

CULTURE - PERSONALITY CONFLICT : THE CASE OF TURKISH MIGRANTS IN GERMANY

M. Ceyhan ALDEMİR (*)

SUMMARY

The aim of this study is not only to explore the state of dominant personal values and the conflicts between current personal values and perceived societal values of Turkish youth in Turkey but also to indicate the more drastic changes and conflicts which are being experienced by Turkish migrants working in Germany. This has been done by drawing inferences of "Cultural Changes and Conflicts" model that has been improved by the author.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is not only to explore the state of dominant personal values and the conflict between current personal values and perceived societal values of Turkish youth in Turkey but also, by drawing inferences, to attempt to explain the more drastic changes and conflicts that are being experienced by Turkish migrants in Germany.

In order to achieve this rather ambitious aim, first, a background of Turkish cultural milieu will be given.

Second, a general model to understand the cultural change and conflict experienced by individuals is in order.

(*) Prof. Dr., D.E.Ü.İ.B.F., İngilizce İşletme Bölümü

Third, after applying this model to the Turkey's cultural context an attempt will also be made to indicate its implications for Turks in Germany.

Fourth, the findings of a research general and exploratory in nature will be discussed. It is being hoped that some findings have also implications for the Turkish youth living in Germany and the ones who returned.

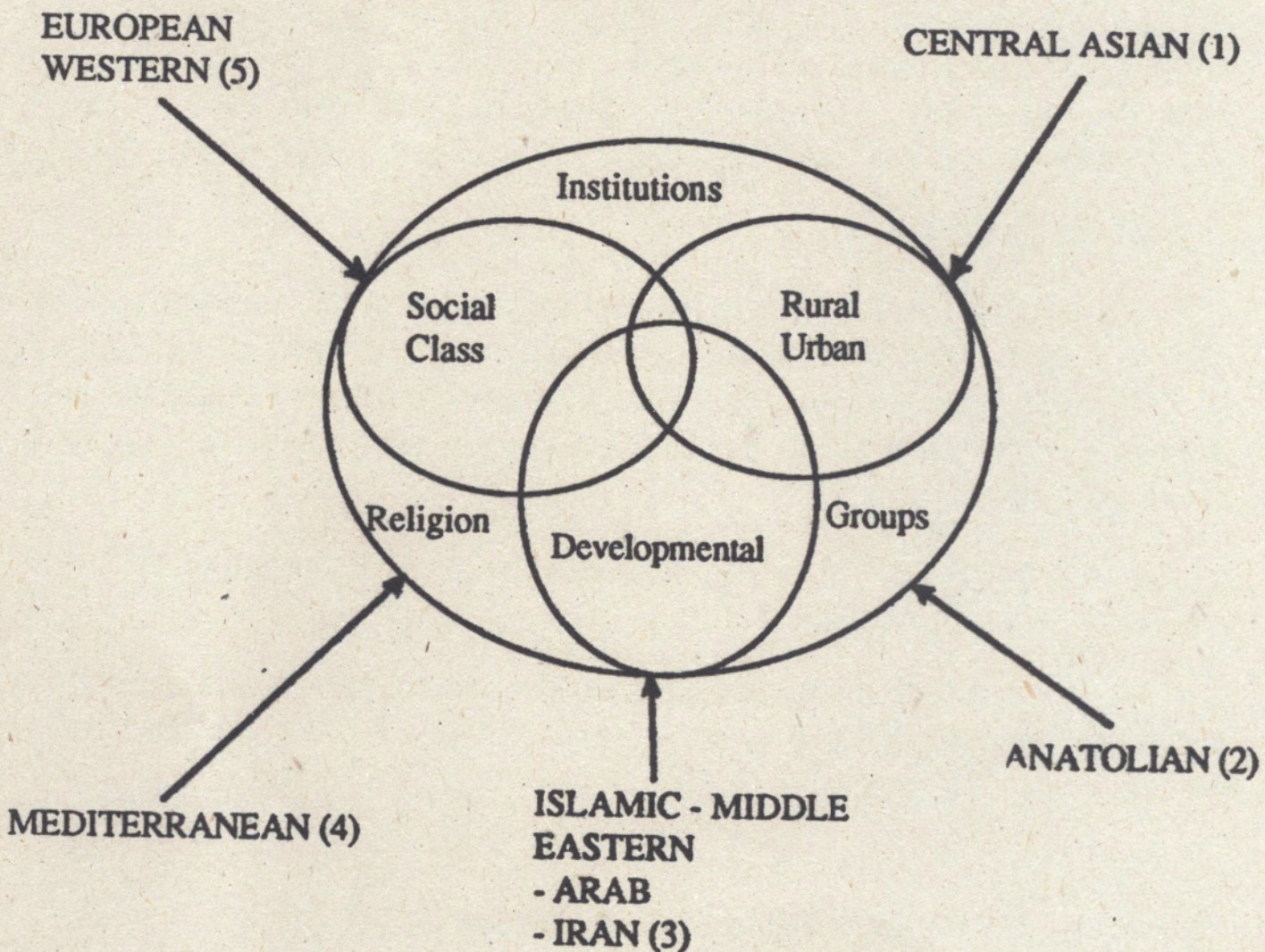
THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF TURKEY

