

A COMPARISON OF TURKISH AND AMERICAN VALUE SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT.

The aim of study was to examine similarities and differences in values between Turkish and American populations. 151 Turkish respondents differing in their social stratification and residence in Turkey were drawn and the translation of Rokeach value scale's E form was administered. The American data was obtained from the published results of an American national survey which used 1409 respondents.

An overall comparison between two samples' values showed; first, two samples' «terminal» values -the goal in life- did not differ as much as they did in the means to attain these goals -instrumental values-. Second, analysis of both rank ordering of values and ranking differences of values showed differences in the value system of Turkish sample and American sample.

Differences and similarities in value systems of the two cultures were discussed with reference to certain features of Turkish and American cultures; and the Westernization process which is still in progress in Turkey.

INTRODUCTION

The present study was aimed for a cross cultural comparison of the value systems of Turks and Americans. Values are consi-

dered to be the most appropriate means for comparing two cultures. Because values are viewed to be a person's centrally located world view or «ethos» which seems to influence the person's reactions to specific objects, situations (Devos and Heppler, 1969; Rokeach 1973), and world view or «ethos» rather than being concerned with reactions to specific objects and situations as attitudes are (Devos and Heppler, 1969).

Values, according to Rokeach (1973), are single beliefs centrally located within an individual's total belief system. In the conceptualization of Rokeach, values are organized into two separate yet related systems : beliefs about an end state of existence (terminal values) and beliefs about a mode of conduct (instrumental values). Examples of terminal values involves such end states as a comfortable life, Inner Harmony, A World at Peace, and Salvation, while some instrumental values include such modes of conduct as Ambitious, Broadminded, Helpful and Honest. These values, according to Rokeach, are organized within each system along a continuum of importance. Rokeach has proposed that the relative importance of two value systems can be measured by having respondents ranking their terminal and then instrumental values in order of importance to themselves. Although Rokeach's mode of measurement of values is unique, his conceptualization of values is quite similar to those of other theorists (eg Allport, Vernon and Lindzey, 1960; Kluckhohn, 1952).

Rokeach's orientation to values and their measurements may be favoured above these other approaches for several reasons. First of all, there is a good deal of empirical support for Rokeach's contention that values, as he measures them, are important determinants of the attitudes people hold and behaviour they engage in. Rokeach (1973), for example, has shown that systematically induced changes in values yield long-term attitude changes consistent with the changed values. Other studies (Rokeach, 1971, 1973; Penner, 1971) have demonstrated long-term behavioural changes as the result of the systematic inducement of changes in the importance of selected values. A further example, Staub, (1974); Shotland and Berger, (1970) found' that, compared with the non-helper, the helper places more emphasis on hypothesized values on the Rokeach Value

Scale such as Helpful, Honesty and Salvation values. It was argued that to some extent this indicates a close relationship between behaviour and related values.

Other reasons for favouring the Rokeach Value Scale as an instrument are methodological: (a) it has been shown to be easy to administer to subjects with limited education (Rokeach, 1973), (b) it has high test/re-test reliability (Rokeach, 1973; Feather, 1971), and (c) it has been used successfully in previous cross-cultural studies (Feather and Hutton, 1974; Rim, 1970; Rokeach, 1973; Penner and Ahn, 1977); Hofstede 1983; Hofstede and Band, 1984; Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987).

In the following section we will be concentrating briefly on the relevant characteristics of Turkish society, since it is important to understand the rationale behind possible value differences between the two cultures.

To begin with, Turkey can still be classified as a developing country with respect to economical advancement, although there have been several attempts in the recent past at industrial development of the country along with some necessary social reforms. These came to a dramatic cumulation when, with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1920 under its founder, M Kemal Atatürk, Turkey became dedicated to a vast program of industrialization and Westernization¹ to be superimposed on a traditional society that was rural, non-industrialized, Islamic in culture and absolutist in political institutions (Berkes, 1964; Erdentug, 1977. Ayvalıoğlu, 1987). Secularization and Westernization of Turkish society involved introducing a series of radical reforms which ranged from bringing into use the Latin alphabet and European Civil Law in attempts to separate religion from political affairs (two aspects formerly integrated) and the establishment of a Western-modelled parlia-

1 Westernization is expressed by the concept of 'Medeniyet' (in Turkish language) which was defined and understood as placing paramount emphasis on science and technology as it exists in developed modern western cultures (see Turhan Müntaz (1963) 'Where are we in Westernization?' Yağmur yayınevi, Istanbul; Gökalp, Ziya 1959 (1911-1923): 'Turkish nationalism and Western civilization'. Selected essays, translated and edited by Niyazi Berkes, New York, Columbia University Press.

mentary system in 1946 (a multi-party political system). This Westernization and modernization process is still in progress (Berkes, 1964; Abadan, 1963).

