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Max Weber and the Korean Work Ethic:

Ethnic origin data can undercut and/or reinforce
stereotypes

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1. Introduction

In Max Weber's 1905 classic "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" he generates a series of essays that were once regarded as the founding texts in the field of sociology. Weber wrote that capitalism in Northern Europe evolved when the Protestant (particularly Calvinist) ethic influenced important numbers of people to work in the secular world, developing their own enterprises and engaging in trade and the accumulation of wealth for investment. Evoking the Protestant work ethic to explain the disproportionate presence of ethnically British Protestant elites in the upper echelons of the economy persisted well into the 20th century. For more than 100 years, the "Protestant work ethic" has been challenged by economic studies, criticized by theologians and undercut by historical documents. But it nonetheless persists. And as one observer put it "...it's nice to feel superior to others or to put a spiritual spin on Labor Day by saying your Protestant work ethic justifies sending late-night emails and going in to the office on the weekend."

Weber was particularly interested in Calvin's theological claims. Therefore in his essay "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism," he wrote that the idea of predestination influenced people to pursue success at work because they viewed wealth as a proxy for God's favor. He credited Calvin and other reformers of the earlier period with contributing to the philosophy underlying capitalism.

Some point out that the ethos of capitalism predated Protestantism by a long time in "Catholic" northern Italy. But despite considerable evidence to the contrary, for much of the twentieth century, the idea of an enhanced or superior work ethic became associated with Protestantism.

2. Weber and Canada

Historically, Canada remained a good testing ground for the “work ethic” as it was largely populated during Weber’s lifetime but Protestants and Catholics. Indeed it was widely argued that in the Canada of the 19th and much of the twentieth century (until the 1960’s) that French Catholics lacked entrepreneurial spirit and hence this explained and for some justified the British Protestant dominance of the Canadian economy.

Of course like many theories, the idea of a Protestant work ethic and the views of its author need to be placed within their historic context. The idea is a product of the state of economic and social thought of the late 19th and early 20th century Germany. It significantly predates the advent of multicultural societies where the varying condition of the multitude of ethnic groups (as many as 300 in Canada) belie the attribution of distinct attributes to a single group.

3. Multiculturalism

With evolving immigration and multiculturalism, the idea of the Protestant work ethic was increasingly challenged by economists and sociologists. But if there is one thing that deals the most powerful to this way outdated theory it’s the contemporary data that is generated by Statistics Canada on the economic performance of ethnic groups. Canada’s Multiculturalism Act calls on federal institutions to “collect statistical data in order to enable the development of policies, programs and practices that are sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada”. However, there is no universal agreement as to the definition of ethnicity and as such attempts to measure the numbers of persons by their ethnic origin(s) are often accompanied by less than perfect systems of classification. There is often an arbitrary or improvised character to the measurement of ethnic origin(s) which can render policy-making somewhat problematic if it is based upon the collection of such data. Ethnic identity intersects with various other markers of identity (ancestry, heritage [generally associated with place of birth], language, ‘race’ and

religion) and analysts often make connections with such markers of identity when explaining the characteristics of ethnic belonging.

In general many observers believe that ethnic identity is neither intense nor frequent and it often is often gets expressed through symbolism. Yet others counter that ethnic identity tells you who you are and what makes you different from others. A renewed interest amongst baby boomers in tracing their ancestry is just one of the many ways that ethnic identities captures public attention. While many observers insist that acculturation and assimilation continue to take place in immigrant receiving societies, others point to the persistence of ethnic identities. But, in the public domain it remains relatively common to hear talk about characteristics that are particular to certain ethnic groups (i.e. some are more entrepreneurial, some more family oriented and some more educated, etc.). Generalizations associated with ethnicity and culture can be at one and the same time the object of pride and prejudice and data on ethnic origins can give rise to both. Groups that perform well economically can be accused of exploitation while those that do less well can be accused of not pulling their weight.

Data on ethnic origins it has the ability to both undercut generalizations and to reinforce them. We provide several examples from the 2016 census below for where such generalizations risk reinforcement or debunking that often depends on how we interpret such findings and to what the results get attributed.

4. Self-Employment: is there Korean work ethic? Koreans, Jews and Swiss most likely to be self-employed; British Protestants way off the top of the list

Looking at Statistics Canada's 2016 data on ethnic origins and self-employment has the British Protestants well down the list (that group is found amongst those saying they are ethnically English, Scottish and partly in the group declaring Canadian as ethnicity) as well as those of identifying as ethnically German. At the top of the list are Koreans, Jews and Swiss when considering the overall results.

