The Catholic Church and Education as Sources of Institutional Panic in the Philippines

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Abstract

In this paper, we analyse two important institutions in the modernising society of the Philippines: the Catholic Church and the educational system. If one is to follow conventional modernisation theories, religion can be seen as a backward institution founded on irrationality, whereas education is a critical institution that ushers in modern thinking. As a developing society, the Philippines and hence its institutions present responses to the contemporary modern condition that run counter to the above. In particular, we focus our attention on seeing certain crises within both the Catholic Church and the school system as indicative of what Blum has called an 'institutional panic'. Taking our cue from what is known about panic responses at the level of the individual, we perceive educational and Catholic religious institutions as exhibiting behaviours of hyper-vigilance as an answer to stress-related situations. At the same time, these entities also have periods during which they let down their institutional guard, and may appear as more passive and demoralised. This perspective allows us to look at the variable nature of panic at an institutional level, and investigate institutional patterns of response to situations of vulnerability.

Keywords

Catholic Church, education, modernity, institutional panic, reproductive health, profit-driven education

Introduction

The main preoccupation of classical sociology was social change, specifically at the level of institutions that arose with modernisation in Europe. After all, the rationality embedded in the modernisation process first and foremost demanded a bureaucracy that entailed differentiation between the secular and the religious. Specialised institutions arose within the secular sphere, including the state and its agencies for welfare, health and education, which were overseen by institutional religion — specifically, Christianity. In the West, these secular institutions have become highly advanced and effective contributors to the modernisation process, while established religion has generally declined in influence among the population (Davie, 2001).

The study of institutions has, therefore, been mounted in line with processes of modernisation. Theories of modernisation, especially during the period after World War II, focused on the importance of the nation-state, its bureaucratic institutions (such as education), and key change agents who were educated to follow certain models to facilitate urbanisation and economic growth (see Harrison, 1993). As far as religion was concerned, it became increasingly clear to many observers that institutional religion had become instrumental to the modernisation process in the Third World (see So, 1990; Martin, 2002). This is in contrast to the classical view that religion, as a bastion of traditionalism, must necessarily give way to progress. Institutions — both secular and religious — have, therefore, become largely appreciated for their effective engagement with processes of modernisation around the world.

The choice of religion and education for this study is not only the result of their being perceived at the opposite ends of the tradition-modernisation spectrum, but is also based on the fact that education and religion are two prominent sectors in the Philippines. Both institutions embody Filipinos' aspirations in their spiritual and professional life. However, both organisations also hold back people's aspirations, due to the inflexible position of the Catholic Church on the issue of population growth control and the decrease in government spending on education (13.9 per cent of the budget in 2005 versus 17.4 per cent in 2000), as well as widespread corruption in the education sector (Severino and Salazar, 2007:183).

In this article, we look at the fortunes of these particular institutions engaged with some aspects of the modernisation process. While there are several vantage points from which institutions may be studied, our interest here is in the responses to conditions of crisis that may be viewed as manifestations of what Blum (1996) has called 'institutional panic'. Institutional panic may be seen in some of the ways in which the Catholic Church is dealing with the Reproductive Health Bill and in how education is more and more a commodity to be sold and consumed, rather than a public good that demands special attention. Using the concept of 'institutional panic' allows us to theorise on organisational behaviours from a different perspective by linking the idea of collective mood to the study of institutions and the impact of interest groups on such organisations, as well as how the current crisis in these institutions underlines their need to search for new identities.

The empirical material for this study comes from publicly available discourses emanating from the Catholic Church and the education system as they have engaged with their respective issues in the Philippines. For the most part, these public discourses are accessed through existing media reports that reflect their social importance. In addition, paying attention to these public

narratives is an avenue to take into account the forms in which knowledge is framed and its potential impact on the Filipino audience (Czarniawska, 1997: 6).

Institutional Religion and Modernity

One common thread among classical sociologists was the attention they gave to religion and the view that its influence was bound to decline as society modernised — the secularisation thesis. While these sociologists did not have a systematic definition of secularisation, one can already sense that they had in mind primarily institutional differentiation, which meant the position of religion — the Christian Church, as far as Europe was concerned — was becoming less influential in the development of the nation-state. Discussing the secularisation thesis further is necessarily complex, since in the past century the theoretical contributions are as diverse as the number of contributing sociologists themselves (see Gorski, 2003; Davie, 2007).

