| Different from their Elders & Betters: |
| *Age cohort differences in the Irish data of the EVS* |

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The European Values Study is a pan-European project which utilises an omnibus survey focusing especially on values associated with work, religion, lifestyles and other issues. Its most recent data gathering exercise was in 1999, the third of its kind and the first EVS to include former Soviet –bloc countries. Various publications will flow from the data gathered on both an individual and a collective basis in the coming years. This study, however, focuses solely on the EVS data for Ireland from the 1999 study as a stand alone project. Further comparative analysis with previous Irish data will follow but lies outside the scope of the current work.

The 1999 EVS in Ireland had 1012 completed interviews. It was based on a national random sample population, excluding those under eighteen years of age. Post fieldwork weighting of data by sex, age and educational level was done against the 1997 Labour Force Survey population data. The Irish data for the EVS study were gathered by the Economic and Social Research Institute to whom the author is indebted for access for this paper.

The survey instrument, available online at the EVS homepage[1], contains questions on a variety of topics including, but not limited to attitudes to work, family, friends, politics, leisure, religion, environment, trust, poverty, happiness, citizenship, and immigration. In this paper the focus is on the variation in responses across the age cohorts.

The 1012 Irish respondents were composed of 498 males and 514 females (Table 1), 197 of whom have third level education, and 281 of whom have not completed the first cycle of second level education (Table 2).

Table 1 Frequency Table for Respondent's Sex

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Male	498	49.2
Female	514	50.8
Total	1012	100.0

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[1] http://cwis.kub.nl/~fsw_2/evs/info.htm

Table 2 Frequency Table for Respondent's Educational Level in Categories

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Third level	197	19.4
	2nd cycle 2nd level	277	27.4
	1st cycle 2nd level	257	25.4
	None/no formal	281	27.8
	Total	1012	100.0

Table 3 shows the breakdown in ages, with just under 16% of respondents being 24 years of age or less.

Table 3 Frequency Table for Respondent's Age in Categories

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	18 to 24 years	158	15.6
	25 to 34 years	209	20.7
	35 to 44 years	212	21.0
	45 to 64 years	282	27.9
	65 years or more	150	14.8
	Total	1012	100.0

In Table 4 a breakdown is given of these age cohorts by sex and educational levels.

Table 4 Crosstabulation of Age Categories by Educational Level Categories

			CATEDUC				
			Third level	2nd cycle 2nd level	1st cycle 2nd level	None/no formal	Total
Age (Categorized)	18 to 24 years	Count	32	73	50	3	158
		% within Age (Categorized)	20.3%	46.2%	31.6%	1.9%	100.0%
	25 to 34 years	Count	66	72	53	18	209
		% within Age (Categorized)	31.6%	34.4%	25.4%	8.6%	100.0%
	35 to 44 years	Count	47	60	61	45	213
		% within Age (Categorized)	22.1%	28.2%	28.6%	21.1%	100.0%
	45 to 64 years	Count	42	55	71	114	282
		% within Age (Categorized)	14.9%	19.5%	25.2%	40.4%	100.0%
	65 years or more	Count	10	16	22	102	150
		% within Age (Categorized)	6.7%	10.7%	14.7%	68.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	197	276	257	282	1012
		% within Age (Categorized)	19.5%	27.3%	25.4%	27.9%	100.0%

The change in educational level across the age cohorts is clear, with the highest level of education amongst the younger groups. This is particularly evident in the column indicating non-completion of the 1st cycle at second level, a category which involves only 1.9% of the youngest cohort (N=3) but fully 68% of the oldest cohort (N=102). There are clear historical reasons for this, (for example, access to education), but it is evident that Ireland has an increasingly well-educated population. This paper examines this youngest cohort with a particular focus on how different this group is from the older cohorts.

The EVS instrument asked about the respondent's own statement of personal happiness. Table 5 gives a breakdown of the responses by age. There is no significant difference across the age groups (X^2=19.28, n.s.).

Table 5 Crosstabulation of Age by Happiness

					happiness		
			very happy	quite happy	not very happy	not at all happy	Total
Age (Categorized)	18 to 24 years	Count	54	100	4		158
		% within Age (Categorized)	34.2%	63.3%	2.5%		100.0%
	25 to 34 years	Count	91	111	7		209
		% within Age (Categorized)	43.5%	53.1%	3.3%		100.0%
	35 to 44 years	Count	103	102	2	2	209
		% within Age (Categorized)	49.3%	48.8%	1.0%	1.0%	100.0%
	45 to 64 years	Count	120	148	11	3	282
		% within Age (Categorized)	42.6%	52.5%	3.9%	1.1%	100.0%
	65 years or more	Count	57	84	8	1	150
		% within Age (Categorized)	38.0%	56.0%	5.3%	.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	425	545	32	6	1008
		% within Age (Categorized)	42.2%	54.1%	3.2%	.6%	100.0%

In Table 6 details are given of four contrasting areas relating to ways in which respondents spend their time. It is interesting to note that some 340 (36.3%) respondents spend time in church on a weekly basis or more frequently, with a further 91 (9.7%) stating they do so once or twice a month; but 382 (40.8%) say they never spend time in church. It should be noted that these data are in conflict with the responses given for frequency of attendance at church which will be examined later when discussing Table 13.

