

# THE SOCIO-CULTURAL MILIEU OF HOLINESS: MALTESE VALUES IN A EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PERSPECTIVE\*

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The English words for “saint” and “holiness”, unlike their Maltese equivalent of “*qaddis*” and “*qdujsija*”, have different etymological origins though related meanings. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines a saint as “a holy or a canonised person (by a Church after his or her death) regarded as having a place in heaven”. The temporal existence of a saintly person is marked by great holiness and virtue. Holiness, however, refers to the state of religious or spiritual goodness and well-being of the living. It is manifest in personal integrity (hence “holy” from whole), good moral conduct, oneness with others, society and the environment. As a diffuse socio-religious culture it is not restricted to any one person or a heavenly saint. Whereas saints are canonized posthumously by a Church, the greatest majority of holy people never come to be declared saints. Ordinary holiness, though very real, often escapes the attention of official religion.

Saints represent the official definition of holiness. Generally, they are individuals from the past who come to be publicly acclaimed for their personal virtues. They are considered to possess human qualities often beyond the capacities of the average person. Having given witness to the transcendent or the “Holy Other”, saints are set apart as examples of heroic faith and human goodness. Popular holiness, however, is the milieu within which living saints exercise their human and divine qualities. It is not something that belongs to the individual saint, per se. It is a religious, spiritual and human quality shared with others in a socio-cultural environment. If it is to be acknowledged, it needs to be shared and communicated. It does not reside

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exclusively in the publicly acknowledged saintly figures. For unlike the holiness which resides in the culture of a people, saints have a delimited spatio-temporal and historical existence, often constructed and reconstructed by a religious community or a Church authority.

In the Catholic tradition most saints were once real people, about whom objective facts may be established. We know about their sex, their place of birth, their circumstances of life and death, their friends, family and work. At the same time, however, the knowledge that reaches us about saints are “the constructed saints”. All saints are more or less constructed in that, being necessarily saints for other people, they are remodelled in the collective representation which is made of them (Delooz 1983: 195). If the narrative continues to be vital to the life of the community, this shaping and reshaping continues (Wyschogrod 1990:7).

The Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church brought saints down to earth. In its document on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*, 1964) it made explicit a universal call to holiness. This theology was already implicit in the diffused popular belief of the “communion of saints”, by which the totality of the faithful constituting the “living saints” were in communion with saints in heaven. In its policy of dialogue with the world, the post-Vatican II Church called its faithful of whatever rank and status to live a life of holiness, to achieve the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of charity. In this way, holiness is achieved by a life of the spirit that is not unrelated to the promotion of a more humane society. Christians are to follow in the footsteps of Christ and dedicate all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbour. In this way, the holiness of the People of God is believed to grow... as is proved by the lives of so many saints in Church history (Abbott 1966: *LG*, 40).

Philosophers are also discovering the function of saints in the construction of a post-modern ethics. Narratives of saintly figures are thought to serve as examples of ethical conduct in a post-modern world. Wyschogrod, for example, connects the spiritual and the psychological with the moral and social dimensions of holiness. She defines a saint as “one whose adult life in its entirety is devoted to the alleviation of sorrow (the psychological suffering) and pain (the physical suffering) that afflicts other persons without distinction of rank or group... whatever the cost to the saint in pain or sorrow” (Wyschogrod 1990:34). Here holiness is associated with loving care, a total commitment to helping others in need even at the cost of self-sacrifice.

Social anthropologists have documented the spatio-temporal and socio-cultural milieu of saintly figures. In traditional societies, “saints” or their temporal

representatives often act as mediators between heaven and earth, the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, superiors and their dependents. In this way “saints” wield power, they protect, give favours and if called upon they intervene for their clients.

