

In Search of the Mediterranean Core Values

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The unique approach - and associated risks - taken by the Anna Lindh Foundation in its pioneering polling on the Euro-Med region is explored in an opening article by Mohamed Tozy. The author exposes the evolution of trends in perceptions of values, based on an analysis of the 2009 and 2012 surveys, with a particular attention to the current socio-political context. Increased mutual interest and interactions between the region's citizens offer, according to Tozy, the most relevant basis for a long-term union across the Mediterranean.

In a previous work, we had the opportunity when analysing the results of the Poll to raise some epistemological and methodological issues related to the practice of this type of Survey. These questions remain valid for this second exercise. The construction of a sample for a Euro-Mediterranean comparison is arbitrary insofar it brings together the Mediterranean and Europe thinking that the familiarity we have with the concept absolves us from having a critical or cautious approach. We cannot emphasise enough the riskiness of this undertaking for which we took the decision to think Euro-Med and investigate an area promoted to the rank of object of social science. To decide to create a sample with over 25,000 citizens from 18 countries and hope for its representativeness of a Euro-Mediterranean population is more an act of faith than a scientific act. This is a bet on the future and a quest to provide solid basis to a project that has barely started and is facing multiple barriers: the bad will of each other, the nationalist reactions, the burst of new conflicts leading to a climate of political instability (Libya, Mali, Syria, Ukraine more recently). This bias – even if arbitrary - has a rational intentionality and shared belief, at least among the promoters of this project, and it is supported by the responses given to the first Survey. This re-ensures us on the performative qualities of such work.

Uniqueness of the exercise

The notion of narrative identity borrowed from P. Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 1985) permits us to think elegantly and accurately about this process of identity-building which this observatory of values under construction refers to. This is a space at the centre of a scheme for shared narratives that avoids a fixed concept that is usually associated to the concept of identity. The story has the advantage of accepting pluralism, supporting the sedimentation, and playing at the same time the dynamics of forgetting and remembering, of similarity and difference. The elements outlined in this text allow fixing a frame that unfolds as boundaries defining what is

outside and inside, and shapes interior layouts that help in organising the plurality providing a spectrum of shades and colors and offers a grammar of elective affinities. Beyond the differences, the frame presents us with an air of Mediterranean family and reassures us about the option of a rapprochement between the European Union (EU) and its southern shore and eastern border.

Even considered as a contribution to the consolidation of a narrative identity, the Anna Lindh Report about representations must maintain a degree of reflexivity that largely determines its level of credibility. A caution which also allows us to practice the nuance, to curb the certainties around 'surveys' and to open the space for reasoned and modest work whose main ambition is to maintain a dynamic where the knowledge of representations is only a minor aspect. In this second article (Tozy, 2010), I am not going back to methodological issues discussed within the Scientific Committee. Things that seem evident in the practices of major pollsters or responsables of European barometers should be questioned also in this particular case especially since we have the ambition to create a precedent. The mode of administration of the polling, the wording of questions, the choice of options provided for the answers of respondents, including the options to identify priority values, are as important as the issues related to the investigation, and they correspond to the issues we raised in the previous Anna Lindh Report. We refer especially to all matters related to the categorisation and the production of typologies, including the option of minimising national traditions and singular trajectories of states in favor of subgroups, as the European countries and the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEM). We should not forget that for the first subgroup, European barometers hold a series of sub-categories that are meaningful and translate degrees of integration and particular identities (formerly the EEC, the Schengen countries, countries of the Euro, Anglo-Saxon countries, countries with Catholic tradition, the Latin countries the countries of southern Europe, the Europe of 28). Things are more complicated

