

POST-SECULARISATION: The Social Significance of Religious Values in Four Catholic European Countries.¹

Anthony M. Abela S.J.

Since the beginning of sociology variants of the secularisation model have been employed to explain religious and social change. Depending on their understanding of religion and secularisation, sociologists have advanced divergent positions concerning the social significance of religion. Still others have questioned the significance of the sociological study of religion itself. In current sociology secularisation has become a multi-dimensional concept not easily verified or disproved by scientific investigation.

At a time when many voices are heard about the return of the sacred and the impact of religion on society the need is felt for an approach that goes beyond the theory of secularisation. While we acknowledge secularisation as concomitant to modernisation, we observe the persistence of the traditional and the emergence of new forms of religion in post-modern society. Accordingly, a post-secularisation perspective is required in order to examine the social significance of the sacred and the secular in society. To enquire about the social significance of religion in today's world is to ask whether people find it meaningful to hold religious values and beliefs. Do they search for purpose and meaning in life? What are their religious values and beliefs? How does traditional religious practice and belief differ from new forms of religion? Are religious values related to social and political options? Do religious values orient people's decisions and action in society? The task of a post-secularisation approach is to account for the socially significant dimensions of religion in a secularised world.

This article investigates whether and if so how religious values and beliefs possess any social significance to a representative sample of individuals living in four European countries at a particular point in time, as they are rooted in

Dr Anthony M. Abela S.J. was born in Malta in 1954. He is *professore aggiunto* of sociology in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and a lecturer in social policy at the University of Malta. He is the author of *Transmitting Values in European Malta* (1991) and *Changing Youth Culture in Malta* (1992).

1. The data for Italy, France and Spain was made available from the ESRC Data Archive, University of Essex; the data for Malta from GALLUP through the EVSSG representative in London.

the same Catholic religious tradition. Our analysis relies on the data sets derived through the collaboration of the *European Values Systems Study Group* (EVSSG, 1981/4), and is thus subject to the limitations of any comparable cross-national survey. We apply factor analysis in order to identify a number of distinct religious factors for all our respondents taken together, which in turn are first differentiated according to socio-demographic characteristics and then inter-related with a number of social values. We enquire whether religious factors are sociologically significant for the understanding of contemporary society. Before giving empirical evidence to support our theory of post-secularisation we shall present a brief overview of the principal contributions to the sociological study of religion in the English speaking world where secularisation remains the dominant model and elaborate on the European Values studies where religious values occupy a place alongside social and political ones.

Secularisation and Beyond

The British contribution to the sociology of religion has been articulated on the foundations of the classical sociologists where it was assumed that in modern industrial society religion was on the decline. Religion's ability to provide a commonly held social order was thought to be fatally eroded by the emergence of a plurality of life experience within a mass market economy and a universalistic conception of citizenship (Wallis and Bruce, 1989). Secularisation was defined in terms of the declining social significance of religion (Wilson 1966, 1976, 1982, 1985). It was believed to be coterminous with *societalisation*, the process by which life comes to be lived less in the context of a closely knit community. Personal bonds and collective faith were believed to be replaced by impersonal connections of the market, the mass media, bureaucracy and the anonymity of urban life. Thus conceived, secularisation assumed that a higher degree of religiosity, however useful it was for the integration of society in an unspecified remote past, was continuously being dissolved in the present. Such a process was evaluated as an irreversible loss of the social significance of religion.

Later, David Martin (1978) analyzed the historical variants of secularisation and clearly distinguished between countries of Catholic and Protestant traditions. Secularisation was seen in terms of conflict between groups, where the outcome was not everywhere the same. For example, in some Catholic states like Poland, Ireland and to a certain extent Malta, where internal divisions were subordinated in the face of opposition to threats from outside, religion — understood as the social influence of the Church — was

found to have remained vigorous. Despite these findings and the subsequent research carried out on the new religious movements that have emerged in a post-industrial world, some British sociologists of religion remain unyielding in their position that the secularisation thesis has been firmly established. Needless to say, such a position cannot be understood outside of its historical and social context. As Bruce and Willis (1989) remarked the sociology of religion has remained marginal because, in their view, British sociology has been dominated by a Marxist agenda. Religion is only acceptable to the dominant orthodoxy if it is explained away by reference to the more substantial economy and social organisations. Whatever the case, the sociology of religion in Britain has since moved away from the original normative functionalism and has applied phenomenological methods to understand religion's resistance to secularisation, the relation between belief and action, and how knowledge, innovation and change are socially and, we might add, religiously constructed. Thus contemporary sociologists of religion analyzed the various manifestations of religion in a secularized world. Without having to falsify the theory of secularisation they moved beyond it.

Beckford (1989) has remarked that the sociology of religion had become self-contained and estranged from other fields of sociology. In his view, the sub-discipline has remained uncritically bound to the legacy of modernisation theory of classical sociology. Variants of the secularisation model previously adopted to explain the transition from pre-industrial to industrial society have become a hindrance to understand religion in the post-industrial world.