Table 6 Time spent in various situations

		Frequency of Time Spent with:		
	Friends	Colleagues	Church	Clubs & Organizations
na	5	12	12	8
	.5%	1.5%	1.3%	.9%
every week	732	213	328	265
	7.2%	25.2%	35.0%	28.7%
once twice a month	207	225	91	188
	20.5%	26.6%	9.7%	20.3%
few times a year	52	171	122	147
	5.1%	20.2%	13.0%	15.9%
not at all	16	218	382	315
	1.5%	25.8%	40.8%	34.1%
Total	1012	844	937	924

In Table 7, the data for time spent in church are examined in detail by age cohort. Here the percentages for never attending are at their highest for the youngest age cohort at 55.9%, closely followed by the 25-34 year olds at 54.8&%, figures which contrast strongly with the oldest age group at only 20.1%. Statistical tests suggest that these variables are not independent (X^2=147.19, p <.001.) and modestly negatively associated (Kruskall's γ = -0.365, p <.001). The younger the age group,

the lower the frequency of spending time in church. Again, the caveat of contradiction with other internal evidence should be noted.

Table 7 Crosstabulation of Time Spent in Church by Age

		spend time in church					
	na	dk	every week	once twice a month	few times a year	not at all	Total
18 to 24 years	1	2	14	22	24	80	143
	.7%	1.4%	9.8%	15.4%	16.8%	55.9%	100.0%
25 to 34 years	2		34	17	31	102	186
	1.1%		18.3%	9.1%	16.7%	54.8%	100.0%
35 to 44 years	1		71	15	33	80	200
	.5%		35.5%	7.5%	16.5%	40.0%	100.0%
45 to 64 years	6		120	26	25	91	268
	2.2%		44.8%	9.7%	9.3%	34.0%	100.0%
65 years or more	2		88	11	10	28	139
	1.4%		63.3%	7.9%	7.2%	20.1%	100.0%
Total	12	2	327	91	123	381	936
	1.3%	.2%	34.9%	9.7%	13.1%	40.7%	100.0%

The survey also sought to ascertain attitudes to various social realities such as the type of neighbours one might like, poverty and immigration as well as looking at religious and spiritual values. It is to these social data that this paper now turns.

The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they would regard persons from specified groups as undesirable neighbours. In Table 8, summary data are given for the percentage of respondents objecting to named groups. The term 'Travellers/Itinerants' is used only in the Irish questionnaire and the result at 50% contrasts strongly with Gypsies at 25%.

Table 8 Percentage of Respondents listing named Groups

Drug Addicts	66%	Emotionally Unstable People	25%
People with a criminal record	56%	People with AIDS	23%
Itinerants/Travellers	50%	Muslims	14%
Heavy Drinkers	36%	Immigrants	12%
Left Wing Extremists	33%	People of a Different Race	12%
Right Wing Extremists	32%	Jews	11%
Homosexuals	27%	Large Families	9%
Gypsies	25%		

Table 9 gives summary data for the total number of unwanted mentions by age. Statistical tests suggest that these variables are not independent (X^2=127.65, p <.001) and weakly associated (Kruskall's γ = 0.187, p <.001). Worthy of note is that 50.1% of the youngest cohort mentions 3 or more categories of unwanted neighbours compared to only 36% of the middle group and 27.1% of the oldest group. Whether this indicates a decreasing level of tolerance in Ireland or is a measure of the relationship between tolerance and age is impossible to say without comparison with data from the previous EVS data sets.

Table 9 Crosstabulation of Total Unwanted Neighbour Mentions by Age

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total
18 to 24 years	16	30	30	26	19	9	7	11	2			3			2	4	159
	10.1%	18.9%	18.9%	16.4%	11.9%	5.7%	4.4%	6.9%	1.3%			1.9%			1.3%	2.5%	100.0%
25 to 34 years	20	34	32	28	29	15	23	9	5	5	5	1		2	1	1	210
	9.5%	16.2%	15.2%	13.3%	13.8%	7.1%	11.0%	4.3%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	.5%		1.0%	.5%	.5%	100.0%
35 to 44 years	25	16	34	26	31	21	14	12	10	6	4	1	3	1	2	2	208
	12.0%	7.7%	16.3%	12.5%	14.9%	10.1%	6.7%	5.8%	4.8%	2.9%	1.9%	.5%	1.4%	.5%	1.0%	1.0%	100.0%
45 to 64 years	26	28	25	37	32	26	23	26	10	16	10	5		3	4	8	279
	9.3%	10.0%	9.0%	13.3%	11.5%	9.3%	8.2%	9.3%	3.6%	5.7%	3.6%	1.8%		1.1%	1.4%	2.9%	100.0%
65 years or more	6	16	18	19	13	11	10	9	11	8	4	5	6	7	1	4	148
	4.1%	10.8%	12.2%	12.8%	8.8%	7.4%	6.8%	6.1%	7.4%	5.4%	2.7%	3.4%	4.1%	4.7%	.7%	2.7%	100.0%
Total	93	124	139	136	124	82	77	67	38	35	23	15	9	13	10	19	1004
	9.3%	12.4%	13.8%	13.5%	12.4%	8.2%	7.7%	6.7%	3.8%	3.5%	2.3%	1.5%	.9%	1.3%	1.0%	1.9%	100.0%