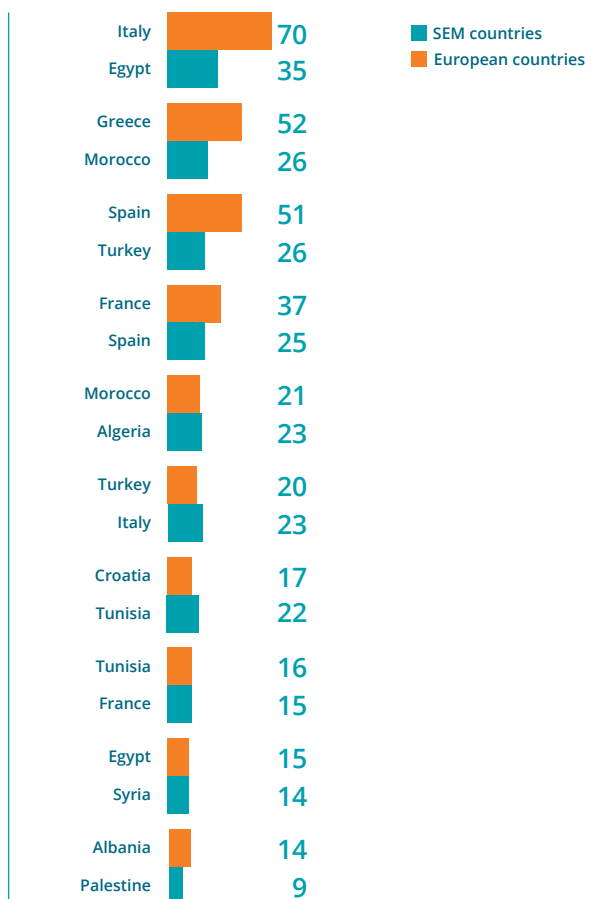
even if the complex reality of SEM countries has no story to tell to the extent and that the tradition of the barometer for this set should be constructed from scratch. SEM do not even exist as a subset of the World Values Survey. We will not repeat enough that data processing from a single sample, from national or intermediate samples (European Group/SEM group) is an issue that we cannot solve with only sociological arguments. We noted earlier that the question of types and angles of readings is crucial in this work and there is no legitimate choice.

The context framing the analysis

The second Survey conducted by the Anna Lindh Foundation takes place in a particular context: a few months after the events of the 'Arab Spring' but also with all the difficulties related to the start of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) project which has lost in this context of change some driving force both on the northern and the southern shore. In the North because of a change by means of presidential elections (N. Sarkozy), in the South by means of a popular uprising (H. Mubarak) which brought to power a new regime at the antipodes of the first at least for its values, and which was taken away by means of a coup acclaimed by a large part of the Egyptian population.

The current investigation took into account the complexity but also the richness of the historical moment by expanding the sample in view of a consolidation of the 2009 Anna Lindh/Gallup Poll results but also by nurturing the ambition to measure consequential changes to the Arab Spring. These changes related to freedom, religion and democracy, recorded by dozens of researches, emerge as a very likely hypothesis and encouraged the integration into the sample of the current Survey previously polled countries (Egypt, Morocco, Turkey, Germany and Spain). Consequently, the problem is to answer questions raised by the 2010 Report: Is the Mediterranean a popular and social reality? Can we talk about convergence of values or conflict of values? What is the nature of interactions between Euro-Mediterranean citizens? But the question is also to respond to other issues related to the ongoing story on the southern (Arab Spring) and northern shore (Euro crisis). We ask indeed whether the values of progress came out enhanced from these crises. What is the impact of the current events on religion? A very legitimate question when different sequences of the revolutionary cycle are observed: fall of dictators, free elections that led Muslim Brotherhood to power and even Salafist groups, who are at odds with the values promoted by the Euro-Mediterranean project, and the opposite - as we learned from the history of the time of Solon, Pisistratus and Clisthene - by questioning the course of democracy even before reaching any compromise, still open on unfathomable ways.

Chart 2.1
Top 10 countries that come to mind when hearing about the Mediterranean region



Survey question: Could you please name all the countries which come to your mind when you hear about the Mediterranean region? **Base:** % of all respondents, % of mentions by regions (© Anna Lindh/Gallup Poll 2012).

Sharing the Mediterranean

The second edition of the Survey confirms the 2009 results regarding the issue of countries linked to the Mediterranean and the answers bear no surprise. The most visited countries topped: Italy, Greece, Spain and Morocco. The order is however not the same for European and SEM respondents. Only Morocco remains among the top five countries mentioned by both groups, while Italy which is the first for 70% of the citizens of the Europe group, ranks only in sixth position for southern and eastern Mediterranean countries with 23% (Chart 2.1). Regarding the perception of the Mediterranean region, the positive image is confirmed, even if, as it happened in the first Survey, there is a certain ambivalence.

The Mediterranean is mainly associated with positive values: hospitality (50.5%), food and Mediterranean lifestyle (56.4%) and a common history (49.5%), with higher percentages than in 2010. At the same time the Mediterranean is scary. It is considered as a source

of insecurity and restlessness even if comparatively this appreciation is lower with 32% of Europeans and 27% of SEM considering a source of conflict.