In his fieldwork in rural villages in Malta Bossevain discovered that all parish churches have a patron or titular saint under whose special protection its founders have been placed. He observed (Bossevain 1965, 1993:58-59) that the Maltese express their devotion to their patron saint with religious ceremonies and processions, band marches and tremendous displays of fireworks. Feasts celebrated in honour of patron saints are occasions on which communal values are reaffirmed and strengthened. In the process the central position which the Church occupies in the social structure is strongly reinforced.

From a total of sixty-one parishes in Malta, thirty-one (50%) are dedicated to one of the titles of Saint Mary, three to Jesus, four to the apostle Paul, the Patron Saint of Malta, three to other apostles whereas the rest to a number of other saints (*Ecclesiastical Directory*, 1994). Besides the annual feast in honour of their patron saint, most parishes celebrate a feast for one or more secondary saint. As feasts give rise to much competition, rivalry and factions in the community, parish priests keep reminding their faithful to re-discover the true values of their patron saints, to curb violence, divisions and waste of resources and to practise solidarity and love of neighbour.

There is a great similarity between the functions of heavenly saints and mortal patrons. Just as saints mediate between man and God, so do earthly patrons influence the decisions of a higher authority in favour of their clients. In fact, the Maltese word “*qaddis*” is used interchangeably for a heavenly saint and for a mortal patron. Several proverbs underline the importance of patrons in Maltese social life. For example, *minghajr qaddisin ma titlax il-Ġenna* (literally meaning, without saints you cannot go to heaven), and *ghat-telgha kull qaddis jghin* (literally meaning, in an upward climb [i.e. in front of difficulties] the help of a saint is welcome). In traditional Maltese society, a system of patronage extends from the religious to the social and the political.

Bossevain (1993: 154-159) observed that the socio-economic development that has occurred over the past few years, has brought about a shift in power within the traditional professional patrons. New patrons have displaced old ones. Government ministers have become the new super ‘saints’ and members of parliament have become brokers, intermediaries between ministerial patrons and their own

constituencies. Contrary to expectations there has been an increase in the celebration of patron saints. The unexpected rise in festivities act to structure and project group identity. Such festivities mark boundaries and generate rivalry, which in turn increase pressure to expand them in order to defend community honour.

Although many changes have taken place in Malta, patronage is found to have remained a principle of social action. In his postscript to his earlier studies, Bossevain (1993: 161) reaffirmed that underlying values such as hospitality, fierce loyalty to family, faction and community, religious reverence, saints and fireworks – are still firmly in place. A diffuse traditional culture still has an influence on the religious, social and political life of the country. It often happens that heavenly saints act as models for earthly patrons. In this way, the study of holiness and patron saints can throw light on religious culture in its relation to the politics of social welfare. Though saintly persons, as strictly defined by Wyschogrod (1990) are few in number, the reconstruction, remembrance and festive celebration of saintly figures might well support the religiosity and morality of the people.

Accordingly, the study of holiness is in line with the newly found interest in diffuse, popular and unofficial religion. Recent studies have documented the importance of shared values and beliefs as a basis for collective meaning and action (Cipriani 1988). In this movement, a shift is observed away from an exclusive concern with institutionalized religion towards popular religious culture, practice and belief. There is a growing awareness that the social significance of religion extends beyond the confines of formal religious organisations. As the social function of religion continues to decline, the social significance of religion, conceptualized in a new form seems to be on the increase (Beckford 1989, 1990). In this perspective, sociological theory and research need to undertake an analysis of the religious environment in a presumed secular world where a culture of religious values, unobtrusive holiness, devotion to saints and popular piety is continuously being reshaped.

This paper investigates the milieu of religiosity in its relation to social solidarity in Malta. It tests the hypothesis of the ethical demands of holiness. It examines whether people's religiosity is related to a corresponding care for others and a culture of social solidarity. An analysis of the European Values studies posits the socio-cultural world for holiness in Malta in a Euro-Mediterranean perspective. After mapping the culture and practice of religion and voluntary social work in Malta, the paper examines the impact of religion on works of social welfare.

