

Understanding Limerick: Contexts and Contradictions

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Tom Inglis (2006) Irish Catholics

- Group 1: Orthodox Catholics
- loyal members of the institutional Church
- accept the teachings of the Church
- engage regularly in Church practices
- Adhere to the rules and regulations of the Church

Inglis's Typology of Irish Catholics

- Group 2: Creative Catholics
 - Includes the older concept of á la carte Catholics
 - Catholics who chose which beliefs they want to adhere to and what they want to ignore
- ‘The á la carte Catholic could be someone who may go to Mass regularly and received Holy Communion but who would distance themselves from the Church when it came to issues such as using contraceptives, having sex before marriage, obtaining a divorce, going to confession...’

Creative Catholics

- Inglis's model of creative Catholics includes an additional dimensions which appeared in his study. There were a significant number of individuals who not only pick and chose between different beliefs and teachings in the Church but who **mix these with the beliefs and practices of other religious traditions** such as the Eastern practices of meditation, yoga and Celtic spiritualities with relate to the Earth

Group 3: Cultural Catholics

- We know a good deal about cultural Catholicism from large-scale studies conducted in the United States and Poland. A cultural Catholic would
- **Wouldn't be a strong believer in the Church's teachings or practices**
- Would attend Church services sporadically, mostly at ritual times such as Christmas
- Are happy to have their children brought up as Catholics
- Like the rituals and celebrations of Catholicism
- Are not open to changing their religion

Group 4: Individualist Catholics

- People born and raised in the Church who now describe themselves as having 'no religion'.
Fastest growing group in religion section of the Census 2011
- Have often given a lot of thought to matters of faith and spirituality
- Often deeply critical of the institutional Church

Catholic Population in Limerick

- What do people say about their religious affiliation?
- In 2011 Census, **170,521 Limerick people described themselves as Catholics**. A large majority of the total population
- Just 2.6% fall from 2006 Census, lower than other Irish cities
- In Limerick, only 5.8% described themselves as having 'no religion' compared to 10.5% in Galway

Behaviour of Limerick's Catholic Population

- In 2014, Limerick has the highest number of births outside marriage, 58.6% so the majority of Limerick's babies are born outside the married family compared to a national average of 36.1%
- 2011 Census revealed that Limerick had the highest divorce rate in Ireland 13.5% compared to a national average of 9.7%
- Significant contradictions between how Limerick Catholics describe themselves and how they live their lives

Grace Davie (1990)

- Europeans moving towards a pattern of 'believing without belonging'
- Have values which conform to various religious traditions but are not active participants in Church
- Limerick seems to have the opposite pattern of 'belonging without believing' – people describing themselves as Catholic but not adhering to the teachings of the Church

Role of Religious in Limerick's Marginalized Communities

- Eileen Humphrey's study demonstrated very high levels of trust in clergy and members of religious orders amongst socially excluded
- Ann explained difficulties of living with social exclusion and intimidation in **Understanding Limerick**

You know what they really want is for you to be down on yourself so that you don't believe you have any other life. They want you to keep your head down and just put up with it

Pain of Exclusion

Manual Castells:

‘The exclusion of the excluders by the excluded’

Marcus Borg:

Danger of regulatory exclusion within the Church

He advocated a **politics of compassion** over and above a **politics of purity**

Compassion as co-suffering

- Expertise in Limerick on the pain caused by exclusion
- Prof. Liam Ryan's study **Social Dynamite (1960)**
- Predicted that the hurt caused by exclusion was so great that it would lead to an explosion which would damage all Limerick society
- In 1990s, this prediction came true.

Ethnic Diversity

- Over 10,000 or 11% of the population of the urban area of Limerick are newcomer/ new-Irish with 3,885 (4% non-white)
- Highly concentrated/ segregated into city centre/ urban locations
- Centre contains less than 5% Irish nationals but 30% of Polish nationals
- Centre contains 4% of the white Irish population but 26% of the black population
- Very little ethnic diversity in main local authority estates – concentrated in private rented sector

Religious Diversity in Limerick

- Majority of population describe themselves as Catholic in 2011 census
- City also has Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Orthodox, Methodist and Pentecostal Churches
- 2000 Muslims in Limerick - 776 in the Limerick County Electoral District (high by national standards)
- 5.8% of population (8,059) describe themselves as having no religion (low by national standards)