

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN REGION: A
FOCUS ON YOUTHS AS ACTIVE AGENTS FOR CHANGE

by

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Intercultural Dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean Region: A Focus on Youths as Active
Agents for Change

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Science at George Mason University, and the degree of Master of Arts at the University
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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the youth generation in the region, whom like the author, have been frequently blinded by misperceptions.

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Abstract

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN REGION: A FOCUS ON YOUTHS AS ACTIVE AGENTS FOR CHANGE

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This thesis analysis focuses on the levels of interaction in the EuroMed region. Intercultural dialogue is the main frame of analysis and levels of interaction are translated from opinion poll surveys carried out in a 10 year time frame. Subsequently youths are individuated as the pivotal component for the successful spread of values: of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding. Theories of intercultural dialogue are analysed vis-à-vis opinion poll results and on-going youth programs. The argument presented in this research project rests on the notion that the intermingled relationship between education, training and employment has a direct influence on the role of misperceptions and the future peaceful transformation of the region.

Introduction

“The borders are porous, particularly so in the liquid materiality of the Mediterranean. The outcome of historical and cultural clash and compromise is that borders are both transitory and zones of transit.” (Chambers, 2008, p.5)

Looking at the Mediterranean region, it is easy to recognize that interaction among its inhabitants has been on-going for centuries. Being an enclosed water basin, the Mediterranean provides a bridge for commerce and trade, whilst also serving as an important cultural hub for the intersection and interaction of two colossal civilizations and religions, Christianity and Islam.

A general dichotomy between North-South and Christian-Islam, which started to take root by the end of WWII, transformed anew state boundaries, political realities and ultimately the region as a whole. Although political and social practices varied widely, the North recognized the extensive need to establish once more solid trade relations with its southern neighbours. During the 1970s the EC delineated clearly a definition of the Mediterranean and was no longer viewed as a vague geographical location but rather as being “a specific group of countries, deemed to be roughly homogeneous among themselves”. (Bicchi, 2004, para. 6) The Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP) identified littoral states as being part of the Mediterranean, and thus for the first time the region was

given legally and politically binding agreements. Nonetheless, due to different political realities and a predominant non-democratic rule in the South, it resulted in an ever increasing misdistribution of wealth and inequality. Negative perceptions on both sides, stemming from a traumatic colonial past and a constant reference to Islam as being incompatible with modern rule of law, became more predominant at the beginning of the 21st century. This could be easily identified if one looks at educational curricula, media reports and also opinion polls.

Nonetheless, numerous are the bilateral mechanisms employed in an attempt to better understand cultural differences and beliefs. The most prominent and costly framework, was undoubtedly the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. This European envisioned partnership sought to enter into a holistic agreement with its southern partners on a threefold agenda, better known as baskets: Political and Security dialogue, Economic and Financial Partnership and Social, Cultural and Human Partnership. (European Union External Action, 2012) Various structures have been put in place in an attempt to bridge cultures, beliefs and traditions, one such example could be the recently founded Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation.

This study will focus on the 3rd basket of the Barcelona process, therefore specific attention will be given to the human dimension and the role of interaction. Now that the process has reached its apex in terms of popularity and legitimacy, this study's core purpose is to provide the already vast existing literature with a milestone of EuroMed interaction analysis that builds upon the need for greater dialogue and mutual

understanding through the fusion of policy and outcomes. My main area of study will focus on youths and their strategic role in an attempt to bridge cultures and beliefs, and accordingly the following main question will be asked: “Does the youth work of EuroMed Youth Intercultural dialogue programs succeed in changing perceptions on both sides of the Mediterranean?” This study will therefore look at how and by whom intercultural dialogue is being professed in the period between 1995 and 2010. I deliberately choose this time frame as it is the most active and prominent time when cultural and social interactions have been given prominence. Subsequently, the structure of the thesis could be divided into two main parts, with subchapters complimenting each part.

Initially the study will look at theoretical literature related to intercultural dialogue as a social phenomenon. A better understanding of what ‘dialogue’ entails will be analysed through theories of Bakhtin and Bohm. Dialogue is analysed in its social context and as such specific focus is drawn upon interaction between two or more people and as a result a general reflection on the ‘other’ is experienced. Intercultural communication is subsequently explored through various theories that take as their pivotal component the individual and the surrounding environment. Special attention to issues related to identity, perception and the socio-historical context will be pursued through the analysis of social science theorists such as Giles, Ting-Toomey, Di Nuoscio, Gadamer and Neuliep. Further analysis of how such theories are interpreted into actual institutional definition will be pursued through official declarations of the Council of Europe and ISESCO.

The study will move then to a more factual phase and look at intercultural trends, as presented by polls, in the region. Chapter 2 will focus on four main polls namely: The Mediterranean space survey 1995, PEW global report of 2006, The Anna Lindh report of 2010 and The Abu Dhabi Gallup report of 2010. The main focus of study will be on perceptions of the 'other' and if there were any changes throughout the years. It is important at this point to illustrate limitations opinion polls can have on the outcome of results. Unfortunately, the Mediterranean still lacks a concrete and updated research centre that gathers and analysis data on a scheduled time period. This lack of congruence makes it difficult for the researcher to systematically compare and contrast trends. Another important hindrance when working with opinion polls is the aim and purpose of the commissioned poll. In most cases, the E.U. being the most economically stable institution in the region provides funds and expertise for the moulding of such polls. This undoubtedly should have serious implications and considerations when one looks at results and trends. The researcher will therefore, through all necessary means, make sure to measure the possible political bias such polls could hide and to also consider time lapses present.

The second part of the research project will specifically focus on EuroMed processes and programs that have been on-going in the past years. A narrower vision, one linked with the initial purpose of this study and thus the role of youths, will be subsequently pursued in Chapter 3. The European community has on numerous occasions stressed the importance of youth participation and contribution to civil society and politics, as could

be seen from the 2001 Council of Europe White Paper ‘A new impetus for European Youth’. Intercultural dialogue is also deemed as very important and youths are looked upon by the European community as the gatekeepers of a more serene and peaceful future. This political agenda has also been implemented in the Mediterranean region and during the past 10 years, youth exchanges doubled if not tripled in number. (EuroMed Youth, 2010) The time frame for Youth program analysis will be concentrating on the period between 1999 and 2010. I decided to limit my time frame to this period due to a lack of an updated trends report and the on-going political and social unrest in the Mediterranean area. I believe that political and social stability of some kind be it a democratic rule or authoritarian regime is necessary for the appropriate retrieval and ultimate interpretation of data.

Chapter 4 will then be critically analysing outcomes of programs discussed in the previous chapter had in the region. A balance between northern and southern voices will be sought through various publications and criticisms that have been present in the region. Official documents issued by the E.U. and other important actors in the region will be given substantial weight, nonetheless, special attention will also be given to other non-official voices that contribute to the vast literature currently available. This chapter will be specifically answering the main question revolving around this research study, and thus the effectiveness of youth programs in reducing misperceptions. Nonetheless, other related questions such as: ‘are programs accessible for all?’ and ‘is there a sense of shared ownership between the two littoral areas?’ will be asked. Special attention will be given to the social, economical and political spheres that contribute to a holistic

understanding of the impact such initiatives have on the general population of the region. The next chapter to follow, Chapter 5 will bring together the already available criticism vis-à-vis the theoretical framework presented in the first section. Are theories of dialogue and intercultural communication being applied to EuroMed youth programs? Has there been a shift in the political will by main actors to successfully implement change and reduce misperceptions? How strategic is intercultural dialogue in relation to youth involvement and policy?

As argued by Braudel (1996), “The Mediterranean speaks with many voices”, however many question which voices make it to the pertinent institutions and how could interaction and exchanges promote the creation of a colourful spectrum made of varied cultural, religious and traditional beliefs? Undoubtedly many agree that a harmonic relationship between inhabitants in the Mediterranean basin results in a more equally distributed and prosperous region. (Adler, 2002) Furthermore unconventional mechanisms such as youths and culture have been of top priority for the region’s institutional agenda for more than a decade. (Council of Europe, 2001) Looking at youths and their potential energies to implement change has indeed been recognized as a pivotal component for future peace and security and now that political changes are on their way in various states intercultural exchanges and practices are important like never before. In a nutshell, this research project aims to bring together theory and practices that have been on-going for approximately 10 years and contribute to the on-going debate about the role intercultural dialogue has in the successful development of a peaceful and prosperous region.

Chapter 1: Intercultural Dialogue: A Theory or a Way of Life?

1.0 What is Dialogue?

“Scegliere il dialogo vuol dire evitare i due estremi del monologo e della guerra”¹.

T.Todorov (as cited in Di Nuoscio, 2011, p.13)

Globalization and the ever increasing interdependence between states and economies have undoubtedly contributed to a surplus of interaction and encounters. Dialogue is therefore a pivotal component for economic, social and political exchanges around the world. Nonetheless, dialogue due to its over usage and consequent saturation of the concept, lost a good component of what it really entails and means.

As argued by Mitias and Al-Jasmi (2004), intercultural dialogue and more specifically the role of dialogue is being entrapped in a number of assumptions that put at risk the core value of such ideal. Dialogue in the international fora is being driven by political forces that seek to establish a peaceful environment with the ultimate goal of cultivating global economic development. On the other hand, Mitias and Al-Jasmi argue that this should not be the only driving motif behind the need for interaction and dialogue, but

¹ This translates as: “To choose dialogue means avoiding the two extremes of monologue and war”.

rather be part of a more holistic and broad understanding of such need. Therefore, intercultural dialogue should act on a variety of levels, with the most important ones being those at the personal and intra-personal realms. The above researchers stress the important link between change of behaviour at a personal level and subsequently the creation of social attitudes based on understanding and respect for other cultures.

This Chapter will be moving from a pure theoretical understanding of dialogue, thus advocating the philosophical, sociological and psychological fields. At an initial stage, a breakdown of the term, 'Intercultural dialogue' will be pursued. At a later stage, institutionalized understanding of what intercultural dialogue is and what it entails will be addressed. Specific reference will be given to the Council of Europe's White Paper on intercultural dialogue and ISESCO's declaration at the UNESCO conference. I deliberately choose to utilize the above mentioned institutions as they are the most often cited institutions in the region. On several occasions most communications and policy makers refer to the White Paper as the epitome of knowledge in relation to intercultural feelings in the region. The main scope of this chapter is to better understand how and if theories of intercultural dialogue are being implemented in the region.

1.0.1 Defining dialogue: an etymological understanding

At this point it is imperative to take a step back and look at how dialogue is described from a philosophical, historical, psychological and social perspective. The etymology and

origin of the word ‘dialogue’ derives from the Greek word ‘dialogos’, which in turn comes from ‘dialegethai’. When dividing ‘dia’, which means across and ‘legein’, which means speech, it is easy to recognize the function and purpose of dialogue. (Aviva Doron, n.d.)

For a better understanding of what this word entails, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2012) provides the following explanations:

- “an exchange of views for the purpose of exploring a subject or deciding an issue
- talking or a talk between two or more people”

On the other hand, the Oxford Online Dictionary (2012) gives a more colourful picture of what is the function of dialogue and thus provides the following explanations:

- “A conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, play or film
- Take part in a conversation or discussion to resolve a problem”

Although both definitions establish a relationship between two or more people, they fail to successfully transmit the true essence of a dialogical relationship. For a more in-depth understanding it is useful to turn once more to the etymological meaning and look at Socrates and his work in relation to speech and dialogue. The art of dialogue as professed by Socrates, builds its foundation on the concept of reason and questioning. Socrates encouraged his students to engage in dialogical encounters for a holistic learning experience, one that builds upon an interconnected reality between ideas, assumptions

and human experience. The aim of dialogue is understanding and creativity at a cognitive level that in turn will transform into a creative act. The important aspect of such dialogical methodology is the transformation of character and perspective or belief at a personal level through own cognitive mechanisms. Without a doubt, this perspective shapes the core understanding and also outlook we have on ways, means and modes of engaging into dialogue. (Van Hooft, 2003)

1.0.2 Dialogue: a philosophical understanding

One of the most universally acclaimed theorists in the field of philosophy and dialogue studies is surely Bohm. His understanding of dialogue shifts attention from the physical setting and thus the actual act of dialogue, to the inter-personal aspect of such encounters. As reported by Nichol (2005), following a personal encounter with the scholar, Bohm confesses that “I think people are not doing enough work on their own, apart from the dialogue groups”. (Nichol, 2005, p.18) Consequently Bohm, develops a theoretical framework that divides the event into 3 distinct yet interrelated phenomenon: self-image, body and meaning. Bohm recognizes the important role the self-image or ego has in any given interaction. This internal ‘me’ is in perfect synchrony with how I view the world and thus the assumption that what we perceive is in fact absolute truth is further strengthened by the social and cultural environment. Bohm turns then his attention to the body and various physiological experiences that could be elicited thanks to dialogue. Sweating, trembling, increased heart rate are all signs that something is on-going at a

psychological level which in turn is resulting in visible physical outcomes. Understanding these ‘symptoms’, could produce a change in meaning and thus a change of being. Bohm explains that a change in meaning could result in the missing link for the creation of a participatory universe, one built upon new notions of being that are currently being blocked by our stagnant world views. (Nichol, 2005)

Moving to a more similar yet unique understanding of dialogue, Bakhtin connects dialogue with language and to a certain extent builds up upon Socrates’ definition and meaning. Bakhtin theories explain dialogue as being “a human condition, as an ethical imperative and even as a prerequisite for thinking”. (Pace, 2007, p.16) This places ‘dialogue’ in a social setting and thus moves away from what he calls *monologic* discourse, consequently stemming from a single entity. Bakhtin’s theory could be in brief described as “a pragmatically oriented theory of knowledge [...] that seek to grasp human behaviour through the use humans make of language”. (Holquist, 1990, p15) Language is in this way viewed as the pipeline through which dialogue can flow and ultimately knowledge is created. Bakhtin believes that dialogue is at the heart of human knowledge and development since although it keeps distant two autonomous consciousnesses; it succeeds by translating the experience into new categories of assessment and structure. As a matter of fact, Bakhtin depicts dialogue as being made up of a trio, with the third figure being “the particular image in which they model the belief they will be understood, a belief that is the a priori of all speech”. (Friedman, 2005, p32)

Dialogism, a term which although not directly used by Bakhtin captures perfectly well his theory, builds upon personal consciousness and subsequently its relation to the 'other'. A demarcation at the personal level is made between centripetal and centrifugal forces, with the latter encompassing heteroglossia and dialogue. As explained by Holquist (1990), the 'self' and consciousness are a direct outcome of 'otherness' and as a result the role of dialogue in the formation of a 'self' is essential. Bakhtin explores also the role of cognition and time, whilst placing perception of the 'other' as an important factor that shapes dialogical encounters. As argued by Holquist (1990), the 'self' and the 'other' are in a constant relationship, one that progresses thanks to both entities as they both serve the purpose of differentiating each other. Therefore the 'self' constructs its knowledge and understanding through a constant exchange of utterances with the 'other'. Existence is no longer viewed in a monotheistic fashion but is accordingly looked upon as a shared event, one which could only be fulfilled through interaction with the 'other' and thus, "in order to forge a self, I must do so from outside". (Holquist, 1990, p. 28)

The perfect setting for such encounters and development is unquestionably the social space provided by the community and although dialogue in its tripartite nature explains itself as being composed of an utterance, a reply and a relation, the last component is the one that holds most significant weight. The social dimension adds colour to the formation and transformation of knowledge and meaning, creating an active cognitive space that has the ability to move towards development and the uncovering of new knowledge. As argued by Todorov: "Discourse does not maintain a uniform relation with its object; it does not reflect it, but it organizes it, transforms or resolves situations". (1984, p. 55)

From the above presented philosophical perspective it is easy to individuate the intermingled relationship between ‘self’, the ‘other’ and the larger community as a whole. A similar perspective about the role of dialogue is given also by Di Nuoscio (2011) in *Epistemologia del Dialogo* (Epistemology of Dialogue). Like Bakhtin, Di Nuoscio argues that when a dialogical encounter is successfully implemented, the individual transforms his/her perceptions not only on the ‘other’ but also on oneself. Di Nuoscio compares an efficacious dialogical encounter to a journey that manages to change the individual at an inter-personal level. Building up on the work of M. Buber, H G. Gadamer, C. Thiebaut, I. Kant and J.S Mill, Di Nuoscio formulates a holistic explanation that focuses primarily on the need to open up for encounters with the ‘other’. Such encounters should be based on a willing desire and therefore not forced upon the individual from structural means. The autonomy of the interlocutor ‘other’ should also be put at the forefront of each dialogical interaction, leaving the ‘I’ free and open for transformation. It is hence logical to argue as Thiebaut did in that “soltanto chi è disposto a rivedere le proprie credenze può incontrare l’Altro”. (as cited in Di Nuoscio, 2011, p.24) Di Nuoscio warns against the possibility of viewing the ‘other’, as an undeveloped entity of ‘I’ or worst still as an inferior entity. To better explain this phenomenon, Di Nuoscio resorts to Gadamer’s study and understanding of dialogue. To avoid the trap of egocentrism, Gadamer develops the notion of ‘fusion of horizons’, and thus the need for interlocutors to realize their finite status and a historically effected consciousness. Only when the individual realizes the reciprocal beneficiary qualities of such fusion, that successful dialogue could be created. (Di Nuoscio, 2011)

At this point one can recognize the interdependent relationship between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. Dialogue has thus the ideal qualities for the creation of a mutual relationship that builds upon joint understandings and development of knowledge. No one side upholds absolute knowledge as this is ‘contaminated’ by a historically effected consciousness and culture. The realization of this contributes to the creation of a world where values considered *sub specie aeternitatis* make way to a fusion of horizons that construct knowledge in a two way relationship giving birth to the *homo dialogicus* whose personality is assembled on the principle of openness to the ‘other’. (Di Nuoscio, 2011)

1.1 What is Intercultural Dialogue?

1.1.1 The role of culture

Interaction with others is further complicated if this occurs between people from different cultural backgrounds. A broad understanding of culture is one embedded in a homogeneous understanding that categorizes individuals in a particular group according to a shared historical past, language, traditions and beliefs. Culture also acts as a very efficient mechanism for the individual to function in a particular society. It provides rules and norms that permit the individual full access to resources and means in a particular society. For a better and comprehensive explanation of what culture actually entails it is imperative to look at various interpretations given by social scientists in general. Looking at one of the earliest pioneering sociologists in the field of culture, Parsons (1949)

explains this social mechanism as being not an inherent characteristic but rather one that is learned and passed down from one generation to the other. Parsons (1949, p.8) explains that “Culture...consists in those patterns relative to behaviour and the products of human action which may be inherited, that is, passed on from generation to generation independently of the biological genes”. The homogeneity of culture is further developed by theorists in the mid-20th century, consequentially Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) explain culture as consisting of “patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts”.

Other theorists have provided a more extensive understanding of what culture is and thus included the notion of national cultures as opposed to a multiplicity of cultures embedded in every individual. To better explain this notion, Avruch (2006) in ‘*Culture And Conflict Resolution*’, provides a much wider definition of culture, thus dismantling the highly acclaimed homogeneity of cultures and moving to a sociological and psychological understanding. He explains that multiple identities within an individual create the possible scenario for a multitude of cultures based on personal experience and other group affiliation. As a matter of fact, Avruch supports the notion that “individuals reflect or embody multiple cultures and that “culture” is always psychologically and socially distributed in a group”. (Avruch, 2006, p.5)

Avruch’s (2006) understanding sheds new light on the role culture has in everyday life interaction. Now that a cognitive component is added to the social one culture is no

longer viewed in a static and rigid way, but better grasped through a spectrum of social and psychological dimensions. Culture has and is still a pivotal component when trying to understand and explain social interaction.

1.1.2 Intercultural dialogue in the 20th century

Intercultural dialogue as such incorporates two very distinctive yet related concepts, and thus that of culture and dialogue into a unique concept that has been gaining popular political and social importance by the mid-20th century. When looking at the political, economic and social changes occurring at the end of WWII, one notices a general shift not only in terms of state boundaries and affiliations but also in terms of social exchanges and interaction. As very well explained by Gudykunst (2002), from an American stand point, the end of the Great War produced numerous occasions for interaction with other people. The Marshall fund, pushed forward by the late president Truman opened up new channels of communication for businesses and also facilitated encounters at a grass-root level.