One question asked respondents to identify the reason for people being in need. Table 10 summaries the responses based on the different age cohorts with respondents stating the primary reason, in their opinion, for people living in need. Note the strong contrasts on age between those who choose 'injustice in society' and those choosing 'laziness or lack of will power.' In the former, only 16.1% of younger people contrasted with 35.2% of the oldest group, whereas in the latter the situation is reversed with w8.1% of the youngest group compared to 26.2% of the oldest group. Cramer's V at .119 was significant, p <.001, indicating a weak level of association between the variables.

Table 10 Crosstabulation of Age by (First stated) Reasons for People in Need

	living in need first					
	unlucky	laziness or lack of willpower	injustice in society	part modern progress	none of these	Total
18 to 24 years	30	25	59	27	14	155
	19.4%	16.1%	38.1%	17.4%	9.0%	100.0%
25 to 34 years	41	37	66	49	10	203
	20.2%	18.2%	32.5%	24.1%	4.9%	100.0%
35 to 44 years	50	41	58	51	6	206
	24.3%	19.9%	28.2%	24.8%	2.9%	100.0%
45 to 64 years	68	56	100	46	5	275
	24.7%	20.4%	36.4%	16.7%	1.8%	100.0%
65 years or more	39	51	38	15	2	145
	26.9%	35.2%	26.2%	10.3%	1.4%	100.0%
Total	228	210	321	188	37	984
	23.2%	21.3%	32.6%	19.1%	3.8%	100.0%

Respondents were also asked about their beliefs concerning the favouring of native Irish over immigrants in relation to employment opportunities. The summary data are given in Table 11. Again there is a different based on age with 65.2% of the youngest cohort willing to give priority to native Irish but increasing linearly to 87.2% of the oldest cohort.

Table 11 Crosstabulation of Age by Giving Irish Priority in Employment

	giving Irish employment priority			
	agree	disagree	neither	Total
18 to 24 years	103	44	11	158
	65.2%	27.8%	7.0%	100.0%
25 to 34 years	138	53	11	202
	68.3%	26.2%	5.4%	100.0%
35 to 44 years	159	40	12	211
	75.4%	19.0%	5.7%	100.0%
45 to 64 years	206	54	17	277
	74.4%	19.5%	6.1%	100.0%
65 years or more	129	15	4	148
	87.2%	10.1%	2.7%	100.0%
Total	735	206	55	996
	73.8%	20.7%	5.5%	100.0%

Turning to questions of religious practice and values, the survey also sought to ascertain such items as religious identification, church practice, the importance of ritual, attitudes to/belief in God, and frequency of prayer. The summary data for religious identification are given in Table 12. Interestingly, the greatest number of respondents identifying themselves as not belonging to a religious denomination is in the 25-34 years group at 14.4%; in addition the highest percentage of persons identifying themselves as non-denominational now but formerly denominational also belongs to this group, 41% (n=23).

Table 12 Summary data for Identification of Belonging to Religious Denomination, currently or formerly

	belong to religious denomination		Formerly
	yes	no	YES
18 to 24 years	141	17	11
	89.2%	10.8%	
25 to 34 years	179	30	23
	85.6%	14.4%	
35 to 44 years	193	19	7
	91.0%	9.0%	
45 to 64 years	267	15	12
	94.7%	5.3%	
65 years or more	145	5	3
	96.7%	3.3%	
Total	925	86	56
	91.5%	8.5%	

Respondents were also asked to identify their frequency of attendance at religious services. The attendance data crosstabulated with age are given in Table 13. Some 22.8% of the youngest cohort attend weekly or more frequently compared to 85.9% of the oldest cohort. On the other end of the scale 31% of the youngest cohort attend once a year of less compared to only 8.7% of the oldest cohort. Statistical

tests suggest that these variables are not independent (X^2=316.98, p <.001) and moderately negatively associated (Kruskall's γ = -0.491, p <.001). These data are in conflict with the data seen in Table 6, where 40.8% of respondents answered that they spent no time in church; in Table 13 it is clear that 40.8% attend church less than once a week, with only 9.4% specifying "never" or "practically never".

