
- CE04: Jesus has risen from the dead.

- CE08: Faith in God helps me in difficult situations.
- CE09: I believe in God.

iKE1: Christian beliefs (t_2) (0.89)

- KE01: God created the world.
- KE02: There is life after death.
- KE03: God loves all humans and cares about each one of us.
- KE04: Jesus has risen from the dead.
- KE08: Faith in God helps me in difficult situations.
- KE09: I believe in God.

iCL2: Interest in the Christian tradition (t_1) (0.90)

- CL01: Baptism
- CL02: The Lord's Supper
- CL03: Course and meaning of Sunday services
- CL04: Your own parish
- CL05: Jesus Christ
- CL06: The Bible
- CL22: God
- CL24: Resurrection

iKL2: Interest in the Christian tradition (t_2) (0.90)

- KL01: Baptism
- KL02: The Lord's Supper
- KL03: Course and meaning of Sunday services
- KL04: Your own parish
- KL05: Jesus Christ
- KL06: The Bible
- KL22: God
- KL24: Resurrection

iKN3: Satisfaction (t_2) (0.88)

- KN01: the whole confirmation time
- KN03: content/topics of lessons in confirmation work
- KN07: minister/person primarily responsible for confirmation work
- KN08: other teachers/workers
- KN10: church services
- KN11: camp(s)
- KN14: music, songs and singing
- KN20: working methods (for example, working with biblical texts, group work, etc.)

iKS1: Experiences with Church services (t_2) (0.79)

- KS01: I experienced forms of worship adequate for young people (e. g., youth services).
- KS05: I listened to interesting sermons.
- KS12: Singing old church hymns was nice for me.
- KS13: Singing modern church songs was nice for me.
- KS14: The services usually dealt with things that concern me and my life.
- KS16: I liked being part of the worship community.

iKS2: Sense of security and well-being in the group during services (t_2) (0.71)

- KS04: I met nice people.
- KS15: I felt secure in the group.
- KS16: I liked being part of the worship community.

iWA1: Importance of Christian tradition (t_1) (0.76)

- WA03: Baptism
- WA04: The Lord's supper
- WA07: Jesus Christ

iWB1: Faith-related aims (t_1) (0.82)

- WB10: get to know other people to whom faith is important.
- WB20: experience the presence of God.
- WC02: be strengthened in their faith.
- WC11: learn to live their everyday life in relationship to God.

iWB2: Aim of focusing services (t_1) (0.81)

- WB30: meet nice people in the services.
- WB31: feel secure and accepted in the group in the services.
- WB32: get orientation for their daily life.
- WB33: experience a friendly atmosphere in the services.
- WB34: get acquainted with the liturgy.
- WB04: experience forms of worship adequate for young people.
- WB28: be given the opportunity to contribute their own ideas to the preparation of a service.
- WB29: have tasks in the services (for example, do a reading).

iWP1: Encouraging voluntary work (t_1) (0.79)

- WP11: get to know young people working in the church as volunteers.
- WP12: get to know parts, programs and tasks in the church where they can work as volunteers.
- WP13: be won for continuing as voluntary workers in the church.

iVB1: Workers' positive experiences with the community in the services (t_2) (0.78)

- VB30: I met nice people.
- VB40: I liked the feeling of being a community.
- VB41: I felt secure in the group.

iVP1

Workers' responsibility for church and society (t_2) (0.76)

- VP37: I want to take part in shaping the church.
- VP39: I want to improve confirmation work.
- VP40: I can change my part of society with my commitment.

iVP2: Workers' feeling of fulfillment in confirmation work (t_2) (0.73)

- VP32: It is fun.
- VP35: I like working with children and adolescents.
- VP45: I like working together with the other workers in the confirmation work team.
- VP46: I like working together with the mainly responsible person for confirmation work (e.g., the minister, deacon, etc.).

iVP3

Workers' perceived impact in confirmation work (t_2) (0.85)

- VP55: I had enough opportunities to realise my own ideas.
- VP56: I had enough opportunities to put my talents and skills to use.
- VP58: I was involved in the conceptualisation of the confirmation training.
- VP61: I have experienced that I can make a difference with my commitment.
- VP62: I carried out meaningful tasks.

Table 60: Cronbach Alpha for all indexes for all countries

Cronbachs Alpha Index	Total	DE	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	EmK
iCB1: Faith-related motives (t ₁)	0.79	0.79	0.76	0.79	0.65	0.85	0.77	0.78	0.75
iKB1: Experience of growth in faith (t ₂)	0.72	0.77	0.76	0.77	0.78	0.63	0.65	0.61	0.80
iCE1: Christian beliefs (t ₁)	0.88	0.85	0.84	0.87	0.81	0.94	0.89	0.87	0.83
iKE1: Christian beliefs (t ₂)	0.89	0.88	0.90	0.90	0.86	0.94	0.87	0.92	0.90
iCL2: Interest in the Christian tradition (t ₁)	0.90	0.86	0.86	x	0.88	0.94	0.90	0.92	0.85
iKL2: Interest in the Christian tradition (t ₂)	0.90	0.88	0.84	0.89	0.89	0.92	0.89	0.92	0.87
iKN3: Satisfaction	0.88	0.87	0.89	0.87	0.75	0.90	0.89	0.83	0.89
iKS1: Experiences with church services	0.79	0.77	0.67	0.80	0.80	0.85	0.78	0.78	0.79
iKS2: Sense of security and well-being in the group during services	0.71	0.71	0.68	0.70	0.63	0.71	0.72	0.71	0.68
iWA1: Importance of Christian tradition	0.76	0.67	0.64	0.71	0.78	0.81	0.74	0.81	0.65
iWB1: Faith-related aims	0.82	0.77	0.78	0.74	0.78	0.86	0.73	0.86	0.66
iWB2: Aim of focusing services	0.81	0.79	0.82	0.77	0.72	0.86	0.76	0.80	0.74
iWP1: Encouraging voluntary work	0.79	0.74	0.75	x	0.88	0.83	0.75	0.74	0.75
iVB1: Workers' positive experiences with the community in the services	0.78	0.78	0.73	0.85	x	0.77	0.85	0.82	0.83
iVP1: Workers' responsibility for church and society	0.76	0.73	0.64	0.60	x	0.82	0.62	0.81	0.86
iVP2: Workers' feeling of fulfillment in confirmation work	0.73	0.67	0.66	0.69	x	0.82	0.80	0.71	0.86
iVP3: Workers' perceived impact in confirmation work	0.85	0.84	0.82	0.84	x	0.89	0.88	0.84	0.86