Table 1

2016 Self-Employed	Total Real Number	Total	Men	Women
Total - Ethnic origin	18268120	12.0	14.4	9.4
Korean	95050	21.1	22.9	19.3
Jewish	75450	0.209145	0.245821	0.166068
Swiss	84070	0.187582	0.212829	0.160297
Taiwanese	16970	0.164702	0.193588	0.13834
Israeli	14175	0.191534	0.237179	0.135793
Russian	345500	0.161548	0.190843	0.132021
Czech	55750	0.150493	0.173267	0.127048
Moroccan	46705	0.145595	0.159533	0.126775
South African	22505	0.148634	0.16835	0.126588
Lithuanian	32565	0.16444	0.20415	0.124266
American	195190	0.139864	0.155191	0.123951
Austrian	114455	0.147569	0.171399	0.122992
Iranian	108840	0.18371	0.233314	0.121707
Latvian	16645	0.148994	0.177313	0.119782
Norwegian	251555	0.141321	0.165964	0.116661
Turk	29745	0.178854	0.224148	0.116158
Syrian	27250	0.170092	0.212488	0.115851
Armenian	32820	0.176417	0.230129	0.115622
Northern European origins, n.i.e.	29500	0.138814	0.158341	0.115611
Swedish	187695	0.13735	0.16061	0.115418
Dutch	599195	0.13907	0.162228	0.11424
Danish	111280	0.138929	0.163638	0.113871
Vietnamese	126835	0.120629	0.127795	0.113507
Australian	23245	0.124113	0.134924	0.110846
Egyptian	46535	0.153648	0.18553	0.110013
German	1807030	0.132878	0.154719	0.109835
Belgian	101890	0.13441	0.158515	0.109539
Polish	614760	0.141511	0.173825	0.108984
Japanese	58050	0.116107	0.125192	0.108736
Hungarian	185330	0.136028	0.164203	0.107626
Chinese	871720	0.130329	0.153497	0.107571
Welsh	262755	0.123138	0.139617	0.107198
Pakistani	90490	0.163941	0.196683	0.106806
Bulgarian	19870	0.148213	0.188922	0.105533
Romanian	136300	0.140536	0.175958	0.10507
Slovak	37885	0.133562	0.163723	0.103066
Lebanese	107955	0.171738	0.224781	0.102791

English	3355025	0.121208	0.140838	0.100763
Brazilian	19270	0.113389	0.127075	0.100156
Palestinian	18305	0.161158	0.198253	0.1
Mexican	62685	0.110473	0.119403	0.099827
Greek	135160	0.146493	0.188019	0.099575
Algerian	28500	0.114912	0.125828	0.099243
Québécois	101900	0.113592	0.127511	0.097594
Ukrainian	753030	0.124776	0.151051	0.097486
Scottish	2613570	0.116787	0.136376	0.096878
Icelandic	56015	0.123271	0.150646	0.095804
Slovenian	21380	0.124883	0.152025	0.095673
Yugoslavian, n.o.s.	22300	0.119955	0.145346	0.095656
Irish	2510195	0.112326	0.130843	0.094452
Finnish	75190	0.112249	0.130295	0.094362
French	2483550	0.111482	0.128302	0.094187
Iraqi	25865	0.154069	0.195388	0.091175
Colombian	50435	0.101219	0.111729	0.090729
Latin, Central and South American origins, n.i.e.	14925	0.095142	0.099871	0.090084
Croatian	70140	0.127887	0.162575	0.089904
Spanish	220790	0.10168	0.118496	0.086201
Serbian	53825	0.138504	0.185465	0.08599
Canadian	5843120	0.105194	0.123727	0.085263
Cambodian (Khmer)	19700	0.08934	0.094854	0.083759
Maltese	21505	0.106487	0.126836	0.083739
Acadian	65645	0.098256	0.115361	0.08142
Berber	17170	0.089983	0.096461	0.080963
Chilean	22605	0.101969	0.122308	0.080491
Cuban	14485	0.106317	0.13338	0.079127
Italian	842945	0.114207	0.146908	0.078744
South Asian origins, n.i.e.	36390	0.120638	0.150746	0.077722
Métis	308565	0.092331	0.107241	0.077609
Macedonian	22330	0.11957	0.158323	0.077031
East Indian	731085	0.124144	0.162868	0.076359
Peruvian	21840	0.088141	0.101944	0.076174
Punjabi	59180	0.157993	0.221862	0.072346
Portuguese	250240	0.09323	0.11279	0.071731
First Nations (North American Indian)	663560	0.081115	0.092244	0.070571
Black, n.o.s.	14355	0.088123	0.10855	0.070118
Other African origins, n.i.e.	103535	0.088038	0.105658	0.069793
Caribbean origins, n.i.e.	14010	0.09065	0.116743	0.068045
Nigerian	24040	0.090058	0.109345	0.066482

Barbadian	19145	0.084095	0.105149	0.06502
Bangladeshi	21730	0.092499	0.112265	0.06361
Salvadorean	34855	0.080476	0.09538	0.063609
Albanian	18425	0.151425	0.223814	0.063253
Afghan	33965	0.135875	0.184525	0.062291
Trinidadian/Tobagonian	40240	0.081635	0.103404	0.060812
Tamil	23740	0.101306	0.131	0.060223
Somali	20670	0.080552	0.102252	0.055381
Haitian	80585	0.078613	0.105893	0.055268
Guyanese	44680	0.07509	0.097362	0.054803
Sri Lankan	77415	0.082413	0.105275	0.054093
Congolese	15850	0.066246	0.077292	0.053964
West Indian, n.o.s.	37450	0.077837	0.106463	0.052919
Ethiopian	21370	0.102012	0.148889	0.049407
Ghanaian	18530	0.072315	0.09563	0.045997
Jamaican	154280	0.072693	0.103182	0.045658
Inuit	32390	0.047854	0.053902	0.041971
Filipino	503640	0.0371	0.038026	0.036391

Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulations, Census of Canada, 2016, Total labour force aged 15 years and over by class of worker - 25% sample data

As age plays an important role in rates of self-employment when looking at the group between the ages of 45 and 54, those declaring they're ethnically Korean remain on top of the list of most self-employed group in the country at nearly 30% well above the national average of approximately 14% in that age group. Israeli and Taiwanese are next on the list, each with 28%.

