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Charismatic Christians: Genuinely Religious, Genuinely Modern

Christl Kessler

The article discusses the findings of an empirical study on religious change in the Philippines conducted in 2003. The findings challenge the common assumptions about the middle class character of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement and the predominantly poor and uneducated followers of non-Catholic charismatic mass organizations. Three types of religiosity are identified: sociocultural, orthodox, and charismatic. The findings indicate that the phenomenon of charismatic Christianity in the Philippines cannot be reduced to socioeconomic or political factors; rather, charismatic religiosity is a genuinely religious phenomenon that cuts across social classes. This religious phenomenon is interpreted as a way of coping with the challenges of modernization processes.

KEYWORDS: *religion, secularization, modernization, Catholic charismatic movement, Pentecostalism*

In classical theories of modernization religion has been located in the realm of tradition and is expected to disappear or at least lose its societal significance. Individual as well as societal secularization is part of the complex and interconnected processes constituting modernization. These processes disenchant the world, pluralize norms and values, and therefore delegitimize the shared religious cosmos of any given society. Charismatic services, as most observers instantly notice, are marked by intense religious experiences. Spirituality plays a central part in charismatic Christianity, and wonders are a recurrent theme. Charismatic Christians do not seem to live in a disenchanted world. Karla Poewe (1994, 12) concludes that charismatic Christianity challenges the emphasis

of the rational and calculated. In this article I will show that, although charismatic Christianity in the Philippines does indeed reenchant the world, it is inherently modern in its notion of individuality and choice.

This article is based on the findings of a study on religious change in the Philippines, conducted by the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute (ABI), Germany, in cooperation with the Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University.¹ The project was headed by Jürgen Rüländ, director of the ABI, and graciously funded by the German Bishops' Conference Working Group on International Church Affairs. The study design included qualitative interviews with members and leaders of Catholic charismatic communities and Pentecostal churches in Manila, participant observation, and a nationwide survey in which a standardized questionnaire was administered to 1,600 respondents in face to face interviews. An initial field visit took place in early 2003. Data collection was undertaken between July and November 2003, with the survey being conducted in the months of August, September, and October.

The questionnaire included 125 questions concerning religious practice, beliefs, attitudes, the role of religion in politics and society at large as well as general sociopolitical and socioeconomic attitudes. The questionnaire was based on a questionnaire on democracy, religion, and culture developed by Theodor Hanf and applied in several studies by the ABI. It was adjusted to the Philippine situation in close cooperation with the IPC. Additional questions were taken from the International Social Science Panels on religion (1991 and 1998) and from the Eurobarometer 47.1 questionnaire. A total of 1,200 respondents were selected in a multistage random sampling procedure; additional samples of 200 Protestant respondents and 200 Catholic charismatic respondents were gained by snowballing technique, starting with the randomly selected Catholic charismatic and Protestant respondents who were requested to refer the interviewers to other Protestant and Catholic charismatics for further interviews. The main sample of 1,200 respondents was weighted for age, sex, and urban/rural distribution on the subregional level and for nationwide population distribution between the major regions of the National Capital Region (NCR), Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.²

Drawing on the quantitative data of the study, I will first illustrate the scope of charismatic groups and churches and the socioeconomic characteristics of their constituency. I proceed by describing the distinct type of religiosity that is linked to these groups and examine potential links between socioeconomic variables and religiosity patterns. I will show that charismatic religiosity is clearly a religious phenomenon. Findings of qualitative interviews suggest that the success of this type of religiosity rests on its hybrid character as both genuinely religious and genuinely modern. I conclude the article with a discussion of the modern features of charismatic religiosity.

Scope of Charismatic Renewal in the Philippines

Studying charismatic Christians requires defining what the term “charismatic Christian” means. In the literature on charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity, the term charismatic is sometimes used in a narrow sense as a label for members of mainline denominations who engage in Pentecostal styles of worship, emphasizing the Holy Spirit, the biblical gifts of the Holy Spirit, the charisms, and the individual spiritual experience with the Holy Spirit. In a broader usage of the term, as applied by Karla Poewe (1994, 2), charismatic Christians encompass all strands of Christianity that concentrate on spiritual experience and the Holy Spirit, including the traditional Pentecostal churches, neo-Pentecostal congregations as well as “charismatic” Christians in other denominations. I use this broad definition, as the study on which this article is based concentrates on shared religious practices rather than on debated theological issues. Therefore, respondents in the nationwide survey were considered as involved in the Charismatic Renewal if they practiced charismatic types of worship or identified themselves as members of a charismatic or (neo-)Pentecostal group or church.

We identified charismatic Christians through

- Membership in a known charismatic organization (registered with the Catholic Church as a charismatic community) or Pentecostal church (all churches and congregations that call themselves Pentecostal, such as Jesus is Lord, Assemblies of God, Four Square Gospel Church, and Jesus Miracle Crusade); and

- Regular participation in a prayer group, lay organization, or covenant community practicing Charismatic gifts such as healing, speaking in tongues, prophecy, and baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Because some Protestant respondents could mistake baptism in the Holy Spirit for adult baptism, which some Protestant churches practice, we exclude those non-Catholic respondents who report baptism in the Holy Spirit as their only charismatic practice. Catholic respondents are not prone to this misunderstanding. Consequently, we regard a Catholic respondent who practices baptism in the Holy Spirit as involved in the Charismatic Renewal, even if his or her group does not engage in healing, speaking in tongues, and so on.³

According to this classification, 19 percent of the 1,185 Christian respondents in the main survey are involved in the Charismatic Renewal. If we differentiate between Catholic and non-Catholic Christians, 15 percent of the Catholic respondents are involved and, similarly, 39 percent of the non-Catholic respondents. The fact that the Charismatic Renewal is stronger among Protestant Christians should not eclipse the numerical dominance of Catholic Christians among Philippine charismatic Christians: 70 percent of all Christians active in the Renewal identify themselves as Catholic (see table 1).