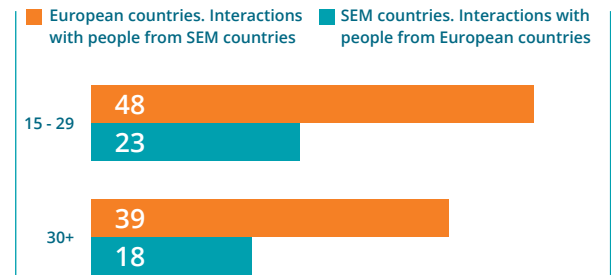
The interest for the Mediterranean varies both with the level of development and according to membership or not to the EU or the SEM countries. Europe is primarily interested in cultural life (more than 80% in 2012 - 76% in 2009) and the economy in the South (80% in 2012 - 60% in 2009). The interest in economic life is shared by SEM respondents although to a lesser degree (around 70% in 2012 - 59% in 2009). Egyptian and Moroccan respondents prefer to associate their interest towards European neighbours with economic opportunities (between 70 and 80%) and with political change (between 65 and 70%).

Both sets, Europeans (48%) and SEM (44%) believe that the Arab Spring will have a positive impact on the southern Mediterranean-Europe relations, but in Europe 10% think it will not have an impact (Albania, Poland and Spain) and 24% even think the impact will be negative (mainly Poland and Belgium), while 19% in the South (mainly Turkey and Jordan) think it will have no impact and 21% think the impact will be negative (mainly Tunisia and Jordan). Europeans and SEM see positive effects of the UfM in particular for the potential increase in innovation and entrepreneurship (85.5%), respect for cultural diversity (85%) and respect for the environment (about 83%).

Interaction processes are also confirmed by the 2012 Survey. The number of Europeans who reported being in contact with SEM people in 2012 reached 43%, 8 points higher than in 2009 (35%), but it is slightly lower than the percentage of SEM people interacting with Europeans (22% in 2012 - 24% in 2009). The effects of the crisis which started to fade since 2012 are offset by the obstacles to mobility related to conflict zones and transit areas in the southern shore, including Libya and Tunisia. Opportunities and modes of interaction between the North and South are largely determined by the standard of living and the legal possibilities of movement. Principal modes of interaction that arrive first in the Poll are business and tourism for Europeans (35%) while for SEM citizens the interaction is mainly virtual, and the Internet is the tool for 19% of them.

Politically speaking, the results confirm the idea that democracy is a shared horizon and carries the same values for all. It means freedom (50% SEM), freedom of expression (38% SEM), free elections (15% SEM), respect of human dignity (15% SEM) and prosperity mainly for SEM (13%). But the opportunities of its implementation are not the same, as civic commitment to solve problems of society for Europeans is considered the best way to achieve efficiency, including integrating

Chart 2.2 — Interactions in the EuroMed region by age group



Survey question: In the last 12 months have you personally talked to or met with any person (or persons) from SEM / European countries?
Base: All respondents, % of 'Yes'; by socio-demographics (© Anna Lindh/Gallup Poll 2012).

social movements (19%), while SEM respondents prefer individual action (22%).