Already in the beginning of the century intellectuals in the philosophical, psychological and social paradigm voiced their findings in relation to the newly acclaimed status of *Homo sapiens* that is governed by an unconscious drive and desire. Freud, Darwin and Marx provided extensive research and understanding on the human component for the

creation of a newly established phenomenon, that of intercultural communication.
(Gudykunst, 2002)

The first and maybe the mostly acclaimed academic in the field is Hall. Working at the Foreign Office Institute and having on numerous occasions worked in multi-cultural environments induced the anthropologist to create a new theoretical framework to better understand interaction at a cross cultural level. Previous contributions by the already mentioned researchers and others such as Simmel's concept of the stranger and W.G. Sumner's concept of ethnocentrism contributed to the formation of Hall's concept of 'silent language'. Hall's paradigm for intercultural communication rests thus on the revolutionary observation of the role of non-verbal communication, including also the notion of proxemics and chronemics. Measuring non-verbal communication and coupling it with spatial and temporal elements shifted academics' perspective from a purely ethnocentric stance to a more open and flexible one. This provided also the researcher with the possibility of digging into hidden and buried cognitive cultural mechanisms rather than staying at the surface level. In the years following Hall's revolutionary contribution, the new paradigm lacked sufficient research to become established as a new research field and as a result various academics and scholars took up the profession of intercultural competence and started to provide numerous contributions and writings.
(Gudykunst, 2002)

1.1.3 A scattered field of knowledge

As a matter of fact, Intercultural Communication theory comes from a variety of applied disciplines such as management, business, psychology, marketing, anthropology and sociology. Various theorists explored intercultural dialogue at different levels and from different perspectives, with clear distinction being drawn between objectivists and subjectivists approaches. Gudykunst (2002) explains that whilst objectivists look at the individual as being a passive actor in an active and predominant environment, subjectivists look for the inner component in human interaction and stress the importance of free will. Gudykunst (2002) argues that a balance between both approaches should be worked upon for a better understanding of intercultural communication. As a result, theories cross and intersect numerous fields, which Gudykunst (2002, pp. 184-196) divides into 5 sections:

- “Theories focusing on effective outcomes...
- Theories focusing on accommodation or adaptation...
- Theories focusing on identity management or negotiation...
- Theories focusing on communication networks...
- Theories focusing on acculturation or adjustment.”

These divides should not be viewed in an exclusive way, but rather as being interrelated and mutually inclusive. For the purpose of this study, a set of objectivists and subjectivists approaches will be chosen and examined.

1.2 Theories of Intercultural Communication

1.2.1 The early years

In the beginning of the 1980s, Barnett and Kincaid developed the Cultural Convergence theory, one that “treats human communication as process that unfolds over time and which focuses on the mutual relationships between participants (especially group of participants) rather than on what one individual does to another individual or to a mass audience”(Barnett, G.A. et al., 1983). Through their cultural model, Barnett and Kincaid develop a mathematical theory able to measure the effects of communication on cultural differences. Through the Law of Thermodynamics, the researchers conclude that “all participants in a closed system will converge over time on the mean collective pattern of thought if communication is allowed to continue indefinitely” (Gudykunst, 2002, p.184). Although this model is developed on research done on immigrant communities and their resettlement in a new culture, they provide an interesting contribution on enclosed group dynamics and functions.

In the late 1980s, following influence from Simmel’s notion of the stranger and building up on Calabrese’s Uncertainty reduction theory, Gudykunst develops a new model of

communicative practice. In 1995, the Anxiety/Uncertainty management theory or better known as AUM is further developed and includes now a cultural variability to it. The AUM model states that when two strangers meet and interact, a level of anxiety and uncertainty is experienced. Gudykunst explains that when culture is in the way, levels of anxiety and uncertainty are high and could hinder the communicative process. Subsequently, control of our anxiety is crucial before even attempting to engage in an intercultural communicative experience. Studies carried out by Gudykunst, Hubbert and Guerrero illustrates how anxiety and uncertainty influence our perceived effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the conversation. Over time this perceived success or failure measured in line with anxiety and uncertainty levels influences future encounters. Gudykunst divides his model into six interrelated yet distinct motives that increase or decrease anxiety/uncertainty levels. Starting off from an introspective perspective, the AUM model moves from inter-personally generated anxiety/uncertainty emotions, and thus 'self' and self concept, to motivation to interact with strangers and furthermore to reactions to strangers. It then moves to a more socially constructed reality and explores the social categorization of strangers, situational process and connections with strangers. This model should not be viewed in an ascending or consequentiality mode, but rather as a process happening simultaneously, with each component effecting each other and ultimately anxiety/uncertainty levels. (Gudykunst, 2002)

Other communication theories that sprung up in the 1980s included other components of the human psyche, such as identity. Moreover they integrated also other themes such as language and the socio historical context. The latter, is a predominant feature of

Communication Accommodation theory developed by Giles. Communication accommodation theory, better known as CAT was initially developed as a speech focused paradigm, but it later evolved to incorporate non-verbal communication. (Gudykunst, 2002) In brief, CAT “explains some of the cognitive reasons for code-switching and other changes in communication as individuals seek to emphasize or minimize the social differences between themselves and their interlocutors”. (Hordila & Pane, 2010, p.196)

In the 1990s Giles theory was adopted and remodelled on numerous occasions and became quickly incorporated into socio-psychological theory of language and social interaction. In 1995, Gallois et al. remodelled this theory to include 17 propositions, with several subdivisions that establish a positive or negative evaluative recount of the encounter. Gallois et al. model could be viewed as a pyramid, with the top part representing the socio-historical context, a context which incorporates collective memory of past encounters and also the social norms regarding contact. The second level is the accommodative orientation context, one which includes intra-personal factors, inter-group factors and initial orientation. The third level moves than to the immediate situation, hence encompassing five subdivisions that include: socio psychological states, goals and addressee focus, socio-linguistic strategies, behaviour and tactics and labelling and attribution. The final stage in Gallois et al. model is evaluation and future intentions, thus including interlocutors’ perceptions on the communicative act which will in turn shape their future approach to intercultural dialogue. (Gudykunst, 2002)

1.2.2 The perceptual context

Therefore, the role of perceptions has been gaining more support in the socio-psychological field, with various theorists placing it as a pivotal component of their study alongside cultural, social, environmental and linguistic contexts. The perceptual context is one of the cardinal themes upon which Singer (1998) builds his understanding of intercultural dialogue. In '*Perceptions and Identity in Intercultural Communication*', Singer explains how perceptions are screens, or as he calls them windows through which every individual experiences the world. For the world to be perceived sensory receptors are required and in addition to this culture shapes and filters which stimuli are given importance and which not. Other aspects mould our perceptions and Singer includes physical traits, environmental determinants and learning processes. The inter-personal communication process model presented by Singer (1998) is a very detailed account of the interaction between the sender and receiver, including also numerous surrounding elements that shape the communicative action. The Data Bank present in each individual adds up to the decision making process shaping thus the sensory receptive input and output. Singer (1998) highlights the fact that an individual is both a sender and receiver in a communicative event, this is so due to the multiple verbal and nonverbal interactions on-going in the in between the space that one could call 'dialogue'. Further enquiry into Neurolinguistic programming, pushed Singer (1998) to look into sensory language as being the key for successful intercultural dialogue. Accordingly, subliminal messages and

the non verbal component in a communicative act are given utmost importance and deemed more beneficial in an intercultural setting.

Recent studies have once more put emphasis on the perceptual filter that shapes and transforms our understanding and subsequently action. Neuliep resorts to an information processing approach, one which consequently distinguishes three stages through which sensory information is transmitted to the brain. Looking at cognitive studies carried out by Lachman and Butterfield, Neuliep individuates perception as being at the initial phase of stage one, thus affecting the subsequent stages. In a three-stage process that moves from input to storage to retrieval, Neuliep argues that perceptions have a pivotal role in the three stages and ultimately shape behaviour or understanding. Further influence perceptions have on our individual judgment and understanding is better understood if one looks at categorization. (Neuliep, 2006) As argued by Allport , “humans cannot avoid categorization and that orderly living depends on it”. (Neuliep, 2006, p.186) Viewed in this way, categorization is beneficial for the human being as it is impossible to attend to the entire incoming stimuli. Nonetheless as Neuliep warns, it could also result in ethnocentrism and stereotyping. A clear demarcation is established between in group and out group and as a consequence difference on terms of moral deeds and personal qualities of individuals pertaining to that particular group are described in a negative way. Dehumanization is also a predominant feature of an extreme development of categorization. In an intercultural encounter the already saturated predefined stereotypical pictures in our mind influence not only the outcome but also the incoming stimulus. Stereotypes and the increased rigidity through which boundaries of in group versus out

group are constantly delineated, result in an ever increasing sense of ethnocentrism. Neuliep argues that ethnocentrism is not a negative attribute to a group, especially in times of attack or threat of extinction; nonetheless ethnocentrism could also result in discrimination, prejudice and injustice. Plotting a continuum of ethnocentrism with two polar ends on each side, Neuliep argues that in intercultural interactions the highest the score on the continuum the highest perceptual interference there will be in decoding the message. High ethnocentrism and misperceptions could be thus viewed as being consequential and mutually influential. (Neuliep, 2006)

1.2.3 Intercultural competence

Furthermore, intercultural flexibility is a sought alternative to ethnocentrism and misperceptions. According to Ting-Toomey and Chung (2005), an ethno relative attitude, thus one which approaches intercultural communication with a liberal mindset that moves beyond own cultural boundaries, is more capable of producing a positive outcome. In the staircase model presented in *Understanding Intercultural communication*, Ting-Toomey and Chung (2005) device a method to understand the individual's approach to an intercultural encounter and measure intercultural communication competence. At the top part of the staircase, the unconscious competence stage is reached; hence the individual is code-switching without any effort and feels confident about his/her approach to the new culturally challenging environment. Divergent thinking practice is consequently

employed, enabling the interlocutor to accept and generate new ideas in a nonlinear fashion. “By understanding the worldviews and values that influence others’ communication approaches, we can understand the logic that motivates their actions or behaviours”. (Ting-Toomey and Chung, 2005, p. 23)

1.3 How is Intercultural Dialogue interpreted in the Region?

When looking at the Euro-Mediterranean area, it is easy to recognize the immense vast spectrum of not only languages but also beliefs, cultures and norms. In this myriad situation people have been interacting for centuries, with trade and fisheries looked upon as an open gate for interaction whilst also apprehension of new professions and words. As reported by Brincat (2000) in ‘Il-Malti Elf Sena ta Storja’ the Maltese language, being a vivid and flexible language, adopted numerous words and meanings from: Sicilian, Arabic, Italian and English, illustrating thus the countless amounts of time locals and foreigners came into prolonged contact. When looking at the situation today, it is clear that the dynamics of interaction transformed greatly in the region especially if one considers technological and social developments. This surely had a great effect on the way and for how long people in the area interact; nonetheless the Mediterranean Sea kept providing a transparent bridge connecting Mediterranean people but also Northern and Eastern Europeans.

This section of the Chapter will be looking closely at northern and southern understanding of intercultural dialogue. The Council of Europe and its communications act as a wake up call for European institutions and governments to take note of a specific social phenomenon. All the literature consulted cites the COE White Paper on intercultural dialogue as the central paper around which present and future policy is constructed. On the southern realm, ISESCO, ALECSO and OIC act as a uniting voice for Islamic nations and states. These institutions hold a relatively legitimate position in relation to cultural, social and human related issues. In most conferences and high level meetings, ISESCO is a vibrant and active voice, balancing out European and Muslim voices, whilst having a direct effect on future national and regional policy making. A thorough understanding of similarities or differences between leading actors is important when analysing trends and policies in the region. A lack of consensus or distorted messages with regards to education, economics, politics and the cultural component can contribute to a North-South divide.

1.3.1 Intercultural dialogue: an E.U. perspective

As a matter of fact, the European Union, due to its multicultural formation sought to bring multiculturalism as a top priority for its agenda. Importance to multiculturalism is reflected in the way the union is governed and thus the possibility to retain an official language for member states and the 6 month presidency rotation in effect twice a year.

With the accession of Spain, Portugal, Greece, Malta and Cyprus the E.U. broadened its horizons to the southern part of Europe and included countries from within the Mediterranean region. As a consequence, the need to implement greater multicultural practices became of top priority. Although the European Union managed to enlarge its share in the area, it perpetuated the divide between the North-South and Christian-Muslim dichotomies. (Bicchi, 2004) Nonetheless it was soon recognized that the need to establish bilateral and multilateral agreements with its southern neighbours was as important as ever, and this due to natural resources and security matters.

Therefore, the E.U. felt the need to re-examine once more its multicultural identity and shape it to novel needs present in the region. As reported in the 2008 Council of Europe White Paper ‘Living together as equals in dignity’, the new realities present in the region presented a situation where the old approaches to cultural diversity were no longer adequate and a new terminology and framework was needed. Thus, Intercultural dialogue was chosen as a better expression to be used. The Council of Europe deemed Multiculturalism as no longer being able to reflect the situation as this only denotes “the empirical fact that different cultures exist and may interact within a given space and social organization”. (Council of Europe, 2008, p.11) On the other hand Intercultural dialogue is “understood as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic background and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect”. (Council of Europe, 2008, p. 10) An unambiguous shift is experienced from the mere recognition of different cultures to an environment of respect and mutual understanding. As a consequence relations

within member states but also with neighbouring countries, according to the White Paper, ended up to be a more holistic approach built upon universal principles of human rights and dignity. (Council of Europe, 2008)

The White Paper continues to explore the advantages when using intercultural dialogue as a point of reference but also as a philosophical ideal that builds upon recognition and equal distribution of power. In this way, the European Union tried to establish a power balance between its member states but also in relation to its southern partners or neighbours. Intercultural dialogue was thus understood as an opportunity for governments, politicians and civil society as a whole to interact and work towards a better apprehension of different actions, beliefs and practices every culture possesses. (Council of Europe, 2008)

Competent intercultural interlocutors and thus society as a whole required freedom of expression coupled with a profound interest in the other's views and beliefs. The White Paper focuses on the need to establish a shared set of values built upon human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Democracy is looked upon as the starting point through which all dialogue can flow into a constructive and effective way building its roots upon mutual respect, inclusiveness and a common ground. Subsequently democratic citizenship and participation is viewed as the pivotal mechanism through which effective and sustainable dialogue could be implemented. (Council of Europe, 2008)

1.3.2 Intercultural dialogue: a southern perspective

Apart from the E.U. the Mediterranean region is also home to other major institutions, which in the past 30 years have been working hard for improved relations and interactions at a regional but also at an international level. The most significant and widely attended conference organized by a multi-stakeholder partnership in 2005, brought together the region's main actors for a two day discussion on 'dialogue among civilizations'. The main participants included UNESCO, OIC, ISESCO, ALECSO, The Danish Centre for Culture and Development and the Anna Lindh EuroMed foundation for the dialogue between cultures. For the purpose of this study I will only look at declarations pertaining the understanding of intercultural dialogue as professed by southern voices and thus including OIC, ISESCO and ALECSO. Voices from the north have been already summed up in the Council of Europe's White Paper. When looking at the complete picture given by southern neighbours, a number of main points could be summed up: (Preis & Bialy, 2007)

- Concrete initiatives that should be integrated into the process of sustainable development
- Profound knowledge of the 'other'
- Importance of translation and joint cultural events
- Intercivilizational dialogue should not be the monopoly of a single organization nor of an academic, cultural or political institution

- Dialogue cannot be an objective for its own sake, but must lead to real rapprochement and mutual recognition and understanding.

Although all participating institutions agreed upon principles, values and attitudes in relation to intercultural dialogue, a subtle distinction could be observed between northern and southern partners' views. The main areas of focus agreed upon included education, science, social and human sciences, culture and information and communication. On the other hand, representatives from OIC, ISESCO and ALECSO brought forward additional arguments and views that are of pivotal importance in the current socio-political and socio-economical dimensions of the region. The 2004 'Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity', presented at the 4th Islamic Conference of Culture Minister stresses that "the universal virtues of brotherhood, justice and tolerance, which all civilizations share [that] should be sublimated and established in the minds and behaviours, as a common heritage of humanity". (ISESCO, 2004, p.2) Thus, members of the Islamic community focus on brotherhood interaction, one which is built upon one's own introspection and subsequently openness to the other since "each culture has its own genius, and is distinctly prolific and enlightened". (Preis & Bialy, 2007, p.151) A focus on socio-political realities, such as the Palestinian occupation, the role of globalization and the great economical divide between north and south are brought into the discussion as key components of the region's realities. Therefore, although all the participants agreed upon the main core values that will guide their work, a lack of commitment from the north to

address socio-economical realities in the south provides the discussion with a vacuum area, thus impeding constructive dialogue and effective widespread outcomes.

1.4 Conclusion

When looking back at the theories explored previously, a general consensus among main actors in the region with regards to the role and scope of intercultural dialogue is easily to identify. An improved image of the ‘other’ is pursued through various education tools and means. Nonetheless, as argued by Mitias and Al-Jasmi (2004), intercultural dialogue should happen at a junction, hence between an intellectual and sympathetic way. The former stimulates our cognitive processes in a journey towards further knowledge, whilst the latter works upon the emotional sphere that allows feelings of compassion, sympathy and tolerance to act on our perceptions and actions. This process should occur simultaneously, with both cognitive and emotive states working together towards the desired stage of *homo dialogicus*. The importance of the above mentioned theories is thus pivotal in understanding on-going processes and programs in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Starting off from the scope of on-going dialogue, observations brought forward at the beginning of this chapter illustrate the possible vacuum present in the region. As argued by Mitias and Al-Jasmi (2004), dialogue between cultures and hence people, should not be pursued with the sole scope of economic development but rather welcomed as a

dynamic journey that transforms the individual at a personal but also intra-personal level. Theories that explore such a transformation such as Bakhtin and Di Nuoscio explain the intermingled relationship between ‘self’ and ‘other’ as an inseparable reality upon which development of both entities is built. Taking these theories into practice and applying them to the EuroMed region could lead to a better understanding of how the ‘self’ of each individual in the North-South dichotomy is only possible to flourish and develop with on-going interaction and exchange of utterances. This would strengthen the important links and channels of communication present in the region as the only possible means through which new knowledge is generated. Therefore a better balance of power could be subsequently struck between the two littorals, recognizing the important contribution the ‘I’ and the ‘other’ has in a given event. Notions of an undeveloped south vis-à-vis an industrial, developed and modern north are lessened and the ‘other’ is no longer viewed as an ‘undeveloped self’ or an inferior entity but rather as being a culturally different reality.

Theorists such as Singer and Nueliep’s understanding of perceptions and their pivotal role in developing a judgment on the ‘other’ are also of great importance to better understand how and if on-going processes are successfully working on these filters. When analysing youths as being the potentially new driving force towards a more open and dialogical region, the theory brought forward by Ting-Toomey and Chung is therefore strategically important. The transformation of youths into ethno relative individuals, thus being: open, curious and tolerant towards the ‘other’ could provide the region with an additional purpose and new direction. Gadamer’s ‘fusion of horizons’ and

the staircase model developed by the above mentioned theorists could subsequently create a safe environment where dialogue is free flowing. On the other hand, institutionalized understanding of what intercultural dialogue entails can have substantial weight on the future collaboration and transformation in the region. As it has been illustrated through the Council of Europe White Paper and ISESCO, ALECSO and OIC declarations a general consensus on what intercultural dialogue calls for is reached. Nonetheless, disagreement about the way forward and on-going issues that need addressing is easily observed.

Therefore, one can conclude that a somewhat symbiotic relationship between theory and policy making is easily perceived. Commitments by regional actors to combat misperceptions and bridge cultures are undoubtedly ranked high on the regional agenda. Nonetheless, many agree that misperceptions and sentiments of mistrust of the ‘other’ are still high in the region, but this will be better analysed in the following chapters.

Chapter 2: Intercultural Levels of Interaction

“The picture is a mosaic in which each tile is important to the whole. All of us are called to serve in this mission of completing the building of this colourful mosaic of Mediterranean integration”. (Frendo, 2010, p.7)

2.0 Introduction

The Euro-Mediterranean region is frequently described as a colourful mosaic that embraces a multitude of cultures, beliefs, norms, religions and customs. An intermingled relationship has been present for decades and inhabitants in the region have been in constant interaction with one another, yet at different levels throughout the ages. At a Mediterranean level frequency of contacts is somewhat more recurrent. This phenomenon is easily explained if one looks at the historical stories of each littoral state. Trade ties and exchanges over marine issues are probably the most visible and common; nonetheless in recent times due to technological advancements and the effects of globalization other routes of communication have opened up. For a better understanding of relations and interactions at an intercultural level in the Euro-Mediterranean region one has to closely look at existing literature, on-going programs and opinion polls. The latter is undoubtedly considered by many as a mirror image of a particular society in relation to a specific topic. As a matter of fact opinion polls have been on-going at a national, regional but

also global level from the mid-20th century onwards. Polls were also present in earlier times, however these were in a small and infrequent number.

The structure of this chapter moves from a theoretical and methodological understanding of the social and cognitive effects exerted by opinion poll surveys. An in depth analysis of the possible flaws and misleading data gathering will follow. The opinion poll surveys chosen stretch between 1995 and 2010, with the most recent poll preceding social and political unrest in the region. A better understanding of how perceptions have changed will be pursued through an extraction of selected questions and results from the said polls. Therefore, a focus on the ‘other’ is the main area of study around which the scope of this chapter will revolve.

2.1 Definition of Concept

Throughout the decades the word poll transformed and shaped its meaning on numerous occasions and in recent times it became associated with public opinion on specific social issues. When looking at the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2012) the term opinion poll is defined as follows: “a recording of the replies to a question or set of questions of opinion given by a small percentage of the members of a group or of the general public and used as a basis for gauging group opinion or public opinion on a particular issue”. As explained by this definition, through the analysis of responses extracted from a small representative number opinion polls act as a mirror of the whole population at study.

Responses are extracted through the means of surveys and later decoded into significant information and outcomes.