### ***Values Study***

A Maltese version of the European Values questionnaire was re-administered in Malta in the nineties by Gallup in association with the European Value Systems Study Group (EVSSG). The first Values study was conducted in 1981 in ten western European countries (Denmark, Holland, France, Britain, West Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland). In 1990 the Values Study was repeated with Denmark being replaced by Portugal. In 1990, as in 1981, a total of around 15,500 randomly selected interviews was achieved.

The Maltese Values survey, conducted for the first time at the end of 1983 and the beginning of 1984 amongst a nationally representative sample of 467 respondents in Malta and Gozo (Abela 1991:1-2), was repeated in June 1991 amongst a similar sample of 393 respondents. Interviews of approximately one hour each were carried out in the home of respondents by specially trained Gallup interviewers (Heald 1992). The data for Malta, Italy, France and Spain make possible a comparative analysis of Maltese religious culture in a Euro-Mediterranean perspective in terms of personal beliefs, morality, Church teachings, prayer life and spiritual experiences and how this relates to the promotion of social welfare. The Values study allows us to draw up a profile of people's expressed holiness and its relation to a culture of care, voluntary work and social solidarity.

### ***Religiosity***

In comparison to most western European countries understudy, the religiosity of the Maltese is still very strong, even if over the past few years it has suffered a number of setbacks. Seventy percent in Malta, in contrast to the average 21 percent in western Europe, 30% in Italy, 22% in Spain and 14% in France find religion to be very important in their life [Table 1].

In the nineties, almost all (98%) of our Maltese respondents claim to have been brought up religiously at home. The same percentage of the Maltese (98%) claim to have retained their attachment to their religion. Generally, in Europe, people are brought up religiously at home (81%) but quite a few abandon their religion as they grow older. This is the case in mediterranean Italy (from 93% who were brought up religiously at home to 85% who have retained their attachment to religion), Spain (from 92% to 86%) and France (from 71% to 61%).

Over the past decade the weekly attendance at religious services has dropped

slightly all across Europe, including Malta, by a margin of two percent. But, in contrast to the average European (30%), the majority of the Maltese (88%) attend religious services at least once a week. In fact, 46 percent of Maltese respondents go to Church on Sundays and another 42 percent also do so during the week. In Malta, only 5% in contrast to 16% in Italy, 30% in Spain, 52% in France and the average 29% in western Europe never go to Church. Generally, a considerable number of western Europeans have come to attend Church less than once a week (41%) contrary to what is stipulated by the Church. Not a few do so only on special occasions marking Christmas, Easter, the celebration of a baptism, marriage or a death in the family.

Generally, in Malta, just as in neighbouring Italy, much higher than in Spain or France, people find appropriate to celebrate births (96%, Italy 81%, Spain 73%, France 63%), marriages and deaths with a religious service. In many instances the request for a Church baptism, marriage or a funeral is more a matter of cultural conformity than of religious conviction. These *rites du passage*, however, can be occasions for an initiation into religious faith and in some cases the beginning of a more active participation in the life of the Church.

Irrespective of whether respondents attend religious services or not, 73% in Malta, in comparison to 63% in western Europe, consider themselves to be religious. In the intervening years between the two surveys (1983-91), however, the percentage of Maltese respondents who think of themselves as religious dropped by 21 percent. 25 percent in Malta, almost just as high as the European average (28%) do not think of themselves as religious. In contrast to other Europeans, however, where 5 percent claim to be atheists and 7 percent religiously indifferent, almost none of our respondents in Malta think of themselves as convinced atheists and only a few are undecided about their faith (1%).

In the same way, 87 percent (3% less than in 1983) in Malta in comparison to 60 percent in Europe, claim to spend some time in prayer, meditation, contemplation or some other spiritual activity. In Malta, 57 percent pray often (23% in Europe), 36 percent sometimes (25% in Europe) and 8 percent either never pray, practically never or just when going through a crisis (28% in Europe).