In a review of the international contribution to the sociology of religion Beckford (1990) called for a renewed conceptualisation of the social significance of religion. He observed cross-national differences but also an international division of labour and transnational influences in the discipline. Given the rootedness of most religious phenomena in separate countries sociologists have tended to develop their work in different and distinctive ways. He gives as examples the Italians for their sensitivity to the political implications of Catholicism, the French for the history of theoretical ideas and the Americans for studies of the functional relations between religion and the social system. The empirical approach of the 1960s in the United States identified various *dimensions* of religion but tended to overlook collective phenomena. Then the newly found interest in diffuse, popular and unofficial religion has documented the importance of shared values and beliefs, a basis for collective meaning and action (Cipriani, 1988). In this movement a shift is observed away from institutionalized religion. There is a growing awareness that the social significance of religion extends beyond the confines of formal religious organisations. Beckford (1990) concluded his review of thirty-five

years (1945-1989) of the discipline by suggesting that as the social function of religion continue to decline, the social significance of religion, conceptualized in a new form, may be on the increase.

Values and Religion

The scientific study of values initiated by the *European Value Systems Study Group* (EVSSG) in the beginning of the eighties — now extended to a number of non-Western and non-European countries — has opened the way for comparative studies, and in particular, has set the ground for a new conceptualisation of the social significance of religion. In these studies, religion and its related values no longer remain the exclusive domain of the sociology of religion, nor is the latter any longer restricted to the micro-level phenomenological analysis of individual researchers. Religious values are examined alongside and in relation to social and political values, work, leisure and family life for randomly chosen representatives of entire populations. The administration of a standard questionnaire in different countries, made possible through the collaboration of a number of sociologists from different countries and orientations, allows for a re-examination of the secularisation thesis in a cross-national perspective. Then, when the successive waves of the survey will be available the main tenets of the secularisation thesis concerning the *decline* of the significance of religion could also be tested over intervals of time. At this point, with the data at hand we are able to investigate the significance of religious values for a representative sample of individuals in different societies, and how these values relate with other social realities.

Studies on the values of ten Western European countries taken together reported on the occurrence of religion in connection with other social realities. Social and religious options were found to constitute complex network of relations. Inter-related values formed coherent wholes both on the individual and the collective level (Stoetzel, 1983). Allowing a margin for individuals' freedom of choice, it was possible to infer the social and political orientation of respondents from their respective adherence to religious values (Stoetzel, 1983:15, 87, 106; Harding *et al*, 1986:84, 216). Although local conditions and historical development of every country have the greatest influence on people's adherence to religious values and institutions, there emerged a number of sociological constants across Western Europe. Stoetzel discovered that generally Western Europeans tend to be more religious and moral than is often assumed to be the case. Religiosity is found to vary by occupation, place of residence, education and is subject to an age effect. Catholics, however, stand out for their reported higher religious practice and belief and for their

satisfaction with their religion and the moral teachings of the Church. Stoetzel (1983:95) observed that as Catholics are more attached to their religious beliefs they seem to resist change better.

Harding *et al* did not only notice the varied influence of religion among Protestant and Catholic countries in Europe, but also the wide diversity of practice among people nominally affiliated to the same Church. Catholic countries show very diverse patterns of practice and belief and seem to sustain a greater commitment among young people. Observing the continued widespread religious belief and the high personal acceptance of the ten commandments they caution against premature conclusions concerning the state of contemporary religion and the prevalence of Christian values. They point out that any assumed secularisation does not seem to have taken place to the degree suggested by some authors, nor was it found to be homogenous across countries and for all the dimensions of religion (Harding *et al*, 1986:69). In their conclusion, however, Harding *et al* (1986: 224) argued that although the data from the survey at one point in time was not sufficient evidence of social or religious change, the marked age differences over values could not be explained away simply as a life-cycle effect.

The contribution of the values survey to international research stands in its capacity to situate countries, groups of people and individuals on a number of comparable scales. In the initial report for Western European values Stoetzel has already observed that instead of dichotomies there emerged a *continuum* ranging from the religious to the secular, the politically conservative to the liberal. Later, the application of factor analyses to distinct batteries of values extracted a traditional and a post-traditional continuum (Harding *et al*, 1986; Abela, 1991) and a materialist and a post-materialist value orientation (Inglehart, 1990). Such an approach made possible the comparison of religious and social factors and the analyses of variance according to socio-demographic characteristics. The distinct religious dimensions that have been identified for Western Europe were in need of confirmation in country-specific analyses (Harding *et al*, 1986:69).

Religious Values in four Catholic Countries

In what follows we undertake a scientific analysis of the religious values in four Catholic European countries taken together, namely for our respondents from Italy, Spain, France and Malta, in order to establish the social significance of religious value in the upper Mediterranean region. We have seen how in earlier comparative research for ten Western European countries the religious qualities of Catholics were found to differ from those of the Protestants.

Although Stoetzel (1983:91) placed France alongside Belgium and Holland in what he termed *lay religion*, its proper place, judging from the respondents' religious affiliation, the country's geographical position and language, stand with its neighbouring Latin Mediterranean countries: Italy, Spain and Malta.

The separate studies on values in Italy, Spain and Malta have variously reported on religion in their respective countries. Thus Calvaruso et Abbruzzese (1985) distinguished between the declining influence of Church-religiosity, the persistence of a diffused Catholic religion and the new dimensions of belief in Italian society. Orizo (1983) reported on the religious factor in Spain and Abela (1991) investigated the transmission of traditional and post-traditional values and the meanings they assume in religious organisations in Malta. Here we examine the religious values of these four countries whose populations were found to be predominantly of a Catholic matrix, even though they differ with respect to the degree of religious practice and adherence to values and belief.

