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Filipino Religiosity: Some International Comparisons

Ricardo G. Abad



In 1991 the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), a consortium of research groups from different nations around the world, conducted a survey on religious beliefs, attitudes, and practices for cross-country comparison. That same year Social Weather Stations (SWS), the Philippine representative to the ISSP, ran the religion module as part of its July nationwide survey. While several SWS reports have been released based on the Philippine religion module (Acuña 1991; Mangahas and Guerrero 1992; Arroyo 1992), few have had the opportunity to compare the Philippine data with those in other ISSP member countries (Sandoval 1992; Mangahas 1993).

In 1993 Andrew Greeley prepared a cross-country analysis on religion using data from twelve of twenty participating countries; the Philippine data was not part of this analysis. This report extends Greeley's study by showing how aspects of Filipino religiosity compare with those found in twelve countries in North America, Australasia, the British Isles, Continental Europe, and the Near East. But this comparison cannot be as thorough as one desires. Without data tapes from the participating countries available at this writing, the report will be limited to figures in the Greeley report which can be directly compared with the Philippine material. This limitation will not impair, however, the task of exploring in a general way how religious Filipinos are compared to other nationalities participating in the ISSP survey. The 10th British Social Attitudes (BSA) Report also

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featured a comparative analysis of religion among twelve ISSP member countries. The report contained several indices useful for comparison with the Philippine data but whose manner of calculation could not easily be discerned, hence replicated, for this paper. Some of the report's findings are, however, reported in this paper. See Heath, Taylor and Toka (1993).

This report starts with a discussion of religious beliefs and practices, followed by similar cross-country comparisons on items dealing with one's relationship with God on supernatural or folk beliefs, and on the connection between religiosity and secular attitudes. A concluding section lists those areas where Filipinos stand unique relative to other countries and draws out broad implications of these findings for an understanding of Filipino religiosity.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

Table 1 compares all thirteen countries on selected items of religious beliefs and practices. The figures show, among others, that with the exception of East Germany, the large majorities in all countries believe in God. The percentages of theists run to as high as nine out of ten in the United States, Ireland, and Northern Ireland; eight out of ten in Italy and the Philippines; and more than two out of three in Israel, Great Britain, and New Zealand. Moreover, with the exception of East Germany and Slovenia, formerly socialist countries, the percentage of atheists—persons who reject the existence of God—is less than one out of five in the other countries. The Philippines has the smallest proportion (1%), closely followed by the United States, Ireland, and Northern Ireland (2% each), and then Italy (4%).

The majorities in nine countries—the exceptions being East Germany (12%), Slovenia (33%), and Israel (42%)—also believe in life after death. In this regard, the Philippine majority (76%) ranks fourth behind Ireland (80%), Northern Ireland (78%), and the United States (also 78%). The same four countries also rank the highest in the proportions of those who believe in heaven, with the Philippines this time ranking first (91%), followed by Northern Ireland (90%), Ireland (87%), and the United States (86%). All together, the majorities in seven of thirteen countries believe in heaven, a belief which is least accepted in East Germany (19%), Hungary (27%), and Slovenia (32%). In turn, the majorities in four of thirteen countries believe in hell, with the Philippines again ranking first (77%), followed by Northern Ireland

Table 1: Religious Beliefs and Practices in Thirteen Countries
SWS July 1991 National Survey and ISSP 1991 Survey
(percent per country)

Country	Religious Beliefs and Practices								
	Atheist ¹	Theist ¹	After Life ²	Heaven	Hell	Regularly Attend ³	Pray Weekly	Pray Daily	No Affiliation
Philippines	1	86	76	91	77	65	90	73	*
West Germany	13	67	53	43	26	15	38	21	10
East Germany	61	26	12	19	7	4	12	7	64
Great Britain	12	70	51	54	29	17	34	17	33
U.S.A.	2	94	78	86	71	44	65	44	6
Hungary	19	64	26	27	16	19	39	27	5
Italy	4	85	66	58	48	49	60	37	6
Ireland	2	92	80	87	53	76	82	57	2
N. Ireland	2	94	78	90	74	57	70	43	9
Norway	16	59	60	47	25	11	28	18	6
Israel	18	71	42	43	39	na	16	9	na
Slovenia	27	61	33	32	28	na	26	11	11
New Zealand	8	70	70	59	34	20	40	22	29

Note: Data not available (na) for certain countries.