Appendix

VI. Appendix

CA/CB: I take part in confirmation time ... // KB/QB: During my confirmation time ... (1=not applicable at all; 7=totally applicable)	N	M	SD	Total	DE EKD	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE EKD	Yes Total	DE EKD	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE EKD	EmK
CA01 because my friends did so as well.	3051	3.14	1.87	3.28	3.04	3.30	1.99	3.36	2.98	3.70	2.72	26%	28%	22%	32%	5%	33%	22%	36%	17%		
CA03 because it has always been like that in my family.	3036	4.23	2.03	4.10	4.32	4.63	4.08	4.30	4.91	4.17	4.03	48%	45%	52%	58%	46%	49%	60%	45%	42%		
CA04 because I was baptised when I was a child.	3029	4.62	2.10	4.54	4.57	4.44	4.43	4.83	4.94	4.89	3.38	57%	55%	53%	54%	54%	61%	62%	62%	35%		
CA05 because I felt obliged to take part.	3037	2.23	1.78	1.71	2.20	2.07	2.69	3.64	3.32	1.68	1.75	14%	7%	17%	10%	18%	33%	29%	8%	6%		
CA06 because my family wanted me to do so.	3016	3.08	1.98	2.82	3.61	3.01	2.81	4.02	3.42	3.42	3.24	26%	21%	35%	24%	22%	48%	33%	26%	24%		
CA08 because I have been told that confirmation time is fun.	3040	3.92	2.00	3.91	4.22	3.62	2.56	5.30	2.75	5.45	3.95	41%	40%	51%	33%	11%	75%	18%	74%	41%		
CA11 because I wanted it myself.	3049	5.76	1.56	5.60	5.38	5.16	6.19	5.88	5.96	6.11	5.80	81%	77%	73%	69%	88%	85%	86%	88%	82%		
CB01 to learn more about God and faith.	3032	4.27	1.82	4.42	3.65	3.64	4.94	3.08	4.21	4.51	5.56	48%	52%	36%	33%	61%	18%	46%	55%	79%		
KB01 I have learned more about God and faith.	3032	5.51	1.35	5.34	5.23	4.88	5.71	5.91	5.79	5.83	5.47	79%	75%	73%	65%	88%	90%	84%	82%	79%		
QB01 I learned more about God and faith.	3032	5.31	1.60	5.54	5.51	3.45	5.54	4.61	5.56	5.24	5.91	75%	80%	80%	34%	80%	62%	79%	73%	89%		

CA/CB: I take part in confirmation time ... // KB/QB: During my confirmation time ... (<i>t=not applicable at all; 7=totally applicable</i>)	DE EKD							SE EmK							DE EKD							SE EmK										
	DE	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	Total	DE	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	Total	DE	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	Total	DE	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	Total
CB02 to experience community in the confirmation group.	4.31	4.14	4.25	4.11	4.10	4.54	5.31	4.74	48%	48%	48%	41%	39%	51%	72%	60%	48%	48%	48%	41%	39%	51%	72%	60%	48%	48%	48%	41%	39%	51%	72%	60%
KB02 I have experienced good community in the confirmation group.	5.44	5.47	5.58	5.70	5.84	5.90	6.25	5.82	81%	78%	79%	84%	83%	85%	88%	85%	81%	78%	79%	84%	83%	85%	88%	85%	78%	79%	84%	83%	85%	88%	85%	
CB03 to come to my own decision about my faith in God.	4.54	4.25	4.24	4.34	3.87	3.77	4.52	5.02	49%	54%	51%	49%	52%	38%	34%	51%	49%	54%	51%	49%	52%	38%	34%	51%	54%	51%	49%	52%	38%	34%	51%	
KB03 I have been enabled to come to my own decision about my faith.	5.20	5.30	4.98	5.28	5.94	5.33	5.25	5.27	73%	70%	69%	68%	71%	84%	77%	70%	73%	70%	69%	68%	71%	84%	77%	70%	70%	69%	68%	71%	84%	77%	70%	
CB04 to make an important step in growing up.	3.83	4.04	3.76	3.99	4.25	4.10	3.21	3.84	40%	40%	44%	39%	46%	43%	44%	24%	40%	40%	44%	39%	46%	43%	44%	24%	40%	44%	39%	46%	43%	44%	24%	
KB04 I have made an important step in growing up.	4.45	4.47	4.23	4.64	5.18	x	x	4.39	56%	52%	51%	45%	59%	72%	x	x	56%	52%	51%	45%	59%	72%	x	x	52%	51%	45%	59%	72%	x	55%	
QB04 I made an important step in growing-up.	4.24	3.89	3.66	3.81	4.08	4.57	3.22	4.16	44%	47%	40%	34%	30%	47%	55%	26%	44%	47%	40%	34%	30%	47%	55%	26%	47%	40%	34%	30%	47%	55%	26%	
CB07 to think about what is good or bad for me and my life.	3.66	3.42	3.23	3.35	3.36	3.30	3.54	4.17	30%	33%	30%	26%	23%	27%	25%	31%	30%	33%	30%	26%	23%	27%	25%	31%	33%	30%	26%	23%	27%	25%	31%	
KB07 I have been thinking about what is good or bad for me and my life.	4.49	4.53	4.49	4.36	5.08	4.96	4.86	4.93	56%	53%	54%	47%	69%	63%	63%	66%	56%	53%	54%	47%	69%	63%	63%	66%	53%	54%	47%	69%	63%	63%	66%	
QB07 I was thinking about what is good or bad for me and my life.	4.49	4.60	4.07	4.14	4.04	4.59	4.35	4.79	52%	44%	46%	43%	49%	58%	47%	59%	52%	44%	46%	43%	49%	58%	47%	59%	44%	46%	43%	49%	58%	47%	59%	
CB08 to be strengthened in my faith.	4.32	4.04	3.24	4.22	3.03	3.86	3.32	5.52	41%	49%	51%	26%	42%	23%	35%	28%	41%	49%	51%	26%	42%	23%	35%	28%	49%	51%	26%	42%	23%	35%	28%	