To help us, Dobbelaere's (1981) work provides a thematic way of defining secularisation. To Dobbelaere, secularisation takes place at three levels: societal, organisational and individual. At the societal level, religion becomes merely one of the institutions differentiated from the others in a social system whose underlying mechanism is rationality. As a result, the services that religion (at least as far as European Christianity is concerned) used to provide, such as health and education, have been taken over by the state. Organisationally, secularisation may be seen in the declining membership and adherence to beliefs and practices. At the level of the individual, secularisation may mean the waning belief in the divine. Interpreting the transformations occurring at the latter two levels, however, needs more careful attention, as they can either be merely neutral changes or in fact indicative of declining religious significance (contrast Luckmann, 1967, with Hunt, 2005).

Even if there are three levels at which secularisation occurs, their interconnectedness is unquestionable. Here, Wilson's (1998) clear-cut view of religion is helpful. Wilson understands secularisation as taking place in three areas of social organisation (see also Dobbelaere, 2006): the locus of authority in society, character of knowledge, and increased rationality. Changes in the locus of authority within the social system mean religious sanctions are no longer called for to legitimate rational positions. The changing character of knowledge emphasises scientific discovery and instrumentality, which are expected of anyone participating in the different institutions of the social system. The point of all this is that religion no longer exerts a significant influence on the social system. Wilson (1998: 63) clarifies that the "... secularisation thesis focuses not on the decline of religious practice and belief per se, but on

their diminishing significance for the social system." Furthermore, in a social system heavily defined by individualism and rationality, it is becoming more and more difficult for religion to influence the life of individuals. In this reading, Wilson sees secularisation in terms of the Church's — for that matter, maybe any institutional religion's — declining influence over the religious disposition of individuals (see also Bruce, 1996, 2001).

Institutional religion will, thus, have to undergo adjustments in its function and role in society. Observing changes in religion in modern Europe, Davie (2001) sees that the persistence of institutional religion in many Western countries lies in the latter's having imbibed vicariousness. The concept of vicarious religion refers to the role that churches play on behalf of members of society, whether nominal or active believers. Churches, both Protestant and Catholic, are expected to provide religious services as needed by society, say, in times of death and burial. Indeed, the role they play might not be so much religious as cultural, but still, it "... is significant that a refusal to carry out these tasks would violate both individual and collective expectations" (Davie, 2001:107). Interestingly, the vicariousness of institutional religion in Europe is both indicative of and an inevitable reaction to the fact that the majority have become nominal believers. This is in spite of thriving religious communities among diasporic groups in the West.

The idea that institutional religion has lost its significance in the social system has led sociologists to direct their attention to contemporary religious subjectivities and practices that may not necessarily be credited to any religious institution. This is seen in the turn toward the study of religious identity and spirituality (see Luckmann, 1967; Coleman and Collins, 2001; Day, 2005; Heelas and Woodhead, 2005).

In other parts of the world, however, particularly in what Jenkins (2003) calls the global South, institutional religion may be said to be thriving. In fact, Berger (1999) uses empirical data on the pervasiveness of religion in the global South to recant his initial position on secularisation. Casanova (1994:41) complements this by arguing for what he sees as the deprivatisation of religion:

> ... that religious institutions often refuse to accept their assigned marginal place in the private sphere, managing to assume prominent public roles; that religion and politics keep forming all kinds of symbiotic relations, to such an extent that it is not easy to ascertain whether one is witnessing political movements which don religious garb or religious movements which assume political forms.

Casanova's project is to search for contemporary forms of religion that engage in modernity without imposing their historical position as the state church. This is an important question given that one feature of modernity is the

institutional separation of religion and state. Casanova (1994:57) argues that religion "... may enter the public sphere and assume a public form only if it accepts the inviolable right to privacy and the sanctity of the principle of freedom of conscience." In other words, religious institutions can choose to engage without alienating individual freedoms and other institutions. By doing this, religions become deprivatised and, hence, avoid the pressure to resist the institutional differentiation taking place in society, which is ultimately detrimental to them. It is at the level of civil society that public religions are successful, since at this level they are "... consistent with modern universalistic principles and with modern differentiated structures" (Casanova, 1994:219). In democratic nations, religious institutions are only one of many public voices that engage in debates over various issues.

Education and Modernity

If, as Casanova presumes, religion can have a public role to play in the modern world, then what is the relation between education and modernity? Modern societies emerged from a transformative era that Polanyi called *The Great Transformation* (1944). Max Weber saw this 'Great Transformation' as announcing the growth and dominance of rational thought. He became especially interested in the bureaucracy as an entity created out of rational thought and rational forms of organisation. Such evolution influenced education; Shipman (1971) reminds us that schooling is similar to other modern institutions, due to its specialised and bureaucratised nature. Indeed, the school progressively replaced the family as the venue for education, the former regulated by well-defined rules. The separation of education from the home was a response to the need for training youngsters for a "... world of organisation and bureaucracy" (p. 36), as well as instilling values that promoted solidarity and integration as a means to maintain social order.

