The Role of the Catholic Church in the Philippines on Youth Development: A Revisit of Badiou's Existential Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the role of the Philippine Catholic Church in promoting development among Filipino youth. Despite the benefits of globalization, its negative consequences were more pronounced. However, engaging and responding effectively to challenges caused by the impacts of globalization can lead to a meaningful existence. This indicates that young Filipinos constantly strive for what is most beneficial for themselves, as long as they are instilled with values that genuinely encourage them in such a pursuit. Such can be understood by investigating the relationship between Catholic social teaching on spirituality and social justice awareness with Alain Badiou's existential philosophy found within his notion of maximal existence. Badiou's notion of maximal existence is characterized as the being that maximally exists due to its meaningful participation in the situation it is in. The author explores the Church's mission of spirituality and social justice awareness and its effective influence for a meaningful existence among the Filipino youth. The Catholic Church is perceived as embodying Badiou's concept of maximal existence through its role on spirituality and social justice, which stands as a framework for young Filipinos' recognition for their worth and ability to make a

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positive impact on both their lives and the Philippine society. The article seeks to increase consciousness regarding the Church's spirituality and social justice in relation to the development of Filipino youth, promoting transformative development focused on truth, service, and active citizenship in them.

Keywords: *Filipino youth, logic of existence, maximal existence, spirituality, social justice*

1. Introduction

Young individuals may encounter various obstacles in globalization that positively or negatively influence their development period. Technology, which is a part and parcel of globalization, poses particular risks for young individuals (Panahi 2015, 16). Positively, smartphones and laptops are beneficial tools in improving their education, providing easier access to learning resources and creating an engaging virtual environment. But negatively, relying excessively on them can lead to misuse, such as mismanaging the use of AI tools for learning and personal use. Given this, technology has an influential function, both helpful and harmful, in their pursuit of a meaningful existence. As a result, young individuals may face challenges in addressing crucial matters and acquiring essential life skills.

The Catholic Church is renowned for its highly effective participation in numerous development initiatives at both global and local levels, including healthcare, education, conflict resolution, and disaster assistance. Empowering youth with essential skills to fulfill their dreams arises from acknowledging the Church's function as a supportive community that assists them in molding their destiny and contributing to society. Trabajo (2016, 47) argued that the "Church's role in youth development may include steering them away from negative behaviors." Pope Francis articulated the dissemination of the Gospel, which has the potential to foster a more inclusive community. This can be observed in the Catholic Church's initiatives to encourage spirituality and raise awareness about social justice among young Filipinos. Further, the attempt to empower Filipino youth mirrors Alain Badiou's philosophy of maximal existence.

Badiou's philosophical system explores situation, event, subject of event in his seminal book "Being and Event" to challenge traditional philosophies constrained by "tyranny of the One", promoting human rationality and multiplicity for pursuing meaningful living. However, the key issue here is, how can someone build a meaningful life in a society where unfair systems make it difficult to reach their desired quality of life? Badiou's subsequent work "Logics of Worlds", which expands on concepts introduced in his book "Being and Event," presents a novel perspective on the question through his existential philosophy. Despite facing credibility issues, the Catholic Church's initiatives to safeguard and empower young Filipinos illuminate their active role in creating the present and future of the Philippines. This can be achieved by examining the relationship between Badiou's concept of maximal existence and the Catholic Church's influence on the development of the youth.

This study explores the role of the Catholic Church in the Philippines toward the development of the youth. In particular, it examines the relationship between Catholic social teachings of spirituality and social justice awareness with Badiou's existential philosophy, specifically on maximal existence, and how it contributes to the development of Filipino youth. This paper concentrates on investigating three main sectional elements. Firstly, it discusses the situation of Filipino young people towards the impact of globalization and their exposure to its negative effects. Secondly, it explores Badiou's existential philosophy centered on maximal existence which is an alternative approach to finding meaning in a given situation. Thirdly, it discusses the Catholic Church's identity in society by exploring its mission principles on spirituality and social justice awareness. The societal identity of the Church, through its spiritual role and commitment to social justice, reflects Badiou's concept of maximal existence, representing it as an element of the Catholic Church that has a significant role in fostering transformative development among Filipino youth. The relation between Badiou's maximal existence and the Church's role on spirituality and social justice awareness promotes fostering of truth, service, and civic engagement among the youth, emphasizing solidarity and community values over individualism.

