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The Impact of the Catholic Church on Mass Mobilization: A Comparison between the Church and protests in Chile and the Philippines

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The Impact of the Catholic Church on Mass Mobilization: A Comparison between the Church
and protests in Chile and the Philippines

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Table of Contents

- I. Abstract
- II. Introduction
- III. Literature Review
- IV. Case Studies
 - a. Philippines: Levels and Influences of Catholicism
 - b. Philippines: Catholic Church's response to Dictatorships in the 1960s-1980s
 - c. Recent Protests in the Philippines: 2020 Junk Terror Bill Protests
 - d. Filipino Catholic Church Leaders response to Junk Terror Bill Protests
 - e. Chile: Levels and Influences of Catholicism
 - f. Chile: Catholic Church's response to Dictatorships in the 1960s-1980s
 - g. Recent Protests in Chile: 2019-2020 Estallido Social
 - h. Chilean Catholic Church Leaders' response to the Estallido Social Protests
- V. Analysis
 - a. Levels and Influences of Catholicism
 - b. Catholic Church's response to Dictatorships in the 1960s-1980s
 - c. Recent Protests: Junk Terror Bill and the Estallido Social
- VI. Conclusions
- VII. Bibliography

I. Abstract

This study examines the effects of religion on mass mobilization efforts in the 21st century. More specifically, it studies the influence of the Catholic Church during the June-July 2020 "Junk Terror Law" protests of the Philippines and the October 2019-March 2020 Chilean "Estallido Social" protests. As both countries have exhibited varying degrees of Catholic influence since the dictatorship of President Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines and the military junta of President Augusto Pinochet, this study compares and contrasts the Catholic Church's response to their respective protests that occurred just around the same period. Through discourse analysis of statements, press briefings, and newspaper articles detailing the protests, this study observes the Catholic Church's response to protests, human rights errors, and political participation in Chile and the Philippines. This analysis reveals that Liberation Theology has not yet entered the official Catholic Church's responses towards mass mobilization for either Chilean or Filipino Catholics. The public Catholic Church response to protest and human rights errors depends heavily on how they are perceived by the people at large, and the recent allegations of sexual abuse and coverups by the Chilean Catholic Church have seriously sabotaged their political voice in the country. The Filipino Catholic Church, however, still possess a salient political voice over Catholic Filipinos as a result of historical characterizations as human rights protectors due to their involvement in rejecting the Marcos administration during martial law and a judicial system that has not allowed sexual abuse victims of the Church to express their allegations. This study contributes to the growing interdisciplinary research on religion and politics by underscoring the importance of religious institutions in championing human rights and analyzing one of the largest, nongovernmental landowning bodies in the world.

II. Introduction

The general public views religion and politics as oil and vinegar, by themselves they make attractive options to guide their decisions, but together, seems impossible to mix evenly. Politics and religion, as per the salad dressing metaphor, by themselves, possess strong ideologies and justifications for why they should steer an individual's actions, positions, and discourse, but they are rarely seen working in tandem to guide. More often than not, one overpowers the other. The more common form this takes in the world is the faithful practitioner whose political voice is subservient to their religious affiliations. However, a reversed relationship of a religious affiliation inspired by political ideology has not been explored or conceptualized enough.

Religiosity and political participation do not exist as opposed, on the contrary, they can coexist and even inspire one another. Typically, one assumes Western, organized religious institutions and their followers flock to conservative ideology because of their shared interest in maintaining tradition and centralizing Judeo-Christian values in all aspects of life. However, the occurrence of religious people and groups adopting socialist-leaning ideologies has not been given mainstream attention even though Christian theology- one of the most dominant religions in the world- preaches the importance of collectivism and preferential treatment of the poor (Prov. 19:1). The Second Vatican Council, a series of meetings by the Catholic ecumenical council that took place from 1962-1965, served as the key event that restructured Catholicism in various forms as a way of "updating" the Church as Pope John Paul XXIII called it (Carbone). Of the new changes to Catholic doctrine and teaching at the time, a shift in how the Catholic Church focused on meeting the needs of underdeveloped predominantly Catholic nations and the larger goal of protecting human rights emerged (Pope Paul VI).

Therefore, this study questions if the Catholic Church's position in the conversation of human rights has taken a more active approach by siding with marginalized people in the last fifty years? Similarly, how has Liberation Theology, "a social and political movement within the church that attempts to interpret the gospel of Jesus Christ through the lived experiences of oppressed people" figured into this response (Dault)? The Papacy has spoken publicly in favor of political issues as of late, the most notable example being *Laudato Si* that advocates for ecological activism and calls for the protection of the Earth as that is in line with liturgical teachings. However, this one example of the Papacy speaking out for a political issue such as climate change leads one to wonder whether or not they advocate for other explicitly political issues such as protests.

At the macro level, this paper explores the history and effects of Liberation Theology in changing how the Catholic Church inserts itself into a political discourse on the side of the oppressed. I argue that they do so in an attempt to remain relevant during a social and political era where their power wanes. To illustrate this relationship and observe cases at the micro-level, I compared the Catholic Church as a political actor in the Philippines and Chile. To measure political participation, I focused on to what extent a layman is influenced by the local clergy to join protests and mass demonstrations. Similarly, my research investigates the role of the Catholic Church in the conversation of political repression during a digital era where their potential reach is as large as it has ever been; given the tool of the internet- and as threatened as ever because of the ongoing crisis of sexual abuse allegations against clergy members. I argue that religious people and clergy are more involved in political protest within Catholic countries that also happen to be part of the global south due to the emergence of Liberation Theology championed by Latin American priests.

This paper will use two case studies: one of the June-July 2020 Junk Terror Law Protests that occurred in the Philippines, and the 2019-2020 Estallido Social protests of Chile. I examine the discourse of the clergy and parishes in response to protests occurring in their respective nations. Both the Junk Terror Law and Estallido Social protests were selected due to their contemporary nature and the differing motivations behind protesting. The two countries were also chosen because Chile and the Philippines can be considered as cousins of sorts- although the Philippines resides in Asia, culturally, it exists in a gray area due to its imperial origins as a Spanish colony. Therefore, the Philippines can be viewed as another Latin American country because Latin America as a region and the Philippines as a single nation exists as part of the developing world. Most importantly, both Latin America and the Philippines were colonized by the Spanish that resulted in a comparable amount of Catholic and Spanish cross-cultural influence imposed by their colonizers.

Importantly, I will discuss both countries' relationship to Liberation Theology, Marxism, protests, and autocratic regimes. Chile is an interesting subject because of its history with political repression during the dictatorship of President Augusto Pinochet that occurred from 1973 to 1990. Similarly, the Philippines also dealt with a dictator around the same time as President Ferdinand Marcos grew in power from 1968-1986. Both countries have a shared past with the practice of "red-tagging" subversives, martial law, and heavy U.S. foreign policy influence that supported their respective dictators. However, Cold War effects on Latin America have produced nuanced theories as to how events unfolded which has then swayed the public opinion of the United States within Latin American countries. Dissimilarly, the Philippines does not exhibit this complexity in their public discourse yet. The dictatorships and subsequent revolutions or political movements that sought to change their governments affect the current

political unrest we witness today in the two countries. What is relevant to explore in the research of this paper is whether the attitude of the Catholic Church has changed over supporting repressive political regimes just because they align with their interests.

Even though Liberation Theology's ideology fits well into some liturgical teachings of the Bible and Jesus, Liberation Theology has been shunned by the official channels of the Catholic Church. It has been the subject of much controversy within the official deliberations of the Church as many clergy members are hesitant to adopt any teachings that remotely even reference socialism or Marxism. Yet, the fact remains that Liberation Theology highlights a preferential treatment of the poor. Special care given to the vulnerable has always been a mainstay of Christian theology so why has a movement towards progressive and active politics not been visible?

