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978-0-521-09006-3 - Roman Catholics in England: Studies in Social Structure  
Since the Second World War

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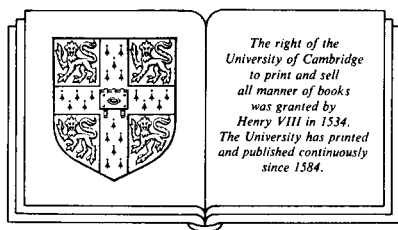
# ROMAN CATHOLICS IN ENGLAND

STUDIES IN SOCIAL  
STRUCTURE SINCE THE  
SECOND WORLD WAR



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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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LONDON NEW YORK NEW ROCHELLE

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521303132](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521303132)

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First published 1987  
This digitally printed version 2008

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Hornsby-Smith, Michael P.  
Roman Catholics in England.  
Bibliography.

1. Catholics – England – History – 20th century.
2. Catholics – Wales – History – 20th century.
3. England – Social life and customs – 1945–
4. Wales – Social life and customs. I. Title.

BX1493.2.H67 1987 305.6'2'042 87–20705

ISBN 978-0-521-30313-2 hardback  
ISBN 978-0-521-09006-3 paperback

Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-09006-3 - Roman Catholics in England: Studies in Social Structure  
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 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

## CONTENTS



	<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
	<i>List of tables</i>	ix
	<i>Preface</i>	xi
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
	1.1 Historical signposts	1
	1.2 Contemporary significance	3
	1.3 Major themes	5
	1.4 Data sources	9
	1.5 Outline of book	13
	1.6 Research orientation	16
<b>2</b>	<b>THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN CATHOLICISM</b>	<b>19</b>
	2.1 Introduction	19
	2.2 Historical roots	20
	2.3 The myth of a golden age	26
	2.4 Competing models of the Church	31
	2.5 The National Pastoral Congress	37
	2.6 The Pope's visit	41
	2.7 A social portrait of English Catholics	43
<b>3</b>	<b>THE HETEROGENEITY OF ENGLISH CATHOLICS</b>	<b>47</b>
	3.1 Introduction	47
	3.2 A typology of English Catholics	47
	3.3 Demographic and social factors	55
	3.4 Variations by institutional involvement	64
	3.5 Concluding reflections	65

Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-09006-3 - Roman Catholics in England: Studies in Social Structure  
 Since the Second World War  
 Michael P. Hornsby-Smith  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
4	THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY	67
4.1	Theme and hypotheses	67
4.2	Mobility measures	69
4.3	The social mobility of English Catholics	72
4.4	The geographical mobility of English Catholics	80
4.5	Religion and mobility	82
4.6	Summary and conclusions	87
5	CATHOLIC MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE	89
5.1	Introduction	89
5.2	A typology of Catholic marriages	92
5.3	Intermarriage and religiosity	98
5.4	Contraception, abortion and divorce	108
5.5	Conclusion	114
6	THE ASSIMILATION OF IRISH CATHOLICS	116
6.1	Introduction	116
6.2	Trends in Irish immigration	118
6.3	Patterns of occupational achievement	120
6.4	Marriage patterns	123
6.5	Religious outcomes	126
6.6	The assimilation of Irish Catholics	131
7	CATHOLIC ELITES	133
7.1	Introduction	133
7.2	Parish activists	135
7.3	Members of the Bishops' Advisory Commissions	136
7.4	Delegates to the National Pastoral Congress	139
7.5	The progressivism of Catholic elites	143
7.6	Competing elites in the Church	151
8	CATHOLICS AND POLITICS	157
8.1	Introduction	157
8.2	English Catholics: A political force?	158
8.3	Social, economic, political and moral attitudes	163
8.4	Politics in the Church	168
8.5	The prophetic challenge	175
8.6	Comparative perspectives	179

Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-09006-3 - Roman Catholics in England: Studies in Social Structure  
 Since the Second World War  
 Michael P. Hornsby-Smith  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

<i>Contents</i>		vii
9	THE COMMUNAL INVOLVEMENT OF ENGLISH CATHOLICS	182
9.1	Introduction	182
9.2	Evidence from four parishes	184
9.3	The national survey	185
9.4	Types of communal involvement	190
9.5	Types of religious commitment	196
9.6	The parish and its quest for community	200
10	THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ENGLISH CATHOLIC SUBCULTURE	203
10.1	Introduction	203
10.2	Summary of findings	204
10.3	The dissolution of a distinctive subculture	208
10.4	Final reflections	214
	<i>Appendix 1</i> Scales of religious beliefs and practices	218
	<i>Appendix 2</i> Supplementary tables	222
	<i>Bibliography</i>	230
	<i>Index</i>	244

