The Mediterranean between Popular Imaginary and Realities

MOHAMED TOZY

The empirical work carried out through the Anna Lindh/Gallup Poll reveals that the Mediterranean is a tangible and complex reality. Mohamed Tozy explores the multiple cultural and spatial expansions of the interactions between the people across the two shores of the Mediterranean and the values they hold for themselves and their neighbours. Tozy underlines the importance of viewing the evolution of values within a historical and social perspective, arguing that there can no longer be a traditional dichotomy between 'North' and 'South'.

Venturing into a Euro-Mediterranean comparison can be seen as an arbitrary exercise. The familiarity we have with Europe and the Mediterranean would not necessarily spare us from the deconstruction task of this research.

We cannot insist enough on the risk of such a venture since we decided to work on the Euro-Mediterranean zone and research it as a social science category. Indeed, choosing a representative sample of 13126 people from the Euro-Mediterranean population is an act of good faith more than a scientific one. Decision taken – though arbitrary – carries a rational intentionality which limits itself and implies reflexive thinking. Such reflexivity is based on a scientific historicism which relies on a deconstruction of evidences and an argumentative definition of its approach. Needless to say, our resistances are in numerous forms that counter to dislodge a long term work.

Crucial issues of data management, categorization and comparison scales have either been scarcely tackled or totally ignored within discussions that took place before the Survey relative to managing problem itemization and question formulation. It would be too premature to sort out collected data: data management based either on a unique sample, national samples or intermediate samples (group of European countries/ group of countries on the southern and eastern Mediterranean shore). Such an issue cannot be overlooked by sociological arguments.

Topics of typology and reading perspectives remain crucial in this context and no choice is compelling. If we consider the constitution of the two categories structure proposed by the questionnaire – European and the countries on the southern and eastern shore of the Mediterranean – we quickly realize that the first is highly institutional, thus grouping European Union (EU) countries while the second is based on deduction. This choice yields a heterogeneous structure, which bears a strong preconception and presupposes a geographical and cultural homogeneity that one may not proclaim. On

the contrary, strengthening specificity by resorting mean values in order to narrowing gaps within each category and hiding punctual similarities, examples of which abound are: Lebanon and Sweden, Greece and Turkey, Hungary, Egypt and France.

Facing the choice between a prescriptive typology and a typology that would result from affinities and regularities resulting from empirical data, we have opted to face them. This is a more elaborate task which involves a controlled intuition via an opening on a historicist sensitivity. Such a choice implies the acceptance of the sociology of complexity, which would not be destabilized by the fact that these types may tie or untie in terms of congruence.

Before retackling the analysis of the Survey parts which I am responsible of, particularly the meaning of the Mediterranean for the people of Europe and of the countries on the southern and eastern shore of the Mediterranean, the realities of interactions between these populations and the values they have of themselves and their close and remote neighbors, I will attempt to circumscribe the multiple cultural and spatial expansions of the Mediterranean concept, and attempt to pinpoint arrangements aiming at integrating or excluding them according to current stakes. This breakdown of the category allows us to focus on the matter of the other and the border. In this framework, our paradigm is the cultural anthropology (Tozy and Albera, 2005) , one of the closest disciplines of this debate on identities and differences and one of the most compromised by the Mediterranean challenges. It will be the good example of projects of breakdown and consolidation of European and Mediterranean categories.

The Mediterranean crisis as a 'venue' is a problem of determining the regional categories in terms of comparison. In this respect, one cannot help notice that some authors associate rejecting the Mediterranean notion to wavering proposals. In some cases, the same researcher may defend three different comparative perspectives rejecting the
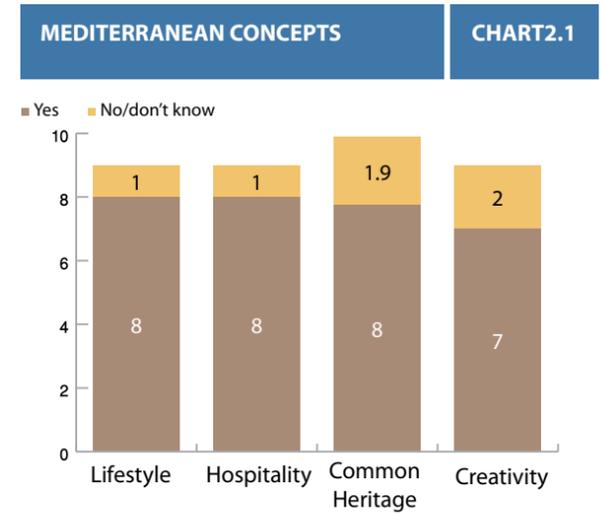
CHART2.1