The Catholic Church as a political actor possesses many doctrines that would align it with the motivations of many popular movements and protests today, for instance, the Estallido Social of Chile seeks to address socioeconomic inequality in their country and the Junk Terror Law protests are a continuation of Filipino anger over the extrajudicial killings of journalists and other citizens under President Duterte's administration. Despite these clear connections and motivations for becoming involved in the struggle, there are no Vatican or Papacy calls to protest. Even on the ground, where the Archbishops of Santiago and Manila would easily be the key guiding political forces in their countries, there are few fiery calls to action or statements in support of protestors. The research and discourse analysis conducted revealed that Chilean Catholic hesitancy stems from the Catholic Church's abysmal reputation in the country due to sexual abuse allegations that occurred just before the Estallido Social. For the Philippines, Catholic response to the Junk Terror Law protests is more noticeable than Chile from local

parishes and the Archbishop of Manila. However, the Vatican and Pope have yet to comment on the unfolding unrest and protests undertaken by Filipinos.

This study begins with a review of relevant and recent literature about the influence of Catholicism on democratic governments, Liberation Theology, and the growing popularity of protests as a dominant form of political participation for young people today. Following that will be a case study of the Philippines and Chile. This section is divided by country and has subsections dedicated to chronicling the overall influence of Catholicism as a whole on the state, the Catholic Church's response to dictatorships during the 1960s to the 1980s, and the profile of the recent protests unfolding. The end of the case study for each country will then analyze a primary source that exemplifies the Catholic clergy's reactions, responses, and opinions of the unfolding civil unrest. Lastly, this study analyzes these themes by comparing and contrasting the variables presented in the case study section. Following the analysis will be conclusions, suggestions for future research, and broader implications.

III. Literature Review

This section provides a literature review on the topics such as religion's role in democratization, Liberation Theology, and the expanding role of protests as a form of political participation. My research exists on the borders and intersections of three distinct academic disciplines- theology, political science, and sociology. As such, the literature review will be divided into three subsections dedicated to each discipline to illustrate the existing literature on the subject of religion and protest participation.

To begin with a broader view of the topic, the section dedicated to looking at political science literature will highlight perspectives on how Catholicism and Christianity have influenced democratization. Next, the section dedicated to theology will discuss the development of Liberation Theology in Latin America and its influence since its introduction by Gustavo Gutierrez. Finally, the sociological section of the literature review will explore existing scholarship on the role of political protests and how religious institutions can inspire mass mobilizations as a popular form of political participation in the 21st century.

The Influence of Catholicism on Democratization and State Formation

First, a key relationship found between religion and political participation is the occurrence of democratization within predominantly Christian countries around the world. In his influential article "Democracy's Third Wave", Samuel P. Huntington explores the phenomenon of democratization in the 1970s to the 1980s and the factors that may have contributed to many countries returning to democracies in the post-World War II era. Huntington goes to great lengths to describe how American influence and Christianity aided the project of returning democracy to a popular form of government after a period of backsliding in the 1940s when several

governments turned to fascism or authoritarian regimes. He also overtly states that one of the key reasons the third wave of democratization was able to come about and spread globally was because of "A striking shift in the doctrine and activities of the Catholic Church, manifested in the Second Vatican Council of 1963-65 and the transformation of national Catholic churches from defenders of the status quo to opponents of authoritarianism" (Huntington, 13). Huntington argues that the Catholic Church played a crucial role in democratization in the 1970s-80s because it was a global institution with sway over countless followers, but overall exhausted its power by the 1990s. Of note from the article is the discussion of a reverse wave of democracy that swept through countries like the Philippines and Chile that saw the ousting of democratically elected leaders in favor of military coups and juntas that governed for some time. Interestingly, the two countries of comparison in this thesis have a shared experience in backsliding from democracy, but the two Catholic countries also appeared to have differing church involvement with their military dictatorships. The case study section will go into greater depth about the different responses the Catholic church took during the Philippines and Chile's military dictatorships and subsequent calls for democratization.

In line with Huntington's perspective about the deep ties between Catholicism and democratization, Peter L. Berger argues that doctrine and the structure of the Catholic Church created the theoretical framework to conceptualize democracy. Modern democracy "presupposes that every individual, regardless of birth, must confront God by himself" which speaks to the foundation of individualism and therefore universal human rights in a democracy (Berger, 78). Although popular thought seems to only view the relationship between religious institutions and democracies in terms of the debate about separation of church and state, democracy reveals to have similarities and possibly roots in religious thought. The piece further highlights the

importance of Vatican II for bringing the Church into agreement with democracy due to the influence of an American Jesuit who brought a “distinctively Catholic legitimation of religious liberty and democracy” to the Council which parallels democratic thought in that an individual idea brought to the group, deliberated over, voted on, and given final approval by an executive leader can become official legislation (Berger, 77).

Both authors suggest that the Catholic Church's transformation from defender of authoritarianism to an opponent representing democracy and human rights should not be thought of as unthinkable. Despite the Catholic Church's prior record of being opposed to democracy, it can still function alongside governments within limits because Western Christianity and democracy have always gone hand in hand. These two highly cited arguments represent one side of the debate of whether or not the Catholic Church can be seen as an institution that defends human rights.

On the other side of the debate over the Church's relationship to democracy, some scholars suggest that the evolution to defenders of human rights was born from the Catholic Church's desire to remain relevant. Recent literature from researchers who highlight Liberation Theology suggests that perhaps the relationship between religion and democracy was not Catholicism influencing democratization, but instead democratization forcing Catholic doctrine to reevaluate their position as enablers to authoritarian governments. Scholars such as William Holden and Kathleen Nadeau who wrote about the effects of Liberation Theology in the Philippines view the shift in the Catholic Church's rhetoric about salvation as a response to how "it became increasingly apparent... that the demands of the modern world required [the Catholic Church] to make changes or risk becoming irrelevant" (Holden & Nadeau, 96).

Other scholars still perceive the Catholic Church as an obstacle to democratization because of its history of opposing democracy in its doctrines. In a distinguished piece of literature written by Alfred C. Stepan, "Religion, Democracy, and the 'Twin Tolerations'" discusses the conundrum of compatibility between religion and democracy. His main argument explains friction that the state and church have when rubbing against one another that pushes them to consider "twin tolerations" towards one another. The "twin tolerations" are the "minimal boundaries of freedom of action that must somehow be crafted for political institutions vis-a-vis religious authorities, and religious individuals and groups vis-a-vis political institutions" (Stepan, 37). In this perspective, the Church and governments must tango for an upper hand that allows them to set the parameters of their influence without overtly overstepping their bounds into one another's territories. From this perspective, the two institutions exist as tango partners leading one another to shared goals and smashing when they reach a boundary. This relates to Berger's argument that the structure of the Catholic Church can account for democracy, but specifically within limits (78). Political scientists who consider the effects of Liberation Theology push forward the argument that political issues have spurred more action from the Catholic Church to position themselves with "the people" and their human rights to maintain legitimacy. The main distinction is that the church is forced to move with the times rather than the influence coming from them and onto governments.

Overall, historian Dennis Shoemith puts it succinctly as to why it remains important to continually observe the political voice and influence of the Catholic Church- "The Church remains the only disciplined, nationwide body outside the direct control of the state" (248). And while Shoemith was referring directly to the case of the Catholic Church in the Philippines, it stands to reason that this observation can be extrapolated to the rest of the globe where the

Catholic Church either historically- or presently- holds cultural, social, and spiritual significance. In any of the countries it maintains a sizable presence in, it always exists as a formidable political voice outside the direct purview of the state, and as such, must be observed as a political actor.

Liberation Theology

To further explain the latter perspective of the Catholic Church's change because of pressure from their followers, this section will highlight Liberation Theology. In "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" Karl Marx utters the infamous phrase "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people" which has forever put Marxist theory and religion on opposed axes (Marx, 1). States that have adopted Marxism and socialist governmental structures have a pattern of instituting reforms that take land away from the Church which then raises their concern since the Catholic Church at least exists as one of the largest, nongovernmental landowning bodies. Further tension between communist governments and the Catholic Church can be explained by the tendencies for the new political leaders to deemphasize the role of religion within the state, sometimes going so far as to institute state-sanctioned atheism as a way to better align their societies with the image of the ideal communist state. Historically speaking, the policies distancing the church and state in communist governments have soured many religious institutions from forming doctrine or dogma that invokes the language or goals of communism for fear of association with the ideology. However, the Catholic Church's strong desire to distance themselves from Marxism often aligned their institution with violent and repressive regimes. As outlined in the previous subsection, the Cold War era saw the backsliding of popularly elected democracies and the rise of dictatorship that

often went through periods of hysteria over "subversive elements" they wished to expel from their countries (Huntington, 18). In response to the violence governments perpetuated against their citizens, Latin American priests came together to conceptualize a theology that would place primacy on human rights, preferential treatment for the poor, and highlight the need for active participation in gaining salvation that was no longer just spiritual, but socially and politically as well.

