

WORK ETHIC VALUES OF PRACTISING CATHOLIC IRISH AND PROTESTANT BRITISH MANAGERS

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Introduction

This paper compares work ethic values of practising Catholic Irish managers and practising Protestant British managers. Max Weber (1985) broadly argued that Protestantism, in particular Calvinism, played an important role in the development of capitalism in the West. Weber explained the role of Calvinism in the development of capitalism through 'the spirit of capitalism'. He believed that a new morality and its religious framework encouraged hard work and productivity. He, therefore, argued that 'the spirit of capitalism' was a feature of Protestant groups. However, in this research, we do not discuss whether the Protestant work ethic (PWE) was a reality or whether it was Protestant but we use the concept of the PWE as a given and well-known construct to compare Catholic Irish managers, and Protestant British managers. The five dimensions of the PWE were extracted by a factor analysis from Mirels and Garrett (1971):

- hard work brings success
- work as an end in itself
- saving in money and time
- internal locus of control
- negative attitude towards leisure.

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Three additional dimensions of the PWE were also used in incentive interviews. They are:

- individualism
- sanctification of wealth and prosperity
- belief in economic inequality.

Ireland is an important and interesting country for PWE researchers. A poor agrarian society with bitter famine experiences has become the Celtic Tiger, one of the successful economies of the European Union, and Catholicism is still an influential factor that shapes the national character in Ireland. According to Weber (1985), Catholic societies were unable to produce 'the spirit of capitalism'. There were several reasons for including Ireland in this research. First, Ireland is a predominantly Catholic country. Secondly, unlike other European countries, the Catholic Church has got still considerable power in social life. Despite the fact that the Catholic Church is not an official political power, she cannot be ignored in social and political life in Ireland. Thirdly, Irish history and social life are coloured by Catholicism, which is perhaps the most important ingredient of Irish national identity. Fourthly, it has been argued that the Catholic ethic is the antithesis of the PWE according to Max Weber's ideas. Catholic monastic asceticism in particular is the opposite of the Protestant worldly asceticism; therefore, Ireland is a good place to examine this phenomenon. Finally, Ireland is an English-speaking country and was a part of the British Empire. This helped to reduce translation bias and the costs of the project.

Being a part of the British Empire as a Catholic country inevitably resulted in a clash between Protestant and Catholic ethics in Ireland. Historically, Ireland has been used as an example of Weberian criticism of the Catholic ethic. The Irish Catholic clergy has been accused by several intellectuals of being an obstacle to the work ethic, the development of the country and of encouraging fatalism. Catholicism was also blamed for failing to develop individualism and the organisational skills that were necessary for a modern working life (Kenny, 1997). The difference between the Catholic and Protestant people of Ireland in terms of the work ethic is still current in the country today.

There is no doubt that Britain was the first country in which the PWE appeared as a characteristic of society. Max Weber took Anglo-Saxon Puritanism as the most representative example of the PWE.

Although Britain is usually regarded as a post-Christian society, it is necessary to include this country in this research so that we can examine whether the PWE values is still valid in a modern Protestant society.

British Protestant managers were chosen to show whether historical Protestant work ethic was valid in modern Protestant groups. Max Weber argued that Calvinist-Puritan Protestantism with its worldly asceticism or religious individualism helped the development of economic individualism and spirit of capitalism. Therefore, some non-conformist groups such as Quakers, Pentecostals, Calvinists, Presbyterians, Methodists were included in this study. Full Gospel Businessmen's Association and two local non-conformist churches were taken as Protestant groups in Britain because of their Calvinist background. The Catholic group in Ireland was mostly constituted of members of the *Opus Dei* and *Focolare* movements. These are two Catholic movements that promote a work ethic among their members. Certain religious groups were included in the research because it is necessary to take them if we are to investigate a religious work ethic from a Weberian point of view.

Theoretical Framework

Max Weber was the first sociologist to explain the transformative contribution of the PWE to the development of capitalism. He published 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' in 1904-5 as a two-part article in German. The main question in his study was the role of Protestantism in the development of capitalism. He also asked why Western societies had scientific thought, empirical knowledge and philosophy that we recognise today as valid. He argued that the rational, systematic and specialised officials, organised into political and social groups, were exclusively Western institutions. Capitalism and its culture were also exclusively Western (Weber, 1985).