Schooling is not only a tool for social control; it is also perceived as a means of economic growth. For instance, human capital theorists argue that investment in education speeds up economic development and social progress. In the same vein, Clark (1962:48) notes the vital economic function of education:

> In the technological society — the currently most advanced stage of industrialism — highly trained men replace raw materials and the factory machine as the crucial economic resource; and these men are trained through the educational institution — through schools and colleges and the educational systems that are springing up in industry and elsewhere.

This description of a technological/modern society is very similar to Daniel Bell's vision of a post-industrial society (1996) characterised by the centrality

of theoretical knowledge and spread of a knowledge class trained within specialised educational institutions.

O'Keffe (2002) expands the economic definition of modernity with a political component: private ownership and representative government. This author underlines how the late twentieth century represents an example of human capital formation, i.e., "...a very large accumulation of human capital effectively signalling a middle-class society" (p. 4). In this equation, education is the broker among the economic and social movements of modernity that sorts out talents and aptitudes among students. However, similar to the Philippine case, O'Keffe stresses how various politics and ideologies can make the educational system dysfunctional.

One suggestion for managing these different features of modernity (scientific development, rationality, bureaucratisation, specialisation, and diffusion of capitalism) has been the modernisation theory (Rappa and Wee, 2006:12). Since in this framework indigenous and traditional cultural norms and values are responsible for underdevelopment, most theories dealing with modernisation and development emphasise the universal aspect of modernisation — an evolution from urbanisation to mass literacy to communication to economic and political participation (Morgan and Kickham, 1997: 24).

One indicator of modernisation is education, which plays a key role in moulding individuals with secular, rational and individualistic attitudes. For instance, Kazamias sees the transformation of the educational system in Turkey as a component of modernisation, since the system offers a secular education aimed at creating "...new values, new ideologies, new human beings, new Turks" (1966:19).

Whereas modernity refers to the approach that there is only one explanation and description of the conditions of the existing world, modernisation theory addresses the various characteristics of a society (level of education, people's mentality, type of government, economic investments, etc.) in order to understand their level of economic development.

Modernisation theory has been criticised for being too Eurocentric — viewing the industrialised West as being the model to replicate in other parts of the world. Also, it fails to grasp the significance of external factors in explaining global inequalities. Yet Inglehart and Baker argue that, "A core concept of modernisation theory seems valid today: industrialisation produces pervasive social and cultural consequences, from rising educational levels to changing gender roles" (2000:20). While we agree with their statement that a partially rationalised world environment exists, at the same time we aim to underline how the social ideologies and group interests willing to use corruption to their own advantage are challenging the cultural rationalisation process of institutions by creating situations that can lead to institutional panic.

Religion and Education as Sources of Institutional Panic in the Philippines

Religion, Education and Modernity in the Philippines

Before discussing religion and education as sources of institutional panic in the Philippines, we need to present the challenges that these institutions are contending with. The challenges may be seen as having been brought about by the modern condition of the Philippines.

Following Casanova (1994), whose work on Catholicism covers the West and Latin America, the most imminent threat that religious institutions face in modern times is the privatising tendency that is the result of functional differentiation. Reflecting the discussion on secularisation above, established religion becomes merely one of the private institutions in society. Based on the experience of the Catholic Church in Brazil, Casanova notes certain conditions that lead to the privatisation of religion. Interestingly, these conditions may be said to resonate with the experience of the Philippines. First, Casanova notes that civil society, which encompasses religious participation, is bound to be demobilised once forms of resistance (especially against authoritarian regimes) cease and political stability is achieved. While civil organisations, including the Catholic Church, remain active in the Philippines, there is arguably an increasing consciousness even within civil society that the Church must stay away from influencing public policy (see also Shirley, 2004; Moreno, 2006). This consciousness appears to have been heightened after the first People Power Revolution against the Marcos regime in 1986, spearheaded almost single-handedly by the Catholic Church. Aside from the issues surrounding the Reproductive Health Bill that this paper seeks to analyse, Moreno (2006:136) observes that, "There have been [other] divisive issues that challenged the church-civil society nexus," such as "... divorce, women, and gender issues where public opinion showed views opposing the position taken by the church."

Second, "Under conditions of modern religious freedom the Catholic church is likely to face competition either from other religions or from secular worldviews" (Casanova, 1994:222). Although Catholic allegiance remains numerically dominant in the Philippines, one cannot deny the entry and potency of other religious movements, such as Charismatic Christianity (see Kessler, 2006), to name but one.

Finally, the Catholic Church is faced with issues brought about by internal diversity in terms of pastoral needs and religious opinion, with even bishops taking different positions on reproductive health (see Gonzales, 2008). But

when it adopts a particular position, the Church "...will have to justify it through open, public, rational discourse in the public sphere of civil society," thereby effectively making it a private institution (Casanova, 1994:223).