The leading figure in this new movement was Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez who wrote the central text of Liberation Theology known as A Theology of Liberation. The revolutionary text called for tangible action to match the teachings of the Bible. Gutierrez states that "Theological reflection would then necessarily be a criticism of society and the Church insofar as they are called and addressed by the Word of God; it would be a critical theory, worked out in the light of the Word accepted in faith and inspired by a practical purpose—and therefore indissolubly linked to historical praxis" (132). Gutierrez was one of the first forces to argue for a theology that centered on salvation in the present rather than waiting for deliverance in death. This theology shook Catholic thinking to its core. He was critical of the way the clergy of the Catholic Church became bystanders to suffering and poverty because of their overemphasis on abstract concepts like heaven and the afterlife. Similarly, his explicit acceptance of Marxism into his prescriptions of how Catholics could better nourish themselves spiritually was unique because of the Church's stance against the ideology.

To explore the historical reasons for the disagreement between Marxism and Christianity, Matthew Kurian writes that "revolutionary doctrines which attempted to fight feudalism were naturally treated as theological heresies" which points out some of the first motivations the Church had in shying away from progressive politics (5). In truth, religious institutions must be

seen as political institutions as well as spiritual communities because they possess their policy interests within the state- none more so than the Catholic Church itself with its vast amount of land. In the modern era, especially in the United States, the general public has lost sight of the fact that the Catholic Church has a vested interest in political issues besides social reasons. The Catholic Church ranks among world powers in terms of landholding rights, some estimates put their ownership at around 177 million acres (Schuler). Therefore, the Catholic Church is a deeply political institution that possesses its motivations for influencing its followers' participation in political matters.

Protests

In this section, the lens of sociology will be applied to Catholicism and political participation. Political participation reveals itself in many forms as citizens can involve themselves in the political process byways of donation, voting, or even canvassing. There are a myriad of ways that religious institutions become involved with politics, for example, in the United States, churches inspire civic engagement because of their structures as communities within communities. There have been numerous studies done to determine the sway religion has on political participation (Kessler & Rüland), and the consensus is that "Churches, as organizations, give parishioners a greater ability to participate in politics through the development of civic skills" (Djupe & Grant, 304). Political participation derived from civic skills taught by religious communities usually means a mobilization in voting because it proves simpler to recruit voters by introducing a shared identity. Their participation is also influenced "if their political activity becomes infused with religious motivations and symbols" (Djupe & Grant, 310).

Nevertheless, the form of political participation at the center of my research will be protests because of their growing frequency and normalization in the last twenty years. Political Scientists Mason Moseley and Daniel Morerno suggest that "protest has become a 'normalized' form of political voice" in Latin America after researching protest participation in Argentina and Bolivia. He proposes two theories for why people decide to protest: disaffected radicalism or because protests are conventional strategic resources. The former theory states that protests function as "a response to abject economic and/or political conditions, and constitutes a rejection of the key representative institutions of the political system" and as "a threat to the legitimacy of democracy, as citizens express discontent not with particular leaders or issues, but with the political system itself" (Moseley & Moreno, 2).

Other scholars disagree, and assert that rather than a radical expression of dissatisfaction with aspirations of rejecting the dominant political system and calling for a new one, protests are instead conceptualized as another form of "conventional political participation in modern democracies" that seek to improve the material conditions of the current system (Moseley & Moreno, 2). Moseley and Moreno go on to agree with this latter perspective as they detail data from surveys and in-person interviews that reveal that those interested in political protests are those who are already more likely to be involved with other conventional methods of political participation such as voting, union membership, and civic engagement. This suggests that if protestors were inspired by the disaffected radicalism theory, they would come from extremely marginalized groups who were at the receiving end of mass inequities from their governments and societies. Instead, their study identifies highly educated, middle class who vote as recurring demonstrators.

In this regard, their analysis presents visible gaps between theories as to why people protest and the demographic makeup of participants. However, I argue that although the makeup of demonstrators may not be those who are extremely marginalized, this does not indicate that their protest participation is not inspired by some form of radicalism nonetheless. Involvement in conventional methods of politics such as voting does not necessarily exclude a desire for radical change in governmental systems as citizens can understand that perhaps for the time being the only tangible form of progress they can be involved in is through conventional methods such as voting. Revolution and systemic changes are slow and detailed processes that require small and sustainable efforts and voting in the meantime while also fighting for a radical shift in policy and structure are not mutually exclusive. Additionally, it is no surprise that those involved in protests are more likely to be interested in politics prior or come from less marginalized backgrounds as they are the ones with enough privilege to spend time protesting and taking to the streets while their working-class or uneducated counterparts are more vulnerable. For example, working-class or uneducated people may want to protest but refrain from joining for fear of lost wages or retaliation from their employers for being involved.

All in all, Moseley and Moreni raise very key points about the overall "normalization" of protests as a viable channel for political expression. Notably, in Bolivia, "support for democracy seems to be positively associated with protest participation, as Bolivians who believe democracy is the best form of government are more likely to take part in protest marches and demonstrations" which is a sentiment one can expand to a trend seen more generally in Latin America as a whole (Moseley & Moreno, 4).

IV. Case Studies

The effects the Catholic Church has on modern protests can better be explored through a case study of two countries that have held demonstrations in the last three years and also possess an intertwined history with Catholicism. For this matter, the Philippines and Chile have been selected as sample candidates for analysis because of their recent protests, history with Catholicism, and their differing public perspectives on the Catholic Church. Both nations are former colonies of Spain and effectively have been marked by the influence of the Catholic Church in political, social, and religious matters. Chile and the Philippines also come from similar trajectories towards independence from the Spanish metropole with Chile achieving sovereignty in 1826 and the Philippines separating from Spain in 1898. Although not much scholarship has been done to acknowledge the Philippines as part of Latin America, it is vital to emphasize its inclusion into the cultural understanding of what constitutes Latin America if the definition of admission into the group means a history of Spanish colonization. In truth, parts of the national Filipino language of Tagalog and its culture are derived from their Spanish colonizers which undoubtedly has occurred in other Latin American countries, such as Chile, as well.

Furthermore, the 1970s era of military dictatorships swept Latin America at around the same time Filipino dictator Ferdinand Marcos rose to power. Pinochet's military dictatorship took control in 1973 which is the same year Marcos instituted martial law in the Philippines. Interestingly, the Catholic Church's responses to the respective dictatorships in the Philippines and Chile were markedly different- in Chile, the church was associated with the repressive regime of Pinochet whereas the Philippines saw heavy involvement from Catholic priests in the toppling of Marcos's hold on the government. As a result, contemporary society in both countries

has opposing perspectives on how the Church should operate in times of civil unrest. In this manner, the case study will present the two responses of Catholic involvement to recent protests.

Data and Methods

The data collected in this section will come first from secondary sources to contextualize the Catholic profile of the Philippines and Chile and the period of authoritarian regimes that affected how the people of each country began viewing the Church as either an ally or enemy in the struggle against governmental oppression. The sections focusing on the ongoing protests of the Estallido Social and the Junk Terror Law movements will then focus on the primary sources of response from Catholic leaders to national civil unrest. Data used in the sections about recent protests will come from a wide variety of news organizations, some global and others more domestic. Examples of global news coverage will come from sources such as *Reuters*, *The Guardian*, *CNN*, and *Al Jazeera*. The more local publications come from news organizations such as *Rappler* and *Davao Today* from the Philippines, and *El Trece* and *CNN Chile* for Chile. Additionally, Catholic newspapers written for a Catholic audience will be utilized such as *The Crux* and *The American Magazine*, *The Jesuit Review of Faith and Culture*.