The Turkish society under study is a highly complex, heterogeneous one with a diversity of ethnic, cultural and religious conglomeration, differentiated along social class, rural-urban and development dimensions.

Various lines of historical - cultural influence have molded this society, the main ones being :

- 1) The nomadic - Turkish,
- 2) Anatolian,
- 3) Islamic - Middle Eastern,
- 5) Mediterranean,
- 5) European- Western,

Figure - 1 : FACTORS MOLDING TURKISH SOCIETY



groups within the cultural milieu, and all of them not only interact with each other but also with the external forces, the picture definitely becomes enormously complex. Consequently, it may be assumed that a comprehensive study which encompasses all variables in explaining the Turkish cultural milieu is very difficult to conduct if not impossible at all. Thus, any endeavour, especially at individual level has to constrain its efforts to a limited number of variables.

However, one important feature of this complex picture is that it is not static, but dynamic, i.e. all factors are affecting and being affected by other variables or combinations of them on almost continuous basis.

Present day Turkish culture can only be depicted as changing, dynamic. As Kağıtçıbaşı (1982 ; 4) puts it "Widespread social change is almost an everyday matter for people in Turkey... It is most noticeable in the waves of rural to urban migration and international migration occurring unceasingly since early 1950's. Concomitant with geographic mobility is what might be called psychological mobility- people changing. "

Economic, technological and social changes and their consequences made themselves felt more intensively among the traditional - agrarian population of Turkey still the core of the society and the main source of its values. After all, it is this section of society which have migrated to cities and other countries, and thus having been exposed to different cultures.

Now the question comes... How can we understand the changes and the resulting conflicts that this people live ?

A GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF CULTURE AND PERSONALITY

In our opinion this question can only be answered by providing a general framework of culture and personality which has two major components ; personality and environment (of which culture is a part). First, we will discuss personality theories, then the framework. Second, culture and conflict resolution techniques will be in order.

Personality

In this paper, it is not only the geographic mobility and the changes that follows, but rather, it's the psychological changes that we are interested. We think that culture can only be mediated through individual personalities. After all, it is the individual's personality which is exposed to cultural changes and conflicts. Hence, our starting point will be the individual and his/her personality.

Personality is defined as " a more or less enduring organization of forces within the individual associated with a complex of fairly consistent attitudes, values, and modes of perception which account, in part, for the individual's consistency of behavior " (Barnauw, 1973 ; 10)

When it comes to the analysis of personality, several approaches may be cited ; like the Conflict Approach of Freud, Fulfillment model of Maslow, Allport and Rogers, Consistency Model of Kelly, Fiske, Maddi and Festinger, and Physiological Approaches of Sheldon, Seltzer.

In our analysis we will not stick to one specific approach but rather adopt the first three of the approaches cited above. In our opinion, they do not contradict but complement each other. A brief explanation of these approaches is given below.

- The Conflict Model

A person is always caught in a clash between opposing forces between which he must make compromises. According to Freud, the core tendency of man is to maximize instinctual gratification while minimizing punishment and guilt. The selfish instincts of man inevitably come into conflict with the taboos of society.