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-09006-3 - Roman Catholics in England: Studies in Social Structure  
Since the Second World War  
Michael P. Hornsby-Smith  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

## FIGURES



Fig. 2.1	Social characteristics of English Catholics (%)	44
Fig. 3.1	Defining characteristics and distribution of types of English Catholics	51
Fig. 5.1	Unity orientations of English Catholics	105
Fig. 7.1	A typology of progressive types	147
Fig. 7.2	A classification of Catholic progressive types	151
Fig. 9.1	A typology of communal involvement (CMSCAL)	190

Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-09006-3 - Roman Catholics in England: Studies in Social Structure  
 Since the Second World War  
 Michael P. Hornsby-Smith  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

## TABLES



1.1	Summary of data sources	<i>page</i> 10
2.1	Estimates of Roman Catholic immigrants in England and Wales in 1971 by country of birth	25
4.1	Social mobility experiences by associational involvement and religious identification	73
4.2	Social mobility experiences of English Catholics by associational involvement, religious origins, country of birth and immigrant generation	75
4.3	Social mobility experiences of English Catholics by country of birth, religious origins and immigrant generation (males only)	77
4.4	Social mobility experiences of English Catholics by geographical mobility	81
5.1	Distribution of Catholics by marriage type and year of marriage	94
5.2	Age of cessation of weekly or regular Mass attendance by type of marriage	100
5.3	Marriage type by frequency of Mass attendance and time of lapsation	100
5.4	Type of religious commitment by marriage type	101
5.5	Attendance at ecumenical service within two years and ecumenical attitudes by type of marriage	104
5.6	Attitudes of Catholic and non-Catholic electors on marital and sexual matters	109
6.1	Irish-born residents in England and Wales, 1851–1981	119
6.2	Marriage type by immigrant generation and sex	125



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-09006-3 - Roman Catholics in England: Studies in Social Structure  
Since the Second World War

Michael P. Hornsby-Smith

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x	<i>Tables</i>	
6.3	Time of lapsation relative to marriage by immigrant generation and sex	125
6.4	Catholic type by immigrant generation and sex	128
6.5	Standardised scores on religious outcome scales by Irish immigrant generation and religion of spouse	129
7.1	Social characteristics of priest, women religious and lay delegates to the National Pastoral Congress	140
7.2	Social and religious characteristics of progressive types	148
7.3	Religious characteristics by leadership type	153
8.1	Selected social, political and moral attitudes by associational involvement and religious identification	165
8.2	Selected social, political and moral attitudes by religious group	167
9.1	Estimates of communal involvement over time	183
9.2	Selected measures of communal involvement	185
9.3	Communal involvement by age, social class, sex, immigrant generation and type of Catholic	191
9.4	Selected demographic and religious variables by type of communal involvement	194
9.5	Selected demographic and religious variables by type of religious commitment	197
9.6	Type of Catholic, communal involvement and unity orientation by type of religious commitment	199
A1	Social and demographic characteristics by sex, age, social class, terminal education age and associational involvement	223
A2	Religious types and scale scores by sex, age, social class, terminal education age and associational involvement	224
A3	Religious types and scale scores by social mobility experiences	225
A4	Religious types and scale scores by geographical mobility experiences	226
A5	Religious types and scale scores by marriage type	227
A6	Progressive orientations by delegate group	228

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-09006-3 - Roman Catholics in England: Studies in Social Structure  
Since the Second World War  
Michael P. Hornsby-Smith  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## PREFACE



how many of you were wise in the ordinary sense of the word,  
how many were influential people, or came from noble families?  
(1 Cor. 1:26)

I write these words from the Epistle read at Mass on the day I started to write this book. They seem strangely relevant to the questions which first exercised me ten years ago when I decided to explore the impact of post-war social change on the Roman Catholic community in England. How had Catholics benefited from the expansion of secondary and higher education and the general post-war affluence? And how had these social changes affected the nature of social relationships, especially between the parish clergy and the laity? At the commencement of this research the Second Vatican Council had ended a bare eight years earlier and the liturgical reforms it had instigated and the fuller participation of the laity in the everyday life of the Church it had encouraged were only just beginning to percolate through to the parishes. Did the ordinary Catholic favour the reforms? And did he or she welcome the increased involvement expected? How was the nature of religious authority changing in response to both social change and religious innovation? After a decade's research and five successive research projects I believe we are in a position to answer some of these questions and some others which emerged in the course of our surveys.