2. The State of the Youth in the Philippines

The world is undergoing a swift and comprehensive shift across multiple disciplines. Individuals are presented with numerous benefits, including task optimization to augment efficiency and practicality, promote agility, and cultivate cognitive skills (Magistra 2022, 126). Social networking platforms in contemporary society have enabled the dissemination of research ideas and offered dependable grammar checkers for the precise articulation of concepts. Although globalization offers advantages, the quest for ease has resulted in unforeseen detrimental effects on environmental, social, political, mental health, and ethical dimensions that influence human flourishing. The concerning issue is the possible risk to the development of Filipino youth resulting from the problems of globalization to which they are susceptible. This section examines the substantial impact of globalization on Filipino youth, focusing on its adverse effects.

During youth, the brain rapidly develops, making individuals highly impressionable and eager to learn (Joshi 2022). This time of transition is a critical juncture where young individuals face different obstacles as they develop. Commonly, when they commit to their objectives, and embrace particular beliefs, they are encouraged to form significant relationships with others in adulthood. Contrastingly, a young person who struggles with basic needs understands that these difficulties often hinder their ability to achieve a good quality of life. Even with access to resources, a majority of young Filipinos today face greater negative effects of globalization like reduced education quality, lack of environmental awareness, and increased harmful social media usage compared to others. Mesa (2007) stated that in the Philippines, some young people are still facing unequal access to education opportunities (digital or traditional), which leads to greater inequalities and lack of social responsibility, despite education being a key priority in the country since independence in 1946 (Bai 2023). A negative attitude towards implementing environmental policies has caused a lack of regard for the environment, despite widespread knowledge of issues such as improper waste disposal practices (Punzalan 2020). Children and adolescents who have unrestricted access to social media are at risk of being exposed to the unfiltered explicit content and inappropriate behavior that are prevalent on online platforms, resulting in decreased ability to communicate effectively in person (Azuike 2017).

Rapid advancements in the economy and technology are believed to diminish the significance of the family's role in society. This means that some families have minimal impact on their children, especially the youth, due to the clash between technological and economic values and the traditional values they were raised with. Subsequently, "young people are being influenced and led by external factors such as nightclubs, negative peers, and harmful conversations" (Sultana and Bukhari 2020, 87). Such is most common among individuals aged 18 to 24, who made up 52 percent of the country's social media users (De Sagun et al. 2023). Here, "lack of communication between parents and children is identified as the cause of moral decline and deterioration" (Sultana and Bukhari 2020, 87). A lack of family responsibilities due to overreliance on technology hinders moral education among the youth by weakening their cognitive skills and promoting social isolation. Evidently, the absence of social accountability in education exacerbates these problems due to an overreliance on technology, such as television and video games, for inappropriate purposes. Many students, both children and youth, have not been reading for enjoyment for many years due to a shift toward visual literacy over print literacy (Wolpert 2009).

The importance of critical thinking, analysis, and creativity for visual literacy is often unrecognized, leading to decreased clear thinking and the spread of misinformation. A lack of comprehensive scrutiny on digital literacy content can contribute to the intentional spread of false information, known as disinformation, which can negatively impact the reputation and emotional health of youth (Fajardo 2023). In fact, "risk factors for consuming and believing fake news includes from lack of education or digital literacy, skepticism towards the media, limited cognitive abilities, strong social media connections, biased opinions, and political or ideological biases" (De Sagun et al. 2023, 1). For example, individuals who are confident in their ability to detect fake news are more likely to vote, with a 152 percent higher chance for very confident individuals compared to those with no confidence. This trend is also seen at lower confidence levels, with increases of 28 percent for not very confident individuals and 74 percent for somewhat confident individuals. With this, educated Filipino youth are more likely to vote, with a 9 percent increase in voting likelihood for those with a higher Real News Score and an 8 percent increase for those with a higher Fake News Score (Mendoza et al. 2022, 22). Being exposed to misinformation can lead to feelings of hopelessness and anxiety,

particularly when political tensions are high, such as before elections (Cabañes and Santiago 2023).

