World Values Survey in Cyprus 2006: A Research Note[1]

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Abstract

This paper provides an overview of the authors' recent extension of Ronald Inglehart's World Values Survey (WVS) in Cyprus. Whereas the WVS is in its fifth wave of study (Inglehart et al., 1981, 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2006-2007), Cyprus is included for the first time. Currently, the WVS comprises 99 countries around the world and is designed to enable the most comprehensive cross-national comparison of values and norms on a wide range of topics and to monitor changes in values and attitudes across the globe. The comprehensive survey of Greek and Turkish Cypriots' attitudes, values, and beliefs will certainly enrich the WVS collection and contribute to valuable comparison between the two ethnic communities on the island as well as comparison with their ethnic kin in Greece and Turkey.

Significance of Cyprus as a Case Study and Its Value for the WVS

There is little empirical analysis of attitudes, values, and beliefs of Cypriots in the literature. Instead, much of the academic literature explores the Cyprus problem using a positioned approach, as Demetriou (2004) outlines, and qualitative methods. In recent years there are some who have published quantitative analysis of the Cyprus problem and Cypriot politics (Georgiades, 2006, 2007; Webster and Lordos, 2006; Papadakis, Peristianis and Welz, 2006; Webster and Timothy, 2006; Webster, 2005a; Webster, 2005b; Lordos, Kaymak and Tocci, 2009). This represents to a large extent a novelty in the analysis of Cypriot society as the WVS is one of the most extensive surveys that provides researchers the opportunity for cross regional and cross national comparisons.

In recent years, the European Union sponsored multiple Eurobarometers in Cyprus and has been active in collecting data on the political, social, and economic data from the populations on both sides of the Green Line. There have been many surveys undertaken by academics, political parties, governments, and individuals to learn more about the opinions of Cypriots on various political, social, and economic issues.[2] Some of the most interesting recent forays into public

1 This survey was funded in part by the Jubitz Family Foundation of Portland, Oregon, USA.

2 A notable one is the International Social Survey Programme, of which the European University of Cyprus (formerly the Cyprus College) is a part of. For further information on this see [http://www.cycollege.ac.cy/cycollege.44.44.menu44.en.4.html].

opinion analysis are the projects by Alexandros Lordos, Erol Kaymak and Nathalie Tocci who carried out public opinion polling in both of the major entities on the island. In their comprehensive survey of public opinion toward the peace process, the authors concluded that an agreement in Cyprus is indeed possible but it will be a 'hard sell' to the people of both communities (Lordos, 2005; Lordos, Kaymak, Tocci 2009, p. 87). More recently, the International Peace Research Institute of Oslo has also supported research that is publicly available (Hatay, 2007; Sitas *et al.*, 2007).

The significance of Cyprus for WVS is found in the island's complex political and social realities that make data collection on this case important for scholars of social sciences. Given its long history of intercommunal conflict, Cyprus presents the opportunity to test theoretically important hypotheses surrounding the clash of civilisations, post-industrial values versus ethnic and religious nationalism, the impact of protracted conflict and war on peoples' lives, the colonial/post-colonial/civil war environment's affect on values and beliefs, as well as the impact of external involvement by outside powers on the people. As such, Cyprus represents a rare case study that will enrich the WVS collection for valuable comparative research. Cyprus also serves as a laboratory for systematic testing of ethnic tensions. Unique to the study of Cyprus is also the fact that Cypriot society includes both the modern and traditional worlds. Here is a list (not exclusive) of crucial issues that make the Cyprus survey interesting and crucial:

1. Cyprus has a population that is multiethnic (Greeks, Turks, and a much smaller number of Armenians, Maronites, and British), and multi-religious (Greek Orthodox, Muslim, Armenian Orthodox), multi-lingual (Greek, Turkish, Armenian, English).[3]
2. Even though, the two main communities, Greeks and Turks, lived side by side throughout the island since 1571, there was very little intermarriage and they certainly failed to create a Cypriot nation distinct from their ethnic kin in Greece and Turkey. They did, however, interact socio-economically and unashamedly borrowed from each other's languages, values and attitudes (Yeşilada, 1989).
3. Physical separation between both main ethnic groups presents a valuable opportunity to measure the impact of the flow of two-way communication on peoples' belief systems. The older generation of Cypriots had far more contact with their counterparts than the younger generations did. Prior to the first intercommunal strife in 1963, the two communities lived mainly in mixed urban and rural settings and worked side by side. This period was a chapter of most intimate interaction for the Cypriots. Between 1963 and 1974, the Turks lived in small enclaves and the two communities had limited contact with each other. Finally, since 1974 – when the island was divided into two almost ethnically pure parts (Greek south and Turkish north) – there has been almost no interaction between the two major Cypriot communities until 2003 when the crossing point was partially reopened permitting some contact between them.