1 One hundred percent minus the sum of columns 1 and 2 equals those who are not certain.

2 "Certainly true" or "Probably true," as in subsequent columns.

3 Two or three times a month or more.

* Less than 0.5%.

(74%), the United States (71%), and Ireland (53%). Belief in hell is least accepted in East Germany (7%), Norway (25%), and Slovenia (28%).

Church attendance data were available for eleven of thirteen countries. In these countries, the majorities attend church services regularly (two or three times a month or more) in Ireland (76%) and the Philippines (65%). More than two out of five do so in Italy (49%) and the United States (44%), while one out of five in New Zealand and under 20% in other countries, least of all in East Germany (4%) and Norway (11%), attend church regularly. Majorities in only two

countries—the Philippines (73%) and Ireland (57%)—pray everyday, though substantial proportions do so too in other countries: over two out of five in the United States and Northern Ireland, over one out of three in Italy, and over one out of five in Hungary, New Zealand, and West Germany. It is least practiced in Israel (9%) and in two formerly socialist countries, East Germany (7%) and Slovenia (11%).

Table 1 also shows that with the exception of East Germany, large majorities in all countries retain their religious affiliation. This applies particularly to the Philippines and Ireland, where 98% or higher of their population report a religious affiliation. They are followed by Italy, Norway, and the United States, all of which have 94–95% of their population affiliated to a religious group.

Combining religious affiliation with frequency of church attendance, a measure used in a British Social Attitudes or BSA report (Heath, Taylor, and Toka 1993), provides an indication of whether or not respondents are regular or irregular church members. Table 2 presents the Philippine data together with those which the BSA study found for twelve other ISSP member countries (the countries included do not exactly match those covered in Greeley's analysis). The figures show that the thirteen countries differ widely in their patterns of religious affiliation. At one extreme are Poland (78%), Ireland (77%), the Philippines (72%), and Italy (55%), where substantial majorities report that they are regular churchgoing Catholics. At the other extreme is East Germany, where 64% said they had no religion. In between are Northern Ireland, the United States, and the Netherlands, where the proportions of regular church members (Catholics and Protestants), substantial minorities in each, exceed the proportions of irregular church members. While the remaining six countries have more irregular than regular churchgoing members, substantial proportions of regular churchgoers can still be found in several of these places—about 25% in Hungary and about 20% in Britain and New Zealand. Only in East Germany and Norway are 10% or less of the sample regular church members.

While these figures do not represent an ideal observance of either religious orthodoxy or religious practice, they do paint a picture in which religion remains vital to the daily lives of many people around the world. This is evident in countries like Ireland, Italy, Israel, Norway, and especially the Philippines, which are "homogeneous in denomination," and even in societies like the United States, Northern Ireland, Great Britain, West Germany, and New Zealand, which are "heterogeneous in denomination" (the terms are from Heath,

Table 2: Extent of Religious Affiliation in Thirteen ISSP Member Countries
SWS July 1991 Survey and ISSP 1991 Survey
(percent per country)

Country	Religious Affiliation					
	Regular Catholic	Irregular Catholic	Regular Protestant	Irregular Protestant	Other Religion	None
Philippines	72	12	4	*	12	*
West Germany	17	26	6	38	2	11
East Germany	3	3	3	26	1	64
Great Britain	6	5	14	36	3	36
U.S.A.	15	12	34	27	4	7
Hungary	21	53	4	17	1	5
Italy	55	38	*	*	1	6
Ireland	77	16	2	2	2	2
N. Ireland	32	4	35	21	*	9
Norway	*	*	9	81	3	6
New Zealand	6	8	15	32	3	31
Netherlands	12	10	13	6	4	55
Poland	78	19	*	*	1	3

Note: Data for countries other than the Philippines come from the 10th BSA Report.

*Less than 0.5%.

Taylor, and Toka 1993). Formerly socialist countries trail other nations, but as Greeley (1993, 26-32) observes, there is evidence of religious revival in these nations: The levels of church attendance in Hungary and the extent of religious belief in East Germany and Slovenia, for example, are much higher in the 1991 ISSP survey than those observed in past studies.