Lastly, the methods employed on these primary sources will be a discourse analysis whereby I will analyze the statements, press briefings, and events of the protests. Through the discourse analysis I discern the influence of the Catholic Church on protests, whether or not they can be characterized as active political guides in the issues expressed by protestors, and the occurrence of terminology or ideas related to Liberation Theology in their statements, sermons or other public speaking events.

Philippines: Levels and Influences of Catholicism

According to the Filipino news site *Rappler*, the National Statistics Office (NSO) [estimates that] "there are 74,211,896 followers of the Roman Catholic Church, or 80.6% of the Philippine population" in the country (Bueza). While numbers may have reduced slightly over the last twenty years as some Catholics have begun identifying with different sects of Christianity- notably evangelical factions- the Philippines has overall remained a Catholic anchor for the Vatican. Many in the Philippines pride themselves on their status as "the bastion of Catholicism in Asia"(Borlongan-Alvarez). In this manner, the Philippines can be categorized as an easy case study since the population at large still self-identifies with Catholicism.

Even as Catholicism has been threatened by the waves of increased allegations of sexual abuse and cover-ups over the past twenty years, the Filipino Catholic base has not been affected as much as other predominantly Catholic countries. Journalists Shibani Mahtani and Regine Cabato theorize that this could be because "Only a handful of cases come to court trials, and even when priests admit wrongdoing, the system still leans in their favor. No priest has been convicted of child abuse or other sexual misconduct [in the Philippines]" (Mahtani and Cabato). Whether it be judicial, social, or religious factors, the Philippines has not seen a dip in the number of Catholics when compared to Latin American countries such as Chile, Brazil, or Guatemala.

Philippines: Catholic Church's response to Dictatorships in the 1960s-1980s

The Catholic Church of the Philippines stood as a prominent force against martial law and the repressive rule of President Ferdinand Marcos. This can be embodied best by how prominent Catholic leaders involved themselves in the ongoing public struggle against Marcos

during the climactic People's Power Revolution of 1986. Described by many as a bloodless revolution and shifting of political power, two million Filipinos took to the streets of Manila to march following the assassination of a key political opponent to Marcos- Senator Benigno Aquino Jr.. Manila's Archbishop Jaime Cardinal L. Sin took part in the 1986 EDSA People's Power revolution that marked an end to the twenty-year Marcos dictatorship and the beginning of free elections with the ascension of President Corazón Aquino (Samonte). Archbishop Sin called for peaceful protest and for Filipinos to align themselves with the military that had already begun to defect from Marcos rule. At a Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, Cardinal Ricardo Vidal called for Catholic voting to correct the wrongs of the Marcos government by voting for Corazón Aquino, stating "If such a government does not of itself freely correct the evil it has inflicted on the people then it is our serious moral obligation as a people to make it do so" (Vidal).

Similarly, Radio Veritas, a Catholic radio station that the Archdiocese of Manila operated at the time, was instrumental in mobilizing people to take to the streets on February 22nd, 1986 as it reported the news of military defection from Marcos' authority. Cardinal Sin directly called for people to rebel and turn out for EDSA People's Power Revolution to show solidarity for the military units that had started the coup (Deats, 33). Cardinal Sin emphasized nonviolence as part of the involvement in the EDSA revolution. His orders to his fellow clergy members, specifically nuns, was "to fast and to pray to avert civil war (Deats, 33). Cardinal Sin's call for Filipino Catholics to join the march and demonstrate against Marcos in the last dying gasps of his power stands as an overt link between Catholicism and mass mobilization.

During this time, there was also the beginnings of a Filipino Catholic theology that specifically took examples from Latin American Liberation Theology. This came mostly in the

form of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC) which can be defined as "a new revolutionary movement transcending class-based politics and hierarchical organization to build up an alternative system of power represented by the people" featuring a "neo-Marxist perspective" (Holden & Nadeau). A small but significant shift away from a conservatism that oftentimes left the poor and oppressed out of the mission's of the Church was taking place in Catholicism at large as "Mainstream church teaching itself was shifting to the 'left' as the Roman Catholic and some of the member communions of the National Council of Churches of the Philippines (NCCP) responded to a worldwide debate in Christian circles on social justice" (Shoesmith, 247). Social justice became a defined and celebrated cause that leaders of the Catholic hierarchy adopted following the period of dictatorships and military juntas that spread across the world in the Cold War "Red Scare". But interestingly, the Vatican sought to differentiate themselves with Liberation Theology specifically at the time, something Cardinal Sin ultimately agreed with (Gorospe, 151). The era of Marcos, martial law, and an overall shifting of the entire Catholic Church positions on social justice combined to make way for a politically active Filipino clergy in the 1960s to 1980s.

Recent Protests in the Philippines: 2020 Junk Terror Bill Protests

Duterte's administration has been criticized by both international human rights groups- the U.N., Human Rights Watch, etc.- along with domestic organizations such as the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines for its extrajudicial killings and violence against the urban poor. Combined with the rise in terrorism, culminating in an international incident in Marawi, Mindanao where ISIL members invaded and occupied the city for months during 2017,

Duterte's administration has been trying to stamp out terrorism and ensure national security within its borders.

On June 3rd, 2020, the House of Representatives passed an Anti-Terrorism Act that would replace a previous version of national security legislation called the 2007 Human Security Law, however, the new 2020 version came with concerning changes as to what constitutes terrorism. Many human rights activists, who were already critical of Duterte, have stated that the Terror Law will be used to silence dissenters and critics of his presidency. President Duterte and his cabinet are not unfamiliar with vocal critics and dissidents throughout his term. Another key point of criticism of the 2020 Anti-Terrorism Act is that it could unjustly detain and imprison people for fourteen to twenty-one days without a warrant or charge. The Philippines has had a long history of labeling dissenters as terrorists or communists since the Cold War, which is known in the country as "red-tagging" (Pagusara).

Filipinos have lamented that this may reveal to be yet another step closer to declaring martial law in the land, which holds a frightening place in the Filipino consciousness due to the events of the Marcos presidency in the 70s. Since June 2020, and until now, the demands of the "Junk Terror Law" movement have been to remove Duterte from office, repeal the Anti-Terror Law, and reinstate ABS CBN- a national media source known for being critical of Duterte- to full broadcasting ability after its lease with the government expired earlier this year.

Protests erupted in Manila during the second week of June, which also coincided with the 122nd anniversary of the country's independence from Spanish colonial rule. One of the key events that triggered wider protests in Manila was the arrest of the "Cebu 8" on June 5th in Cebu City (Lachica). The main group consisted of seven students from the University of the Philippines Cebu who organized a rally outside the university campus; the eighth person arrested

was a mere bystander. They were kept in detention until a judge ordered their release after "various organizations and individuals who supported the calls for their immediate release [through] widespread condemnation of their arrest, overwhelming efforts to raise a bail fund, and the free services provided by lawyers and paralegals" were given national attention (CNN Philippines Staff). What followed was a week of protest against the bill in the more visible capital city of Manila over independence weekend.

On June 12th, 2020, activists organized a rally called the "Grand Mañanita", which referred to "the abuse of power and privilege when [the] National Capital Region Police Chief- Debold Sinas- was allowed to get away with violating quarantine [social distancing] rules with the excuse that he was merely celebrating his birthday", meanwhile the police had broken up or stopped Junk Terror Law protests and LGBTQ+ Pride events for violating the same lockdown guidelines (Contreras). Activists and protestors were aware that many police departments and government bodies would claim that their assembly would violate the general community quarantine, therefore, they practiced social distancing while also highlighting the hypocrisy of those in power who were enforcing the guidelines arbitrarily. Protesters came with "balloons, paper hats, and other party paraphernalia to the venue after the suggestion of several social media users, including Senator Kiko Pangilinan who tweeted that calling the gathering a mañanita would 'avoid arrests' " (CNN Philippines Life Staff). Grand Mañanita took place at the University of the Philippines Diliman and comprised of around 1,000 Filipinos who marched from the campus to the Human Rights Commission wearing caricatured costumes of Duterte and masks, as well as carrying various signs that proclaimed "Activism is not Terrorism". Those who were in attendance consisted of university students and activists, as well as other vocal critics of Duterte's human rights record such as religious organizations, human rights lawyers, and

environmentalists. The protests also benefited from online activism that encouraged the international community to speak up and join the movement.