The figures illustrate the scope of charismatic Christianity in the Philippines. Bearing in mind that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal started in the United States only in the late 1960s⁴ and that major efforts of Pentecostal missions in the Philippines started only after the Second World War, these numbers indicate substantial growth. The Pentecostalization of Philippine Protestantism, along with the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church of the Philippines, forms a major current in the contemporary religious scene in the Philippines.

If we compare the respondents actively involved in charismatic groups and churches with those not involved along sociodemographic and socioeconomic variables, the only differences occur with regard to gender, age, and education (see table 2). Women are overrepresented in charismatic groups and churches. Respondents below 24 years of age seem rather less attracted by charismatic groups and churches. This is even truer for non-Catholic respondents. Education works in an un-

Table 1. Incidence of charismatic involvement among Catholic and non-Catholic Christians

	Percentage Charismatic Renewal within Denominations	
	Roman Catholic	Other Christians
Involved*	15	39
Not Involved	85	61
Total	100	100

	Percentage of Denomination within Charismatic Renewal	
	Involved*	Not Involved
Roman Catholic Christian	70	89
Non Roman Catholic Christian	30	11
Total	100	100

*Member of a charismatic lay organization/charismatic prayer group/Pentecostal Church

expected direction, as the charismatic groups apparently appeal more to those with higher education than to those with less formal education. Respondents with tertiary education are clearly overrepresented among those active in charismatic groups and churches.

One of the most astonishing findings is that there are no major differences with regard to socioeconomic variables. Overall socioeconomic status—a variable derived from per capita income of the household, an index of household belongings, and individual educational attainment—shows no substantial effect on charismatic involvement. The overall socioeconomic structure of Christians who are engaged in charismatic groups and churches resembles the socioeconomic structure of the total sample. This finding holds for the subgroups of Roman Catholic Christians and non-Roman Catholic Christians. Our data, therefore, challenge common assumptions about the predominantly poor constituency of Pentecostal churches as well as about the middle class character of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

An analysis of the Charismatic Renewal based on group or church membership alone is not sufficient, as organizational affiliation does not

Table 2. Percentage distribution of Christians according to charismatic involvement, denomination, and sociodemographic variables

	<u>Christian Denomination</u>		<u>Charismatic Involvement</u>		<u>Denomination of Charismatics</u>		Total sample
	Roman Catholic	Non Catholic	No	Yes	Catholic	Non Catholic	
Gender							
Male	51	44	52	45	45	46	50
Female	49	56	48	55	55	54	50
Education							
None/low	11	12	11	12	14	7	12
Elementary completed	33	29	35	25	25	26	33
Secondary completed	39	43	40	39	36	46	39
Tertiary completed	16	16	14	23	24	21	16
Age							
18-24	25	16	26	12	14	8	23
25-34	26	30	27	24	19	36	26
35-49	28	30	27	33	33	34	28
50+	22	24	20	31	35	22	22
Urban vs. Rural							
Urban	41	41	41	40	39	40	41
Rural	59	59	59	60	61	60	59
Socioeconomic Status							
Low	17	16	18	14	14	15	17
Medium	76	76	76	78	79	75	76
High	7	8	7	8	7	10	7

necessarily allow a conclusion to be drawn about religious practices and beliefs. A case in point are the survey results concerning exclusively Catholic practices and beliefs: 23 percent of all non-Catholic Christians in the main sample subscribe to the statement that praying to saints is a valuable religious tradition, and 28 percent of non-Catholics believe that the Virgin Mary is able to intercede with God on behalf of the faithful praying to her. To go beyond what affiliation would make us suppose, we need to ask if the rise in organizational membership reflects a change in the way Filipinas and Filipinos live their religiosity—if the rise of charismatic groups and Pentecostal churches is accompanied by the emergence of a certain, distinguishable type of religiosity.

Patterns of Religiosity

In search of such patterns of religiosity, we ran an explanatory factor analysis (principal component analysis) of the survey data.⁵ We included eighty-four variables concerning religious practices, attitudes, and experiences; sociopolitical attitudes; and eleven socioeconomic variables. The analysis reveals four distinct dimensions. The first three dimensions are of high face validity. We refer to them as sociocultural religiosity, orthodox Catholic religiosity, and charismatic religiosity.

Sociocultural religiosity differs from the other two patterns in that it combines attitudes toward religion with attitudes toward society and life in general. Here religion is seen as a framework for social relations and societal order. Acceptance of religious authorities, constraining social contacts to one's own religious group, and applying the moral guidelines of one's religion in everyday life mark this pattern. Distinctively religious beliefs and practices—like praying, attending services, belief in life after death, and the like—are not part of this pattern. This stand toward religion is connected with a rather conservative conception of gender roles and a self-perceived powerlessness toward life in general (see table 3).