Relationship with God

Table 3 supports these observations. Sizable majorities in the Philippines (84%), the United States (77%), Ireland (76%), and Italy

and Northern Ireland (both 68%) rate themselves as at least "somewhat religious," as do nearly half of West Germans and about two out of five in Great Britain, Norway, Slovenia, and New Zealand. While majorities in twelve of thirteen countries do not say they are "extremely close" to God—with the notable exception of 64% of the Filipinos who say they are—larger percentages (except for East Germany and Israel) agree that God cares about humans. Again the highest proportions appear in Northern Ireland (79%), the United States (74%), Ireland (64%), and the Philippines (61%).

Table 3: Items on Relationship with God among Thirteen Countries
SWS July 1991 National Survey and ISSP 1991 Survey
(percent per country)

Country	Relationship with God					
	"Religious" ¹	Close to God ²	God Cares ³	God Cares ⁴	"Very Happy"	Fatalist ⁵
Philippines	84	64	61	0.2	24	46
West Germany	49	6	40	23	19	21
East Germany	21	2	14	53	9	18
Great Britain	44	11	38	13	33	23
U.S.A.	77	35	74	4	37	13
Hungary	na	18	28	42	8	30
Italy	68	19	52	14	37	28
Ireland	76	22	64	2	41	23
N. Ireland	68	20	79	2	36	30
Norway	38	14	38	17	31	12
Israel	25	33	19	18	17	24
Slovenia	38	6	26	20	9	37
New Zealand	39	13	42	13	21	15

1 Percent rating themselves as "Extremely," "Very," or "Somewhat religious."

2 Percent answering "Extremely close to God."

3 Percent saying "Agree."

4 Percent saying "Disagree strongly."

5 Percent saying "Agree" that people can do little to change their lives.

By the same token, these same four countries lead other majorities in rejecting the statement that God does not care about humans. Majorities in all countries—notably the United States, Norway, and New Zealand—also reject a fatalistic view of life, i.e., that there is very little humans can do about controlling their own destinies. Interestingly, the Philippines has the smallest majority (54%) in rejecting the fatalist view.

The overall picture is still of countries in which people are moderately religious and not particularly devout, with the exception of those in four countries—the Philippines, the United States, and the two Irelands. Moreover, the people in these countries tend to have higher levels of psychological well-being. The correlation (r) between being in any of these four countries and the proportion saying they are “very happy” is .55. Stronger correlations with personal happiness are obtained with religiosity self-ratings (.82), agreement that God cares about humans (.85), and the perception that one is extremely close to God (.64). The same connection between personal happiness and spirituality has also been observed in the Philippines (Arroyo 1991).

Supernatural Beliefs

Table 4 shows that beliefs in the supernatural remain relatively strong in all thirteen countries. Majorities in seven countries—with the Philippines (80%) ranking first—and substantial minorities in all other countries except East Germany believe in religious miracles. Not as many report having contact with the dead, but a third or more in five countries, about a quarter in another three countries (the Philippines included), and close to 20% in the other countries except Norway (13%) make this claim. Also not as many report having mystical experiences, least of all in East Germany (7%), but the claim is made by a third or more in New Zealand and the United States, by more than a quarter in Great Britain, and by more than 20% in Israel and the Irelands. Only 14% of the Philippine sample report such ecstatic experiences.

In seven countries that included questions on “superstitious” practices, substantial proportions (nineteen out of twenty-eight percentages are 30% or more; the lowest is 18%) also believe in faith healers, horoscopes, or astrology, good luck charms, and fortunetellers. This pattern holds even in advanced and highly technological countries like Great Britain and West Germany. By comparison, the

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Table 4: Supernatural or Folk Beliefs in Thirteen Countries
SWS July 1991 National Survey and ISSP 1991 Survey
(percent per country)

Country	Supernatural or Folk Beliefs								
	Miracles	Contact with the Dead	Mystical Experiences	Faith Healers	Horoscope/ Astrology	GoodLuck Charms	Fortune- tellers	"Magic" Scale ¹	Secularists ²
Philippines	80	27	14	52	33	30	29	49	9
West Germany	59	23	18	38	36	31	32	38	5
East Germany	30	17	7	39	22	34	22	32	26
Great Britain	45	30	28	51	30	23	41	42	8
U.S.A.	73	40	33	na	na	na	na	na	na
Hungary	28	20	12	na	na	na	na	na	na
Italy	66	22	12	na	na	na	na	na	na
Ireland	74	29	22	67	18	25	27	34	1
N. Ireland	76	17	24	70	25	23	33	37	1
Norway	41	13	12	na	na	na	na	na	na
Israel	43	31	22	na	na	na	na	na	na
Slovenia	51	32	15	67	32	34	56	60	6
New Zealand	48	34	36	na	na	na	na	na	na

Note: Data not available (na) for certain countries.