Table 2

Canada 2016 aged 45-54	Total Number	Self-employed	Totsl	Male	Female
Total - Ethnic origin	4259595	593520	13.9	16.9	10.7
Korean	22395	6665	29.7	0.31108	0.285099
Israeli	2350	675	0.287234	0.344444	0.21
Taiwanese	2760	780	0.282609	0.31405	0.26045
Iranian	25475	6290	0.246909	0.305754	0.166821
Jewish	15210	3735	0.245562	0.275399	0.213947
Lebanese	24010	5735	0.238859	0.320485	0.124562
Turk	6295	1480	0.235107	0.285714	0.158513
Pakistani	19070	4480	0.234924	0.277235	0.148444
Syrian	5540	1295	0.233755	0.308176	0.133475
Afghan	5345	1180	0.220767	0.300448	0.0875
Armenian	7015	1520	0.216679	0.285912	0.143068
Palestinian	3710	800	0.215633	0.261224	0.130952
Punjabi	10715	2290	0.213719	0.294548	0.105148
Egyptian	9480	1995	0.210443	0.261023	0.133858
Swiss	17290	3615	0.20908	0.237347	0.180564
South African	4710	960	0.203822	0.244161	0.163482
Iraqi	5710	1110	0.194396	0.240506	0.12065
Arab, n.o.s.	10295	1965	0.190869	0.216691	0.139971
Moroccan	11100	2080	0.187387	0.196198	0.176796
Russian	72570	13580	0.18713	0.224636	0.152188
Lithuanian	6405	1190	0.185792	0.235294	0.138037
Czech	11010	2000	0.181653	0.199091	0.164396
Bulgarian	5325	965	0.181221	0.235514	0.126654
Australian	3860	685	0.177461	0.201044	0.151282
Dutch	122545	21655	0.176711	0.211094	0.141989
Greek	33170	5825	0.17561	0.227144	0.116929
Czechoslovakian, n.o.s.	5525	930	0.168326	0.198058	0.140917
Croatian	16645	2785	0.167318	0.218023	0.113184
Chinese	224290	37330	0.166436	0.196019	0.138086
Polish	124190	20640	0.166197	0.206905	0.127586
Other European origins, n.i.e.	7885	1305	0.165504	0.20341	0.124339
East Indian	145270	23915	0.164624	0.217669	0.101478
Danish	24570	4035	0.164225	0.1976	0.134109
Brazilian	3115	510	0.163724	0.182119	0.149533
Austrian	25635	4185	0.163253	0.183922	0.142802

Northern European origins, n.i.e.	6035	985	0.163215	0.176752	0.148532
Norwegian	53145	8595	0.161727	0.193354	0.131886
Slovenian	5355	865	0.161531	0.198874	0.126394
Belgian	21805	3495	0.160284	0.192619	0.127162
American	39245	6225	0.158619	0.174883	0.142893
Hungarian	41660	6590	0.158185	0.189659	0.12797
German	390335	61675	0.158005	0.187331	0.129019
Serbian	13765	2160	0.15692	0.211359	0.102131
Vietnamese	29710	4655	0.156681	0.163613	0.148711
Romanian	33555	5255	0.156609	0.199822	0.113371
South Asian origins, n.i.e.	8265	1280	0.15487	0.201621	0.085586
Albanian	3955	610	0.154235	0.230404	0.064865
Swedish	40295	6205	0.153989	0.18177	0.129891
British Isles origins, n.i.e.	80785	12340	0.152751	0.180709	0.127929
Ethiopian	5830	890	0.152659	0.221198	0.066148
Ukrainian	157455	23825	0.151313	0.185636	0.116737
Cambodian (Khmer)	3345	505	0.150972	0.16156	0.141935
Slovak	8210	1235	0.150426	0.182266	0.119277
Icelandic	11280	1690	0.149823	0.178506	0.121867
Latvian	3090	460	0.148867	0.16955	0.136364
Nigerian	5015	730	0.145563	0.177172	0.098558
Macedonian	5125	745	0.145366	0.198556	0.080851
Colombian	10990	1595	0.145132	0.151978	0.137994
Algerian	8455	1205	0.142519	0.146503	0.135861
Mexican	11460	1630	0.142234	0.147639	0.136767
Cuban	3130	445	0.142173	0.184971	0.085714
Italian	193190	27425	0.141959	0.184626	0.096754
Somali	4305	610	0.141696	0.211165	0.080178
Latin, Central and South American origins, n.i.e.	3155	445	0.141046	0.144201	0.144231
Maltese	4605	635	0.137894	0.162218	0.108295
Welsh	56540	7780	0.137602	0.160447	0.117764
Tamil	5635	775	0.137533	0.199074	0.05625
Japanese	12860	1765	0.137247	0.153916	0.124068
Bangladeshi	5395	740	0.137164	0.153738	0.105691
Yugoslavian, n.o.s.	5360	725	0.135261	0.160156	0.114286
Québécois	21260	2865	0.13476	0.160305	0.106667
Chilean	4015	540	0.134496	0.157635	0.110831