In education, the challenges to the institution may be gleaned from Blum's (1996:682) argument that university life in modern society is governed by the logic of panic in four areas. His four-tier classification is applicable to the Philippine case. First, he notes how the university is dominated by an 'external' society that requires tertiary schools to compromise the learning experience and embrace a more practicable application of knowledge to 'real life'. For instance, rationality, that is, the calculation of the most efficient means to achieve a goal — in this case, an economic one — has been embraced by some Philippine educational institutions, to the detriment of 'education as cultivation'. Indeed, the University of Manila, in order to prepare its students for a global world, has enforced 'English-only zones' on its campus since 2004. Since there has been enormous potential in the IT sector, with the rapid growth of call centres, the need for Filipinos to improve their English capacity is pressing. The scholar Peter Wallace argues that in order to maintain the growth of information technology enabled services (ITES), the government has to reinstate English as the medium of education (Severino and Salazar, 2007:196). In the University of Manila, this decision of 'English-only zones' means that students and faculty members are required to speak English inside and outside the classroom, even though many low-income students are not comfortable with this medium. Thus, we may wonder how the use of the English language might challenge these students' comprehension of the lectures' content (Overland, 2004).

Second, Blum notes that the impact of such a market economy is forcing the educational system to redefine its content in order to fit this ethos of competition and profit. The impact of the market economy in the Philippines has resulted in an international demand for nurses, leading private information-technology schools to become nursing institutions that are expanding rapidly but often not producing well-trained nurses (Overland, 2005a). Third, Blum adds that the quality of a course becomes defined by students' satisfaction, hence promoting behaviourism as the ethics of this system. Finally, the dominance of instrumental calculation leads to the dilution of education for its own sake.

The logic of panic is occurring not only in tertiary education; it is also occurring at other levels, often as a result of the state cutting back on education expenditure. Recently the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) raised the alarm regarding the increasing number of Filipino children between the ages of 6 and 15 years who do not attend school. The chairperson of ACT

estimates 3.3 million children out of school, a 78 per cent increase from 2002. Frequently cited reasons for not going to school include a "…lack of food or *baon*, transportation fare and the burden of the school fees" (Ronda, 2008). Indeed, the state of health care, a social service neglected by the government, has a negative impact on education. Apparently 25 per cent of the school dropout rate before the end of Grade 4 is due to children being 'underweight and under height'. This same condition is responsible for 35 per cent of the dropout before the completion of Grade 6 (Severino and Salazar, 2007:37). As social scientists note, poverty reduction demands investment in both health-care and education.

Since the state cannot ensure the educational interests of all citizens, some private or NGO initiatives have attempted to fill the educational gap by offering micro-solutions to educational challenges. For instance, Project Impact (Instructional Management by Parents, Community, and Teachers), implemented in a few areas in the Philippines in the 1970s, dealt with the issue of children who were located in remote and poor regions with understaffed schools and either did not attend school or did so only sporadically. A simple booklet on learning how to write and read was devised as a tool to respond to the economic situation of these children, the lack of teachers, and a low budget for education. The simplicity of the book meant that children could study alone, or count on an individual in their community who had basic reading skills to teach them their lessons when they could not go to school. Students and the community could substitute for the teacher, and learning could take place regardless of location. Further, learning in the classroom was done in groups, so that the stronger students could help the weaker ones and there was less dependence on teachers. Such measures enabled an increase in the number of students per teacher (Flores, 1981). Yet despite promising results, Project Impact failed to expand throughout the Philippines. Rather than aiming at universal application, an aspect of modernity, the initiative was viewed as a pilot project that was highly localised and contextualised. Further, the goal was to find targeted solutions to specific economic contexts, rather than implementing a general formula. Such a pilot project appeared as a rapid and partially effective 'fire-fighting' response to a clear crisis, but it lacked an overall vision.

In parallel, the deterioration and vulnerability of the public school system has resulted in the wealthy sending their children to private schools, where they receive better education. Thus, the equalising effect of education has failed to occur, and subsequently the promise of human capital theory that better educated pupils would promote greater economic development has not had a chance to be tested (Meinardus, 2003).

Common Response: Institutional Panic

The concept of panic became popular as a tool for social analysis in the litera-
ture on moral panic that emerged in the 1970s, especially Cohen's work
Folk Devils and Moral Panics (1972), which addresses deviance and youth cul-
ture. The concept has also been employed in other subfields, such as media
and cultural studies, as well as in research on natural and technical disasters
(Quarantelli, 2001). Thompson (1998) expands the meaning of 'moral panic'
when he describes modern nations as 'risk societies' that put their members in
danger through such occurrences as sexually transmitted diseases. In a similar
vein, Blum (1996) discusses the relation between adverse environments and
the logic of institutional panic that is the operational principle of major insti-
tutions in modern society.