The other prominent influence on Turkish culture comes from the Islamic religion (Mardin, 1977). Besides being a religion, Islam supplies a set of guidelines as to how a person's life should be conducted. Certain virtues in a man are emphasized in Islam, such as generosity, responsibility, obedience, trustworthiness and moderation. In addition, individuality and individual achievement are somewhat less emphasized while the individual's primary responsibility is to the family and society (Ayvalioğlu, 1987). Despite the above-mentioned fact that Turkey has been undergoing a Westernization process, the basic features of Islam, apart from some change of values in certain areas, have remained the predominant ones in Turkey (Mardin, 1977; Tezcan, 1974).

Some data on the specific values of the Turkish are available from recent studies. Among these, Frey's (1968) paper, based on the data survey of the national sample (N=6,500) conducted in 1962 under the auspices of the Government of Turkey and the USA Agency for International Development, is of prime importance. Results from this study demonstrate that a national Turkish sample Judge M Kemal Atatürk as the man who most epitomizes Turkish nationalism in all its aspects of loyalty to community and country, and this judgement followed the values of religion and loyalty to family. Further, in response to a question concerning the perceived characteristics of the Turks as a people, the Turkish sample replied 'heroism, nationalism, hospitability and religiosity'. Tezcan (1974), using a similar type of question format, has reported finding the same trend among university students in Ankara.

Frey (1968) has also argued that there are some changes and signs of the emergence of a new value system in Turkish society in the wake of the new republic : notably a high emphasis on nationalism instead of religiosity, although the latter still carries much weight especially in rural Turkey. Somewhat similar findings have been found among Turkish Lycee (high school) students (Kagıtcıbası, 1973). Besides observing a greater emphasis on patriotism among Turkish youth, she also found a high level of achievement

orientation, belief in internal control reinforcement and optimism about one's personal future. According to Kağıtçıbaşı, this finding clearly shows a desire for Westernization and modernization in Turkish society, in the present case among youth mobilized through patriotism or Kemalism.

The present study will report comparisons of Turkish and American samples on their ranking of values on the Rokeach Value Scale. In general, it was predicted in line with the proposition of Rokeach (1973) that the differences between the two groups' instrumental values would be much greater than the differences in their terminal values. This is because, according to Rokeach, the terminal values which represent an end state of existence or ultimate goal in life do not differ between cultures to the same extent as the instrumental values or the means by which they attain these goals. This should be especially applicable in a comparison between an Islamic and a non-Islamic culture. Islam, as has already been argued, places a great deal of emphasis on a particular mode of conduct as an avenue leading to an end state of existence. This proposition was evaluated in the present study between Turkey and the United States.

The review of previous work may lead us to expect particular differences in some specific values between the Turkish and American populations. For example, as we have seen, the feeling of patriotism or nationalism is highly valued as a social norm in Turkey; this observation, as indicated by Frey (1968), is similar in those nations which are newly emerging as a part of a nation-building phenomenon. This phenomenon is emphasized in such countries because it provides an impetus for an orderly of change in traditional social and economic systems. As Verba (1965) puts it (in Frey, 1968), this sense of identity allows elites to mobilize masses for the commitment of necessary changes. When these findings in Turkish society are looked at within the frameworks of the above analysis, the feeling of patriotism or nationalism in Turkey can be seen as part of efforts directed toward Westernization formulated by Atatürk and implemented all the way up to the present day. The picture in the United States seems to be quite different in this respect. Lipset (1966) asserts that the United States more than any

other modern non-communist industrial nation emphasizes, along with achievement, equalitarianism, the value of universalism. Hence, in the light of these two analysis, a difference may be expected in the importance of ranking on the value of national security on the Rokeach Value Scale; the Turkish sample more so than the United States sample may express this social norm by placing higher rank on the value of 'National Security'.

A second prediction concerning the value of 'Salvation' may be made in the light of Hofstede (1983) data. As argued earlier, in Turkish society religion - Islam - is still an important traditional institution, which highly emphasizes Salvation (Magfired). Although this value is also a central concept in the Christian teaching, Turkey's being a more traditional type of society might suggest that this value may be ranked differently by the two cultural samples. Further, the present study originally also intended to examine differences in values systems with regard to respondents' sex and educational level across the two cultures. However, the failure to collect enough data from these groups did not allow the present study to make such comparisons. The original expectations with regard to these groups (sex and educational level) were as follows: Value differences seem to exist between the two cultures' female groups with regard to certain specific values. This could be expected on the basis that American or Western women, as compared to Turkish women, have more or less equal status with men and are more concerned with equal rights and with the role of women in their society (Abadan, 1963). Although, together with the Republic, Turkish women emancipated themselves from the traditional concepts, they are still behind their Western counterparts in this respect. Thus, one may expect differences in values in such areas as ambition, equality and freedom.