Table 13 Crosstabulation of Age by Frequency of Attendance at Religious Services

	more than once a week	once a week	once a month	christmas / easter day	other spec holy days	once a year	less often	never, pract never	Total
				attend rel services					
18 to 24 years	3	33	41	30	2	16	9	24	158
	1.9%	20.9%	25.9%	19.0%	1.3%	10.1%	5.7%	15.2%	100.0%
25 to 34 years	8	71	28	32	7	20	15	27	208
	3.8%	34.1%	13.5%	15.4%	3.4%	9.6%	7.2%	13.0%	100.0%
35 to 44 years	14	115	16	34	3	5	4	21	212
	6.6%	54.2%	7.5%	16.0%	1.4%	2.4%	1.9%	9.9%	100.0%
45 to 64 years	57	166	16	10	5	6	1	18	279
	20.4%	59.5%	5.7%	3.6%	1.8%	2.2%	.4%	6.5%	100.0%
65 years or more	54	74	7		1	2	6	5	149
	36.2%	49.7%	4.7%		.7%	1.3%	4.0%	3.4%	100.0%
Total	136	459	108	106	18	49	35	95	1006
	13.5%	45.6%	10.7%	10.5%	1.8%	4.9%	3.5%	9.4%	100.0%

Significantly, despite the wide variation in church attendance, respondents in the different age cohorts answered without much differentiation when asked about the importance of religious rituals at the time of birth, marriage and death, with total numbers of 'yes' in the range of 88.2% to 99.3% as seen in Table 14.

Table 14 Summary data for Yes responses to Importance of Religious Ritual for Birth, Marriage and Death.

	Yes		
	Birth	Marriage	Death
18 to 24 years	137	146	153
	88.40%	94.20%	99.35%
25 to 34 years	180	181	195
	88.20%	87.40%	93.30%
35 to 44 years	189	190	198
	89.20%	90.00%	93.83%
45 to 64 years	256	259	268
	93.10%	94.20%	96.05%
65 years or more	145	147	149
	97.30%	98.70%	99.33%
Total	907	923	963
	91.20%	92.60%	96.01%

When asked 'are you a religious person?' the respondents' answers are somewhat different from those given for attendance at religious services, as seen in Table 15. Almost 35% of the youngest cohort identify themselves as not religious compared to about 12% of the oldest group.

Table 15 Crosstabulation for Age by Identification of Self as Religious

	are you religious person		
	religious person	not religious person	convinced atheist
18 to 24 years	97	53	2
	63.8%	34.9%	1.3%
25 to 34 years	131	60	7
	66.2%	30.3%	3.5%
35 to 44 years	146	54	7
	70.5%	26.1%	3.4%
45 to 64 years	218	54	1
	79.9%	19.8%	.4%
65 years or more	129	18	
	87.8%	12.2%	
Total	721	239	17
	73.8%	24.5%	1.7%

When asked about specific elements of belief, interesting patterns emerge, as indicated in Table 16. While 95.8% of all respondents believe in God, only 79.8% believe in life after death, but 85.6% believe in heaven. Belief in sin is quite high at 86.1% but belief in hell is only 53.6%. Generally speaking there is an age-related trend for the traditional beliefs with higher levels of belief in the older cohorts; the opposite holds true for belief in reincarnation and telepathy.

Table 16 Summary data for Yes responses to Belief Items by Age

	Yes Responses for Elements of Belief						
	belief in God	belief in life after death	belief in hell	belief in heaven	belief in sin	belief in telepathy	belief in reincarnation
18 to 24 years	146	99	63	123	119	64	37
	94.80%	70.70%	42.60%	83.10%	83.20%	50.40%	28.20%
25 to 34 years	186	127	92	139	160	77	44
	92.50%	70.20%	51.40%	75.10%	82.50%	44.80%	26.20%
35 to 44 years	197	133	77	153	162	59	45
	93.80%	80.10%	44.50%	83.20%	86.20%	36.90%	24.90%
45 to 64 years	271	208	143	228	230	96	59
	98.20%	85.60%	60.30%	90.80%	87.80%	45.90%	25.30%
65 years or more	149	129	91	137	131	27	15
	99.30%	90.80%	68.40%	95.80%	90.30%	23.90%	10.90%
Total	949	696	466	780	802	323	200
	95.80%	79.80%	53.60%	85.60%	86.10%	41.40%	23.50%

Respondents were asked of the importance of God in their lives on a scale of 1 – 10, from "not at all important" to "very important". The summary data are given in Table 17. Once again, age is an important factor. In the youngest cohort, those responding on a scale of 8 – 10 represent 21.7%, a figure which rises linearly through the age cohort to 89.9% in the oldest age group, a moderate level of association (Kruskall's γ = -0.435, p <.001).