MEDITERRANEAN CONCEPTS

Base: All respondents, % of aggregated country data. Chart developed by M. Tozy on the basis of the Anna Lindh / Gallup Poll 2010

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'Mediterranean'. Generally speaking, the comparison units used as replacement (whether the Middle East, Europe, states and ethno-states) are plagued with the same problems blamed on the Mediterranean concept. Whatever scale is used, one runs the risk of being metaphysical, centralized, ethnocentric and essentialist. In addition, discussion of the required conditions of a comparative unit has laid ground for cultural continuity and uniformity. The Mediterranean category is rejected because this zone fails to unite characteristics that would be found in smaller homogenous units. In my opinion, the opposite is happening: the concentration in the Mediterranean circle could lead to prospective comparisons, because of the complex interaction between resemblances and differences.

In this concept, I have chosen to analyze survey data while avoiding preconceptions and some new works that artificially increase the contrast between North Europe and the Mediterranean, at the risk of generating a neo-orientalism.

A Meaningful Perception of the Mediterranean

One of the first contributions to this survey is the building of a sample of the Euro-Mediterranean population. This step favors several possibilities for data processing. It allows several spatial and geopolitical (North/South, East/West) as well as socioeconomic and demographic variables (GDP per capita, IHD, etc.) to give a rational explanation to the results. Survey designers were concerned about this matter in relation to the braudelian concept of the 'Mediterranean actor'. It was important to know whether the 'mare nostrum' would make sense for interviewees.

The Survey reveals that the term Mediterranean was meaningful for four respondents out of five. However, the gaps proved to be mostly unimportant between more
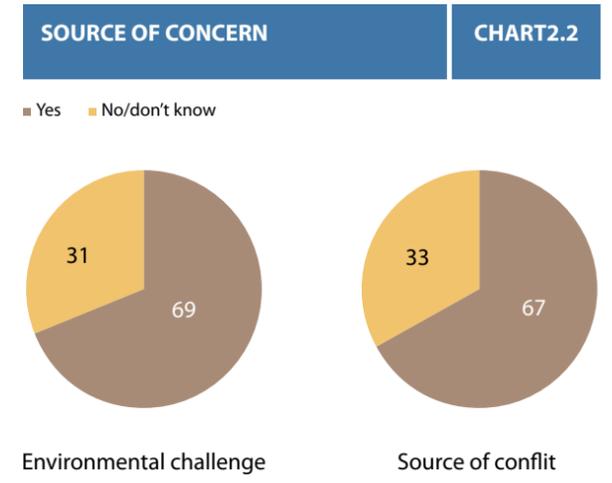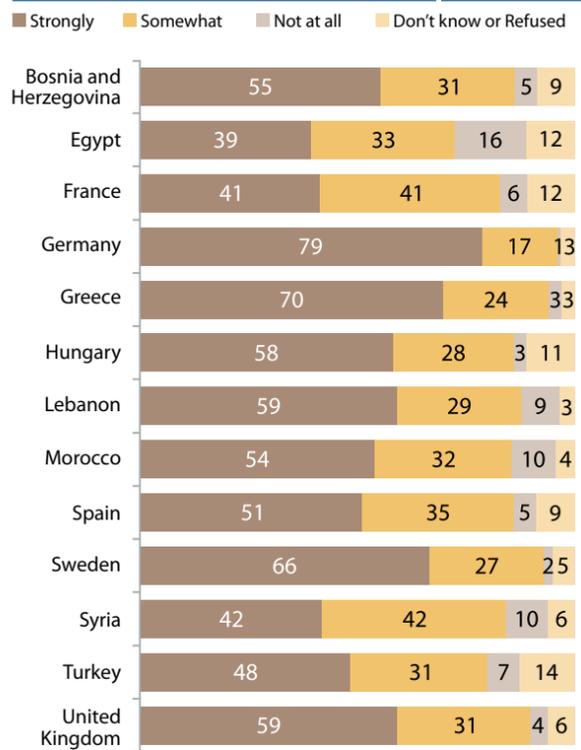
indifferent interviewees and those most involved. Pessimistic and optimistic projections have proven to be mostly true. The positive image of the Mediterranean proves that stereotyped images in the media (lifestyle, diet, a welcoming and hospitable space) are the unique characteristics that shape the future towards a link either newly created or normalized.