3 For a full discussion on Cypriots who are neither Greek Cypriot nor Turkish Cypriot, see Akçali (2007).

4. In these two ethnically homogenous regimes, socio-economic and political developments have not kept pace with each other. The Greek controlled part of the island, being the internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus, maintained a close association with Western Europe and joined the European Union in 2004: Its level of development is on a par with the EU. The Turkish controlled part of the Island, under the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' ('TRNC') which is only recognised by Turkey, has been under an international embargo since 1974 and survives on economic and military assistance from Turkey: its level of economic development is far lower than the Greek side. Moreover, developments that were not part of the Turkish Cypriot social scene before 1974 have begun to take hold in the 'TRNC' (e.g., the entry of Islamic fundamentalist institutions and organisations from Turkey). Thus far, this development has not affected the political landscape in the 'TRNC' – a vivid contrast to experiences in Turkey. Yet, the gradual entry of Islamic fundamentalists into Turkish Cypriot social and political life should remain under close observation to determine its future impact on the Turkish Cypriots' belief system. Future waves of World Values Survey in Cyprus could facilitate an opportunity to test the impact of Islamisation efforts on Turkish Cypriots.

Methodology

Representative samples were taken covering both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities of Cyprus. In the WVS-Cyprus study, a sample of 1,200 people (600 people from both urban and rural areas of each community) was collected out of the Island's total population of 900,000. The samples included individuals aged from 18 to 70+ years old. The samples chosen were based on a 95% confidence interval and a sampling error of ± 4.0%. The response rate was 95% – higher than the expected rate of 85%. Two Survey companies carried out the study. On the Greek side of Cyprus, the University of Nicosia (formerly Intercollege) Survey Research Centre administered 600 face-to-face surveys in teams of five surveyors headed by a team supervisor. On the Turkish side of Cyprus 550 surveys were carried out by KADEM. The samples are representative of all the major geographic areas in Cyprus. The general population was divided into subsets, or strata, according to gender, age and place of residence covering all districts of the north and south of Cyprus. After stratifying the population, the samples were randomly selected within the various strata. The next step was the actual field work which took place during February-March 2006.

The teams conducted the surveys in accordance with the method described above. The response of residents was quite enthusiastic with many individuals wanting to continue talking with the survey team members as no one had ever asked them detailed questions on diverse aspects of their lives. Team leaders and supervisors verified interviews by randomly selecting 20% of the surveys and making telephone calls to the households involved. Electronic copies of data entries and hard copies of the surveys were sent to Portland State University for editing/check for errors/data entry. Following the careful review of the hard copies a sample size was drawn up of

n = 1,050 error free study (with 550 interviews from the Greek Cypriot community and 500 interviews from the Turkish Cypriot community). The Turkish Cypriot sample was weighted to reflect the difference in population size between the two communities.

Description of Some General Findings

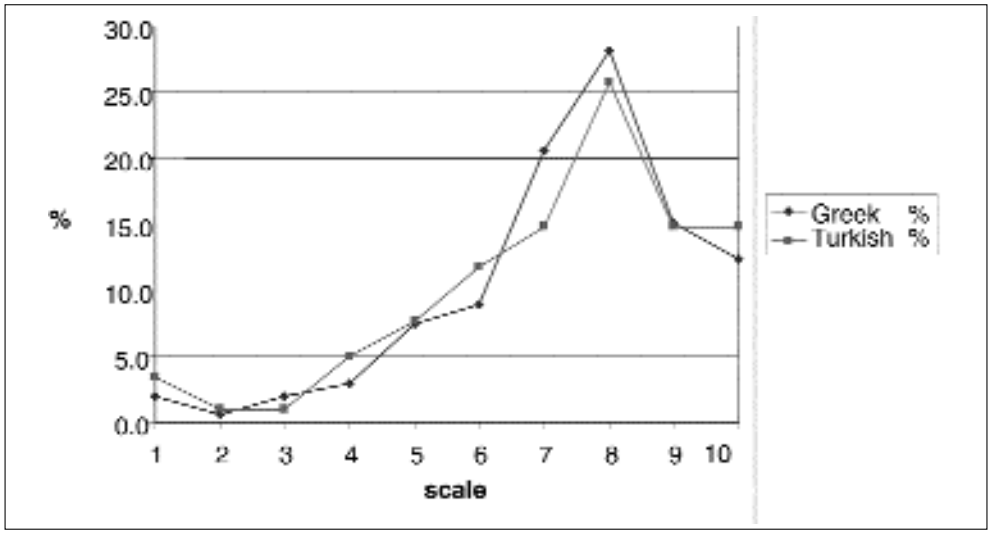
The purpose of presenting the survey's general findings is to present preliminary observations on the social values of Greek and Turkish Cypriots. It is simply a research note and not a detailed statistical analysis of causal relationships. These general observations, however, are valuable in displaying similarities and differences of social values of the two Communities.