We draw from Blum's (1996:675) view of panic as a sense of desperation
that arises when people feel unable to resolve a social problem. Such an orien-
tation leads people to give up hope of changing the situation for the better.
Instead, human beings opt for *ad hoc*, reactive and impulsive responses "... for
the sake of survival, self-interest, and materiality." This approach, as will be
seen, is relevant in order to understand recent actions carried out by individu-
als in religious and educational institutions in the Philippines. The notion of
panic is used to explicate the sense of desperation that these institutional col-
lectivities exhibit in the face of situations that threaten their position in society.

Panic, in Blum's assessment, may be analysed in two senses, namely, in
terms of the present situation that provokes an immediate response in the
form of a short-term, hyperactive panic; and in terms of an enduring condi-
tion that gives rise to long-term panic resulting in a situation of demoralisa-
tion and malaise.

Relating these ideas to the context of this paper, we perceive educational
and Catholic religious institutions as exhibiting institutional panic at two lev-
els. First, institutional panic may be in terms of short-term reactions and
hyper-vigilance as a result of crises or stress-related situations. Short-term or
hyperactive reactions are quick expressions of institutional panic immediately
targeted at the threat, while hyper-vigilance is a natural response following a
violent trauma, whereby the institution remains alert to any additional poten-
tial threats. However, at the same time, these entities also have extended peri-
ods during which they let down their institutional guard and may appear as
more passive and demoralised. On the whole, this two-level assessment of
institutional panic allows us to look at the variable nature of panic at an insti-
tutional level and investigate institutional patterns of response to situations of
vulnerability.

For the purposes of this piece, we do not delve into a comprehensive analysis of religion and education in the Philippines as institutions *per se*, recognising that institutional reactions to or engagements with modern conditions may vary at the same or different periods in time, as Moreno (2006) and Shirley (2004) have shown. What we focus on instead are certain institutional actions that, while they cannot speak for the entire institution, do provide insights into how these collectivities position themselves in relation to contemporary predicaments of Philippine modernity. In other words, the propositions spelled out in the following discussion do not view institutional panic as the overall condition characterising the Catholic Church and education in the Philippines. Institutional panic is being underscored in this paper to bring to attention other ways by which the institutions at hand are relating with their contemporary crisis. In so doing, the concept of institutional panic, which has not been employed thoroughly in the literature, is effectively used to shed light on recent events in Philippine society and the need for these institutions to rethink their own identity.

Panic in the Catholic Church

For the Catholic Church, the most imminent threat comes from the marginalisation of the religious institution as a result of functional differentiation in society. Here we argue that the institutional panic that is the response of the Catholic Church is best exemplified in the tension brought about by the Reproductive Health Bill.[1] Simply put, we see some of the recent actions by the Catholic Church against lawmakers lobbying the Reproductive Health Bill as exhibiting institutional panic in the form of short-term reactions and hyper-vigilance, and also long-term panic over its waning influence in civil society.

The issue of reproductive health in relation to population management has a long history in the Philippines, and its association with such sensitive matters as contraceptives has not been particularly helpful (Austria, 2004). The national policy on population depends largely on the president of the country and, arguably, the level of political stability that needs to be sanctioned by the Catholic Church. The current president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, has repeatedly stated that her administration's policy is limited merely to natural family

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[1] Admittedly, there are other responses to modernity that may be seen as strategic institutional assertions, such as the Charismatic movement within the Catholic Church in the Philippines (see Cornelio, 2008). This, however, does not negate the position of this paper, since institutional actions may vary and coincide with one another as a result of internal diversity, especially within the global Catholic Church (see Jenkins, 2003).

planning procedures and no more, a move that deviates from previous admin-
istrations' policies and is seen to seek political favour from the Catholic hier-
archy. In 2008, the Reproductive Health and Population Development Act
was submitted to Congress; this is still undergoing deliberation. Arguing for
the immediate need to address population as a development issue in the Phil-
ippines, the Act is intended, among many other objectives, to heighten aware-
ness of and access to both natural and modern family planning, which includes
the use of contraceptives, such as condoms, pills, and IUDs (Lagman, 2008).

Although the national population policy appears secure for the moment,
with the current president's unyielding stance, the proposed law, if passed,
becomes a national mandate regardless of whoever is president (although it
may be revoked or suspended, a process that takes time). Here the threat
becomes clear. The bill, while it may be coloured with issues of morality and
religion, is ultimately a challenge to the institutional and ideological position of
the Catholic Church over the state and society. Admittedly, however, the Cath-
olic Church may have the confidence that at this level of policy-making, its
institutional influence remains robust. As Moreno (2006:158) has rightly
observed, "[The] Church's survivability has proven that no matter what kind of
regime rules the Philippines, it invariably sought the loyalty of the Church..."

