

Mediterranean, between the achievable and the desired

Mohamed TOZY

In this article, Mohamed Tozy shows us the shared positive vision that 'Mediterraneans' have of the space they belong to: a space of hospitality, specific lifestyle and food and common cultural heritage, and not nearly defined as a space characterised by conflict and insecurity as in 2010. The author presents an analysis of priority values in the upbringing of children and how countries as diverse as Palestine, Austria, Israel and Finland can be, as an example, quite close in their appreciation of independence and curiosity.

The presentation of the results of the three waves of the poll carried out since 2010, country by country, for the Anna Lindh Report, have put into perspective the arbitrariness of the categories considered in the EU/SEM countries. It frees the analyst's imagination and allows a clearer view of the paradoxes.

From the point of view of the historical sociology of the politics whose themes I support in my work, the trap of an immediate commentary can only be avoided by first of all taking into account the duration and the long term. Hence the possibility of using this type of survey to raise questions rather than to provide answers. And secondly, to give a full role to the context in its multiple dimensions: political, economic and psychological, when the questions are conceived, administered, and analysed.

When we refer to the context to report on the trends of representations, we can only do so in a non-exhaustive way. The markers for this third campaign are no longer events such as the 11th September or the Arab Spring, but a groundswell that touches demographics and political variables. This context, marked by an almost unprecedented movement of populations between the two shores, a strengthening of far-right movements and identity tension in the EU countries, and a failure of models of democratic transition combined with the return to favour of iron-fisted regimes, be they in the South or in their Northern partners, indicates the possibility of historical bifurcation. This combination lends to the status of a 'epistemological break', as were the Battle of Lepanto for the historians of the Mediterranean or the reign of Felipe II for Braudel.

The preparation of the 2018 Report took place between two terrorist attacks, one in Nice on 14 July 2016 and the one in Barcelona in August 2017. The sequence draws a macabre grammar of violence that should normally put light years between any positive commentaries on a shared horizon. Yet, results of the Survey contradict

this accepted hypothesis, and this in an increasing trend since the first survey of 2010.

The Mediterranean area is mainly associated with positive values: hospitality (56% compared with 50.5% in 2013), food and lifestyle (56.5% compared with 56.4% in 2013) and a common history (52% compared with 49.5% in 2013). The percentages are all higher than in 2010. At the same time, the Mediterranean region is still a source of anxiety and even dread. It is considered a source of insecurity and unrest, even if paradoxically and in spite of the context, this judgement has been declining since 2010. 26% of respondents in the North and 38% of those in the SEM countries believe that the *Mare Nostrum* represents a source of conflict.