1 Proportion high on factor composed of previous four items.

2 Percent who do not believe in anything at all—neither God nor faith healers, fortune tellers, good luck charms, astrology, or miracles.

Philippines does not rank the highest on any item on superstition. Slovenia consistently edges the Philippines in all categories and receives the highest score (60% above the mean) on the "magic" factor—an index comprising all four items on folk belief. The Philippines ranks second with a score 49% above the mean, followed by Great Britain with 42% above the mean; the lowest was East Germany with a score of 32% above the mean.

As Greeley notes (1993, 12), the persistence of these beliefs, suggests that the "animism" that official Christianity contended with

from the Fall of Rome to the Reformations continues to survive in modern society. It also implies that the Church's attempt to eliminate these practices was less than a complete success, and animism still thrives despite the changes wrought by the Reformations, the Enlightenment, the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions, and even the Post-Industrial period. Table 4 also reveals that the Philippines is not unique in its widespread acceptance of folk beliefs; it is a view shared worldwide, even among people of the First World. The purely "secular" man or woman—a person who believes in neither God nor any of the folk practices—is a rarity in contemporary society. Less than 10% in six of the seven countries where data was available (the Philippines included) can be called such.

Believing Atheists

That religion still carries a relatively strong imprint in modern societies receives further support from data showing the extent to which atheists accept orthodox and folk beliefs. Table 5 shows that in the Philippines, 70% of the atheists believe in religious miracles, 21% pray weekly, 49% believe in faith healers, 31% in fortunetellers, 9% in good luck charms, and 32% in horoscopes. Almost all of them (94%) support prayers in schools. Elsewhere, 45% of the atheists in West Germany and over a third in three other countries believe in miracles; moreover, 40% of the atheists in Ireland pray weekly, as do 20% of the Americans and more than one out of ten in three other countries.

In countries that were surveyed on "superstitious" practices, a range from 27 to 66% of atheists believe in faith healers, between 20 to 51% in fortunetellers, between 17 to 32% in good luck charms, and between 19 to 38% in horoscopes. Support for school prayers gets a nod in around half the atheists in the Irelands, over a third in Great Britain, and in over one out of five atheists in three other countries. To quote Greeley (*ibid.*, 19), "pure secularism seems to be hard to maintain even in the most secular environments." Especially, one might add, in the Philippines.

Image of the Churches

How about the institutional church? Is there a match between the widespread acceptance of religion and a high admiration for organized religion? Table 6 shows that substantial proportions in most countries think churches have too much power: almost three out four

in Israel and almost one-half in West Germany and Italy. The Philippines, like the Irelands, is less inclined to make this claim, though over a third still think churches have too much power. The lowest percentages are found in Hungary (13%) and New Zealand (18%).

Nevertheless, sizable proportions express "Complete" or "A great deal" of confidence in churches—a large 69% in the Philippines, almost half in Hungary and Ireland, more than two out of five in the United States and Northern Ireland, around a third in Norway, and over a quarter in West Germany and Slovenia. For all twelve countries (the Philippines excluded), the confidence given churches is higher than that placed on other institutions—education, the legislative branch, government or the civil service—except for the court

Table 5: Selected Beliefs and Practices of Atheists in Thirteen Countries
SWS July 1991 National Survey and ISSP 1991 Survey
(percent per country)

Selected Items on Beliefs and Practices							
Country	Miracles	Pray Weekly	Faith Healers	Fortune- tellers	Good Luck Charms	Horoscope/ Astrology	Support School Prayer
Philippines	70	21	49	31	9	32	94
West Germany	45	12	36	32	29	32	23
East Germany	30	3	35	20	32	19	5
Great Britain	14	8	27	35	17	23	39
U.S.A.	28	20	na	na	na	na	22
Hungary	8	9	na	na	na	na	15
Italy	21	15	na	na	na	na	18
Ireland	36	40	48	27	26	21	47
N. Ireland	37	18	46	36	21	20	54
Norway	18	5	na	na	na	na	11
Israel	11	2	na	na	na	na	na
Slovenia	35	8	66	51	30	38	10
New Zealand	17	6	na	na	na	na	22

Note: Data not available (na) for certain countries.

system. In the Philippines, the confidence given churches receives the highest percentage relative to other institutions. The educational system ranked a close second to churches (68% vs. 69%). Despite this show of confidence, majorities in all countries strongly feel that churches should stay out of politics, particularly in matters concerning elections and other government affairs.