In sharp contrast, orthodox Catholic religiosity consists of genuine Catholic content. It is characterized by belief in the intercessory role of the Virgin Mary, the existence of purgatory, receiving confession, valuing

Table 3. Variables defining "sociocultural religiosity"

Variables (Cronbach's Alpha=0.67)

-
- V37: Mothers should stay at home and look after their children and family.
 V5: I prefer to find my friends among people of my own religious group.
 V2: There is little people can do to change the course of life.
 V23: Do you believe that the faithful are obliged to follow the teachings of their religious leaders in theological matters?
 V8: Religion should determine all aspects of society and state.
 V6: Someone like me cannot do much to improve people's life in my country.
 V12: Christians should be interested in politics because Christians bear responsibility for the society they live in.
 V13: Christians are obliged by the teachings of Jesus to work for social justice.
 V9: Women should be encouraged to take leading positions in church lay organizations.
 V21: Are you convinced that your own religion is the only true one?
 V22: Do you try hard to live your daily life according to the teachings of your religion?
-

Table 4. Variables defining "orthodox Catholic religiosity"

Variables (Cronbach's Alpha=0.71)

-
- V41: Do you believe in the Virgin Mary and in her ability to intercede with God on behalf of the faithful praying to her? – yes
 V42: Do you believe that praying to saints is a valuable religious tradition? – yes
 V20d: Do you believe in life after death, where there is heaven, hell, and purgatory? – yes
 V47: Are you a Born-Again Christian? – no
 V25: During the past years a great number of different religious communities have appeared. The following two statements are about the role of the Catholic Church for Christianity in these times. Please tell me which of the following statements is closer to your own opinion.
 If Catholics feel that the Catholic Church is not preaching the true faith, they should leave the church and found a new religious community in order to preach the true faith, even if initially this new church is very small.
-

Table 4 continued

	<i>or</i>
	<i>Even if Catholics feel that some teachings of the Catholic Church are not true, they should stay in the Church to maintain the unity of Christians. – second statement, stay in the church</i>
V46e:	<i>The Christian churches have different sacraments. Please tell me which ones you already received, which you have not yet received but want to receive, or which you do not want to receive. Confession – received</i>

the practice of praying to saints, appreciating Catholic unity, and rejecting the label of Born Again (see table 4).

The dimension we refer to as charismatic religiosity is marked by diligent religious practice combined with typical charismatic practices and experiences, such as speaking in tongues, being slain in the Spirit, and testifying in religious services (see table 5). The existence of such a pattern clearly supports the hypothesis that the rise in membership of charismatic groups and Pentecostal as well as neo-Pentecostal churches is indeed a sign of the rise of a distinct type of religiosity.

Table 5. Variables defining “charismatic religiosity”

Variables (Cronbach’s Alpha=0.81)

V64	<i>How often do you read the Bible? – very often/often</i>
V63:	<i>Have you ever been prayed with for baptism in the Holy Spirit? – yes</i>
V61:	<i>In case you do pray, are you a member of a regular praying group? – yes</i>
V62:	<i>Have you ever given testimony of your faith publicly in a religious service? – yes</i>
V57a:	<i>Was this person inspired by the Holy Spirit/possessed by saints or Mother Mary or Santo Niño/possessed by other spirits? – inspired by the Holy Spirit</i>
V57:	<i>Have you ever personally witnessed a person speaking in tongues? – yes</i>
V48:	<i>How often do you attend religious services? – very often/often</i>
V74:	<i>Would you call yourself a renewed Christian? – yes</i>
V58:	<i>Have you ever been slain by the Spirit? – yes</i>
V67:	<i>How often do you donate money or goods to your parish? – daily/weekly</i>

Table 5 continued

V47:	<i>Are you a Born-Again Christian? – yes</i>
V59:	<i>Do you regularly give ten percent of your income to the church? – yes</i>
V70:	<i>Have you ever participated in a "Life in the Spirit" seminar? – yes</i>
V94:	<i>Would you describe yourself as extremely religious/very religious/ somewhat religious/neither religious nor nonreligious/somewhat nonreligious/very nonreligious/extremely nonreligious? – extremely religious/very religious</i>
V50:	<i>How often do you attend services by lay preachers? – very often/often</i>
V43	<i>The Bible reports that the apostles were speaking in tongues at Pentecost as a gift of the Holy Spirit. Do you believe that this was not only given to the biblical apostles but is still given to chosen faithful in our present? – yes</i>

For each of these patterns, we aggregated the items and built a scale, using the quartiles of each scale to define the categories. The distribution of the religiosity patterns in the sample are shown in figures 1 to 3, and the resulting scales and percentages are listed in table 6.

Table 6. Religiosity Scales

Dimension	Items/Respondents	Low	Medium	High	Total
Sociocultural Religiosity	Number of items agreed to	0–5	6–8	9–11	11
	Percentage of respondents	29%	43%	29%	100%
Orthodox Religiosity	Number of items agreed to	0–3	4–5	6	6
	Percentage of respondents	19%	44%	37%	100%
Charismatic Religiosity	Number of items agreed to	0–1	2–6	7–16	16
	Percentage of respondents	24%	51%	26%	100%

The abovementioned hypothesis that the rise of membership in charismatic groups and Pentecostal churches is accompanied by the emergence of a distinctive religiosity is further confirmed by the relationship between charismatic religiosity and involvement in the Charismatic Renewal. There is a strong link between charismatic religiosity and our definition of charismatic Christians (Pearson's $r = 0.61$, $p = 0.000$).