In their majority (84 percent) our respondents [Table 1] identified themselves as Roman Catholics: 99 percent in Malta, 90 percent in Spain, 93 percent in Italy and 71 percent in France. Few others (2 percent) belonged to another Christian denomination or religion while 13 percent did not identify themselves with any religion. Regular Church attendance, however, was much lower. Apart from social occasions such as baptisms, marriages and funerals, 29 percent went to Church once a week or more often but 35 percent never attended any religious service. The rest went to Church once a month (11 percent), on Christmas or Easter day (7 percent), on other specific holidays (5 percent), once a year (5 percent) or less often (6 percent). The Maltese had the highest weekly Church attendance (90 percent), followed by the Spaniards (41 percent), the Italians (36 percent) and least of all the French (12 percent). Still, independently of whether they went to church or not, 67 percent of our respondents considered themselves religious, 22 percent non-religious and only 6 percent convinced atheists. Again, the highest religious identity was found in Malta (94 percent), followed by Italy (84 percent), Spain (63 percent) and France (51 percent). The French have the highest percentage of convinced atheists (10 percent) but an equal percentage of non-religious as the Spaniards (30 percent). Although the relatively high religious consciousness in Latin Europe is not supported by as frequent an attendance at religious services as required by the Church, 61 percent of our respondents spend some time in prayer and 53 percent claim to derive comfort and strength from religion. Besides, 77 percent believe in God even though their understanding of God varies from a personal Supreme Being (33 percent), some sort of spirit or life force (35 percent), or just do not really know what to think about God (15

percent). Similarly, our respondents score an average of 6.06 on a 10-point scale for the importance of God in their life. All this suggests that religion has a personal if not a social significance for most of our respondents in Latin Europe.

Our respondents are divided on the social importance of religion. For example, when asked about the future importance of religion for people in their country, 17 percent think that religion will be more important, 34 percent that it will be equally important, 37 percent that it will be less important while 12 percent did not now what to say. 55 percent hold that the sharing of religious beliefs between spouses has an importance for the success of a marriage, and 18 percent give a priority to religious faith — from a list of 17 other social values — in the education of their children. People tend to trust the Church more than is often presumed: 23 percent of our respondents expressed great confidence, 32 percent a certain degree of confidence, 23 percent were rather diffident but only 19 percent were completely disaffected. A positive attitude towards the teaching of the Church was observed on spiritual matters (45 percent), the moral problems and needs of the individual (40 percent), but less for its teaching on family life (36 percent).

The EVSSG survey also enquired about a number of post-traditional dimensions of religion. For example, with regard to para-spiritual experiences, 33 percent of our respondents had been in touch with someone from afar, 27 percent to have seen events happening at a distance, 23 percent to have been in touch with a dead person and 11 percent to have felt an uplifting spiritual force, of which 17 percent claimed that such an experience had greatly changed their outlook on life. Generally, our respondents were also found to be concerned about the meaning and purpose in life. Thus, 32 percent often thought about the meaning of life, 23 percent about death, 12 percent often had regrets after doing something wrong while 42 percent never felt that life was meaningless. Only a select few, however, expressed a heroic readiness to sacrifice everything, even to risk their life in order to save another person (21 percent), safeguard freedom (8 percent), peace (6 percent), their country (6 percent), justice (5 percent), religious beliefs or God (4 percent).

Religious Factor

A large-scale factor analysis of all the items on religion from the EVSSG (1981) questionnaire extracted eleven distinct factors [Table 2]. The first factor stands for the traditional religious belief on eschatology, or belief in the last things (F1). It has high factor loadings for belief in hell (.86), the devil (.83), heaven (.80), sin (.64), a soul (.62), life after death (.62) and a lower factor

loading for the non-Christian belief in reincarnation (.55). The second factor stands for a positive attitude toward the teachings of the Church (F2) and has very high loading for the Church teaching on moral problems and the needs of the individual (.95), on problems of family life (.95) and on man's spiritual need (.94). The third, called the religiosity factor (F3) has high loadings for attendance at religious services (.81), belief in God (.73), importance of God in life (.73), Church affiliation (.73), religious identity (.72) and belief in a personal God (.59). The fourth is the spirituality factor (F4) and brings together a number of para-psychological experiences: feeling close to a powerful spiritual life force that seemed to uplift the person out of itself (.81), contact with a person at a distance (.73), seeing events as they were happening at a great distance (.73), feeling in touch with someone who had died (.72), and that such an experience had changed one's outlook on life (.59).

The fifth factor is the option for justice and faith (F5), and displays a person's readiness to sacrifice everything even risking one's life for the post-traditional value of justice (.76), freedom (.74), peace (.73), and to a lesser degree one's religious beliefs, God in particular (.41). The sixth factor consists of the items concerned with the meaning and purpose in life (F6): feeling that life has a meaning (.74), thinking about the meaning and purpose of life (.74), thinking about death (.68) and regret for having done something wrong (.53). Factor seven has to do with everyday implicit religion, or life of the spirit (F7) and has high loadings for deriving comfort and strength from religion (.75) and giving some time to prayer, meditation or some other spiritual exercises (.75). Factor eight displays an uncertain future or incertitude (F8) as it has high loadings for the likelihood of a war in the near future (.64), the declining importance of religion in the future (.56), the belief that in the long run technology harms mankind (.48) and that none of the great religions has any truth to offer (.41). Factor nine (F9) represents patriotism, bravery or altruism as it displays a willingness to fight for one's country in the case of war (.71), a person's readiness to sacrifice everything even risking one's life for one's country (.52) or to save the life of another person (.33).