CA/CB: I take part in confirmation time ... // KB/QB: During my confirmation time ... (<i>1=not applicable at all; 7=totally applicable</i>)	N		M		SD		DE		AT		CH		DK		FI		NO		SE		DE	
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EmK	EmK
QB11 To receive a blessing was important for me.	3004	4.22	1.82	4.57	4.17	3.71	4.52	3.44	4.04	2.91	5.47	47%	55%	52%	35%	55%	30%	39%	20%	76%	20%	76%
KB15 I have learnt more about other religions.	3046	3.41	1.79	3.63	3.30	3.74	2.92	2.93	3.20	3.73	29%	33%	30%	35%	26%	20%	19%	28%	39%	28%	39%	39%
KB17 to celebrate a festive confirmation service.	3041	5.48	1.53	5.67	5.68	5.68	5.19	5.25	4.81	5.78	75%	79%	82%	81%	72%	70%	73%	60%	81%	60%	81%	81%

What do you think about the following statements? (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable)	N				M				SD				Total	Total	DE EKD	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE EmK
	N	M	SD	Total	N	M	SD	Total	N	M	SD	Total										
CE01 God created the world.	3016	4.14	2.01	4.46	4.19	3.55	4.27	3.50	4.25	2.91	6.25	43%	48%	49%	33%	46%	29%	44%	22%	87%		
KE01 God created the world.	3016	4.15	2.01	4.36	3.90	3.40	4.34	3.60	4.53	3.16	6.04	44%	48%	38%	30%	48%	33%	53%	23%	83%		
QE01 God created the world.	3016	3.63	2.14	3.85	3.51	3.21	3.86	3.15	3.91	2.30	5.97	34%	39%	32%	28%	35%	30%	37%	10%	83%		
CE02 There is life after death.	2988	4.72	1.91	4.77	4.79	4.79	5.30	3.96	4.68	4.72	5.82	56%	58%	59%	56%	68%	44%	51%	57%	79%		
KE02 There is life after death.	2988	4.93	1.83	5.04	4.98	4.84	5.15	4.28	4.92	4.91	5.96	60%	64%	63%	60%	63%	41%	60%	59%	81%		
QE02 There is life after death.	2988	4.99	1.87	5.18	4.89	4.92	5.12	4.21	5.07	4.72	6.18	63%	67%	61%	60%	69%	48%	64%	54%	86%		
CE03 God loves all humans and cares about each one of us.	3005	5.29	1.77	5.45	5.51	4.74	5.56	4.65	5.51	4.74	6.51	71%	74%	70%	57%	80%	58%	73%	59%	94%		
KE03 God loves all humans and cares about each one of us.	3005	5.35	1.73	5.40	5.30	4.72	5.77	4.85	5.72	5.13	6.38	71%	73%	71%	58%	80%	61%	76%	64%	91%		
QE03 God loves all humans and cares about each one of us.	3005	4.99	1.98	5.10	4.74	4.59	5.40	4.38	5.32	4.43	6.18	63%	65%	59%	55%	69%	53%	70%	49%	88%		
CE04 Jesus has risen from the dead.	2969	4.50	1.99	4.82	4.77	3.99	4.56	3.80	4.55	3.49	6.31	51%	57%	58%	40%	52%	37%	54%	33%	91%		
KE04 Jesus has risen from the dead.	2969	4.64	1.93	4.87	4.56	3.89	4.78	4.05	4.93	3.71	6.23	53%	59%	54%	38%	50%	38%	61%	39%	86%		
QE04 Jesus has risen from the dead.	2969	4.08	2.08	4.47	4.13	3.66	4.15	3.34	4.13	2.57	6.16	42%	51%	50%	31%	43%	25%	39%	13%	85%		
CE05 I am insecure what I should believe.	2979	3.60	2.05	3.45	3.56	3.78	3.67	3.47	3.89	4.34	2.58	34%	31%	36%	36%	36%	29%	38%	49%	17%		
KE05 I am insecure what I should believe.	2979	3.61	2.07	3.42	3.64	3.81	3.48	3.91	3.83	4.33	3.20	34%	31%	36%	39%	33%	40%	37%	45%	28%		
QE05 I am insecure what I should believe.	2979	3.64	2.11	3.49	3.87	3.62	3.58	3.72	4.05	4.21	3.13	35%	33%	43%	36%	33%	33%	33%	42%	45%	25%	
CE08 Faith in God helps me in difficult situations.	2992	4.06	1.96	4.38	3.88	3.83	4.22	3.36	3.97	2.85	5.85	43%	50%	42%	41%	44%	27%	40%	19%	82%		

What do you think about the following statements? (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable)	N	M	SD	EKD										Yes Total	DE EmK	SE	DE EmK			
				DE	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE	EmK								
KE08 Faith in God helps me in difficult situations.	2992	4.38	2.00	4.61	4.21	3.89	4.38	4.01	4.33	3.67	5.66	51%	55%	52%	43%	54%	41%	50%	37%	81%
QE08 Faith in God helps me in difficult situations.	2992	3.93	2.13	4.16	3.90	3.71	4.15	3.26	3.95	3.21	5.37	44%	47%	48%	40%	50%	32%	49%	27%	75%
CE09 I believe in God.	2967	5.15	1.87	5.57	5.32	4.64	5.54	4.00	5.02	3.73	6.46	66%	75%	73%	54%	75%	44%	59%	34%	93%
KE09 I believe in God.	2967	5.25	1.83	5.55	5.39	4.62	5.91	4.19	5.17	4.05	6.40	68%	74%	72%	56%	84%	47%	64%	46%	92%
QE09 I believe in God.	2967	4.79	2.04	5.18	4.63	4.36	5.02	3.73	4.88	3.38	6.20	60%	67%	55%	49%	65%	44%	60%	30%	86%
CE10 I know what the Christian faith entails.	3006	4.73	1.55	4.83	4.49	4.47	4.64	4.56	4.96	4.23	5.13	56%	60%	57%	50%	52%	51%	62%	43%	65%
KE10 I know what the Christian faith entails.	3006	5.23	1.45	5.20	5.29	4.68	5.57	5.30	5.24	5.08	5.35	71%	70%	72%	59%	78%	73%	71%	68%	76%
QE10 I know what the Christian faith entails.	3006	5.50	1.34	5.47	5.58	4.99	5.64	5.41	5.92	5.36	5.45	80%	78%	78%	65%	89%	82%	85%	77%	80%
QE14 I am satisfied with my life.	3055	5.73	1.36	5.72	5.80	5.90	5.80	5.76	5.83	5.43	5.55	83%	83%	84%	87%	87%	86%	84%	72%	75%