None of those ranking low on charismatic religiosity is classified as a charismatic Christian, compared with 57 percent of those ranking high. Looking at the figures the other way, none of the Christian respondents, who are involved in the Charismatic Renewal (according to our definition), ranks low on the charismatic religiosity scale, while 75 percent of these charismatic Christians rank high on the scale.

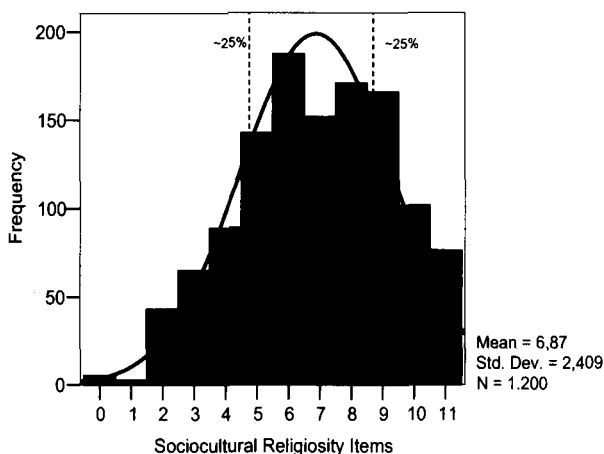


Figure 1. Sociocultural religiosity

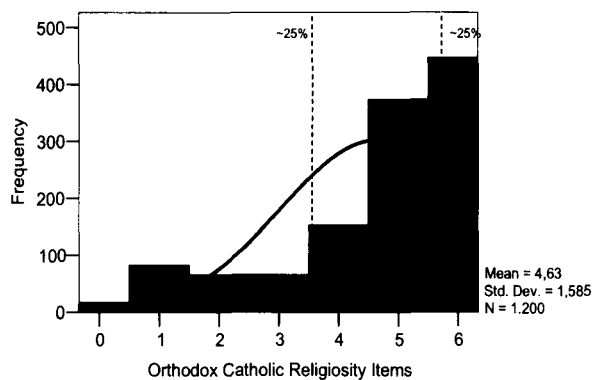


Figure 2. Orthodox religiosity

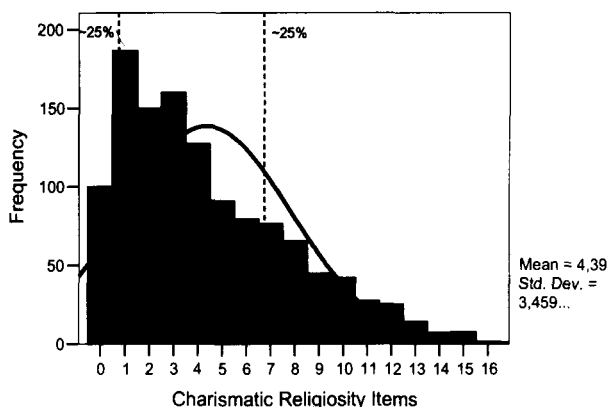


Figure 3. Charismatic religiosity

The data also show that 43 percent of respondents who rank high on charismatic religiosity are not actively involved in charismatic groups and churches. This figure suggests that a great potential for further growth exists. It also lends credence to the view that it is less the socialization process within the Charismatic Renewal that forms charismatic religiosity but rather a certain type of religiosity or religious need that drives people into the Charismatic Renewal.

The fact that members of Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches show a distinct type of religiosity might not be astonishing. The remarkable finding here is that the correlation between charismatic religiosity and involvement in the Charismatic Renewal holds for Catholic and non-Catholic Christians alike. The distinction between Catholic charismatics and their fellow believers is also expressed by the self-definition of Catholic charismatics. When asked for their religious affiliation, two respondents of the main sample answered that they were "El Shaddai," one offered "Christian Life Program Catholic Charismatic" as his religion, and another simply stated that she was "Catholic Charismatic." Of the 200 respondents in the Catholic charismatic sample, twenty-four respondents specified their religious affiliation in this way. These responses indicate that being Catholic does not fully capture the self-perceived religious identity of Catholic charismatics, a finding that is supported by the existence of a religiosity pattern—char-

ismatic religiosity—which links charismatic Catholics more to fellow charismatics and Pentecostals of other denominations than to their fellow Catholics.

Socioeconomic Influences on Religiosity Patterns

Our data suggest that the Charismatic Renewal in the Philippines is indeed more than a surface phenomenon. While our findings support the importance of this phenomenon, they challenge common notions about the underlying causes of the Charismatic Renewal. Mass media coverage of the Charismatic Renewal in the Philippines and much of the literature on the growth of Pentecostalism in general connects this type of religiosity to marginalized segments of the population and views it as a phenomenon among the poor, often urban, masses. Women are portrayed as major agents in Pentecostal growth and religious practice. One would expect that charismatic religiosity correlates with socioeconomic variables, but these links are very weak and point to an unexpected direction (see table 7). In our main sample, women score only slightly higher on charismatic religiosity than men. The most remarkable finding is that socioeconomic status⁶ has no major effect on charismatic religiosity, and the effects are contrary to common expectations: respondents with low socioeconomic status are found overproportionally among those ranking low on charismatic religiosity and are underrepresented among those ranking high on charismatic religiosity. The reverse is observed for respondents of high socioeconomic status. They are overrepresented among those ranking high on the charismatic religiosity scale and underrepresented among those ranking low. Metropolitan residence even functions as a kind of antidote against charismatic religiosity, and higher education enhances the likelihood of charismatic religiosity.