The word 'survey' is also attributed to the classical period, in this case its origin dates back to the Latin period. 'Survey' is therefore composed of two Latin words added up together, with the initial part 'sur' stemming from the word 'super' meaning over and 'vey' from 'videre' meaning to see. Therefore, survey is a mechanism that allows the researcher to 'over see' a social, political or economical issue without the need to extend the study to the whole targeted population. (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988)

2.2 Types of Opinion Poll Surveys

Looked at in this way opinion poll surveys seem to be the ultimate mechanism for a better understanding of social interaction, politics and economics. Through accurate measurements and a scientific based methodology surveys provide; researchers, government officials, students and policy workers with a magical formula that unravels and unlocks all type of mysteries and uncertainties. Nonetheless, numerous are the criticisms and warnings brought forward by various disciplines and professions of the possible flaws present. The first thing to look at is undoubtedly the purpose of the study and thus the scope or organization behind such study. Opinion poll surveys are conducted by various entities such as governmental offices, which could include the census or politically related polls. A high frequency of polls is also carried out in the commercial

market field and at a university level. Media and private polls have also been on the increase in the past years and commissioned work by political candidates or independent organization rest faith in these private polling entities. Amongst the mostly acclaimed private polling organizations one finds Gallup and PEW global research, with the former enjoying a rich and abundant history of frequent and constant monitoring of social issues. (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988)

The process of polling is a scientifically meticulous one, which continued to improve its measurements and practices throughout the years. Technological advancements have also contributed to not only accelerate the process but also be more accurate. Opinion poll surveys are conducted thus via; face to face interviews, telephone interviews and mail responses. Each method could be used for a variety of social issues and enquiries, nonetheless a difference in the scope and purpose of each study illustrates how a certain method could be more useful than another. Therefore, a detailed exploration of the three types of data gathering is important if one wants to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of such tools. (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988)

2.2.1 Face to face interviewing

Starting off from face to face interview, this type of mechanism is best suited for situations of behavioural studies and in instances where respondents are unreachable

through the phone due to socio-economic realities. Therefore, face to face interviews allow greater penetration into the targeted social group and provide the researcher with the possibility to dig deeper into the issue through subsequent questions and human interaction. On the other hand, face to face interviews have numerous disadvantages not only on the researchers' side but also in relation to the study as a whole. Bradburn and Sudman (1988) examine the numerous flaws that face to face interviews could present to researchers and thus the possibility of peril and subsequently an unwillingness to visit areas of unrest or locations found in remote places. From the study's point of view, missed chances of interaction due to the above mentioned reasons and also a turn down or no answer reply by vulnerable individuals could result in a serious data and result misrepresentation.

2.2.2 Telephone interviewing

The other possible way of conducting surveys is through telephone interviews. This kind of research method is conducted from a centralized office, with professional interviewers calling interviewees and recording responses on paper or on an electronically aiding device. The mostly known and widely used system is the computer assisted telephone-interviewing (CATI). During the years technological advancements produced numerous types and systems of CATI with some of the systems capable of keeping a record of calls and also ability to reschedule unresponsive calls. This kind of mechanism provides the researcher or interviewer with more time to understand responses and thus reduce the risk

of confusion. As argued by Bradburn and Sudman (1988) a reduction in the probability of error when administering the questions is registered. On the other hand, CATI can also provide disadvantages and problems. A technological malfunctioning of the system could hinder the interviewers work and possibly also damage the study as a whole. Another possible disadvantage of telephone conducting interviewing is the lack of human interaction and subsequently the tendency for responses to be short. When studying human interaction and social behaviour as a whole a lack of in-depth responses could provide serious implications for final outcomes and results.

2.2.3 E-mail & mail questionnaires

The last type of possible data gathering is through mail questionnaires. These are undoubtedly the cheapest, fastest and mostly accessible tool for researchers. Nonetheless, Bradburn and Sudman warn against infinite problems when dealing with questionnaires. One of the most pressing and important troubles is ambiguity and correct understanding of the question by the respondents. Since the interviewer is not present the interviewee is left alone in the decoding and encoding of questions. Therefore, when questions are unclear, hold technical jargon or are long they tend to create difficulties not only on the interviewee side but also at a later stage when the researcher is analysing responses. The length of the study and a well-defined covering letter stating the scope and purpose of the research are also important. With mail questionnaires the response rate is somewhat smaller than that of face to face or telephone conducted interviews. As reported by

Dillman, studies longer than twelve pages tend to discourage even the most willing interviewees resulting in a very low response rate and ultimately a misleading result. (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988)

All of the above mentioned methods provide the interviewer with multiple tools and mechanisms for a better understanding and apprehension of the phenomenon at study. On the other hand, the non-identification of serious weak spots each mechanism holds could hinder the whole research process and ultimately results. The ‘magic’ like method that draws upon supposedly free flowing responses is possibly trampled by various technological and human constraints.

2.3 Sampling Methods

Another important aspect is the way respondents are chosen and subsequently the sample formulated. For a successful and fruitful survey there is no need for a large number of participants, since “the science of statistics is fundamentally concerned with generalizing from samples to populations”. (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988, p.110) Therefore, a definition of the population is essential if one wants to successfully draft a representative sample. The most readily available record of the population is unquestionably the national registrar office which holds a detailed record of all citizens eligible to vote. This record presents researchers with an easy and official record of persons over the age of eighteen,

nonetheless it does not account for non-registered voters, minority groups or people younger than the designated age. It is also difficult to obtain detailed constituency data in conflict zones or war torn regions. The above mentioned constraints will consequently shape the final outcomes and results of the study. A well-crafted survey will ensure that each individual with certain characteristics has an equal probability of selection.

There is a variety of sampling methods among which are: (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988)

1. Simple Random Sampling is considered as being the most popular. A list with the total number of possible participants is available to the researcher and the interviewees are chosen according to random numbers or every n th person in the list.
2. Clustered Sampling is gathered through the analysis of group clusters found in the same area.
3. Stratified Sampling relies on a sub grouping of a heterogeneous population into a more homogenous one.

2.3.1 Sampling limitations

The above mentioned methods present nevertheless problems, limitations and ultimately biases in the end product. A clear methodological description in the introductory part of the opinion poll survey is imperative if one wants to successfully interpret results. Although a 100% sampling error free study is impossible, sampling error could be

reduced when the sample is increased. Nevertheless, a more troubling bias is sampling bias which includes the inability to obtain accessible information from the total population and the possibility that samples are not drawn using probabilistic rules. (Bradburn and Sudman, 1988)

2.4 Content Analysis

Moving to ‘content-analysis’ understanding of polls, issues related to wording of questions and subsequently encoding of responses into statistics by researchers hold a pivotal role. As presented by Bradburn and Sudman (1988) the trap of formulating wrong questions is twofold, on the one hand the researcher might formulate questions that do not reflect what his/her study is looking for and on the other hand the actual wording might bias and shape the answer. A strict adherence to the questions formulated a priori is sought throughout the research project and interviewers refrain from changing the wording or add additional explanations.

2.4.1 Types of questions

Bradburn and Sudman (1988) divide the types of questions asked in polls into two categories; Factual and Opinion. Factual questions are types of questions which could be

easily verified by prior recorded factual knowledge. Diversely, opinion questions reveal more of the psychological state of the respondent. Furthermore Opinion questions are divided into three: Evaluative, Cognitive and Action intentions. The three types of Opinion questions embrace a multitude of inquisitive questions that dig deep into the personal understanding of the issue. Wording and structure of the questions is therefore important if one wants to avoid biased and predisposed answers. Loaded questions should be therefore avoided as this will only produce a predefined outcome, based on the researchers' needs and agenda. Open ended questions as opposed to closed ended questions will undoubtedly be more efficient in an in-depth social behavioural and interaction study. Bradburn and Sudman (1988) also talk of Double-Barrelled questions which include a reference to the possible action pursued and also of the ultimate goal. Intimidating questions will most certainly have substantial weight on the interviewees' response and judgment.

2.4.2 Non-sampling errors

Transformation and variation of data could result from: the actual wording, structure and order of the question, the interviewee and the respondent. Many question the possibility of intentionally giving false answers on the respondent's end. This is possible, however studies have shown that the most pressing problem is the respondents' perception of the study, researcher and the on-going interview as a whole. The researchers explain that the respondents "desire to be good respondents and answer questions as fully and as

truthfully as possible may conflict with their desire to present themselves in a good light to the interviewer”. (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988, p.190) Interviewees might also feel inclined to answer in accordance to socially designated and desirable ways, even in front of a stranger. The researcher is therefore obliged to keep in mind all the possible sample and non-sampling errors that could have shaped the study. Done intentionally or not, Bradburn and Sudman (1988) argue that a careful understanding of the above mentioned constraints is imperative for the strategic use of polls.

2.4.3 Un-opinionated answers

Special attention should also be given to how ‘Don’t know’ or ‘No Opinion’ responses are analysed and transformed into data. Bradburn and Sudman (1988) argue that ‘don’t know’ answers are sometimes yes an honest response by interviewees which do not have an opinion on the issue, however at other times a ‘don’t know’ might be used as a delay by the respondent. Interviewees, especially when responding to questions relating to personal feelings and behaviour might need more time to better formulate their understanding of the question and ultimately answer.

2.5 What Polls Actually Do

Many agree that opinion poll surveys are a well-crafted mathematical mechanism through which a social, economic or political phenomenon could be easily studied. Through the analysis of individual responses the researcher manages to extend this information to the population as a whole or to specific sub groupings. Therefore, sampling theory acts as a guarantor for the scientifically based framework upon which results are crafted. As argued by Bradburn and Sudman (1988), opinion poll surveys are used for many reasons, but mainly being those linked to government politics, businesses or the non-profit sector. Institutionalized offices use polls to better understand what the general public's feelings and thoughts are in relation to a specific social, political or economic issue. Furthermore the researchers agree that "more specifically, surveys are often used to help organizations monitor the implementation of decisions and to evaluate the results of government programs or advertising campaigns". (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988, p.8) Therefore, polls act not only as an initial indicator on a specific social issue but also as a measuring instrument which manages to monitor on-going programs and decisions. Looking at the business side, polls are an easy and considerably cheap way of individuating market preferences in a customer centred way. The media finds also great use of polls as these provide a number to the measurement of audience size and also a mirror on specific social issues related to governmental policies and changes.

When looking at polls from an individual perspective, Bradburn and Sudman (1988) argue that polls have a direct effect here too. A sense of pleasure is felt on the

interviewee's part as he/she feels important and consulted on matters of importance. The researchers conclude that "polls bring the average citizen closer to those who govern" (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988 p.222), creating therefore a bridge between those who govern and the constituency. Opinion poll surveys give the majority a voice as opposed to a usually small but economically sound minority which imposes its views and agenda. As very well argued, "in the absence of poll data, the majority may remain silent and inactive and permit the minority to prevail". (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988, p.224) This notion is also true in behavioural studies and interaction. Whereas, usually behavioural taboos are masked and kept in the shadows, opinion poll surveys have the ability to unmask such taboos and subsequently create a behavioural bandwagon which represents a better understanding of the issue and ultimately action. On the other hand, a possible negative outcome of attitudes and behaviour as a result of polls is an established reality. Nonetheless, "censorship and ignorance of the true state of public opinion and behaviour is worse than any of the consequences of reporting accurately what the poll results are". (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988, p.224) Consequently opinion poll surveys do measure and analyse public opinion, however it exerts also substantial influence on the general public as a whole. As argued by Crawford Hollingworth (2012) "Opinion polls shape public opinion as much as they reflect it". Building upon behavioural economics theory, Hollingworth argues that in general individuals do not like to be a misfit or an outcast and thus choose to follow the crowd.

Therefore, opinion poll surveys act in a two-way direction, on the one hand they provide government officials and institutionalized offices with data about a specific population in

relation to a certain social aspect and on the other hand, through their publication they manage to stimulate discussion in the public sphere.

2.6 Analysis of Polls

2.6.0 Introduction

This study will be looking at four distinct opinion poll surveys conducted in the Euro-Mediterranean region and also globally that have been on-going for the past fifteen years. The polls are conducted by different entities and institutions, thus providing a better picture of relations and interaction. Nonetheless, a serious lack of congruent and sequential surveys by the above mentioned institutions leave the region with a vacuum of data. As a matter of fact, till 2010 the Euro-Mediterranean region provides a grave deficiency on how relations progressed or transformed throughout the years. This study hopes therefore to gather a general and non-exclusive picture of progress or regress in terms of intercultural dialogue in the region. The polls will not be analysed in their entire structure but rather focus on specific issues related to perceptions on the ‘other’.

2.6.1 Themes and time frame

The main area of study will revolve around youths and their strategic role in transforming relations in the region. As it will be explained at a later stage, none of the polls directly

study youth's perceptions of intercultural interaction. Nonetheless the more recent reports and thus the Abu Dhabi Gallup report (2010) and the Anna Lindh report (2010) state on numerous occasions that youths provide a more open and cooperative approach to intercultural encounters. Since these studies target a population as young as 15 years of age, a comparable analysis based on age was possible for the researchers. Age comparative data is not presented in either study, however both reports highlight the more frequent positive responses given out by youths. Analysis will move from the most distant to the most recently conducted polls in the designated time frame (1995-2010). The first two opinion poll surveys have a distinct set of variables that makes a comparison difficult. They also lack to include youth perspective and perceptions as respondents are; government or academic officials or chosen from the adult population of 18 years of age and older. Nonetheless a better understanding of the adult population might prove to be useful as these are the current educators and leaders of the young. In the first survey professionals from the field of business, law and social sciences are consulted whilst in the second a random sampling of the general population in the targeted group is chosen. Behavioural, attitudinal and perceptual feelings are passed down from one generation to the other and therefore an understanding of over 18's is also a possible understanding of the younger generation.

2.6.2 Mediterranean Space survey 1995

Starting off from the most distant survey conducted and thus ‘The Mediterranean Space’ survey carried out in 1995, a time span of 15 years will be analysed. This survey is commissioned by the Institut Català de la Mediterrània and its findings are presented during the EuroMed civil forum of 1996. The main scope of the survey is to better understand cultural, economical and political realities in Mediterranean and European countries, dividing the region into North-South categorization. As specified in the initial technical data section, this study was conducted amongst elites and professional individuals of the region. Therefore, respondents were chosen on the basis of economical, educational and political backgrounds. The biggest segment of respondents come from the humanities and social science sector, followed by law, administration and international relations actors and science specialists. The other professionals and elites consulted included respondents from interdisciplinary centres, industry and business, technology and territory, urban planning and transport. This type of sampling contrasts sharply with the scientifically based probability sampling method utilized by most quantitative researchers and hinders the legitimacy of the study. However, a predefined declaration on what criteria respondents were chosen on facilitates analysis and understanding. In the technical section further explanation is provided about how the data was gathered and distributed. Questions were mailed to respondents with a total number

of 1,500 surveys distributed. A very low response percentage rate that of 24.2% is easily understood if one looks back at Bradburn and Sudman's (1988) arguments provided in the previous section. Questions asked were divided into two and a mixture of open and closed questions were used. The survey was conducted in four different languages: Catalan, Spanish, French and English, providing respondents with the opportunity to choose a preferred language. It is however surprising that Arabic is not listed as an available option. The present phenomenon clusters this study in a European centred ideology which recognizes only the importance of romance languages with the addition of English as a lingua franca. The omission of Arabic could also stem from the clustered elitist focus undertaken by the researchers. A sense of colonial domination and influence is surely easily to individuate and target.

2.6.2.1 Future aspirations for the region

When looking at the contextual content of this survey a clear understanding of how the respondents view the region in general and also what are their future aspirations illustrate a great divide not only in economical, social and political terms but also in future aspirations and transformations of the region. Respondents are guided towards a desired future scenario and asked what is their position in relation to a North-South gradual integration process. Respondents are given a set of answers and thus are confined to abide to the researchers agenda. Therefore no space for free responses and individual reflections is given. A clear distinction between North-South relations and expectations is

probably most visible in this section, with a percentage difference to most responses. The biggest and in my opinion most significant percentage gap is the one related to the economic sphere. The following options were presented to respondents:

- Setting up a free-trade area within the region
- Restructuring of foreign debt

In both instances the southern part voiced greater support for the above mentioned options, whilst the North showed marginal interest in such mechanisms. Another staggering difference is registered when the option of incorporating non-European Mediterranean states into the EU is listed. A 3.2% from the North as opposed to a 17.3% from the South illustrate different perceptual understanding of the way forward and also possible future scenarios of the region.

2.6.2.2 Methodological and content limitations

It is interesting to note the major flaws present in this survey, amongst which one can include the lack of a random sampling technique and also the lack ‘don’t know’ answers. Respondents are forced to choose their answer from a predefined list, giving little opportunity for new options and answers. Another main drawback of this survey is the very low response rate explained in the first part, therefore making the study not only unrepresentative of the region but also unrepresentative of the clustered group of

professionals and elites. Unfortunately it is the only available data in the region and subsequently the only possible way to look into intercultural relations during the 1990s.

2.6.2.3 Reflections

Although this survey lacks an in-depth understanding of how the North views the South and vice-versa, respondents show a somewhat distinct understanding not only of the role of the region but also the role of the ‘other’ in relation to one’s cultural, economic and political future. Elites and high governmental officials chosen for this survey represent, although in a limited way, a picture of how their country will approach the ‘other’ at a state relationship level. The above mentioned disparities in imagined future scenarios are undoubtedly rooted in past economical expectations and present political realities of participating states. A spill over effect from the high technical board represented in the survey to the general population, through national policy commitments, is ultimately experienced. An increase in mistrust and misperception, as is explained through subsequent surveys is therefore witnessed at a state and regional level. Furthermore, the 1995 survey acts as the first indication of a gap in not only intercultural relationships but also in perceptions about the future. Subsequently these perceptions are translated into an increased sense of mistrust and misunderstanding. The economical gap which continues to distance the North from the South in terms of human development and social justice adds up to the negative perceptual understanding of the ‘other’.

2.6.3 PEW Global Attitudes survey 2006

The second poll that this study will be looking at is the 2006 PEW Global Attitudes survey named 'The Great Divide; How Westerners and Muslims view each other'. The Pew Global attitudes survey has been on-going since 2001 and deals mainly with political and social issues including a variety of nations from around the world. Although most of the research is done in relation to the U.S. understanding and experience of a certain phenomenon, the PEW research centre declares its independence and commitment to represent also other nation states.

With a total of 300,000 interviews carried out in 59 countries, PEW research centre enjoys a somewhat legitimate position in the international fora. In this study, PEW Global Attitudes survey delves into 15 different nations from around the world in an attempt to better understand how Westerners and Muslims view each other. This time we are presented with a dichotomy based on civilization affiliations and not on specific geographical location. In contrast with the 'Mediterranean space survey' of 1995, where researchers divided the region into two geographical segments, PEW researchers decided to use the labels Westerners and Muslims for the classification of their data. In this particular study, Muslims living in Europe were also given a voice and their answers recorded alongside responses of Westerners living in the West and Muslims living in predominant Muslim countries. This study opted for a combination of data gathering and thus used both telephone and face-to-face interviews. A declaration of 95% confidence in

sampling error is calculated, with additional error or bias attributed to practical difficulties and wording. Each country is individuated and listed in the methodological appendix and this provides the researcher not only with a clear picture of countries studied but also margin of error and data gathering method utilized. A clear difference from one nation state to the other in terms of data gathering is easily observed and coupled with socio-economic realities. Taking as an example four nation states: France, Germany, Egypt and Spain a difference in data gathering could be observed.

The most prominent way of conducting surveys was through telephone operated questions in France and Germany, whilst on the other hand in Egypt and Spain the adult population is engaged through face-to-face interviewing. As explained earlier a difference in the method used might lead to different outcomes and responses. Languages used for interviewing respondents matched the respective national language and in some instances also the inclusion of another predominant language in the state or widely used dialects. When looking at nation states such as India and Pakistan a principal defect of data gathering could be observed when one looks at the representative section. Only the urban population is consulted and as such no real representation of the county as a whole is provided, on the other hand national samples are used for the other nation states at study.

For the purpose of this research project and thus a focus on the EuroMed area, specific countries will be chosen amongst the global perspective. Reference to the global West-Muslim view will also be given importance, nonetheless special attention will be

conveyed towards France, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, Egypt and Turkey. In this way I hope to illustrate differences or similarities present in the EuroMed region vis-à-vis the global perspective.

2.6.3.1 Perceptions on the ‘other’

Delving now into the PEW Global Survey specific attention will be given to perceptions on the ‘other’ through predefined questions prepared for respondents. For a better understanding of how the two groups view each other, the PEW research team decided to move from a purely favourability rating to a narrower judgment based on individual perception.

One set of questions included a rating of judgment based on predisposed characteristics attributed to their specific group and also in relation to the other group. For a better understanding a list of traits used for the survey is important. These included positive and negative traits with each trait available for both set of groups. The following is the list of negative traits presented to respondents: selfish, arrogant, violent, greedy, immoral and fanatical. On the other hand the positive traits included: respectful of women, generous, tolerant, honest and devout.

2.6.3.2 Muslim response

Starting off from Muslim respondents, therefore for the purpose of this study Egypt and Turkey, one finds a predominance of negative traits attributed to Westerners, with 69% of Turkish and 63% of Egyptian respondents considering Westerners as selfish. Negative traits of violence, fanaticism and greediness score over 60% for both nation states. When looking at perceived positive traits one finds a low percentage rate, with less than 30% claiming in generosity and tolerance. A general mistrust about the West is also felt through responses related to traits of honesty, with a minimum score of 23% for Turkey and a somewhat more positive score of 32% for Egypt. The West is also perceived as pursuing secularly dominant politics, with 39% of Turkish respondents considering the West devout and only 29% of Egyptian respondents agreeing.