But not in matters religious. School prayers, for example, receive strong majority support in six countries, especially in the Philippines

Table 6: Attitudes toward Churches in Thirteen Countries
SWS July 1991 National Survey and ISSP 1991 Survey
(percent per country)

Country	Attitude toward Churches				
	Too Much Power	Confidence ¹	Should Not Interfere in Elections	Should Not Interfere in Government	Support School Prayer
Philippines	36	69	65	63	98
West Germany	48	28	85	76	42
East Germany	34	20	80	70	12
Great Britain	28	19	74	61	73
U.S.A.	23	41	65	54	64
Hungary	13	48	69	62	43
Italy	45	28	84	71	59
Ireland	38	46	76	69	84
N. Ireland	38	41	72	62	88
Norway	26	34	69	52	34
Israel	72	18	60	55	24
Slovenia	26	28	71	68	24
New Zealand	18	22	64	58	48

¹ Proportion of total sample (twelve countries, excluding the Philippines) with "Complete" or "A great deal" of confidence in churches is 34%. For the educational system, it is 34%; for the court system, 35%; for the legislative branch of government, 24%; and for the civil service, 18%. In the Philippines, the comparable figures are 69% for churches, 68% for the educational system, 39% for the court system, 32% for Congress or the legislative branch, 43% for business, and 34% for the government or the civil service.

(98%), and moderate support (34–48%) in four other countries. The strongest opposition appears in East Germany, Israel, and Slovenia, where less than a quarter express support for school prayers. In general, while churches are not overwhelmingly popular institutions—except perhaps in the Philippines—they do receive enough mass support in many countries, especially when they do not get too involved in matters of state. A BSA study adds that strong support for church/state involvement is more likely to come from regular churchgoing Catholics and Protestants and least likely from those with no religion (Heath, Taylor, and Toka 1993, 59).

Support for Sexual Teachings

No similar support is apparent in matters of sexual teachings as prescribed by the Christian churches, except for the Philippines, where the majority, at least in attitudes, strongly disapprove of premarital sex, extramarital sex, homosexuality, and abortion (for a more detailed discussion on the Philippine data, see Sandoval 1992). In other countries, as Table 7 reveals, no majority exists in believing that premarital sex is always wrong. Opposition to extramarital sex and homosexuality is more widespread, but the disapproval is not universal. In West and East Germany, Hungary, and Slovenia, for example, there is no majority opposition to extramarital sex. In the two Germanys and in New Zealand, there is equally no majority opposition to homosexuality. In contrast, approval of abortion is more widespread across nations. Only in the Irelands (and in the Philippines as indicated earlier) is there widespread opposition to abortion even with the mitigating circumstances of birth defects and poverty present.

Are Catholics more likely than non-Catholics to disapprove of unorthodox sexual practices? Not all the time, as Table 7 shows; indeed, in a few instances (as in the Philippines), the reverse may apply. Catholics are more likely than non-Catholics to disapprove of premarital sex in only three countries, Britain and the Irelands, and even here the majority of Catholics do not accept the Church's teaching on the matter. In both the United States and the Philippines, the opposite holds: Non-Catholics are more likely than Catholics to oppose premarital sex.

Moreover, only in three of thirteen countries—Ireland, Slovenia, and New Zealand—do Catholics tend to reject extramarital sex more strongly than non-Catholics. In the Philippines, the reverse again

applies though the percentage difference is very small. In turn, homosexuality finds stronger opposition from Catholics than non-Catholics in only four countries—Ireland, West Germany, Slovenia, and to a slight degree, the Philippines. The reverse applies in the United States and Northern Ireland.