What could be more worrisome for the Catholic Church as an institution
is the fact that the Bill touches on private moral matters (such as the individ-
ual's decision to engage in sexual acts and whether or not to procreate). As
private affairs are arguably the last area of jurisdiction for religion in moder-
nity (see Hunt, 2005), the Bill becomes a more imminent threat to the insti-
tutional position of the Church over the individual. In fact, this subtle threat
must have become rather evident, since for a sustained period of time public
opinion has been in favour of the distancing of the Catholic Church from
government decisions (Abad, 2002). A recent national survey is more reveal-
ing, with 76 per cent of adult Filipinos supporting 'family planning education
in the public schools' and 71 per cent favouring the 'passage of the Reproduc-
tive Health (RH) Bill' (Social Weather Stations, 2008). The same survey
reveals that 58 per cent of adult Filipinos are at odds with the Catholic Church
by disagreeing with the statement that the "...usage of legal contraceptives
like condoms, IUDs and pills can also be considered as abortion."

To understand the different manifestations of institutional panic over the
Reproductive Health Bill, therefore, one has to understand that institutional
influence, as far as the Catholic Church is concerned, occurs at two levels:
policy making and the population at large. Institutional influence remains
forceful (but not necessarily absolute) at the former and is distinctly shaky at
the latter. At these two levels, the Reproductive Health Bill serves, in Blum's

(1996) framework, as the crisis or the emergency situation that exhibits precisely the move for greater functional differentiation in modernity, as Casanova (1994) has deftly explained.

This condition accounts for the recent reactions by certain influential members of the Catholic hierarchy, all indicative of short-term hyperactive reactions and hyper-vigilance. The most controversial, perhaps, has been the call by some priests and bishops to deny Holy Communion to those policy makers lobbying for modern family planning. In fact, a local councillor who introduced the use of artificial contraceptives and free sterilisation in a city in Metro Manila had to move his wedding to another venue when the priest used this as a threat against him (Gonzales, 2008). In the southern Philippines, an archbishop ordered his priests to deny Holy Communion to politicians pushing for contraceptives. The measure was approved by no less than the president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (International Herald Tribune, 2008).

In addition, Austria (2004:98) observes that the Church's anti-contraception position literally equates to "...all modern family planning methods, including birth control pills, injectables, IUDs and even barrier methods with abortion..." Although the perception of modern family planning as abortive remains to be debated (as some of its measures may not necessarily be so using the Church's very own definition of abortion), the Catholic Church has insistently declared it as such. To call all forms of modern family planning, and by implication the entire bill, pro-abortion becomes the justification for the denial of Holy Communion to supposedly erring politicians. This is in spite of the repeated clarification from some sectors that the Bill does not legalise abortion. Furthermore, the bill's association with abortion appears to be effective in antagonising it. In the official statement by the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development (Philippine Information Agency, 2008), the "...issue of the RH Bill promoting abortion has long been clarified... We are disgusted with how some bishops continue to display irresponsible behaviour of spreading disinformation on the bill, refusing to take it for its real intentions and choosing instead to demonise it; to look for ghosts that are not there."

Some influential members of the Catholic Church have also invoked the religious obligation that Catholic policy makers ought to adhere to. The chairman of the Episcopal Commission on Family and Life of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines declared on radio that Catholic lawmakers "...should behave like Catholics," which meant the rejection of the Bill (Manila Bulletin, 2008). This is, of course, in spite of the assumed non-religious position of the legislative.

Finally, another action that exhibits institutional panic is the threat of a vote against these politicians. The same local councillor above, who still had another term to run for, was warned that he no longer had the vote, a clear message "...that is apparently being sent to other *solons* both in the local government units and the national government" (Isis International — Manila, 2008). Even the head of El Shaddai, an influential religious group, declared that politicians supporting the Bill would not be endorsed in the next election.

By and large, these actions of prominent leaders in the Catholic Church may be seen as indicative of institutional panic against the emergency situation that the Bill represents. Following Blum (1996), these are forms of panic as they exemplify a sense of desperation as well as how an interest group, the Catholic Church, is trying to continue influencing a weak state. This becomes more glaring when contrasted to Casanova's (1994:223) thesis that "...whichever position or option it takes," modern forms of religion "...will have to justify it through open, public, rational discourse in the public sphere of civil society." Casanova (1994:58) further argues that the effective involvement of religion in the modern public sphere is often justified when its arguments invoke freedom, rights and ethical considerations that "...show, question, and contest the very 'limits' of the liberal political and social order."

