
The decline of religious values, work ethics and the void at the heart of the global business environment.

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Abstract

Following Max Weber's work linking religious ethical values of the protestant faith and the modern capitalist system, a substantial quantity of literature and empirical research has addressed the relationships between religious faith, values and behaviour of economic agents within the global business environment.

However, the last century has seen the decline of commitment in the Western world to the dominant Christian religious faith, across the different churches. At the same time the second wave of globalization, with its technological implications has reached unprecedented levels. The repercussions at the macro and micro levels of the relationships of different macro and micro economic variables are visible and traceable in the economic strategies of multinationals and financial institutions as in the working environment of smaller organizations.

In this talk the relationships between the different religious values, the undermining view provided by the Nietzschean analysis of the Christian values, the development of the Marxists paradigm and its failure in the last century, and the current economic variables and labour behaviour patterns set by a positivist dominant paradigm of the economy will be discussed by using a 'Weberian model'. Further, by factoring into the discussion the cultural dimensions that have arisen due to the globalization process and have become part of a global business environment, where values tend to be seen as interchangeable, even without having a solid historical and sociological root, but rather based on some semantic similarity, will be explored.

Thus, the resulting framework on which the religious aspects and the economic performance of organizations, strongly led by market performance has left a substantial void in terms of ethical practices, particularly visible in the financial sector, and almost erased the human face of the economic endeavours of economic agents. Thus the positivist characteristics of the economic system not grounded anymore on certain values that belonged historically to western culture and its history, but rather to a "machine view" of the business environment will be explored.

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