	N Total	M Total	SD Total	DE EKD										Yes Total	DE EKD									
				AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE EmK	AT	CH	DK		FI	NO	SE	DE EmK						
CF01 How would you describe your current attitude towards the Christian faith in general?	2858	3.82	0.76	3.92	3.99	3.80	3.88	3.59	3.86	3.45	4.31	71%	75%	78%	67%	60%	71%	49%	89%					
KF01 How would you describe your current attitude towards the Christian faith in general?	2858	3.95	0.77	4.01	3.97	3.85	4.09	3.73	3.96	3.72	4.29	76%	78%	70%	70%	64%	73%	65%	90%					
QF01 How would you describe your current attitude towards the Christian faith in general?	2858	3.81	0.79	3.90	3.78	3.63	3.89	3.65	3.65	3.63	4.37	67%	73%	66%	56%	55%	54%	62%	88%					
CF02 How would you describe your current attitude towards the church in general?	2837	3.87	0.74	4.01	4.31	3.76	3.62	3.65	3.76	3.79	4.36	70%	78%	89%	63%	57%	65%	69%	87%					
KF02 How would you describe your current attitude towards the church in general?	2837	3.93	0.76	4.07	4.43	3.83	3.63	3.71	3.85	3.91	4.36	74%	80%	93%	70%	67%	73%	72%	89%					
QF02 How would you describe your current attitude towards the church in general?	2837	3.80	0.78	3.94	4.27	3.68	3.52	3.71	3.56	3.82	4.21	67%	75%	88%	61%	65%	49%	61%	83%					

For these items the following answering scale was used: 1=very negative; 2=rather negative; 3=neither negative nor positive; 4=rather positive; 5=very positive

What do you think about the following statements? (1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable)	N		M		SD		DE		AT		CH		DK		FI		NO		SE		DE	
	Total	Total	Total	Total	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EmK
CG01 It is important for me to belong to the church.	3022	4.21	1.64	4.44	4.35	3.82	4.02	3.95	4.19	3.39	5.56	43%	48%	49%	37%	37%	39%	44%	22%	75%	75%	
KG01 It is important for me to belong to the church.	3022	4.45	1.63	4.55	4.49	3.96	4.45	4.34	4.63	3.93	5.37	50%	53%	54%	38%	52%	44%	55%	37%	75%	75%	
QG01 It is important for me to belong to the church.	3022	4.08	1.86	4.16	4.04	3.41	4.22	3.81	4.46	3.60	4.97	44%	45%	46%	30%	46%	44%	53%	33%	64%	64%	
CG02 The church does not have answers to the questions that are important for me.	2950	3.73	1.69	3.70	3.68	4.17	3.51	4.04	3.67	3.59	3.14	28%	30%	29%	40%	22%	28%	24%	24%	23%	23%	
KG02 The church does not have answers to the questions that are important for me.	2950	3.86	1.58	3.88	3.47	4.09	3.53	3.81	4.19	3.86	3.28	31%	32%	28%	39%	20%	24%	38%	32%	24%	24%	
QG02 The church does not have answers to the questions that are important for me.	2950	4.03	1.73	4.10	4.15	4.45	3.90	3.79	3.98	3.89	3.55	36%	38%	39%	47%	29%	29%	35%	33%	27%	27%	
CG03 If I will have children, I want to have them baptised.	2981	6.30	1.26	6.25	6.44	6.10	6.61	6.15	6.53	6.21	5.81	89%	88%	91%	84%	94%	91%	93%	86%	76%	76%	
KG03 If I will have children, I want to have them baptised.	2981	6.34	1.20	6.32	6.25	6.18	6.63	6.27	6.40	6.07	5.68	90%	89%	85%	87%	95%	92%	90%	85%	75%	75%	
QG03 If I will have children, I want to have them baptised.	2981	6.13	1.41	6.17	5.91	6.01	6.48	5.76	6.20	5.86	5.39	86%	86%	78%	84%	93%	85%	84%	79%	66%	66%	
CG04 Church services are usually boring.	2993	4.34	1.74	4.16	3.81	4.52	4.17	5.04	4.61	4.39	3.51	48%	42%	35%	51%	40%	73%	52%	51%	28%	28%	
KG04 Church services are usually boring.	2993	4.60	1.71	4.51	4.12	4.65	4.71	5.06	4.72	4.22	3.87	52%	50%	40%	54%	55%	64%	53%	42%	33%	33%	
QG04 Church services are usually boring.	2993	4.36	1.70	4.28	3.91	4.35	4.60	4.73	4.21	4.13	3.65	48%	45%	35%	46%	55%	55%	46%	44%	34%	34%	

	N		M		SD		DE										E	M		
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	EKD	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE	E	M				
KK03 I came into good personal contact with the leaders and workers.	3054	4.93	1.57	4.60	5.24	4.83	4.87	5.50	5.36	6.01	5.13	64%	55%	74%	62%	65%	79%	71%	87%	69%
CK04 to be allowed to decide about the topics together with my fellow confirmands.	3004	4.14	1.76	4.36	4.57	4.82	3.39	4.43	3.57	3.58	4.20	41%	45%	51%	62%	26%	49%	28%	26%	43%
KK04 we could influence the decisions about the topics.	3004	3.59	1.83	3.40	4.01	4.34	3.11	4.39	3.05	4.58	3.19	33%	30%	50%	51%	17%	49%	20%	59%	29%
CK05 to have a lot of fun.	3014	6.27	1.17	6.41	6.64	6.30	5.74	6.07	5.99	6.70	6.37	91%	93%	98%	93%	81%	90%	84%	97%	92%
KK05 I had a lot of fun.	3014	5.44	1.50	5.32	5.64	5.40	4.93	6.23	5.15	6.14	5.34	75%	73%	78%	78%	70%	89%	62%	90%	76%
KK10 taking part in confirmation time was stressful for me.	3045	2.72	1.65	2.86	3.10	2.77	2.36	2.30	2.99	2.58	2.81	16%	17%	27%	14%	10%	10%	25%	19%	17%
CK11 that my questions concerning faith will play a role.	2978	4.39	1.72	4.52	3.96	4.22	4.22	4.08	4.48	4.22	5.37	49%	51%	39%	45%	45%	42%	56%	46%	71%
KK11 my questions concerning faith were addressed.	2978	4.31	1.59	4.22	4.17	4.20	4.05	4.97	4.11	4.60	4.45	42%	40%	46%	42%	37%	52%	41%	50%	50%
QK20 It was one of the most important days of my life.	3064	4.38	1.73	4.54	3.96	3.98	5.16	3.69	4.45	3.37	4.88	51%	55%	41%	43%	67%	34%	56%	27%	64%
QK21 I can recommend taking part in confirmation time to others.	3053	5.93	1.42	5.95	6.00	5.50	5.80	5.80	6.25	5.99	5.70	85%	86%	88%	77%	81%	79%	89%	87%	81%
QK 23_A I felt bullied.	2394	1.28	0.92	1.31	1.37	x	1.19	1.43	1.12	1.15	1.16	3%	3%	5%	x	1%	5%	2%	2%	2%
KK32 I got to know people who really try to live their faith.	3025	4.73	1.88	4.66	4.60	4.61	4.51	4.77	5.44	4.66	5.26	57%	55%	54%	55%	52%	58%	69%	56%	70%