- The Fulfillment Model

Assumes only one great force, located in the individual. Conflict may exist, but is not held to be inevitable or continuous. According to Carl Rogers, there is an actualizing tendency in all living things ; in the case of man there is an attempt to actualize the self, involving the realization of a need for the approval of others and approval of one's self.

- The Consistency Model

Life is seen as an effort to maintain consistency. There is less emphasis on an inherent human nature than in the other two models. For consistency theorists ; the content of personality is largely learned, and represents the history of feedback resulting from interacting with the world. People experience frustration when there is a discrepancy between their expectations and actual outcomes, and they act to reduce this discrepancy.

Freud discusses the inherent conflict between man and nature. Maslow does not deny this conflict. When a person can't get into higher levels of needs (i.e. dissatisfaction), he experiences tension, frustration and reverts to either constructive, or, as most often the case is, to defensive mechanisms. It becomes obvious from the ongoing discussion that especially people, migrating to different cultures, may experience intensive dissatisfaction. Consistency model, on the other

hand, does not contradict but complement these two approaches in that a person who is looking to satisfy a specific level of need is at the same time trying to reduce inconsistencies.

Excluding psychopathologically vulnerable individuals, inconsistencies, as in the case of cultural changes, are the byproducts of environment. Thus, it is necessary to look into the relationship of an individual with his / her environment. It is, after all the environment in general with which the individual encounters and experiences conflict or consistency. Psychological adjustments are made to the changes in the environment.

Framework

In figure 1- 2 the environment is conceptualized as having two major components ; Immediate and General.

Immediate Environment is the one with which the individual has daily contacts. It is in this sense highly concrete and visible.

General Environment on the other hand is mostly a conceptualization. Individual feels it, but can't locate it. Many times he may not be aware of it.

Figure - 2 : PERSONALITY - ENVIRONMENT CONSTRUCT

EXGENEOUS VARIABLES

- 1 -

- 2 -

IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT

GENERAL ENVIRONMENT

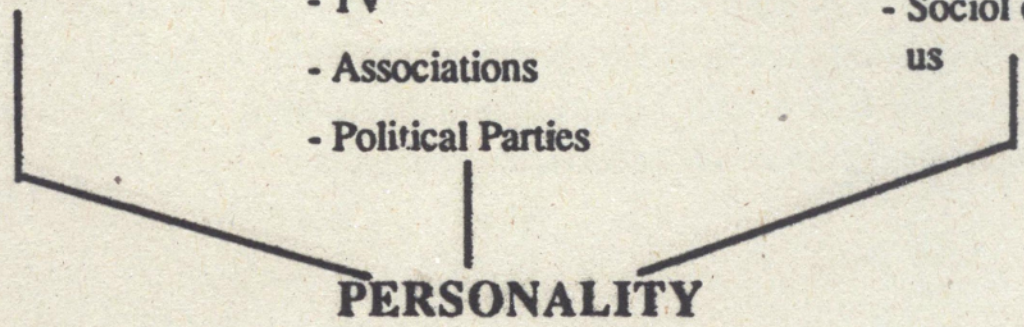
**1- A
INFORMAL
COMPONENTS**

**1- B
FORMAL
COMPONENTS**

- Traditions
- Norms
- Institutions
- Socio - Economic Conditions
- Technological Advancements
- Sociol classes Stat-
us

- Family
- Kinship and Com-
munity
- Sex Roles

- Schools
- Work Organizations
- Mass - Media
- TV
- Associations
- Political Parties



PERSONALITY

General Environment, no doubt influences the individual either directly or through the immediate environment.

Individuals living in rural areas have little chance to control or influence both environments.

The patterns of relationships between both environments and the individual must be found and followed if we want to understand several possible conflicts that an individual may experience.

Culture

A culture is the way of life of a group of people, the configuration of all the more or less stereotyped patterns of learned behavior which are handed from one generation to the next through the means of language and imitation (Barnauw, 1973 ; 6). We have to underline some of the important aspects of this definition, First, culture is a way of life of a group of people. This group may be a small or an entire society. But, in any case, it has to have some integration and cohesion - cohesion i. e. recognizable patterns or configurations of behavior. This behavior must be learned behavior - not instinctual. Patterns of learned behavior are only relatively fixed. What is acceptable in one society may not be acceptable in another, e.g. Scotsmen wear kilts, Turkish men, on the other hand can't even think of it. Also, what is acceptable at one point in time in a given society may not be accepted or even rejected at some later time, e.g. Turks gave up arabic alphabet in 1928, and now reject to use it.