1. Satisfaction with Life

Using cross tabulation controlling for the language of the interview (Greek or Turkish) the authors first reviewed how satisfied the Cypriots say they are with their current lives and financial situation. Figure 1.1 displays the result on life satisfaction and figure 1.2 on financial satisfaction.

Figure 1.1: Life Satisfaction

Where 1 = completely dissatisfied and 10 = completely satisfied



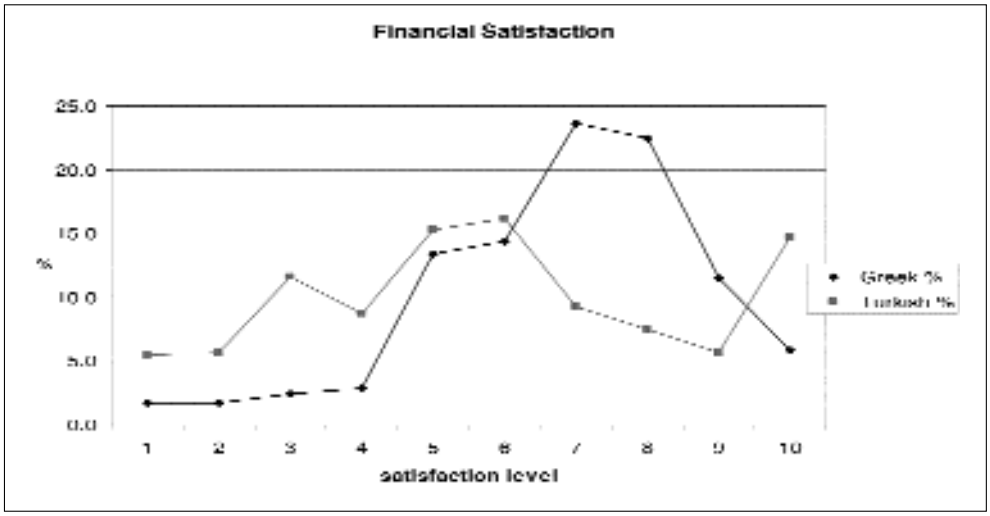
Both communities seem to be fairly satisfied with their lives with a slight difference in the means where more Greek Cypriots fall in the 5-10 range than the Turkish Cypriots. When it comes to financial satisfaction, however, more Turkish Cypriots express dissatisfaction with their

household's financial situation than their Greek Cypriot counterparts. It is important to note that whereas the Greek Cypriots' response displays a bell shaped curve with most people in the range of 5-8, the line graph for Turkish Cypriots hints at a serious financial discrepancy with most respondents being dissatisfied and only a small minority (n=72) expressing complete satisfaction with their financial situation.

The data suggests that while life satisfaction between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots is on even parity, there is discrepancy between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in the way they experience financial satisfaction. The discrepancy between the two is understandable. The bottom line is that Greek Cypriots, in relation to Turkish Cypriots, are a more upper middle class community with fewer poor/lower income classes. Nevertheless, for the Turkish Cypriots, a lower income level does not translate to overwhelming dissatisfaction with their financial state. Perhaps, personal security carries greater salience for the Turkish Cypriots despite a lower living standard than the Greek Cypriots. Future analysis should take note of this point and investigate causality. Furthermore, the current financial state of the Turkish Cypriot community is far better than the shocking conditions they experienced between 1963 and 1974.

Figure 1.2: Financial Satisfaction

Where 1 = completely dissatisfied and 10 = completely satisfied



2. *Tolerance*

Tolerance is an important measure of social values that can hint at the willingness of Cypriots to live together in peace and harmony. To this end, WVS included the following question: "Could you please mention any [*category of individuals*] that you would not like to have as neighbors?"

With regards to the latter, figure 2.1 shows considerable similarities between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

Overall, on the question of tolerance a great affinity is observed between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots but with some notable differences. The groups mentioned by Turkish Cypriots that portray the largest measured attitude difference in the category of 'undesirable neighbour', are people with AIDS, unmarried couples, and homosexuals. There are some fairly diverse feelings toward these groups: first, the Turkish Cypriots have a noticeably more conservative attitude towards non-heterosexuals and those with aids. The lower levels of tolerance that Turkish Cypriots display towards unmarried couples might be explained by the presence of stronger traditional values. Among the Greek Cypriots, a higher level of acceptance is detected of unmarried couples, which is not unforeseen as engagement is viewed as a license to live together.