The Maltese have kept strong their faith in God (99%). Most still think of God as a person (71%). Since the eighties there has been an increase in the number of respondents who think of God as a form of spirit or life force (from 12% to 18%). This might be due to the proliferation of popular religious movements at the grass-roots of society, the Charismatic movement in particular. In sharp contrast to Europe

(10%), only the very few in Malta (1%) are of the opinion that there is no spirit, god or "life-force". The Maltese find God to be much more important in their life (9.4 on a 10-point scale) than either the Italians (7.1), the Spanish (6.1), the French (4.4) or the average western European (6.0).

At the same time, however, there has been an overall drop (4% lower than in the eighties) in the number of Maltese respondents who believe in the soul (87%), sin (85%), heaven (82%), life after death (79%), hell (74%) or the devil (74%). Nevertheless the religious belief of the Maltese remains by far the highest in western Europe. Thus, for example, considerably fewer Europeans still believe in the devil (26%), hell (24%) or in life after death (44%). In the same hierarchical order of belief as the Maltese, though considerably much lower, Europeans generally have kept their faith in God (73%), the soul (62%) and to a lower extent in sin (57%), life after death (44%) and heaven (44%). Though, overall, Europeans have retained the same level of religious belief as in the eighties, we observe the emergence of a plurality of individualised systems of religious values and beliefs (Kerkhofs 1992:79). This situation posits the advance of religious individualism. Western Europeans have become increasingly selective in their adherence to traditional beliefs [Table 2].

The erosion of a common system of religious beliefs in western Europe is also manifest in the lower priority attributed to the sharing of religious beliefs for success in marriage, irrespective of the actual sharing of attitudes between partners. In sharp contrast to a majority in Malta (60%), those who find important the sharing of religious beliefs between married partners are very few in western Europe (23%), with no exception to Mediterranean countries like Italy (23%) Spain (25%) or France (16%) even if the actual sharing of religious attitudes between partners in these countries (average for western Europe: 61%) is much higher. Similar to other Europeans, the majority of the Maltese (86%) share religious attitudes with their partner, but unlike their European counterparts, most Maltese respondents (60%) also think that this is important for the well-being of their marriage. It seems that people in Malta are more likely to adhere to a common system of religious values rather than to work out individualized value systems as has generally become the case in western Europe.

The sharing of a common system of values in Malta is also evident in the place assigned to the transmission of a set of religious and moral values in the family, Church and society. Fifty five percent in Malta in contrast to 25% in western Europe, 35% in Italy, 26% in Spain and 13% in France give priority to religious faith for the education of children in the family.

Religious education in the family finds its counterpart in the elaboration and diffusion of the teachings of the Church. In their majority, the Maltese are satisfied with the activity of the local Church, show great confidence in its institutions and would like to receive its guidance on moral and social issues. Thus most Maltese, much higher than the European average, think that the Church in their country is giving adequate answers to spiritual matters (87%; 52% in Europe), family life (85%; 33% in Europe), moral problems and the needs of the individual (79%; 36% in Europe) and to a lesser extent on contemporary social issues (68%; 27% in Europe). The majority of the Maltese, much higher than the western European average, think that it is appropriate for the Church to speak out on the morality of abortion (91%, Europe 52%), extramarital affairs (87%, Europe 41%), racial discrimination (77%, Europe 67%), euthanasia (72%, Europe 54%), disarmament (68%, Europe 53%), unemployment (65%, Europe 45%), and the environment (50%, Europe 49%). Foremost amongst all other social institutions, the Church in Malta enjoys the highest level of confidence by the people [Table 3].