English	736850	98665	0.133901	0.156801	0.111537
Scottish	569720	75690	0.132855	0.156933	0.109796
Irish	536360	69655	0.129866	0.152711	0.10944
French	553700	71875	0.129809	0.151781	0.108163
Caribbean origins, n.i.e.	3140	405	0.128981	0.170648	0.092537
Finnish	16245	2095	0.128963	0.150032	0.10972
Peruvian	4370	560	0.128146	0.140436	0.117137
Canadian	1311670	164850	0.125679	0.151632	0.099335
Spanish	50100	6240	0.124551	0.151088	0.101425
Trinidadian/Tobagonian	7545	935	0.123923	0.163293	0.085938
Portuguese	56565	6885	0.121718	0.149924	0.090926
Salvadorean	6360	770	0.121069	0.135294	0.104553
Acadian	14410	1680	0.116586	0.145789	0.088556
Other African origins, n.i.e.	22485	2595	0.11541	0.13606	0.091429
Barbadian	4130	470	0.113801	0.148541	0.084821
Métis	65930	7385	0.112013	0.135585	0.089214
Black, n.o.s.	3425	370	0.108029	0.138264	0.085561
Sri Lankan	19415	2065	0.106361	0.145843	0.06018
Berber	5215	545	0.104506	0.108696	0.093484
Guyanese	9235	915	0.09908	0.138826	0.06237
Haitian	16185	1585	0.09793	0.141232	0.060206
First Nations (North American Indian)	146690	14210	0.096871	0.113213	0.081828
Jamaican	35370	3410	0.096409	0.141314	0.058164
West Indian, n.o.s.	9190	850	0.092492	0.141414	0.055396
Ghanaian	3555	260	0.073136	0.102894	0.0525
Congolese	3465	240	0.069264	0.07455	0.062706
Inuit	6745	355	0.052632	0.067976	0.039301
Filipino	116405	5040	0.043297	0.042917	0.043481

Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulations, Census of Canada, 2016, Total labour force aged 15 years and over by class of worker - 25% sample data

5. Immigration not necessarily the issue when it comes to self-employment

In general immigrants are more likely to be self-employed than non-immigrants but age does play a factor in explaining some of the gap. In effect, when controlling for age, the gap is reduced between immigrants and non-immigrants when examining the respective ratios of self-employed.

Table 3

Canada 2016	Total	Self-employed	Total	25-54	55-64
Total - Immigrant status and period of immigration	18672470	2194440	11.7	11	17
Non-immigrants	13953340	1554195	11.1	10.5	16.6
Immigrants	4449245	626720	14.1	12.8	18
Before 1980	682700	142375	20.8	14.6	18.7
1980 to 1990	702115	112470	16	14.1	18
1991 to 2000	1077140	153085	14.2	13.9	18
2001 to 2010	1317900	163645	12.4	13	16.9
2001 to 2005	647280	87085	13.4	14.3	18.2
2006 to 2010	670620	76565	11.4	12.2	15.3
2011 to 2016	669390	55145	8.2	8.4	13.6

Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulations, Census of Canada, 2016, Total labour force aged 15 years and over by class of worker - 25% sample data

6. Self-Employed: Not born that way

As mentioned above age plays an important role in self-employment. As the table below reveals, the tendency to be self-employed rises with age and hence so it would be difficult to maintain that some groups are genetically predisposed to self-employment. While not explored here the inclination towards self-employment is likely attributable the experience, skills and education of an important segment of a given group lend themselves to trades and industries that more in line with self-employment. In the table below we note that the 25-34 cohort has relatively low rates of self-employment whereas the highest share is amongst those persons over the age of 75 who are very often required to pursue self-employment if they still wish to work at that stage of their lives. We selected the 45-54 group as the benchmark for ranking levels of self-employment amongst Canada's ethnic groups. When controlling for age, the ethnically Korean population remains the most likely to be self-employed with Israelis 2nd on the list.