When it comes to trusting people, the Cypriots seem to be quite cautious. When asked whether "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?", the majority of respondents from both communities indicated caution (table 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Measure of Tolerance in Cyprus

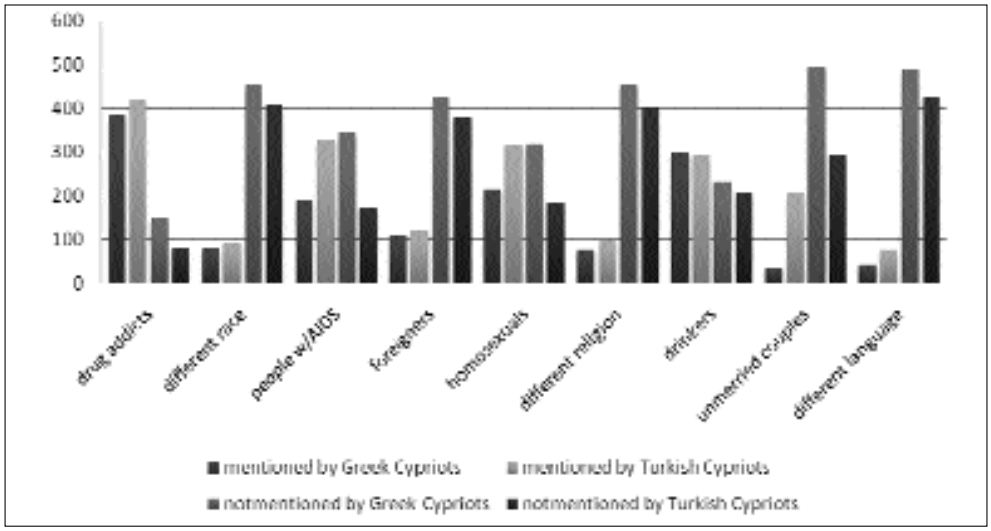


Table 2.1: Measure of Trust of People

	Greek	Turkish
Trust (% of total)	6.52	19.60
Be careful (% total)	93.48	80.40
Total %	100.00	100.00

It can be seen that clear majorities are cautious in both major communities in terms of trusting other people. Comparatively, Turkish Cypriots seem to be more trusting than their Greek Cypriot counterparts by 3:1. Further analysis of trust provides important observations about Cypriots' views of their neighbours, people of different religion, nationality, and who they meet for the first time (table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Measure of Trust by Greek and Turkish Cypriots

2.2.1: Your family

		language of interview	
		Greek	Turkish
trust: family		% response	% response
	Completely	82.87	94
	Somewhat	14.75	4.6
	not very much	2.00	0.6
	not at all	0.36	0.8
Total % responses		99.98	100

With regard to family members, both communities indicate a high degree of trust toward them. This is expected given the strong ties between members of traditional family units in Cyprus.

2.2.2: People of another religion

		language of interview	
		Greek	Turkish
trust: people of different religion		%	%
	Completely	0.73	5.4
	Somewhat	21.17	39.4
	not very much	45.80	34.6
	not at all	32.48	20.6
Total		100	100

In this category, we witness that the Greek Cypriots are much less likely to trust people of other religions than Turkish Cypriots (21% to 44.8% respectively) – this might be indicative of the closer attachment of the former to the Orthodox church and religion whereas the Turkish Cypriot community has been heavily influenced by the secular Kemalist revolution in Turkey.

2.2.3: People of another nationality

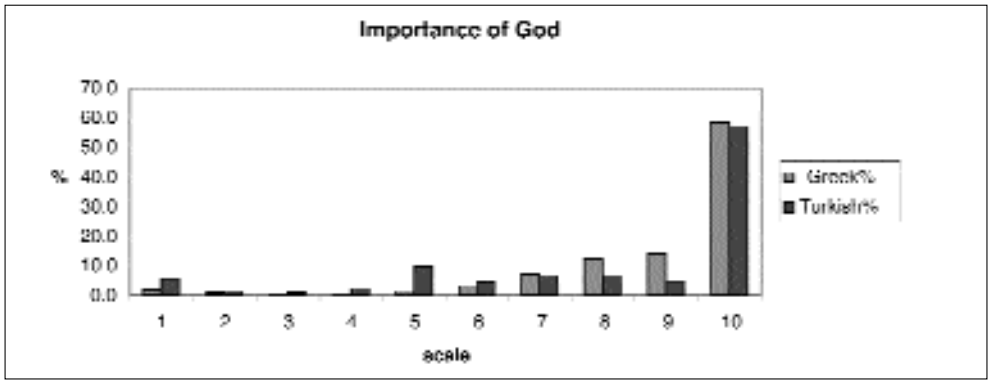
		language of interview	
		Greek	Turkish
trust: people of different nationality		%	%
	Completely	0.91	7.60
	Somewhat	23.18	36.00
	not very much	45.44	35.20
	not at all	30.66	21.20
Total	100	100	

Finally, when it comes to trusting individuals of different nationality, Greek Cypriots once again seem to be much more cautious than Turkish Cypriots.