With regard to education groups, it may be expected that more educated individual members of the two cultures would possess somewhat similar value systems than individuals with limited education. This prediction may be based on the fact that, as an individual progresses through the Turkish education system, he would be increasingly exposed to Western thought and values. This influence would probably manifest itself in the importance assigned

to values, especially terminal values such as 'Freedom', 'Equality', 'Ambition' and 'Broadmindedness' by a sample of highly educated Turkish subjects. Yet, as has been indicated, it was not possible for this study to be carried out on these sub-groups for such a comparison across the two cultures. However, this further comparison presents a stimulating challenge for future study.

METHOD

Overview

Form E of the Rokeach Value Scale was administered to a total of 151 Turkish respondents, while the United States data were obtained from the published results of an American national survey based on 1409 respondents (see Milton Rokeach (1973) *The Nature of Human Values*). *Turkish sample* : 151 Turkish respondents (77.7 % male and 22.8 % female) were individuals of 18 years of age and over, selected in a systematic manner and interviewed over the summer of 1978 to the winter of 1979. Respondents were drawn from as large a pool as possible so that the sample could be comparable to the USA national sample. Respondents were either residing in one of the two major cities of Turkey (Istanbul and Ankara) (52.9 %) or in one of four towns (36.4 %), located in Northern, Western and central Turkey or from a rural village (6.6 %) in Western Turkey. Respondents also differed in their socio-economic status. Distribution of the sample was as follows : the higher class or the lower higher class (business company owner), 5.3 %, the upper middle class (professionals and high ranking business or government executives), 23.8 %, the middle class (university and high school graduates), 40.8 %, the working class, 18.6 %, and peasants, 13.5 %. The sample was thus a fairly representative cross-section of Turkish society.

Procedure

Ten university students and high school teachers served as interviewers. Interviewers were trained prior to the administration of the value survey and supervised by the present author. To reach the present goal of having a fairly representative Turkish sample,

a preliminary inquiry was carried out as to where a given group of individuals could be contacted for the present survey. In fact, this activity included getting in touch with Ankara and Istanbul Trade and Commerce Chambers, and, through these organizations, the high SES individuals (eg business and company owners, executives, etc) were contacted. Later, respondents at a given location were contacted either in their place of residence or their place of occupation. First, the aim of the present study was briefly explained and then the Rokeach Value Scale was given to respondents along with explanatory instructions concerning how the questionnaire should be rated. In order to minimize reactivity effects, the value survey was left with respondents and retrieved about two days later.

The Rokeach Value Scale

The Rokeach Value Scale questionnaire use in the study consisted of two parts. In the first part, respondents gave their age, sex, place of current residence (town), nationality and occupation, along with total number of years in education. The second part of the questionnaire was a Turkish translation of form E of the Rokeach Value Scale. In Form E of the Rokeach Value Scale, respondents are presented with lists of 18 terminal values (along with defining phrases) and then 18 instrumental values (along with defining phrases). The respondents were instructed to look over the 18 terminal values and the 18 instrumental values and rank each set of values from 1 to 18, with 1 being most important and 18 least important. Re-test reliability reported by Rokeach after five weeks is $+0.74$ for the terminal values scale and $+0.70$ for the instrumental values scale.

In order to arrive at a suitable Turkish translation of the Rokeach Value Survey, the following procedure was used : three bilingual, Turkish nationals independently translated the survey into Turkish. They then met with the author and resolved any inconsistency in translation. By this method it was felt that accurate translation of the questionnaire into Turkish was reached.

RESULT :

In the analysis, in order to determine overall differences in the relative importance of the values, Spearman's nonparametric rank order correlation (Siegel, 1966) was computed between the ordering of means for the United States sample's values system and the Turkish sample's value system. Differences between the two samples for particular values were then qualitatively analysed since the published American data was not sufficiently detailed to allow any of the recommended statistical analyses (Rokeach, 1973) such as median test, t-test or discriminant analysis. An overall comparison between the Turkish and American value systems is presented in Table 6. Spearman's rank order correlation between the relative importance of the two groups' terminal value systems was $r_s = +.56, p < .01$.