Weber saw capitalism as an economic system, based on the rational long-term calculation of economic gain. He argued that rationalisation and depersonalisation needed a new ethical environment to grow. A certain type of Protestantism, which broke traditional economic understanding, provided this ethical environment. The result was the 'spirit of capitalism' (Weber, 1985).

Weber argued that free-labour was a necessity for the rational capitalistic organisation that emerged in the West. The concepts of the proletariat and bourgeoisie also come from free labour. Accounting

methods and principles indicate rational capitalistic operations. Rationality is based on Western sciences such as mathematics and the empirical natural sciences. Weber underlined six socio-economic factors that were important to the development of capitalism:

- The separation of productive enterprise from the household
- The development of the Western city
- Roman law, which supported the rationalisation of juridical practice
- The nation state, administered by full-time bureaucratic officials
- The development of double-entry book-keeping
- A free mass of wage labourers.

Weber put forward the idea that these factors, together with the driving motive of the Puritan ethic, were responsible to the development of modern capitalism (Giddens, 1976).

According to Weber (1985), the Calvinist branch of Protestantism encouraged hard work, self-discipline, a this-worldly asceticism and need for achievement as a way of life; it also brought about the accumulation of money which could not be spent on luxury, but rather put into one's own business. Calvinists believed in predestination and Weber argued that this kind of worldly asceticism engendered one of the important roots of capitalism, which was a new attitude towards this-worldly activities, or the spirit of capitalism (Weber, 1985).

Weber pointed out that statistics from Europe showed that business leaders and owners of capital were overwhelmingly Protestant. He admitted that this Protestant superiority may be partly explained in terms of historical circumstances in which religious affiliation was not the cause but the consequence of economic conditions. But Weber provided numerous counter-examples and argued that the principal explanation must be sought in the permanent intrinsic character of Protestants, and not only in their temporary external historico-political inheritance. It should be noted that Weber saw Protestantism as only one side of the causal chain to modern capitalism (Giddens, 1976).

Weber stated that Protestants tended to give more importance to economic rationality, regardless of their situation in society. The true PWE believer did not seek power and recognition, rather he or she avoided ostentation, unnecessary expenditure, the conscious enjoyment of power, and outward signs of social recognition. The

PWE believer modestly gets nothing out of his or her wealth except the non-rational sense of having done his or her job well. It is this belief that no doubt seemed to pre-capitalistic man so incomprehensible and mysterious, and so unworldly. The man who has the spirit of capitalism is reliable, honest, rational, courageous and work-oriented. This man, however, is not supposed to be a religious man. In the PWE, the gaining, saving, and careful spending of money, which is productivity, was the main goal of life. This ethic was not an opportunistic and unscrupulous pursuit of self-interest.

Weber did not see Lutheranism as a proper ethical background for the spirit of capitalism, because he did not see pro-capitalistic ideas in Luther's theology. Luther believed that individuals should keep their own jobs, which were their vocations. Although Weber recognised Luther's contribution to the work ethic with his moral emphasis on organised worldly labour, for Weber Lutheranism was linked with Catholic traditionalism and he believed that social progress was possible only in opposition to Lutheranism (Graf, 1993). The calling, for Luther, was something man had to accept as divine ordinance and to which he had to adapt himself. The individual should remain once and for all in the situation and calling in which God had placed him. Weber saw Lutheranism as incapable of developing 'the spirit of capitalism'.

Weber argued that there were four principal ascetic Protestant groups: Calvinists, Pietists, Methodists, and Baptists. Furthermore, he expressed the opinion that, although they had different dogmatic foundations, they shared similar ethical maxims. His interest, theoretically, was to see how the influence of those psychological sanctions, while originating in religious beliefs and practices, gave direction to practical everyday behaviour and influenced individual behavioural norms.

In Weber's thesis, Calvinism was historically the initiator of the spirit of capitalism. In the writings of Calvinists, Weber found evidence for some of the cornerstones of the PWE: the idea of their being a small elect, which is the core of the doctrine of predestination; the idea that all work in the world was for God's glory alone and was good; that God helps those who help themselves, in the sense that people create their own salvation; and distrust of the Catholic sacramental system.

Calvinism involves the idea of predestination, which means that some persons are elected for everlasting life by God by His divine and secret will. This belief has caused the social isolation of Calvinist society, which was considered to be one of the roots of individualism

in Western societies. Calvinists stress the importance of trust in God. They want to prove themselves as elected ones through their work in this world. Moreover, professional success and wealth are accepted as proofs of being one of the elect (Calvin, 1961).