About 80% of respondents associated the Mediterranean to a positive virtue and expressed it as a true curiosity and frank desire to reach for and discover the other as well as the deep conviction of a proximity which would draw its legitimacy from historic depth. More than 80.5% of the respondents envisage the Mediterranean as a common heritage (Chart 2.1). The Mediterranean is also a source of concern, respondents however have demonstrated some realistic concerns as to the possible change of this positive image. On the other hand, nearly 68% of respondents see the Mediterranean as a possible 'source of conflict' in the region. However, links between environmental stakes and the concept of a potential tension are not explicitly expressed. Qualitative research may help us probe this hypothesis, particularly if the debate involves issues such as climate change and issues related to water stakes (Chart 2.2).

Beyond the aggregated results clearly demonstrate how much the Mediterranean means to every respondent and left no one indifferent, there are still nuances which sketch out some affinities that may appear as paradoxical, but may - once conceptualized - become intelligible or at least allow some assumptions.

To assess such a complexity which does not discredit the reality of a consensus, we have chosen two images/values for an analysis exercise of this complexity. The two values are stereotyped, and not multifaceted: 'hospitality' and 'conflict.' We have avoided 'creativity' which is scarcely recognized as a

HOSPITALITY — CHART 2.3

Strongly ■ Somewhat ■ Not at all ■ Don't know or Refused

| Country	Strongly	Somewhat	Not at all	Don't know or Refused
Bosnia and Herzegovina	55	31	5	9
Egypt	39	33	16	12
France	41	41	6	12
Germany	79	17	1	3
Greece	70	24	3	3
Hungary	58	28	3	11
Lebanon	59	29	9	3
Morocco	54	32	10	4
Spain	51	35	5	9
Sweden	66	27	2	5
Syria	42	42	10	6
Turkey	48	31	7	14
United Kingdom	59	31	4	6

Survey Question: Different people have different thoughts about what the Mediterranean region represents and the vision for the future. I will read out a set of ideas/images that may come to the minds of different people and please tell me if you think these characterize the Mediterranean region strongly, somewhat or not at all? **Base**: All respondents, % by country (©Anna Lindh / Gallup Poll 2010).

SOURCE OF CONFLICT — CHART 2.4

Strongly ■ Somewhat ■ Not at all ■ Don't know or Refused

Country	Strongly	Somewhat	Not at all	Don't know or Refused
Bosnia and Herzegovina	30	40	16	14
Egypt	21	44	19	16
France	21	41	27	11
Germany	41	42	7	10
Greece	48	34	13	5
Hungary	23	43	16	18
Lebanon	42	33	19	6
Morocco	32	37	21	10
Spain	35	39	19	7
Sweden	33	49	12	6
Syria	27	30	28	15
Turkey	13	28	34	25
United Kingdom	21	44	23	12

Survey Question: Different people have different thoughts about what the Mediterranean region represents and the vision for the future. I will read out a set of ideas/images that may come to the minds of different people and please tell me if you think these characterize the Mediterranean region strongly, somewhat or not at all? **Base**: All respondents, % by country (©Anna Lindh / Gallup Poll 2010).

common character, but which suggests contrasting contents, even if declared as such by the respondents. Interpretation possibilities often stop short of its multifaceted character. Creativity may be interpreted as inventiveness, genius, innovation, cleverness, bricolage and the capacity to overcome obstacles by resorting to practical informality. It could point as much to Leonardo da Vinci, as much as it would to contraband and smuggling.