As the magnitude of distance between the value rankings indicates, the largest differences occurred between the following terminal values of the two cultures: Salvation, National Security, True Friendship, Pleasure, where the Turkish sample considered these more important, and 'Self-Respect', 'A Comfortable Life', 'Wisdom', where the American sample considered these more important. However, on the remaining 12 terminal values, the two samples did not differ much, as the distance between ranks indicates (see Table 1).

The rank order correlation between the group's instrumental values system was $r_s = +.22, ns$, indicating greater dissimilarity between the two groups' instrumental values than observed with the terminal value system. Inspection of the distance between the rank of each value suggests differences in the following values: the value of 'Forgiving' and 'Self-Controlled' and 'Cheerful' were considered to be more important by the Turkish sample, while the value of 'Honest', 'Helpful', 'Loving' and 'Imaginative' were considered more important by the American sample (see Table 1).

Discussion

Differences between Turkish and American value systems

In accordance with the expectation regarding the relative similarity of terminal and instrumental value systems in the two cultures, the differences between the instrumental value systems were much greater than the differences between the terminal value systems. As has been seen, the relative size of the rank correlation for the terminal values was $r_s = +.56$, $p < .01$, and the instrumental values $r_s = +.22$, ns. Thus, in line with Rokeach (1973), although Turkish samples and American samples differed in respect to a person's goal in life, this difference was not as great as the differences in a person's beliefs about how to reach these goals.

Turning to the examination of differences in specific values between the two groups, as measured by the distance between the ranking, we can note that in general six values showed differences. 'National Security', 'Salvation' and 'True Friendship' were considered more important values by the Turkish sample, while the Americans considered that 'Self-Respect', 'A Comfortable Life' and 'Wisdom' were more important. Although the two groups did not differ much in their ranking of 'A World at Peace', the Turkish sample did place a higher value on 'National Security' than did Americans. Higher ranking of this value by the Turkish sample, unlike the earlier reported situations in Israel (Rim, 1970) and Vietnam (Penne and Anh, 1977), is not likely to result from heightened feelings as a result of the presence of a threat to these nations, and seem rather to reflect a sense of nationhood that has been stimulated by the New Turkish Republic on its founder, Ataturk.

As already seen, this phenomenon in Turkey, as Frey (1968) has remarked, is very similar to the nation building process' in currently emerging countries. It is also important to note that Turkish nationalism, which derives its essential principles from Kemalism, does not include such pathological elements as chauvenism, authoritarianism, Xenophobia, rigidity and hatred towards other nations, that are classically associated with the notion of nationalism, but rather is based on sacrifice, obligation, coordination, flexibility,

achievement and positivism (Berkes, 1959, 1964). When the rank ordering of terminal values by the Turkish sample is examined, a profile for the Turkish respondents' goals in life is revealed which may be interpreted as supporting evidence for the above analysis. For example, the high ranking by the Turkish sample of 'National Security' along with 'Family Security' and 'Salvation' were accompanied by the values of 'A World at Peace', 'Equality' and 'Freedom'. 'National Security' has thus been viewed in the context of 'A World at Peace'; further, these also seem to reveal that these ends should be reached through an egalitarian and free society.

The value of 'Salvation', as predicted, showed differences between the two samples; the Turkish sample ranked it third, while the American sample ranked it tenth. Greater importance of the value of 'Salvation' by the Turkish sample must be sought in features of Islamic religion which places greater emphasis on 'Salvation' (or in Turkish 'Magfired') as an end. This finding clearly shows us the character of Turkish society in this respect - rather traditional and religious oriented.

Finally, Paralleling Hofstede and Band's (1984) data in the three values - 'A Comfortable Life', 'Self-Respect' and 'Wisdom' - the Turkish sample differed from the American sample. The Turkish sample considered these values less important than the Americans did. According to Hofstede et al (1984) this difference might be a product of I versus We society, in that Turkey may be classified more so as «we» type (Ayvalioğlu 1987).

The best discriminator among the instrumental values was the value of 'Honesty' which the Turkish sample ranked 16th and the Americans first. This was an unexpected finding and what accounts for this variance is unclear. The other strong discriminators between the two cultures were the values of 'Self-controlled', 'Cheerful', 'Imaginative', 'Helpful', 'Loving' and 'Forgiving'. The first three values ranked higher in the Turkish than in the American sample, while 'Helpful', 'Loving' and 'Forgiving' were ranked lower by the Turkish than by the American sample.

Other interesting findings showed with regard to the Turkish sample's ranking of certain values such as 'Ambitious', 'Capable',

'Responsible' in relation to the American sample's ranking. The Turkish sample, by placing them amongst the first six rank values, considered these three values as important as their American counterparts. Again, consistent with the earlier argument, the rank ordering of these values by the Turkish sample as the most important ones may suggest a somewhat changing outlook of Turkish society - from individual achievement being less emphasized in traditional Islamic society towards Westernized society in which these values are emphasized and rewarded.