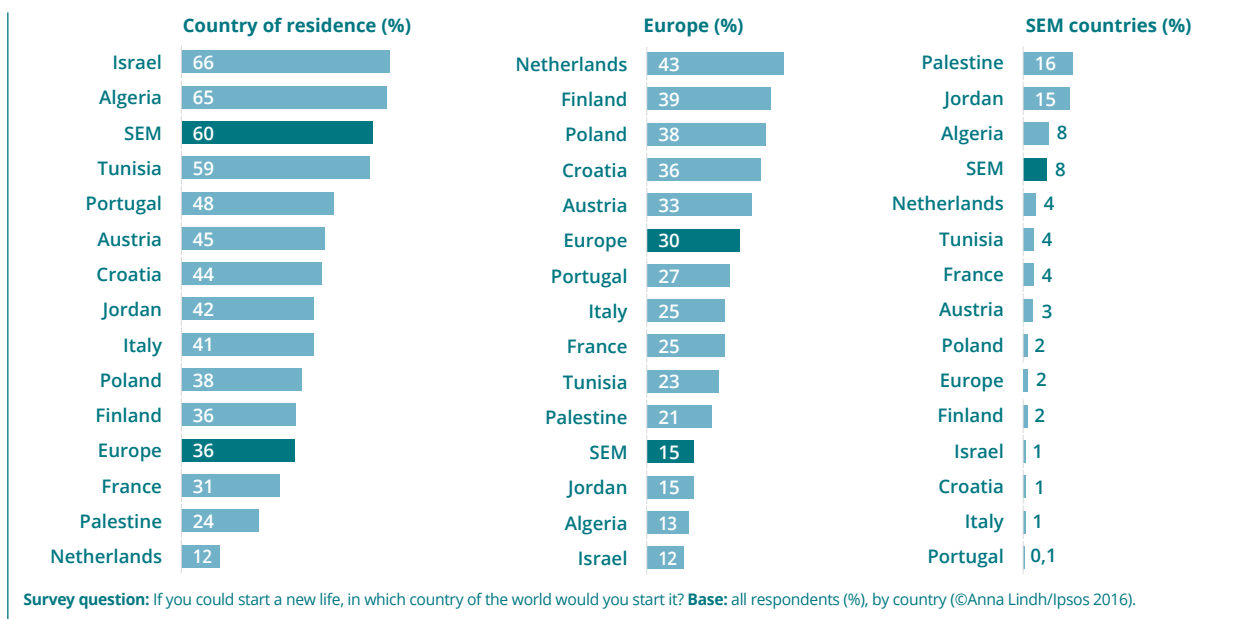
A mobility endured rather than desired

Looking at IOM statistics, it can be seen that the extent of mobility in the Mediterranean area is unprecedented, but even more so is the relative reluctance for the dream of living elsewhere shown by the Southern populations compared to those of the EU that is noticeable in the ALF/IPOSOS Survey.

Admittedly, from 1st January to 20 August 2016, and from 1st January to 20 August 2017, the figures are vertiginous. Italy recorded 97,931 arrivals and 2,244 victims at sea in 2017, compared with 103,691 arrivals and 2,725 victims in 2016. Greece recorded only 13,320 in 2017 compared with 162,015 migrants and asylum seekers in 2016. Morocco and Spain deplored the loss of 121 victims in 2017, compared with 108 in 2016, and recorded the arrival on the northern shore of 8,385 up until July 2017, compared with 3,805 in 2016 – an increase of more than 100%.

The map of mobility at the global level puts the size of these statistics into perspective and makes it possible to highlight the exceptional character of this migratory flow from the South, which can be linked mainly to the

Chart 2.1
Referred countries to start a new life, by country



colonial past (Maghreb and West Africa) or recent events such as the civil war in Syria.

To illustrate this, I will give some statistics from the IOM dynamic map of population movements (IOM, 2017). Nearly 2 million, almost 3% of the French population are expatriates, a designation less stigmatising than migrants. France admits 7.7 million, the majority of whom come from neighbouring countries – except the special case of the Maghreb (mainly Algerians: 1.9 million); 713,158 Portuguese, 367,593 Italians, 304,422 Spanish, and 233,627 Germans.

The situation in Poland is just as interesting; the country has admitted 619,403 immigrants while 4,444,978 Poles have emigrated, almost 2 million to Germany and 703,000 to the UK.

In the Survey the section on interaction between EU citizens and those of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries offers nothing new compared to previous campaigns. Over the twelve months before the questionnaire was administered, there had been massive contacts between citizens from the North and South of the Mediterranean region; the former through tourism and business, the latter thanks to the virtual world and the spread of broadband. Because of this, the resulting links are just as fleeting as they are superficial. Consequently, the result is a stereotypical conception of the ‘Other’.

In contrast, a key lesson to be learned from this third campaign is the choice of country when planning for a possible new start in life.