The Mediterranean in use: interactions and diversity

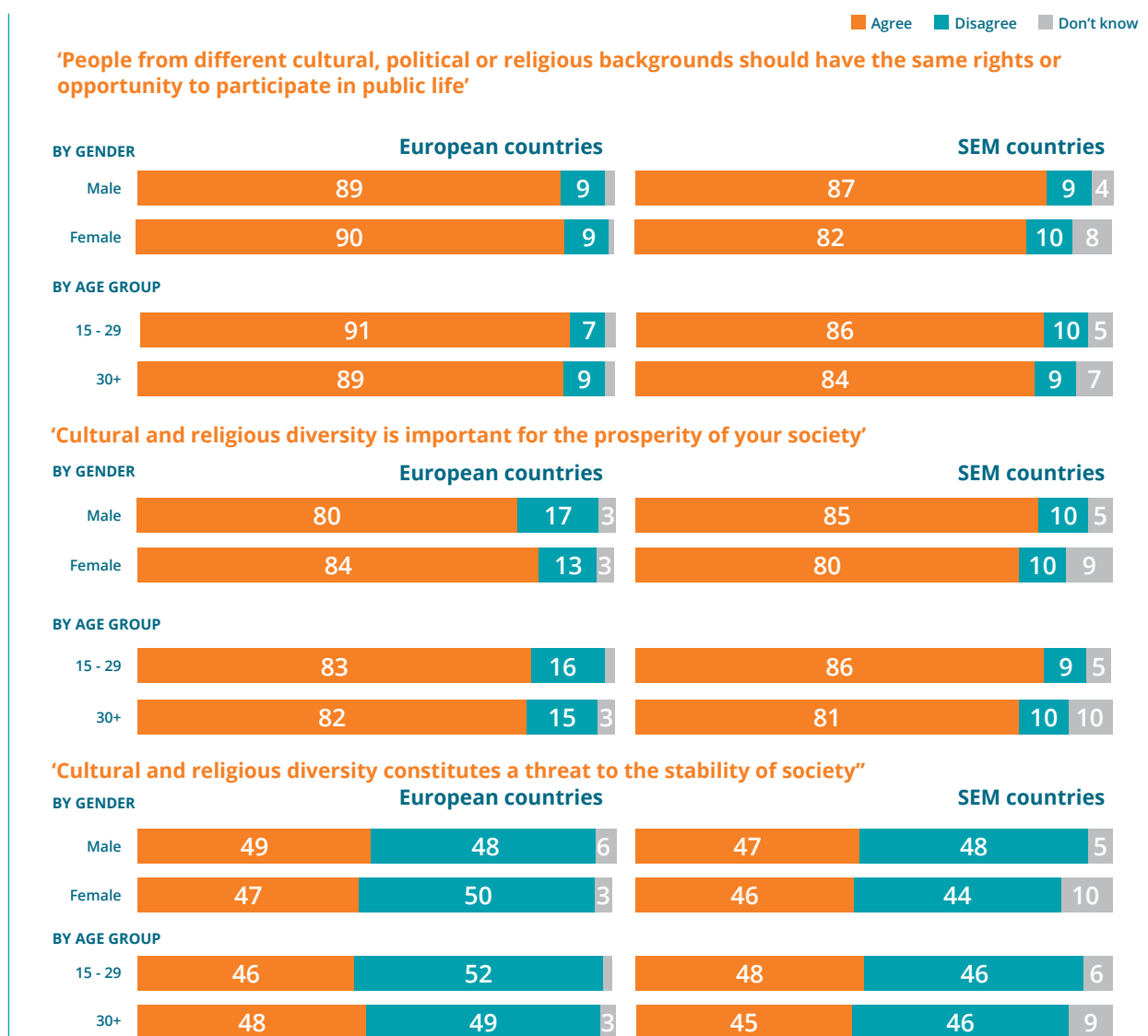
These general remarks related to the use of polling averages must be tempered, knowing also that we are unable to restore typologies from sorting. We opted for a reflection on the influence of the gender and age variables on the outcome of the investigation. Our challenge is twofold: on the one hand, to test the hypothesis defended in the history of the Mediterranean by anthropologists like Germaine Tillon, among others, on the 'conservative function of the Mediterranean woman embodying the status of *mama*', regent of the patriarchal family, on the other, to focus on the role that young people can play in developing the foundations of this shared horizon, knowing that many commentators of the Arab Spring attributed to 'Generation 2.0' the responsibility of the earthquake that followed the immolation of Bouazizi by fire.

Regarding the issue of interaction, young people interact more than adults over thirty: 11 points in Europe and 5 points higher in the SEM, but men interact more than women: 4 points in Europe and 6 more in southern and eastern Mediterranean countries (Chart 2.2). The mode of interaction as expected is virtual.

For the very specific question related to perceptions on the role of women in society, the results of the Survey contradict stereotypes. SEM citizens believe more in women's role than European citizens, and men more than women (+4 points), this is what separates the two sets. The same applies to youth, we observe some convergences between Europe and SEM countries. Regarding the increase of women's role in society in the next five years, SEM people believe in it more than Europeans, women as much as men to a point of difference. But SEM women are more optimistic than European women: 12 points of difference. In relation to

Chart 2.3

Views about political, cultural and religious diversity by gender and age group



Survey question: Could you please tell me, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? **Base:** % of all respondents, % by socio-demographics, where Agree: "Strongly agree" + "Agree somewhat", and Disagree: "Disagree somewhat" + "Strongly disagree" (© Anna Lindh/ Gallup Poll 2012).

this matter, age is not as a relevant variable in Europe as it is in SEM countries; however overall hope for the future is stronger for SEM (+10 points difference). These results call for some comments because they are surprising. Women's optimism about their future contrasts to their current situation, especially in some of SEM countries. Social movements related to the Arab Spring, as well as some heroic acts for civil rights by women (the Tunisian activist Amina Sboui, the Egyptian feminist Aliaa Magda Elmahdy or the Soulaliyates in Morocco) showed that the determination of some women to contribute to the establishment of a new covenant is explained by both the scandalous nature of their social and legal status and the enormous hope for change they bear.