Weber stressed that this consciousness of divine grace of the elect was accompanied by an attitude towards the sin of one's neighbour, an attitude not of sympathetic understanding based on consciousness of one's own weakness, but of hatred and contempt for him as an enemy of God bearing the signs of eternal damnation (Weber, 1985). From that point, it is clear that the belief in predestination has a similar effect to that of the idea of the 'chosen people' in Judaism. Similarly, the result was social isolation and, therefore, people who believed in predestination perceived themselves as superior to others.

Weber (1985) pointed out that the distinctive character of Pietism was its intensified emotional nature that stressed strict, temperate, methodically-controlled, supervised, ascetic conduct. Pietists established an aristocracy of the elect, resting on God's special grace. The virtues of Pietism were more those of the faithful official, clerk, labourer, and domestic worker, while Calvinism was more closely related to hard legalism and the active enterprise of bourgeois, capitalist entrepreneurs.

Weber also mentioned the Baptists, Mennonites, and Quakers as being similar to Puritan groups in a community of personal believers rather than a church. Thus, the concept of a state of religious grace was essential. This state could not be attained by magical sacraments, confession or good works, but a specific type of conduct unmistakably different from the way of life of the natural man. This rationalisation of conduct in this world for the sake of the next was a direct consequence of the concept of calling. Puritans believe that God blesses believers in terms of their job performance. They condemned all sorts of mammonism. They also condemned time-wasting, which was the biggest sin. In vocational life, hard work was required to prevent sexual desire. They described work as a duty or order that had been given by God.

According to Quakerism, vocational life is an ascetic virtue. One must work for God, not to be rich. Moreover, richness, a product of working, is an order of God. Legal profit and job division are ethically good. Puritanism limits consumption and encourages gaining and saving. Thus, it brings about capital accumulation and capitalism.

In Weber's thesis, the spirit of capitalism originated from the spirit of Protestant worldly asceticism. In short, Weber argued that certain

religious ideas had a transformative effect on social and economic structure. His thesis is based on a link between Calvinism and entrepreneurial attitudes (Weber 1985).

PWE characteristics were examined in numerous research studies. For example, in the USA, Lenski (1961) argued that there is a positive link between religion and economical, political and social behaviours. He agreed with Weber that Protestants are more work-oriented than Catholics. A study by Mayer and Sharp (1962) supports the PWE hypothesis. Its results implied that belonging to a Protestant sect encourages hard work and diligence. It makes members more likely to achieve success. It is observed that successful individuals converted to high prestige Protestant sects after they had achieved success. Mirels and Garrett (1971) explored the psychological meaning of the Protestant ethic and found it meaningful. Kanungo *et al* (1978) studied the psychological profiles of Anglophone and Francophone youths in Quebec to find out whether the culture-based differences between Anglophone and Francophone adults reported in earlier studies are still prevalent among the younger generation. Comparison of the two groups was made with respect to their achievement-orientation, risk-taking behaviour, educational and occupational aspirations and occupational values. A matched sample of 123 Anglophone and 248 Francophone final-year high school students was administered. Results showed that, while the occupational aspiration levels of the Francophones were as high as those of Anglophones, the Francophones exhibited a lesser concern for individual achievement and risk-taking and a greater concern for a more secure interpersonal climate at work than the Anglophone group. Francophones are mostly Catholics and results are in harmony with the Weberian thesis. Triandis *et al* (1984) investigated role perceptions of Hispanic young adults. Combined results indicated that non-Hispanics exhibited more competition than Hispanics. Results showed that Catholic Hispanics are not as competitive as their non-Hispanic and mostly Protestant counterparts.

PWE characteristics were also studied in the following studies: Cherington, 1980; Burke and Weir, 1980; Furnham, 1982; Furnham and Bland, 1983; Fine, 1983; Sinha, 1983; Chonko, 1983; Furnham, 1983; Ho and Jaqueline, 1984; Furnham and Muhiuddin, 1984; Furnham, 1984; Triandis *et al*, 1984; Hooker and Ventis, 1984; Shamir, 1985; Spence, 1985; Bordeleau, 1985; Cohen 1985; Munroe and Munroe, 1986; Hafsi, 1987; Chushmir and Koberg, 1988; Poulton and Hung, 1989; Furnham and Quilley, 1989; Moran, 1990; Heaven, 1990;

Tang and Tzeng, 1992; Pierlot, 1992; Furnham *et al*, 1994; Tang and Gilbert, 1995; Martin, 1995; Oyserman *et al*, 1995.