Man is born into a culture. Culture provides a number of ready-made answers to the problems of life. The individual learns these as he grows up and comes to see the world through the particular spectacles of his culture. Culture provides the individual the means to cope with the uncertainties of the world. Mastery of these methods increases ones sense of confidence.

Also culture may provide some orientation and reassurance to the individual by supplying him doctrines about the world, religion, traditions and folklore. It is very seldom that individuals question the tenets of the culture they are born into. In some ways cultural behavior is like that of persons under posthypnotic suggestion, who perform actions without realizing why they do so (Barnouw, 1973 ; 7). Man would be lost without his culture - hardly different from the apes. Although he gains a lot from his culture he is also brainwashed by it. Equipped with a collection of stereotypes with which to face the world, man is apt to lose sight of possible alternative models of behavior and understanding.

vides ;

- 1) Confidence,
- 2) Orientation,
- 3) Reassurance, to the individual.

All of these serve the consistency needs of individuals. In relatively stable cultures (especially traditional societies), individuals do not experience inconsistencies. They know the outcome of their behavior and they know what is expected of them.

Also, if they want to self-actualize themselves, they know the limits. Thus, one of the worst diseases of human beings, uncertainty - inconsistency, is eliminated and there is no place to dissatisfaction. But, what happens when these stable consistent conditions are threatened and, in this context, what are some of the consequences common to the experiences of migration, acculturation and rapid cultural change? One may be, a kind of confusion, disorientation and incandescence sharpened by a sense of emotional isolation. Murphy has listed some situations which provoked acute confusional states - e.g. students in their first year at college, immigrants arriving off a ship, soldiers recently inducted. According to Faris and Dunham an abrupt change in cultural context may even cause mental breakdowns.

In Maslowian terms, the person is not able to satisfy his very essential needs; that of security and social. In consistency theory terms, he is exposed to uncertainties and unknowns. He can't cope with them with his indigenous culture's stereotypes.

Sources of Cultural Conflicts

Under normal conditions, individuals are first exposed to their families, relatives, friends, elderly people and informal groups. Through the socialization process they inherit the values and standard norms of behavior from these groups. Afterwards, they are exposed to the formal environment and finally through these immediate formal components of the environment to the general environment.

In small communities, it is seldom that an individual experiences conflict between himself and these components. However, he may experience some conflict between his informal group and formal group. In such a case, he tends to solve it in favor of informal organization. If he experiences conflict between 2 and 3, like the norms and values he learned in the classroom with that of society in general, he tends to solve it in favor of 2. That is, I presume, why many traditions are passing away. Instead of sticking to society's abstract and rather distant values and norms they stick to their own. If immediate and general environments are impos-

ing two different sets of values, individual tends to accept the one with which he contacts most.

SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF TURKISH MIGRANTS

Now, I would like to discuss the case of Turkish migrants to West Germany by making use of ;

1) Maslow's self-actualization and Roger's Consistency theories in explaining the personality paradigm,

2) My own conceptualization of conflict sources, i.e. the environment, in depicting the cultural conflict paradigm.

Within the context of the environment personality interaction I must first depict the immediate environment of a typical Turkish migrant.

Informal Components

- Family

First of all, he is most probably born to a peasant family living in a village. His family in contrast to what many believe, is not a patriarchal but a nuclear family.

A typical pattern of change through the life cycle of the rural family involves first the newly married couple living with the husband's parents as a valued pattern and due to economic necessities, moving out as the young man gains more income and autonomy (nuclear family) and then later the aged parents moving in again for protection in old age (Timur, 1972 ; Kiray, 1974).

Even, when conjugal families live apart, they are called upon to provide material support. Thus, because widespread social security programs are not available in Turkey and due to strong security needs which is very typical of Turks mutual support among not only the immediate family members but also the relatives becomes the rule. Thus, older brothers are expected to help finance younger siblings' education and be available to their parents in old age (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1979).