Although the greatest majority in Malta claim to practise their religion and to abide by the teachings of the Church, only the few are members of a Church or a religious group or do unpaid work in a voluntary organisation. Similar to the average in western Europe (13%), 14% in Malta in comparison to 8% in Italy, 5% in Spain and 6% in France belong to a Church or religious group. Still, more people in Malta (9%) than generally in western Europe (6%), Italy (6%), France (5%) or Spain (3%) in particular, do some kind of unpaid voluntary work for their Church or religious organisation. Generally, unpaid voluntary work in either secular or religious organisations is highest in France (34%) and Italy (27%). Overall, however, fewer Maltese (22%) do unpaid voluntary work than the average in Europe (26%). Again, contrary to expectations, the French -who have the highest number of unchurched in western Europe -are more involved in voluntary work for the elderly, the handicapped, the deprived or in community action to combat poverty, unemployment, housing or racial inequality (8%) than anywhere else in western Europe (6%), Italy (4%), Spain (3%) or Malta (3%) in particular. Applying Wyschogrod criteria for what constitutes holiness, it seems that only the few in Malta, despite the overwhelmingly high level of religiosity relative to other Europeans, would qualify as "saints". Conversely, it is not uncommon for western Europeans to practise care and other saintly qualities in community voluntary work without any commitment to a formal religion.

In the nineties the Values survey enquired about people's motivations for doing voluntary work. In a number of European countries (but not in Malta) respondents



were given a list of fourteen possible reasons for undertaking voluntary work. They were asked to rate the importance they attach to each on a five-point scale. In descending order of importance (the average on a five-point scale), western Europeans engage in voluntary work mostly out of a sense of duty or moral obligation (3.36), to give a contribution to their local community (3.32), solidarity with the poor (3.31), to give dignity to the disadvantaged (3.26), out of compassion for those in need (3.24) or to identify with the suffering (3.24). Equally important are personal concerns like learning new skills and gaining new experiences (3.25), to pass away the time doing something worthwhile (3.23) or for socializing and meeting others (3.22). Less importance is given to a set of instrumental-objective values such as to have an opportunity to repay and give something back (2.94) or to bring social and political change (2.56). They assign least importance to religious beliefs (2.51). The low importance of a religious motivation relative to other humanitarian aims suggests that solidarity in western Europe is no longer under the exclusive inspiration of the Church. Such a situation posits the secularization of care, a departure from a predominant religious motivation in voluntary work.

### *Care in society*

In order to establish the extent to which Europeans think that they are living in a caring society, respondents were asked whether, in their opinion, people today are more willing, less willing or equally willing to help each other than they used to be ten years ago. In the eighties, the greatest majority of western Europeans (60%), the Italians (68%) and the French (67%) in particular, but not so much the Maltese (49%), were of the opinion that people are less willing to offer help. Generally, in the eighties, in comparison to other western Europeans (33%), the Maltese were more of the opinion that people are equally or more willing (43%) to offer help to others. In the beginning of the nineties, however, fewer Maltese respondents (38%) were as optimistic about the caring society as in the eighties. In the intervening years between the two surveys there has been an overall drop of 11 percent in the number of Maltese respondents who think that people today are more willing to help each other than they used to be ten years ago (from 28% in 1983 to 17% in 1991) [Table 4].

On another count, the European Values survey asked respondents to identify the reasons for what makes people in their country live in need. Answers to these question are useful in the appraisal of care (Ashford and Timms 1992:25). Respondents were asked if people were in need because of social injustice, progress,

bad luck or laziness. On the one hand, if people are found to be in need because of social injustice, the situation could in principle be remedied by a programme of social welfare. On the other hand, if their condition is seen to be the product of the inevitable march of progress, not much could possibly be achieved. With regards to the unlucky in the lottery of life chances, caring might take the form of social compensation. Respondents, however, might not see any value in caring for the lazy or those lacking in will power.

In Europe, respondents generally give most weight to reasons which call for social remedy. Overall almost four out of every ten respondents in western Europeans think that people are in need because of injustices in society. Next in importance Europeans think that people live in need because they are unlucky. Less importance is given to the inevitable march of progress, laziness or a lack of will power. In Malta, however, the majority of respondents think that people are in need primarily because of laziness or lack of will power (58%), and only secondarily because of injustice in society (12% give social injustice as first reason, 30% as second reason). Less importance is given to bad luck (13%) or the inevitable march of progress (7%).