Many of the empirical research studies listed above are in favour of Weber's thesis (Arslan, 2000), showing that there is a positive relationship between work ethic and religious values. It should be noted that each research study includes one or more PWE values but not all. Therefore, each study has its own limitations, either resulting from measuring problems or content.

Method

Groups from Great Britain and Ireland were compared in terms of their PWE beliefs and work-oriented attitudes in this cross-cultural study through qualitative and quantitative methods. This is because we wanted to minimise the weaknesses of each method. Integration of qualitative and quantitative methods in social science is usually known as triangulation. The logic of triangulation is to increase the validity of social research with the use of both methods to check each other on the basis that they may have different sorts of threats to validity. The Protestant work ethic is a multi-dimensional concept, and it is difficult to understand the components of the PWE through one method alone. For this reason, different data collection and analysis methods were used.

In-depth interviews with key informants were performed as a qualitative data-collecting method. Mirels and Garrett's Protestant work ethic scale was also used as a survey questionnaire, because it is the most frequent used questionnaire for a cross-cultural examination of the PWE. In addition, this scale is useful for comparing the results with previous research, since it includes 19 items to measure attitudes towards hard work, money, saving, and success (Mirels and Garret, 1971). Although it does not contain all dimensions of the PWE, it is a good measurement tool to make the sample larger. Each item has a scale ranging from 1 to 7, representing 'strongly disagree' and 'strongly agree' on a Likert scale.

A factor analysis of with varimax rotation revealed five dimensions of the PWE. These PWE characteristics are 'work as an end to itself', 'money and time saving', 'internal locus of control', 'hard work brings success' and 'negative attitude to leisure'. Five items were excluded because of lower factor loadings. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted for overall results and univariate t-tests were performed for each item.

A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the survey questionnaire and structured interview, and satisfactory results were yielded. Although the survey questionnaire has been used in previous research, a reliability analysis was performed for the pilot study and it showed a sufficient alpha coefficient of 81%. Structured and unstructured interviews were used in this research during the data-gathering process. Interviews provide more detailed information on attitudes and behaviour than the questionnaire method. In the light of previous research, a structured interview format was developed. It included a set of PWE characteristics that were not included in the survey questionnaire, such as individualism, collectivism, predestination, equality, attitudes towards time, money, wealth, saving.

Observations were used especially to get information about the use of time. Instead of asking how punctual or loyal to their appointments they were, we preferred to observe their actual behaviour in this research. For this reason, appointment arrangements were recorded for each informant.

In the survey questionnaire, a disproportionate stratified random sampling design was used for the particular religious groups, because there are two subgroups: Protestant and Catholic groups. The size of subgroups in the research is approximately equal. A stratified random sample is the most efficient sampling design when using the analysis of variance (ANOVA) and other statistical analysis methods.

Sample size is determined by the extent of precision and confidence desired. The British sample includes 100 practising Protestant managers. They are from Full Gospel Businessmen's Association and from two nonconformist communities in the UK. The Irish sample contains 103 practising Catholic managers from the *Focolare* and the *Opus Dei* movements in Ireland. Since we integrated qualitative and quantitative methods in this study, we paid attention to increasing the level of validity while accepting its limitation in terms of cross-cultural equivalence. A stratified random sampling procedure was conducted based on the sampling frame. The sample size was 203, including 100 Protestants and 103 Catholics. Respondents were first and middle level managers from ages 35 to 55. The questionnaire was personally administered to avoid missing values and misunderstandings.

Reliability can be defined as consistency in obtaining the same results again with similar groups at the same period in time, or with the same group over time (Furnham, 1990). In the analysis of the

survey research, we used Cronbach's alpha coefficient to test reliability. Since alpha is a correlation coefficient , it ranges from -1 to +1. Negative alpha values indicate that the reliability model is violated (Norusis, 1994). The alpha coefficient for the Mirrels and Garret Protestant work ethic scale was found to be +0.83, which is highly satisfactory.