Their demands were clear that they wish for a continuation of freedom of speech, dissent, and an end to arbitrary imprisonment and arrest. Although the Anti-Terror bill has officially become law, there are already sixteen different petitions and lawsuits filed to the Supreme Court of the Philippines challenging the law's constitutionality, two of the challengers are original authors of the 1987 Philippines Constitution, and one is a Jesuit priest (Buan).

Filipino Catholic Church Leaders response to Junk Terror Bill Protests

A statement by the Association of Major Religions Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP), which comprises mostly Christian- rather than just Catholic- leaders intended to help connect all Filipino religious leaders to better address issues of poverty and spirituality. On June 3rd, 2020 they published a post entitled 'STATEMENT ON THE ANTI TERRORISM BILL AND THE RE-OPENING OF CHURCHES' penned by Fr. Cielito R. Almazan and Sr. Mailyln Java. They begin with a quote from the Bible and continue by lamenting "While our embattled nation continues to suffer from the tempests of the COVID-19 virus, and its effects on the lives of millions of Filipinos, especially the poor, the leaders of the land have, unfortunately, been trying to fast track the passage of a controversial House Bill" (Almazan & Java). The emphasis on the poor relates to the BEC movement's mission of addressing the common person's material poverty, and on their website, they detail the history of their group and how they believe that "evil forces of greed and corruption which stem from the menace of globalization have more than ever before laid a stranglehold over the people's lives through government pseudo-reforms imposed by the external agents often beyond ordinary human control. In the context of these

realities, the major superiors gained a deeper understanding of consecrated life"(Almazan & Java). It appears that even without identifying as a basic ecclesial community, some religious groups have incorporated tenets of Liberation Theology into their view on how to better serve as religious leaders.

The Facebook post continues by saying "only through efforts for peaceful resolution of hostilities while addressing the root causes of such violent acts comprehensively, and not just militarily will genuinely answer the roots of violence that is rampaging across our land" but also furthers political involvement when they defend freedom of speech (Almazan & Java). The religious superiors place power in politics when they state "Political dissent and criticism are very much part of democracy. They ensure the checks-and-balance of powers of the officials of the government, push them to act more justly, remove any ambition of any ruling administration to authoritarianism, and help to shape the course of the people's narrative as a nation. Any attempt to silence or stifle them is a great disservice to the aspirations of our nation to be a 'just and humane society'"(Almazan & Java). The quotes convey hope for political involvement by their members and followers by citing at least three lines from the Bible and outlining their grievances towards the danger they fear will be directed at vulnerable members of society.

Chile: Levels and Influences of Catholicism

According to a study conducted by the Center of Public Studies (CEP), a Chilean political think tank, where Chileans were surveyed about their political beliefs, Catholicism's decline amongst Chileans has occurred only recently. Economist Ricardo González writes for the CEP that the adult Catholic population has "fallen five percentage points between 1990 and 2008 and 14 points in the last decade, that is to say, the slope of Catholicism in Chile has been much

more recent" (González, 2). This research was published in 2018, only a year before public outrage was set to erupt in the protests of the Estallido Social in October 2019. González outlines the reasons for this drop in followers to the rise of evangelical Christianity becoming more prominent in Latin America over the past decade (2). Another explanation he offers is the global phenomenon of secularization that has caused people today to no longer identify with a particular denomination or a belief in a god figure. This reveals the reality that religion's grasp as a whole has weakened society.

Additionally, political professor Paul E. Sigmund from Princeton University observes in "Revolution, Counterrevolution, and the Catholic Church in Chile" that despite "larger percentages [of Chileans who] consider themselves somewhat religious... 40 percent or more of the population has voted consistently for parties that are traditionally anticlerical...it is clear that the church is not an overwhelmingly important source of legitimation" (Sigmund, 28). In Chile, the division between church and state can be marked in voting patterns and the way that socialist and socialist-leaning parties can garner votes in larger numbers as compared to other predominantly Catholic countries. Chilean voters and laypeople view their spirituality as separate entities where in this case the political voice leads instead of an overt loyalty to the clergy and official institutions of Catholicism.

Nevertheless, González makes no point in discussing another vital variable in analyzing the declining membership of Catholics in Chile. Sexual abuse scandals and their treatment by the Church is the unavoidable elephant in the room when discussing the contemporary reputation of the Catholic Church in Chile. Also in 2018, Fr. Fernando Karadima, a prominent priest in the social elite circles of Santiago, had his title and clerical status revoked by Pope Francis after years of accusations and litigation over the sexual abuse of young boys in the 1980s (San Martín,

“Pope Removes Notorious Chilean Abuser from the Priesthood.”). His crimes were one of fourteen high-profile Catholic priests who were stripped of their titles for either engaging in sexual abuse or aiding in the cover-up of said crimes. Suffice to say, Catholicism and the Vatican have been seeing diminishing returns in Chile as the number of adults who self-identify with religion has fallen in the last twenty years.

Chile: Catholic Church's response to Dictatorships in the 1960s-1980s

The Catholic Church's response to the political situation in Chile during the Pinochet years presents a fractured picture, to say the least. Many priests with a more conservative lean were unsupportive of the Marxist government of Salvador Allende, whereas other priests were interested in weaving socialist ideology or progressive politics with Catholic theology in lieu of the Liberation Theology movement sweeping the region at the time. A notable clergy member who fell into this latter category was Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez, who claimed that Christianity's goals better fit with that of socialism rather than capitalism (Sigmund, 30). He was a supporter of human rights, social reform, and the redistribution of some church lands in the years leading up to socialist, Chilean president Salvador Allende's election and subsequent coup. Cardinal Silva represented the factions of priests, and possibly even the official Catholic Church, who tolerated Marxism because of their shared visions on preferential treatment for the poor. Here, one can observe the influence of Liberation Theology on the Catholic Church as conferences in 1968 Medellín, Colombia coincided with the Second Vatican Councils taking place throughout the 1960s. A great example of the influence Liberation Theology had on specifically Chile is the radicalization of the Christian Democratic Party in the 1960s. Their party interests and goals were tailored towards issues such as “agrarian reform as a central issue, called

for partial nationalization-what they termed Chileanization-of the American-owned copper industry, and promoted the creation of groups of so-called marginalized slum dwellers, neighborhood committees, and mothers' centers that would give organizational expression to what they vaguely defined as communitarianism” (Sigmund, 28). Another notable group operating during the time was the Vicariate of Solidarity, an organization founded by Cardinal Henríquez specifically tasked with providing legal service to the family members of disappeared peoples and victims of torture or extrajudicial killings by military forces under Pinochet (Ruderer). It is clear from some factions and individual priests operating during the Allende presidency that generalizing the entire Catholic Church as Pinochet supporters and Allende opponents would misconstrue the reality of diverse Catholic clergy opinion.

The Catholic Church's perceived association with conservatism and the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile stems, instead, from the military junta's repeated use of Christian morality to structure their new governmental and social system following the coup of Allende. For example, the junta published a Declaration of Principles in March of 1974 where "most of which had been written by a right-wing, Catholic former student leader, Jaime Guzmán" (Sigmund, 33). The Declaration of Principles called for the establishment of a "new democracy" through the "formation of new generations [instilled] with the concepts of love of God, of the Fatherland, of the family . ." which contains references to Catholicism as a driving force of morality in this new Chilean society under Pinochet (Loveman, 264). While of course there were members of the clergy who were more conservative and opposed to socialism within the church, it appears that for the most part, the Catholic Church is broadly painted as a bystander to the Pinochet regime because of the regime using Christian doctrine itself to legitimize their power. Rather than Catholic clergy leaders influencing the social and moral guidelines of the Pinochet junta, it was

the junta themselves who leaned heavily on the Catholic morals to justify their ascension to power. Nonetheless, the Catholic Church did not vehemently reject the importance the junta and Pinochet gave to their institution.