### *Religiosity and social care*

The contemporary literature on holiness in the Catholic Church links faith with works for social justice. In this perspective, authentic religiosity needs to find expression in social solidarity, a concern for others and a commitment to voluntary work for the welfare of others in society. The multi-disciplinary approach of the Values studies makes possible an examination of the relation between people's religiosity and social values, care for others, in particular. In order to test the hypothesis of a necessary link between holiness and solidarity the various dimensions of religion are correlated with the factors of social care.

A large scale factor analysis extracted six dimensions of religion, identified as (1) people's aspirations for guidance by the Church's teaching on morality, (2) traditional belief, (3) conventional religiosity consisting in the celebration of important events in life by the rites of the Church, (4) satisfaction with the services provided by the Church, (5) Church belonging and participation, and (6) membership in a religious or Church group.

Table 5 represents the correlation matrix obtained for the specific dimensions of religion and a number of caring factors in Malta. The results show that there is

no significant relation between religiosity and social welfare or the acceptance of foreigners in the community. In Malta, religious and non-religious respondents alike are equally favourable or unfavourable of remedial action to counter social injustice or to administer social compensation for those who suffer through no fault of their own. However, it can be observed that those who hold high levels of religious belief, those who want guidance from their Church and are members of a religious or Church group are more likely to think that people are in need because of the inevitable march of progress. In this way people with strong religious convictions, members of religious organisations and those who look for guidance in the teachings of the Church are of the opinion that people are in need because of the inevitable march of progress. They might also be reluctant to favour a programme of social welfare for the alleviation of poverty. In the same way those with strong religious commitments and who are obedient to the teachings of the Church are more likely to dislike having deviants or people with serious social problem in their community neighbourhood [Table 5].

As might be expected, in the special case of Malta, there is a strong affinity between membership in Church organisations and voluntary work ( $r = .44$ ). Unlike other countries of western Europe, voluntary work in Malta is still closely related to the activities of the Church. Many members of religious or Church groups are also active in voluntary work of a religious nature ( $r = .74$ ), and quite a few are also active in voluntary social work ( $r = .12$ ). In this way, core members of the Church in Malta, but not the religious at large, are committed to the alleviation of poverty and the provision of care for people in need.

Respondents' perceptions of a caring society or solidarity does not depend on traditional belief, conventional religiosity or satisfaction with the services of the Church. The active Church goers and those who rely on the teachings of the Church for moral guidance, however, are more likely to be of the opinion that today people are less willing to help each other than before.

### *Conclusions*

A socio-cultural perspective on holiness, in view of Wyschogrod's definition of a saint and the theology emerging from the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church, leads us to conceive of the "new saints" as those people who strive to live their religious faith by a commitment to voluntary care for others in society. Accordingly, testing the hypothesis of the ethical demands of holiness in Maltese

socio-religious culture ethical demands of holiness in Maltese socio-religious culture we observe that core members of the Church in Malta, but generally not those who consider themselves to be religious, are committed to the alleviation of poverty and the provision of care for people in need.

Commitment to social welfare does not depend on conventional religiosity. The closer people are to the Church the more likely are they to hold that today people are less willing to help each other than before and that solidarity is on the decline. In such a situation, leaders of the Church are faced with a great challenge to promote a caring society. They have the task to translate popular religiosity into works for social justice.