Table 17 Crosstabulation of Age by Importance of God in Life

	importance of God in life										
	not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	very	Total
18 to 24 years	12	3	9	10	36	27	26	7	11	16	157
	7.6%	1.9%	5.7%	6.4%	22.9%	17.2%	16.6%	4.5%	7.0%	10.2%	100.0%
25 to 34 years	15	3	14	13	27	25	25	26	11	47	207
	7.2%	1.4%	6.8%	6.3%	13.0%	12.1%	12.1%	12.6%	5.3%	22.7%	100.0%
35 to 44 years	7	7	8	16	20	13	26	29	19	68	213
	3.3%	3.3%	3.8%	7.5%	9.4%	6.1%	12.2%	13.6%	8.9%	31.9%	100.0%
45 to 64 years	4	2	5	8	15	19	27	42	28	131	281
	1.4%	.7%	1.8%	2.8%	5.3%	6.8%	9.6%	14.9%	10.0%	46.6%	100.0%
65 years or more	1	1	1	1	3	3	5	20	11	104	150
	.7%	.7%	.7%	.7%	2.0%	2.0%	3.3%	13.3%	7.3%	69.3%	100.0%
Total	39	16	37	48	101	87	109	124	80	366	1008
	3.9%	1.6%	3.7%	4.8%	10.0%	8.6%	10.8%	12.3%	7.9%	36.3%	100.0%

A subsequent question asked about the frequency of prayer in the respondent's life. The summary data are given in Table 18 and is strongly associated with the importance of God in the previous question (Pearson's r= -.649, bearing in mind the reverse coding of the prayer question). Again a moderate level of association is found (Kruskall's γ = 0.449, p <.001).

Table 18 Crosstabulation of Age by Frequency of Prayer

	frequency of prayer							
	every day	more than once week	once a week	at least once a month	several times a year	less often	never	Total
18 to 24 years	33	24	20	20	7	28	25	159
	20.8%	15.1%	12.6%	12.6%	4.4%	17.6%	15.7%	100.0%
25 to 34 years	58	27	23	23	24	19	33	208
	27.9%	13.0%	11.1%	11.1%	11.5%	9.1%	15.9%	100.0%
35 to 44 years	81	42	23	18	15	15	17	213
	38.0%	19.7%	10.8%	8.5%	7.0%	7.0%	8.0%	100.0%
45 to 64 years	171	47	18	13	7	11	13	280
	61.1%	16.8%	6.4%	4.6%	2.5%	3.9%	4.6%	100.0%
65 years or more	121	16	6	2	1	2	2	150
	80.7%	10.7%	4.0%	1.3%	.7%	1.3%	1.3%	100.0%
Total	464	156	90	76	54	75	90	1010
	45.9%	15.4%	8.9%	7.5%	5.3%	7.4%	8.9%	100.0%

The survey used a series of item statements measured along a common scale. Respondents were asked to rate a series of actions on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 meant the action could never be justified and 10 meant the action could always be justified, with a complete range of possibilities between the two limits. Means and standard deviations are given in Table 19. Divorce and homosexuality are seen as the most justified (the highest means but also the highest standard deviations) and joyriding as the least justified (smallest mean and smallest standard deviation).

Table 19 Means and Standard Deviations for Justification Item Statements

	N Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation
claim state benefits	990	1.89	1.66
cheating on tax	991	2.34	2.09
joyriding	994	1.12	.74
taking soft drugs	992	1.94	1.87
lying	987	2.31	1.86
adultery	980	1.82	1.63
accepting a bribe	988	1.46	1.27
homosexuality	931	4.27	3.17
abortion	976	2.83	2.43
divorce	964	4.76	2.90
euthanasia	933	3.23	2.80
suicide	941	2.05	1.91
throwing away litter	994	1.83	1.59
driving under influence of alcohol	994	1.42	1.19
paying cash	980	2.90	2.36
having casual sex	966	2.66	2.35
smoking in public places	983	3.35	2.58
speeding over limit	994	1.90	1.66
sex under legal age of consent	984	1.47	1.37
prostitution	960	2.54	2.18
experiments human embryos	937	1.89	1.78
manipulation food	918	2.01	1.82

Focusing on one significant issue in the Irish context, that of suicide, it is interesting to examine the data on the basis of both age and gender. Figure 1 represents the answers in graph format.

Figure 1 Bar chart of Justification of Suicide by Age by Gender
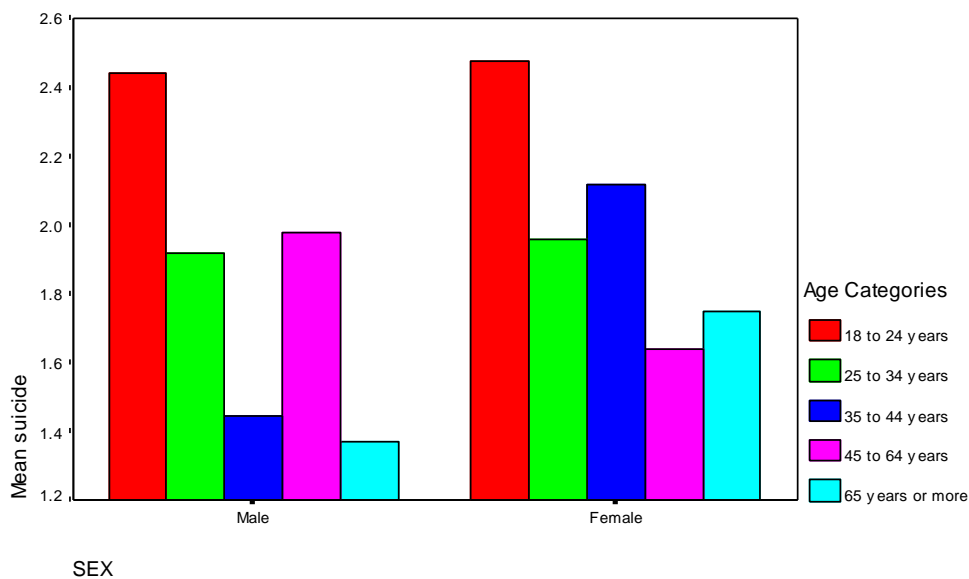
Table 20 looks at the precise range of responses to the suicide justification question for the 18-25 year olds. There is a significant difference between males and females at the 'never justified' level with 43.2% of males compared to 60.9% of females.