The relation to pluralism is another real test for individuals seeking new social relations, negotiated in a civic space that guarantees freedom in all its forms, including freedom of conscience which was at the center of political issues in Tunisia, in Egypt and Morocco. The question of pluralism which we will comment on later is closely linked to the question of truth. It is important to note that the response of most of SEM citizens to the question of the existence of an absolute truth varies between 44% (Egypt) and 80% (Morocco), the average being 53%, while in European countries it varies between 38% (Poland) and 11% (Albania), the average being 26%.

We should note that the theory of the link between the status of truth (Revelation) and Islam is contradicted by the results of the Survey: Albania, with half of its population Muslim, has the lowest score (11%) while the Catholic Poland has the highest score in the Europe group (38%). To return to the issue of diversity and pluralism, we find that it does not always have a direct correlation with the belief in one absolute truth. The historical experiences of each country sometimes correct the rigidity of belief, and we see that Moroccan and Tunisian citizens (81%) for instance outperform the Egyptians (78%) regarding their appreciation of diversity in relation to prosperity while 80% of Moroccans believe that there is only one truth against 44% of Egyptians.

The relationship diversity/prosperity registers a score up to 80%, and when we link these results to gender and age, we find that the gender variable plays moderately. SEM women have 5 points of difference with SEM men (-5 and -7 with European men) in their appreciation of diversity and (-) 4 compared to European women. Youth believes a little more in the benefits of diversity for public debate compared to adults (+5 points in SEM and +1 in Europe) (Chart 2.3). The relationship that respondents establish between diversity and stability is relatively low. Ethnic and religious conflicts in progress can explain this distrust linked more to the absence of regulatory mechanisms than to a lack of appreciation of the virtues of diversity. 47% of the respondents of any category agree with the idea that diversity is a threat to the stability of their country. The gender variable is not significant as well as the age group, even if adults in SEM countries show a slightly higher perception of threat (+3 points).

Another paradoxical result concerns the assessment of the current and future personal life. The level of satisfaction is higher among SEM countries and gender does not play a significant role. Totally, the SEM group is 12 points higher compared to Europe, and we should note that France was not included in this group during this polling round, which could have made decrease the EU average even more, taking into account that skepticism is high in France. The theory of frustration developed by Samuel Stouffer (Stouffer, Suchman, DeVinney, Star, and Williams, 1949) could provide some answers about the relationship between the satisfaction of basic needs and the level of frustration. Paradoxically, it is with youth that we observe a higher level of satisfaction within the SEM group, the gender has no influence. Youth across the region declare a level of satisfaction in their personal life of around 50%, with more than 10 additional points within the SEM youth group. European adults are very pessimistic (-7) compared to younger people, while adults of SEM are far more optimistic than European adults (+26). They are only slightly more pessimistic than youth of SEM countries by a point of difference.