Hospitality is a value/ image highly favoured by tourism marketing, but is – at the same time – part of the oriental ego of many Southern populations and often recognized by others as well. Many results favor this association between Hospitality and the Mediterranean. As many as 63% of the population interviewed are in favour of this concept and may reach 85% if one adds those who consider it as a potentially acceptable concept. Paradoxically, of the four most favourable countries to the concept of Mediterranean hospitality (68%), three are in Northern Europe (Germany, Sweden and England) and the four most skeptical (42.5%) are on the Mediterranean shores (Turkey, Syria, France and Egypt) (Chart 2.3).
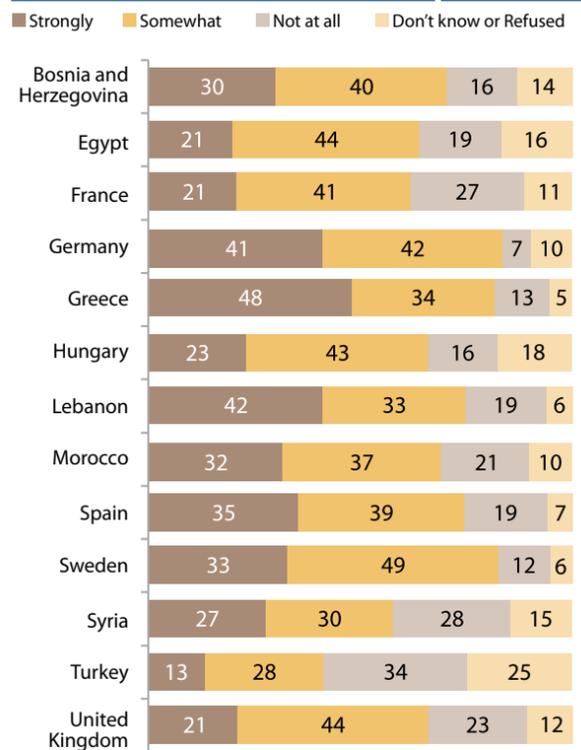
How to Explain such a Paradox? The first explanation is based on our experience of the other. The combined spatial and cultural distance favours homesickness and the experience of vacationing might explain why the British, Swedes and Germans are more likely to link the Mediterranean to hospitality than others. Indeed, these three Northern European countries provide many tourists and one can clearly see here the strong influence of the big marketing image so dear to tour operators. As for the group of more skeptical countries, two hypotheses come to mind: the first concerning the issue of proximity. In France for instance, the Mediterranean is symbolized by Le Midi and Corsica, which are hardly symbolic of hospitality for French people from the north. As for other countries, that-is-to-say Egypt, Turkey and Syria, the competition between the national and Mediterranean spirits could be envisaged. Respondents from these countries where such values are deeply engrained, tend to see hospitality as a national virtue that is often perceived as stronger than that of neighboring countries. This game of differences is often muddled by proximity and may, on the contrary, be strengthened by geographical and cultural distances.

When considering the Mediterranean as a source of conflict many factors may be involved in such variable concern: in our opinion, the historical experience of each individual country may be the most important, but may influence indirectly according to the concept and nature of conflict in respondents. 'Is it a real conflict or merely the hazard of local or subregional conflict that might be associated with the Mediterranean?' In fact , parties involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which might be attracted to associate it to the Mediterranean consider it as a painstaking element of the Middle East. Only 27% Syrians and 21% Egyptians consider the Mediterranean as a major source of conflict. In a similar vein, hardly 13% Turks consider the Mediterranean as a source of conflict, although they have encountered the Cypriot conflict that is seen more as a local conflict that would threaten neither Mediterranean nor European security. Another perception for the Greek respondents (48%) who have interest to associate their experience of the conflict with a wider geopolitical framework. A relative anxiety of Northern countries was expressed by respectively 41% German and 33% Swedish respondents that can be explained by the combined effect of distance and historical experience. These two countries are deeply involved in the management of certain conflicts and the distance effect allows linking these conflicts to large geopolitical groupings (Chart 2.4).