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TABLE 1

Religious Practice in Western Europe of which four Euro-Mediterranean Countries (Malta, Italy, Spain, France)

	WE %	M %	I %	S %	F %
Belong to a religious denomination	77	98	85	86	61
Brought up religiously at home	81	98	93	2	71
Consider oneself religious	63	73	81	62	48
Religion very important in life	21	70	30	22	14
Attend religious services:					
more than once a week	7	42	10	8	1
once a week	23	46	28	23	9
less often	41	6	45	41	38
never, almost never	29	5	16	30	52
Religious service important for:					
Birth	71	96	81	73	63
Marriage	73	95	78	72	66
Death	77	95	83	73	70
Shared religious beliefs very important in marriage	23	60	23	25	16
Share with partner religious attitudes	61	86	68	66	58
Priority of religious faith in the education of children	25	55	35	26	13
Belong to a Church/religious group	3	14	8	5	6
Unpaid voluntary work of which for:	26	22	27	14	34
Church/religious group	6	9	6	3	5
for elderly/handicapped/deprived	4	2	3	2	5
poverty/employment/housing/equality	2	1	1	1	3

TABLE 2

Religious Belief in Western Europe of which Four Euro-Mediterranean Countries (Malta, Italy, Spain, France)

	WE %	M %	I %	S %	%
Belief in:					
God	73	99	82	80	57
Life after death	44	79	53	41	38
A soul	62	87	66	59	50
The devil	26	74	34	27	19
Hell	24	74	33	25	16
Heaven	44	82	44	46	30
Sin	57	85	65	55	40
Resurrection of the dead	35	73	43	32	27
Re-incarnation	20	14	22	20	24
Importance of God in life (score on 10 point scale)	6.0	9.4	7.1	6.1	4.4
Get comfort/strength from religion	50	92	63	51	33

TABLE 3

Attitudes towards Church morality in Western Europe of which four Euro-Mediterranean Countries (Malta, Italy, Spain, France)

	WE %	M %	I %	S %	F %
Church gives adequate answers on:					
Moral problems/individual needs	36	79	45	36	34
Problems of family life	33	85	39	36	26
Spiritual needs	52	87	60	47	53
Social problems	27	68	34	27	21
Proper for Churches to speak on:					
Disarmament	53	68	65	48	48
Abortion	52	91	56	55	35
Third World problems	76	83	85	77	70
Extramarital affairs	41	87	39	47	34
Unemployment	45	65	56	49	36
Racial discrimination	67	77	79	70	55
Euthanasia	54	72	58	55	47
Homosexuality	35	67	35	37	26
Ecology/environment issues	49	50	56	47	49
Government policy	22	28	22	22	15
Confidence in Church (great/quite)	51	82	61	50	47



TABLE 4

“Do you think that people today are more willing to help each other than they used to be, say ten years ago?”

	YEAR*	M	WE	I	S	F
	%	%	%	%	%	
More willing	1981	28	11	15	17	9
	1991	17				
Less willing	1981	49	60	68	51	67
	1991	53				
Equally willing	1981	15	22	13	23	16
	1991	21				
Don't know	1981	8	7	3	9	8
	1991	10				

\*in Malta the values survey was administered in 1983/4 and repeated in 1991.

TABLE 5

Correlations of religious dimensions and care

<b>RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS</b>						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<b>CARING FACTORS</b>						
People poor because:						
unlucky	-.07	.03	.01	.02	.07	.00
lazy	.08	-.17*	-.03	.05	.09	-.02
social injustice	.08	-.06	.02	.01	-.02	-.05
inevitable progress	.15*	.14*	.03	.00	.00	.15*
Don't want as neighbours:						
foreigners	.02	.11	-.02	-.04	.05	-.01
problem people	.15*	.14*	.14*	.11	.02	.01
Voluntary workers	.15*	.03	-.03	-.03	-.01	.44**
in organisation:						
Church/religion	.09	.04	.03	.03	.15*	.74**
Social welfare	.09	.00	.00	.02	.01	.12*
Help others (7)	-.19**	-.05	-.03	-.18**	-.03	.06

(1) Favour Church teachings

(2) Hold traditional belief

(3) Favour religious rites marking events in life

(4) Church trust/satisfactory services

(5) Church belonging/alienation

(6) Membership in religious/Church group

(7) People are more willing to help others than ten years ago.

\*  $p < .01$ \*\*  $p < .001$