Expectations about the future

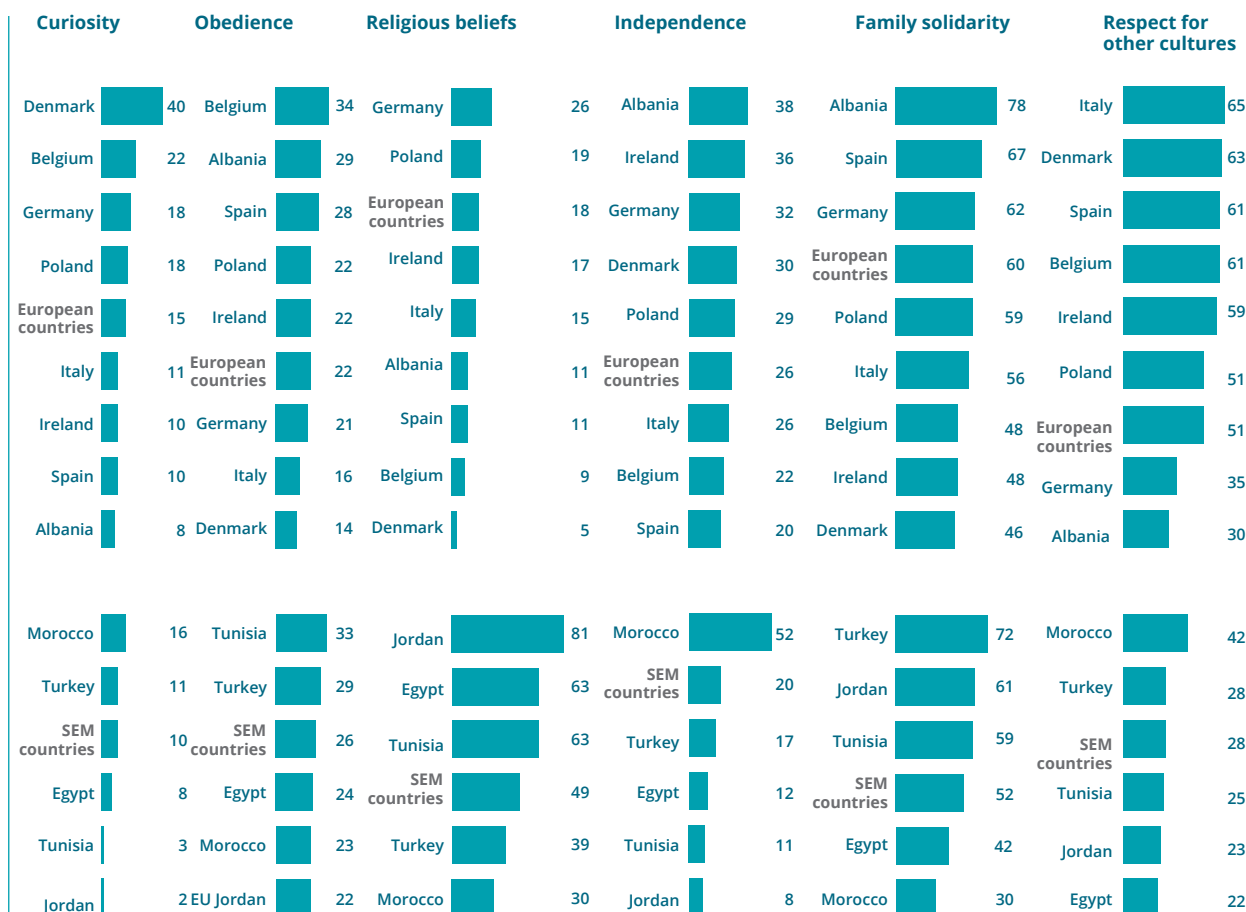
About the future, we note a strong belief in the expectations of improvement with more than 10 points compared to the previous question concerning the current life situation. Women believe in it more than men (+2) and SEM women more than the others, in fact only 5% of SEM women are pessimistic against 17% of European women, 25% of European men and 10% of SEM men. According to the age variable age, young people are generally confident in the future with 66% and a difference of +12 points between the current and expected level of satisfaction among SEM youth. European adults are far more pessimistic than their SEM peers (22% against 8%). One feels here the effects of the economic crisis more than those of the Arab revolutions. Nevertheless, on the question regarding the effect of the Arab Spring on the future of Euro-Arab relations, young people think that they are positive (compared to adults' perceptions +7 points in the Europe group and +5 points in the SEM group).

Another indicator to consider a credible bet on youth is related to modes of action to change things and solve problems of society. We had noticed the skepticism of SEM citizens about the virtues of collective action, through both civic activity and political parties (41%), compared to 57% of Europeans. Almost one in four people in SEM said that individual action is more effective compared to one in five in Europe. The variable age is playing a role, with European youth strongly believing in it. More than 22 points separate them from their SEM peers. There are plenty of reasons for this disaffection: lack of freedom, risk of associative action. We cannot avoid to draw parallels between these results that remind us of some observations made by several studies on the crisis of traditional forms of political participation (the party crisis, the crisis of the traditional elite) and the emergence of other forms of participation through civil society or social networks. These new dynamics stimulate a new assessments of civic action but their development also generates strong opposition from the states trying to confront, recover or to neutralise them. We understand therefore why in SEM countries one in three citizens does not believe in civic action while in Europe it is one in eight. We should also link this to the importance given by youth in SEM to the freedom (82%) as an important value and expected results of closer cooperation across the Mediterranean.