The literature on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal points out that its constituency is drawn predominantly from a middle class background (for the United States, see Csordas 1994, 17; Bord and Faulkner 1983, 8–9; for the Philippines, see Weber 1983, 163). Given the predominantly Catholic character of the Charismatic Renewal in the Philippines,

Table 7. Percentage distribution of Christians according to religiosity patterns and socioeconomic background

Background Variables	Sociocultural Religiosity		Orthodox Catholic Religiosity		Charismatic Religiosity		Total sample
	low	high	low	high	low	high	
Denomination							
Roman Catholic	88	84	29	98	98	59	84
Non-Catholic	12	16	71	2	2	41	16
Sex							
Male	48	51	53	45	59	43	50
Female	52	49	47	55	41	57	50
Education							
None/low	5	21	12	11	17	12	12
Elementary completed	21	48	32	37	38	25	33
Secondary completed	47	26	39	40	35	37	39
Tertiary completed	26	5	18	13	9	26	16
Age							
18–24	26	18	22	21	24	13	23
25–34	30	24	32	27	30	28	26
35–49	28	29	27	26	27	30	28
50+	16	29	19	26	19	29	22
Urban vs. Rural							
Urban	61	26	45	40	42	37	41
Rural	39	74	55	60	58	63	59
Socioeconomic Status							
Low	6	32	16	17	22	14	17
Medium	83	66	77	75	74	77	76
High	11	2	8	8	4	9	7
Charismatic Involvement							
Not involved	87	80	67	85	100	43	81
Involved	13	20	33	15	0	57	19
Region							
NCR	27	3	14	9	18	5	13
Visayas	15	28	14	23	15	30	20
Luzon	45	37	44	37	52	42	43
Mindanao	13	32	28	32	15	23	24

we could also expect a middle class dominance. However, although the survey results contradict the assumption that charismatic religiosity is confined to the poor and uneducated masses, they neither support the hypothesis that the Charismatic Renewal is a middle class phenomenon in the Philippines. The links between charismatic religiosity and socioeconomic variables are generally very weak, indicating that respondents ranking high on charismatic religiosity can be found in all levels of society. Orthodox Catholic religiosity is also rather unaffected by socioeconomic variables.

In sharp contrast to charismatic religiosity, sociocultural religiosity is clearly affected by socioeconomic variables. Those with tertiary education form only 5 percent of those ranking high on sociocultural religiosity, compared with 16 percent in the whole sample. Urban dwellers account for 41 percent of the whole sample, but for only 26 percent of those who rank high on sociocultural religiosity. Metro Manila residents, who account for 13 percent of the sample, constitute only 3 percent of those ranking high on sociocultural religiosity. Socioeconomic status is also linked to sociocultural religiosity: the share of respondents with low socioeconomic status doubles from 17 percent in the whole sample to 32 percent among those ranking high on sociocultural religiosity. Respondents who have a high socioeconomic status account for only 2 percent of those with high sociocultural religiosity.

To probe the impression gained from the crosstabulations of socioeconomic variables and the religiosity patterns, we ran a CHAID (chi-squared automatic interaction detection) tree analyses with age, gender, urban/rural residence, education, income, household belongings, and socioeconomic status as predictors.⁷ The results indicate that orthodox religiosity is virtually unrelated to socioeconomic variables. Charismatic religiosity is also only slightly connected to socioeconomic variables, which explain 8 percent of the total variance. However, almost one quarter of the variance of the sociocultural scale can be explained by these variables. If we only look at the group of high-ranking respondents in each religiosity scale, we can correctly predict more than half of those high rankers on sociocultural religiosity, 28 percent of high rankers on orthodox Catholic religiosity, and only 16 percent of high rankers on Charismatic religiosity.

Table 8. Socioeconomic influence on religiosity patterns

	Explained Variance of Original Scale	Correctly Predicted Respondents Ranking High on Recoded Scale
Sociocultural Religiosity	23%	53%
Orthodox Religiosity	2%	28%
Charismatic Religiosity	8%	16%

Obviously, sociocultural religiosity is most vulnerable to the secularizing effects of processes like urbanization, increasing levels of education, and improving living conditions, whereas charismatic as well as orthodox Catholic religiosity seem to be rather unaffected by these forces.