Additionally, Filipino youth have been exposed to increasing screen time, with a negative impact on language skills and social interactions, particularly if they use screens for more than two hours daily (Dy et al. 2023). Excessive use of social media by young Filipinos can disrupt their sleep patterns, resulting in lower academic achievements and heightened levels of anxiety and self-doubt (Angwaomaodoko 2024). While anime and other forms of media can promote positive values such as friendship and family, their impact on the values of young people is often unclear because of concerns about the violence and inappropriate content they may be exposed to (Pinili 2017). Medina's research indicated potential connections between the rise in sex crimes like sexual assault and rape and the availability of sexual content in mass media, along with the easy availability of online pornography leading to an increase in 'cybersex' among young people (Lanuza 2004). This may also refer to the growing trend of using mobile devices to access child pornography, a serious issue that is becoming more prevalent (Nuncio 2019). Young Filipinos' misuse of social media causes mental health issues like depression and anxiety, leading to violence as a solution to real-life conflicts.

Young people often overlook environmental issues caused by globalization, focusing only on its benefits like "smartphones, tablets, and laptops that have revolutionized the way we live. But there is no denying that these everyday technologies have significant environmental impacts" (Okafor 2024). The main problem facing young individuals is not their inability to utilize social media to tackle environmental issues efficiently. Instead, what is particularly worrying about their situation is the impact from "environmental degradation in the Philippines caused by the damaging activities of both foreign and local corporations, affluent individuals, politicians, government officials, and certain individuals" (IBON Foundation 2020). For instance, a tragic garbage avalanche at Payatas Dumpsite in Manila in July 2000 caused loss of lives and economic instability for underprivileged families, affecting the youth responsible for supporting their families. Thus, as the condition of the environment worsens, achieving sustainable development becomes more difficult, leading to the continued marginalization of youth in rural areas (Broad and Cavanagh 1993).

Globalization negatively affects Filipino youth by lack of parental guidance, limited social responsibility in education, and declining morals from social media misuse. However, positive impact can come from meaningful relationships and social skills development in the societal role of the Catholic Church. Encouraging spirituality and social justice through the Catholic Church can help young people creatively engage with globalization, becoming ethically active citizens in Philippine society. Further, exploration of Badiou's notion of existence is needed to understand the influence of these two mission principles on Filipino youth development.

3. Badiou's Existential Philosophy

According to Badiou, "being is fundamentally linked to events, in which a being changes upon the chance occurrence of a significant event and is acknowledged by subjects faithful to it" (Sandhya 2020, 22). Events happen unexpectedly within complex interconnected situations controlled by fundamental rules. Efficiently structured situations are perceived consistent, devoid of any "voids" among their elements, as exemplified by the bourgeoisie thriving in capitalism (Sahin 2012, 84; 88), whereas historical events are inherently unpredictable and develop due to particular gaps or voids within situations (Sahin 2012, 91). According to Badiou, this "lack" in a situation represents the void, which eludes direct observation. It is a locus where vision is obstructed or an absence in a certain situation manifest (Sahin 2012, 85). In this way, Truth can manifest unexpectedly, as it does not consistently emerge in predetermined situations (Sandhya 2020, 23). Badiou's theory deconstructs social disparities and advocates for human development through intellectual advancement and a transformation of values.

Badiou believes that overlooked parts of a situation can reveal truth through intentional efforts, transforming inconsistency into consistency. These neglected elements are key for personal growth and new opportunities. This is where his concept of an event begins to gain significance.

Badiou asserts that "events, initiated by disruptions in existing structures, create space for new truths to emerge" (Agra 2017, 163). Badiou's notion of an event elucidates the importance of contradictory multiplicities in uncovering concealed truths and opportunities for

development. Human subjects dedicated to uncovering truths across various domains transcend conventional reasoning and societal norms. A human subject, whether operating independently or collaboratively, genuinely believes in their situations and endeavors to enhance them, in contrast to a subject that remains inert in a situation that "does not engage with its demands" (Heyer 2009, 442). Imbong examining Badiou's perspective on romantic relationships, posits that "confronting challenges collectively enhances comprehension and facilitates the attainment of previously deemed unattainable objectives" (2015, 39). Their drive originates not only from their affection for each other, but also from love itself, motivating them to rise above selfishness and work together toward lasting love and a more meaningful life. Here, Badiou enables individuals to construct a more equitable world by integrating theory with practice.

Badiou's inquiry into the sole concept of existence parallels the way totalitarian regimes impose authoritarian language. Existence, for Badiou, is a being within a world regulated by relational logics—a framework that delineates the manner in which a being exists. Badiou (2009, 116) elucidates logic as the framework that structures the relationships between beings in reference to other beings. This profound transformation questions conventional perceptions of experience and reality, whereby the interactions, connections, and manifestations of a being's elements delineate its existence. We shall now officially elucidate Badiou's terms of "infinite," "existential resource," and "appearance" to enhance our analysis of his philosophy of existence.