Interactions in the Euro-Mediterranean Region

The most important part of this Survey is the evaluation of the volume and nature of interactions between the different populations. It is a powerful interaction, whose main actors are migrants, whether tourist or immigrant and businessmen. This is a concrete interaction which generates interpersonal contacts as well as virtual ones via the Internet which is a good alternative to reach others, particularly in countries with restricted circulation.

Four out of ten respondents of the southeastern Mediterranean have or had relatives or friends in Europe (42%). Results are different among countries of emigration towards Europe which are in strong interaction including Turkey (61%), Morocco (58%) and Lebanon (55%) where more than half the respondents declared having relatives or friends on the old continent and Near Eastern countries with different migratory paths. Syrian respondents (73%) are known to have a predilection towards migration to Latin America and the United States and Egyptians (88%) are more oriented towards the Gulf and declared not having family or friends in Europe.

In Europe, Germany, France and Italy are the first and preferential European destinations for relatives and friends of the respondents in more oriental and southern Mediterranean countries. These results match immigration and naturalization data in these countries. Immigration figures match the fact that three-quarters of Turkish

respondents who declared having relatives and friends in Europe said that they live in Germany (75%), France (22%) and the Netherlands (18%). From 1998 to 2007 a total of 444,800 Turks moved to Germany and 584,248 have acquired the German nationality. The same observation applies to Moroccans in France. From 1998 to 2006, 190,600 Moroccans have moved to France, mostly within the context of family reunification (OECD, 2009). Moroccans are the first naturalized population in Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and France and the second in Spain, with a total count of 641,990 people from 1998 to 2006.

Another figure of mobility in this Survey is the European tourist. Approximately, one European out of three respondents (36%) has visited a southern or eastern Mediterranean country. Paradoxically, Swedes were the most frequent travelers across the shores of the Mediterranean (51%) followed by Germans and French (43%) and the British (42%). Spanish tourists fall last in the list (26%). Turkey was the most visited destination among five out of eight European countries. Half German, Swede and Greek respondents visiting the Mediterranean have been to Turkey. Out of every two Spanish respondents, one (48% of respondents) expressed his/her preference for Morocco, probably because of its geographical proximity. Many French prefer Tunisia (45%) while the British favor Spain (40%).

Tourism and immigration probably allow human contact, but not necessarily the link. We have tried to prove relations beyond the physical presence. Interpersonal contacts are much less important than the rate of travel on either shore. One out of three Europeans (64%) and one in four citizens from the southern and eastern Mediterranean (76%) has either met or engaged in a conversation with a citizen from the destination country. Swedes (52%) and French (51%) as European countries and the Lebanese (41%) as southern and eastern Mediterranean countries are those who had the highest number of contacts. Hungarians (12%), Egyptians (9%) and Syrians (7%) had the lowest rates of contact with other nationalities.

Reasons and modalities of such interaction vary from one region to the other, in addition to basic motivations such as tourism for the Europeans and immigration for the southern shore. A total of 38% of European travel is for business purposes. Respondents from southern and eastern Mediterranean countries have declared using the Internet to tie contacts (24%), against only (4%) Europeans.

Values and Representations between Similarities and Differences

It was fundamental for a Euro-Mediterranean study to take the risk of assessing issues related to values and representations. Intense discussions preceded the launch of the Study to settle matters on presupposition and prejudice of some people over others. Another matter has been the definition of the

| VALUES CONSIDERED IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN EDUCATION BY RESPONDENTS | | | | | | | | CHART2.5 |