The positivist approach emphasises cross-cultural equivalence in terms of internal validity; nevertheless, in this research, the anthropologic criticism of positivist social psychology has been taken into account. In the light of the anthropologic point of view, it should be accepted that the divisions and structures of concepts and categories are different in different cultures (Chapman, 1997). Since there is no cultural equivalence across nations, construct or variable equivalence should not worry the researcher. However, it is possible to increase the level of internal validity through some techniques, such as back translation.

Results and Discussion

TABLE 1: MANOVA RESULTS

Test Name	Value	Exact F	Hypothesis DF	Error DF	Sig. of F
Pillais	.37991	5.90089	19.00	183.00	.000
Hotellings	.61266	5.90089	19.00	183.00	.000
Wilks	.62009	5.90089	19.00	183.00	.000
Roys	.37991				

Notes: F statistics are exact.
p<0.05

TABLE 2: UNIVARIATE RESULTS — BRITISH IRISH

PWE characteristics	mean	SD	mean	SD	t-stats
Factor 1 Work as an end in itself.					
The most difficult college courses usually turn out to be the most rewarding.	4.24	1.39	3.56	1.88	2.911*
There are few satisfactions equal to the realisation that one has done one's best at a job.	5.27	1.60	4.94	1.77	1.384
I feel uneasy when there is little work for me to do.	4.56	1.79	4.06	2.11	1.826
Factor 2 Saving money and time.					
The credit card is a ticket to careless spending.	4.13	1.70	3.66	1.80	1.914
Money acquired easily (e.g. through gambling and speculation) is usually spent unwisely.	4.80	1.39	4.42	1.89	1.637
Most people spend too much time in unprofitable amusement.	4.10	1.38	3.24	1.56	4.137*
Factor 3 Internal locus of control.					
Most people who do not succeed in life are just plain lazy.	2.98	1.56	2.45	1.48	2.497*
People who fail at a job have usually not tried hard.	3.38	1.38	3.25	1.49	.632
Factor 4 Hard work brings success.					
Hard work offers little guarantee of success.	4.33	1.46	4.62	1.55	-1.380
Any man who is able and willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.	4.80	1.43	5.36	1.49	-2.718*
If one works hard enough he is likely to make a good life for himself.	4.39	1.29	4.97	1.38	-3.097*
Life would have very little meaning if we never had to suffer.	3.99	1.70	4.30	1.98	-1.198
Factor 5 Negative attitudes to leisure.					
People should have more leisure time to spend in relaxation.	3.64	1.42	3.69	1.55	-.283
Life would be more meaningful if we had more leisure time.	4.38	1.43	3.86	1.53	2.479*

Note: N=203 * t-statistics are significant at $P < 0.05$

A multivariate analysis of variance in **Table 1** shows the overall results that there is a significant difference between British and Irish managers at the 95% level. Since overall results showed a significant difference between the groups, univariate t-tests were performed for each item, which was summarised in **Table 2**.

In the first factor, 'work as an end itself', the groups did not differ in two items, although British managers had a significantly higher score in one of the items. Since British managers had higher scores than their Irish counterparts in all three items in the first characteristic, these results indicate that British managers give more importance to self-fulfilment at work than Irish managers. Work as an end in itself is a part of this-worldly asceticism of the Protestant ethic and is related to self-discipline. When we asked a question about idleness, a Protestant manager, S.D., answered that he did not mind seeing people wasting their time if they were relaxing. But if someone is wasting his or her time when he or she could be doing something better, it does annoy him. Like most of his colleagues, Catholic manager D.G. said that it was difficult to condemn people for idleness because some activities might be idleness for us but not for them. He also added that laziness annoyed him and he thought that it was a sin. The intensive interviews suggested that Protestant managers were more inclined to accept work as an end in itself.

In the second factor, 'money and time saving', British managers showed higher scores than Irish managers but only in one item is there a significant difference between the two groups. Saving is another important component of the PWE. Max Weber (1985) emphasised the importance of the ascetic compulsion to save as a characteristic of this-worldly asceticism. Furnham (1990) pointed out that PWE believers were frugal people:

The Puritan position is in favour of saving but against spending. (Furnham, 1990: 60)

Saving is the opposite attitude to modern consumerism. The use of credit cards cannot be reconciled with PWE values. The findings from interviews confirm the quantitative results and show that the Protestant group has a stronger saving motivation than the Catholic group. The findings reveal that traditional Puritan values towards saving can still be seen in the words of British managers. For example, a Protestant manager, S.P., said:

"I think some people might regard me as frugal, as far as money is concerned. I regard myself as a frugal person that

I am responsible to spend my money wisely. It is wrong to spend your money for unnecessary luxuries that you do not really need, such as very expensive holidays."