I will avoid dealing with responses by sub-regional averages and focus on the contrast between national traditions within each category. Taking the case of Spain, Ireland, Belgium and Germany for the European group of countries. To qualify my remarks, I will choose from the six proposed values according to an implicit categorisation developed by pollsters between values

Chart 2.4

Most important values to respondents when bringing up their children



Survey question: In bringing up their children, parents in different societies 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 six would you say is most important when raising children? And the second most important? **Base:** All respondents, % of sum of 'Most important' and 'Second most important' by country (© Anna Lindh/Gallup Poll 2012).

of 'progress' (curiosity, independence, freedom and respect for other cultures) and values of conservatism (obedience, commitment to family, religion). When we look at the results in each country (Chart 2.4), we feel a certain discrepancy in thoughts and judgments that people bear between their perception of values which are dominant in the other and the reality. A resurgence of confrontation is observed between countries that share a common history or present including through current interactions through tourism or migration.

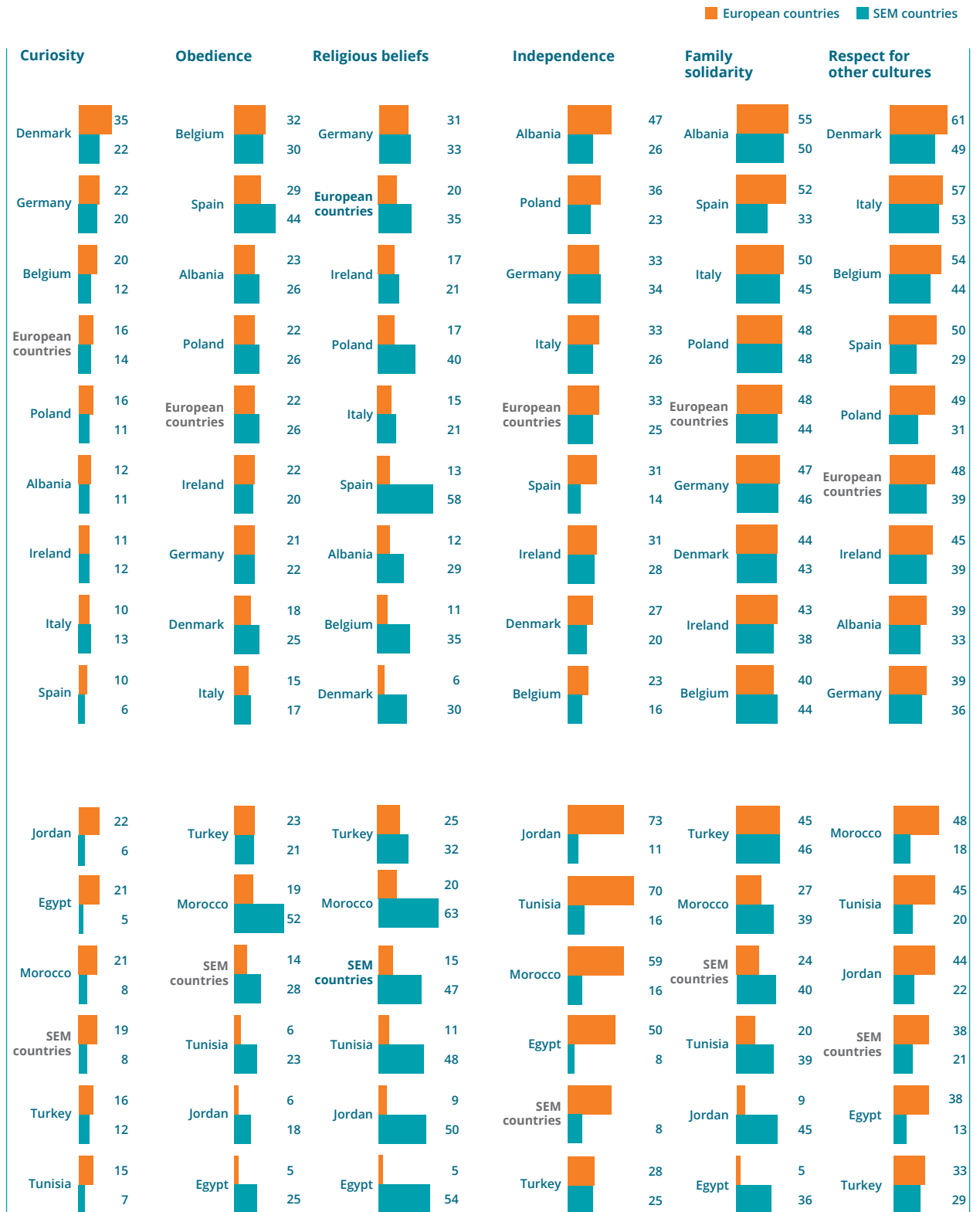
It is indeed possible that the answers to these questions which define the perceptions we have on others refer to the national views of each country. This idea is influenced by the ratio of emigration, the colonial past and sometimes the long-term historical memory. So if we look closer at the score of Spain and Belgium compared to Ireland, we realise that the point of view of Spanish respondents is based on a rather negative bias (in the scale of values ranging from tradition to modernity) when considering the differences between European and SEM values. Respondents think that the SEM people are less