According to Badiou, a "world" is akin to a limited representation of existence, defined as any situation or location composed of multiple entities that coexist and are regarded as elements of a cohesive whole, analogous to the way apples in a fruit basket constitute a world (Kejriwal 2021, 68). "Worlds or situations function as frameworks that dictate the arrangement of multiple possibilities, as they are the places in which an individual's identity is formed" (Badiou 2009, 113). A being's existence is inherently situated within a particular situation, as we cannot ascertain the feasibility of its existence without reference to the precise situation it inhabits. However, comprehending "being" designated for a specific situation necessitates acknowledging that situations serve as frameworks devoid of a singular, central point of reference.

The absence of a singular reference point that delineates a situation results to Being engaging in several situations, which we refer to as the

"infinite" (Badiou 2002, 68). No situation is confined to a singular, immutable state of existence (Badiou 2009, 308). Conversely, each situation possesses an "actual infinity" as the notion of a singular truth is dismissed (Kahvecioglu 2015). For example, take a political leader in a certain province of the Philippines who fulfills the functions of both a mayor and a governor. Assuming the roles of "mayor and governor" can be interpreted as exemplifying Badiou's notion of the infinite situation pertinent to a political leader, signifying their existence as a servant leader inside a province. A being situated in a particular situation may be deemed to exist due to the myriad possibilities for its existence that the situation provides. This indicates that "the infinite" encompasses multiple interpretations. Multiple situations allow various beings to articulate themselves, each contributing to their holistic development.

However, being aware of the importance of actively participating in a situation one is a part of means recognizing the responsibilities that come with that specific situation. For Badiou, the term for this concept is "existential resource,"—representing the conscious participation in a situation a being is part of. The obligation of a being in a situation arises from the notion that a being is inherently destined to appear in a particular world or situation (Badiou 2009), for such a being is closely tied to a presented localization, whose space acts as the infinite situation in which it resides (Badiou 2002). In the context of a province-based political leader, the responsibilities associated with these situations present limitless opportunities, including, but not restricted to, a mayor devising strategies for environmental preservation and a governor supervising the agencies tasked with executing these strategies. Badiou's existential resource is a being existing in different local situations at a given point in time, hence, "does not revolve around a singular overarching world, but instead encompasses multiple situations where beings exist, resulting in a decision to portray only one being instead of the entirety of Being" (Badiou 2009, 161).

Moreover, Badiou raises the question of how we can determine the emergence of a pure multiplicity, or a being, within a situation character-ized by a very complex network of differences, identities, intensities, and similar elements (2011). In short, what we need to validate according to Badiou is the existence of a being in the infinite local situations from which it emerges. This is where the idea of a single, fixed reality is challenged, and embracing the diversity of ways "being" can manifest is revealed.

To confirm the existence of a being, it is important to see its active engagement in a situation. Badiou posits that the 'situation of a being' refers to the situation in which a being delineates a unique procedure for establishing its identity through interactions with other beings (2009, 114). A being may display differing levels of difference, identity, or proximity to other beings depending on the many situations in which it exists (Badiou 2002). Hence, in a specific situation, it is possible for multiple beings to exist concurrently, and the observation of their coexistence indicates the recognition of the particular localized situation within the larger situation of the involved beings. A competent political leader in a province simultaneously occupies both the offices of mayor and governor within that area. The functions of a mayor and a governor appear quite analogous, as both are tasked with responsibilities pertaining to environmental conservation and embody the qualities of credible political leadership, reflecting similarities in the province they serve. In here, Badiou brings our attention to the complex levels of existence manifested through the act of appearance.

Appearance has the function of drawing attention to the spatial dimension of existence, highlighting the "there" in the diverse manifestations of being as observed in their ontological state (Badiou 2009, 162). The differentiation or identification of beings depends on their appearance, as it is through their appearance and interrelations that one can comprehend existence. Badiou employed logical relations to discern the emergence of two or more beings within a situation, prompting us to consider their interrelations, whether they differ or possess certain commonalities in the situation they belong to. According to Badiou, this reasoning relates to the concept of appearance, which refers to the extent to which the appearance of a being aligns with or diverges from that of another recognized being in a situation.