Table 7: Sexual Attitudes by Country and Denomination
SWS July 1991 National Survey and ISSP 1991 Survey
(percent per country)

Country	Sexual Attitudes (% Always Wrong)														
	Premarital Sex			Extramarital Sex			Homosexual Sex			Abortion: Defect			Abortion: Poor		
	C	NC	d	C	NC	d	C	NC	d	C	NC	d	C	NC	d
Philippines	57	65	-8**	85	86	-1**	83	81	+2*	55	54	+1	62	71	-9**
West Germany	2	4	-2	41	40	+1	40	27	+13*	13	11	+2	27	20	+7
East Germany	4	3	+1	53	48	+5	42	37	+5	14	9	+5	28	15	+13*
Great Britain	21	15	+6*	64	61	+3	63	60	+3	22	11	+11	41	15	+26*
U.S.A.	18	30	-12**	69	74	-5	69	77	-8**	23	22	+1	40	39	+1
Hungary	13	15	-2	44	44	0	80	79	+1	11	12	-1	10	13	-3
Italy	16	na	na	53	na	na	66	na	na	17	na	na	37	na	na
Ireland	37	20	+17*	72	52	+20*	69	42	+27*	49	27	+22*	69	37	+32*
N. Ireland	36	33	+3*	81	77	+4	77	81	-4**	51	17	+34*	69	40	+29*
Norway	na	9	na	na	50	na	na	50	na	na	11	na	na	25	na
Israel	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Slovenia	2	4	-2	38	26	+12*	62	51	+11*	6	4	+2	12	9	+3
New Zealand	17	16	+1	77	59	+18*	48	49	-1	29	12	+17*	46	20	+26*

Notes: C = Catholic/NC = Non Catholic/d=difference

Data for Israel as well as for selected countries not available (na).

For the Philippines, "Undecided," "Don't know," and "No response" categories were excluded from the tabulation.

The Z test of proportions was used as a measure of inference.

* Catholics significantly more likely to oppose.

** Catholics significantly less likely to oppose.

Abortion resulting from birth defects is likely to receive greater disapproval from Catholics in four of thirteen countries the Irelands, New Zealand, and to a slight extent, the Philippines. In turn, abortion owing to poverty meets stronger Catholic resistance in five of thirteen countries (three of which are East Germany, Britain, and New Zealand where the issue does not affect many people). The reverse, however, holds true in the Philippines: Non-Catholics are less tolerant of abortion owing to poverty than are Catholics.

If one equates religiosity with an acceptance of Christian sexual teachings, then religion appears to be a weak force in many parts of the world, except perhaps in the Philippines and, to a lesser extent, the Irelands, where greater congruence is achieved between religious beliefs and attitudes towards unorthodox sexual relations. But does this general inconsistency between religiosity and sexual teachings hold in earlier historical periods or in other sex-related issues as well? It is hard to say without adequate data. In the Philippines at least, there is evidence that in one sex-related matter, namely family planning or birth control, discontinuities arise between what the Catholic Church says and what the people believe (Bautista, Abenir, and Sandoval 1993). In this regard, it might be useful to ask why societies influenced by Christianity—in the past, present, or both—find a standard of sexual abstinence outside of wedlock difficult to maintain consistently in various spheres of sexual life.

Religiosity and Secular Matters

Religion may be alive and well around the world, and especially in the Philippines, but does it spill over and influence the secular areas of human life? Data on sexual attitudes indicate one area where traditional religion has little effect, but these results may suggest that many people are able to reinterpret religious teachings, or follow a different set of norms, to accommodate unorthodox sexual relations and still consider themselves religious. Another test would be to correlate indicators of religiosity with attitudes toward what Greeley calls the "distant other" (e.g., the poor and the unemployed) and the "impersonal other" (e.g., the government). If people's relationship to God serves as a paradigm for human relationships in general, one would expect positive relationships between religiosity and attitudes toward others.

In Greeley's analysis, religiosity was indicated by frequency of prayer and images of God; of these two, only data on prayer can be compared across countries since findings on images of God were

presented in graphs and could not be accurately compared with the Philippine material. In turn, the notion of a "distant other" was indicated by an index combining attitudes toward government intervention to provide jobs and promote equality, while the "impersonal other" was indicated by another index combining items on attitudes toward cheating the government on tax returns and applications for funds. Correlations between frequency of prayer and personal happiness were also added to determine the effect of religiosity on psychological well-being.

Table 8 presents the correlations (r) in Greeley's study together with the Philippine data. While the correlations are small, all save one are positive; moreover, of the fifty-one correlations in the table, thirty-two are statistically significant and reflect real differences in the population from which the samples were drawn. In five countries—the United States, the Irelands, Norway, and New Zealand—all correlations are statistically significant. No correlation is significant in Israel, and only one relationship, that between frequency of prayer and support for government intervention, matters in Hungary. In the remaining countries, including the Philippines, frequency of prayer has some impact on two of four variables, most of them having to do with attitudes toward the other.