The official hierarchy of bishops and cardinals in Chile existed in a gray area at the beginning of the Pinochet regime, but slowly over time, individual priests became more and more outspoken about the human rights errors that racked the country in the name of purging Chile of Marxist “subversives” and “anarchists” (Fuller). Pinochet and the junta based the structure of their new society on Catholic values, and despite the growing unhappiness of the Church with the Pinochet government, the junta knew they could not jail the very figures whose values they were advocating for so openly. As a result, the Church and its members remained untouched by Pinochet, but this only created more resentment from regular Chileans against Church leadership. Despite attempts to create councils to investigate kidnappings, tortures, and murders and bring Chilean suffering to the attention of the United Nations, the Catholic Church appeared complicit in the dictatorship because they remained untouched (Sigmund, 32).

By the time civilian rule returned to Chile in the 1980s, the Catholic Church could no longer be characterized as a strong oppositional force to the Pinochet regime. Their once notable outspokenness against the war crimes perpetrated during the military rule had fallen to a whimper as Cardinal Silva- the most high ranking clergy member critical of Pinochet- had retired by 1975. His successor, Juan Francisco Fresno, was a Pinochet supporter himself and his time in office lacked any of the statements or press briefings that criticized the government that had appeared more frequently when Silva was in charge (Sigmund, 34). In 1986 Fresno’s reign “the Vicariate faced a more cautious church leadership, [than before], that seemed inclined to return to a more ‘pastoral’ mission (Bowers, 53). The changing of the cardinals is yet another example

of associating the Chilean Catholic Church with one of passive leadership who allowed more violence to spread and did not even come to the people's aid once the regime had officially ended.

Chile: Recent Protests: 2019-2020 Estallido Social

The Estallido Social is a series of protests that occurred in the capital city of Santiago from October 2019 to March 2020. It should be noted that demonstrations still habitually occur every Friday at the La Plaza Baquedano in Santiago. On October 1st, 2019, the Panel of Public Transport Experts, a “technical and autonomous entity” composed of nongovernmental members, announced that they would adjust metro fares for trains in Santiago and neighboring areas for the new year (“Panel de Expertos”). However, the adjustment was revealed to be a sizable increase from the previous 10 pesos to 30 pesos, which critics claim puts metro fares in Santiago as some of the most expensive in all of Latin America. Rivaling only São Paulo, Brazil in terms of cost, the new train fare price in Santiago would mean that “fifty trips during rush hour would mean the equivalent of 13% of the minimum wage” (Cadiz). Compare this to other major Latin American cities such as Buenos Aires, Lima, or Mexico City where the metro prices would only account for “8 to 5% of the minimum wage” (Cadiz). Consequently, on October 7th, 2019, public college students organized a mass fare evasion day where students would hop over turnstiles at train stations, beginning with the University of Chile station (Bartlett).

Eventually, demonstrations escalated to marches, then rioting and even looting. Reports describe that the “protests had turned violent with students breaking gates, shattering glass and throwing debris onto the electrified rails. The situation further deteriorated when some seven stations were set on fire, bank branches and supermarkets attacked and the country's main

electricity company headquarters building, –several stories high–, emergency facilities were ignited” (Santiago Times). The demands of the protests evolved from frustration over a train ticket price to a movement dedicated to critiquing socioeconomic inequality at large in Chile. By October 25th, millions of Chileans took the streets around La Plaza Baquedano in what is described as the biggest march in all of Chilean history. Demonstrations on the 25th remained peaceful, but the marches had only just begun for the Estallido Social.

The protests can be explained by the “deep-rooted disillusionment at how millions of [Chilean] citizens have been frozen out of the country's economic rise” with rampant privatization of water, healthcare, and valuable lithium mines in the last ten years (Franklin). Similarly, although Chile has exhibited an exemplary model for economic growth in the South American region, many argue that wages have remained static or have not increased fast enough in response to their national economy (Cuffe). Rioting and the subsequent response of the Chilean government to protesters are exactly what caused the Estallido Social to gain national attention as President Sebastián Piñera declared a state of emergency, a curfew, and deployed the military to secure Santiago. The latter action was heavily criticized by Chileans as it conjured images of the Pinochet dictatorship. This would be the first time since Pinochet's rule that the military had been called to secure the capital (Laing & Donoso). Other grim reminders of Pinochet's regime came from the violence and the sheer amount of protestors out in the streets demonstrating which prompted many to characterize the Estallido Social as the worst civil unrest since the end of the dictatorship thirty years ago (Laing & Miranda).

The protests of the Estallido Social have proven to be an effective linchpin for a variety of other social and political causes to latch onto as well. As previously mentioned, excessive police brutality employed against protestors has become incorporated into the demands of

activists who now also call for police reform. Carabineros, the Chilean name for their police force, were documented by Amnesty International for committing various human rights errors such as excessive use of force, murders, and even rapes of protestors (“Eyes on Chile”). This aspect of the Estallido Social protests has also created a throughline for the global feminist movement #NiUnaMenosMás to involve their cause in the Estallido Social as Carabineros have sexually assaulted and violated protestors (“5 años de #NiUnaMenos”).

Although many causes have merged to march under the general movement of protests under the Estallido Social of Chile, the key demands of the movement are important to note. First and foremost, protestors have called for the drafting of a new constitution since there has not been an updated version of the constitution since the end of the Pinochet regime in 1990. Similarly and relating to issues of socioeconomic inequality, demonstrators have called for an end to the privatized healthcare system, education and pension reform, and an overall increase of minimum wage. Many Chileans have been reeling away from the neoliberal policies that have dominated Chile since Pinochet. Lastly, the movement has also demanded the resignation of President Piñera (Laing).

Chilean Catholic Church Leaders' response to the Estallido Social Protests

On November 8, 2019, three weeks after the initial demonstrations broke out in Santiago, a Catholic parish known as La Asunción was looted by protestors who were gathering a few miles away. They took with them church pews, statues, and other memorabilia and proceeded to burn them in the streets. The following year in October 2020, demonstrators gathered in the same Plaza Italia square to commemorate the initial events of the Estallido Social and ended up setting fire to the very same church that had been looted the year prior (Catholic News Service).

Demonstrations for the Estallido Social had been put on a temporary hold as the COVID-19 pandemic pushed protesters indoors and allowed the Chilean government to quell the initial series of protests.

Another church, St. Francis Borgia, was also looted, set on fire, and had their religious paraphilia burned in the streets just as La Asuncion had had in 2019. Chilean Catholics have theorized that St. Francis Borgia was targeted because it is "home to institutional ceremonies for the 'Carabineros,' Chile's national police, a force unpopular with protesters over accusations of it employing repressive tactics" (Catholic News Service). Meanwhile "some cite popular anger over Chile's massive clerical sexual abuse scandals" (San Martín, "Amid Tumult over Constitution, Chile Watches Two Churches Burn"). Despite some theories as to why these specific churches were targeted, these instances of lootings and arson display the extent to which the Catholic Church of Chile has been involved in the protests of the Estallido Social. Bishops and other Church leaders have been quiet in the face of protests and unrest from the Estallido Social, except when it comes to issues that directly affect their property. The responses given by Archbishop Celestino Aós were generally supportive of human rights but remained critical of one of the key demands of the Estallido Social- redrafting of the constitution. He stated that if the constitution were to change, that he " find[s] it hard to understand that if the Constitution begins by saying that all people have the right to live, death in an abortion is legalized" which indicates that perhaps official Catholic stance on changing the Chilean constitution depends on the advancement of their own policy interests rather than an overall interest in correcting injustices in the law (Rodríguez & Navarrete). The official council of bishops in Santiago argue that "In democracies we express ourselves with free vote in conscience, not under the pressure of terror and force" which exemplifies an interest to create political change through conventional methods

rather than the more radical form of protests (San Martín, “Amid Tumult over Constitution, Chile Watches Two Churches Burn”).