The overall results are very informative. 60% of respondents from the SEM countries would like to start

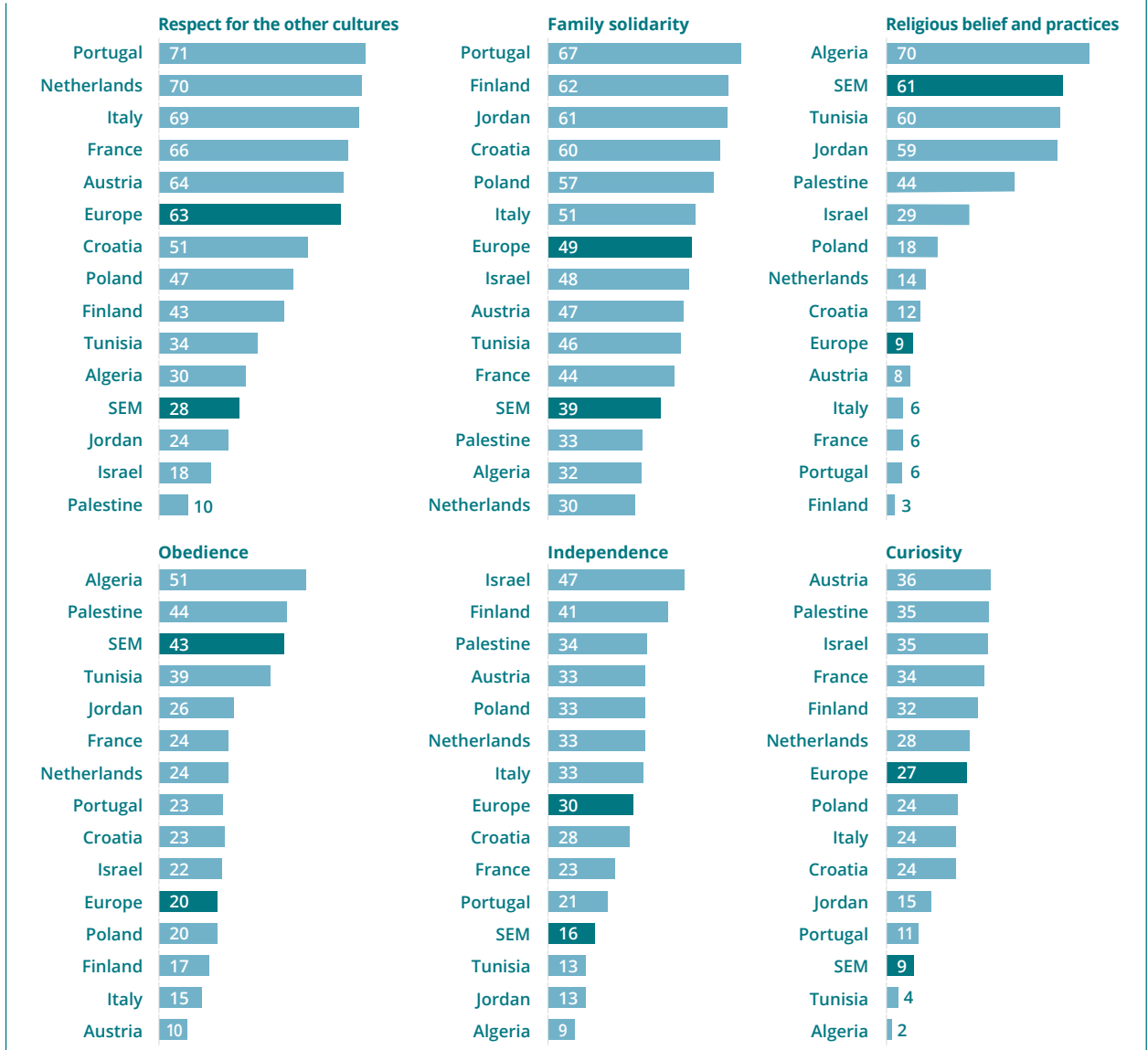
a new life in their own country, compared with 36% of Europeans (Chart 2.1). Country by country, the results are even more surprising. The Dutch are the ones who most think of the world as the ‘horizon’, only 12% of them consider starting a new life at home, while 43% prefer other European countries as a destination, compared with 13% of Algerians. At the other end of the spectrum, 66% of Israelis have no desire to start a new life elsewhere. Unexpectedly, to say the least, is the attitude of Algerians (65%), Tunisians (59%), and especially the Portuguese (48%), traditionally a people of migration.