2.6.3.3 Western response

When looking now at Western respondents or as classified by PEW ‘non-Muslim respondents’ a similar pattern followed by the above mentioned states is observed. When looking at positive traits associated with Muslims, the West considers Muslims to be highly devout by all the chosen countries. The country which considers Muslims to be mostly devout is Spain with 86% of respondents agreeing to this, followed by Germany 85%, Great Britain 84% and France 69%. Percentages lower further when issues of tolerance, honesty and generosity are put into question. An interesting change in

percentages and rankings highlight the previously mentioned socio-economic and political differences amongst these nation states, with only 20% of Spanish respondents and 21% of German interviewees considering Muslims as tolerant as opposed to France 45% and Great Britain's 35%. When looking at the negative traits Western respondents attribute to Muslims, changes in percentage are again observed at national level. When looking at fanaticism and violence, Spain leads the way with 83% for the former and 60% for the latter. Germany is again closest to Spanish perceptions, consequently 78% of German respondents rate Muslims as fanatic, whilst 52% rate Muslims as violent. France and Great Britain have a somewhat less negative perception of the 'other' with only 50% of French respondents considering Muslims fanatical and 41% violent and only 48% of British interviewees considering Muslims fanatical and 32% violent. A change in ranking is observed when negative traits of arrogance, selfishness, greediness and immorality are included. A shift between Spain and Germany is experienced with both nation states occupying the highest percentage as opposed to France and Great Britain. The negative trait that received less scoring was the immoral trait with the highest score being that of German respondents (26%) and the lowest score being that of British respondents (16%).

2.6.3.4 Reflections

When looking at the global perspective one notices that countries in the EuroMed region are more or less in line with respondents from other parts of the world. Specific changes

and polarization of results is to be attributed to specific nation states and not to the region as a whole. As it has been illustrated above, national histories, socio-economic realities, immigration flows throughout the ages and varying political philosophies have a direct effect on perception of the ‘other’.

No mention in this study is given of youths as respondents chosen had to be of 18 years and older. Nonetheless, as argued for the Mediterranean space survey report, adult rankings and perceptions are easily transferred to the young population. Although a marginal sense of individual choices for each youth in different societies is present, society will overtly or covertly shape and transform perceptions and understandings. As presented by Singer (1998), perceptual filters are shaped and constrained through cultural, physical, environmental and also learning processes. All of the above explain therefore how the adult population could to a certain extent mirror the younger one. Nonetheless, elements of economical and educational background are important here as a clustering of individuals into homogeneous cultural groups is misleading.

2.6.4 Abu Dhabi Gallup survey 2010

The third poll for analysis is the Abu Dhabi Gallup survey, ‘Measuring the state of Muslim-West relations’ conducted between 2006 and 2010. The Gallup research centre has been active since 1935 with predominant attention being focused on the U.S. (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988) However, throughout the years the Gallup group expanded

and stretched its outreach to a more global perspective. Gallup surveys have become nowadays the epitome of opinion poll surveys and a landmark for students, policy makers and researchers. Various have been the issues or phenomenon studied by Gallup, amongst which one finds national political, social and economic analysis and also internationally related issues such as terrorism and job creation. The Gallup research centre is one which enjoys popularity not only for its commitment to carry out studies on a longitudinal schedule but also due to the long experience and practice with polls.

In 2010 the Abu Dhabi Gallup research centre was established and an attempt to provide the Muslim population with a voice and subsequently provide Westerners with better understanding and action. As explained in the Executive summary of the study, “the report, which is based on survey research Gallup conducted between 2006 and early 2010, delves into the meaning of respect and the source of tensions between Western and majority Muslim societies”. (Abu Dhabi Gallup Center, 2010, p.10) It is interesting to note that this survey gives priority to Muslim voices by placing a change in word structuring of the well know West-Muslim relation. This subtle yet important move has substantial weight not only on the scope of the study but also on its ultimate outcome and results.

Looking at the technical section, one is struck by the high level of detail and explanation. The language of interaction between interviewees and interviewers depends on the most popular language of each country. The technical section explains how original texts in English, Spanish or French are used and translated into the desired language. A double

check is performed by a second translator who checks the end result with the initial version. This practice is of utmost importance if one wants to successfully distribute the same questions across languages and cultures.

Interviews are conducted via face-to-face interaction or by telephone, with the latter lasting more or less 30 minutes and the former around one hour. As reported in the methodological section this survey is based on a probability sampling mode based on national statistics of the population aged 15 years and over. A vast geographical area is covered thanks to infiltration of rural areas, with the only exception when safety of the interviewer was at risk and in some scarcely populated islands. Sampling is divided into two distinct categories according to the method of interviewing chosen.

When conducting face-to-face interviewing a three stage process is carried out, at an initial stage a 'Primary Sampling unit' is singled out. This primary sampling unit is based on already available data of household capacity stratified by population size and/or geography. At a second stage random route procedures are used for the selection of sampled households, with a maximum of three attempts of call if no full refusal is registered. At the final stage respondents in the household are randomly selected by means of the Kish grid method. This method is a widely used one especially when dealing with large scale surveys. As explained by Marshall (2012) this grid gives equal opportunity of participation to every individual in a household. Marshall (2012) explains that "the technique involves constructing a list of eligible individuals at a particular

address, ordered by age, and then selecting according to the serial number of the address itself”.

On the other hand the telephone survey design has a completely different method of data gathering. The method used is known as random-digital-dial (RDD), with randomly chosen phone numbers extracted from a nationally representative list. Here again the Kish grid method is used for a random selection of respondents with three attempts of contact made in different times and days. Special attention is given to household size as bigger households present a different and lower probability rate for its occupants. Samples are once more analysed in a post stratification weight analysis and finally design effect and margin of error are calculated.

A detailed account of: data collection dates, number of interviews, design effect, margin of error, mode of interviewing, language used, over sampling error and exclusions are listed for each participating country. This facilitates the researchers’ work in understanding the difference in methodological tools and also the total period of time during which the survey was conducted in each country.

2.6.4.1 Perceptions of Muslim-West relations

This Gallup research was conducted across 55 countries with a total number of 123,288 interviews carried out between the periods of 2006-2010. Countries analysed are grouped

into regional categories and thus one finds: Asia, Sub Saharan Africa, MENA, Europe, U.S and Canada. The study is divided into six sections analysing different aspects of Muslim-West relations. Regrouping of countries is moulded according to the issue at study, therefore in section 1 ‘Change over time: Muslims Views of Muslim-West relations’ one finds a trending system which does not include the total sum of countries studied but rather the trended regional categorization. Specific countries are chosen from the region as a representative of the whole group so for example in the MENA region one finds that only 10 countries were consulted. On the other hand, in section 2 ‘Perceptions of Muslim-West Interactions as a Threat versus benefit’ more countries are included in the regional grouping.

2.6.4.2 Interaction: threat vs. benefit.

Gallup’s research team takes a closer look into ‘Perceptions of Muslim-West interactions as a threat versus a benefit’. Gallup’s research reports that overall both Muslim and Western countries conclude that greater interaction with the ‘other’ is more of a benefit than a threat. Gallup reports that although higher interaction is sought in both civilizations a link between higher education and young age is established. As an example 62% of residents in majority Muslim countries with at least a high school degree stated that higher interaction is a benefit. A somewhat similar result is registered in the West with 85% of Westerners with at least a high school degree believing that greater interaction is beneficial.

When looking at individual countries, Muslim countries in the MENA region differ their responses not according to economical and social realities but rather as a direct response to the presence or lack of Western military presence. Gallup recognizes that a high level of mistrust and therefore non-beneficial relationship is mostly recalled in countries where Western military bases have or are still present.

When looking at the Euro-Mediterranean region as a whole, Germany tops the list of viewing greater interaction as a benefit with a 76% score. Tunisia, Egypt and the United Kingdom hold the same percentage of 72%, whilst Morocco and the Netherlands view interaction as being 69% and 67% beneficial respectively. Only 65% of French respondents considered interaction as being beneficial whilst only 59% of Italian and Turkish respondents agreed. A divided society is registered in Libya and Algeria with 50% of respondents considering greater interaction as a benefit. I intentionally refrained from clustering once more countries into sub regional groupings but rather look at specific countries within the region. It is clear that an intermingled relationship between socio-economic realities and national and regional political dynamics are the true hindering force to intercultural dialogue.

2.6.4.3 Reflections

From the above presented list a mixture of perceptions is present irrespectively of being Muslim or Westerner, but rather based on age and educational background, coupled with socio-political realities and changes. Young age is therefore looked upon as an important and pivotal component for improved relations. The Gallup team recognizes that the intermingled relationship between increased educational schooling and an increased aptitude for intercultural dialogue is registered. Youths still in the educational system and that manage to continue up till high school represent a positive and encouraging element in the region. Educational programs at a national and regional level are therefore looked upon as important ingredients when trying to build a peaceful and prosperous environment. Negative attitudes attributed to the ‘other’ are therefore decreased through greater interaction and intermingling but also through a holistic educational program that from the Gallup’s research seems that starts to bear its fruits at a high school and post-high school level.

2.6.5 Anna Lindh Report survey 2010

The fourth poll for analysis is ‘The Anna Lindh report, EuroMed Intercultural dialogue trends 2010’. This is the first report of its kind as it focuses only on the Euro-Mediterranean region and a commitment to reproduce the study every three years is

stated in the introductory section of the report. For the first time therefore European and Mediterranean countries are analysed closely and their relationship or lack of it is explained through a new understanding of how differences are perceived and experienced. The report adheres to the principle of a scientifically based approach which does not focus on the usual split between West-Islam or Europe/Arab countries. The false perceived homogeneity such categorizations imply miss out the on-going political, social and economical transformations in the region. The report therefore acknowledges that other opinion polls which measure the state and predisposition for dialogue between cultures have been on-going for a long-time, nonetheless this report presents its readers with a unique exercise. Moreover, The Anna Lindh Report (2010, p.16) states that “it aims at acknowledging cultural diversity in a social and human context which appears in a map running from Stockholm to Rabat and from Madrid to Damascus”. The aim is to look closely at the social and human component in the region and thus focus on daily life experiences and values.

The Anna Lindh foundation does not carry out surveys on its own but rather teams up with the Gallup Europe research centre to successfully implement and design methodologically sound tools for the region. The report analysed 13 countries of the Euro-Mediterranean area with 13,000 respondents interviewed. Special attention has been given to the social and economic background of the individuals participating in the survey, in an attempt therefore to break away from the predefined divisions mentioned earlier. The report includes a complete list of questions asked to interviewees, distributed

in a sequential mode. The questions are divided into four thematic chapters with two additional questions on media and demographic information.

Data gathering is done through face-to-face interviewing for southern and eastern Mediterranean countries whilst CATI was the preferred way of conducting interviewing in European countries. CATI was also used for the eastern Mediterranean state of Turkey. In Hungary both methods have been used and this in an attempt to improve quality and coverage. Primary sampling units for face-to-face interviewing was used whilst Random Digit Dial was used for telephone interviewing. As explained earlier responses change according to the method used and subsequently face-to-face interviewing might yield more in depth answers as opposed to CATI. The only country in which both methods were used was Hungary with 700 interviews carried out by CATI and 300 by face-to-face interviewing. It might have been interesting to carry out this exercise amongst all the participating states and this to further increase coverage. This report follows closely the Gallup's philosophy on sampling methods. Subsequently one finds that the report is built upon the Kish grid and includes all individuals aged 15 and older. The random sampling method represents also rural areas and locations. The margin of error recorded is that of $\pm 1.4\%$ at a 95% of confidence interval.

2.6.5.1 Perception of the ‘self’ and ‘other’

Moving now to the content analysis of the report, one finds a variety of questions that move from personal likings and preferences related to representative countries in the Mediterranean to specific characteristics. Further on, the report delves into perceptions of the ‘self’ and also of the ‘other’ in relation to values and beliefs. The Anna Lindh (2010) research team decided to ask respondents a non-conventional question which allows internal reflection upon one’s own beliefs, one’s own cultural group but also reflections about the ‘other’. Results point to a possible perceptual gap which is hindering the other surrounding processes and interactions, nonetheless this is better explained through a closer look at the specific question.

Respondents from both groups were asked to choose two options from a predefined list of values most important to them when bringing up their own children. The list included; family solidarity, respect for other cultures, obedience, independence, curiosity and religious belief. A clear distinction is noted with family solidarity and respect for other cultures being voted the most important values for Europeans, whilst religious beliefs and family solidarity being the most voted by southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. Respondents from both groups were then asked to state what their perceived understanding of values as professed in Europe and in southern and eastern

Mediterranean countries is. A clear distinction between respondents' perceptions of the 'other' and actual results gathered from the previous section is present. A mismatch between 'own' values and cultural values of the pertaining society in which respondents lived were also noted. As presented in the report, "most respondents assumed their own values to be the same as their own country group" (The Anna Lindh Report, 2010, p.27), however in most instances this was not the case.

Taking as an example family solidarity and respect for other cultures, percentages varied across the groups but also within them, with Europeans misjudging their counterpart parents values by slight yet considerable numbers. As such, family solidarity and respect for other cultures was considered by 32% of respondents as the most important value when bringing up their children. When asked to rate the perceived understanding of values other Europeans attach to child rearing only 27% and 25% respectively agreed mostly with the statement. European interviewees were then further asked to rate the values southern and eastern Mediterranean parents attach to family rearing. Misjudgements with regards to curiosity, independence and obedience were amongst the most prominent. When looking at percentages, Europeans rated curiosity as being 7% important, Independence 14% and obedience 28%, on the other hand southern and eastern Mediterranean respondents gave a complete different picture of values related to child upbringing, with curiosity rated at 19%, Independence 20% and obedience 35%.

Moving now to southern and eastern Mediterranean respondents, a similar pattern is observed when comparing questions concerning personal values, perceived own regional

values and perceptions of the 'other'. When looking at family solidarity, southern and eastern Mediterranean respondents considered this value as most important as opposed to other respondents in the region. Obedience also registered a marked difference between own values and the general perceived values of the region, with the former scoring 35% whilst the latter 40%. Misjudgements about the 'other' were also registered among southern and eastern Mediterranean respondents, with individualistic values being highly attributed to European parents. Furthermore, 57% of southern and eastern Mediterranean respondents considered independence as the most important value for European parents, whilst only 19% of European parents placed this value as the most important when bringing up their children.

The report illustrates also that a high frequency of 'don't know' answers is highly frequent amongst European respondents (16%), whilst from the southern and eastern Mediterranean group Turkey (44%) is the predominant state with most don't know answers. When looking at the methodological structure and how data was collected, one can easily individuate the reason behind such a large rate of no responses. As argued by Bradburn and Sudman (1988), telephone conducted interviewing tends to be shorter and less expressive than face-to-face interaction. Respondents might be distracted by the surrounding environment and subsequently not give full attention to the conversation. Face-to-face interaction on the other hand allows the interviewee and interviewer to enter into an imagined confined space where full attention is given to the newly formed dialogical relationship. Face-to-face interviewing has nonetheless its disadvantages; however it seems that it yields a higher rate of engagement on the interviewee part.

2.6.5.2 Reflections

The report fails to give a detailed account of responses categorized into ages. Nonetheless on numerous occasions the report states that young age and a high level of education are the perfect ingredients for a more open approach to the ‘other’. In the eleven areas for action listed at the end of the report youth led initiatives and educational programs are individuated as pivotal for the creation of a peaceful and mutually understanding region. Amongst the initiatives listed one finds the increased inter-personal interaction through cultural exchanges and institutionalised interaction. Together with virtual platforms and the aid of new technology, the Anna Lindh report encourages all participating actors in the region to engage and facilitate interaction for such youths, with a specific focus on students.

2.7 Conclusion

Although none of the polls carried out a longitudinal study of the area, a trend in perceptions is easily observable. Moving away from the preconditions of Huntington’s theory of ‘The Clash of Civilizations’ a deeper understanding of socio-cultural and political-economical interwoven webs of interaction is imperative. Therefore, a deeper

understanding entails one to look not only at what polls tell us but also put these results in the light of economical disparities and political realities that divide the region. The usual dichotomy of North-South or West-Islam is crumbled down to make way for a better and more theoretically grounded explanation.

Already in the 1995 'The Mediterranean space survey' a clear distinction in future collaboration between states is perceived from the results. This imagined future, built upon already existing realities and economies, reflects the aspirations of two distinct economies but is also a reflection of past encounters and dialogues. The second poll discussed is the 2006 PEW global attitudes research. As explored earlier, this poll delves into perceptions and traits associated with the 'other'. During a time span of 11 years since the 1995 survey, results seem to point towards a greater divide and a lesser role for understanding. Negative traits are most often linked to the 'other', whilst positive and laudable traits are associated with one's own cultural group. This 'in group' versus 'out group' tension is continuously fuelled up by frequent terrorist attacks in the region, but also and most importantly the mass media, political discourse and a general increased sense of insecurity.

The Gallup and Anna Lindh reports come at a time when various institutions, programs and intercultural initiatives have been set up and on-going since the Barcelona process and thus a total number of 15 years of institutionalized and civil interaction. Nonetheless, results point once more to the same direction of mistrust and misperceptions that seem to not have narrowed throughout the years but rather remained constant across most social

groups, with the only exception of youths and high school educated people. Thanks to a wider targeted population and therefore the inclusion by the Gallup and Anna Lindh research centres of 15 year old respondents, a new understanding of relations is possible. Educational background of respondents is also studied and this together with demographic results gives the study new shades and meaning. With the inclusion of the above mentioned data a link is subsequently made between young age and a high school level of education as being two of the most important factors that contribute to improved perceptions and relations. Youths, with the most important sub grouping of students' gains a pivotal role in future interactions and relations of the region.

To this end numerous have been the initiatives and publications which stress this newly acclaimed phenomenon of student participants as being active leaders in the transformation of the region. In the past years national educational curricula have been given substantial importance and various mechanisms have been put in place for the remodelling and transformation of information taught to students. From the above presented reports, all participating countries' respondents with a high level of education proved to be more open for the 'other'. On the other hand a lack of educational background and an increase in age have shown to be the most prominent amongst respondents that deem intercultural interaction as a threat or undesirable.

The four opinion poll surveys used in this analytical section move from an adult understanding of the population at study to a narrower approach where thanks to adjusted data sampling, new light is drawn on possible areas of action. Cultural differences seem

to hold a somewhat important role in determining the outcome of relations, nonetheless as previously argued cultural affiliations are most of the time depicted in a homogenous exclusive way. Few are the instances when European and Muslim countries break away from the preconditioned dichotomy of North-South or West-Muslim and the above presented polls are a clear example of this. Nonetheless, in depth analysis of demographics and educational background provide the region with a ground-breaking understanding of present and future relations.

In the upcoming section an analysis of intercultural initiatives with a direct focus on youths will be pursued in an attempt to better understand the existing link between opinion poll results and actual programs. The E.U. is in this case the main actor, with youth programs organized over a period of 11 years (time frame 1999-2010). The region experiences therefore a change not only in the mechanisms in place but also in the general approach to intercultural dialogue. Both polls individuate an up till now dormant group that could be the positive driving force in the region. Therefore, youths are singled out as the most promising and accessible group that could provide the region with not only economical and political leverage but also as being the source of a possible shared future. Coupling this with a strong educational background various regional actors have been pushing forward the need to look at a future built upon a shared set of values, which move away from the preconditioned identities related to religion, culture or geographical location.

Chapter 3: Youths as Active Citizens

“Europe was (re)-discovering the fact that the Mediterranean region was not only synonymous of tourism at its best and boat people at worst, but was also a cultural space rich in diversity”. (Tanzarella, 2005, p.108)

3.0 Introduction

Throughout the years various institutions and organizations have been committed to work with and for youths, not only at national level but also globally through widespread networks and contacts. Various states have been advocating the need to frame youths as a vulnerable group that is at a crossroad and as such an important time for the future transformation into adulthood. Unfortunately, the word ‘youth’ is a highly used word which is easily manipulated for economic, social and political reasons. For a better understanding it is imperative to look at the Merriam-Webster (2012) definition of the word youth. Youth is defined as “the time of life when one is young: especially the period between childhood and maturity” and “a young person; especially male between adolescence and maturity”. Leaving aside the gender connotations, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2012) provides a short yet significant explanation of not only the actual time

but also the actual transition. A time when the individual goes through not only physiological and psychological transformations, but one who is also on a journey of morality and conscience. For this reason various state and regional youth related policies are driven by this intrinsic need to guide and illuminate the journey for this new at risk group, which is still inexperienced in regards to the perils of the world. Youths are in this way relegated to a somewhat homogenous group that needs constant guidance and advice, leaving no or only a tiny fraction for input.

Furthermore, lately and also thanks to European youth involvement, a shift in not only the scope but also the function of youths is witnessed. Following the 2001 White Paper titled 'A new impetus for European youths', new light is shed on the expectations, needs and aspirations of young Europeans. A sense of disinterest in political life stems not from the fact of being young and thus more care free, but originates from the fact that youths are most of the time consulted at a later stage or left out of discussions completely. (Council of Europe, 2001) A shared sense of citizen deficit is reverted into lack of participation and engagement in programs and frameworks. To this end the European Community recognized the important and active role European youths can have in the development and implementation of policies. A youth philosophy grounded in the notions of action and positive contribution by youths at all levels of policy making is recognized as the most promising mechanism to not only involve youths in the public sphere but also bring about change in the social sphere.