The last two factors consist of the morality of the Ten Commandments. Factor ten (F10) stands for how the ten commandments apply to oneself: do not have other gods before me (.87), do not take the name of your God in vain (.81), keep the Sabbath holy (.85), honour thy father and mother (.85), do not kill (.87), do not commit adultery (.81), do not steal (.87), do not bear false witness against your neighbour (.87), do not covet thy neighbour's wife (.82), and do not covet thy neighbour's goods (.86). Factor eleven (F11) stands for how the same ten commandments are seen to apply to others.

The eleven factors which have been extracted by factor analysis correspond to the various dimensions of religion. The first three factors, namely belief in eschatology (F1), adherence to the teaching of the Church (F2) and explicit religiosity (F3) have a traditional quality. Then the factors for spiritual experience (F4), the option for justice and faith (F5), concerned with the meaning and purpose in life (F6), everyday implicit religion (F7) and to a certain extent, the observed sense of incertitude about the future (F8) have a marked post-traditional character. The factors for altruism (F9), the relevance of the ten commandments to oneself (F10) and to others (F11) represent the moral dimensions of religion, ranging from a traditional patriotism and a personal adherence to the ten commandments to the evaluation of contemporary behaviour in a post-traditional presumed secular environment.

The traditional and post-traditional dimensions of religion correspond to the movement that has taken place in the Catholic Church over the past few decades. The Second Vatican Council (1963-1965) has initiated a process of renewal in the various dimensions of the Church's religious activity. Alongside the traditional religiosity there arose new expressions of belief, renewed liturgies, new movements of spirituality which encouraged new forms of personal prayer and community-building. Within certain sections of the Church there also emerged a renewed social consciousness for solidarity with the poor, linking religious faith to the promotion of justice and peace.² But what is the social significance of the traditional and post-traditional dimensions of religion in the four Catholic countries under examination? How do the religious dimensions vary by socio-demographic characteristics, and how do they relate to other social values?

Socio-demographic variations

An analysis of variance is applied to establish whether there are any significant differences between the religious values supported by separate groups of our respondents. Table 3 represents the results obtained on a one-way analysis of variance for the mean factor scores of the previously extracted religious factors according to age, social class, sex, education, place of residence and country of our respondents. The mean score for every socio-demographic category can vary from a maximum value of 1 to a

2. Reviewing the state of the Catholic Church 20 years after the Council an Extraordinary Synod of Bishops (Origins, 19 Dec, 1985: 444-450) reaffirmed the teaching of Vatican II on spirituality, evangelisation, ecumenism, the integral relation between justice and faith and the autonomy of secular realities. A correct *aggiornamento* far from secularising the Church was seen as an openness to the world.

minimum value of minus 1, where the mean factor score for all our respondents taken together is zero. Variance from the mean is measured by the F-ratio, which represents the ratio between the mean square between groups and the mean square within groups. Depending of the strength of the F-ratio and its level of significance,³ we are able to accept or reject the null-hypothesis for the association between any of the religious factors and the socio-demographic characteristics under consideration.

The greatest variance is to be observed for the traditional factor of religiosity. Visible and explicit religion varies mostly by country, age, gender and level of education, and to a lower extent by place of residence and social class. Traditional religiosity is highest in Malta (.61) and lowest in France (-.68). The young (-.27) tend to participate less in formal religious activities than their elders (.26). Housewives (.30) but not so much working women are more religious than men (-.20). This suggests that religiosity rather than being gender-specific varies with a person's occupation. And as might be expected the least religious are the higher educated (-.26), those living in urban areas (-.17) and the upper social classes (-.19). Traditional belief and a person's attitude towards the teachings of Church are also a matter of variation by country of origin and age. Again Malta (.85) manifests stronger traditional belief than Spain, Italy or France. However, despite its low traditional religiosity and belief, France (.25), is more favourable to the teachings of the Church than any of the other countries. Whereas the young have the lowest sympathy towards the teaching of the church (-.10), they hold similar levels of traditional belief as their elders (.11). And as might be expected the teaching of the Church is less welcomed in urban areas (-.14) than in rural societies (.05), whereas traditional belief is strongest amongst housewives. No significant difference over traditional belief could be observed by level of education, social class or place of residence.

Differences over the post-traditional factors are less marked than over traditional religion. In particular, the post-traditional religion of everyday life seems to have become a universal and diffused phenomenon. There is no significant difference amongst our respondents' life in the spirit, that is to say with respect to the widespread prayer life, consolation and strength derived from religion. Minor variations, however, are to be observed for the post-traditional factors concerning para-spiritual experiences, the meaning and purpose in life and most significantly over the justice and faith option and a consciousness of insecurity about the future.