	N		M		SD		Total		DE	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE				
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EmK				
KK55 I have learnt to respect other religions that are different from mine.	3030	4.74	1.78	4.66	4.73	4.68	4.84	4.59	5.20	4.89	4.63	57%	56%	61%	55%	54%	56%	64%	60%	57%
KK26 I temporarily worked in programs of the church (e.g., in an internship).	3023	3.54	2.35	3.60	3.10	2.81	2.98	3.92	4.52	2.56	3.81	38%	40%	33%	25%	27%	41%	54%	22%	42%
KK56 I made new friends within the group.	3043	4.76	2.15	4.79	5.26	3.89	3.64	5.66	4.46	5.78	5.00	59%	61%	71%	40%	35%	78%	48%	76%	63%
KK57 I was given the chance to try out voluntary work.	3026	3.66	2.16	3.70	3.88	3.15	4.07	3.10	4.40	2.85	3.68	36%	38%	44%	28%	43%	24%	47%	22%	39%
KK58 we discussed the importance of voluntary work for church and society.	2383	4.10	1.91	4.23	4.38	x	3.37	4.61	4.34	3.06	4.01	44%	45%	51%	x	27%	63%	48%	25%	46%
KK35 What I learnt in confirmation training has little to do with my everyday life.	3058	4.23	1.66	4.27	4.27	4.46	4.27	4.15	4.11	3.98	3.75	41%	42%	45%	50%	43%	39%	35%	37%	30%
KK44 I have experienced that my commitment to other people is important.	3051	5.00	1.47	4.96	4.88	4.67	4.51	5.37	5.53	4.93	5.14	64%	64%	67%	58%	49%	76%	74%	58%	71%
KK45 I have become (more) conscious of my responsibility for ecological problems.	3010	4.04	1.73	4.00	3.94	4.10	3.65	4.39	4.71	3.42	3.99	40%	40%	34%	41%	33%	44%	59%	26%	42%
KK41 I would prefer being confirmed without the confirmation time beforehand.	3029	3.08	2.03	3.36	2.83	3.42	2.57	2.45	3.27	2.46	3.19	25%	31%	24%	31%	15%	13%	26%	10%	28%
KK37 In our parish I feel welcome and accepted.	3044	5.56	1.42	5.32	5.76	5.32	5.82	5.78	5.86	6.26	5.90	76%	71%	80%	71%	77%	85%	85%	86%	83%

How about your interest in these topics? (1 = not interested, 7 = very interested)	N	M	SD	DE EKD										Yes Total	DE EKD	SE	NO	FI	DK	CH	AT	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE EKD
				DE EKD	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE EKD	AT	CH													
CL01 Baptism	3044	4.65	1.54	4.79	4.78	4.73	4.89	3.93	4.68	4.41	4.84	54%	56%	53%	59%	63%	33%	55%	47%	62%						
KL01 Baptism	3044	4.91	1.48	4.91	4.91	4.74	5.52	4.70	4.85	4.53	4.98	63%	62%	63%	60%	82%	61%	56%	50%	63%						
CL02 The Lord's Supper	3025	4.21	1.65	4.50	4.41	3.80	3.83	3.86	3.75	4.05	4.97	42%	51%	49%	34%	29%	30%	33%	39%	63%						
KL02 The Lord's Supper	3025	4.46	1.62	4.57	4.84	3.88	4.55	4.35	4.32	4.14	4.76	50%	53%	60%	36%	55%	51%	44%	35%	59%						
CL03 Course and meaning of Sunday services	3021	3.76	1.61	4.01	4.39	3.58	3.83	3.06	3.40	3.46	4.47	32%	38%	46%	29%	34%	18%	22%	22%	48%						
KL03 Course and meaning of Sunday services	3021	3.99	1.56	4.05	4.27	3.68	4.48	3.49	4.00	3.75	4.58	36%	38%	45%	32%	44%	25%	35%	30%	55%						
CL04 Your own parish	3007	4.08	1.64	4.25	4.04	3.66	4.43	3.62	3.94	3.40	4.89	38%	43%	43%	31%	41%	29%	37%	21%	60%						
KL04 Your own parish	3007	4.47	1.57	4.55	4.44	3.90	4.72	4.23	4.62	4.11	5.13	50%	52%	46%	35%	54%	44%	52%	40%	72%						
CL05 Jesus Christ	3021	4.62	1.76	4.97	4.82	4.11	5.06	3.53	4.34	3.87	6.07	54%	63%	59%	42%	64%	28%	46%	36%	89%						
KL05 Jesus Christ	3021	4.90	1.63	5.11	5.05	4.44	5.57	3.89	4.77	4.51	6.07	62%	67%	62%	53%	77%	40%	61%	47%	86%						
CL06 The Bible	3029	4.11	1.78	4.37	4.22	3.61	4.63	3.22	3.69	3.67	5.71	42%	48%	45%	34%	56%	18%	34%	36%	82%						
KL06 The Bible	3029	4.41	1.64	4.50	4.66	3.99	4.91	3.89	4.29	4.20	5.51	49%	50%	56%	40%	61%	40%	50%	40%	75%						
CL07 Other religions	3020	4.03	1.89	4.17	4.00	4.59	3.79	3.80	3.82	3.69	4.73	41%	46%	39%	55%	37%	35%	34%	30%	59%						
KL07 Other religions	3020	4.56	1.75	4.56	4.63	4.77	4.90	4.29	4.35	4.62	4.96	54%	53%	49%	60%	65%	46%	50%	56%	66%						
CL08 Justice and responsibility for others	3015	4.98	1.58	4.99	4.96	4.91	5.11	4.57	5.47	4.82	5.22	63%	64%	66%	61%	64%	52%	73%	60%	76%						
KL08 Justice and responsibility for others	3015	5.43	1.40	5.28	5.66	5.15	5.88	5.38	5.86	5.51	5.49	75%	72%	80%	69%	84%	75%	80%	80%	77%						
CL09 Friendship	3036	5.90	1.37	5.86	5.88	5.81	6.13	5.56	6.30	5.91	6.07	84%	83%	81%	84%	89%	78%	90%	85%	89%						
KL09 Friendship	3036	6.12	1.23	6.00	6.38	5.77	6.49	6.18	6.26	6.31	6.21	88%	86%	95%	85%	95%	91%	87%	93%	91%						
CL10 Drug abuse and criminal behaviour	3041	4.16	2.11	4.16	3.91	4.80	4.06	4.17	4.12	3.97	4.17	48%	49%	44%	62%	41%	45%	50%	45%	51%						
KL11 The meaning of life	3003	5.22	1.72	5.22	5.13	5.09	5.62	4.96	5.40	4.89	5.55	68%	69%	64%	69%	73%	64%	69%	63%	78%						
KL11 The meaning of life	3003	5.63	1.47	5.56	5.92	5.35	5.90	5.50	5.80	5.85	5.83	78%	77%	87%	74%	85%	76%	79%	80%	83%						