A similar framework is transferred to the Mediterranean region, shaking the archaic national methods and perceptions in youth policy making and subsequently transform EuroMed relations on numerous grounds. Although the political and economical components remain high on the national and regional agenda drafted by states and subsequently through the EuroMed Partnership, the important role of youths is strengthened and given more of a prominent role. A focus in terms of intercultural encounters and understandings is not surprising when considering the multitude of cultures, languages, beliefs and traditions present in the small region.

This chapter will be looking at the transformation civil society undergoes through time but also at a state and regional level. The work carried out by civil society, with youth organizations being singled out as the most important civil unit will be analysed and put into perspective vis-à-vis socio, economical and political differences in the region. The content moves from a pure European centred understanding and moulding of programs to a narrower focus which deals with Euro-Mediterranean programs and initiatives. The main aim of such encounters and programs is the creation of better interactions and to break away from negative and stereotyped perceptions of the 'other'. It is hoped by the main regional players that the end result will be the creation of a wide spread network of active youths in the field of intercultural dialogue and intercultural competences. These would later have the opportunity to transform on an intra-personal level and as a result exert a direct positive influence on the wider community.

3.1 A Journey towards Youth Recognition

The programs, initiatives and frameworks set up from the Barcelona process onwards are a direct result of previous governmental and regional bilateral agreements between European states and Mediterranean states. As history easily illustrates, the creation of a peaceful environment, built upon the elimination of direct violent confrontation has been the main purpose upon which European states forged their unity and identity. Economic and political ties are surely the initial stages of cooperation between states, with the creation of a strong market economy capable of competing with other international markets set as priority. Attention is also reverted towards southern and eastern neighbours, with the main objective being a peaceful development of the states and subsequently a more stable region. In subsequent years more ties on the grounds of security, energy, environmental resources and culture continued to increase. Main actors in the region fluctuate and change according to time but also according to different political realities. From the mid-1990s onwards the role of youths gradually started to infiltrate European jargon and in a time span of 10 years, youths were put at the forefront. For a better understanding of how youths became an important and strategic actor at not only European level but also at a Euro-Mediterranean level it is imperative to look at the preceding political and economic ties. As it will be explained, various political changes at a national but also regional level shaped the structure, purpose and scope of youth policy in general. Youth policy and the inclusion of young participants in major fields of expertise are to be viewed as a gradual build-up of a new targeted population that strives

to function in a turbulent environment but which has the potential to implement change at a social, economic and political level.

3.1.1 Defining the Mediterranean space

In a world dominated by colonialism and imperial power forces, few spaces are left for the distinguishing and demarcation of non-territorial states or sea demarcations. From the mid-17th century onwards Europe experienced major changes in regional actors but also a shift in power dynamics. By the mid-19th century European states corridors overflowed with comments, reflections and speculations about the imminent end of the sick man of Europe. (Chambers, 2008) The Ottoman Empire was crumbling down and changes in technological and warfare advancements made it possible for the involvement of new and rather young states. Mechanisms are put in place for the development of a colonial reality that accompanied us till the mid-20th century. To this end the Mediterranean area is rarely referred to as a region, with major international institutions such as the U.S. completely change its composition and divide the area into; Europe, Middle East and Africa. (CIA, 2012) As argued by Chambers (2008), “The Mediterranean as both a concept and a historical and cultural formation, is a ‘reality’ that is imaginatively constructed” and he continues by saying that “it is a construct and a concept that linguistically entered the European lexicon”. (Chambers, 2008, pp.10-12) A successful inclusion of this new lexicon paved the way for increased levels of interaction and cooperation.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the European Economic Community continued to strive further and increase its strong economical stance in the region but also globally. This was successfully implemented through numerous and constant bilateral relations with individual states and their governments. As an example one has to only look at the several bilateral agreements implemented with Turkey and Egypt. Furthermore the ECC recognizes the importance of a regional sub grouping of countries that are found in the so called Mediterranean area. To this end the Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP) was launched in the early 1970s, establishing for the first time a legal framework for a somewhat vague geographical area. The Mediterranean is now considered as a homogenous group with policies and agreements designed for the region and not for single nation states. (Bicchi, 2004)

3.1.2 Political changes with a snowballing effect

The region is hit with major changes in composition but also framework throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Major changes in political realities of single nation states but also shifts in global political relations leave their mark on the region. The fall of autocratic regimes in Spain, Portugal and Greece created new opportunities for the EEC but also for the single nation states. With a newly established democratic rule, the above mentioned states sought stability not only at a political level but also advancements in terms of human, social and economical terms. (Bicchi, 2004) To this end, accession to the EC or now better known as E.U. is highly sought by the three states. This accession together with

following accessions, mainly those of Malta and Cyprus create an imbalance in the relationship between North and South. As argued by Bicchi (2004), tension between the intended policy frameworks for the region could be felt. Whilst on the one side many questioned how the EC could successfully implement greater interaction between the two dividing sub-groupings, thus creating a region together with the Mediterranean, others questioned the possibility of further establishing the distinction between the EC and the Mediterranean.

The year 1995 marks an important stepping stone in the transformation of the region. Now that the Cold war has come to an end and new states have been formed, the E.U. seeks to strengthen its position not only in the political and economical field but also in the cultural and social spheres. A Euro-Mediterranean partnership (EMP) is once more put onto the agenda of European states which subsequently culminate at the Barcelona Conference of 1995. (Bicchi, 2004)

3.1.3 The Barcelona process

With the end of the Cold war, various institutions in the region developed numerous agreements and cooperation strategies for the implementation of a peaceful and stable environment. Although the region was far from being considered a safe haven for economic exchanges and practices, improvements have been registered and more agreements signed. With the involvement of NATO and CSCE the region began to

experience a multitude of initiatives that sought to develop regional stability. (Adler & Crawford, 2002) The E.U. has been active for a long time, nonetheless in the 1992 European Council Summit the first steps are laid down for the EMP. Adler and Crawford agree that the Council Summit recognizes for the first time that “The Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean and the Middle east are both areas of interest to the Union, in term of security and social stability”. (Adler & Crawford, 2002, p.36) A new approach is therefore sought, one which creates a more open environment for dialogue and input by southern members. To this end “the E.U. is bound to consider recommendations and concerns expressed by Mediterranean partners” (Calleya, 2005, p.3), in an attempt therefore to move away from the preconditioned notions of colonial domination, but rather as being partners in business.

At the 1995 Barcelona Conference the total number of countries involved added up to a total of 27, with 15 E.U. states and 12 Mediterranean states. During this conference and in subsequent meetings the member states pledged to increase contact on a three-dimensional level, encompassing a holistic approach to issues of security, economic advancements and human interaction in general. Similarly to the 1975 Helsinki final Act, the Barcelona process is built upon three baskets (Europa.eu, 2012):

1. Political and security partnership: Establishing a common area of peace and stability
2. Economic and financial partnership: creating an area of shared prosperity
3. Partnership in social, cultural and human affairs: Developing human resources, promoting understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies

Each basket addresses the main issues and problems which are hindering the progress and prosperity of the region. The first basket adheres to the principles enlisted by the United Nations charter and the Universal declaration of human rights, stressing the importance of the rule of law, democracy and a significant reduction of arms and WMD. The second basket looks closely to the economic dimension present in the region and individuates the great divides present. The establishment of a free trade area (FTAs) which gradually eliminates customs barrier and facilitate trade exchanges is considered as the pivotal component for the sustainable development of the area. The third basket includes the importance to look at intercultural dialogue with special attention being given to religion and interfaith dialogue. Other aspects included in the third basket consist of the role of the media, education and cultural exchanges. The role of civil society is for the first time put at the forefront of discussion, hence individuating the pivotal role civil society has in the successful implementation and distribution of projects. (Europa.eu, 2012)

3.1.4 Civil society: a pivotal role.

Throughout the years the Barcelona process continued to develop and expand its influence with the creation of various institutions that facilitated interaction and ultimately delivery of positive outcomes. In 2004 a shift in relations is experienced once more with the EMP being incorporated into the European Neighbourhood Policy, incorporating thus both Mediterranean and Eastern countries. (ENPI-INFO.eu, 2012)

Another important and significant initiative is the recently launched Union for the Mediterranean, which unites for the first time 27 E.U. member states, the European commission and 16 Mediterranean countries. Here again the focus is a holistic one, stretching thus from economics and finance to culture and the social component. (UFM, 2012)

Whilst the E.U. and its southern partners strived and developed a somewhat successful implementation of economic development, the human and social component seems to have been relegated to the side or worst still engulfed by bureaucratic and elitist agendas. To this end the E.U. recognizes that civil society is an important player in the region and that for a successful implementation of projects, especially those enlisted in the third basket, a more active and involved civil society is needed. (Martin, 2005)

3.1.5 Western conceptions of civil society

It is imperative at this point to give a proper understanding of what civil society entails. As argued by Spencer (2012), the role civil society play in a particular region, state or globally is directly influenced by French and English philosophy matured in the 17th and 18th century. To this end, Spencer refers to Annette's understanding and categorization of civil society into two groups; dichotomous and integrative. Dichotomous philosophical understanding goes back to John Locke and considers civil society as being "completely independent of the state and its primary function is to control the latter" (Spencer, 2012,

p.219), exercising therefore complete freedom whilst keeping an inquisitive eye on the structure. The integrative approach is attributed to the 18th century French philosopher Montesquieu and views civil society as being “part of a political system”. (Spencer, 2012, p.219) This philosophical disposition gives a completely different shade and function to civil society since a direct link between the government and the constituency is strengthened whilst a rigid functioning method is employed.

3.1.6 European understanding and functioning of civil society.

Since the Barcelona process and the formulation of the three baskets, civil society gained substantial weight in not only state related issues but also when discussing and implementing regional and global projects. To this end, the E.U. together with its partners sought to implement various mechanisms through which civil society could be involved and networked better. When looking at how European democracies view the role and function civil society has, Spencer (2012) argues that most states prefer to perceive themselves as following the Lockean tradition. Furthermore she also argues that in reality in most cases the relationship between civil society and the state could be easily described as being “somewhere between the two poles of (dichotomous) anti-system opposition and (integrative) mediation”. (Spencer, 2012, p.220)

3.1.7 Civil society in the Euro-Mediterranean sphere.

When looking at the Barcelona process and moving more towards recent times, a change in not only function but also purpose of civil society is easily observed. At an initial stage of the process, civil society was given an ‘integrative’ role with a selective process of engagement. In more recent times, more specifically from the Union for the Mediterranean onwards, more interaction at a governmental level is experienced, sidelining thus the commission and any independent initiative. A direct link to the government is therefore imperative for any civil society group that wishes to benefit from agreements and processes. This illustrates how the perceived philosophical concept explained earlier is giving way to a more closely controlled and monitored institution that as a result is entrenched in governmental and official mechanisms. (Spencer, 2012)

3.1.7.1 Civil society at a closer look

Various criticisms of how civil society is being governed by state controlled mechanisms have been on-going for the past years. Various entities have been voicing their disapproval of such mechanisms, with southern Mediterranean countries being most badly hit. Southern Mediterranean countries encounter numerous technical and procedural constraints that hinder their possibility to access and fully benefit from initiatives and programs. One of the most important and arresting aspect is the difference in political systems between North and South. Southern Mediterranean countries do not

have NGO's but have rather VGO (very governmental organizations), entrapping civil society into a narrowly state selected group with strong political and ideological beliefs that move hand in hand with national policy. (Spencer 2012) Other constraints include a high level of technical jargon and methodology when considering: financial procedures, the impossibility to access funding due to national legislation, a lack of mobility between actors from the North-South and the slow penetration of the Arabic language into European schools and universities. Martin (2005) lists the here mentioned drawbacks as being a strong transparent dividing wall that instead of working towards greater interaction and exchanges are successfully strengthening the perceived homogenous nature of the North-South dichotomy. Moreover constraints are also present on the European side, with NGO's receiving funding from the central government. Reducing therefore the possibility of criticism by the said NGO with regards to the philosophy and working policy of the ministry. (Spencer, 2012)

Martin (2005) further argues that the word "dialogue" and civil society are being intentionally manipulated to create an imaginative and utopian image of positive, frequent and constructive dialogue. To this end he argues that "everything set in motion today under the label of the "dialogue between cultures" brings into play interlocutors who are similar as twins". (Martin, 2005, p.34) Programs inviting civil society to participate and engage into intercultural dialogue are a false and fake endeavour which do implement a successful outcome on paper, but lack an important and substantial impact on the larger society as a whole. To this end change at a logistical, legal but also

institutional framework is needed for a balanced and more equally distributed access to the civil space.

Spencer (2012) envisions a utopian future, where both civil society and the private sector work together or are embedded into one entity that brings about real and tangible change. The private sector is most of the times looked upon with suspicious eyes by the civil sphere as profit is usually the leitmotif behind every program. Nonetheless, rather than focusing on sole economic benefits, actors in the region should strive to concentrate on the common good which is the key for a successful and prosperous region. The time is therefore ripe for civil society in the region to break away from the traditional philosophical understanding of dichotomous or integrative approaches but rather “focus more on creating the necessary enabling environment (political as well as legal) for bottom-up development to take place, and to rely less on the capacity of central state or local authorities to deliver effective change alone”. (Spencer, 2005, p.232)

3.2 Youths as Active Social Actors: European Dimension

As early as 1995, the Barcelona conference and subsequent working groups individuated civil society as the cardinal point around which successful implementation of programs is possible. Although being relegated to the third basket, civil society is an active mechanism through which a successful bridge between institutionalized policy making

and on the ground needs is built. (Martin, 2005) The E.U. individuates possible social actors that through their work, ideas and contribution are able to promote a shared set of values built upon mutual respect and recognition. Amongst the main actors listed one finds: professional and academic individuals, media personal and religious institutions. High ranking governmental work has been already on-going for a decade and the need to shift attention from a purely institutionalized approach to a more grass-root mechanism pressed the agenda. A shift in this sense is observed not at a thematic level but rather at a population level. The new targeted population, an up till now dormant group, has the potential to bring about change and new dialogical exchanges in the region. (Council of Europe, 2001)

In the 2001 White Paper “A new impetus for European youth”, the European commission indicates youths as an important key component of every society. At a national, regional and global level youths are the future driving force of every society and as such work ‘with’ youths but also ‘from’ youths is important. To this end youths are considered as legitimate stakeholders whom ought to be consulted and heard. (Council of Europe, 2001)

The E.U. together with the commission and parliament conducted on numerous occasions various studies and working groups which discuss youths and their needs. Data focusing on quantitative figures is extracted from the Euro barometer of 2001 and includes an age bracket of individuals between the age of 15 and 25. Additionally the White Paper is built following a consultative exercise spanning between May 2000 and March 2001. A

multitude of youth working organizations, policy makers and the scientific community were amongst the participating groups, which saw the involvement of 450 delegates representing 31 countries. The delegates involved youths between the age gap of 15 and 25 worked closely with organizations and presented before the commission more than 400 suggestions. Themes discussed during these conferences varied widely and moved from pure economic and employability concerns to health issues, education and general feelings of injustice and unequal representation, treatment and opportunities. (Council of Europe, 2001)

3.2.1 The demographic component as a moving force

Youths are a big portion of European integration and unification and many consider this group as the first generation of true Europeans. A gradual aging European population is also on the agenda with estimates published by the EuroStat of 1999 calculating an increase of 20, 6% by the year 2020. (Council of Europe, 2001) As a consequence youths are being clustered into a somewhat small and homogeneous group that is constantly trying to develop and transform vis-à-vis an always increasing adult group that will be eventually relying on the young for social welfare. This together with the always increasing competitive labour market presents young people with a multitude of challenges that stretch from housing problems to employability and ultimately to a lesser and lesser linear path through life. (Council of Europe, 2001) All of the above challenges

and social adjustments are creating a new scenario, one which rests solemnly on the fact that “traditional collective models are losing ground as personal pathways are becoming increasingly individualized”. (Council of Europe, 2001, p.9)

3.2.2 Citizen deficit and the praxis of non-participation

A shared sense of mistrust and non-interest in matters related to public affairs at national, regional but also European level is flagrant. Youths voiced their discontent with the fact that youth-related issues are only discussed in clustered meetings and that youths at a national and also European level are scarcely offered a true representative and effective voice. Subsequently, policy making is drafted through the analysis of opinion poll surveys which are deemed as insufficient data results for the implementation of successful programs. Another important aspect for an increased sense of apathy with regards to public policy is the fact that youth-related issues are most of the time stereotyped and miss the opportunity to delve into issues deemed by youths as important. (Council of Europe, 2001)

3.2.3 New European youth public action

Coupling this with the ever increasing labour competitive market and other social changes, the commission narrows its focus and tries to remodel its philosophy and

approach to youths. Pertaining to these three distinct yet interrelated changes and thus; demographics, citizenship deficit and the labour market youths are being singled out as a small yet important group which needs addressing, financial support and new institutionalized and non-institutionalized structures that provide a new approach. This new approach of European public action is built upon five pivotal principles which are interdependent and indivisible and thus include (Council of Europe, 2001):

- Openness: providing information through the use of the mother tongue, about the workings and procedures of the European Union
- Participation: consultation and input by youths with regards to youth or community policy
- Accountability: new and structured forms of cooperation between member states and European Institutions that meet young people's expectations.
- Effectiveness: make sure that young people's potential is utilized in its full capacity and this to increase successful responses to the numerous challenges
- Coherence: develop an overview of the policies and subsequent action at different levels

These principles engulf a holistic approach to not only bring about change from within the institution but also amongst the targeted population. Change is built also on an enduring process which does not end when a particular program is completed but rather continues to transform through constant contact and interaction with youths. The 'open method of coordination' is proposed as the working mechanism through which programs

should be implemented. This method pushes forward greater interaction between member states and European institutions whilst encouraging the exchange of best practices that move towards the achievement of common targets built upon the rule of law, democracy and human rights principles. To this end the ‘open method of coordination’ provides a “way of encouraging cooperation, the exchange of best practice and agreeing common targets and guidelines for member states... It relies on regular monitoring of progress to meet those targets, allowing member states to compare their efforts and learn from the experience of others”. (Council of Europe, 2001, p.15) A network of interested parties is created and moulded upon the needs and beliefs of young people eager to make their voices heard and to more actively participate in the civil sphere.

3.2.4 A holistic approach to youth policy

For a successful and enduring contribution and participation by youths, the White Paper recognizes that a more open approach is needed. Other policies which are not directly linked to youth, but which have equal importance in the intra and inter-personal development of the young individual include;

- Education, lifelong learning and mobility
- Employment
- Social integration
- Autonomy

- Intercultural competences to combat racism and xenophobia. (Council of Europe, 2001)

Youths consulted argued that a holistic approach which incorporates all aspects of youth life is imperative if a clear and effective change is to be implemented in the community. A successful campaign against racism can never be separated from other important fields such as education, mobility and lifelong learning. Education is deemed as the most central aspect upon which European youth build their future path, aspirations, expectations and also world views. Consequently, education should be renewed and restructured to include new methods of apprehension that utilize not only formal and traditional tools but opens its gates to a new and more engaging way of learning. Similarly, lack of employment or the presence of underpaid or precarious working opportunities hinder the possibility of successfully implementing individual aspirations and ultimately social inclusion. European youths stress the important link between a healthy development and job opportunities. Employment is the key connecting element that ascertains an adult social status and consequently the opportunity to be independent and become a significant social actor in a particular community. (Council of Europe, 2001) Another important element in the development of youth is mobility. Mobility opens up a new dimension in the possibility of encounters and interactions with the outside world. At an educational, voluntary or employable level, “mobility opens up access to the world and enriches our experiences”. (Council of Europe, 2001, p.55)

Youths individuate numerous obstacles that cluster mobility as a privilege for the lucky few and other financial and political constraints, amongst which:

- The lack of updated and clear information,
- Psychological barriers: stereotypes, misperceptions and negative judgments on the ‘other’
- Legal practices: need of visas or other special permits
- Lack of language skills (Council of Europe, 2001)

A well-crafted mobility policy, they argue, is important for the creation of better practices at an institutional level but also improved and positive relations at a grass-root level. To this end, a ‘mobility partnership’ is needed between local and foreign social partners, NGO’s and businesses, incorporating a wide range of youths that come from different ethnic, political and socio-economic backgrounds. (Council of Europe, 2001)

This holistic approach moves therefore from a truly intra-personal transformation, building consequently on the competences and aspirations of the individual, to a more inter-personal one. The latter is translated into improved and remodelled actions related to intercultural dialogue and a reduction of racism and xenophobia. Built upon a shared set of values which nonetheless move towards recognition and respect for the other, youth policy and programs have as a result the ability to transform social realities at a national but also European level.

3.3 EuroMed Youth Programs

3.3.1 Youth policy at a European level

An interest in the youth population has been present in European policy for more than 20 years and a proof of this are the numerous programs and set up frameworks that transform, change scope but also name from time to time. For a better understanding of how youth policy is moulded in the region, one has to look at European programs and *modus operandi*.