The closest primary source that came from a Catholic leader that represents some of the ideologies of Liberation Theology come from Jesuit researcher Jorge Costadoat from the Theological Center Manuel Larraín. He argues that the unrest of the Estallido Social can be explained “as the rotten fruit of decades of extreme neo-liberal economic policies- ‘probably too radical even for Milton Friedman’—first instituted by the dictator Pinochet in the 1970s but renewed for decades by the democratically elected administrations that followed his regime” (Lima). His critique reveals to be patently anticapitalist in sentiment as it pins the root cause of societal unhappiness with the government and other elitist institutions like the Catholic Church as corrupt and not acting with the best interest of the people in mind. Costadoat similarly cites that the Church lacks "a stronger and prophetic voice" in political manners because their reputation has been severely crippled by the ongoing sexual abuse scandals and coverups that have shaken up Church hierarchy since 2018 (Lima). In 2018, almost all of the bishops of Chile resigned in response to the revelation of sexual abuse of minors. Costadoat states plainly that civil unrest targeting Catholic institutions should be no surprise since "[politically and socially] conservative bishops with a focus on sexual morality" have dominated upper levels of Catholic leadership in Chile since the 1980s (Lima). The irony and hypocrisy of their liturgical focuses have only impassioned Chileans to be distrustful of the Catholic Church in Chile as they also ignore growing social inequality amongst society.

V. Analysis

Levels and Influences of Catholicism

Comparing the two countries in terms of their Catholicism does yield results that demonstrate a difference in influence. To begin, the Philippines possess a higher census of self-identified Catholic followers as compared to Chile. According to the most recent research attempting to produce a figure for Catholicism in each country, as of 2018 around 80% of the Filipino population self-identify as Catholics, whereas, only about 55% of Chileans are Catholics (Bueza; Gonzalez, 2). This stark contrast can perhaps be attributed to the visibility of sexual abuse scandals committed by clergy members. This reality has undoubtedly tarnished the reputation of the Catholic hierarchy in the eyes of the global population adding to a growing rate of secularization in previously predominantly Catholic states. A large majority of the discourse surrounding the Catholic Church in Chile focuses on this exact topic since their scandal garnered national attention since it implicated prominent clergy members, such as Fr. Karadima and Fr. Cristián Precht, tarnishing the reputation of the Church until bishops in Santiago resigned in waves following the uncovering of their involvement or culpability in the abuse (San Martín, “Amid Tumult over Constitution, Chile Watches Two Churches Burn”).

The Philippines, however, is not unique to the ongoing Church sexual abuse scandals- the church hierarchy and clergy members there are also dealing with accusations of sexual harm done to minors in the past few years. The key distinction, however, is the fact that no member of the clergy has ever been convicted of a sexual abuse crime in Filipino courts- "prosecutions of priests alleged to have committed sexual abuse are extremely rare in Asia's largest Catholic nation" (Ang). Similarly, the Filipino Catholic clergy members who have been publicly accused

of a crime have been more local clergy members rather than the high profile members as exhibited in Chile. Meanwhile in Chile, the Church and high-ranking members have been subject to lengthy public investigations and trials. In 2019, the Chilean Appeals Court ruled in the Karidima case that he and the Catholic Church had to compensate the victims, and many Chileans believe that this move from the judicial system opens the possibility of similar cases of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy members reaching higher Chilean courts (Reuters Staff).

A key difference between the influence of Catholic systems in Chile and the Philippines comes from the present judicial system found in each respective country. Chile's courts appear to have no reservations in pursuing justice against the crimes of the clergy which can be connected to the population's growing secularization in recent years. Similarly, one of the prominent demands from the Estallido Social was a revamping of the justice system that especially addresses the abuses of the police system due to the excessive force used by Carabineros during demonstrations (“A dos años del estallido social...”). The Filipino judicial system- as it stands today- does not treat crimes of sexual abuse with the sensitivity or respect they deserve. Amongst just women in the country, the issue of sexual harassment and assault remains a secretive topic that has only now gained traction as more and more women speak up on social media about their experiences. These adult women are at the mercy of a culture that prefers to internalize and insulate problems within the community rather than going through judicial channels. One explanation for this can be analyzed from the dearth of corruption flooding the political and judicial systems of the Philippines.

Overall, the difficulty that Filipino adult women face in bringing cases against abusers is emblematic of the wider issue of a judicial system that does not believe victims, this then certainly affects the young victims at an even more alarming level.

Catholic Church's response to Dictatorships in the 1960s-1980s

The reaction from the Catholic Church during the two countries' dictatorships was quite fractured. Responses from official Catholic clergy varied as there were competing groups and factions vying for influence over bishops and the lay people of their countries. On the whole, one can characterize the Church's role in the Philippines during the Marcos regime as one of a protector of human rights as some clergy members were targeted alongside average Filipino citizens. Their alliance with the people of the Philippines and visible solidarity as priests would sometimes be targeted by the Marcos regime places the Filipino Catholic Church with the oppressed rather than the government. This can best be exemplified through the involvement of the Church in spreading the news about the coup over church-owned radio stations Radio Veritas and how they participated in public demonstrations. In Chile, we see the same small factions of Catholic priests who were already aligned with socialist belief given the influence of Liberation Theology. Said priests attempted to resist the restrictions and oppression of Pinochet and the junta, but overall, the Church was characterized by Chileans as a bystander to the violence, disappearances, and repression of the dictatorship since they were never subjected to the same punishments as regular Chileans. The Chilean Catholic Church under Cardinal Henríquez attempted to oppose the Pinochet dictatorship within the parameters that allowed them to, but the efforts dimmed once he retired and was replaced by a Pinochet loyalist (Sigmund, 34).

The demonstrations that overthrew both Pinochet and Marcos occurred around the same time, with Chile's happening in May 1983 to November 1984, and the Philippines in February 1986. However, Chile did not have the same visible support from high-ranking Catholic clergymen during the ousting since Cardinal Silva had retired in 1975. The Philippines did have

Cardinal Sin who was able to mobilize lay people into joining protests and demonstrations during the culmination of the People's Power Revolution through Radio Veritas.

Cold War politics and the accompanying “Red Scare” influenced both the Filipino and Chilean governments to allow repressive authoritarian regimes to take control, but in the years leading up to this shift, there were smaller, grassroots Catholic groups organizing along the ideologies set forth by Liberation Theologists such as the Christian Democrats in Chile (Sigmund, 28). Young Chileans were particularly drawn to the Christian Democrat party because of their "emphasis on pluralism, religious freedom, communitarian approaches to social problems, and the promotion of the rights of workers and peasants as more in keeping with the Christian message" (Sigmund, 28). An adoption or at least tolerance of Christian Democrats contributed to the relevance of Catholicism amongst young Chileans as older Catholic Chileans argued for a return to state-sanctioned religion before the election of Salvador Allende. In the Philippines the BEC movements were also taking shape amongst rural populations, which was one of the more notable influences of Liberation Theology in the country at the time.

Recent Protests: Junk Terror Bill and the Estallido Social

The recent protests in Chile and the Philippines can both be analyzed as direct continuations of the political and social fallout from the era of autocratic governments. Pinochet and Marcos's dictatorships created lasting impacts on society at large in both Chile and the Philippines that each country is still trying to parse through. Historical continuities play pivotal roles in the formation of popular protest and political action, and in an era where more and more protests and populist movements have appeared, it is vital to always contextualize these movements as one part of a long history of social unrest. Similarly, this contextualization allows

us to better understand connections between the two movements as protests have increasingly become global and, more importantly, transnational. In the case between the Philippines and Chile, we can observe these interactions through the discourse of political, and religious leaders.

During the height of violence in the Estallido Social, President Piñera characterized protestors and their participants in hostile terms when he said "We are at war against a powerful enemy, who is willing to use violence without any limits," which many Chileans claimed only heightened hostility between the Carabineros and protestors (Laing & Miranda). His comments ran the risk of furthering police brutality and violence against those demonstrating as part of the Estallido Social. He then threatened to persecute those who were already arrested for demonstrating, which harkens back so effectively to the Junk Terror Bill slogan of "activism is not terrorism". Both the Filipino Junk Terror Law protests and the Estallido Social demonstrations have clashed with the police forces and criticized their hand in political repression.