3. Religiosity

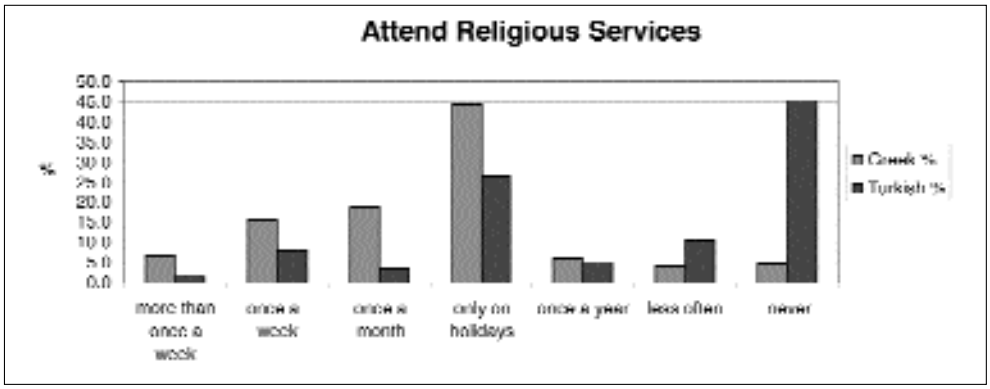
We next turned our attention to religiosity. The following figures and table provide descriptive statistics on this topic in Cyprus. The first point that should be apparent from these outputs is how very similar the two Cypriot communities are in terms of their attitudes toward God, but in their approach toward institutionalised religion they differ greatly.

Figure 3.1: - Importance of God in One's Life



For 91% of Greek Cypriots and 75% of Turkish Cypriots, God is very important in their daily lives (range 7-10 on the above scale where 1 = not at all and 10 = very important). The high levels of importance that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots attribute to God in their lives did not take the authors by surprise given the rather recent modernisation of Cyprus' society and economy. In many respects, high levels of belief in God would be expected in traditional societies. When it comes to following organised religion, however (i.e. attending church or mosque services), the two communities significantly drift apart as shown in the next figure.

Figure 3.2: Attendances of Religious Services



There is a marked disparity between the two communities in terms of religious practices. While Greek Cypriots regularly attend church services this is not found to be the case among Turkish Cypriots, who view themselves as being some of the most secular Muslims in the world. To further investigate religiosity, we studied their attitude towards religious institutions (church or mosque) in order to gain insight into various issues of concern. Table 3.1 again illustrates a significant variance between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot positions in this regard.

Table 3.1: Attitudes of the Greeks and Turks on Religious Institutions

Issue of concern:			
		Greek %	Turkish %
Moral Problems			
	yes	47.8	32.4
	no	52.2	67.6
Family Problems			
	yes	49.5	19.4
	no	50.5	80.6
Spiritual questions			
	yes	62.7	17.4
	no	37.3	82.6
Social problems			
	yes	44.3	22.6
	no	55.7	77.4

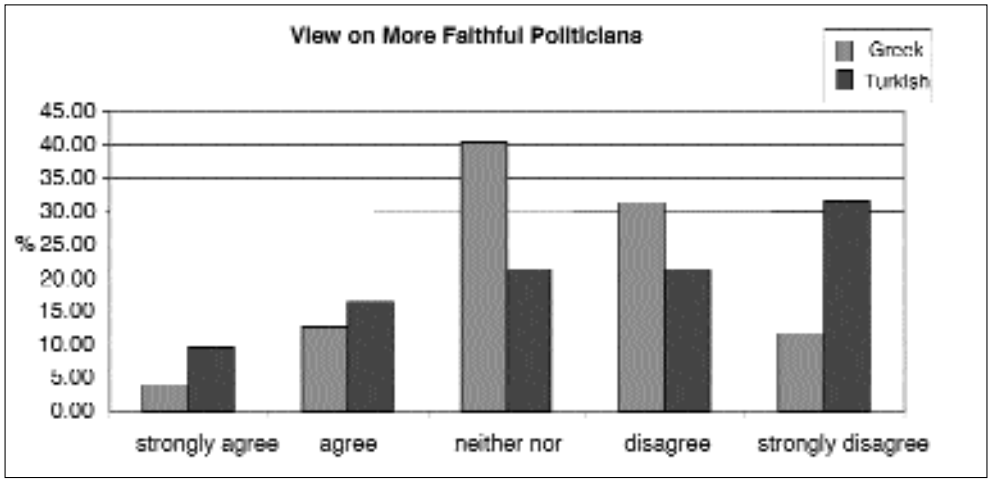
The Greek Cypriots are almost evenly divided in their view on the relevance of religious institutions to provide answers to moral, family, and social problems. On the other hand, Turkish