Sociocultural religiosity resembles the type of religiosity that psychologists of religion label as extrinsic religiosity (Allport and Ross 1967). Extrinsic religiosity values religious practice and adherence to religious beliefs for their social, emotional, and cognitive rewards: religion is a means, but not an end in itself. If sociocultural religiosity is labeled extrinsic, orthodox Catholic religiosity and charismatic religiosity can be labeled intrinsic types of religiosity. In both, religious beliefs and practices are an end in themselves. Viewed in a functionalist way, religion can be described as delivering a cognitive framework that enables an individual to give sense to his or her life experiences by relating these experiences to a transcendent power. In a modern pluralistic society there is a broad range of worldviews that compete with religion in fulfilling this function. A religiosity that is not rooted in the religious content of religion, but rests rather on the functions of religion, can easily be abandoned for other cognitive frameworks that equally enable individuals to maintain stable social relationships, be part of a broader social community, give sense to life, and cope with its calamities. This might explain why extrinsic sociocultural religiosity is much more affected by modernizing and pluralizing factors, like education and urbanization, than the intrinsic charismatic or orthodox Catholic religiosity. It is much harder to substitute the latter type of religiosity

with other, nonreligious cognitive frameworks. The data given in table 7 and table 8 suggest that the old secularization thesis linking modernization and the decline of religion might hold for sociocultural religiosity, but not for orthodox Catholic religiosity or charismatic religiosity.

Charismatic Religiosity

We have seen that socioeconomic variables turn out to be of little value in explaining religiosity. A second CHAID tree analysis involving a set of variables that reflect religious, political, social, and economic attitudes shows that these have minimal explanatory power. The results confirm the relative autonomy of religion, with religious beliefs remaining as the decisive variables for charismatic religiosity. The most important variable pertains to the statement that "only true Christians will be raptured before the Great Tribulation." Among those who agree with this statement, the share of respondents ranking high on the charismatic religiosity scale rises from 27 percent in the whole sample to 42 percent. This share increases even more to 47 percent among those who believe that Jesus is the only way to salvation. Respondents who disagree with the statement, that only true Christians will be raptured, but believe in the Bible as divine revelation and feel (rather) positively or negatively affected by rapid economic, social, and cultural changes, form a second group, in which the percentage of those ranking high on charismatic religiosity rises to 33 percent. Knowing all the variables of figure 4 enables one to correctly predict that the respondent will rank high on charismatic religiosity in 32 percent of all cases. These variables allow for better prediction than socioeconomic variables, but the dominance of variables on religious beliefs still indicates that charismatic religiosity cannot be associated easily with certain sociocultural or political attitudes.

The correct prediction of high scores on the charismatic religiosity scale decreases to 12 percent if the tree analysis is run without the items on religious beliefs. Nevertheless, the results are interesting as they confirm the importance of societal changes for charismatic religiosity and illustrate a tendency toward religious intolerance and acceptance of