By failing to follow these expectations in the civil society, such forms of Catholic institutional panic are arguably hyperactive reactions that the other participants in the public sphere, particularly the state, will find difficult to answer sensibly, a reason why the tension is going to be endless. Very recently, for example, bishops have decided to walk out of Senate discussions on the Bill "...because the Catholic Church's views on population policy were not being taken into account" (Bordadora, 2009). In addition, some of these reactions, in particular the use of electoral threat against politicians, may be deemed as manifestations of hyper-vigilance in the sense that they are forms of alertness against the future threat that such candidates pose against the Catholic Church.

Casanova (1994:215) intelligently notes that, in other words, "...public religions in the modern world... do not need to endanger either modern individual freedoms or modern differentiated structures," which are being violated by institutional panic. Within this framework, institutional panic reflects resistance against functional differentiation, which can be detrimental to established religion in the long run. In the case of Spanish Catholicism, it eventually lost influence in the public sphere since it was viewed — even by its adherents — as conservative. The Catholic Church in Spain may then be seen as in a long-term state of panic because of this. As it fails to engage strategically in the public sphere, the Catholic Church in the Philippines will always face

external threats, whether from the state or even other non-religious organisations. Alongside this sociological assessment, the other important research question deals with whether the Catholic Church in the Philippines, by exercising institutional panic, marginalises or consolidates its followers.

At any rate, the Catholic institutional panic appears to be successful since the number of lawmakers willing to support the Bill is declining (Isis International — Manila, 2008). This, however, does not negate the initial premise of this paper that the Catholic position is being threatened. Apart from the functional differentiation that the Bill is grounded in — at least in principle — public opinion over the Bill remains to be debated.

Panic in Education

Complicating Blum's view of emergency situations is the existence of a weak Philippine state and a political system interwoven with corruption and clientelism (King, 2008:162). Clientelism defines the relationship of patronage between a patron and a client that is a bond based on submission to the patron, who in return provides protection and favours to the client (Rappa and Wee, 2006:60). Such a system opens the door to corruption, as it stands in opposition to the concept of a modern centralised state ruled according to legal authority. Indeed, the Philippine state's failure to keep public and private spheres separate has had negative consequences on education. Moreover, the pressure of the foreign debt burden and the existence of a powerful elite that is more globally oriented than protectionist has put the interests of the free global market first (Porio, 1997:14).[2] For instance, when the Commission on Higher Education, embracing a behaviour of hyper-vigilance, revoked the permits of schools due to the poor quality of education the schools delivered to students — in terms of training them for the international market — the owners of these institutions went to the presidential palace and, thanks to their connections, were able to have the higher education commission's ruling overturned (Overland, 2006b).

At the same time, Filipinos have an 'equally enduring suspicion of a strong state' (Abinales and Amoroso, 2005:2). Their negative experience with past authoritarian rulers explains such suspicion. Despite the 1991 implementation of the Local Government Code which aimed to transfer central powers to local governments and communities, citizen groups often squared off against the intermingled interests of the political and economic elite, which used state structures to maintain their power and access to resources (Porio, 1997:10–

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[2] Such an elite, powerfully anchored in the Philippines, often emerged from the Spanish-run schools in the Philippines. These schools fostered an educated Westernised class whom the Americans relied on to implement various policies (May, 1980:xvi).

11). In conjunction with the pro-elite bias of state and class structures, the Philippines has also failed to develop a culture of accountability. Such an environment makes it almost impossible to make policy promises that are credible in the long run, what MacIntyre in his study of institutions refers to as 'credible commitment' (2003: 18–23).

The following is a case in point. Research has shown that the general population in the Philippines shares a commitment to education — especially college education — as a means of embarking on upward social mobility and reducing family poverty (Miralao, 2004:76). However, the Philippine education sector has exhibited a long-term situation of panic, which can counteract such goals of upward mobility. More precisely, the recent collapse of education-savings plans, offered by the College Assurance Plan, resulted in nearly a million students ending up unable to pay for college. This situation was precipitated by the rapid increase in tuition; tuition at private colleges and universities rose up to 50 per cent a year for several consecutive years. The tuition increase, in turn, was due to both the government's removal of the 10 per cent cap on tuition increase in the 1990s, and the negative impact of the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

However, these were not the only reasons. A 1990 report underlines how fund managers for the prepaid-tuition companies based their calculations on unrealistic projections of very low inflation rates and tuition fees. Moreover, the funds were poorly invested, creating 'a ticking time bomb'. In a class-action lawsuit, Ms. Pascual-Lopez asserts that the Sobrepeña family, the owner of College Assurance Plans, employed the funds as its private piggy bank to pay for real-estate ventures, golf courses, and vacation properties held by relatives. While there is no evidence of any misdeeds committed by senior politicians in this case, many believe that the relations between powerful business and political interests continue to protect the corporate players, just as they did under the Marcos regime. Indeed, reports point out that the Sobrepeñas are family friends of President Arroyo and are, hence, unlikely to be prosecuted for any wrongdoing (Overland, 2006a). This situation fits Blum's (1996:675) conditions for long-term institutional panic, in which educational institutions are unable to control corruption and experience a malaise, or "...a sense of the irremediable limits of the 'good.'"

