CHAPTER 5

The Holistic Organization of Values

1 Typologies of Values

In the two previous chapters, general and Jewish values were considered separately. In each case, the analysis was based on the emphasis given to each individual value. It is further enlightening to consider all the values at once in a structural analysis based on the correlations among the entire set. This is a critical step in evaluating the issue, because values do not exist in isolation. Individuals and groups have sets of inter-related values. The differing relative emphases given to different types of values yield the widely diverse value systems seen among cultures and individuals.\(^1\)

International studies have repeatedly verified that basic categories of values are recognized by divergent cultures around the world, and that these categories of values are understood in similar ways. This enables comparison of the values of different populations. If each population understood the meaning of basic social values in completely different ways, it would be irrelevant to compare the relative emphasis they give to each.

In the sociology of values—the field of axiology—it is posited that values are organized in holistic, internally coherent, hierarchical systems. Axiological typologies portray (graphically or otherwise) how categories of values are cognitively organized.

One model describes a core or figurative nucleus of highly important and stable values and peripheral values which are more likely to shift in different situations or over time.\(^2\) Core values are “...the heartland of the ideological system and act as identifying values which are symbolic of the group and its membership.”\(^3\) Someone who rejects the core values of a group would find it difficult or impossible to remain a member.

An early axiological typology developed by Guttman and Levy in the 1970s verified their theoretical approach (see the definition on page 67). They analyzed empirical data on values among Israelis with computer-based

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1 Rokeach, 1979; Rokeach & Ball-Rokeach, 1989.
2 Smolicz, 1981. A similar concept is expressed as the ‘figurative nucleus’ in theories of social representations (Abrid, 1993; Pereira de Sá, 1996).
multi-dimensional analysis techniques, which were quite new at the time. In their model, one axis runs between values related to altruism and values related to egoism. Along the second axis, values related to authority are contra-lateral to values related to autonomy. This model has been verified among many populations. An application of this model to data on values of contemporary French-Jewish adults is shown in Figure 5.1.

The tension between authority and autonomy is a hallmark of adolescence in modern societies, as discussed above. This issue is also addressed in Hofstede's power distance index, which ranks the degree to which members of a society accept differences in power and authority.

In a model based on data from the World Values Survey, two axes were found to be most relevant in describing the similarities and differences between societies. One ranges from traditional values (respect for authority, national pride, belief in God) to secular-rational values (free choice, acceptance of divorce, homosexuality, abortion). The second is from materialist values pertaining to

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5 Hofstede, 1991.