Table 4

Geography: Canada self – employed 2016	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and over
Total - Ethnic origin	7.5	11.7	14.1	17.2	30.2	47.9
Korean	0.076249	0.176404	0.305594	0.473015	0.544236	0.589744
Israeli	0.130102	20	0.292208	0.340741	0.327273	60
Taiwanese	0.09809	0.190307	0.288889	0.291667	0.319149	0.333333
Iranian	0.101103	0.170385	0.256525	0.309116	0.411867	0.4375
Jewish	0.135807	0.183061	0.248338	0.278713	0.381993	0.568807
Turk	0.129994	0.206132	0.246872	0.242947	0.330935	0.478261
Lebanese	0.111174	0.190683	0.246032	0.292762	0.366972	0.458333
Syrian	0.116893	0.171733	0.244802	0.259259	0.401235	0.722222
Pakistani	0.105639	0.19598	0.242097	0.26797	0.302013	0.416667
Afghan	0.107749	0.193329	0.231827	0.215457	0.25	0
Armenian	0.105548	0.158455	0.225519	0.27027	0.410169	0.54386
Palestinian	0.10307	0.180626	0.224719	0.321918	0.409639	0.545455
Egyptian	0.098031	0.147851	0.22032	0.257065	0.308917	0.34375
Punjabi	0.128982	0.203184	0.216548	0.191203	0.223077	0.21875
Swiss	0.117647	0.18831	0.211157	0.270071	0.438799	0.564286

Iraqi	0.105685	0.18717	0.20632	0.248162	0.285714	0.5625
South African	0.105166	0.142714	0.205348	0.241636	0.427536	0.545455
Arab, n.o.s.	0.092944	0.15765	0.202577	0.239716	0.282759	0.533333
Moroccan	0.103478	0.147979	0.195949	0.212329	0.365714	0.565217
Russian	0.109479	0.161961	0.189572	0.237713	0.380579	0.493902
Lithuanian	0.099644	0.150338	0.18844	0.228689	0.380048	0.506329
Bulgarian	0.097497	0.147913	0.185399	0.198459	0.326316	0.692308
Czech	0.088321	0.16274	0.183402	0.23156	0.406926	0.586207
Greek	0.085279	0.135366	0.178681	0.239744	0.397516	0.502646
Dutch	0.088093	0.142339	0.178223	0.224615	0.360715	0.526316
Australian	0.078717	0.144301	0.178153	0.227373	0.344538	0.8
Chinese	0.085946	0.137452	0.170359	0.17791	0.275776	0.5
Czechoslovakian, n.o.s.	0.075029	0.137179	0.170174	0.202067	0.354839	0.685714
Croatian	0.083036	0.135588	0.169817	0.177604	0.334884	0.510638
Brazilian	0.09168	0.120567	0.168874	0.195833	0.447368	0
Other European origins, n.i.e.	0.089163	0.145968	0.168605	0.199557	0.361607	0.551724
Polish	0.08555	0.140421	0.16814	0.206696	0.358979	0.512635
East Indian	0.081718	0.145901	0.167572	0.17101	0.247156	0.412351
Danish	0.087933	0.136018	0.16646	0.203195	0.375901	0.527027
Northern European origins, n.i.e.	0.081577	0.147791	0.165965	0.22057	0.417778	0.571429
Austrian	0.088847	0.142579	0.165089	0.219417	0.384831	0.571429
Slovenian	0.070215	0.132979	0.163671	0.184783	0.351563	0.444444
Norwegian	0.083443	0.143955	0.163356	0.217848	0.371139	0.564516
Belgian	0.083071	0.134759	0.161993	0.20995	0.382632	0.59
American	0.085445	0.139007	0.160687	0.198501	0.360731	0.518657
Vietnamese	0.084214	0.157488	0.160379	0.151823	0.207792	0.692308
Hungarian	0.082751	0.145239	0.160341	0.207438	0.374903	0.548638
German	0.08335	0.133703	0.15966	0.201539	0.3538	0.549958
Serbian	0.092648	0.154116	0.159116	0.210238	0.288591	0.5
Romanian	0.090943	0.139064	0.158953	0.190608	0.352483	0.506024
South Asian origins, n.i.e.	0.093148	0.133199	0.15822	0.164575	0.244604	0.333333
Albanian	0.150276	0.21134	0.158031	0.149289	0.214286	0.6
Ethiopian	0.056128	0.093851	0.157801	0.200514	0.133333	0
Swedish	0.083631	0.136658	0.155728	0.202456	0.358989	0.593496
Somali	0.030796	0.095816	0.155216	0.213296	0.166667	0
Cambodian (Khmer)	0.06085	0.098446	0.154671	0.123162	0.071429	0.666667
British Isles origins, n.i.e.	0.073445	0.121635	0.15453	0.183668	0.324413	0.486692
Ukrainian	0.083808	0.127926	0.15293	0.189723	0.322821	0.523022
Slovak	0.071384	0.146983	0.152563	0.188062	0.386207	0.578125
Algerian	0.080687	0.116213	0.151192	0.157563	0.2	0.5
Icelandic	0.073987	0.131602	0.15096	0.195409	0.355769	0.522727