He also said that he had never had a credit card and he paid cash for everything. He thinks that credit cards are financially dangerous things because they can be a trap inducing you to buy more things than you can afford. You may end up with serious financial difficulties. His following remark shows how his attitude towards saving is similar to historical Puritan values.

"I would much rather to save my money until I am able to afford something I want to buy."

The Irish group was more tolerant of credit cards. Most the group members stated that they had at least one credit card and they considered it a part of modern life. However, they added that it must not be abused. They agreed that credit cards could be dangerous if their owners were not careful enough.

The British group had also higher scores than the Irish group in the third factor, 'internal locus of control' but only in one item is there a significant difference between the groups. This-worldly asceticism is explained by the internal locus of control (Jones, 1997). Both qualitative and quantitative results showed that the difference between Protestant and Catholic managers in internal locus of control is not so high. A British manager, S.D., said that he did not believe in chance but God's plan:

"Definitely, I don't believe in chance or coincidence. I believe in God's plan in my life. For example, I believe in arranged marriages but not by parents, I believe in arranged marriages by God. It was not an accident when I first met my wife, I felt that she was going to be my wife."

An Irish manager, G.B., also reported that chance and coincidence were important factors in gaining success, as well as hard work:

"I believe chance and hard work are equally important in business life. I take chance as the invisible hand of God in my life. Sometimes bad luck can be a help from God. You may need to lose something to get rid of your pride, which is a sin."

An attitude towards hard work and success is one of the main characteristics of the PWE. Unlike other factors, in the fourth factor,

'hard work brings success', Irish managers showed higher scores than British managers. There was a significant difference between the groups in two items. It appears that Irish managers have a higher level of PWE endorsement than British managers in the factor 4. This does not support the Weberian thesis that Protestants are more hard-working than Catholics. However, when overall results are considered, Protestant British managers show slightly higher PWE scores than Catholic Irish managers. It is usually believed that Protestant societies are more hard-working than Catholic societies. However, from interviews and observations we found that Protestant, Catholic managers share similar attitudes towards hard work and success. In quantitative results, Catholic managers showed a higher degree of endorsement than Protestants in this PWE characteristic. However, qualitative results did not show a difference between the groups.

The following conversation between the researcher and a British manager, who is a member of a Pentecostal-Protestant movement, characterises British managers' attitudes towards hard work:

R: If a person works very hard, do you believe that he will get what he wants?

J.P.: To a certain measure, yes. If you work hard, you will get a measure in the end but it is not the whole story at work. If we are talking about financial success, hard work sometimes does not work well. There are some people, do a job for a charity and don't get a penny and they are successful. But if we are talking about achievement, I would say you can get success by hard work if it is in God's plan.

Respondant J.P. believed that hard work is a religious duty, regardless whom you are working for — a typical PWE belief. On the other hand, 'God's plan' is a key word in this conversation that defines the limits of hard work.

The following conversation between the researcher and one of the Irish members of the *Focolare* movement reflects his attitude towards hard work. He was the production manager of a chocolate factory in Dublin and may be a good example of the Catholic work ethic in Ireland.

R: Do you believe that hard work and ambition are the main factors in gaining success?

L.S.: Do you mean financial or material success?

R: I would say yes, success at work.

L.S.: I believe hard work is very important, you can't get anything if you don't work hard, but there is a limit to it. Sometimes you can fail even though you work very hard. If God doesn't want you to get it, you won't get it.

According to the leisure ethic, work cannot make life meaningful. Work is only a necessity for survival. Work is considered as being a cost of leisure time that is only an opportunity to fulfil self-realisation. As Furnham (1990) noted that all PWE believers are expected to be against idle, self-indulgent leisure such as drink but in favour of educational or health-promoting leisure. Therefore, one should try to increase his or her leisure time for more creative activities. Since the leisure ethic is the opposite of the Protestant ethic, disagreement with the leisure ethic is an indicator of the PWE. In the fifth factor, 'negative attitude to leisure', in one of two items Irish managers had a higher score than British managers but there is no significant difference between the groups in that item. In the other item, British managers had a higher score than Irish managers and the difference is statistically significant. There were two reverse items in the fifth factor. Since reverse items were converted in the data analysis process, the higher scores were transformed accordingly.