	Value priorities of respondents In their home country			Perception about values in European countries			Perception about values in the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries		
	Family solidarity	Religion	Curiosity	Family solidarity	Religion	Curiosity	Family solidarity	Religion	Curiosity
Bosnia - Herzegovina	20,3	6,9	6	17,4	9,2	6,5	18,8	16	8,1
Egypt	3,1	50,6	16,4	4,5	12,8	39,8	6,9	38	17,4
France	28	5,9	7,6	22,7	4,9	9,7	25,7	23,3	5
Germany	44,4	2,6	8,5	32,4	10	5	33,1	34,4	2,5
Greece	35,1	6,9	2,4	27,2	8	3	19,9	34,2	2
Hungary	61,8	6,9	3,5	51,2	10,2	5,2	34,6	45,7	1,5
Lebanon	21,3	39,6	11,5	4,2	4,8	24,7	15,3	45	5,4
Morocco	7,8	46,4	13,8	1,8	10,2	28	8,1	46,6	8,3
Spain	29,9	6,5	4,6	26,2	5,9	3,6	18,4	29,8	2,9
Sweden	13	1,6	26,4	28,4	12,5	9,3	30,4	33,6	5,3
Syria	9,9	23,3	16,6	10,6	14,3	24,8	8	38,2	8,5
Turkey	35	40	2,5	17,5	21,2	6,9	15,2	49,7	4,2
United Kingdom	29,9	5,9	4,6	36,5	7,6	2,7	34,7	20,1	2,2

Base: All respondents, % Total. The Chart establishes a comparison among the 13 surveyed countries taking into account three values: family solidarity, curiosity and religious beliefs and presenting the perception that respondents have about people's priority values in other surveyed countries. Chart developed by M. Tozy on the basis of the Anna Lindh / Gallup Poll 2010.

concept itself, which I will discuss below, as well as the means to introduce this type of questions over a large population sample. An important risk was to draw an imaginary frontier to suggest hypotheses on the very formulation of the questions and the choice of precoded responses. It was quite difficult to avoid hypothesis on the state of representations on themes such as family ties, the spread of the secularization process, the relation between tradition and authority given that a linear concept of change would implicitly underline our theories that modernization spreading from European lights would become an unavoidable model.

Values are collective preferences seen as ideal and which refer to means of being, thinking or acting collectively. Talking about values is equivalent to talking of evaluation and is an explicit or implicit comparison often leading to establishing preferences among practices and beliefs. The general principle is that values have practical functions: they inspire, guide, legitimize, rationalize, orient and set into a hierarchy practical individual and collective actions. Values are thus set into an ideal order, but are expressed in practices, opinions and norms, and observed through verbal and nonverbal

manifestations. Believing in gender equality, tolerance, prevalence of collectivity, freedom of the individual, and so on, may lead such practices, opinions, etc. Based on values people adhere to, the starting principle is to make choices, adopt practices and reject others. The same value may inspire a multitude of religious or social practices. Believing, for example, in the necessity to follow religion in its original pure form leads several positive and negative practices and attitudes. Values may also lead to such practices that may come into contradiction with other recognized values. One must ascertain that values are collective preferences which refer to means of being or acting in ways that people or social groups acknowledge as ideal (Parsons in Joas and Kluckhohn, 1959).

Curiosity, solidarity, freedom, autonomy of the individual, home country, obedience, religion, and so on are examples of values. In life, people prefer several things: people prefer the cinema over theater, the sea to the mountains, spring to winter or vice-versa. In the world of values, the concept of preference follows norms: it is not what one prefers that counts, but rather what one should prefer. The notion of

value implies a distinction between what is preferred and what is preferable (Tozy in El Ayadi and Rachik, 2007). Preferring the cinema to theater is more a matter of taste and not necessarily linked to a normative obligation: one is never compelled to like the cinema, although that does not apply to values. In countries where the value of home country is revered, one must love his home country to the extent of giving it priority over one's family, belongings and often one's own life. The Survey should take these points into consideration to avoid any identity assignment, based on results that are mostly arguable, without losing any of their suggested values. Taking the results too literally and away from any historical context may enclose societies and individuals in a system of values which would impact their mode of action.