There is a high value put on children's loyalty to the parents and family. The research that I've conducted among the Turkish university youth shows this very clearly. Among the values, they've ranked " A happy family " as the most important.

Also, in conjunction with the economic necessities, they placed material (monetary) security as the second. This did not differ whether the student came from

a small city or a large one. Among sexes, females ranked material security as the third. Also, when they are asked about their own values they have placed highest value on family, kinship and community.

Closely knit family extends into the kin and often members of a whole village are related to each other through marriages and blood relations.

- Kinship

Kinship ties form the basis of social relations in rural settings (Kağıtçıbaşı, 7). Especially, brothers are the ones who must provide help, defence and revenge. In a small community everybody is a "Significant other" and nobody can be ignored. "Other-directed behavior" develops from childhood onwards. Helling (1966) observed that the adults with whom the village child interacts are more numerous and have more control over him than the child's urban counterpart. Expectations from the child are not only individual and familial but communal as well.

- Community Religion

Religion is more of a communal rather than an individual affair, because to be a muslim for the villager means first of all to be a part of a community. Religion means a set of rules about daily behavior, and in this sense religion is concrete.

- Sexual Differences

Males and females are separate when it comes to religious activities.

- Sex Roles

Some of the typical roles rural women play are as below

- Rural woman has second class status in Turkey as it is in other Middle East countries

- Village woman's status is evaluated in terms of age and childbearing.

- Young women are subject to social control.

- Sex roles, division of labor among sexes and separate social networks are clearly defined for both groups.

- Concept of Namus (Honor) referring to the sexual modesty of a woman is related to sex roles segregation. Man has honor as long as he controls the sexuality of his woman.

Honor reflects the other-directed small, face to face character of social relations within the community. The great significance of other's evaluation and the shame orientation.

- Status of young women is low. Once she bears a son, her status increases. And when the son brings a bride, it reaches its peak.

- Son never leaves home, but daughters leave.

- Son is valued more than daughter. Mother - son relation is more important than the husband-wife relationships in the traditional family.

- Decision making is done by adult males.

Formal Components

- Schools

After the age of seven every village child should go to school. Although the literacy level in Turkey is increasing, generally speaking, it is still very low in villages. Peasants' children attend either one or two years at most, they finish primary school. Thus, the school does not play a social change agent's role.

- Organizations

There are no formal organizations in villages. Only local authority (muhtar) is elected and there is an old people's assembly. Recently some villages are forming cooperatives but they are not functioning very well. There are no associations to attend or be a member of.

Political Parties are not organized at village level. Only some leaders or rich villagers with greater status deal with politics and mostly others follow his directions.

Until 1970's very few villages received TV or newspapers. TV started to play an important role as a change agent.

Instead of going into a discussion of the details of Societal-cultural context, we would like to show the changes that took place in the above mentioned traditional socio-cultural context of Turkish peasants. It should be reminded once more that most of the Turkish migrants to West Germany are of rural origins.

Most of the Turkish workers coming from rural areas; including both sexes, experience abrupt social changes and conflicts when they move to urban areas. There are several research work which show their difficulties and agonies in adjusting to city life. Almost all aspects of group-community living style change

when they move into cities, let alone to foreign countries like West Germany. Quite a significant number of rural people moved to West Germany without having any urban experience even in Turkey. Adaptation to urban life in Turkey is easier than Germany. At least there are no language or religious barriers.

Now, what happens to a Turkish villager who moves to West Germany. Again, in the light of our framework, I will try to analyze the situation and try to show how intensive and abrupt the change and conflict is.

To start with, let's first look at the family. What happens to it? Families separate when one of the spouses move to Germany. On the average this separation lasts for about five years. Meanwhile, if woman is working, she attains economic security and independence and starts questioning the authority of man in the traditional family. When they come together, they are forced to live as a nuclear family without any extensions. The children are tried to be raised in accordance with traditional teachings. This is sharply in contrast with industrialized society's ways of raising, training children. Thus, the children start experiencing conflict too. Second generation Turks in Germany are called as lost people. At home, they are expected to behave as a member of a traditional society, outside they are forced to behave as a member of an industrialized society. The values of traditional and industrial societies in this case are not complementary, as it is in Japan, but contradictory.