Cypriots overwhelmingly reject the relevance of religious institutions in moral and social issues. The differences on religion surface further when we consider how the two communities responded to the statement "religious institutions provide answers to spiritual questions". While Greek Cypriots agreed with the statement by a 2:1 margin, Turkish Cypriots rejected it by over 80%. This does not, however, mean a rejection of religion by Turkish Cypriots as demonstrated in their belief in God.

4. Religion and Politics

When asked whether Cyprus would be better off if more people with strong religious beliefs held public office, respondents tended to hold the neutral-disagree position (figure 4.1). However, there seem to be certain differences of opinion in Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot responses. A large percentage of Turkish Cypriots used the most "atheistic" response possible in the Likert scale presented to them in comparison with a U-shaped pattern among Greek Cypriots. While only a small percentage of Greek Cypriots are prepared to have politicians with no strong religious beliefs, this formed the most frequent response by Turkish Cypriots. Although both have congruent mean scores, the Turkish Cypriot responses show a greater willingness to embrace political leadership with few or no religious beliefs. Again, this stresses the more secular aspects of the Turkish Cypriot society in contrast with Greek Cypriot society in which religion and the Church still play an important role in politics.

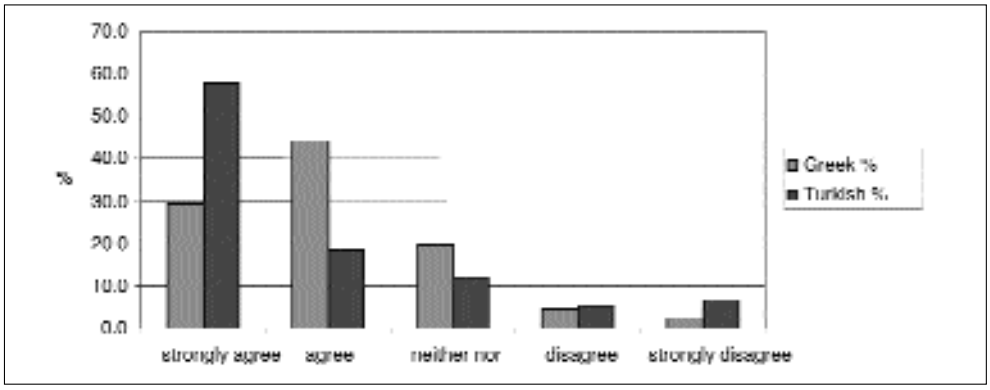
Figure 4.1: View on More Faithful Politicians



The majority of people similarly place a strong emphasis on limiting the religious leaders' influence on politicians (figure 4.2), with Turkish Cypriots revealing the strongest views on this subject. Consistent with the position of politicians and their religious beliefs, there is a great deal of support for a limitation of religious leaders' influence in politics. The most resolute "atheist"

response to the question is strongest among the Turkish Cypriots, with the majority of responses indicating that they would like a secular government. While most Turkish Cypriots were in agreement that politics should be secular, the Greek Cypriots were much more likely to respond with a more moderate response, which suggests that they are more willing to accept influence from religious leaders.

Figure 4.2: Limiting Religious Leaders' Influence in Politics



5. *Social Values*

The World Values Survey also gives significant insight into peoples' values in everyday life. In order to obtain a sense of how the Greek and Turkish Cypriots compare on such matters, the authors asked respondents to judge various behavioural traits as being either acceptable or unacceptable. Although figures 5.1 to 5.6 display remarkable similarities they also highlight considerable differences between the two groups at the same time.