In 1988, the European Union launches the program ‘Youth for Europe’, a program that supports the exchange of youths from different European countries, with a total number of 80,000 participants for the period 1989-1991. ‘Youth for Europe’ was again implemented this time under the name of ‘Youth for Europe II’ and covers the year period between 1991 and 1995. A third phase of the programs is launched in March 1995 and ends in 1999. In parallel function with the Youth for Europe program, in 1996 the European commission launches the European Voluntary Service for young people. (Council of Europe, 2001) These programs include a vast array of opportunities for young people to not only travel and meet culturally different individuals but it also “stimulated the development of European, national and local projects involving young people, in particular those facing special difficulties”. (Council of Europe, 2001, p.54)

The year 2000 marks an important stepping stone in European youth policy as this moves to a more direct program that focuses on the “acquisition of knowledge by young people and the creation of cooperation between member states in the development of youth policy”. (Council of Europe, 2001, p.64) Although built upon the experiences and lessons learned from the previous programs, the YOUTH program comes at a time when the E.U. is trying to combat unemployment. This could be successfully done through lifelong learning and progress, shaping therefore the YOUTH program in not only composition but also scope. To this end exchanges become the gateway to training courses and educational development. The YOUTH program is more concerned with employment and places as its pivotal philosophy training. This program provides greater opportunities for third country nationals to participate in programs and initiatives. (Neisse, 2007)

3.3.2 The Mediterranean component

Since the launch of the Barcelona process in 1995, the need to reach southern and eastern Mediterranean countries continued to increase and widened its purpose from a mere economical partnership to a more socially and culturally sound agreement. To this end, youths are singled out as the most important social actor for the implementation of change at an institutional but also community level. The success and momentum upon which European youth policy has developed its purposes moves policy makers in the

region to look upon this and other similar frameworks as a point of reference. (Neisse, 2007)

In 1999 the EuroMed Youth I regional program is launched. Building upon the European experience this program is too divided into three distinct set of activities mainly: youth exchanges, voluntary services and support measures. Participating countries include the Barcelona signatory states and thus the 27 E.U. member states and 8 Mediterranean countries. (EuroMed Youth, 2010) The year 2001 sees the launching of EuroMed Youth II which continues up to 2004. The third phase of the EuroMed program brings about structural changes in the way projects and initiatives are available to participants. In the third phase, running through the period between 2005 and 2008, program management is transferred to national authorities under the EuroMed Youth units scheme, giving therefore greater space for equal sharing and power in decision making. This provides southern partners with an unprecedented opportunity to have a greater impact and say in decision making whilst facilitating the harmonization of national and regional youth policy. This practice of decentralization is continued throughout the subsequent program, running during the period of 2007 to 2013. (EuroMed Youth, 2010)

The main focus of the programs is intercultural competence and learning whilst other issues such as democracy, human rights and interfaith dialogue are also on the agenda. (Neisse, 2007) The methods of interaction oscillate between formal and non-formal educational tools which have the ability to transform the individual at a personal but also at an inter-personal level. The above presented methods are easily individuated if one

looks at the various platforms and youth institutions that have been setup in the region throughout the EuroMed youth program phase, with collaborations stretching beyond geographical and political borders. The main players in the region that facilitate communication and cooperation include: SALTO Youth EuroMed resource centre, Anna Lindh foundation, League of Arab States, The EuroMed Youth Platform, The Euro-Mediterranean youth parliament and the European youth forum. (Göksel, 2009)

As argued by Neisse (2007), although Mediterranean youth policy is crafted upon European youth experiences and methods, a shift in focus is easily observed. In fact, the Euro-Mediterranean youth programs focus mostly on cultural and intercultural competences, with the main objective being the creation of open channels of communication within national borders but most importantly intercultural competence at a regional level. The main goals of greater interaction at a cultural level aim towards the creation of a more tolerant region built upon the improvement of mutual understanding and dialogue among cultures. EuroMed youth programs become as a consequence the “singularly most focused regional instrument to promote youth intercultural dialogue within the Euro-Mediterranean area and to foster the development of the youth associative sector in the MEDA countries”. (Neisse, 2007, p.4)

3.4 Conclusion

The above presented literature illustrates the philosophical and political transformation of not only state and regional level politics, but also the way civil society is approached and used. A major transformational component in the region is undoubtedly the creation of a strong and widespread web of networks that oscillate between grass-root initiatives to national or regional policy making. Decisive global and regional political transformations have a direct or sometimes an indirect effect on not only the programs but also the modus operandi. The need for greater interaction and mutual understanding pushes the region into a new colourful reality composed of an array of not only religious and political beliefs but also cultural, social and traditional customs. Therefore action is sought and needed at not only the economic and political spheres but also at an intercultural level, one which recognizes the importance of mutual respect and tolerance. To this end civil society is singled out as the most important social actor for the implementation of wide spread change at all levels of society. The need to depart from governmental and institutionalized initiatives is reflected in the new targeted group for action; youths. Youths are given a prominent role as not only strategic social actors but also as THE most important component to implement change.

Summing all up, one can argue that interaction in the region could be consequently divided into two groups with subsequent sub-groupings that follow. At a state level; interaction, agreements and cooperation on economic and financial endeavours have been

steady and on-going for more than 30 years, with head of states and governmental officials invited to visit various European states and vice-versa on various occasions. Interaction is also sought through the inclusion of civil society and the importance of social and cultural interactions. As a result youths are singled out as the most promising population that is able to implement change at a greater and wider level. Youth initiatives that fall under the EuroMed Youth program move on a three dimensional approach thus including; voluntary service, youth exchanges and youth training and networking. This somewhat provides a holistic approach to the young, providing not only training and networking but also the opportunity for charitable activities and functions.

Each category, although having a specific line of expertise, includes the possibility of mobility and accordingly the opportunity to meet culturally different individuals. Intercultural dialogue could be inasmuch viewed as an umbrella effect, incorporating the three youth programs as an excellent example of a sustainable build-up of positive and constructive regional interaction. Channels of communication are therefore open and abundant in number for willing participating youths, which have the possibility of transforming the region at its core value and essence, thus the social component. The philosophical stance that is adopted from European youth policy making provides the region with a solid and widespread opportunity to implement change.

Chapter 4: Positive and Negative Mechanisms to Youth Involvement

4.0 Introduction

EuroMed youth programs have been dominating the regional scene for more than 10 years. The programs drafted upon the main principles of the Barcelona Declaration of 1995, falling mainly under the third basket, provided the region with a unique opportunity to meet, interact and build relationships across borders. Throughout the years, the program evolved at a structural but also philosophical level, as an example one can look at the 2005 innovation of introducing EuroMed Youth Units (EMYU's). This shift marks an important stepping stone towards greater interaction and involvement by the agreed partners. Youths from 35 countries have been into contact and interaction on three differentiated yet interrelated programs that fall under the EMYP. Youth exchanges, voluntary work and training and networking have been providing young persons with the opportunity to engage and participate in the said programs. Subsequently, a wide spread network of youth workers, associations and organizations is built and kept on constant go through various institutions, such as the EuroMed Youth platform. The main objective, as stated in the online portal of the EMYP, is that of creating stimulating environments and opportunities for the successful exchange of youths. This in turn will result in the creation

of intercultural sound young adults that work in harmony and mutual respect with one another. The successful and peaceful development of the region rests solely on the ability to instil positive learning abilities and practices to this emerging group. Although culture is put at the forefront, youths in EMYP have the opportunity to learn and listen to the ‘other’ as an important contributor to knowledge. Subsequently, youth programs act as a bridge but also as a facilitation experience that transforms the individual into a new, intercultural competent individual.

Various academic contributions and official E.U. reports analyse and scrutinize the programs, with the EuroMed III receiving most attention and reportage. When looking at E.U. backed studies, representing the European view and at other evaluations that come from the southern partners, a somewhat distinct perceptual outcome is observed. Various writers and academics have mixed feelings toward the success or non-success of EuroMed youth programs. From the selection of literature available, this chapter will move from European centred evaluations to southern voices, in an attempt therefore to better understand the impact and effect such programs have on youths scattered throughout the region. Issues related to the structural, political, bureaucratic and technical sphere are probably the most prominent and recurrent throughout the years. Nonetheless, other issues such as education and economic stability are interwoven in the web of opportunities or constrains that have been and are still making the EMYP the most discussed and scrutinized initiative in the region.

4.1 Levels of Participation and Funding

Projects that fall under the EMYP are categorized into three; youth exchanges, voluntary service and training and networking. Each category hosts various types of activities for the participants amongst which: seminars, training, exchanges, and support measures. Each section is further divided into actions, including the use of arts or other visually representative mechanism that spread a message to the host community. Although topics and issues vary, a high concentration of projects; address problems of racism and xenophobia, discuss active youth citizenship, engage into inter-religious dialogue and matters of social exclusion. (EuroMed Youth Project, 2008) The increased need to include a vibrant and active civil society and also the need to induce more frequent contacts and interactions as a means to combat misperceptions is easily individuated as an overarching umbrella effect. Contacts and communications go beyond the actual training session, creating an interwoven web of active networks. Technological advancements and the use of the internet provide easy and accessible cyber-space for a follow up of the session whilst also the possibility for real time interaction and communication.

The number of participants and individuals included vary from one project to the other. Sometimes projects add up more than 50 participants, whilst in other cases open access to participation was only limited to a small number. (EuroMed Youth Projects, 2008) Locations are scattered throughout the Euro- Mediterranean region, stretching from

Morocco to Belgium and from Germany to Turkey. No restriction is put upon the location and every participating partner can host the event, seminar, training or workshop in the mother state. Participants have the opportunity to not only meet culturally different youths but also experience a true cultural immersion through the local population and customs.

Funding varies from time to time and although various political, economic or social changes might have been the reason for such fluctuations, no explanation of how the allocation of funds are going to be distributed is given by the E.U. Starting off from the first phase of EMYP, running between 1999 and 2001, the total number of funds added up to €9.7 million. At a second phase, thus between 2002 and 2004 the total number of funding increased to €14 million. (Tanzarella, 2005) During the third phase of the program, EMYP III running between 2005 and 2008 funding sees a considerable downfall, with a mere of €5 million allocated.(EuroMed Youth Projects, 2008) The year 2007 marks an important step toward greater interaction and exchanges, subsequently the Youth in Action program is launched. More countries have the opportunity to participate and interact whilst the age bracket is increased, therefore including youths between the ages of 15 and 28 and in some cases from 13 to 30. Participants come from a wide geographical area: European member states, Mediterranean partners, E.U. neighbours, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey and other partner countries from around the world. (EuroMed Youth Projects, 2008) An increased amount of funding is attributed to this program, adding up to €885 million for a seven year period. An increase in funding is easily explained considering the increased number of participating countries and states. The youth network is stretched further and opportunities for multilateral and bilateral

exchanges increased in number and also participating actors. Nonetheless, many question if this amount of monetary contribution is enough or equally distributed. Tanzarella (2005) argues that although an increase in interaction and number of projects is a laudable initiative by the E.U., southern Mediterranean countries find numerous technical, logistical and structural problems. To this end, she concludes that “these programs have been devised through a European logic and not with an eye on partnership”. (Tanzarella, 2005 p.116)

4.2 EMYP: A Success Story

Beginning in a post-Barcelona conference, the EMYP changed its façade on numerous occasions and this due to changing political, social and economic realities. Nonetheless, the program continued to be renovated and remodelled year after year, with a small interruption in 2005 paving the way for the new EuroMed Youth Units. When looking at the official reports and reviews published by the EMYP a very promising and positive picture is given of the achievements and objectives reached through more than 10 years of projects. Looking closely at the EMYP III, running between 2005 and 2007, figures speak up for themselves. With a total number of 85 projects, 1,689 young participants and 650 youth workers, the program concluded on a positive note. (EuroMed Youth, 2010) The geographical reach stretched from Algeria to Turkey, incorporating 9 southern Mediterranean basin states. The projects moved from a direct focus on intercultural competences to broader understanding of active citizenship. Together with the Youth in

action program, a holistic approach to youth realities but also an opportunity for increased levels of contact is created and sustained. The ‘Youths in action program’ provides increased opportunity for contact due to the inclusion of more participating states, including: European Union member states, southern Mediterranean partners and also other affiliate countries like youths from Turkey and Norway. (EuroMed Youth, 2010) As a result various European and Mediterranean countries have been in a constant and uninterrupted opportunity to travel, discuss and interact with youths from various geographically, culturally, politically and socially different states.

4.2.1 Mutual understanding and tolerance

Following a mid-term evaluative report for the youth programs running between 2000 and 2006, Neisse (2007) argues that stakeholders in the region attach great importance to these programs as they managed to fill a vacuum in the social sphere and provided the means and modes to implement programs which cannot be addressed at a national level. Furthermore, European youth and civil society are showing an increased sense of interest in the region, whilst pointing out that real and effective intercultural dialogue can only be practiced with youths from a varied cultural background. The report illustrates that at an intercultural level, the projects carried out under the EMYP contributed to positive and important results. A better and broader understanding of culture is reported by the participants’ involved and greater space for mutual respect and tolerance is also registered. New technical skills and competences were also acquired by the participating

youth workers; therefore with the possibility to apply the said tools once back in the mother country. Moreover, apart from the technical skills, young participants apprehend also a baggage of intercultural competences and skills. This will undoubtedly help them function more efficiently in a multicultural society, but also have a direct impact on the broader society as a whole. To this end Neisse (2007) argues that “the effect of a youth exchange or a youth encounter on the local population can give rise to more positive awareness of other cultures and have an impact not only on the young people themselves and their associations’ activities, but also on the local communities”. (Neisse, 2007, p. 7)

4.2.2 The multiplier effect

A direct impact on the community by involved individuals is one of the most important and central aspects of the EMYP. Already at an initial phase of the program, the multiplier effect is given high levels of attention. The main argument behind such mechanism is the possibility to use a small group of young energetic and intercultural competent individuals as an active hub of intercultural teaching. An assumed direct impact on the wider society governs the philosophical stance driving EMYP. Following a mid-term analysis of EuroMed youth program of 2001, the multiplier effect is highlighted as an effective tool. (ECOTEC, 2001) On numerous occasions the report stresses the importance and strategic role multipliers have in their own society. Apart from providing participants with necessary tools and skills for a personal transformation, EMYP have the ability to reach not only youths but also the wider society as a whole. (ECOTEC, 2001)

Values of mutual understanding, tolerance and peace are spread by these youths to the wider society, thus creating a network within a network. “Participants in the projects appear to spread value of peace, tolerance and solidarity and respect for human dignity in the host community and in the community they live in”. (Neisse, 2007, p.6) Youths are now viewed as an important social actor, capable of spreading to their peer group but also to the older and the younger generation values of: respect, understanding and tolerance. One can conclude that actions at EMYP level are foremost intended as an inter-personal transformation which, subsequently have a causational effect on the wellbeing and future functioning of the society.

In line with Neisse’s arguments, Ilgaz (2007) stresses once more the pivotal role and strategic philosophy behind the creation and implementation of these projects. Amongst the positive and constructive outcomes one finds a list of laudable results that have the ability to transform the region into a prosperous and well-functioning one. The most prominent and recurrent responses included the creation of mutual respect and awareness of other cultures.

4.2.3 An interwoven network

Youth participants reported also that the projects provided them with an opportunity to enter into a dialogue with other youths like themselves and recognize that after all irrespectively from cultural differences or geographical location, youths face the same

problems and dilemmas. The creation of an interlinked web of relations at a governmental but also grass-root level, with the inclusion of civil society and a decentralized mode of action through the EMYU's strengthen cooperation and push forward the values and targets set by the third basket of the Barcelona process. A balanced and equal distribution of power and contribution between the participating states is set as the most important mechanism for the creation of intercultural competences and collaboration. Ilgaz (2007) continues to explore the possible field of interaction and individuates urban and rural areas as strategic places to implement the agenda. The interwoven web of relations, that extends further into cooperation embedded in multilateral agreements between the EuroMed Youth program, the national state and urban and rural areas respectively create a holistic approach to the recurring problem of misperceptions and stereotypes.

4.2.4 A dialogue between equal partners

In another report, titled 'Survey on the evaluation and follow up of the Euro-Mediterranean youth policy co-operation activities', organized in the framework of the Youth partnership, Majeed and Qurie conduct a study for a better understanding of outcomes and results. The area of study focuses on 4 different seminars/round table activities that have been on-going between 2005 and 2007. Although the response rate to the survey is very poor, it provides the only direct first-hand experience critical analysis of the projects. It is interesting to note that most responses received come from the

southern Mediterranean partner countries. Overall a general high level of satisfaction is shared amongst participants and partners. (Majeed & Qurie 2009) The seminars or round tables provided participants and partners with numerous opportunities, including: the learning of European practices, development of new project ideas, learning new definitions and concepts related to youth policy at a national and international level and most importantly the creation of networks throughout the region. Majeed and Qurie (2009) conclude that although some aspects of the projects failed to deliver the preferred outcomes, they managed to create a “new equal dialogue between the Arab countries and European countries through the exchange of experiences from both sides of the Mediterranean”. (Majeed & Qurie, 2009, p. 7)

4.3 EMYP: An Increased divide

Political, social and economic realities lacerate the region in two and at a closer look one can see that further divisions and differentiations are present. Moving from a strictly national policy to a broader one, including thus a mixture of regional multilateral agreements, the Barcelona process and later on the European Neighbourhood policy brought together a multitude of actors and institutions in increased levels of contact and cooperation. Various European and southern Mediterranean critics have been voicing their discontent with the way the program has been progressing. An overall discontent with the outcomes and results of the Barcelona process are brought forward by Fernandez and Youngs (2005). Both explain that a greater divide between North and South has been

established at the expense of political stability and presumed security. Further on “disillusionment with the Barcelona process appears particularly acute on the southern shore of the Mediterranean ... the EMP has helped neither governments to develop and grow their way to modernization, nor civil society to pressure their way to reform”. (Fernandez & Youngs, 2005, p.4) This apparent lack of involvement by civil society conflicts greatly with the initial purpose of the process, that of bridging divides through the involvement of non-governmental and grass-roots institutions. Although civil society is put at the forefront as the most important mechanism through which a widespread transformation is possible, a variety of technical, bureaucratic and structural constraints helped induce a further distinct in North-South relations and interactions.

When looking at youth involvement and participation a surprising difference in terms of access, opportunity and funding is observed. At a first glance political and cultural differences seem to be the main hindering obstacles for a successful implementation of the projects. However, at a closer look other constraints include a vast net of interrelated issues that have a direct or indirect influence. As argued by various southern partners, a change in the way youths, national curriculum, governments, civil society and interested parties are approached needs serious restructuring and re-examination.

4.3.1 Age as a barrier

Various critics showed an extensive interest in how different nation states and institutions consider youth. The age gap varies from one nation state to the other and a lack of general consensus about the ideal age frame for policy making is very much present in the region. When looking at the European understanding of youth, a general consensus is agreed upon through parliamentary and commission communications. In the initial section of the 2001 White Paper 'A new impetus for European Youth' the age bracket for young age is set between the ages of 15 and 25. (Council of Europe, 2001) This age bracket is applied also to Euro-Mediterranean countries, in an attempt to equally distribute opportunity of participation. Nonetheless, major problems are faced by southern partners and most especially willing young participants due to age. Neisse (2007) illustrates how compulsory military service (18 years to 21 years), still present in some states within the region, hinders the possibility of participation. Lack of consensus on the ideal age bracket is also observed at an intra/inter-state level. When looking closely at individual southern Mediterranean states, Abrignani (2009) brings to light the diverse interpretation of youth not only amongst states but also within them. As an example, at an intra-state level, in Algeria the Ministry of employment clusters youth between 18-35 years of age, whilst the Ministry of Youth extends the group to include individuals up to 30 years of age. On the other hand, at an inter-state level, Israel defines youth between the ages of 13 to 18. This discrepancy has an influential effect on

participation but also opportunity to interact and learn, whilst continuing to create an imbalance between participating youths.

Furthermore, Neisse (2007) observes that the age frame delineated by the European commission and parliament fails to consider that Mediterranean youths are still pursuing their studies and certainly have limited financial capabilities for participation. Neisse (2007), concludes that “the age frame in the program is rather discriminatory and it should be changed if the EU wishes to draw to the program not only elites or male participants but all segments of the Mediterranean society”. (Neisse, 2007, p.9)

4.3.2 Gender: a silent constraint

Throughout the region, gender discrepancies and differences are very much evident in various states. Although none of the projects divides participants according to gender, various cultural, social or traditional beliefs are having a direct effect on participation. Young women, especially when coming from traditional patriarchal families miss the opportunity to interact and travel outside the state and in extreme cases also outside the community. In traditional Muslim-Arab societies parents very often object to allow young women under the age of 18 participating in projects, especially when travelling is involved. (Neisse, 2007) To this end, a cluster of young participating males are dominating the scene, having a strong input and subsequently a stronger voice in the EuroMed arena. Young males have therefore the opportunity to interact and meet with

other significantly different youths, whilst young girls are relegated at home with few opportunities to learn. An imbalance in terms of gender will undoubtedly have a direct effect on the outcome of the project but also an indirect effect on the wider community. Young women's beliefs, needs and opinions are being silenced as a direct effect of cultural constraints but also serious miscalculations from the European side. A redirection of actions taken with regards to young women is urgently needed if the involved actors want to abide to the Barcelona declaration and commitments.