Table 20 Crosstabulation of Sex by Justification of Suicide for 18-25 year olds

	suicide								
	never	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	always
Male	32	11	11		13		5	2	
	43.2%	15%	15%		18%		7%	2.7%	
Female	42	7		3	7	7	2		1
	60.9%	10%		4.3%	10%	10%	3%		1.4%
Total	74	18	11	3	20	7	7	2	1
	51.7%	13%	7.7%	2.1%	14%	4.9%	5%	1.4%	.7%

Turning to practical application of values, the survey asks respondents, inter alia, about various targets for the creation of a just society, levels of importance of care for named groups, and willingness to engage in practical expressions of help for specific target groups. The data for the responses are given below in graphic form. In Figure 2 the summary data for three questions are shown. Respondents were asked to state how important it was to engage in each of three social targets: the elimination of inequalities, the provision of basic needs for all, and the recognition of people on the basis of their merits. The scale used was 1 – 5, with 1 meaning "not at all important" and 5 meaning "very important". The upward trend in importance based on age can be seen. The basic needs item is not statistically different across the age cohorts. The summary Anova data are seen in Table 21.
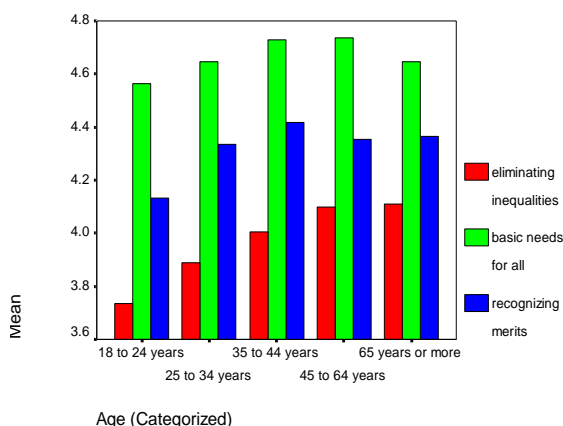
Figure 2 Clustered Bar chart of Age by Social Targets

Table 21 Summary ANOVA data for Social Targets

	F	Sig.
eliminating inequalities	3.789	.005
basic needs for all	2.150	.073
recognizing merits	2.776	.026

Figure 3 and Table 22 show the corresponding results for a series of 'concern' items, scored in the opposite direction, such that lower scores indicate higher

levels of concern. The differences between the groups are least in terms of concern expressed for immigrants, and such concern is the lowest of all.

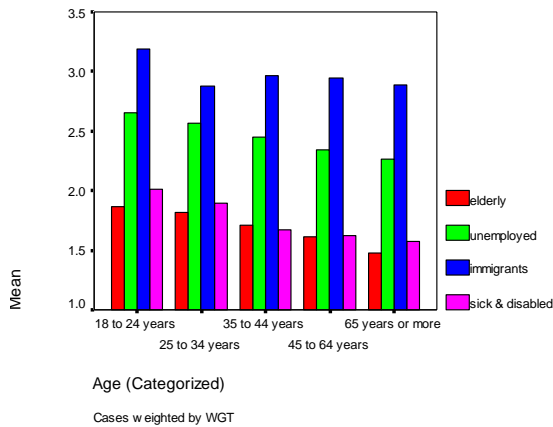**Figure 3 Clustered Bar chart of Age by Concern Items**

Mean

Age (Categorized)

Cases weighted by WGT

legend: elderly, unemployed, immigrants, sick & disabled

Table 22 Summary ANOVA data for Concern Items

	F	Sig.
concerned with elderly	4.297	.002
concerned with unemployed	3.932	.004
concerned with immigrants	2.467	.043
concerned with sick and disabled	8.295	.000

The same questions were also asked in relation to other groups. Similar summary data are given Figure 4 and Table 23. In these variables, it is the level of concern for Europeans alone that exhibits differences within the age cohorts, with the youngest group being significantly different from the two oldest groups. On all other variables there were no significant differences across the age groups.