The focus of our attention will be Roman Catholics living in England and Wales in the 1970s and 1980s. For simplicity these will be referred to as English Catholics though some of our data will refer also to the Catholics in Wales who comprise about 3% of the

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Michael P. Hornsby-Smith  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

xii

*Preface*

Catholics under the authority of the single hierarchy of England and Wales. For our purposes, too, we have included in this term all those Catholics who were born abroad, notably Catholics born in Ireland or the Catholic countries of eastern or southern Europe who are currently living in England and Wales.

In attempting to answer the questions outlined above I will draw on research from five different studies, each of which will be described in detail in the main text. For the moment I wish to pay tribute to all those who have contributed to this substantial research programme. The original inspiration for this research came from Asher Tropp who first encouraged me to investigate the impact of post-war social mobility on the Catholic community in England and persuaded me that a Roman Catholic could legitimately and from a sociological perspective investigate his own religious community. Valuable advice and encouragement was given in these early stages by the late Robert Bogan, Joan Brothers, Tony Coxon, Graham Dann and Margaret Norris.

I gratefully acknowledge two research grants from the Social Science Research Council which enable the first two studies to be undertaken. It was my good fortune to have as colleagues Penny Mansfield, Ray Lee and Peter Reilly who were the Research Officers on these studies. We were indebted to the four parish priests in our London and Preston parishes for their trusting and generous help. During our field work in Preston we were particularly grateful for the hospitality given by Liz Bond and Patsy Manda. During the study of *Roman Catholic Opinion* Ray Lee and I received much constructive advice and great encouragement from Joan Brothers, Tony Coxon, David Gerard, Chris Harris, Bishop Harvey, Gordon Heald and Noel Timms. Several invaluable analyses of these data were carried out by Kathy Turcan.

I am also pleased to acknowledge two small research grants from the University of Surrey which facilitated the National Pastoral Congress (N.P.C.) study and the early stages of the study of the Pope's visit. I am also indebted to them for two terms of sabbatical leave which facilitated the early stages of data collection in the S.S.R.C. studies and a further sabbatical year in 1985–86 which enabled me to complete the writing of this book.

Archbishop Worlock kindly arranged to make available the lists of delegates to the N.P.C. The Nuffield Foundation awarded two small grants, one at very short notice for the Pope's study. Much of the

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Michael P. Hornsby-Smith  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

*Preface*

xiii

analysis of this study was undertaken by Ann Scurfield, Joan O'Byrne and Jennifer Brown. In the analysis of the N.P.C. data I was fortunate to have Betsy Cordingley as a collaborator. On numerous occasions I have been grateful for the computing skills of Jane Fielding and Lyn Rajan. Mike Procter has always been generous with his advice on data analysis. Peter Abell counselled me to continue my research on Roman Catholicism at a crucial stage and Christian Heath offered me valuable and encouraging criticisms and comments on various drafts.

I am grateful to all those who have allowed me to quote extensively from publications we originally produced jointly: Jennie Brown, Betsy Cordingley, Angela Dale, Ray Lee, Penny Mansfield, Joan O'Byrne, Mike Procter, Lyn Rajan, Peter Reilly and Kathy Turcan. I would like to acknowledge special debts of gratitude to all my colleagues in the Sociology Department at the University of Surrey and to the members of the Sociology of Religion Study Group of the British Sociological Association for their continuing support and critical comments on various working papers over a number of years.

I wish to thank the editors of *The Month*, *The Newman*, *Sociological Review*, *Sociology*, and *The Tablet* for permission to quote from articles originally published by them. My thanks are also due to Gordon Heald for permission to include extracts from *Roman Catholic Opinion* written on the basis of Gallup's 1978 survey and Omnibus and also to Angela West for permission to quote from her article 'A Faith for Feminists?'

For over a decade a succession of dedicated, competent and good-humoured secretaries in the Sociology Department have typed various drafts of what has emerged in this book. I am particularly grateful to Alwyn Whitehead for so carefully and patiently producing the final copy.

Finally, I am pleased to record my love and gratitude to my wife, Lennie, for her tolerance and support for the work I have chosen to do. In the hope that our children will be committed to the process of transformation of the loveable but flawed Roman Catholic Church I am pleased to dedicate this book with love to: Andrew, Gillian, Stephen and Richard and also to Tom Messenger whom I was honoured to sponsor at his confirmation on the day this book was completed.