The processing of data on inter-Mediterranean mobility requires a lot of tact and caution because any partial commentaries tend to reactivate fear-mongering and accentuate prejudices. There is no point hiding the fact that the Mediterranean region has never been subjected to as much pressure than as today. What must be noted, and what the bottom line of the results of preferred destination for starting a new life tells us, is that the phenomenon seen today is temporary, and resettlements are more endured than desired.

Beyond an expected dichotomy between progressive and traditional values

Needless to say the predefined categories with which we work, give the expected results, be they those of EU or SEM countries or those of the values proposed to the respondents, pre-classified in progressive values (independence, curiosity, respect of other peoples’ cultures), and in conservative values (religion, obedience, family solidarity). The decrease in religious practice in the North is rather correlated to the respect for other cultures; placing religion as a core value in the education

Chart 2.2 Key values when raising children, by country



Survey question: In bringing up their children, parents in different countries may place different emphasis on different values. Assuming that we limit ourselves to six values only, I'd like to know which one of these is most important, to you personally, when raising children? And the second most important? **Base:** all respondents (% 'most important' and 'second most important'), by country (©Anna Lindh/Ipsos 2016).

of children in SEM countries goes along with the condemning of curiosity and celebrating obedience as a central value. Only family solidarity causes a problem and makes it impossible to provide a disconcerting typology of 'clarity' which is so predictable when we choose to settle for average values from a positivist perspective that favours a linear reading of history.

The database offers other possibilities that I do not have the time to fully explore here. What is certain is that the question of values continues to draw multiple borders between the North and the South, the countries of the Eastern and Western Mediterranean, between countries of Catholic tradition and those of Protestant, Muslim and Jewish ones, countries with a French colonial past and

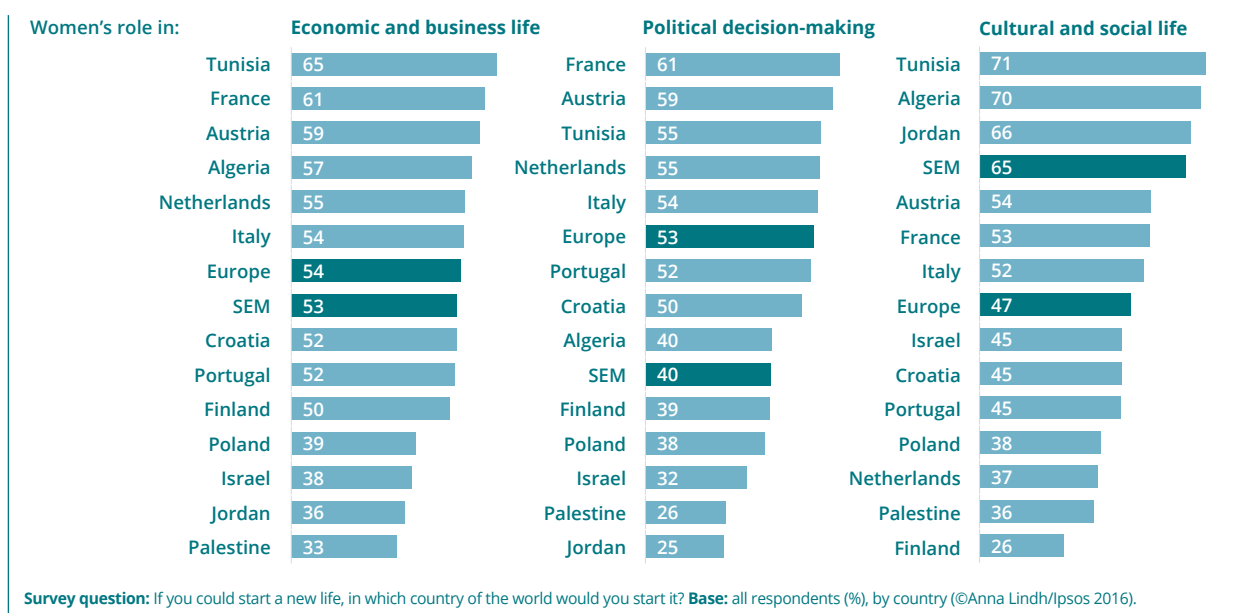
those with a British colonial past. But these borders shift and are largely impacted by current events.