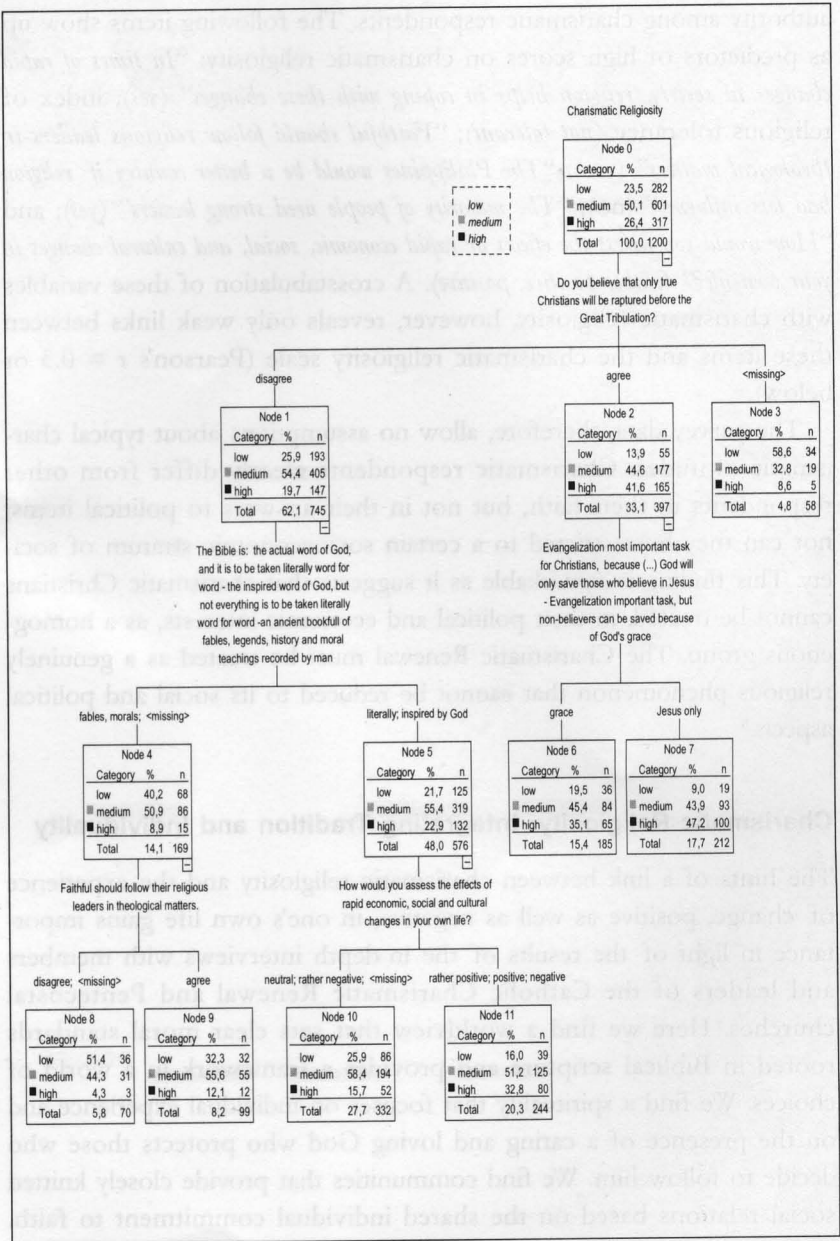


Figure 4. Predictors for charismatic religiosity

authority among charismatic respondents. The following items show up as predictors of high scores on charismatic religiosity: "*In times of rapid changes in society, religion helps in coping with these changes*" (yes); index of religious tolerance (*not tolerant*); "*Faithful should follow religious leaders in theological matters*" (yes); "*The Philippines would be a better country if religion had less influence*" (no); "*The majority of people need strong leaders*" (yes); and "*How would you assess the effects of rapid economic, social, and cultural changes in your own life?*" (*rather positive, positive*). A crosstabulation of these variables with charismatic religiosity, however, reveals only weak links between these items and the charismatic religiosity scale (Pearson's $r = 0.3$ or below).

The survey data, therefore, allow no assumptions about typical charismatic attitudes. Charismatic respondents clearly differ from other respondents in their faith, but not in their answers to political items; nor can they be restricted to a certain socioeconomic stratum of society. This finding is remarkable as it suggests that charismatic Christians cannot be treated, in their political and economic interests, as a homogeneous group. The Charismatic Renewal must be treated as a genuinely religious phenomenon that cannot be reduced to its social and political aspects.⁸

Charismatic Religiosity: Integrating Tradition and Individuality

The hints of a link between charismatic religiosity and the experience of change, positive as well as negative, in one's own life gains importance in light of the results of the in-depth interviews with members and leaders of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and Pentecostal churches. Here we find a worldview that sets clear moral standards rooted in Biblical scripture and provides a framework in a world of choices. We find a spirituality that focuses on individual experience and on the presence of a caring and loving God who protects those who decide to follow him. We find communities that provide closely knitted social relations based on the shared individual commitment to faith. Membership provides a social network and a sense of belonging to a community.

The charismatic worldview and the charismatic religious practice, as revealed in these interviews, qualify charismatic religion as genuinely modern as it emphasizes individuality and choice. Unlike traditional religion, of which orthodox Catholic religiosity is an example, charismatic religion is based on individual choices and personal experience, to be reaffirmed in everyday religious practice again and again, rather than in institutionalized affiliations and rituals. Charismatic Christians enjoy a personal, emotional, and spiritual relationship with God. As one respondent puts it: "God has become alive, personal. You can talk to him. He's alive. He shows you his response" (Male, Catholic charismatic lay leader, English original).

Charismatic Christians interpret events, which noncharismatic Christians might attribute to good luck or connections, as manifestations of God's love and care:

Take for example my job. I did not apply for it. I was called by my sister and I just went to the office for the contract signing. . . . I know it was my sister, but I do believe that she was used by the Lord to give his blessing to me. It just so happened that she was my sister.

(Protestant charismatic woman, 29, Tagalog original)

The dominant image of God in these interviews is that of a caring and loving God. Charismatic Christians who have surrendered their lives to God can feel protected and secure in a threatening world.

The cognitive framework of charismatic religion, the way the world is framed and portrayed, reduces the complexity of modern society by rooting all its problems in the abandonment of God. It is not only God who manifests himself in ordinary events of life. Satan is alive and well, too. Charismatic Christians regard a wide range of phenomenon as the work of Satan, including drug addiction, homosexuality, adultery, and corruption. Salvation from this whole array of ills can be achieved by returning to God. Personal renewal and return to God will solve all problems, personal and societal. The Christian formation program of Couples for Christ, which is probably the largest Catholic charismatic lay organization in the Philippines at present, is "to present

a relationship with Jesus as the only way out of the sorry state of the world today” (Couples for Christ 1997, 2).

Consequently, the solution for all societal and economic problems of Philippine society is seen in the moral renewal of the political and economic elite, as well as that of the common people. Structural change is regarded as futile when it is not accompanied by individual moral renewal. Such a renewal will make the fight for structural changes unnecessary, as the rich and powerful will refrain from unjust accumulation of wealth, treat their workers and tenants fairly, and refrain from any immoral practices in order to keep their grip on power. As one lay leader of a Catholic charismatic group reported about their renewal efforts among the landed elite:

So, that's one good thing that happened here, when those who were touched were able to realize they were being unfair to those employees of theirs, tenants of theirs. Some even donated land for their tenants to till, title and all.

(Male, Catholic charismatic lay leader, English original)

Land reform is achieved through individual renewal of landlords rather than enforcement by state institutions. This stress on the individual rather than on structures and institutions is a core feature of charismatic religion. This emphasis on individuality is countered by embedding the individual in the Christian family and the charismatic community. The Christian family is seen not only as the core of society but also as the model for society in general. This model Christian family is based on Christian morals, firmly grounded in faith and ideally integrated into a charismatic community that supports its members in their endeavor to live up to the standards of Christian morals. Such a community might be a large movement like El Shaddai or Couples for Christ, but it is actually put into practice in small cell groups that allow face-to-face interactions and provide a stable social network.