3. The level of significance is acceptable at .05 or lower.

Para-spiritual experiences are slightly more frequent for the lower educated (.18), women, and for our Italian (.29) respondents. Except for a slightly higher degree for unemployed women (.10) and the Maltese (.22) concern over the meaning and purpose of life is equally universal.

The option for justice and faith (F5) is significantly higher in Spain (.19) and Malta (.02) than in Italy (-.10) or France (-.25). It is favoured more by men and women who work outside the house, by urban dwellers and most importantly by the higher educated (.16). A sense of insecurity over the future is mostly felt by the advanced in age (.28), the lower social class (.21) and the lower educated (.13), housewives and people living in rural areas. Our respondents from Malta (.30) and Spain (.18) are also more concerned about security than the French (-.17) or the Italians (-.25).

The personal morality of the ten commandments is significantly weakest with suburban dwellers (-.17), men (-.17) and the French (-.25) but strongest with our Maltese respondents (.46). There is no significant difference in the evaluation of how the ten commandments are seen to apply to others, except that the French (.15), and the higher educated (.08) seem to have a more positive appraisal of social morality than the rest of our respondents.

In sum whereas traditional religion differs mostly by country and age and to a certain extent by gender, education and place of residence, post-traditional religion seems to be more universal. Apparently, in the modern society of our four Catholic countries alongside traditional religion there exists a diffused post-traditional and secularised religion that finds expression in a multiplicity of forms ranging from a widespread but implicit life of the spirit, concern over the meaning and purpose of life, the occurrence of para-psychological experiences and the not so common option for justice and faith.

Religion and Social Values

How is religion related to society? Do any of our religious factors have an impact on social and political life? In order to investigate whether the traditional and post-traditional dimensions of religion have any social significance in our four Catholic countries we now examine how the distinct factors of religion relate with a set of social and political values that were included in the EVSSG (1981) survey.

On 10-point left-right political scale our respondents displayed a left political orientation (average of 4.80), 20 percent were politically left, 8 percent politically right and 44 percent identified themselves with the centre. Asked about their basic social attitudes, the majority (70 percent) were of the

opinion that their society must be gradually improved by reforms, some (16 percent) held that it must be valiantly defended against all subversive forces and only a tiny minority (7 percent) were of the opinion that the entire organisation of their society has to be radically changed by revolutionary action. Having to choose between freedom and equality, 45 percent would opt for personal freedom, that is, a situation where everyone can live in freedom and develop without hindrance, whereas 39 percent would prefer a situation of equality where nobody is underprivileged and where the social class differences are not strong. 16 percent, however, were unable to decide for either freedom or equality.

Then in reply to Inglehart's battery of questions concerning the aims of the country for the next ten years, the majority of our respondents gave top priority to the materialist values of maintaining order in the nation (43 percent) and fighting rising prices (26 percent), and only a few chose the post-materialist values giving people more say in important decisions (16 percent) and protecting freedom of speech (12 percent). In sum, our respondents from Latin Europe were generally of a politically left orientation but paradoxically favoured freedom over and above equality. They sought a gradual social reform rather than either a radical change or the upkeep of the status quo. They had a predominantly materialist value orientation. But how do religious factors relate to and influence social and political values?

Table 4 represents the results from the one-way analysis of variance of the mean scores of religious factors in four Latin European countries according to our respondents' political orientation, their priorities for society and their respective social commitment to voluntary work or religious organisations. The greatest variance in social and political values is to be observed for the factor of traditional religiosity. Those who abide by a traditional religiosity were politically more on the right (.38) than on the left (-.57), favoured more the defence of the status quo (.11) than a gradual reform and were contrary to any suggestion of a radical change (-.76). Their top political priority for the near future was the upkeep of social order in their country (.26). At the same time they expressed less concern over people's participation in important government decisions (-.34) or the protection of freedom of speech (-.48).

Generally the politically left were also low on the other factors of traditional religion such as belief in the last things (-.22), adherence to the teachings of the Church (-.22) and to the ten Commandments (-.19). Yet, they were more favourable to the post-traditional religion of justice and faith (.12) and were more positive about social morality (.04) than the politically right (-.14). The quest for a radical social change went contrary to traditional religion

but was favoured by the factors of post-traditional religion such as para-spiritual experiences (.15) and the option for justice and faith (.19). Those who advocated a radical social change, however, were low on personal morality (-.30). By contrast, those who were for the defence of their country against all subversive forces held strong to the ten Commandments (.15).

Generally materialist values were favoured by a traditional religiosity, belief and adherence to the teaching of the Church, but not the post-traditional option for justice and faith. On the contrary, post-materialist values were supported by the factors of post-traditional religion such as the option for justice and faith, para-spiritual experiences, concern with the meaning and purpose in life and a sense of certitude about the future. However, post-materialists were less likely to adhere to the morality of the ten Commandments than materialists.

Significantly both the traditional and post-traditional modalities of religion were found to support membership in a number of organisations, and to generate a plurality of voluntary activity in society. Thus the pluri-dimensionality of religion inspired membership in various types of Church groups but also in other secular organisations which were often accompanied by involvement in voluntary work. As might be expected membership in religious organisations was found to be sustained by a strong traditional religiosity (.56), an adherence to traditional belief (.35) and the morality of the ten Commandments (.28) but a weaker satisfaction with the teaching of the Church (.19). Post-traditional religion, especially the option for justice and faith (.23) and implicit religion (.20) also favoured membership in religious organisations. A social commitment in voluntary work, however, was strongest with our respondents opting for justice and faith (.24) than the traditionally religious (.15) or an implicit religion (.08) and much less with people who cherished para-spiritual experiences (-.12).