How about your interest in these topics? (1 = not interested; 7 = very interested)	N		M		SD		DE		AT		CH		DK		FI		NO		SE		DE	
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	Emk
CL12 Love and sexuality	2976	4.11	1.97	3.74	3.68	4.18	4.64	4.19	5.13	4.47	3.64	36%	36%	43%	51%	40%	64%	49%	35%	35%	35%	35%
KL12 Love and sexuality	2327	4.90	1.76	4.50	4.79	x	5.46	5.42	5.54	5.25	4.49	61%	52%	59%	x	78%	69%	69%	53%	53%	53%	53%
CL14 Magic, esoterics, supernatural experiences	3032	4.06	2.10	3.93	4.20	4.07	4.08	4.48	4.23	4.01	3.97	43%	41%	47%	44%	46%	51%	44%	38%	41%	41%	41%
CL15 Other Christian denominations (e.g., Catholics)	3047	3.68	1.81	3.85	3.48	3.93	3.52	3.45	3.29	3.43	4.53	33%	38%	30%	41%	26%	25%	23%	30%	52%	52%	52%
CL16 Care of the environment/ecology	2387	3.95	1.90	3.80	3.89	x	4.02	4.34	4.13	4.04	4.46	39%	37%	44%	x	37%	45%	40%	39%	54%	54%	54%
CL21 The social mission of the church	3053	4.29	1.77	4.78	4.83	4.14	3.60	3.45	3.57	4.16	5.30	46%	59%	61%	42%	28%	26%	22%	45%	75%	75%	75%
CL22 God	2366	4.98	1.82	5.36	5.02	x	5.37	3.73	4.64	4.02	6.30	64%	73%	65%	x	77%	31%	54%	41%	90%	90%	90%
KL22 God	3022	5.22	1.66	5.46	5.44	4.87	5.80	4.04	5.04	4.89	6.14	69%	75%	72%	64%	80%	45%	63%	63%	88%	88%	88%
CL23 Death	3049	4.75	1.92	4.86	4.52	5.00	4.62	4.43	4.58	4.78	5.16	59%	61%	51%	66%	60%	50%	56%	57%	69%	69%	69%
CL24 Resurrection	2978	4.14	1.85	4.40	3.70	3.58	4.38	3.44	4.11	3.63	5.60	42%	48%	33%	30%	38%	26%	41%	30%	76%	76%	76%
KL24 Resurrection	2978	4.47	1.74	4.63	4.59	3.95	5.00	3.82	4.55	4.09	5.48	51%	55%	54%	39%	62%	34%	51%	45%	75%	75%	75%
CL25 Angels	2388	4.07	1.92	4.22	4.20	x	4.04	3.72	3.98	3.72	5.01	42%	46%	43%	x	37%	33%	40%	33%	63%	63%	63%

To what extent are you satisfied with ... (1 = not satisfied at all; 7 = totally satisfied)	N		M		SD		DE EKD		AT CH DK FI NO SE DE EKD		Yes Total		DE EKD		SE DE EmK					
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EmK			
KN01 the whole confirmation time	3022	5.60	1.22	5.49	5.83	5.35	5.28	6.10	5.69	6.05	5.38	82%	81%	85%	81%	70%	90%	85%	93%	76%
KN03 content/topics of lessons in confirmation work	3053	5.07	1.18	4.91	5.23	4.89	5.10	5.21	5.46	5.62	5.13	70%	65%	77%	69%	75%	78%	73%	85%	74%
KN20 working methods (for example, working with biblical texts, group work, etc.)	3046	4.92	1.30	4.81	5.05	4.86	4.85	5.36	4.86	5.22	4.95	65%	62%	71%	65%	67%	75%	59%	71%	63%
KN07 minister/person primarily responsible for confirmation work	3053	5.75	1.43	5.58	6.22	5.70	5.52	5.96	6.16	6.39	5.90	83%	78%	89%	83%	83%	88%	93%	94%	86%
KN08 other teachers/workers	2739	5.62	1.39	5.48	6.04	5.44	5.14	6.20	5.56	6.26	5.45	81%	79%	92%	80%	63%	93%	81%	94%	79%
KN10 church services	3017	4.99	1.34	4.77	5.36	4.72	5.09	5.43	5.37	5.32	5.16	67%	62%	77%	61%	67%	81%	75%	75%	74%
KN14 music, songs and singing	2883	5.10	1.52	4.80	5.22	4.74	5.29	5.90	5.20	5.66	5.05	68%	61%	68%	63%	73%	86%	67%	82%	66%
KN11 camp(s)	2799	5.87	1.45	5.63	5.91	6.00	5.72	6.40	6.17	6.31	5.72	83%	79%	84%	87%	81%	94%	90%	90%	81%
QN01 I am satisfied with my confirmation time.	3022	5.86	1.37	5.91	5.99	5.66	5.83	5.41	6.14	5.96	5.78	85%	87%	91%	83%	86%	71%	90%	85%	87%