curious than the European by 4 points and almost twice as obedient and more than four times more attached to religion (58% SEM - 13% Europeans), three times less independent (31% SEM - 14% Europeans), almost twice less respectful of diversity. The only value that is reversed is the one of family solidarity, since Spanish respondents believe that Europeans are more supportive in terms of family than SEM (52% Europeans - 33% SEM). This value is very important or at least highly considered as such in Spain and in many countries of the North as a positive value (Chart 2.5).

We can say the same thing about Belgium, a country with a less confrontational experience with the southern Mediterranean in its distant past, but which has a rather difficult relationship with migration groups originating from Morocco (making up to 30% of the Brussels population). The integration model developed by the Belgian State on the basis of its own rather powerful multinational experience has not prevented the Belgian respondents to be within the European average. They think that SEM are less curious by 8 points than Europeans, more attached

Chart 2.5

Most important values to parents raising children in European and SEM countries: actual values vs. perceived values⁴⁵



Survey question: Which one of these six do you think is the most important to parents raising children in Europe? And the second most important? And to parents raising children in the SEM societies? And the second most important? **Base:** % off all respondents, % of the sum of 'Most important' and 'Second most important' answers by country (© Anna Lindh/Gallup Poll 2012).

to religious values (11% Europeans - 35% SEM), less independent (23% Europeans - 16% SEM) and more supportive in terms of family (40% Europeans - 44% SEM). Ireland in its relationship with the southern shore has a different sensitivity compared to other European countries which have a strong interaction with the Mediterranean through tourism or migration. The Irish perception about SEM is more neutral. The Irish see very little difference between SEM and European countries in terms of the values transmitted. The difference in relation to the appreciation of curiosity, obedience, commitment to a religion, independence, respect for other cultures and family solidarity does not exceed five points.

Regarding SEM countries, it is difficult to interpret the answers because the interviewees' understanding of the Poll questions is not the same across the countries. We see three different categories of responses: in some cases responses about preferred values in other SEM countries correspond to those that interviewees identify as priorities for themselves, in other cases they correspond to those they consider would be thought by European citizens and in others by other SEM citizens. Morocco develops a relatively negative view of SEM countries. For the Moroccan citizens surveyed, SEM people are less curious and three times more obedient, three times more religious, five times less independent, a little more supportive in family relationships (12 points) and especially two times less respectful of other cultures than Europeans. This view represents almost the perspective of Spanish about SEM. Morocco, which is in a strong interaction with Europe, oddly thinks like Spanish and Tunisians who show a similar pattern aiming to keep the difference within the same group of belonging and to get closer to a reference group for expressing their representation. While for Turkey, which considers itself European, the differences with European perceptions of SEM are less marked, between 7 and 2 points based on the different values.

Concluding reflections

The 2012 Survey results confirm those of the previous Anna Lindh/Gallup Poll. We can at the risk of over-interpretation think that the combination of factors related to the 2008 crisis and the Arab Spring strengthens the idea of a convergence of representations that increasingly erodes the thesis of the clash of cultures and that the religious variable, which continues to inspire social movements, tends to stabilise. In other words, one cannot deny that the experience of Islamists in power, especially in Egypt, will impact on future choices.

I cannot conclude this opening overview without admitting that the enthusiasm that accompanied the processing of data, as a source of hope, was often mixed with an enormous sense of helplessness and depression.

It sometimes appears almost futile to devote so much effort to explore the labyrinths of representations and values in conflict in a period when every day we have to see unbearable images of an unnamed war that has lasted four years in Syria; at a time when the Syrian people who also represent one of the most beautiful expressions of the Mediterranean culture is in the process of becoming the first refugee people of the World.

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