Overall, the socio-political orientation of our respondents was found to be related to their religious orientation. The social values commonly associated with the politically right, such as resistance to change and the priority of social order over participation and economic control, correspond to traditional religiosity, adherence to religious belief, the teaching of the Church and the morality of the ten Commandments. By contrast, the social values of change, participation and freedom of speech of the politically left correspond to the post-traditional dimensions of religion, the option for justice and faith, in particular.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis has brought to light the relation that exists between religion and society in four Catholic European countries of the upper-Mediterranean region. A post-secularisation approach to religion enabled us to differentiate between traditional and post-traditional dimensions of religious values and to examine their respective social significance in a secularised world. Thus when religious values from the EVSSG survey were organised into factors we obtained a picture of religion in a secular world. It emerged that in contemporary Latin European society the secular is not exclusive of the religious. Religious values have not only a place alongside social and political values but that the latter were found to vary with the former.

Traditional religiosity was found to vary greatly between countries of the same Catholic faith. Such a finding supports the view that secularisation is not a universal phenomenon and that it depends on the historical and cultural situation of each particular country. By contrast, post-traditional religiosity in a post-secular world was found to be more universal. Yet it assumes a diversity of forms, ranging from the widespread concern with the purpose and meaning of life and implicit everyday religion to the less common para-spiritual experiences, incertitude about the future and an option for justice and faith. It remains to be seen whether the post-traditional dimensions of religion, the option of justice and faith in particular, will, in the long term, contribute towards peace and justice in the world.

Dar Patri M. Magri
Tower Street
Msida MSD 06
Malta

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABELA, Anthony M., *Transmitting Values in European Malta*, (Jesuit Publications, Malta; Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma 1991).
- BECKFORD, James A., *Religion and Advanced Industrial Society*, (Unwin Hyman; London 1989).
- BECKFORD, James A., "The Sociology of Religion 1945-1989", *Social Compass* 37(1990) 45-64.
- CALVARUSO, C. et S. Abbruzzese, *Indagine sui valori in Italia. Dai post-materialismi alla ricerca di senso*, (Società Editrice Internazionale; Torino 1985).
- CIPRIANI, Roberto, *La Religione Diffusa. Teoria e prassi*. (Edizioni Borla; Roma 1988).
- HARDING, Stephen and D. Philips with M. Fogarty, *Contrasting Values in Western Europe. Unity, Diversity and Change*, (Macmillan and EVSSG; London 1986).
- INGLEHART, Ronald, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*, (Princeton University Press; New Jersey 1990).
- MARTIN, David, *A General Theory of Secularisation*, (Basil Blackwell; London 1978).
- ORIZO, Francisco A., *España, Entre La Apatia y el Cambio Social, Una encuesta sobre el sistema europeo de valores: el caso español*, (Editorial Mapfre; Madrid 1983).
- STOETZEL, Jean, *Les valeurs du temps présent: une enquête européenne*, (Presses Universitaires de France; Paris 1983).
- WALLIS, Roy and Steve Bruce, "Religion: The British Contribution", *The British Journal of Sociology* 40(1989) 493-513.
- WILSON, Bryan, *Religion in Secular Society*, (Penguin; Harmondsworth, Middlesex 1966).
- WILSON, Bryan, *Contemporary Transformations of Religion*, (Oxford University Press; London 1976).
- WILSON, Bryan, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, (Oxford University Press; London 1982).
- WILSON, Bryan, "Secularisation the Inherited Model", in P.E. Hammond (ed), *The Sacred in a Secular Age*, (University of California Press; Berkeley 1985).

Tables mentioned in the article

TABLE 1
Religious Values in four Latin European Countries
(percentages)

Religious Values	ALL	France	Italy	Spain	Malta
Roman Catholic	84	71	93	90	99
No Church Affiliation	13	24	6	9	0
Religious Person	67	51	83	63	94
Atheist	6	10	4	4	0
Derive comfort from religion	53	37	63	57	94
Spend time in prayer, etc.	61	44	72	69	90
Importance of God in life: (10 point scale)	6.03	4.72	6.96	6.39	9.58
Attend Church Weekly or more	29	12	36	41	90
Never	35	57	21	25	4
<i>Church teaching adequate on:</i>					
Moral problems	40	42	40	39	70
Family life	36	34	39	34	79
Spiritual needs	45	48	43	45	84
Confidence in the Church	55	54	60	50	83
<i>Religion in the future</i> more/equally important	51	49	57	44	70
<i>Shared religious beliefs</i> very/rather important in marriage:	55	46	53	66	86
Priority of religious faith in child education at home:	18	11	22	22	43
Member of a religious group	8	4	7	15	15
N	5318	1200	1348	2303	467

Source: EVSGG 1981/4

TABLE 2

Large-Scale Factor Analysis of Religious Values
in four Latin European Countries.