Turks, coming from closely knit communities form communal relations quickly. The Turkish district in Berlin is a good example. They prefer to be together. This also helps them in solving their petty problems. But, it also hinders them from interacting with the German society. As it is common knowledge, kinship ties have no function whatsoever in industrialized societies. This, of course, is another major source of conflict.

Religion and religious activities, especially some concrete ones, like sacrificing sheep during religious holidays, are sharply in contrast with modern Christianity. Religion seems to be the major factor which separates both societies. Second generation Turks do not seem to be that religious, but first generation is. That creates huge gaps not only between them and Germans but also with their children. Children who are raised according to Islamic understanding at home experience severe conflicts not only in the school but also on the streets.

Schooling is another source of conflict. Many of the migrants (especially those migrated in 1950's) hardly completed their primary school education. Most of them attended village schools which not only lacked teaching materials but often times the teachers. The style and methods of instruction are different too. It is very very rare for the Turkish student to question the material that he is sup-

questioned by students. This is totally in contrast to Western method of instruction. Second generation experiences more severe schooling problems. Because the kids don't know German very well, they are more often regarded as retarded and put into retarded classrooms. Very few of them survive through high school to universities.

POSSIBILITIES OF ADJUSTMENT

As a consequence of the above analysis, one may easily come up with questions such as :

- a) What do Turkish migrants feel ?
- b) How do they react ?
- c) What do we expect from them ?

I presume, the answer to the last question is that both Turkey and Germany would like to see them with a minimum number of problems. From the cultural perspective that means both parties expect them to adapt to German life style and standard norms of behavior. We are expecting traditionally raised people to show the behavior that is typical of a modern industrialized society. This is an inherent conflict and if not impossible very difficult to resolve. In my opinion at least for the first generation, it is not possible.

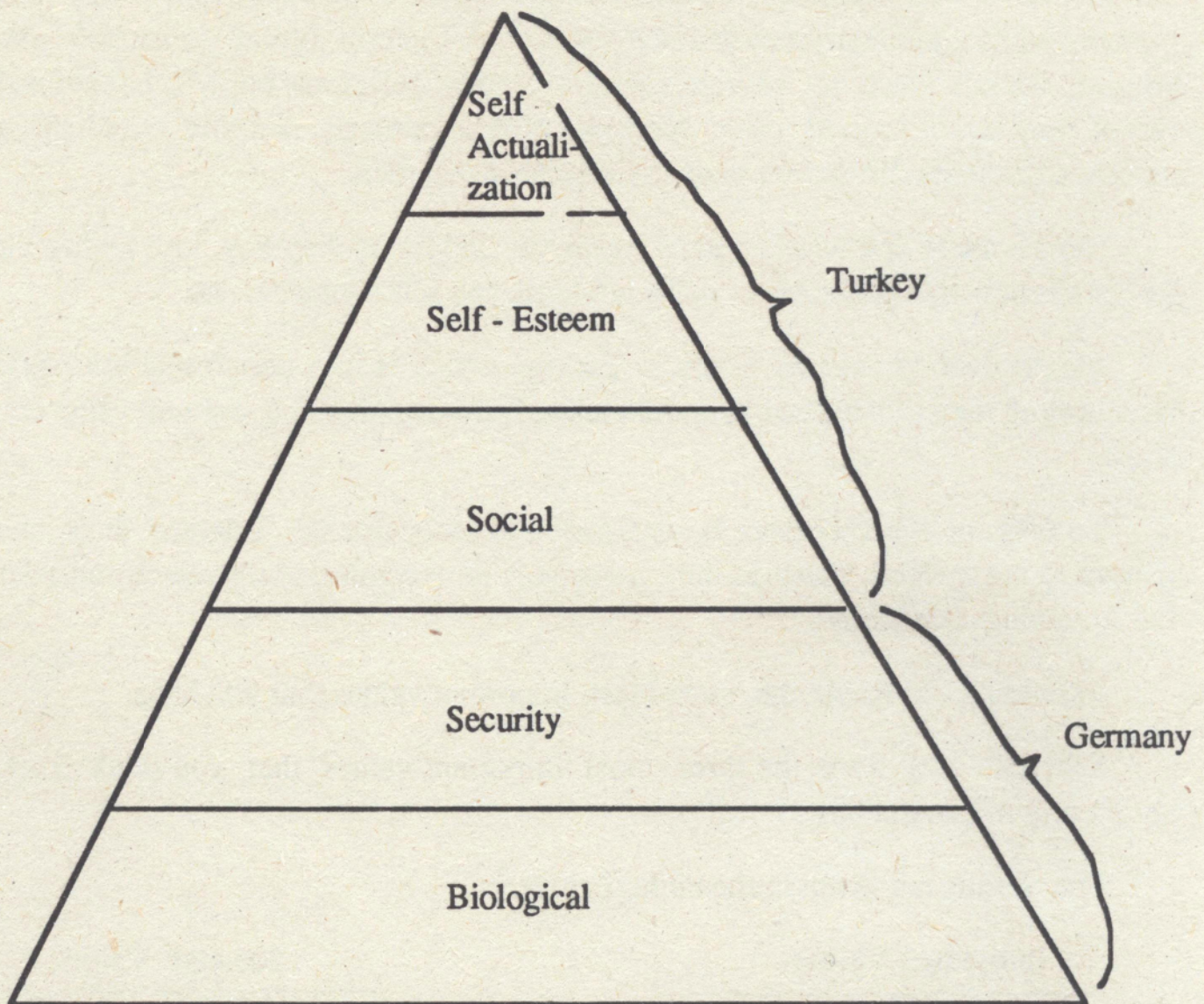
First of all adoption requires acceptance on both sides. We don't know to what extent Germans are genuinely ready to accept Turks.