When we refer back to the level of each country a certain discrepancy is noticeable in the perceptions and judgements about each other, according to their conception of the preponderant values in the 'Other'. There is a resurgence of confrontation between countries that have a common history or an ongoing common experience, including territorial conflict, tourism or emigration. This confrontation creates an attraction-repulsion effect, but hints at a certain amount of similarity.

It seems to me that mutual perceptions tend to match. The difference is not in the order of priorities but in their intensity.

Chart 2.3

Perceptions about women's roles in society, by country (% 'greater role')



It can be noted that some paradoxes disrupt the order of the pre-established categories. The Portuguese respondents, although coming from a country reputedly of strong Catholic tradition, nurtured by a Messianic 'sebastianist' memory, but also troubled by a 'painful' experience of migration and decolonisation, at the same time prefer, in a significant proportion, to teach values of respect for other cultures (71%) and family solidarity (67%), while refusing by a significant majority to teach religious culture (6%) – the same proportion as in France, an aggressively secular country, known for its anticlerical tradition. Algeria offers another illustration of the importance of a historical trajectory of a sensitive state/nation and society, that, after more than a century of French colonisation – which gave an illusion of intra-Mediterranean territorial continuity – has reinvented an Arab-Islamic identity. Algerian respondents are by far the most numerous to prioritise the teaching of the culture and values of religion (71%) and obedience (51%) and are suspicious of the values of independence (9%) and curiosity (2%). The Palestinian respondents, who in theory have a certain admiration for the history of Algeria, give closer results regarding the values of obedience and religion (44%) but are nevertheless 17 points below the average of SEM countries. On many issues, their results are moving away, getting closer to their Israeli neighbours when it comes to the importance they place on the values of independence (34%), where they are in third place behind Israel and Finland with 47% and 41% respectively. Concerning the value of curiosity, they come joint second with Israel (34%), just behind Austria (36%) with 8 points more than the European average and 26 points more than the SEM country average (Chart 2.2).

Hope for an increased role for women

I cannot conclude this overview without confessing a feeling of perplexity on account of the frequent paradoxes that blur our firmest certainties. That is why I want to refer back to the respondents' assessment of women's role in society. The answers allow high hopes for the convergence of certain values in spite of the delay by Muslim exegetes in producing a more enlightened interpretation on the status of women. Social dynamics are influencing representations; the academic achievements of girls are cracking patriarchal ideology. In the three fields addressed – economics, politics, and social and cultural life – only the idea of a more important political role for women comes up against a great deal of reluctance. In the last four places are countries where religion plays an important role in shaping identities (Poland, Israel, Jordan and Palestine) (Chart 2.3).

The acceptance by the respondents in SEM countries for a prominent role for women in social and cultural fields corresponds to a traditional representation of the gender division of labour (65% for SEM countries compared with 47% for the EU countries). Yet when Tunisians come first on the list with 65% in favour of an increased role for women in economic fields and Algerians are ahead of the Dutch (57% compared with 55%), we are obliged to take seriously the Tunisian government's desire to change the inheritance laws and to entertain some hope of a possible questioning of the frame of reference on the Mediterranean woman bequeathed by Germaine Tillion.

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