%	Belief in:	F1	%	Justice and Faith	F5
26	Hell	.86		<i>Readiness to sacrifice everything, risk life for:</i>	
26	The devil	.83			
38	Heaven	.80	5	Justice	.76
54	Sin	.64	8	Freedom	.74
57	A soul	.62	6	Peace	.73
45	Life after death	.62	4	Religion, God	.41
22	Re-incarnation	.55			
<hr/>			<hr/>		
%	Church Teaching	F2	%	Meaning and Purpose	F6
40	Moral problems and individual needs	.95	42	Never felt that life is meaningless	.74
36	Family life	.95	32	Often think on the meaning of life	.74
45	Spiritual needs	.94	23	Often think about death	.68
			12	Often regret doing wrong	.53
<hr/>			<hr/>		
%	Religiosity	F3	<hr/>		
29	Church Attendance	.81	Implicit Religion: life of the spirit		
77	Belief in God	.73	%	F7	
6.03*	Importance of God*	.73	53	Religion gives comfort and strength	.75
84	Church Affiliation	.73	61	Give time to prayer, meditation, etc.	.75
67	Religious person	.72			
33	Personal God	.59			
<hr/>			<hr/>		
%	Para-Spiritual Experience	F4	%	Uncertain future, incertitude	F8
11	Felt uplifting spiritual force	.81	3.93*	Likelihood of war in the near future	.64
33	Contact person at a distance	.73	37	Religion less important in the future	-.56
27	Seen events happening at a distance	.73			
23	Contact with a dead person	.72	20	Technology harms mankind	.48
17	Experience changed outlook on life	.59	15	No great religion has any truths	.41

* average on a 10-point scale

%	Patriotism, bravery, altruism	F9
39	Readiness to fight for country in war	.71
6	Sacrifice/risk life for country	.52
21	Sacrifice/risk life to save another person	.33

(percent) Apply fully to:			Factors	
SELF	MOST PEOPLE	Commandments	F10	F11
50	18	Do not have other gods before me	.78	.84
48	13	Do not take the name of God in vain	.81	.86
37	12	Keep the Sabbath holy	.85	.89
79	42	Honour thy mother and thy father	.85	.90
87	47	Do not kill	.87	.90
56	19	Do not commit adultery	.81	.88
81	31	Do not steal	.87	.91
73	26	Do not bear false witness against thy neighbour	.87	.91
60	17	Do not covet thy neighbour's wife	.82	.89
66	19	Do not covet thy neighbour's goods	.86	.90

F10 = factor for how the ten commandments apply to oneself; F11 = factor for how the ten commandments apply to most people.

Source: EVSSG (1981/4). N = 5318. .

TABLE 3

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Factor Scores of Religious values by Education, Age, Social class, Sex, place of Residence and Country.

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	N
AGE:												
under 34 years	.11	-.10	-.27	-.01	.01	.07	-.04	-.16	-.01	-.12	.04	2096
35-54 years	.03	.05	.16	.03	.02	-.02	-.01	-.01	.02	.03	-.01	1523
over 55 years	.15	.10	.26	.05	-.04	-.09	.07	.28	-.02	-.10	.08	1260
F ratio	28.56	19.94	149.22	2.28	.96	10.68	5.04	78.35	.78	29.15	5.72	
p	.000	.000	.000	.103	.385	.000	.007	.000	.460	.000	.003	
SOCIAL CLASS:												
upper: AB	-.05	.11	-.19	-.05	.06	.06	.06	-.19	-.03	-.09	.12	807
upper middle: C1	-.04	-.09	.10	.07	.04	.04	.02	-.13	.02	.02	-.01	1518
lower middle: C2	.00	.01	.01	-.05	-.01	-.01	-.04	.08	-.01	-.01	-.01	1558
lower: DE	.01	.03	.01	.01	-.09	-.09	-.01	.21	.02	.04	-.05	1003
F ratio	1.59	8.25	15.35	4.29	4.79	5.12	2.21	37.74	.739	3.15	5.02	
p	.189	.000	.000	.005	.003	.006	.084	.000	.529	.024	.002	
SEX:												
Man	-.12	-.02	-.20	-.07	.05	-.04	-.08	-.11	-.12	-.17	.02	2361
Housewife	.19	.05	.30	.03	-.10	.00	.10	.19	.14	.13	-.03	1510
Non-Housewife	-.05	-.05	-.01	.06	.01	.07	.05	-.04	.11	-.01	.01	976
F ratio	45.35	3.69	121.22	7.80	11.10	4.44	17.40	45.20	38.38	40.86	1.11	
p	.000	.025	.000	.000	.000	.010	.000	.000	.000	.000	.328	
Age left												
SCHOOL:												
under 15 years	.02	-.05	.18	.07	-.07	-.10	-.00	.13	.03	.06	-.06	2389
15-17 years	-.01	.05	-.06	-.06	-.08	.03	-.02	-.05	-.06	-.00	.05	992
over 18 years	-.02	.05	-.26	-.06	.16	.14	.02	-.18	-.00	-.01	.08	1497
F ratio	.86	5.94	94.61	10.28	29.42	25.33	.44	49.09	2.92	12.39	11.12	
p	.420	.000	.003	.000	.000	.000	.645	.000	.050	.000	.000	
PLACE OF RESIDENCE:												
Rural	.00	.05	.13	-.02	-.07	-.07	-.02	.07	.02	.00	.06	2024
Sub-urban	-.03	.07	-.01	.01	.01	.01	-.02	-.04	-.05	-.17	.02	1919
Urban	.03	-.14	-.17	.02	.08	.09	.06	-.05	.03	-.02	.04	1309
F ratio	1.39	22.46	33.29	.641	7.96	8.61	3.24	7.56	3.52	.14	5.49	
p	.249	.000	.000	.527	.000	.000	.039	.001	.030	.872	.000	
COUNTRY:												
France	-.11	.25	-.68	-.03	-.25	-.07	.02	-.17	.01	-.25	.15	1200
Italy	-.15	-.41	.23	.29	-.10	.22	.02	-.25	.05	.16	.04	1348
Spain	.00	.08	.11	.17	.19	-.10	-.06	.18	-.03	.05	.09	2303
Malta	.85	.16	.61	.09	.02	.09	.22	.30	-.06	.46	.02	467
F ratio	119.28	116.25	324.32	61.67	58.28	33.48	9.56	79.76	2.28	75.12	16.62	
p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.077	.000	.000	