Second, Turks may not want to be Germanized. After all, the primary motive behind their sojourn is to earn money and to satisfy their lower order needs, like biological and security.

Several research in Turkey (Aldemir, 1982 ; Ergenç and Timurcanday, 1985) have shown that security needs are the most dominant. Thus, it can be hypothesized that Turkish migrants are in Germany to satisfy their lower order needs not higher order ones like social, self-esteem and self-actualization.

They, most probably, want to satisfy their higher order needs in their own country. That is why they are sacrificing so much. Their bodies are here but their souls are in Turkey. In Maslowian terms, this can be depicted as in figure - 3.

Figure - 3 : AN APPLICATION OF MASLOWS FULLFILLMENT MODEL TO TURKISH MISRANTS IN GERMANY



Those Turks who want to return home are still more than those who want to stay.

Obviously, this observation generate another question. "To what extent and for how long can Turkish migrants suppress their higher order needs ? 10 years ? 20 years ?

Long delays in these satisfaction areas may cause lots of psychopathological problems. Research is replete with examples.

Third, what type of roles do Germans want Turks to play ? Here comes the concept of role conflict. "Role conflict" refers to the degree of correspondance (consistency) versus dissimilarity (inconsistency) between home and host values and

expectations . The amount of role conflict increases as the distance between cultures increases.

Research by Eng-Kung Yeh and Klein (Bochner, 1981 ; 161) shows that when a young adult is suddenly transplanted from one cultural milieu to another, his existing Socialization-his values, social attitudes, religious beliefs, behavioral norms may be of limited use in his new cultural context, and this may lead to serious adjustment difficulties even to psychiatric disorders.

Most notably and which seems a general finding is that they lose higher order satisfaction like self-esteem, self-confidence and self - actualization.

Fourth even University youth in Turkey, which is in a transformation phase, transforming from traditional to industrialized, are experiencing cultural value conflicts.

To find out whether there is consistency or inconsistency between their own values and the societal values as they perceive, I have conducted a research and asked the following questions ;

Individual - 1) Rank the three most important values that you have.

Societal - 2) Rank the three most important values that you think Turkish society in general has.

The results are given in the tables below.

<u>Individual Values</u>		<u>Societal Values</u>	
1 - A Happy Family	: 162	1 - Honor (Namus)	: 85
2- Friendship	: 70	2- Material Security	: 74
3- Material Security-Money	: 66	3- Religion	: 61

Table 1 :

Individual Values of Turkish University Youth and the Turkish Society's Values as they perceive. (N:218)

Obviously, as it can be seen from the above, there is a widespread difference between the values of the youth and what they think the society's values are.