Figure 4 Clustered Bar chart of Age by Concern Items 2

Mean

Age (Categorized)

legend: family, neighbourhood, region, fellow Irish, Europeans, Humankind
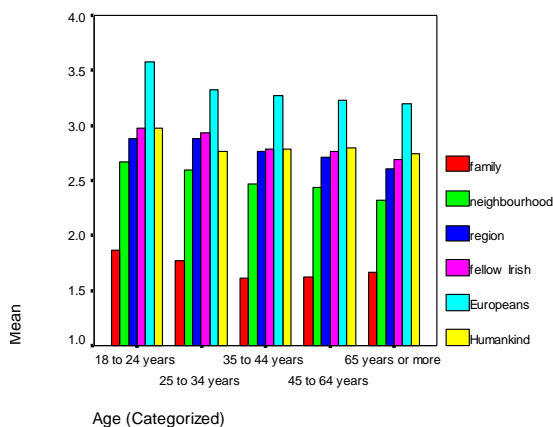
Table 23 Summary ANOVA data for Concern Items 2

	F	Sig.
family	1.048	.381
neighbourhood	1.864	.115
region	1.855	.116
fellow Irish	1.981	.095
Europeans	3.198	.013
Humankind	1.272	.279

Finally, in this section, respondents were asked about their willingness to give practical expression to their concerns by way of a measure of 'willingness to help' scored with a scale where 1 means absolutely yes and 5 absolutely no. Summary data are given Figure 5 and Table 24. There is no disagreement within the age cohorts in respect of immigrants; the data here are closest to the mid-point choice of 'maybe yes, maybe no'. Interestingly, the oldest age cohort is least willing to

help immediate family members. The two youngest age groups have the lowest willingness to help the sick and disabled.

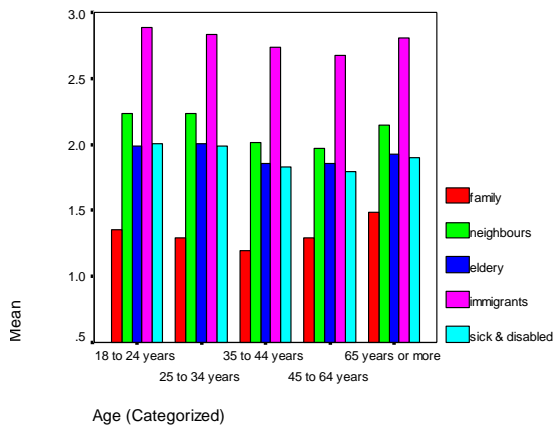**Figure 5 Clustered Bar chart of Age by Help Items**

Table 24 Summary ANOVA data for Help Items

	F	Sig.
help immediate family	5.740	.000
help people neighbourhood	5.233	.000
help eldery	2.070	.083
help immigrants	1.813	.124
help sick and disabled	2.932	.020

From all of the foregoing data it is possible to construct a series of indices which serve as useful summaries for specific trends in the data. There are four such indices.

- A "Liberal" index was created by adding the 'moral act justification' variables together excluding the suicide item. There were 21 items in the index with an alpha of 0.85;
- A "Religiosity" was created by summing the 'yes/no' religious variables together. There were 12 items in the index with an alpha of 0.82;
- A "God" index was computed by adding the 'frequency of practice', 'frequency of prayer' and 'sense of God' variables together. The nature of the three variables suggests a 'God' dimension and had an alpha of 0.78; and, last of all,
- A "Care" index was created by adding the 'concern about' variables together. The nature of the 10 variables suggests a 'Care of Others' dimension and had an alpha of 0.90.

Figures 6 and 7 show the four indices with raw age scores and categorized age cohorts respectively. It should be noted that the direction of the concern items has been reversed for this index such that a high score now means greater concern.
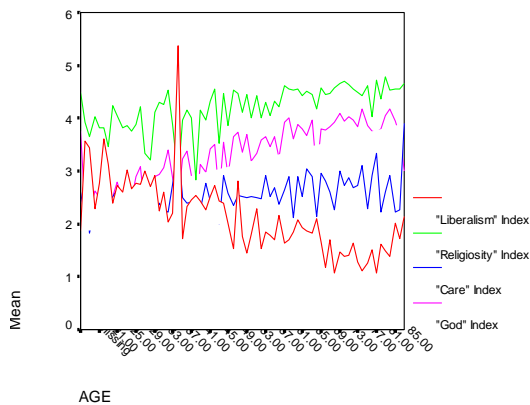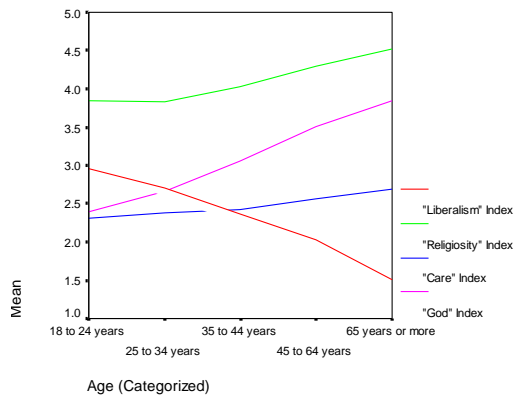
Figure 6 Indices with raw age scores

Figure 7 Indices with categorized age

The trends are indicated more obviously in Figure 7 but Figure 6 is a good indicator of the variability within the data. Looking at Figure 7 it is clear that the older cohorts have higher scores on the Care, Religiosity, and God indices and lower scores on the Liberalism index. It should be noted that the level of variation across the age cohorts is greater in the Liberalism and God indices and much less in the others two, Religiosity and Care.