Looking at the figures vertically, there are six out of a possible thirteen significant correlations with personal happiness, another seven with the death penalty, ten with opposition to cheating the government, and nine with government intervention in favor of the poor and the unemployed. On the whole then, frequency of prayer does make some difference in enhancing one's psychological well-being and in fostering sympathy toward "distant" and "impersonal" others. The Philippines is no exception to this general pattern.

Summary and Conclusion

Greeley's twelve-nation study shows that while levels of religious belief and practice vary considerably from one country to another, religion remains an important aspect of people's lives worldwide. Sizable percentages of each national sample, and even among subsamples of atheists in each country (except in East Germany), believe in God and in life after death; they also pray regularly and are more likely to attend church services regularly. Majorities as well are affiliated with a religious group, and substantial proportions in most countries are regular churchgoers. Similar majorities claim to be at

least "somewhat" religious and agree that God does care about humans. While belief in superstition is also widespread, majorities reject the fatalist view that humans cannot control their destinies. Attitudes toward unorthodox sexual relations are, however, generally at variance with the views of churches, except in countries like the Philippines that have high proportions of respondents who report to be religious and devout.

Religion influences secular attitudes as well. Frequency of prayer, for example, correlates positively with personal happiness, opposi-

Table 8: Correlations (*r*) between Frequency of Prayer
and Selected Personal and Political Attitudes
SWS July 1991 National Survey and ISSP 1991 Survey

Country	Attitude Items			
	Personal Happiness	Oppose Capital Punishment	Oppose Cheating Government ¹	Support for Government Intervention ²
Philippines	.04	-.01	.08*	.10*
West Germany	.03	.03	.10*	.07*
East Germany	.00	.06*	.07*	.01
Great Britain	.11*	.03	.11*	.03
U.S.A.	.11*	.08*	.07*	.08*
Hungary	.04	.02	.03	.06*
Italy	.00	.01	.07*	.09*
Ireland	.06*	.05*	.11*	na
N. Ireland	.10*	.14*	.18*	.05*
Norway	.07*	.08*	.11*	.08*
Israel	.00	.03	.03	.03
Slovenia	.03	.05*	.00	.05*
New Zealand	.08*	.05*	.13*	.05*

Note: Data not available (na).

*Correlation statistically significant at .05 or lower.

1 Condemn cheating on tax and on applications for money.

2 Favor government intervention to provide jobs and promote equality.

tion to the death penalty, opposition to cheating the government, and support for government intervention in favor of the poor and the unemployed. People also place more confidence in churches and their leaders than they do on the average in other institutions (business and government), with the exception of the courts. All together, the study believes it premature to post an obituary notice for religion and shows great reluctance to accept the notion that secularization, or the process that diminishes the influence of religion in everyday life, has exercised such a strong grip on modern life.

The inclusion of Philippine data in this cross-country study hardly alters these conclusions. This is not surprising considering that the Philippines, the only Catholic country in the Orient, has a strong religious tradition. The Philippines joins the United States and the two Irelands as among the most religious and devout countries in the world, and if the ranking was based solely on religiosity self-ratings and feeling "extremely close" to God, the Philippines would stand out as the most religious among the thirteen nations participating in the survey (see Mangahas 1993 for a comparison of the Philippine data with those found in Ireland and Italy).

Furthermore, Filipinos, compared to other nationalities, appear to have the closest ties to their churches: Filipinos, more than any other nationality group, are more likely to be affiliated to a religion, express greater confidence in their churches, prefer churches to stay out of politics, support school prayers (even among atheists), and share the churches' disapproval of unorthodox sexual practices. There is also some indication that Filipino Catholics, while generally conservative, are more liberal than Filipino non-Catholics as far as sexual attitudes are concerned (also see Mangahas 1993). Filipinos' religiosity, like that of other nationalities, has slightly positive but significant effects on their attitudes toward others. However, a sizable proportion, close to half to be precise, are strongly bound to superstitious beliefs; moreover, more than two out of five still cling to a fatalistic view of life. The persistence of animism and fatalism, both traditional religious attitudes, in post-Vatican II Philippines reflects the continuing encounter between official and folk practices that have characterized Filipino religious behavior since the days of Spanish colonization. How this continuing encounter shapes Filipino religiosity, how it affects other areas of Philippine life, and how levels of religiosity vary among subgroups in the population are among the main analytic tasks of social scientists seeking to understand Filipino religious behavior.

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