

The Gozitans by numbers

MaltaToday's surveys assessed Gozitan perceptions on corruption, moral values and environmental issues. Compiled by JAMES DEBONO

Surveys conducted by MaltaToday show that while Gozitans are steadfast in their Catholic faith, some of them tend to be less moralistic when exchanging votes for favours. Significantly, most Gozitans seem to have lost their awe for mega development projects. These were the major conclusions of two MaltaToday surveys conducted among 300 Gozitan respondents in 2006 and 2007.

PATRONAGE IN A SMALL ISLAND

GOZITANS tend to believe that corruption is more widespread in Malta as a whole than in Gozo in particular. While 39% think

that corruption is widespread in Gozo, 59% think that corruption is widespread in the country as a whole.

Gozitans also tend to believe that there is less corruption in the country than the rest of the population. While only 0.7% of Maltese say there is no corruption in the country, this opinion was expressed by 8% of Gozitans.

10% of Gozitans also think that there is no corruption in Gozo. But the impression that Gozo is less corrupt than Malta contrasts with the fact that 12% of Gozitans openly ad-

mit receiving favours in exchange for votes. Only 2.7% of respondents in the country a whole admitted exchanging their vote for favours.

The survey indicates that Maltese a Gozitans perceive corruption differently. Small island inhabitants all over the world tend to rely on patronage networks to get access to resources. Behaviour which tantamount to corruption in larger communities could be seen as a way of life in smaller communities.

How widespread is corruption in Gozo? (%) (Gozitan respondents)

Very widespread	39.3
There is some corruption	45.7
There is no corruption	10
Don't know	5

How widespread is corruption in the whole country? (%)

	Gozitans	All Maltese
Very widespread	58.7	63.3
There is some corruption	28.7	26.7
There is no corruption	7.6	0.7
Don't know	5	9.3

(Survey among Gozitans held in July 2007, survey among Maltese held in June 2007)

Have you ever received a favour in exchange of your vote? (%)

	Gozitans	All Maltese
Yes	11.7	2.7
No	85.7	96.7
No reply	2.7	0.7

(Survey among Gozitans held in July 2007, survey among Maltese held in June 2007)



CONSERVATIVE BULWARK

BENEDICT XVI would feel very much at home in Gozo. Unscathed by the winds of moral relativism blowing across the European continent, Gozo emerges as a nation of churchgoers, where divorce and gay marriages are still considered as anathema. While

nearly half of Maltese respondents had expressed themselves for the introduction of divorce in February, only 25% of Gozitans agree. But Gozitans under the age of 34 tend to be more liberal with the percentage favouring divorce rising to 36%.

Do you agree with the introduction of divorce? (%)

	All Gozitans	Gozitans under 34	Maltese
Yes	27	36.2	49.6
No	71.9	62.1	50.4
Don't know	1.1	1.7	

(Survey among Gozitans held in July 2007, survey among Maltese held in January 2007)

Do you agree with same-sex marriages?

	All Gozitans	Gozitans under 34	Maltese
Yes	9.4	31.6	29.2
No	87.6	77.2	68.1
Don't know	3	3.5	2.7

(Survey among Gozitans held in July 2007, survey among Maltese held in June 2007)



DEFENDING THE CRIB

BACK in the 1990s, when the boom was in full swing, Gozitans expressed little sympathy for Maltese environmentalists, who were derided for wanting to preserve Gozo as a "presepu" (crib).

MEPA's 1999 Public Attitudes Survey exposed the pro-development bias prevailing among Gozitans at that time. While in the whole of Malta 72% disagreed with the statement: "some building permits should be granted outside development schemes" only 58% of Gozitans disagreed. While 51% of all Maltese disagreed that "more land should be zoned for development", only 38% of Gozitans disagreed.

And while only 30% agreed that there should be less regulation on the land use of private property, in Gozo the percentage of those wanting less regulation shot up to 44%.

But MaltaToday surveys have shown a reversal of these trends. Gozitans

seem to have rediscovered a love for the land which seemed all but lost amid the building and touristic boom in the 1990s. Significantly, the Gozitan green renaissance comes at a time of economic crisis where employment emerges as the greatest concern for Gozitans. Still, despite the primacy of bread and butter issues and the hunger for jobs, Gozitans do not perceive mega-development projects as a panacea for the prevailing economic ills.

Projects in Ta' Cenc and Hondoq ir-Rummien are all rejected by a majority of Gozitans. Another MaltaToday survey held in 2006 showed 44% were opposed to a golf course in Ta' Cenc. Only 40% supported this development.

In 2006 8.2% of Gozitans considered environmental degradation as their main national concern. Gozitans are also divided on the hunting issue. While only 37% of the Maltese would like hunting to continue in Spring, 42% of Gozitans expressed the same opinion. But significantly more Gozitans were against hunting in Spring than in favour.

Do you agree with the development proposed at: (%)

	Hondoq ir-Rummien	Ta' Cenc
Yes	34.9	20.9
No	49	51.9
Don't Know	16.1	27.3

(MaltaToday Survey 2007)

Should hunting in Spring be allowed? (%)

	Gozitans	Maltese
Yes	41.8	36.7
No	42.8	46.2
Don't Know	15.5	17.1

(MaltaToday Survey 2007)



BRIDGING THE SEA GAP

Do you agree with a bridge linking Malta and Gozo?

Yes	57.7
No	42.3

(Survey held in July 2006)

FACED with the problem of living in an island within a larger island, the majority of Gozitan respondents favour the construction of a bridge linking Gozo to Malta.

While 57.7% would favour a bridge over the Gozo channel, a substantial minority of 42.3% defend Gozo's identity as an island cut off from the mainland by sea. Support for a bridge linking the two islands is strongest among younger respondents. Among those surveyed aged 18-24, support for a bridge linking the two islands rises to 66.7%. Yet in the absence of a bridge or an airport, the only links between the two islands remain the ferry service and the expensive helicopter service.

84% of Gozitans have used the ferry service at least once during the first seven months of the year. The survey also shows that 16% of Gozitans use the Gozo Channel service more than once a week. The percentage of those using the ferry service more than once a week rises to 29% among the 18-34 age bracket.

Gozitans are equally divided on whether an airport should be developed to link the two islands by air. Controversy on building an airstrip in Gozo has raged over the past decade.