In the Survey, the sample population was first asked to define itself in relation to six values: 'obedience', 'family solidarity', 'curiosity', 'independence', 'respect of the other' and 'respect of religion'. Respondents were asked to state which values are considered as important in children education. Later, the population was asked to give its opinion on which European countries it thought was the most important and which values were preferred in southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. In each question, the population was asked to express itself with a first and second choice. Before proceeding further, we would like to propose a comprehensive table on three values considered as most sure. This example allows us to delve into an analysis of homogenous groups, since the list of proposed values does not allow establishing an index of tolerance, opening and modernism. We will analyze further the paradox of the strong ties of southern countries to religion and to values such as 'curiosity', despite some distancing from families. At the same time, developed countries are less in favor of encouraging child 'curiosity' in education, but strongly favor 'family solidarity'.

Results are sometimes coherent, with one's image corresponding to that of others of oneself, but the value mentioned does not bear the same meaning. This is the case with religion which may refer to a value which is compatible with modernism, individual freedom or the struggle against injustice, but may be considered also as an archaism or an opium (Chart 2.5).

Sometimes, results may not be matching; for example, European respondents see 'family solidarity' as important in southern country as in their own countries, while respondents from the countries on the southen and eastern shore of the Mediterranean think the opposite. In this context, nostalgia for a lost brotherhood is followed by a desire to quit the community. In fact, answers remind us of the historical path of each country and of the vision of others. This is not a uniform vision. It is nurtured by the experience of each society, but is neither fixed nor 'natural'. It is always the fruit of history.

Unexpected Affinities Except for Religion

Globally, results of the Survey are very surprising if one considers the matter of religion as an exception in that it draws an expected disparity between European and southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. The importance granted by southern and eastern Mediterranean countries to religious socialisation can be explained by differences on the position of religion on the normative system and its strategic character in the definition of political legitimacies. In this respect, one can distinguish three groups:

Northern European countries (e.g. Sweden and Germany) leave little room for religion in children education, with respectively 1.6% and 2.6% of respondent votes. Countries where religion is socially important, but not a matter of state (e.g. Bosnia Herzegovina and other European countries as Spain, France, Hungary and Great Britain). In these countries, Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches occupy an important position, though it is currently on the decline. Although these countries have undergone a different process of secularization, they still share this constant. Indeed, elite personalities have brought to reality the process of separation of the religious from the political.

The inclusion of religion in the value base to be transmitted is not a priority and is considered to be of relative significance for 6%-7%. The third group comprises southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, with responses ranging from 32% for Syria and 50% for Egypt. Such responses are not surprising and do not lend themselves to a North/South comparison. They can only be revitalized by placing them in context. One must keep in mind that we are facing political systems which have built their normative reference on a massive utilization of religion and religious socialization being an objective as such. Even in such countries that have gone through a period of declericalization, such as Kemalist Turkey and Baathist Syria, religion was never truly marginalized. In this context, what could surprising is to find a Moroccan or an Egyptian out of every two respondents and two Lebanese, two Turks and two Syrians out of every three respondents considering religion is not the most important value to convey. This result grants a relative weight to the myth that religion may be a universal solution, further acknowledged by several surveys on religion at the core of daily life (Tozy, El Ayadi and Rachik, 2007).

For other values, ('curiosity', 'independence', 'obedience', 'familial solidarity', 'respect of the other'), the distribution of responses shows unexpected affinities. The distance is thus increasing between the concept of self (i.e. the values that respondents present as being theirs) and their opinion of others as being abyssal. Respondents are often trapped by stereotypes when one must express a point of view of others. The 'other' - here - does not correspond to categories one has conceived during this survey (Europe/souhtern and eastern Mediterranean countries). Its presence is an indicator of otherness that starts at the doorstep of the space of the

state/nation duality. The main conclusion is the strength and durability of the identity principle including within an entity such as the European Union. This will be discussed further on matters of family solidarity.