Most British managers were critical of some kinds of leisure activities such as expensive holidays, television programs, computer games, and the drinking of alcohol. A British manager, J.P., said:

"If you want a sewer in your livingroom, buy a television. Many programs are encouraging people to do unethical things and that is against what we believe. Sometimes you are better without a television."

Although some Irish managers complained about unethical television programs, most of them were not critical about modern leisure activities. For example, an Irish manager, S.O.:

R: How do you spend your spare time? Is it mostly non-work activities or work related activities?

S.O.: I would say, it is mostly non-work activities. Charity work is my second job; I think it is another kind of work. I like to share my spare time with my family and friends. I quite like to dine in good restaurants. Last year, we were in a luxury restaurant in Sydney with my brother and his family. Our parents were very poor. In the summer time, we

did not have proper shoes when we were children. In the restaurant, we remembered how needy we were and we thanked God for what He had given us.

Although Catholic managers do not differ from Protestant managers in some PWE values, the overall results show that they had lower PWE values than Protestants. Thus, the findings suggest that historical Protestant ethic values are still valid among practising British Protestant managers to some extent. It should be noted that PWE values are not perceived as a whole by participants. One may be very hard-working but not a good saver. As Wayne (1989) found, traditional Protestant ethic values and contemporary work values are different.

Weber developed his Protestant ethic thesis on the basis of Calvinist and non-conformist movements. His argument was simply that Catholicism and Lutheran Protestantism did not and could not produce 'the spirit of capitalism'. Catholicism had already been condemned by the Protestant intellectuals of Weber's time as a backward belief preventing economic progress in Germany (Graff, 1993). Catholicism and Catholic clergy in Ireland have also been accused of having the same effect by the liberal Catholics and Protestants of Ireland (Kenny, 1997).

Ireland was seen as a proof of Weber's thesis, while Belgium was seen as a proof against it. The Weberian critique of Catholicism was frequently applied to the underdeveloped Irish economy. Kenny (1997) stressed the popularity of the Weberian approach in Ireland:

"The Weberian theme of equating Catholicism with economic future crops up in publication after publication at this time [early twentieth century]." (Kenny:1997:38)

Above all, the accusations about Catholic clergy in Ireland have continued until recent times (Sheehy, 1968). As Connolly (1983) stated:

"The social origins and status of the Catholic clergy prevented the development of Catholics that might otherwise have arisen." (Connolly, 1983:74)

Connolly (1983) also pointed out that the negative impact of the British penal laws on the economic situation of Catholics in Ireland should not be overestimated. Since the 19th century, the Catholic clergy of Ireland has been criticised for discouraging a work ethic and economic progress in the country. They were usually accused of

being against education and progress, observing more holy days than Protestants which reduced annual working days for Catholics, poor leadership, and other-worldliness.

Kenny (1997) noted that Sir Horace Plunkett, an Irish landowner and agricultural reformer, was one of the influential intellectuals who were critical of the Irish Catholic clergy in the early 20th century. He argued that Catholicism was holding Ireland back because of its other-worldliness, its want of economic understanding and work ethic. Catholicism had failed to develop individualism, and Catholics were not prepared to produce the organisational skills necessary for a modern working life. Catholicism had encouraged fatalism and passivity in Ireland. The Catholic clergy was criticised by both Catholics and Protestants. For example, a Catholic lawyer attacked a Catholic priest for his backwardness, his mumbo-jumbo superstitions, his laxity in enforcing morals, and his reluctance to keep up with the changing modern world of the 1900s. On the other hand, the Catholic clergy responded by saying that Catholics were certainly capable of prosperity, if they were given the right circumstances, as in Belgium (Kenny, 1997).

It is also argued that the Catholic Church absorbed a large body of entrepreneurial young men and other economic resources in Church activities, thus hindering economic growth in Ireland. However, Kennedy (1996) noted that such allegations could not be proved. He argued that the Catholic Church had made a positive contribution to the economy of 19th century Ireland. As he wrote:

"In the 18th century, despite legal and other limitations on Catholic enterprise, substantial numbers of Catholic entrepreneurs emerged, and indeed as that century closed Ireland had a reasonable claim to be considered a relatively developed country by European (but not English) standards." (Kennedy, 1997:114)

Contrary to Kennedy's argument, Inglis (1987) argued that the Catholic Church did not play a major role in the modernisation of the Irish economy in the 19th century Ireland. He argued that the promotion of large families by the Catholic Church prevented the development of an economic individualism. He stressed that the Church's ideal was a self-sufficient, rural society based on small-scale production in which family, community and religious took precedence over the acquisition of material possessions.