In the case of Catholic response to the protests in both countries, statements made by official Catholic leaders were difficult to track down. Despite my earlier claims that at least the Philippines has a politically vocal and active clergy in response to the Junk Terror Law protests, there were considerably more useful sources coming out of other Christian groups such as Episcopalians, Evangelicals, or Methodists. For example, Norma P. Dollaga, a Methodist deaconess, puts forward the religious message that "Human rights is a beautiful articulation to reclaim the dignity of human beings", but the Terror Law may endanger religious groups' missions to help the poor because she believes that their ministry and activism are one in the same, "One would be in trouble if she or he gives soup to the hungry. Today, one becomes a suspect, and will be in jail" (Mangiduyos). This Methodist deaconess did more to invoke the

imagery and ideas of Liberation Theology than their Catholic counterparts. Perhaps the tenets of Liberation Theology have spread to other Christian groups in the country, regardless of Catholic affiliation.

The lack of tangible statements or press briefings revealed a similar situation in Chile, but as mentioned above, the absence of sources can be interpreted as a waning political influence from the Catholic hierarchy in the country as a result of numerous child sexual abuse scandals hitting Chile just a year before the outbreak of the Estallido Social. Another contributing factor to the Chilean Catholic Church's silence and their low regard amongst Chileans can also be interpreted through their record under the Pinochet regime. Discourse analysis was difficult to come by in this regard since few direct statements were coming from the bishops or cardinals of Santiago. At the very least, the bishops of Manila were able to release statements condemning the Anti-Terror Law and highlighting the protestors concerns that the law would threaten their freedom of expression. However, the fact that the Papacy and Vatican had little to comment on the matter was also disappointing. In Chile, the Vatican has also remained quiet on commenting on the unfolding human rights errors. Responses from both the Chilean Catholic leadership towards the protests have mostly come in the form of condemnations of church burnings and lootings.

The responses in each country are markedly different because of their distinct levels of Catholic influence in the country. While the Estallido Social of Chile targeted churches by looting and burning their religious paraphernalia in an attempt to demonstrate their frustrations with corrupt institutions, the Junk Terror Law protests saw no targetting of churches or religious lands. Since trust in the institution of Catholicism is still high in the country, public political expressions at large do not tend to criticize the Church as part of the corruption in the country.

This may stem from the continued notion of the Catholic Church existing outside of the concerns of politics and law, similar to the apolitical image most people associate with religions. But all in all, Filipinos not associating the Catholic Church with corruption and elitism can further be explained by the high regard from the Church's solidarity with Filipinos during the Marcos administration. Additionally, the Philippines has not yet had a moment of reckoning with their Catholicism in the same ways Chilean people were forced to during the Pinochet dictatorship and the major resignations from bishops in light of the sexual abuse.

Altogether, my research into the Catholic influence in protests revealed an unavoidable political issue that affected their ability to respond to political situations: sexual abuse scandals. This was not a dimension I initially foresaw as part of the research into the political influence of the Catholic Church, but as my research progressed, the elephant in the room became too difficult to ignore. The systemic abuses perpetrated within the Catholic Church have truly taken a toll on their likability and political influence over the last twenty years. My hopes of perhaps seeing a more active clergy responding to human rights errors and injustices were unsubstantiated as the realities of Church reputation became more apparent. Despite the radical changes the Church took in Vatican II, responding to the Liberation Theology movement, and an overall shift into a theology that places importance on social justice and human rights, the juggernaut that is sexual abuse and coverups has stained any avenues the Catholic Church may have hoped to take this path. The hopes of updating doctrine and tradition to appeal to more followers during the 1960s was ultimately cut short by the sexual abuses becoming public by the 1980s. That is not to say that all attempts to be involved in political participation and action done by the Catholic Church are null, there are still grassroots Catholic socialist groups and local parishes that try to undertake the role of political guide in their communities, but it must be noted

that the official leaders and members of the upper Church hierarchy are at a political disadvantage to lead the charge per se. Liberation Theology and a politically active clergy are observable at smaller, grassroots levels as compared to the official channels of the Papacy, the Vatican, or archbishop groups.

VI. Conclusions

Societal response to sexual abuse scandals have played a large role in why the Chilean Catholic Church is not as involved in mass mobilization efforts as compared to the Philippines. They do not make nearly as many statements condemning the repression of the government or even involve themselves in judicial efforts to oppose errors of their government as compared to the Philippines who even have priests filing cases against the Terror Law. This obstacle to their political voice therefore makes it even more difficult for clergy members and the official Catholic Church channels to adopt Liberation Theology outright. I found that Liberation Theology has not reached the discourse, teachings and sermons of high ranking bodies of the Catholic Church such as archbishops or cardinals through their statements towards recent protests. Examples of Catholic clergy members are perhaps more available at the local and grassroots level as exhibited by continuing BECs in the Philippines. Similarly, other Christian religions have adopted ideas from Liberation Theology which indicates its power in activating the people but without depending on a patently Catholic voice to utilize it. Liberation Theology in Chile is less noticeable today within clergy discourse as a growing move towards societal secularization has weakened the Church's political voice.

The reputation and the public's trust in the institution of Catholicism affects clergy member's ability to call for progressive or radical political action such as protesting. Public trust

in Catholic officials depends on how well their reputations are in their respective countries. This can be affected by matters such as judicial structures, media, and existing skepticism for the Catholic Church. Adherence to Catholicism has diminished in Chile because of the use of Catholic values to promote Pinochet's oppressive regime, Church leadership's focus on doctrines that addresses issues such as sexuality and morality during the fallout of the Pinochet's rule, and the ongoing systematic sexual abuse within the Church hierarchy. The Philippines, while having their own public cases of sexual abuse scandals and victims, possesses a judicial system that makes it difficult for victims of priest sexual abuse to file cases and much less even win their cases against the church. Sexual abuse does occur in the Philippines at the hands of priests and other clergy members, but the avenues to investigating, charging, and prosecuting offenders are sparse as compared to Chile. This may explain why their reputation has not suffered the same fate as Chilean Catholic priests and also why their members feel more comfortable involving themselves in political matters. Historically as well, the Catholic Church of the Philippines was not as heavily associated with autocratic governments in the same manner as Pinochet's junta was because Filipino Catholic priests were targeted by Marcos under martial law.

My overall theory that religious people and clergy are more involved in political protest within Catholic countries due to the emergence of Liberation Theology championed by Latin American priests was ultimately unsupported by the research conducted. This is because of the scarcity of primary resources that would have revealed either an influence by Liberation Theology on current discourse, or not. The gap in official statements made by clergy members was in fact more telling than the actual few resources I could discover. Similarly, I believe that field work and surveying lay people in both countries could have added more insights towards the influence of Liberation Theology in both countries.

Future areas of study could focus on just a comparative analysis of the Estallido Social and Junk Terror Protests alone since their novelty creates various points of interest. Comparing mass mobilization strategies, the use of social media in garnering global attention, and the effects of COVID-19 on their demonstrations are all just some examples of other avenues research into the topic can be structured. Also, the intersection between the church, politics, and socialism finds more relevant avenues of research in the investigation of church lands. As it exists today, the Catholic Church is still the largest non-state body to be landowners and this position undoubtedly creates a point of political interest for the organization. Research into Church lands can also explore the political motivations of releasing the *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis that acknowledges climate change and advocates for international environmental legislation. Further study into this topic can similarly employ discourse analysis methods on the papal essay.

At the broadest level, the influence of the Catholic Church on politics must be studied further since it is the largest, nongovernmental landowning body in the world. As stated before by historian Dennis Shoemith, "The Church remains the only disciplined, nationwide body outside the direct control of the state" (248). As an official hierarchy with its executive, councils, and theological legislations, the Catholic Church can rival states in its capacity to guide and influence their followers. Despite the notable damages to its reputation due to the awakening of many to its systematic sexual abuses, the Church still holds political salience in the eyes of its followers. And this overall demonstrated the power of organized religion on political participation in the 21st century as the main forms of collective political response today come in the form of mass mobilization, demonstrations, and marches.

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