Figure 5.1: Cheating on Taxes

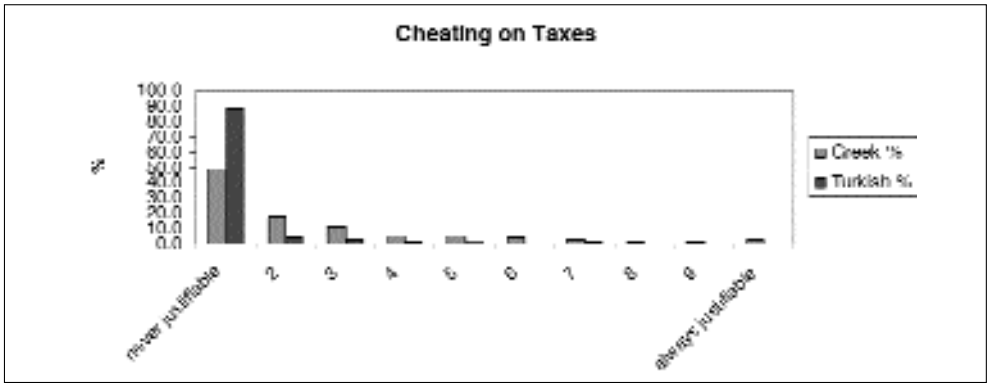


Figure 5.2: Accepting Bribe

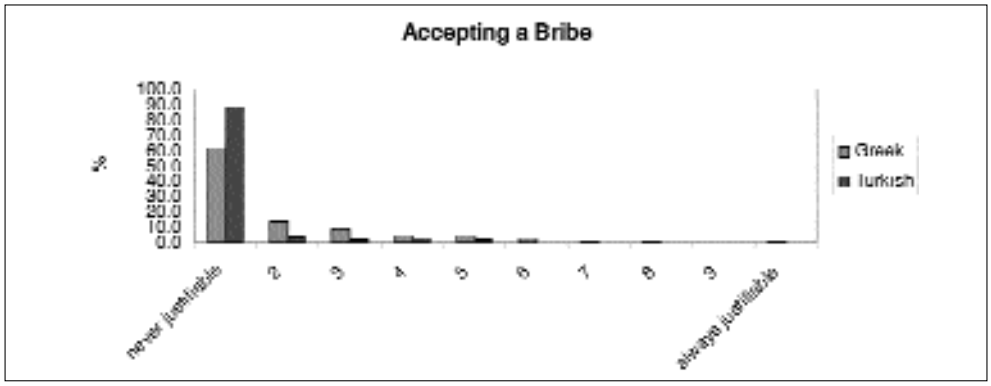


Figure 5.3: Homosexuality

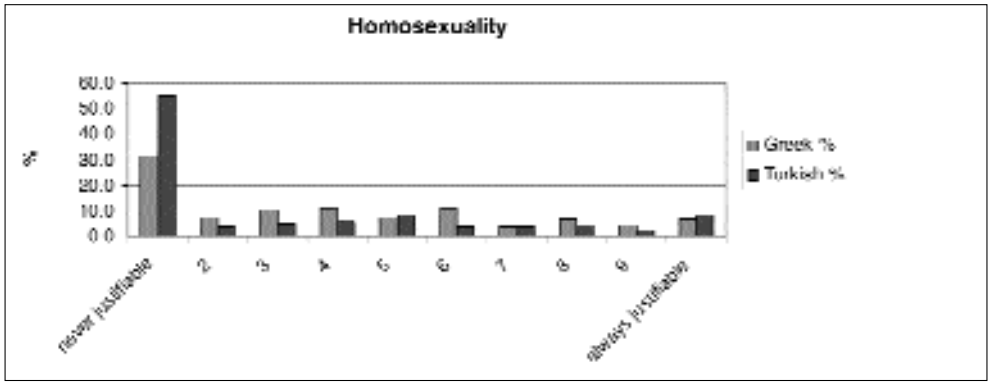


Figure 5.4: Prostitution

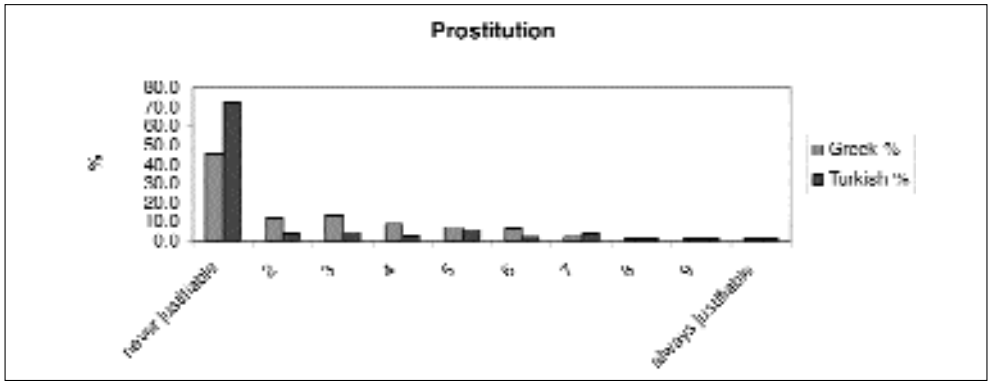


Figure 5.5: Abortion

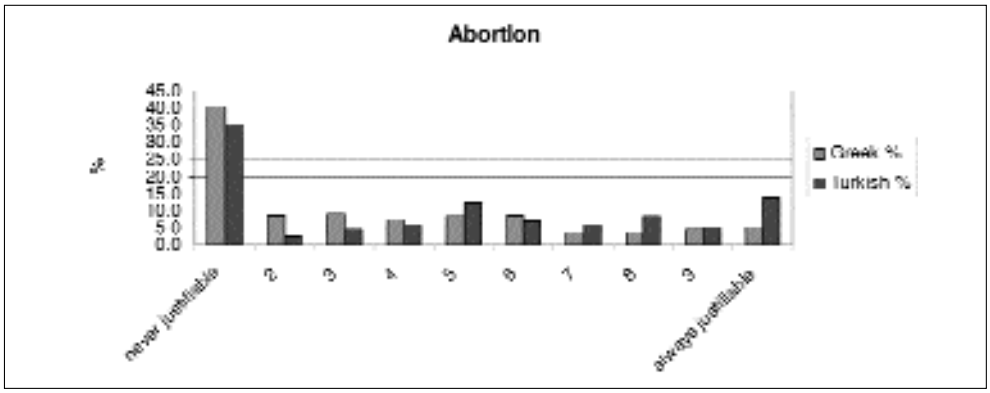
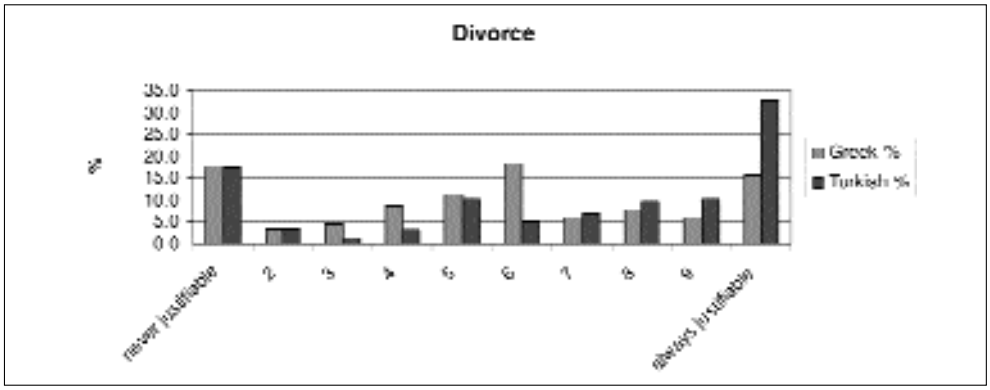


Figure 5.6: Divorce



It is hard to ignore the fact that some degree of hypocrisy appears to be present when the responses among Greek and Turkish Cypriots are reviewed on bribery and cheating. In relation to taxes it is widely known that these behaviours are regularly practiced in Cyprus. On abortion we also perceive similar attitudes between the two communities; however, with regard to homosexuality and prostitution, the Turkish Cypriots are more vehemently negative than the Greek Cypriots.

Having noted these points, the one area where a significant variation is found in the above behavioural traits of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots is on the issue of divorce. Almost 40% of the Turkish Cypriots view divorce as always justifiable. It would appear that this might be the result of a more liberal approach to marriage as an institution. Despite the law that allows civil marriages, the vast majority of Greek Cypriots have religious weddings. Secular weddings among Greek Cypriots tend to involve partners from different religions or nationality. Among Turkish Cypriots, religious weddings are almost unheard of. While Orthodox Christianity has made divorce a