	N		M		SD		DE		AT		CH		DK		FI		NO		SE		DE	
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EmK	EmK
CP01 I could imagine helping in the church as a volunteer after confirmation.	3010	3.24	1.80	3.32	3.32	2.96	2.81	3.67	2.97	3.12	4.67	25%	24%	20%	14%	35%	19%	27%	52%			
KP01 I can imagine working in the church as a volunteer after confirmation time (for example, in youth work or confirmation work).	3010	3.85	2.04	3.93	3.72	3.25	2.77	4.89	3.52	4.60	38%	38%	26%	17%	62%	30%	43%	56%				
CP02 I could imagine helping in other fields as a volunteer after confirmation.	3045	3.72	1.83	3.75	3.68	4.18	3.14	4.39	3.66	4.32	35%	32%	45%	23%	55%	32%	23%	43%				
CP03 The church gives young people possibilities to become a voluntary worker.	2241	4.69	1.77	4.81	4.57	x	3.84	5.19	4.46	5.24	55%	56%	x	31%	70%	50%	x	66%				
KP03 The church gives young people possibilities to become a voluntary worker.	2995	5.41	1.53	5.51	5.87	5.26	4.59	5.71	5.56	5.22	72%	76%	70%	43%	86%	72%	66%	68%				
CP04 I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself.	2384	4.99	1.70	4.81	4.83	x	4.42	5.29	5.65	5.07	64%	61%	x	52%	68%	80%	82%	69%				
QP50 I was asked to take over a task in the church.	3056	3.09	2.35	3.47	3.57	2.30	2.16	2.54	3.43	4.55	31%	43%	20%	14%	22%	34%	25%	59%				

CS: What are your wishes concerning church services? / KS: What do you think about the church services during your confirmation time? (1=not applicable at all; 7=totally applicable)	N		M		SD		DE		AT		CH		DK		FI		NO		SE		DE	
	Total	Total	Total	Total	EKD	EKD	Emk	Emk	Yes	Total	Yes	Total	Yes	Total	Yes	Total	Yes	Total	Yes	Total	Yes	Total
CS01 to experience services adequate for young people.	3010	4.92	1.71	5.27	4.98	5.27	4.20	3.95	4.49	5.44	5.61	70%	64%	70%	35%	36%	47%	73%	73%			
KS01 I experienced forms of worship adequate for young people (e.g., youth services).	3010	4.55	2.02	4.51	4.63	4.60	4.41	4.30	5.04	4.76	5.03	54%	57%	57%	52%	47%	64%	60%	61%			
CS02 to contribute my own ideas to the services.	3013	3.28	1.80	3.56	3.58	3.56	3.24	2.58	2.76	2.85	3.87	25%	36%	30%	20%	18%	14%	16%	37%			
KS02 I had the opportunity to contribute my own ideas to the services.	3013	3.30	1.87	3.36	3.76	3.18	3.05	3.85	2.65	3.24	3.65	26%	40%	27%	19%	32%	16%	26%	33%			
CS03 to have tasks in the services (for example, do a reading).	3013	3.02	1.88	3.01	3.10	2.44	3.47	2.42	3.68	2.88	3.46	23%	27%	13%	22%	13%	41%	23%	31%			
KS03 I had tasks in the services (for example, do a reading).	3013	4.36	2.30	4.30	4.83	3.33	3.59	5.03	5.45	4.11	4.18	53%	60%	36%	34%	70%	74%	48%	48%			
CS04 to meet nice people in the services.	495	3.91	2.03	3.38	3.20	2.87	x	5.12	4.00	5.14	x	40%	30%	24%	x	67%	43%	64%	x			
KS04 I met nice people.	2421	3.94	1.83	4.04	3.84	4.44	x	3.50	3.62	3.92	x	38%	40%	51%	x	33%	27%	35%	x			
CS05 to listen to interesting sermons.	2412	2.01	1.45	1.96	1.83	2.17	x	2.22	1.98	2.03	x	7%	6%	9%	x	13%	5%	10%	x			
KS05 I listened to interesting sermons.	2422	2.23	1.47	2.21	1.87	2.38	x	2.35	2.52	1.77	x	8%	3%	11%	x	5%	15%	4%	x			
CS06 It is unclear to me what one can expect from a worship service.	3009	3.58	1.80	3.24	3.23	3.39	3.82	4.36	3.89	4.12	2.91	28%	26%	25%	31%	43%	39%	41%	18%			

CS: What are your wishes concerning church services? / KS: What do you think about the church services during your confirmation time? (1=not applicable at all; 7=totally applicable)	N		M		SD		DE		AT		CH		DK		FI		NO		SE		DE	
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EmK
KS12 Singing old church hymns was nice for me.	3049	3.83	1.87	3.55	3.60	3.06	3.94	4.62	4.31	4.17	3.51	37%	31%	38%	23%	37%	57%	49%	42%	31%	42%	31%
KS13 Singing modern church songs was nice for me.	3035	4.92	1.80	5.02	4.93	4.53	4.52	4.37	5.31	5.42	6.19	63%	67%	63%	56%	54%	51%	70%	69%	89%	69%	89%
KS14 The services usually dealt with things that concern me and my life.	3042	3.95	1.62	3.92	4.26	3.77	3.98	3.76	4.21	4.15	4.39	38%	36%	48%	31%	43%	33%	48%	39%	48%	39%	48%
KS15 I felt secure in the group.	3039	5.37	1.53	5.13	5.26	5.11	5.32	5.68	5.79	6.25	5.47	71%	65%	68%	67%	70%	80%	83%	86%	73%	86%	73%
KS16 I liked being part of the worship community.	3044	4.67	1.60	4.67	5.05	4.20	4.44	4.27	5.43	4.86	5.30	54%	55%	62%	43%	48%	43%	71%	57%	68%	57%	68%
KS17 I felt uncomfortable.	3042	2.32	1.58	2.29	2.15	2.29	2.16	2.53	2.35	2.43	2.06	12%	11%	11%	10%	7%	16%	15%	14%	10%	14%	10%