Nigerian	0.04341	0.100666	0.150826	0.2	0.276923	0.4
Latvian	0.088972	0.138889	0.15082	0.231481	0.369048	0.542857
Colombian	0.079204	0.099722	0.148857	0.15812	0.177419	0.5
Macedonian	0.071806	0.118497	0.148111	0.18927	0.302521	0.608696
Cuban	0.079408	0.122989	0.146623	0.166667	0.15625	0
Mexican	0.095485	0.131276	0.145666	0.165318	0.248408	0.125
Italian	0.07269	0.122732	0.143707	0.179028	0.313489	0.477304
Latin, Central and South American origins, n.i.e.	0.05814	0.09715	0.143548	0.140449	0.194444	1
Bangladeshi	0.043243	0.082516	0.141627	0.201493	0.2	#DIV/0!
Tamil	0.073308	0.116398	0.140909	0.112593	0.12782	0.5
Maltese	0.078922	0.108768	0.139254	0.193043	0.230088	0.2
Welsh	0.074519	0.118345	0.138966	0.18006	0.319429	0.482428
Japanese	0.076368	0.12356	0.138922	0.184638	0.312207	0.442623
Québécois	0.084206	0.132265	0.137774	0.174761	0.306554	0.33871
Yugoslavian, n.o.s.	0.07033	0.1262	0.137311	0.175915	0.325153	0.526316
Chilean	0.068468	0.105116	0.136536	0.16041	0.282895	0.307692
English	0.071048	0.111465	0.135421	0.178133	0.314797	0.495002
Scottish	0.069846	0.112489	0.134332	0.176951	0.315143	0.487101
Caribbean origins, n.i.e.	0.055814	0.101551	0.131707	0.130573	0.164706	0.222222
Irish	0.067862	0.110931	0.13151	0.170574	0.310598	0.48764
French	0.072738	0.111988	0.131453	0.164143	0.301497	0.461696
Peruvian	0.074405	0.07645	0.131301	0.128015	0.213675	0.5
Finnish	0.077151	0.118678	0.130652	0.164179	0.342256	0.493151
Canadian	0.072105	0.108917	0.127173	0.153217	0.279817	0.429879
Spanish	0.069993	0.101421	0.126984	0.154939	0.253333	0.352941
Trinidadian/Tobagonian	0.059183	0.086086	0.126437	0.107948	0.17623	0.322581
Salvadorean	0.060943	0.087819	0.125	0.109529	0.222222	0.5
Portuguese	0.060549	0.098538	0.12352	0.148988	0.232465	0.42623
Other African origins, n.i.e.	0.056934	0.094566	0.118791	0.132717	0.201309	0.339623
Acadian	0.068813	0.107276	0.117688	0.141818	0.28012	0.428571
Barbadian	0.061728	0.100802	0.115055	0.102041	0.187919	0.208333
Métis	0.071539	0.104162	0.114072	0.143612	0.253444	0.485981
Black, n.o.s.	0.055649	0.102073	0.111446	0.119617	0.154545	0.2
Berber	0.062706	0.086207	0.109438	0.135849	0.341463	0
Sri Lankan	0.052707	0.102526	0.109029	0.104263	0.141243	0.347826
Haitian	0.062167	0.073596	0.101149	0.119837	0.243842	0.5
Guyanese	0.057466	0.084772	0.100993	0.109316	0.168224	0.388889
First Nations (North American Indian)	0.059475	0.087734	0.100004	0.126293	0.218164	0.359712
Jamaican	0.053208	0.082527	0.09837	0.096748	0.146754	0.25
West Indian, n.o.s.	0.052949	0.084634	0.095291	0.116698	0.150183	0.142857

Ghanaian	0.038	0.095238	0.075362	0.1376	0.209302	0.5
Congolese	0.066095	0.083004	0.07396	0.07393	0.137931	#DIV/0!
Inuit	0.033771	0.056196	0.055556	0.085799	0.156463	0.25
Filipino	0.027109	0.03633	0.043686	0.059335	0.096126	0.242857

Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulations, Census of Canada, 2016, Total labour force aged 15 years and over by class of worker - 25% sample data

7. Quebec's Self-Employed: More than one in four Syrians report self-employed when is considered

When it comes to Quebec's self-employed the groups shift somewhat with the pattern exhibited for Canada on the whole. As seen in the Table below amongst those between the ages of 45 and 54 it is Punjabi that are most likely to be self-employed followed by Australian. Ethnically Korean are in 4th spot with Jews ending up 12th. The more recently arrived Syrian group arrives within the top ten.

Table 5

45 to 54 years Québec 2016	Total labour force aged 15 years and over by class of worker - 25% sample data	Self-employed	
Total - Ethnic origin	980415	136590	0.139319
Punjabi	225	80	0.355556
Australian	190	55	0.289474
Iranian	2135	615	0.288056
Korean	650	185	0.284615
Israeli	425	110	0.258824
Ethiopian	155	40	0.258065
Czech	625	160	0.256
Syrian	2425	620	0.25567
Lebanese	8970	2235	0.249164

Pakistani	940	230	0.244681
Turk	1270	310	0.244094
Jewish	2300	540	0.234783
Swiss	2710	620	0.228782
Latvian	175	40	0.228571
Chinese	14535	3310	0.227726
Taiwanese	135	30	0.222222
Palestinian	505	110	0.217822
Lithuanian	690	150	0.217391
Austrian	1430	310	0.216783
South African	70	15	0.214286
Russian	5850	1215	0.207692
Vietnamese	4830	985	0.203934
Polish	7625	1550	0.203279
Armenian	2760	550	0.199275
Dutch	2725	540	0.198165
Cambodian (Khmer)	1370	265	0.193431
Icelandic	105	20	0.190476
Danish	730	135	0.184932
Afghan	770	140	0.181818
Arab, n.o.s.	4890	885	0.180982
Moroccan	9190	1635	0.177911
East Indian	4880	865	0.177254
Croatian	850	150	0.176471
British Isles origins, n.i.e.	3690	650	0.176152
Latin, Central and South American origins, n.i.e.	630	110	0.174603
Slovenian	345	60	0.173913
Egyptian	2560	445	0.173828
Hungarian	2935	510	0.173765
Other European origins, n.i.e.	1090	185	0.169725
Finnish	300	50	0.166667
Macedonian	120	20	0.166667
Ghanaian	240	40	0.166667
Belgian	5530	915	0.165461
Slovak	515	85	0.165049
American	4665	765	0.163987
Nigerian	245	40	0.163265
Czechoslovakian, n.o.s.	245	40	0.163265
Swedish	770	125	0.162338
Greek	9055	1455	0.160685