"It might be said that Ireland did not begin to modernise until the 1960s, and that the Catholic Church, because of its opposition to materialism, consumerism and individualism, has been an inhibiting factor." (Inglis, 1987:222)

The socio-economic structure of Ireland in the late 19th and early 20th centuries reveals a considerable difference between Catholic and Protestant communities. The anti-capitalistic attitudes of the Catholic clergy can be considered as an important factor in determining the economic situation of Irish Catholics. The economic situation in Belfast and Dublin between 1870-1920 shows that the Protestant population was economically more developed than the Catholic community. Belfast was an industrial centre, while Dublin was the commercial and administrative centre of the Island.

Hepburn (1983) stated that, although Catholics continued to play an important part in Belfast's industrial growth, the economy as well as the politics of Ireland's only major industrial centre was to remain predominantly in Protestant hands at all levels. However, discrimination against Catholics should be taken into account as well as the low work ethic of Catholics when explaining their economic situation in Belfast. In predominantly Catholic-populated Dublin, the economic situation of Catholics did not differ from Belfast.

Daly (1984) agreed that Protestants were over-represented to a substantial degree in law, medicine, and civil service white-collar employment between 1871-1911 in Dublin; and the proportion of Catholics receiving either primary or secondary schooling in the city was lower than Protestants.

Conclusion

Results from the survey questionnaire show that, except one factor, 'hard work brings success', British managers had higher scores than Irish managers. However, the differences between the groups are significant in most of the items. Results from interviews also show that British managers are slightly more work-oriented than Irish managers. In the light of both qualitative and quantitative findings, we can hypothesise that Irish managers are moving away from traditional values and adapting PWE values.

The results of the interviews and observations carried out in this study suggest that traditional collectivist and anti-industrial Irish attitudes are being transformed into a more individualistic and Protestant-type work ethic. It seems that, with the help of modern

Catholic social ethic and lay movements, the anti-work ethic character of the Catholic church in Ireland is disappearing. Meanwhile, it appears that British Protestants are moving away from traditional PWE values to a more communitarian values. The results of this research suggest that the Weberian critique of Catholicism is not valid in present day Irish society. An Irish sociologist, Dr. Tom Inglis (1987) makes a similar point in his 'Moral Monopoly: the Catholic Church in Modern Irish Society', which is that the moral power of the Catholic Church has been declining in Ireland since the 1960s.

"They have gradually been moving away from a legalistic acceptance of the Church's rules and regulations to a more Protestant, do-it-yourself type of religious ethic in which they are making up their own minds about what is right and wrong." (Inglis, 1987:225)

It should be noted that a comparison of other social classes such as villagers and workers, in Ireland and other countries would provide different results.

It is obvious that Protestants had an economic and social superiority over Catholics before Independence, although Protestant economic ascendancy has remained in the South until recent times. The role of British colonialism, penal laws, and discrimination against Catholics should not be underestimated but the role of the Catholic clergy in effecting the economic disadvantage of the Catholic community in Ireland should also be taken seriously. It should be noted that Quakers played an important role in the development of industry in Ireland. As Cullen (1987) pointed out:

"If any religious group had an especially close and extensive association with the growth of the industry in the North in the late 17th century and early decades of the 18th century, it was the Quakers." (Cullen, 1987:60)

Weber's thesis has been used by Protestants and liberal Catholics until recent times in explaining the economic backwardness of the Irish Catholic community. On the other hand, the Irish Catholic clergy and the ultra-nationalists preferred to accuse the British.

Our conclusion is that the other-worldly and anti-industrial nature of Irish Catholicism possibly had a responsibility for the historical economic backwardness of Ireland along with other factors such as the colonial policies. However, it should be remembered that the negative role of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland is a controversial issue. Ireland has achieved a remarkable economic

development record since its membership of EU. Its booming economy shows that Irish managers successfully adopted a productive management style. According to our findings, practising Catholic Irish managers are becoming more work-oriented, in other words, they are adopting historical Protestant work ethic values

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