Such discrepancies create lots of problems, not only for the individual but also for the society as a whole.

The number of students who cited Honor (Namus) and Religion as one of their three most important values did not exceed 24-16 Honor, 8 Religion. I have brought this example to demonstrate the value crisis that Turkish youth is living in Turkey. Turkey is transforming from a traditional to industrialized society. Most student think that Turkish society, as depicted before, is still a traditional one. Their own values on the other hand do not reflect an industrialized society's values, i.e. that of hard work, achievement, disciplined behavior etc, This finding, too supports our view that a value crises is being experienced. Eventually, it really becomes very difficult to understand i.e. to emphasise the conflicts that migrants, who are exposed to totally different cultures, experience.

SUGGESTIONS TO RESOLVE CULTURAL CONFLICTS

First, both cultures should accept rather than reject each other. Willingness to cooperate is a must.

Second, cultural mediators may be employed. A cultural mediator is more than a person who lived or lives in both cultures. He should be able to form sound and healthy links between cultures.

Some of the characteristics of a cultural mediators may be ;

- 1) She / he should have knowledge about both societies,
- 2) She / he has to have communication skills, i.e. should speak both languages,
- 3) She / he must have technical skills, i.e. should know the habits and customs of both cultures, i.e. should know how to eat rice with chopsticks if she / he is mediating between Japanese and other cultures,
- 4) She / he should know the social skills which are the rules that govern social relations.

In the light of above descriptions, we should look for the person or persons who can be ideal mediator. Tablo 2 may provide an answer to this search.

Who can be Cultural Mediators ?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Vested Interests</u>	<u>Criterion of Success</u>	<u>Culture likely to benefit</u>
Trader	Himself	Profit	Home
Diplomat	Home government	Power	Home
Missionary	Mission	Innovation	Depends on Mission
Teacher	Variable	Mutual Understanding	Host and Home

Thus, ideal mediators should look like an ideal teacher and student. In certain cases she / he act as an effective teacher, in others as an effective student. Empathy on the part of mediator is a must. Through empathy, he can not only understand but feel the joys and agonies of the people. Social service workers in West Germany must be trained in this fashion. For that purpose, they should be sent to Turkey and spend adequate amount of time to learn the nuances of culture.

That will not only increase the understanding of the Germans but also foster the relationships between the two cultures.

KÜLTÜR - KİŞİLİK ÇATIŞMASI

BİR ÖRNEK : ALMANYADAKİ TÜRK İŞÇİLERİ

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı yalnız Türk gençliğinde egemen olan kişisel değerleri belirlemek ve kendi kişisel değerleriyle algıladıkları toplumsal değerler arasındaki çatışmayı ortaya çıkarmak değil, aynı zamanda Batı Almanyadaki göçmen Türk işçilerinin yaşadığı daha ağır değişim ve bunun sonucu ortaya çıkan değer çatışmalarını, yazar tarafından geliştirilen "Kültürel Değişim ve Çatışma" modeli çerçevesinde incelemektir.

- Aldemir, Ceyhan ; Elmasođlu, Gaye, "Yöneticler Düzeyinde Motivasyon " Personel Yönetiminde Gelişmeler Semineri, Mayıs, 1982, İzmir.
- Bocher, Stephan, **The Mediating Person**, Schenkman Pub. , Co., Cambridge Mass., 1981.
- Ergenç, Alev ; Timurcanday Ömür ; Bilgin Nuri ; **Yaşam Kalitesi**, III Ulusal Psikoloji Kongresine sunulan bildiri, 1983, İstanbul.
- Kağıtçıbaşı, Çiğdem, **Türkiye'de Çocuğun Değeri**, İstanbul, 1979.
- Kağıtçıbaşı Çiğdem, **Sex Roles, Family and Community in Turkey**, Indiana University, Indiana, 1982.
- Karpat, Kemal, **The Gecekondu**, Columbia University Press, 1976.
- Üner, Necla, " Does Education Make a Difference in the Child Rearing Attitudes of Parents in Turkey ", Turkish Review Quarterly Digest, Autumn 1986, v.1, no : 5, pg. 119-130.