4.3.3 Language barriers

Language can act as a connecting bridge but also act as a dividing wall of sound, meaning and utterances. Studies carried out by Tharp in 1946 and Deer in 2005 illustrate the link between language competence and increased levels of economic growth. Language learning and competence has also important effects on perceptions and understanding of the 'other's' culture. (Baudassé & Driouchi, 2007) When looking at the EuroMed region, more specifically to youth related projects a recurrent issue that resurfaced a couple of times in various literatures is language and its power to connect or distant individuals, communities and even whole societies. The negative effects induced by the lack of appropriate linguistic tools are reported by Majeed and Qurie (2009). Following the consultative survey, Majeed and Qurie observe a general disappointment when it comes to positive and effective communication during seminars and workshops.

In most cases, participants recalled to have found language barrier difficulties, especially due to poor translation levels from English into Arabic and vice-versa.

Poor or lack of translations do not only hinder the seminar or workshop in progress but have also a general negative effect on the wider population. Sharing knowledge is important and crucial for the build-up of mutually constructed dialogue and cooperation. Lack of translated books into Arabic but also a predominantly small number of books translated from Arabic to European languages continues to increase the perceptual divide and misperceptions. Furthermore, this lack of knowledge has a direct effect on the participation and willingness to engage into dialogue with the other part. A lack of knowledge about the 'other' means also a diminished interest to pursue dialogue and enter into cooperative projects with each other. (Bouquerel & El Husseiny, 2009)

4.3.4 An accentuation of the civilization paradigm

When the Huntington's theory hit the international arena, various critics voiced their disapproval or allegiance to such ideology. Furthermore, the central role civilization and culture have on the relationships and future transformation of world power and conflict pushed Western leaders, with the European Union at the forefront to reconsider once more its position in the world and also vis-à-vis new possible threatening powers. (Pace, 2007) Although various measures and procedures have been put in place to counter argument Huntington's theory, many agree that the EMP has been specifically built upon

this precondition of division according to civilization. Del Sarto (2007) argues that in the Euro-Mediterranean region the delineations established by the European community are much narrower than those proposed by Huntington. ‘Europe’ and the ‘Arabic world’ are most often labelled in terms of religious belief, which subsequently produces two major ‘civilization blocks’. A perceived hegemonic quality of the two blocks is easily observable if one looks at the way programs and projects are implemented, especially when looking at projects prior 2005, therefore the introduction of EMYU’s. Consequently a false judgment about the needs, expectations and future aspirations of the youth is easily drafted when clustering of this type is present. Bouquerel and El Hussein (2009), warn against this hindering and negative impact on the overall success of the project. Southern Mediterranean countries are diverse both in terms of historical realities but also in terms of political, social and economical spheres making “each national professional environment unique, [highlighting] the need for strategies that can be customized according to circumstances at the national level”. (Bouquerel & El Hussein, 2009, p.17) When looking at European civilization, Haddad (2006) looks at the perceived civilization hegemony in European states. If the civilization paradigm is built upon religious creed, Haddad (2006) points out the extreme diverse and multicultural societies within the European Community. He argues that “the imagined notion of two civilizations falls flat when one considers the 15 million members of the E.U.’s Islamic community”. (Haddad, 2006, p.3)

4.3.5 Structural hindrance

Political, economic and social realities are the most agreed upon symptoms for a dysfunctional or better to say restless region. Nonetheless, collaboration and cooperation on trade, politics and security strengthened ties at a governmental level whilst further enhanced contact between European and southern Mediterranean states. The political reality preceding 2010 was one of a democratic Europe vis-à-vis a predominantly authoritarian driven southern Mediterranean. A failure by European leaders to accept new political actors such as the Hamas in Palestine and other independent civil society actors “produced a double standard in policy” and “perceived by the Arab street as a continuation of this hypocritical bias against the Arab people”. (Hadded, 2006, p.7) Civil society groups in the southern Mediterranean region face numerous constraints stemming from financial opportunities, political interference and also exclusion. Bouquerel and El Husseiny (2009) put forward the numerous financial constraints civil society in the southern countries face, with states restricting or refusing the access to funds from abroad. The said writers elaborate further on the issue and include administrative practices and procedures as a major hindering issue. Demanding E.U. application forms provide a significant obstacle for willing southern partners and create an unfavourable scenario for civil society NGOs and organizations. Moreover, “the method of documentation is largely valued over the content and that empty shells succeed in receiving funding only for the merit of their administrative qualities”. (Bouquerel & El Husseiny, 2009, p. 43) Therefore, European tenders are placed out of reach for small,

independent civil society actors (Martin, 2005), creating an imbalance and unfair environment for the participating partners. Taking as an example Morocco, Abrignani (2009) reports that distribution of funds is highly scrutinized by the central government, subsequently out of 38,000 associations only 8,400 hold a recognized status.

Therefore one can conclude that even when civil society is given the space and freedom to participate, a number of structural obstacles prevent a free and equal access. Coupling this with inter-governmental collaboration and cooperation, little space is left for a wide and diverse participation by youths. Furthermore, culture is defined within governmental and affiliated institutions leaving no space for minority voices from within the state. (Del Sarto, 2007)

4.3.6 A highly politicized dialogue

The introduction of civil society as an important actor in regional dynamics gave a new impetus to the region. As it has been explained in the previous chapter, defining civil society in the Euro-Mediterranean region is very difficult and this due to variations in national and regional interpretations. Nonetheless, various institutions such as the EuroMed Youth Platform have been put in place to facilitate interaction and cooperation at a regional level. It is however questioned how accessible such institutions are for independent civil society groups. As argued by Malmvig (2007) civil society has been unfortunately relegated and selectively chosen by head of states. Subsequently one can

conclude that “Euro-Mediterranean governments have effectively gained firm control over the kinds of civil society organizations that have been given access to the dialogue” (Malmvig, 2007, p.81) Dialogue no longer fulfils its function of bridging cultures, ideas, beliefs and customs but transforms rather into an imaginary capacity building activity involving only individuals who share the same beliefs. Martin (2005) argues that this staged and imaginary intercultural dialogue is the predominant form of civil society involvement in the EMP. Further on he questions the real intention behind such processes and condemns the EMP of inconsistency between what is written on paper and what actually happens on the ground. The lack of equal and fair access by civil society actors is a direct catalyst for southern Mediterranean countries’ suspicion about European intentions and commitments. “Initiatives such as the EMP that address Arab Society through unrepresentative Arab regimes only fuel the flames of mistrust” and “the EU ... is not interested in an honest dialogue, but is only interested in enhancing their interventionist capacity”. (Haddad, 2006, p. 11)

4.3.7 Mobility: an opportunity for the few?

The opportunity to travel and meet culturally different youths has been one of the cardinal proposals set in the 2001 White Paper ‘A new impetus for European Youths’. To this end mobility is considered as one of the most effective ways to overcome perceptual cultural judgments and misperceptions. In synthesis, “mobility opens up access to the world and enriches our experience”. (Council of Europe, 2001, p.55) In the Euro-

Mediterranean region, contact through exchanges and mobility are probably the most desired form of intercultural interaction. As explained in the first part of this chapter, projects and programs that fall under the EMYP have been facilitating and organizing exchanges between youths for more than 10 years. Nonetheless, accessibility, administrative and political hindrances have been obstructing the process and progress in this regard. Probably, one of the most recurrent problems is the need for southern Mediterranean youths to obtain a visa to be able to travel to Europe or sometimes even to another southern Mediterranean state. Martin (2005) explains how the EMP has failed to facilitate mobility for interested youths, contradicting therefore the commitment to create a free flowing channel of interaction between North and South. Furthermore “the current difficulty to obtaining a visa for the majority of the Arab population does not create a sense of community with the EU”. (Haddad, 2006, p.23) Mobility is therefore most of the times experienced in a one way direction; from Europe to the Mediterranean and few are the instances of a reverse situation. Bouquerel and El Hussein (2009) include also financial constraints and political volatility as two other important factors. High travelling costs could induce youths to overlook such opportunities and dismiss the idea altogether, whilst political unrest creates insurmountable barriers for young individuals. Discrepancies in terms of financial opportunities between North and South but also between South-South, unbalances the scale of mobility towards a European centred process.

Summing all up one can conclude that mobility is a very vibrant and active opportunity for Euro-Mediterranean youths, nonetheless only a small group of financially and

politically stable elites seem to have easy access. Subsequently, mobility together with the above mentioned hindrances such as; age and structural influences cluster participating youths into a somewhat small group of chosen individuals.

4.4 Education

Formal and non-formal education is a recurrent theme in intercultural competences and transformation. In the 2001 White Paper, European Youth individuate education as the most important aspect during the adolescent period. More and more youths are spending a lengthier time in formal education as a means to better prepare for the labour market. The main objective of learning is a threefold purposed journey that not only fosters employability but also acts as a: personal fulfilment, social inclusion mechanism and active citizenship. Equal importance is divided between formal and non-formal educational tools that provide the individual with a solid knowledge base for a better functioning in the community. (Council of Europe, 2001) At a seven year distance the 2008 White Paper on intercultural dialogue ‘Living together as equals’, education is once more at the centre of discussion, with formal and informal methods taking the lead. Higher level education is again praised as being the most suitable environment to cultivate a philosophy of open mindedness and inclusion. Students are looked upon as “intercultural intellectuals”, therefore having the ability to look at the world through different shades and lenses. (Council of Europe, 2008) Education, including therefore formal, informal and higher institutionalized training incorporates a holistic approach that

instils intercultural skills from a very young age and continues to accompany the individual up till the adolescent years. Subsequently, main actors in the region recognize and uphold the important role education can play in the development of an individual, the community and the greater society as a whole.

4.4.1 Education, social capital and employment

Baudassé and Driouchi (2007) report, analyse studies conducted by Helliwell and Putnam in 1999 on the relationship between social capital and education. In their studies a correlation between social capital and education is uncovered. When the level of education increases, traits of trust and participation rise too, subsequently creating a more peaceful and sustainable community. The authors question whether this theory could also be applied to the North-South divide in the region and argue that education is the key component for a real transformation. Through a variety of means, including new technological mechanisms, a variety of novel options are available for policy makers, youth workers and most importantly youths themselves to learn and interact at an intercultural level. Therefore, the non-market benefits stemming from education are spread throughout the community, setting the scenario for positive and healthy interactions between individuals. A community built on the foundations of a holistic educational approach move towards greater levels of inclusion and understanding. To this end education is viewed as “an important instrument of inclusion and promotion of

human values that include cultural diversity and values”. (Baudassé and Driouchi, 2007, p.19)

On a similar note, Calleja (2007) stresses the pivotal role education has in future EuroMed relations. The Divide Syndrome brought to light due to various differences that move on a continuum from religious to cultural and from political to financial, is strengthening its position in the region. A lack of proper educational tools and mechanisms will continue to increase the divide and make it more difficult for a future peaceful scenario. To this end education should be the key tool to restore past differences and erase misperceptions, whilst provide the necessary skills for a positive development. Moreover, past historical and religious struggles have only been artificially constructed for political purposes and youths in the region have the capability of breaking these chains and move towards an open understanding of the world around. At a Euro-Mediterranean context a triangular relationship between education, training and employment is pivotal if a successful outcome of youth-related programs is to be fulfilled. Subsequently, “A Euro-Mediterranean process which manages to design educational programs targeted towards regional objectives within an employment perspective, is a meaningful political commitment which will mobilize individuals for a personal and collective purpose”. (Calleja, 2007, p.143)

4.4.2 Fostering intercultural competence through higher education

Universities and higher educational institutions have a very special role in society, communities and regional hubs in general. They hold an important duty of being the ‘laboratory’ of knowledge par excellence whilst also an always active hub of new, innovative ideas. Higher education institutions hold also the key to important societal and community transformations and at the same time are able to keep an open eye on possible conflicts, political bullying and also the ever increasing power of the media. (Zaragoza, 2010) Nonetheless, for higher education to fulfil its mission, changes at the institutional level are important. (Egron-Polak, 2010) A true effective educational system is one built upon the fundamental principle of human existence and views “cultural diversity as an intrinsic value and an opportunity for cultural enrichment”. (Bergan, 2010, p.71) A balance between professional and personal development is important if higher education wishes to full fill its duties. Higher educational institutions should strive to produce not only subject specialist, but also intellectuals who build their knowledge on mutual respect for the other and awareness on the limits of a personal cultural relative knowledge base. The ability to recognize the role of perceptions and subjective world views opens up greater opportunity for mutual interaction and cooperation. (Bergan, 2010) At the end of the educational program, youths become now fully fledged active citizens with a possibility to foster intercultural competences and knowledge in the broader society. (van’t Land, 2010)

4.4.3 Education in the southern Mediterranean region

When applying this philosophy to the Euro-Mediterranean region, national and regional educational policies come into play. Abrignani (2009) looks at states in the southern Mediterranean region² and examines the governmental stance and relation to youth policy and education. In most cases, Abrignani (2009) observes that variations in scope, priorities and approach are a vibrant aspect of youth policy. Whilst some states have been devoting energies and financial backup for a sustained and remodelled youth educational program, others are still trying to envision the way forward and combat high levels of illiteracy and school drop-outs. Looking for example at Morocco, the state has to struggle with an illiteracy rate of 36%, making it the highest rate in North Africa. Moreover, Algeria struggles to include more participant youths in secondary education, with a slight increase to 60% of enrolments. (Abrignani, 2009) When it comes to the type of educational mechanism, a general inclination towards formal education is easily observable. Abrignani (2009) notes that non-formal learning is still a somewhat new ideal for southern Mediterranean countries and whilst many countries do include non-formal training other states dismiss it or do not recognize it all together.

Important hindrances and national constraints when looking at education include the different approach to learning and teaching methods. Arab educational system favour a rigid system based on a one way direction of knowledge dissemination, thus calling for

² Southern Mediterranean countries studied: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Palestinian authority: Gaza and the West Bank, Egypt, Turkey

students to be submissive and conform with the system. Little space is left for free critical thinking exercises and most learning is done through books, notes and summaries. This type of learning contrasts with European and western methods of learning, making it more difficult and diminishing the “chances for a good intercultural exchange between north and south or more precisely between Euro-Mediterranean countries”. (Baudasse and Driouchi, 2007, p. 23)

4.5 Conclusion

The construction of bridges throughout the region started in the mid-1990s under the Barcelona process and continued to evolve and transform throughout the years. Various institutions such as the Anna Lindh foundation and the EuroMed Youth Platform established unprecedented institutions and mechanisms for greater interaction. Official reports and follow up of projects portray a strong built network of partners stretching from southern Mediterranean partners to European states and affiliates. This coordinated network implements its pressure and influence on youth related policies, frameworks and issues. Mutual understanding, tolerance and an equal dialogue between the concerned states are the three cardinal points upon which such collaborations are built, sustained and implemented. Governments, NGO’s and other grass-root institutions have now the opportunity to embrace difference, learn new techniques and also have a strong voice in regional related issues.

At a closer look, the multi-layered collaboration made up of the above mentioned actors dismantles and loses its efficacy when other aspects such as age, language, politics and economics come into play. As presented by various critics, the European community has once more failed to deliver what has been promised on paper. The division into two civilization blocks biased the dialogue from the start. The perceived homogenous qualities of the southern Mediterranean states blinded European policy makers into drafting a unique policy. The strong control by governments and centralized elites of cultural centres, funding and also participation dismantles the Barcelona process commitment to include and enrich a diversified and independent civil society. The creation of bridges and most importantly young intercultural competent individuals is a perceived one. The most promising solution is education in all its forms. Varying from formal to non-formal methods, education seems to hold the key to create young intercultural competent individuals. Unfortunately, a high level of illiteracy and gaps in teaching methods add up to difficulties to implement and sustain regionally broad projects.

One can therefore conclude that EMYP has a significant impact in the region, nonetheless structural, political and economical issues should be addressed before the attempt to engage into dialogue. Dialogue built between similar individuals or in a highly unequal environment fails to deliver positive and prolonged outcomes, but rather induce further misperceptions and judgments.

Chapter 5: A Stagnant Present and the Future Scenario

5.0 Introduction

A very busy and vibrant youth intercultural exchange scenario is easily perceived when looking at the various programs and projects present in the region. The Barcelona process and subsequently the EMP provided the region with a unique opportunity to interact, exchange beliefs and build up new and dispersed relations across borders. The involvement of civil society and most importantly youths transformed the philosophical and political ideology behind youth's role. This chapter will be delving deeper into the relationship between opinion poll results and EMYP outcomes. Therefore, I will be closely looking at the main research question: Does the youth work of EuroMed Youth Intercultural dialogue programs succeed in changing perceptions on both sides of the Mediterranean? The analysis will bring together theory, opinion poll results and official criticisms brought forward in the past years. Although opinion polls are not the ideal and most representative picture, they are the only quantitative tool available, able to give a recount of changes in the region.

At an initial stage, the chapter will be looking closely at the main hindering aspects that put into question the real intended scope of such programs. The intermingled relationship

between education, economic opportunities and social growth will be analysed at deeper levels through the amalgamation of opinion poll results, theory and criticism. The role of gender is pulled once more into the discussion and its implications for equal access and participation are subsequently explored. Furthermore, analysis of the main issue surrounding the effectiveness of such programs and thus the dissemination of values of tolerance and mutual respect in the wider society will be pursued. The so called multiplier effect is on several occasions mentioned as the most important aspect of the programs. Nonetheless, many question the real and tangible impact this mechanism is having in the region. At a second stage, theories of intercultural dialogue will be explored in relation to the results gathered in the initial part. What is the role of perceptions? Is Gadamer's theory applicable? And if so, how are the main actors going to implement a region wide change? Therefore the selected theoretical framework will be building upon already established realities in the previous section, in an attempt to envision a possible bridge between theory and practice.

A small outlook on a post 2010 scenario will be pursued at the end of the chapter. The now saturated concept of Arab spring will make way for a personally merged definition; Euro-Mediterranean spring, that I hope gives greater justice to the political and social realities in the region. New state and regional political transformation will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the future endeavour of the EMYP. To this end a brief exercise of the possible scenario and mode of action in light of the current situation will be pursued.

5.1 Opinion Poll Results vs. EuroMed Youth Programs

5.1.1 Education

The opinion poll surveys presented in this research project cover a time frame of 15 years, with the first survey analysed coinciding with the Barcelona process launch. Although the polls presented various technical flaws, they managed to give a more colourful picture of the feelings, beliefs and attitudes of inhabitants in the region. In a 15-year period little seems to have changed, with blatant and flagrant misperceptions dominating the scene. In each survey a somewhat difference in present beliefs but also future aspirations remains a constant final outcome, with most surveys advocating the need to improve and enhance relations.

An agreed upon tool for improved intercultural communication and exchanges is education, most specifically higher levels of education. In both the Abu Dhabi Gallup 2010 report and the Anna Lindh foundation 2010 report, a relationship between higher levels of education and an increased aptitude for intercultural relations is established. In both reports, a high level of education is pivotal in the successful transformation of intercultural competent youths. A higher level of education opens up increased opportunities in the labour market but it also provides the individual with intercultural tools to be used back in the community or across the region. With this in mind, the E.U.

and other major stakeholders in the region opted for increased levels of interaction at higher institutionalized settings such as the University, but also engage into non-formal ways of learning. Therefore, the EMYP could be viewed as the only mechanism capable of putting into action the results, outcomes and suggestions brought forward by the polls. Nonetheless, critics involved in youth related work and policy making highlight the great discrepancies and flaws faced by southern Mediterranean youths, but also European youths and organizations.

When looking at programs, a lack of access but also a lack of agreed upon philosophical approach to learning narrows the opportunity for interaction and involvement. As argued by Abrignani (2009), southern Mediterranean states uphold different standards and approaches to the educational journey of the individual, contrasting the European imposed model. An incongruent educational framework, and thus one which does not aim for the same outcome or more importantly the same path for a similar outcome will be doomed to fail and be significantly poor in results. A clear discrepancy is easily witnessed when one looks at the illiteracy rates present in the region. Data gathered by the World Bank in 2010 illustrates an 8% difference in literacy rate of people aged between 15 and 24. Whilst Europe registers a 99% of youth literacy rate, Middle East and North African countries register only 91% of youth literacy. (The World Bank Group, 2012) This substantial gap in a relatively small enclosed sea bed provides various hindering aspects to the inclusion and implementation of a successful intercultural program based on education. When considering the increasing youth bulge on the one

side and the increased aging Europe on the other a focus on the educational transformation and development is important.

5.1.2 Gender

Things complicate even further when gender is included. As it has been already presented in the previous chapter, young female inhabitants find it difficult to enrol in extracurricular activities envisioned under the EMYP. Moreover, the low educational level of young woman, especially from rural areas is particularly noticeable. (La Cava, 2010) Amongst the main factors contributing to this phenomenon one finds barriers of both supply and demand. On the supply end one finds lack of adequate infrastructural locations, shortage of teachers and a poor school climate. On the demand side, barriers include lack of family resources, societal expectations and the need to work to sustain the family. When looking at young females, a strong societal influence is directed towards the girls' present and future aspirations.