Blum also tells us that educational institutions are behaving according to a logic of panic when they willingly compromise educational quality by following the logic of business in the name of survival and profits (1996:682–683). The three following Philippine examples support the above argument. In a deregulated world economy, the expansion of a global market economy and educational development are perceived as rational means of achieving economic success. This trust in rationality, meaning a disposition for calculating

the most efficient means to achieve one's aims, is a lynchpin of modernity. However, within the education arena we encounter irrationalism entangled with rationality, since human demands may be violated by instrumental rationality, i.e., the rationalisation of an activity as a goal-oriented project. For instance, in the Philippines many maritime schools have converted overnight into nursing schools in a desire to profit from the international demand for nurses. Such impulsive moves have contributed to a pool of poorly qualified nurses (Overland, 2005a).

Since the educational system is becoming more and more a provider of products being sold to student-consumers (Stones, 1998:43–44), the quality of education becomes defined by students' satisfaction, hence promoting behaviourism as the ethics of this system. Not only do educational institutions tailor their courses to attract students; a number of them may also ensure high graduation rates to satisfy student demand. Indeed, learning institutions have been suspected of leaking test answers to students. Compostela Valley Rep. Manuel Zamora filed a resolution demanding an investigation into this problem and the creation of new laws that would intercept and prevent such leaks (Manila Standard, 2006; Overland, 2007).

Finally, the dominance of instrumental calculation leads to the dilution of 'being educated', which may downgrade the quality of educational environments overall in ways that are harmful to society at large. Such dilution is epitomised by Ms. Azurin, a former nurse: "I am waiting for McDonald's to offer nursing to go, with fries on the side" (Overland, 2005a). The *ad hoc* institutional expansion of dubious and more expensive schools also triggers impulsive student protests against the "...privatisation and commercialisation of education in the Philippines," according to Alvin A. Peters, President of the National Union of Students of the Philippines (Overland, 2008). Lacking integrity, the institution of education appears as an organisation that is damaging itself, moving away from its mission to offer educational mobility based on advancing students' knowledge and intellectual growth.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study has been to investigate the relationship between modernity and two types of modern institutions in the Philippines: the Catholic Church and the sector of higher education. Linking the notion of collective mood to the concepts of interest groups and a weak state allows us to argue that both types of institutions are in a state of 'institutional panic', that is, they exhibit types of institutional behaviour that typify patterns of short-term reactions and hyper-vigilance, and long-term malaise. This situation is a

result of specific features of modernity that include functional differentiation, economic and educational deregulation, the evolution of values regarding family and sexuality, and population migration. Reinforcing this institutional panic are the cumulative factors of corruption and clientelism within Philippine society and its state institutions.

Contrary to the idea that modernity weakens religion, the Philippine case shows how religion is interwoven with modernity, especially in the way religion plays an important role in politics. On the other hand, education is struggling to fulfil its mission as the 'modern religion' of the masses that can offer academic opportunities and, subsequently, professional mobility.

Alongside these features of the Philippine nation, we also find high ideals regarding the functioning of society that were inherited from the Spanish and American colonial periods. On one hand, the parish friars were in charge of primary education, where the emphasis was mainly on religious education. The legacy of such 'prayer schools' has been a high level of spirituality among key sections of the population, as well as the long-standing involvement of the Catholic Church in shaping social policy (Abinales and Amoroso, 2005:92–93). On the other hand, American colonisers sought to promote free public elementary and secondary education as a means to attain mass literacy and to build one of the foundations for a democratic policy (Abinales and Amoroso, 2005:122). The post-colonial sense of falling short of these ideals, combined with the country's quest and then failure to achieve the modernist promise of rapid social and economic development in the 1960s, continues to reinforce a sense of institutional panic within the country's religious and educational arenas.

Hence, there are two matters at stake: the issue of organisational identity, as well as what promises for the future these two institutions (the Catholic Church and education institutions) can deliver to the Filipino population. More specifically, what is the identity of an educational institution that is less and less based on the pursuit of knowledge and a commitment to specialisation but more and more driven by profit? What is the identity of a Catholic Church that is damaging itself by refusing to accept adequate limits to its power in politics and society?

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