difficult task, Islam has a much more liberal approach towards it. Since marriage is linked far more with religious institutions than with taxation, corruption, sexual practice, prostitution, and abortion, it is not particularly surprising to detect contradictions between how the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots approach the question, especially given the very notable differences in the ways that Orthodox Christianity and Islam perceive the topic. Therefore, it is likely that religion has greatly influenced the approaches of the ethnicities towards divorce.

Conclusions

Preliminary observations of the first World Values Survey in Cyprus show that Greek and Turkish Cypriots are more similar in their values and views than many of them may realise. In this paper, the authors have barely scratched the surface of the rich data obtained in 2006. The findings, however, demonstrate extraordinary similarities between the two communities in their tolerance of others and in social values. One area where significant controversy is detected between the two communities is religiosity. Whereas the large majority of Greek and Turkish Cypriots believe in God and His place in their daily lives, they differ appreciably on the importance of organised religion – attending religious services and the role of religious institutions in providing answers to personal, family, and social problems. In this regard, institutionalised religion holds a vital role in the lives of Greek Cypriots whereas it is conspicuously absent in the Turkish Cypriot community. More detailed causal analyses would undoubtedly shed light on the similarities and differences outlined above and on the degree of compatibility with their kin in Greece and Turkey. That comparison in itself may reveal whether or not the myth of "close affinity" with Greeks and Turks from the respective main lands is real or simply a legend.

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