Family Solidarity as a False Perception Detector

It is usual in the extension of modernisation studies (Giddens, 1987; Goody, 1985 ; De Singly 1988 ; Taylor, 1992 and 1998) to consider the emergence of the individual as an actor and of individualism as a value. The corollary of such evolution is a crisis of traditional family ties and a relaxation of intrafamilial solidarity bonds. This movement is observed in most industrial societies and is consolidated by the passage from a large family to a nuclear one and the importance of the welfare state to fulfill the needs of a horizontal solidarity. The enlarged family and familial solidarity are thus associated in our imagination to the traditional society and forms of mechanical solidarity considered today as old-fashioned. As a consequence it was acceptable to believe that specific country respondents, who have lived the demographic transition and industrial revolution, to be the least bound to values of familial solidarity. Survey results contradict the existence of a common sense shared by profanes and the academic community alike. Paradoxically, the group of countries where respondents think of familial solidarity as a marginal place in the body of values to convey to children is heterogenous. The majority belong to southern and eastern Mediterranean countries (Morocco, Egypt and Syria 7%). Sweden is part of this group where the society is in a transition stage towards modernization. Groups of respondents, who consider familial solidarity important is as non-homogenous and cohabitate in it countries such as Hungary (61%), Germany (44.4%), Turkey (35%), Spain and Great Britain (29.9%), France (28%), Lebanon (21.3%) and Bosnia (20.3%) (Chart 2.5).

Several assumptions may explain such paradox. Why would respondents from less developed countries find familial solidarity unimportant, although the empirical observation of their daily life proves the opposite? Lengthening school years, unemployment of the youth, housing crises, lack of social protection due to weak social policies show that the essential factor to social equilibrium is through family support. This reality – that characterizes these resourcefulness societies – is probably badly perceived as not valued by the discourse of modernization. The family is often perceived as a burden and even an obstacle jeopardizing the emergence and emancipation of the individual actor. The case of Sweden does not fit in this explanation. In my opinion, Sweden sees itself and is recognized as a model for the management of solidarity at a global system which shows respect for such a model. This does not apply to other European countries who demonstrate a certain degree of skepticism towards their states and focus their hopes on familial solidarity, given that the concept of hyperindividuality nurtures a certain nostalgia towards community values.

Respondent opinion on inherent values in European countries, results often conform to various stereotypes and to the vision of every country on its individual national identity. Most important gaps between national values and values of others are encountered with Swedish respondents who value curiosity more than other European countries (26.6% vs. 9.3%), while obedience is less valued in Sweden (9.6%) versus Europe (20.3%). Swedish respondents tend to disregard religious values more (1.6%) than in the rest of Europe (11.4%). Reverse prejudices are seen in Southern and eastern Mediterranean countries versus Europe. Moroccans find religion to be less important in Europe (9.6%) than in their home country (46%) (Chart 2.5).

A Tangible and Complex Reality

The Mediterranean has always been considered a 'given' geographical data, but rarely seen as a cultural ensemble. Its fate is often at stake between two diametrically opposing representations: a border that cannot be crossed, delimiting two opposing spaces of civilizations or a utopist 'mare nostrum' drawn from a 'history' that does not refer to the other.

One of the main challenges of this analysis is to consider the Mediterranean in its evolution as a 'reference' ensconced in our imagination and a political bias project founded on a complex but promising historical reality. Our concern is to make our complexity discourse audible by calling for caution vis-à-vis the knowledge of urgency. The Mediterranean, as a study target and a field of comparison, is the first step of this enterprise which aims at describing the Mediterranean as, using words borrowed from Wittgenstein, a network of resemblances of overlapping and interwoven families: either global similarities or, occasionally, similarities of detail.

This empirical work sustains our assumption that the Mediterranean is a tangible and complex reality. It confirms as well that diverse populations have constantly rubbed elbows, observed, known and frequented each other within this space. It also sustains that populations continue doing so beyond any previsions, despite obstacles and biases they may encounter. This close neighbourhood has engendered a wide array of situations: from conflict to peaceful confrontation, reaching to interpenetration and syncretism. This work is indeed the first step down this path and calls upon us in more than one way in terms of interpretation methodology and survey design. This work also invites us to humility and caution. For a larger perception of our assets and limits, time as well as patient and skeptical research are required, supported by a deep belief in the solidarity of interpretations and nurtured by a form of humanism more centered on the layout of individuality and subjective human intuition than on the ideas received.

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