Badiou's novel approach to understanding Being contrasts with spiritual explanations by emphasizing the physical components of the material world, devoid of metaphysics, hence challenging societal conventions, beliefs, and religious interpretations within existing institutions. Badiou refers to this as the transcendental, which is "the system in place that enables us to understand the varying degrees of identities and distinctions in a particular world or situation" (2009, 118). Badiou asserts that the scale serves as a multifaceted tool for assessing the efficacy of a particular situation. According to Badiou, a measurement system is

essential to evaluate the similarity among various beings in a specific situation and ascertain their level of identity. Hence, a being appearing in a situation is determined by the "degree of indexing of its appearance based on either the transcendental aspect or the logic of the situation" (Sahin 2012, 111).

A multiple is inherently connected to a being's existence as being-there. Based on this information, multiple situations exist in which a being may appear, each characterized by distinct elements, as evidenced by the simultaneous existence of two or more beings within the realm of a particular being. Badiou (2011) asserts that a measure of identity is associated with this precise point, representing the extent of identity or distinction between two beings within a given situation. In assessing the degree of identity between two beings in a situation, a scale that pinpoints the pivotal aspect of the situation, which facilitates the analysis of both identity and differences within the confines of the particular situation to which a being belongs (Badiou 2009, 119) must be laid out. To elucidate the scale, it can be defined as the measurement of the extent of identity of the act of appearing or the function of appearance, represented by the equation $Id(\varepsilon, \varepsilon)$. Every transcendental possesses a minimum (μ) and a maximum (M) value. If $Id(\varepsilon, \varepsilon) = \mu$, then ε does not exist in the world m; its existence in m is null (Badiou 2009). This denotes the least level at which two multiples lack similar relations in a situation. If $Id(\varepsilon, \varepsilon) = M$ (indicating the maximal self-identity of ε's appearance), then ε exists absolutely in the world m (Badiou 2009, 269). When two multiples react in a manner that impeccably corresponds with a situation, it exemplifies Being actively existing within that situation they are in. Consequently, a multiple that is included in a situation where it successfully fulfills its function and is validated as advantageous to that situation, its existence is maximal (Badiou 2009). Given this, maximal existence entails direct engagement with the outcome of an event, fully adopting a new set of truths to transcend mere existence and initiate a new existence within those truths (Prozorov 2014).

Ultimately, Badiou's philosophical framework offers a unique perspective on understanding the idea of existence. According to him, the existence of a being in a world/situation is determined by how much it is identified as being, along with other beings, the same within the world/situation in which it participates (Badiou 2009, 269).

4. The Role of the Philippine Church in Youth Development

Although individuals frequently link the Catholic Church with grand architecture, spirituality, and history, its significance on both global and local levels extends far beyond these surface perceptions. The Catholic Church, unlike other organizations, significantly influences health, education, and poverty alleviation, demonstrating a profound commitment to addressing many societal needs in the pursuit of Truth (Volonte 2020). The Catholic Church is characterized as a "religious organization capable of engaging in substantive dialogues with the secular realm to promote the dignity of all individuals, alongside justice, peace, and sustainable development" (Alva 2021, 222). In his article "The Distinct Role of the Catholic Church in Development and Humanitarian Response," Gordon (2021, 13) underscores that the Church's impact on human development is founded on three fundamental principles of Catholic Social Teaching: seeing, judging, and acting. These basic concepts serve as a framework for decision-making, providing practical guidance that, when integrated, focus on essential aspects of human transformative development.

The Church should observe social indices and heed the voices of the marginalized, oppressed, silent, underrepresented, and mistreated by unjust authorities. The Church asserts that "every individual is both sacred and social, warranting the opportunity to attain their full potential through engagement in family, community, and relationships within spiritual, social, and cultural frameworks" (Himchak 2005, 4). The Church is tasked with serving all of society, regardless of race or creed, by protecting human dignity, fostering solidarity and the common good, assisting the impoverished, and nurturing creation. Pope Paul VI asserted that growth must encompass more than only economic progress. For authenticity to exist, it must be complete: inclusive, indicating that it should foster the welfare of every individual and the entirety of a person" (*Populorum Progressio*, 1967; as cited in Gordon 2021, 15). The Church adheres to several mission concepts, including spirituality and social justice awareness. The significance of spirituality and social justice awareness in the development of Filipino youth underlines the sociocultural identity of the Catholic Church.

Accordingly, these two mission principles embody the Badiouan level of maximal existence, representing the Church's role as fundamental resources for Filipino youth development. Analyzing how the two mission

principles embody Badiouan existential sense is essential for a Filipino youth development framework.