The Modern Character of Charismatic Religiosity

Why should this type of religiosity be modern? Modernization is commonly described as involving the complex and interrelated processes of

industrialization, urbanization, rationalization, and pluralization. Individualization is part of these complex processes as they set individuals free from their traditional bonds and relationships. Modernization is inherently a paradox, and so is individualization. As people gain autonomy and choices, it becomes increasingly difficult to establish a stable identity (see Loo and van Reijen 1997, 178 for a discussion of the paradoxical character of modernity and the paradox of individualization). An increase in freedom, by means of a pluralization of norms and values, is concomitant with an increase in instability and thus insecurity (Berger and Luckmann 1995).

Charismatic religiosity is modern insofar as, first, it incorporates the modern features of individuality and choice, and, second, when it reacts to the insecurities produced by this modern individuality with recourse to faith, religious legitimization, and social networks. Charismatic religion enables people to cope with the challenges of a modern or modernizing society without retreating from it.

Charismatic religion incorporates the modern by offering stability in a changing environment. Charismatic religion values the individual—everyone is worthy of divine attention and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The personal relationship of each believer with God is central in charismatic religious practice, and the individual decision for God is the starting point of charismatic religion, thereby acknowledging that believing in God requires a decision, given that there are alternatives to faith. However, once this decision is made, faith provides guidance for all kinds of choices: occupation, marriage partner, place to live, school for the kids. This prevents modern individual biographies from becoming “topsy-turvy,” as one respondent puts it. Charismatic religion orders one’s life in an unordered society.⁹

Charismatic religion is genuinely religious. The survey data reveal its autonomy against socioeconomic and political aspects. And charismatic religion is genuinely modern by placing the individual, who is free to choose and worthy of divine attention, at the center. This combination might well be the secret of its success, as it enables people to come to grips with a modernizing society with the help of their faith.

Notes

1. I presented an earlier version of this paper at the "Conference on Global Pentecostalism and Filipino Charismatic Christianity: Social Science Perspectives," Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 16 Sept. 2005, and would like to thank my copanelists as well as the audience for valuable comments.

2. This article concentrates on the findings of the quantitative survey and draws from the corresponding chapters of a manuscript for a monograph I wrote with Jürgen Rüland, "Give Jesus a Hand! Charismatic Christians: Populist Religion in the Philippines." See also Kessler and Rüland 2006. For the detailed analysis of the survey data we relied on the expertise and assistance of our colleague at ABI, Rainer Hampel.

3. We thank Fr. Dr. Herbert Schneider, Dean of the Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, for his help in identifying characteristics of charismatic Christians within the survey, and Dr. Reinhard Hempelmann from the Evangelische Zentralstelle für Weltanschauungsfragen for his advice in classifying non-Catholic churches as charismatic or noncharismatic.

4. I have to thank an anonymous participant of the conference cited in note 1 for the information that there have been "outpourings of the Spirit," instances of charismatic practice and Catholic charismatic groups, even before the advent of the U.S.-Catholic charismatic movement in the Philippines. However, as most of our interview partners mentioned the American Renewal as the start of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and did not make any reference to Philippine groups with charismatic practices prior to the American Renewal, it can be said that the tremendous success and spread of charismatic practices in the Philippines started most probably after the 1960s.

5. Our data are predominantly dichotomous and, strictly speaking, do not qualify for factor analysis. However, in applying factor analysis as a way of data reduction in search of underlying structures, we follow common usage in social research (Kim and Mueller 1978, 74–75).

6. A variable derived from monetary income, household belongings, and educational attainment of respondents.

7. Because we were interested in the more complex relationships that could not be detected by simple crosstabulations with two or three variables only at a time, we also applied a statistical procedure capable of capturing multivariate relations. The CHAID has the advantage of being based on chi-square measures, which means that nominal level variables can be included in the analysis. This method is less prone to the negative effects of several interrelated variables like education and socioeconomic status. The CHAID chooses from a given set of variables the predictor that most effectively segregates respondents with respect to their value in the target variable at each branch of the tree. Categories of each predictor are merged if they are not significantly different with respect to the target variable. As the

CHAID procedure automatically sets weights below 0.5 to zero, we run this analysis with the unweighted file.

8. Charismatic religiosity is not identical with the charismatic movement, but our data illustrate that a substantial percentage of those active in the charismatic movement ranks highly on charismatic religiosity.

9. With this integration of the modern notion of individuality while harking back to real and imagined premodern social structures, charismatic religion strikingly resembles in the religious sphere what political populism is in the political sphere. Political populism reacts to modernization and differentiation processes by reducing the complexities accompanying these processes by emphasizing personal relations as grounding society rather than institutional arrangements. But while relating the social structures of the past as foundations of contemporary society, they simultaneously refer to the very modern notion of individual rights in a democracy (for a discussion of the characteristics of political populism see Puhle 1986; Canovan 1999; Meny and Surel 2002). Contrary to the often derogatory use of the political-populism tag, we would like to invoke the democratic aspect of political populism and its rather ambiguous character by highlighting the parallels of political populism and charismatic religion. The Philippine experience—with the constant failure to establish inclusive political structures, the omnipresent corruption in all levels of society, and the personality-oriented presidential system—is conducive to political populism. If political populism responds to similar needs and conditions in the political sphere as charismatic religion does in the religious realm, this similarity could partly explain its success. A detailed analysis of the populist character of the Charismatic Renewal in the Philippines is found in Kessler and Rüländ n.d.

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