The inter-index correlations in Table 25 indicate a not-unexpected set of results. The Liberalism index is significantly negatively correlated with the Religiosity, Care and God indices. The latter three are significantly correlated with each other, with the correlation between the God index and the Religiosity index being the strongest.

Table 25 Inter Index Correlation Matrix

		"Liberalism" Index	"Religiosity" Index	"Care" Index	"God" Index
"Liberalism" Index	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.356*¹	-.144*¹	-.457*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	813	542	790	810
"Religiosity" Index	Pearson Correlation	-.356*¹	1.000	.174*¹	.762*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	542	607	586	606
"Care" Index	Pearson Correlation	-.144*¹	.174*¹	1.000	.183*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	790	586	973	965
"God" Index	Pearson Correlation	-.457*¹	.762*¹	.183*¹	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	810	606	965	1003

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Taking the correlation analysis a step further, Table 26 represents a correlation comparison of the four index variables with two variables already examined above, viz., respondents' perceptions of personal happiness and of justification for suicide. It should again be noted that the suicide justification variable has been omitted from the Liberalism index to facilitate this analysis. Likewise it should be

noted that the happiness variable has been recoded so that the higher the score, the higher the measure of happiness.

Table 26 Reduced correlation matrix for Indices with Happiness and Suicide Justification

	happiness	suicide
"Liberalism" Index	-.049	.519*
	.159	.000
	811	813
"Religiosity" Index	.040	-.104*
	.323	.012
	605	587
"Care" Index	.093*	-.006
	.004	.863
	968	908
"God" Index	.132*	-.184*
	.000	.000
	997	933

From the table it is evident that the justification of suicide variable is moderately associated with the Liberalism index and very weakly associated with the Religiosity and God indices. Similarly, the happiness variable is very weakly associated with the God and Care indices. Examining these data for the 18-25 year old group alone, a different picture emerges as seen in Table 27. Here none of the indices are correlated with happiness. On the other hand the justification of suicide variable remains moderately associated with the Liberalism index and weakly negatively associated with the God index.

Table 27 Reduced correlation matrix for Indices with Happiness and Suicide Justification, 18-25 year old Respondents only

	happiness	suicide
"Liberalism" Index	-.029	.514
	.743	.000
	131	131
"Religiosity" Index	-.004	-.015
	.973	.890
	93	87
"Care" Index	.099	-.042
	.222	.620
	155	144
"God" Index	.043	-.212
	.595	.010
	157	144

The foregoing tables and charts are a brief introductory review of the Irish data of the European Values Study. In some respects many more questions are raised than answered. From the evidence presented it is quite clear that there are significant differences between the age cohorts on social and religious values, sometimes to a very marked degree. It is not clear, however, whether such changes represent a real alteration over time or simply a generational difference. From anecdotal

evidence it would seem reasonable to suspect the former rather than the latter. Other surveys, for example, indicate a clear decline over time in church attendance, something also evident in this survey in terms of generational difference.

Further research is both possible and desirable. It would be a logical next step to evaluate all of the foregoing material in the light of the two earlier EVS datasets for Ireland. Such material has already been made available to the author, courtesy of the ESRI, and the analysis has already commenced but is outside of the scope of this paper.

More importantly, the data to hand suggest a variety of important social questions which cannot be answered from within the data alone. If religious and social values and attitudes are changing, as strongly suggested here and elsewhere, then what are the implications for Irish society? As we become an increasingly educated society in quantifiable terms, what is happening to our value and belief systems? As those values, attitudes and beliefs change, how will such change be reflected in society? Does the erosion of church practice mean the erosion of religious values or are we simply witnessing transference of allegiance from institutions to self? What about issues like care for others, concern for those in poverty, and the challenge of immigration? The data seem to suggest that such care and concern is decreasing. If so, how will this be remedied such that those in need of care or protection are provided with it? Or is such provision itself under threat?

Is it incontrovertible that Ireland will be different in the future, that the social map will have very different contours, especially in relation to institutional religion. Perhaps we should now be engaged in a formal public debate as to the nature of Ireland in the future. As we let go of things deeply rooted in Irish society, are the prophets of doom correct in foreseeing a complete erosion of values and a descent into mayhem? Or are we simply becoming a mature nation amongst the nations of Europe, whose value and belief systems will simply be more homogenous with our neighbours, who have not fallen apart at the seams?

If we choose the latter model, perhaps we might be a little cautious about the future, based on the final two tables relating to justification of suicide, happiness and the various indices created in this analysis. It seems entirely reasonable to suggest that reduction of care and concern for others, a reduced sense of God, and a minimised approach to things religious, allied with a rise in liberalism, are not of themselves harbingers of prosperity and joy for society; the opposite, in fact, seems true, that such a combination results in decreased happiness and increased alienation. As a society how are we to manage change without doing violence to ourselves or others? What price will be paid, and by whom, for our transformation into something different?