Welsh	1160	185	0.159483
Ukrainian	4570	720	0.157549
German	15860	2490	0.156999
Romanian	7560	1155	0.152778
Colombian	2975	450	0.151261
Spanish	9730	1470	0.151079
Albanian	435	65	0.149425
Trinidadian/Tobagonian	605	90	0.14876
Yugoslavian, n.o.s.	405	60	0.148148
Scottish	23870	3505	0.146837
Salvadorean	1670	245	0.146707
Italian	40765	5940	0.145713
English	24360	3475	0.142652
Algerian	7645	1085	0.141923
French	221970	30605	0.137879
Bulgarian	1345	185	0.137546
Irish	50150	6880	0.137188
Québécois	19890	2660	0.133736
Chilean	1200	160	0.133333
Canadian	581660	77485	0.133214
Acadian	3985	530	0.132999
Peruvian	2060	270	0.131068
Norwegian	725	95	0.131034
Serbian	845	110	0.130178
First Nations (North American Indian)	29840	3780	0.126676
Japanese	555	70	0.126126
Bangladeshi	555	70	0.126126
Maltese	120	15	0.125
Mexican	2335	280	0.119914
Jamaican	1380	165	0.119565
Iraqi	460	55	0.119565
Caribbean origins, n.i.e.	505	60	0.118812
Cuban	920	105	0.11413
Métis	7440	840	0.112903
Portuguese	7995	900	0.11257
Other African origins, n.i.e.	4540	490	0.10793
Haitian	13890	1445	0.104032
Berber	4720	485	0.102754
Brazilian	595	60	0.10084
West Indian, n.o.s.	610	60	0.098361

Tamil	305	30	0.098361
Barbadian	625	60	0.096
Sri Lankan	1635	155	0.094801
Black, n.o.s.	405	30	0.074074
Guyanese	350	25	0.071429
Filipino	5235	335	0.063992
Congolese	1775	95	0.053521
Inuit	1335	50	0.037453
Somali	155	0	0

Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulations, Census of Canada, 2016, Total labour force aged 15 years and over by class of worker - 25% sample data

When age is not taken into consideration it is the Jewish population that emerges as the group most likely to be self-employed in Quebec.

Table 6

Québec 2016	All classes of workers	Employee	Self-employed	
Total - Ethnic origin	4154010	3664920	489090	0.117739
Jewish	11780	9235	2545	0.216044
Iraqi	2070	1660	410	0.198068
Czech	3265	2620	645	0.19755
Syrian	11640	9350	2285	0.196306
Israeli	2705	2175	525	0.194085
Lebanese	37985	30870	7115	0.187311
Russian	28510	23170	5335	0.187127
Austrian	6265	5100	1165	0.185954
Punjabi	1455	1185	270	0.185567
South African	460	380	85	0.184783
Korean	3405	2795	615	0.180617
Icelandic	530	435	95	0.179245
Lithuanian	3465	2865	610	0.176046
Armenian	13640	11255	2385	0.174853
Palestinian	2825	2335	485	0.171681
Swiss	12985	10770	2220	0.170966

Iranian	11515	9555	1950	0.169344
Turk	6780	5640	1145	0.168879
Polish	41915	34960	6955	0.165931
Latvian	980	815	160	0.163265

Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulations, Census of Canada, 2016, Total labour force aged 15 years and over by class of worker - 25% sample data

8. Managing with ethnic origins: Korean, Lebanese and Israeli Canadians are most likely to be managers

As regards those ethnic groups that are in management occupations in Canada it is the ethnically Korean population that finds its way to the top of the list and in part confirms the link between self-employment and entrepreneurship. Other groups that are disproportionately self-employed are also found at the top of the list in management occupations (i.e. Lebanese and Israelis amongst others).