Being at a church service, it is important for me ... (1 = not important at all; 7 = very important)	N		M		SD		DE EKD							Yes Total		DE EKD							SE EmK	
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	DE	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE	EmK	DE	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE	EmK
KQ06 to meet nice people	3039	4.64	1.84	4.54	4.89	4.43	4.04	4.82	4.82	5.39	5.16	5.70	55%	53%	66%	53%	37%	58%	73%	68%	82%			
KQ07 to listen to the sermon.	3036	3.72	1.73	3.61	3.79	3.52	3.70	3.43	4.26	4.42	4.36	33%	30%	36%	27%	35%	23%	48%	49%	47%				
KQ08 that I like the music.	3032	4.76	1.80	4.76	4.82	4.81	4.05	5.11	4.95	4.99	5.49	59%	59%	61%	62%	43%	65%	61%	65%	78%				
KQ09 that I like the atmosphere.	3033	5.07	1.64	5.04	5.51	5.01	4.64	5.15	5.44	5.35	5.61	67%	66%	76%	68%	54%	67%	76%	74%	77%				
KQ10 that I can pray there.	3037	4.24	1.82	4.34	3.96	3.38	4.15	4.04	4.41	4.34	5.10	44%	47%	40%	26%	43%	39%	50%	43%	67%				
KQ11 to calm down.	3028	4.79	1.76	4.67	4.59	4.23	4.77	4.82	4.96	5.76	5.15	59%	56%	58%	48%	67%	53%	63%	82%	66%				
KQ12 to feel secure in the group.	3025	4.98	1.71	4.76	4.76	4.42	4.90	5.09	5.73	5.85	5.58	62%	58%	56%	49%	60%	62%	83%	82%	77%				
KQ13 to feel as a part of the worship community.	3015	4.63	1.71	4.64	4.80	4.05	4.80	4.14	4.95	4.99	5.41	54%	55%	63%	42%	58%	37%	64%	62%	71%				
KQ14 to receive the blessing at the end.	3028	4.26	1.83	4.42	4.30	3.19	4.19	3.76	4.59	4.23	5.11	44%	49%	49%	24%	40%	32%	50%	43%	66%				
KQ15 to get through with it as soon as possible.	3030	3.88	1.91	3.66	3.40	4.49	4.09	4.49	4.08	3.57	2.83	37%	32%	28%	53%	40%	49%	44%	29%	15%				

Are you active as a volunteer in ...?	N		M		SD		DE EKD							Yes Total		DE EKD							SE EmK	
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	DE	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE	EmK	DE	AT	CH	DK	FI	NO	SE	DE	EmK
QP74 sports	3043												25%	17%	15%	68%	42%	25%	30%	27%	58%			
QP75 music	3043												12%	9%	7%	44%	17%	10%	10%	9%	58%			
QP76 school (e.g., as a spokesperson for the class)	3043												27%	28%	32%	31%	17%	30%	27%	27%	28%			
QP77 confirmation work	3043												12%	11%	9%	x	2%	28%	10%	15%	6%			
QP78 Sunday school	3043												4%	7%	6%	x	0%	0%	3%	0%	27%			
QP79 Christian youth work	3043												11%	15%	7%	x	6%	4%	12%	9%	35%			
QP80 other youth work	3043												19%	18%	15%	30%	35%	13%	17%	13%	29%			
QP81 another field	3043												8%	11%	10%	15%	1%	8%	0%	6%	16%			

I am a volunteer because ... <i>(1 = not applicable at all; 7 = totally applicable)</i>	N		M		SD		DE		AT		CH		DK		FI		NO		SE		DE		
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EKD	EmK	
QP32 it is fun.	506	6.40	0.99	6.48	6.70	6.45	x	6.46	5.86	6.07	x	97%	100%	97%	x	100%	71%	93%	x	97%	100%	97%	x
QP66 I like working together with other people.	506	6.06	1.11	6.09	6.20	6.19	x	5.79	6.64	5.93	x	97%	90%	97%	x	92%	100%	80%	x	92%	90%	97%	x
QP67 I want to contribute to a better society.	508	5.09	1.53	5.14	5.50	5.33	x	4.42	6.50	5.19	x	72%	80%	74%	x	54%	93%	75%	x	72%	80%	74%	x
QP68 I want to help young people to grow in their faith.	505	4.61	1.91	4.97	4.70	4.32	x	3.42	5.64	4.37	x	55%	60%	48%	x	29%	71%	44%	x	64%	60%	48%	x
QP69 I want to learn something that is useful in life.	505	5.68	1.38	5.54	5.90	5.66	x	5.92	6.00	5.87	x	81%	90%	86%	x	88%	79%	75%	x	81%	90%	86%	x
QP70 because of the good spirit in the team of (voluntary) workers.	504	6.11	1.17	6.21	6.30	6.26	x	5.75	6.36	6.00	x	90%	90%	96%	x	88%	86%	87%	x	92%	90%	96%	x
QP65 I want to learn more about God and faith.	502	4.47	1.98	4.79	4.50	4.46	x	3.37	5.50	4.14	x	56%	50%	56%	x	42%	79%	43%	x	60%	50%	56%	x
QP71 I want to take part in a camp.	495	4.26	2.14	3.49	3.50	3.00	x	5.67	5.57	5.79	x	49%	40%	24%	x	83%	79%	79%	x	32%	40%	24%	x
QP72 I want more of the same experiences I had as a con-firmand.	495	4.86	1.98	4.76	5.40	3.65	x	4.83	5.36	6.21	x	62%	80%	38%	x	67%	64%	86%	x	60%	80%	38%	x
QP73 doing something for others is a consequence of my faith.	493	4.34	2.00	4.74	4.70	3.81	x	3.08	5.86	3.57	x	51%	60%	40%	x	33%	86%	36%	x	57%	60%	40%	x
QP91 it's good for my CV/port-folio	495	3.91	2.03	3.38	3.20	2.87	x	5.12	4.00	5.14	x	40%	30%	24%	x	67%	43%	64%	x	29%	30%	24%	x

QP51: Are you active as a volunteer in church or Christian youth work? Yes/No/Not anymore.

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