Source: EVSGG 1981/4; N = 5318. *Traditional Religion*: F1 = Belief in eschatology; F2 = Church Teachings; F3 = Religiosity; F9 = Patriotism, bravery or altruism; F10 = Personal morality; *Post-traditional Religion*: F4 = Spirituality; F5 = Justice and faith; F6 = Meaning and purpose in life; F7 = Everyday implicit religion, or Life of the Spirit; F8 = Uncertain future, incertitude; F11 = how the ten Commandments are seen to apply to others. NA = Not Applicable/No Answer.

TABLE 4

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Factor Scores of Religious values
in four Latin European Countries.

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	N
Political orientation:												
Left	-.22	-.22	-.57	-.03	.12	.02	.07	-.20	.00	-.19	.04	1037
Centre	.00	.01	.08	-.02	-.03	.07	.01	-.15	-.02	-.03	.10	2325
Right	.43	.08	.38	-.07	-.04	.08	.11	-.09	-.14	.12	-.14	472
NA	.03	-.02	.16	.04	-.02	-.15	-.10	.42	.16	.01	-.23	1479
F ratio	48.30	26.57	167.82	2.17	6.00	15.76	9.59	125.36	5.33	23.34	39.06	
p	.000	.000	.000	.090	.001	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	
Society needs:												
- radical change	-.10	-.28	-.76	.15	.19	.06	.01	-.11	.07	-.30	.02	367
- to be reformed	.00	.04	.06	-.04	-.01	.04	.02	-.05	-.03	.03	.02	3723
- to be defended	.06	.08	.11	.12	-.07	-.01	.08	-.09	-.03	.15	.01	773
F ratio	3.39	19.07	124.9	12.81	8.41	.92	1.25	1.00	1.81	31.05	.02	
p	.034	.000	.000	.000	.000	.399	.286	.367	.164	.000	.977	
Social priority:												
Freedom	.01	.05	-.02	.01	-.01	.06	.04	-.15	-.05	.03	.03	2088
Equality	-.01	-.04	-.01	-.03	-.04	.04	.05	-.09	.00	.03	.04	1907
Neither	.00	.03	-.04	-.01	.20	.09	-.09	.20	.01	-.11	.01	473
F ratio	.33	5.1	.28	.90	10.81	.82	4.51	27.67	1.67	6.25	.22	
p	.718	.006	.752	.405	.000	.441	.011	.000	.188	.002	.802	
Materialist (M)/Post-materialist values (P):												
M) Social Order	.07	.07	.26	-.04	.02	.01	.00	.04	-.05	.12	-.05	2296
M) Price Control	-.03	.01	-.07	.01	-.15	-.05	.01	.05	.00	-.01	.07	186
P) Participation	-.11	-.19	-.34	-.03	.08	.15	.03	-.20	.09	-.18	.07	821
P) Free Speech	-.07	-.01	-.48	.12	.05	.04	.04	-.19	-.01	-.16	.06	511
F ratio	8.69	13.97	138.37	3.73	10.54	7.89	.248	20.53	3.98	28.93	6.75	
p	.000	.000	.000	.011	.000	.000	.863	.000	.008	.000	.000	
Voluntary workers												
of which in	.15	.11	.15	-.12	.24	.08	.07	-.10	-.05	.15	.13	1097
Church Group	.35	.19	.56	-.05	.23	.06	.20	-.20	-.06	.28	.08	515
No Voluntary Work	-.04	-.03	-.04	.02	-.06	-.02	-.02	.03	.01	-.04	.03	4216
F ratio	34.58	16.34	29.25	17.72	79.17	10.34	7.72	14.26	3.37	29.69	24.33	
p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.006	.000	.067	.000	.000	

Source: EVSGG 1981/4; N = 5318. *Traditional Religion*: F1 = Belief in eschatology; F2 = Church Teachings; F3 = Religiosity; F9 = Patriotism, bravery or altruism; F10 = Personal morality; *Post-traditional Religion*: F4 = Spirituality; F5 = Justice and faith; F6 = Meaning and purpose in life; F7 = Everyday implicit religion, or Life of the Spirit; F8 = Uncertain future, incertitude; F11 = how the ten Commandments are seen to apply to others. NA = Not Applicable/No Answer.