Table 7

Canada 2016	All occupations	Management occupations	
Total - Ethnic origin	18268120	2013365	11.0
Korean	95045	15955	16.7
Lebanese	107955	16605	15.4
Israeli	14175	2145	15.1
Palestinian	18300	2715	14.8
Greek	135160	20025	0.148158
Swiss	84070	12285	0.146128
Australian	23250	3275	0.14086
Armenian	32820	4620	0.140768
South African	22505	3105	0.137969
Austrian	114450	15765	0.137746
Taiwanese	16965	2335	0.137636
Lithuanian	32560	4440	0.136364
Belgian	101895	13790	0.135335
Czechoslovakian	22860	3075	0.134514

Egyptian	46535	6195	0.133126
Slovenian	21385	2830	0.132336
Jewish	75455	9855	0.130608
Syrian	27250	3535	0.129725
Italian	842945	109325	0.129694
Dutch	599195	76325	0.127379
Macedonian	22330	2830	0.126735
American	195190	24605	0.126057
Norwegian	251555	31655	0.125837
Icelandic	56010	7005	0.125067
Danish	111280	13785	0.123877
Welsh	262760	32480	0.123611
Czech	55755	6890	0.123576
Swedish	187695	23135	0.123258
Iranian	108845	13390	0.123019
Maltese	21505	2625	0.122065
English	3355025	409465	0.122045
German	1807030	220280	0.121902
Slovak	37885	4605	0.121552
Scottish	2613570	317210	0.12137
Latvian	16640	2015	0.121094
Russian	345500	41745	0.120825
Turk	29740	3590	0.120713
Ukrainian	753035	89515	0.118872
Polish	614765	72920	0.118614
Irish	2510195	295480	0.117712
Croatian	70140	8190	0.116766
Hungarian	185330	21610	0.116603
Other European origins, n.i.e.	38070	4305	0.113081
Romanian	136305	15185	0.111405
Chinese	871720	97100	0.111389
Japanese	58050	6455	0.111197
French	2483550	272005	0.109523
Yugoslavian, n.o.s.	22300	2440	0.109417
Bulgarian	19870	2160	0.108707
Moroccan	46705	5070	0.108554
Finnish	75190	8150	0.108392
Pakistani	90490	9800	0.108299
Serbian	53825	5570	0.103484
Canadian	5843120	592200	0.10135
East Indian	731090	74020	0.101246

Portuguese	250235	25075	0.100206
Arab, n.o.s.	41710	4155	0.099616
Barbadian	19145	1880	0.098198
Trinidadian/Tobagonian	40235	3905	0.097055
Acadian	65645	6255	0.095285
Spanish	220785	20990	0.09507
Brazilian	19275	1780	0.092348
Iraqi	25870	2350	0.090839
Guyanese	44685	4015	0.089851
South Asian origins, n.i.e.	36390	3235	0.088898
Albanian	18420	1630	0.088491
Mexican	62685	5490	0.087581
Métis	308560	26780	0.08679
Québécois	101905	8765	0.086011
Bangladeshi	21725	1845	0.084925
West Indian, n.o.s.	37450	3155	0.084246
First Nations (North American Indian)	663560	53420	0.080505
Afghan	33970	2730	0.080365
Tamil	23740	1895	0.079823
Sri Lankan	77420	6155	0.079501
Caribbean origins, n.i.e.	14005	1110	0.079257
Chilean	22605	1755	0.077638
Peruvian	21840	1695	0.07761
Punjabi	59185	4590	0.077553
Latin, Central and South American origins, n.i.e.	14925	1095	0.073367
Colombian	50435	3665	0.072668
Vietnamese	126835	9125	0.071944
Black, n.o.s.	14350	1030	0.071777
Algerian	28505	1985	0.069637
Cuban	14490	985	0.067978
Other African origins, n.i.e.	103535	6960	0.067224
Inuit	32395	2175	0.06714
Jamaican	154280	10350	0.067086
Nigerian	24040	1440	0.0599
Cambodian (Khmer)	19700	1145	0.058122
Berber	17165	980	0.057093
Salvadorean	34855	1920	0.055085
Ghanaian	18530	905	0.04884
Filipino	503640	23335	0.046333
Ethiopian	21370	835	0.039073
Haitian	80585	2970	0.036855

Congolese	15850	560	0.035331
Somali	20670	675	0.032656

Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulations, Census of Canada, 2016, Total labour force aged 15 years and over by class of worker - 25% sample data

9. Racialisation and self-employment: Korean score much higher than others

When visible minority status is used to rank self-employment rather than ethnic origin, the Korean group is also found at the top of the list.

Table 8

Canada 2016	All classes of workers	Employee	Self-employed	
Total - Visible minority	18268125	16073680	2194440	12
Korean	92205	72440	19765	21.4
West Asian	131205	108690	22520	17
Arab	216840	182715	34130	15.7
Chinese	767495	661555	105940	13.8
Japanese	46045	40245	5800	12.6
South Asian	979680	857805	121870	12.4
Not a visible minority	14371790	12609505	1762290	12.2
Southeast Asian	168200	149565	18630	11
Latin American	265235	238355	26880	10.1
Total visible minority population	3896330	3464180	432150	11.1
Black	578525	534795	43735	7.5
Filipino	478770	461420	17355	3.6

10. Conclusion: Should we be talking about a Korean work ethic?

Given the popularity of the Weberian adage that success in Capitalist societies is connected to a Protestant work ethic the current analyst might lead those inspired by the work of Weber to argue on the basis of the data that ethnically Korean Canadians possess a “Protestant work ethic”. But perhaps it is time to revisit this adage that was undoubtedly quite challenged over the 20th century and has not survived the test of time in the 21st. Maybe it’s time to speak about successful British and other Canadians exhibiting a Korean work ethic?