5.1.3 Lack of and mismatched skills: a poverty cycle

As presented by La Cava in 2010, various differences exist within the region and in no way one can over generalize, nonetheless high levels of poverty are creating an inter-state dividend between poor and rich youths. Looking again at the educational fields, high

levels of drop-outs are not a surprising reality. Absenteeism is a vibrant actuality and levels of drop-outs are high, resulting in an ever increased centralized educational system. Educational quality is poor and archaic, therefore not capable of producing labour competent youths. The competitive labour market and demanding technical skills are relegating southern Mediterranean youths away from stable and applicable knowledge. To give a better picture of the recent situation, one has to only look at the TIMSS study of 2007. Southern Mediterranean countries have a relatively stable low level of Mathematics but a lacking score when it comes to high and advanced levels. (La Cava, 2010) A poor educational foundation and background provides the individual with limited opportunities and prospects for the future. When looking at southern Mediterranean countries, youth unemployment rates are very high. The biggest portion of unemployed youth belongs to the drop-out category or those with only a primary-school qualification. Therefore an interwoven relationship between increased levels of education and better opportunities for employment illustrate the journey or missed opportunity to develop and transform.

Nonetheless, special attention should also be given to the relatively small group of graduate youths that struggle in the employability field. Although differences are high amongst states, southern Mediterranean graduates find numerous obstacles to employment. With the public sector constituting the main and most well paid job hub in the state, few are the youths that seek employment in the private sector. La Cava (2010) and Ahmed (2012) agree that in some instances graduate youths prefer to remain unemployed and wait for a more secure post with the public sector. However, other

factors that contribute to increased levels of youth unemployment include: skills mismatches, labour force growth and labour and product market rigidities. A skills mismatch is on several occasions quoted as the pivotal component of graduate youth unemployment. The creation of appropriate curriculum and educational-employment networks will prove to be important if youth unemployment is to be addressed. Therefore, a change in the philosophical stance on the role of youth is needed: youths as an asset rather than as a constraint. (Ahmed, 2012)

5.1.4 The multiplier effect ... an exercise for the elite?

Most of the EMYP focus on the opportunity to engage a substantial number of youths from across the region in frequent and constant interaction. Although intercultural dialogue is the fulcrum of such interaction, other topics such as human rights, democracy and active youth citizenship are recurrent themes. The main aim is to provide a small group of youths with the tools and expertise to exert a certain amount of pressure and implement change in the host community. A multiplier effect, as argued by Neisse (2007) is the main driving force behind the creation of workshops, seminars and training set ups. The possibility to reach locally scattered youths through the positive influence of other youths is upheld as the most important and effective means to reach the wider society.

Nonetheless, the E.U. has failed to provide an updated quantitative study to measure the effects and impact of the multiplier effect in the region. If one looks at the opinion poll

results the effects of the multiplier effect seem to be of minimum if not inexistent impact. More specifically The Abu Dhabi and Anna Lindh reports highlight that youths, most specifically those with a high level of education show positive signs of intercultural competences and tools. Nonetheless, the older generation and youths with a low level of education seem to show no improvement whatsoever in relation to positive views about the other. A stagnant reality is creating dividends not at a civilization level but at a social strata one within states.

5.1.5 Reflections

A gap between the actual intention of such programs, as envisioned in the Barcelona process and what is actually happening on the ground are contributing to an increased sense of divide at a regional but also state level. Values of peaceful coexistence, tolerance and respect for culturally different individuals are being clustered to a specific chosen group that is predominantly male and enjoys social luxuries: such as a successful educational background, present and future strong economical capabilities and political stability. Therefore one can conclude that if the multiplier effect is having some kind of effect it is only visible amongst a small group of individuals. When considering that EMYP's are attracting or better to say are available, to a restricted group of youths, the opportunity to successfully spread values of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding are restricted. A saturated group of close 'friends' with similar backgrounds, beliefs and

values are being engaged in a dialogical encounter that lacks substance but most importantly effect on the wider society.

To this end, one can argue that education has been erroneously considered as a causational element to an increased aptitude for intercultural dialogue. However, the above presented issues illustrate that a narrow vision towards high levels of education shadows other social, economical and political constraints that have a direct impact on levels of participation and effect. Consequently, a higher aptitude for intercultural interaction, education, economic stability, political liberty and social freedom are in a correlated relationship between themselves. A strong and prolonged educational journey can never be possible without strong economical, social and political freedom. When a high level of education, as it has been presented by the polls and related literature is directly linked to an improved and an increasing willingness for intercultural encounters, risks to engulf the concept into an elitist's perspective are high. In countries where a high level of education is not widely accessible and subsequently not available for a large number of the youth population, a possible perceived sub-cultural gap is created. As the polls have illustrated, more specifically the Abu Dhabi report, youths from a poor educational background and low economic stability view interaction as a threat. Therefore, a possible divide at a state level is easily observable when considering the levels of education vis-à-vis an economical backdrop. Moreover, the picture gets further complicated when one considers the huge educational differences between European and southern Mediterranean countries.

Therefore, the EMYP is working in an environment of unequal educational levels but also unequal access, economic and political realities. Projects and initiatives driven by the EMYP lack an in-depth understanding of economical, social and political differences between but also within states. Serious issues related to project planning and a lack of state tailor made methodological tools is a central contributing factor to the ineffectiveness of the program. The EMYP has failed to recognize differences and similarities in the region and instead opted for the classification of two civilization blocks that need to implement dialogue for the future well-being of the region. A negative outcome of this methodological stance is easily observable when looking at opinion poll results. A focus on the cultural and more specifically the civilization paradigm obscured underlying structural and political obstacles that seem to have a more substantial effect on the accentuation of misperceptions. The missed opportunities to embrace a holistic approach, built upon present interaction but also future intended relations clusters the initiatives into a somewhat narrow and dull envisioned scenario of intercultural dialogue. The exclusion of many groups, which do not fall into an educational, economical or social recognized stratum, multiplied the perceived difference at a regional but also state level. Subsequently, a future focus on intercultural dialogue must encompass not only the overlying cultural component but also other issues that have a direct influence on the aptitude and effectiveness of encounters. Furthermore, real inclusion and accessibility for a variety of youths in the region can never be separated from a strong political will to eradicate illiteracy, create job opportunities, bridge skills and labour market demands and level out the still present economic and social discrepancies.

5.2 Theories of Intercultural Dialogue Applied to the Region

In the initial part of this research project various theories of dialogue and intercultural dialogue moved from a pure inter-personal transformation to a collective action of change. Theories explored delved into the physiological, psychological and environmental factors that could contribute or hinder positive intercultural dialogue. One of the most important and pivotal component in every communicative action is undoubtedly perception. Perceptions shape and mould the message before it actually comes into contact with our auditory senses. Perceptions and an impinged data set of knowledge have a direct effect on the input and output of a particular set of utterances. Nonetheless, various philosophers and social scientists in the field recognize the interdependent role the 'I' and the 'other' share in an attempt to formulate new knowledge. This interdependent relationship places dialogue as the most positive way through which utterance exchanges are possible. Subsequently, the ultimate goal is the building up of bridges across geographical, social, cultural and perceptual dividends. Although a philosophical approach to dialogue is imperative a more tacit understanding of its mechanisms and functions is only possible through a better understanding of the cognitive and psychological dimension to intercultural competences.

5.2.1 The perceptual context in the EuroMed region

The continuous and on-going programs, extensive literature on the matter and various communication and high level inter-governmental relations, are all an indication that intercultural dialogue is a sought after ideal. The pivotal role intercultural competence has in relation to the well-being and prosperity of the region has been on the EuroMed agenda for more than 15 years. High incidences of misperceptions, lack of tolerance, negative and depreciative comments about the 'other' are a constant struggle for political actors in the region. Misperceptions and a general misinformation about the views, beliefs and values of the 'other' remained at a constant level since 1995, with marginal improvements registered amongst youths and highly-educated individuals. Perceptions have a direct effect on the present dialogical encounter but also future relations, thus shaping the individual's judgment and understanding. A narrow vision about the 'other' will undoubtedly result in the creation of saturated stereotypical images and beliefs that cluster the group into a predefined category. As argued by Neuliep (2006) categorization is an unavoidable reality, nonetheless it is also a dangerous mechanism that could lead to xenophobia and sentiments of exclusion. Categorization, both at an institutionalized and grass-roots levels is very much visible in the region. One has to only look at the way the region is most often divided into two civilization blocks or geographical realities. A religious divide is easily to observe with a Christian Europe area on one side and a Muslim southern Mediterranean area on the other. This false perceived homogenous

reality moves directly in line with Neuliep's arguments and is unfortunately shaping relations and policy.

5.2.2 A fusion of horizons?

In a region so much engulfed in inequalities a possible fusion of horizons is difficult to envision, yet this philosophical stance fits perfectly well to the realities and needs of the region. As argued by Gadamer, a fusion of horizons consists in the ability to move away from the predefined culturally and historically prefabricated realities towards a more neutral environment built upon trust, mutual understanding and tolerance. A realization of a historically effected consciousness is the starting point for a true and effective dialogue. Realities in the Euro-Mediterranean region have been on various occasions trampled and moulded for various political reasons. Consequently, relations deteriorated and the perceptual divide based on past encounters, economical and educational disparities continued to increase. Therefore a fusion of horizons approach could provide a strong and effective working tool for the implementation of the agenda set at the Barcelona conference of 1995.

5.2.3 An ethno relative attitude

Ting-Toomey and Chung (2005) argue that intercultural competence comes with time, practice and prolonged encounters. Through the staircase model, the researchers depict the process through which an individual has to go through before reaching the enlightened state of ethno relativity. Intercultural competence and tools are not a rigid predefined and encoded text of rules, but a learning experience that through enhanced interaction and communication triggers an inter-personal change. This change moves beyond surface level cultural perceptions to a much deeper level of understanding. Through the employment of divergent thinking practice the individual is open for new ideas that might also shake his/her core beliefs and values. In a Euro-Mediterranean context this model is somewhat applied to EMYP. Nonetheless, no available data or study follows the participating young in their mother country and intercultural learning stops when the project or workshop terminates. A three day or one week long program is possibly a short time to have a strong and significant impact on the participating youths. The staircase model falls short and becomes of little use to the complete and holistic transformation of the individual. However, if this approach is applied as a lifelong endeavour, one which incorporates formal and non-formal educational tools and mechanisms coupled with political, economical and social improvements, it has the potential to bridge the gap between official institutionalized communications and reality on the ground. An intercultural flexible youth population is exactly the ideal scenario envisioned by 1995 Barcelona process.

5.3 Post Euro-Mediterranean Spring

In the year 2010 and also throughout 2011 and part of 2012, political changes swiped the region from north to south. However considerable attention has been reverted towards the southern part of the Mediterranean. Many in the political and journalistic field labelled these uprisings as an Arab spring. Nonetheless, political unrest and social demonstrations broke out also in major European states, including the U.K. and Spain. When talking of the Arab spring, a perceived peaceful and stable European dimension is depicted, however I deem it important to keep abreast into the discussion the numerous demonstrations and political unrest in European states. For the purpose of this study I will not be using the widely acclaimed post Arab spring phrase but rather translate it into a Euro-Mediterranean spring.

When looking at the political, economical and social environment in a post 2010 scenario, a fragmented picture is the result. Major political changes quake the southern part and we are witnessing today the transition Arab countries are implementing towards democracy, human rights and the rule of law. At a European level, various economical struggles left their toll on governments and as a result a shift in major political figures has been experienced. All of this has an unquestionably direct effect on the future of the EMYP and the region as a whole. It is important at this point to take a step back and delve briefly into the relationship established through various programs. Values of democracy, human rights, rule of law and the fair distribution of resources have been

always a top priority in European rhetoric and philosophy. Nonetheless, double standards have been a constant and recurrent issue. The various agreements and ties made with autocratic regimes placed the E.U. at a junction between its normative rhetoric and realpolitik on the ground. A general sense of mistrust about the real intentions of the E.U. in relation to its southern neighbours continued to increase and feelings of mistrust are high amongst the populations. (Haddad, 2006)

Furthermore, the E.U.'s neglect of certain strands of civil society and political Islam means a total break-up of bridges and channels of communication. The exclusion of some factions in the civil sphere, frequently those with a strong religious background, meant that this one sided approach resulted in the barring of important and significant agents of change. The increased intergovernmental policies advocated by the Union for the Mediterranean and also subsequent policies, placed autocratic regimes at a co-ownership status, brushing civil society at the margins. The year 2011 marks an important change in the relations between Euro-Mediterranean states, with the commissions' communication 'A new response to a changing Neighbourhood'. The rhetoric arguments about democracy and the pivotal role for civil society have once more gained momentum. However many agree that this new approach is 'old wine in new skins' and that little is being done for a real accessible approach to dialogue. A truly new approach is therefore needed, if stability, security and a peaceful environment are the ultimate goal of cooperation. The inclusion and recognition of various types of civil society is important, most specifically the inclusion of new youth organizations. A strong relationship is never possible if certain groups of the civil sphere are left out. One can conclude that "the EU is

caught in a dilemma and has to be extremely sensitive vis-à-vis civil society to avoid a new credibility gap”. (Junemann, 2012, p.5)

5.3 Conclusion

After 15 years of interaction (1995-2010) the EMP produced marginal and poor results. A double standard policy has been the main hindering aspect that transformed the initiative into a postmodern attempt for colonial rule and influence. Although the days of imperialism are over, a clear imbalance in not only power but also access to means is still very much present. Furthermore, the increased economical, political and social gap between the North-South divide fuelled misperceptions and feelings of suspicion on both sides. A true partnership has never been established and to this day few have been the instances when improved relations have been registered. Increased levels of misperceptions at an intergovernmental level but most importantly at a grass-root level means that future collaboration is threatened and the ideal values of mutual respect and tolerance are most probably abandoned.

Youth involvement has been of a superficial nature, with various political, structural, economical and social constraints blocking the way for true dialogue. Many writers agree that the E.U. needs to re-examine its position in the region if it truly upholds the values and standards set in the Barcelona Declaration. The involvement of civil society and most importantly youths must break away from the preconditioned exclusivist’s agenda and

embrace a diversified civil sphere. Equal accessibility and fair representation can never be achieved if the cultural agenda is the sole driving force for collaboration. An in-depth understanding of the economical, political and social differences within the region but also at a state level will prove to be the new test for Euro-Mediterranean continuation and success.

Conclusion

"People of different religions and cultures live side by side in almost every part of the world, and most of us have overlapping identities which unite us with very different groups. We can love what we are, without hating what – and who – we are not. We can thrive in our own tradition, even as we learn from others, and come to respect their teachings". (Annan, n.d.)

In a region which is trying to bridge its cultures, beliefs and norms but which is afflicted by economic and social divisions, a true understanding of what Intercultural dialogue means is imperative. Therefore, a long and deconstructed definition is important if one wants to better understand what this art of utterance exchanges involves. As it has been presented in chapter 1, in essence dialogue is the most highly considered exercise by most philosophical scholars. Already in classic antiquity, Socrates recognizes the pivotal role the inquisitive and humble ‘ignorant’ interlocutor has in relation to knowledge. Later on other scholars, including Bohm and Bakhtin analyse dialogue from a different perspective and include notions of language and self-image. The creation of knowledge is never independent from the ‘other’, but is in a constant transformation through the use of language. Two distinct and autonomous entities manage to retain their individuality whilst move towards a new state of consciousness that translates the experience into new

categories and structures. Subsequently, an interdependent relationship between ‘self’ and ‘other’ is established and developed through an exchange of utterances. Therefore, Gadamer’s notion of fusion of horizons is only possible if both interlocutors recognize a historically effected consciousness. Understanding what intercultural dialogue entails can never be separated from the psychological, physical and environmental component that governs everyday life. Through the works of Gudykunst, Giles and Gallois et al the cognitive component is brought at the forefront of discussion, side-lining the predominant speech focused on imagined hegemonic cultural affiliations. The cognitive component, more specifically perception is later individuated as a pivotal element around which present and future interaction rests. As argued by Neuliep and Singer, perceptions have a direct effect at a sensory level but are also shaped by an already existing Data Bank in our mind. Therefore, a free non preconditioned judgment is never possible and only through a tacit and deep understanding of the hindering perceptual walls that true exchange of utterances is possible.

Perceptions and misperceptions are a constant wound at the heart of the region. As it has been explored through chapter 2, interactions and encounters between inhabitants of the region have always been present. Nonetheless, in a post WWII environment leading political actors of the region sought to embark on a project that puts as its cardinal dogma, improved relations with the other, in an attempt to fight misperceptions and conflict. However, results gathered from four distinct and diverse opinion poll surveys point towards an increased sense of divide. In a 15 year distance opinion poll results are very similar in outcome, with the most recent polls: Abu Dhabi Gallup 2010 and Anna

Lindh 2010, stressing the important role intercultural dialogue has for the future peaceful survival of the region. A targeted group that of youths is illustrated by both reports as being the most promising mechanism through which change at a state but also regional level is possible. To this end, the reports individuate youths and higher levels of education as the perfect ingredients for improved relations.

This research study then moved towards a better understanding of the role of youths as strategic actors in the EuroMed region. Already in 2001, the Council of Europe places the role of youths at the forefront of discussion and decision making. Youths are no longer viewed as a vulnerable *tabula rasa* entity that needs constant monitoring and tutoring, but are rather viewed as a vibrant and novel group that could successfully contribute to politics, economics and improved socio-cultural relations. As it has been explained in chapter 3, the region has on numerous occasions been exposed to various projects and programs that target youth and most specifically youths as active agents of change in the intercultural domain. Although funding and the infrastructures put in place, including the EuroMed Youth platform, have as their working philosophy the creation of bridges and the facilitation of interwoven networks of civil society, many critics have been voicing their discontent with the projects.

Criticism of programs, thus covering the period between 1999 and 2010 are developed in chapter 4 and 5. Various southern but also European scholars blame regional leaders and policy makers for major flaws and an increased sense of divide. Structural, political, economical and social are the main hindering forces that are unfortunately reinforcing the

civilization paradigm envisioned by Huntington. As argued by Haddad, Neisse, Abrignani and Bouquerel and El Hussein direct structural forces such as the non-inclusion of various civil society actors and other indirect social factors such as age and gender are having substantial weight on the successful implementation and outcome of such projects. Subsequently, only a small number of youths have the opportunity and means to participate in EMYP, transforming the project into an elitist inter-governmental initiative. Other elements which are having a direct impinge on the free access to participation include education and the economic component. As it has been argued, huge differences in educational methods and levels exist not only between the North-South divide but also between states in the region. An unbalanced dialogue has limited hope to achieve an intra-personal transformation in the participating youth. A general sense of mistrust and suspicion about the real intentions of such programs run high, especially amongst inhabitants of the southern Mediterranean. A double standard approach governs EMYP, with few opportunities for independent civil society actors to participate. Chapter 5 delves further into this issue and uncovers the intermingled link between education, training and employment. Furthermore, through the works of La Cava and Ahmed, I was able to unearth the missing link between education and an increased aptitude for intercultural interaction. The narrow vision, linking higher levels of education with an increased aptitude for intercultural dialogue risk to engulf this desired state of being as an elitist privilege. Economic stability and positive prospects for the future are the parallel elements that simultaneously work with education for the intra and inter-personal transformation of the region.

Intercultural dialogue has limited success if other surrounding issues are not given diligent importance. Values of mutual respect, tolerance and respect are more difficult to spread in a community lacerated by poverty, illiteracy and political injustice. A true dialogical encounter, based on a historically effected consciousness and therefore one which moves away from categorization and xenophobia is only possible if true and strong political will is injected in the projects. As argued by Junemann, in a post-EuroMed environment the E.U. is now faced with a daunting task of regaining legitimacy and credibility amongst its neighbours and partners. This can only be achieved through the abolition of double standards and the elimination of economic and social disparities throughout the region. On the political field, one can conclude that drastic changes on the southern Mediterranean part, but also party shifts on the European part will have a direct impact on the future functioning and successful development of a peaceful and prosperous region. Moreover, an ethno relative attitude is not directly linked to education or economic stability solely, but is a transformation based on an intermingled mosaic of value changes, education, economic stability, social development and justice. It is now our common responsibility to uphold notions of tolerance and peace amongst our community and also regionally.

What better picture to conclude with than that of comparing intercultural dialogue in the region to an olive tree. The Olive tree, a characteristic tree in the Mediterranean area is a tree that grows tall and over a long period of time. Its roots are firmly ingrained into the ground and its branches stretch high and wide. Like the olive tree, intercultural dialogue in the region has well ingrained roots and high reaching branches that are constantly

making way for new and blossoming sprouts. The youth bulge in the region could be easily compared to these sprouts, it now depends on the surrounding environment and cultivating political actors to successfully take care and ensure the flourishing transformation of the region. An unattended olive tree / youth population which constantly fights against turbulent winds of intolerance, xenophobia and injustice has little chance of transforming into a mature and intercultural competent entity.

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Curriculum Vitae

Karen Mamo received her Bachelor of Arts in Italian studies from the University of Malta in 2008. She pursued her studies to a post graduate level and in 2009 she graduated from the University of Malta with a post graduate diploma in Translation studies. Following a two year break she decided to change career path and enrolled for a Dual Master's program offered by the University of Malta and the George Mason University in the U.S.A. Upon completion of the Master of Arts in Conflict Resolution and Mediterranean security she hopes to be of service at a national and regional level.