In summary, on the basis of the results obtained in this value study, the following conclusions seem warranted. First, what primarily differentiated the two samples was not so much their goal in life (terminal values) but rather the means by which these goals are sought to be attained (instrumental values). Also analysis of both rank ordering of values and ranking differences of values showed differences in the value systems of the Turkish sample and the American sample. Differences in value systems of the two cultures can be attributable to features of Turkish culture and to the fact that Islamic religion is the prevailing institution in Turkey. Yet, in a number of values, the Turkish sample was similar to their American counterparts. These values are especially the ones which, besides showing the nature of the belief system in Turkish society, also may indicate the extent to which Turkey has progressed in the Westernization process.

Table : 1

Comparison of Turkish and American value systems¹

<i>Terminal values^a</i>	Overall Turkish sample (n=151)		Overall USA sample (n=1409)	
	<i>X</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Rank</i>
A COMFORTABLE LIFE				
1. (a prosperous life)	9.37	10	9.95	5
AN EXCITING LIFE				
2. (a stimulating, active life)	10.35	13	13.94	18
A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT				
3. (lasting contribution)	10.47	14	9.44	11
A WORLD AT PEACE				
4. (free of war and conflict)	8.34	4	4.56	1
A WORLD OF BEAUTY				
5. (beauty of nature and the arts)	11.25	18	11.83	15
EQUALITY (brotherhood, equal opportunities for all)	8.45	6	8.45	7
FAMILY SECURITY				
7. (taking care of loved ones)	8.00	2	5.23	2
FREEDOM				
8. (independence, free choice)	8.50	7	6.25	3
HAPPINESS				
9. (contentedness)	8.86	8	7.95	4
INNER HARMONY				
10. (free from inner conflict)	9.16	9	10.07	13
MATURE LOVE				
11. (sexual and spiritual intimacy)	10.72	17	11.44	14
NATIONAL SECURITY				
12. (protection from attack)	7.00	1	9.15	9
PLEASURE				
13. (an enjoyable, leisurely life)	10.92	10	13.69	16
SALVATION				
14. (saved, eternal life)	8.21	3	9.16	10
SELF-RESPECT				
15. (self-esteem)	10.50	15	7.97	6
SOCIAL RECOGNITION				
16. (respect, admiration)	10.64	16	13.82	17
TRUE FRIENDSHIP				
17. (close companionship)	8.38	5	9.52	12
WISDOM				
18. (a mature understanding of life)	9.50	12	8.51	8

<i>Instrumental values^b</i>	Overall Turkish sample (n=151)		Overall USA sample (n=1409)	
	<i>X</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Rank</i>
	<hr/>			
AMBITIOUS				
1. (hard-working, aspiring)	8.77	4	7.70	3
BROADMINDED				
2. (open-minded)	9.05	8	7.97	5
CAPABLE				
3. (competent, affective)	8.94	6	9.48	9
CHEERFUL				
4. (lighthearted, joyful)	8.90	5	10.12	13
CLEAN				
5. (neat, tidy)	9.00	7	9.55	11
COURAGEOUS				
6. (standing up for your beliefs)	8.38	3	8.53	6
FORGIVING				
7. (willing to pardon others)	10.75	14	7.77	4
HELPFUL (working for the				
8. welfare of others)	11.37	17	8.83	7
HONEST				
9. (sincere, truthful)	11.25	16	4.47	1
IMAGINATIVE				
10. (daring, creative)	9.83	10	13.85	18
INDEPENDENT				
11. (self-reliant, self-sufficient)	9.90	11	9.92	12
INTELLECTUAL				
12. (intelligent, reflective)	10.50	13	11.67	15
LOGICAL				
13. (consistent, rational)	11.50	18	12.41	17
LOVING				
14. (affectionate, tender)	10.83	15	8.93	8
OBEDIENT				
15. (dutiful, respectful)	10.25	12	12.33	16
POLITE				
16. (courteous, well-mannered)	9.60	9	10.78	14
RESPONSIBLE				
17. (dependable, reliable)	7.83	2	7.07	2
SELF-CONTROLLED				
18. (restrained, self-disciplined)	5.35	1	9.54	10

1 The lower the mean value, the more important the value. For each correlation, $n = 18$.

a Spearman's rank order correlation, $r_s = +.56$, $p < .01$.

b Spearman's rank order correlation, $r_s = +.22$, ns.

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