Badiou posits that a being lives solely inside a situation, implying that beings detached from a situation lack a feeling of existence. Badiou's concept of infinity delineates an existence wherein the elements of the situation to which being is assigned either lack totalizing attributes or have been divested of substance (Mambrol, 2018). A being's existence is not contingent upon a singular circumstance, as there are countless contexts to which a being may pertain. This multiplicity guarantees that the essence of a being, engaged with infinite situations, remains unclouded by the essential aspects that characterize its existence. Badiou (2009, 114) asserts that "the process of 'worlding/situating' a formal being, which encompasses its existence or manifestation, is fundamentally a logical procedure that establishes a secure foundation for its identity."

Concerning the identity of the Catholic Church, despite facing various challenges that assess its significance, their dedication to fostering the growth of Filipino youth embodies Badiou's concept of the infinite, as illustrated by the Church's mission principles of spirituality and social justice. According to Badiou (2009, 114), the Church is perceived as a "pure multiplicity capable of manifesting in infinite situations," exemplified by the context of Filipino youth development. The fundamental ideas of spirituality and social justice consciousness serve as the basis for potentially transforming interactions with Filipino youth. In contemporary society, it can be contended that these mission principles, regarded as fundamental components, direct the Church in "confronting diverse challenges at both global and local scales, by motivating its organizations and members, including the youth, to maintain relevance in an evolving world" (Vincett and Obinna, 2014: 1, cited in Cornelio 2016, 12). This suggests that the mission principles, viewed through Badiou's perspective, act as fundamental elements in the context of Filipino youth development, acting as existential resources that reflect the social identity of the Catholic Church.

Badiou defines "existential resource" as the conscious engagement in a situation to which a being belongs. Conscious participation in a situation denotes the obligation of a being within that situation, stemming from the conviction that Being is necessarily destined to manifest in a local situation (Badiou 2002, 69). The way a being exists is not random; it is influenced by the particularly local situation, dictated by the circumstances that

emerge within that situation. Badiou's concept of "existential resource" emphasizes the need of adeptly navigating the situation one faces. The Catholic Church's influence on spirituality and social justice guides its role in shaping authentic relationships, significance in young Filipinos' lives, and fostering transformative existence for a more equitable society. For example, when examining individuals who perceive spirituality as a conduit for connecting with themselves, others, nature, or the universe, alongside those who concentrate solely on the Divine Reality, it is clear that the Catholic Church significantly contributes to the arrays of Filipino youth development, irrespective of its procedures. In the Catholic Church's endorsement of Filipino youth through a focus on social justice, it demonstrates its recognition of them as essential members of God's family and its commitment to offering equitable opportunities irrespective of their social standing.

Upholding the dignity of Filipino youth embodies Badiou's existential resource along with the spirituality and social justice awareness of the Church, symbolizing the Church's obligation rather than a privilege towards them. Nonetheless, Badiou's notion of existential resource implies that a being's existence is contingent upon the structural and relational dynamics of its situation; thus, our primary concern is how to ascertain the existence of a being within a situation marked by a highly intricate network of differences and identities. This emphasis brings our attention to Badiou's notion of appearance.

From Badiou's viewpoint, these mission principles represent the specific situation of a being, with each ideal functioning as the foundational framework that informs the Catholic Church's mission efforts in the development of Filipino youth. Badiou's transcendental scale allows for the visibility of the connections and assurances of unity among these elements in a particular world/situation, presenting their appearance in an organized manner. The relations among these Church mission elements are always taken into account "when observing differences in their existence, with their identity formation being dependent on the differences between them" (Paquette 2018, 1074). Assessing the level of identity determines whether multiple beings can be considered identical or similar to one another in the situation they are in.

The measurement of the degree of identity in appearances is represented by the equation $Id(\varepsilon, \varepsilon)$ in the transcendental scale. When two multiples do not have the same relations in a particular situation, their

transcendental scale is $Id(\varepsilon, \varepsilon) = \mu$, indicating that ε is not present in the world m, making its existence non-existent in the situation m. On the other hand, when two multiples react in a manner that affirmingly matches the situation, the measure of the level of identity between these two multiples in a situation is $Id(\varepsilon, \varepsilon) = M$, demonstrating the maximal level of existence of a being and is absolutely identical in the particular situation it is in. It has been noted that the Catholic Church's mission principles of spirituality and social justice awareness highly contribute to the development of Filipino youth, which leads to effective strategies and practical solutions, a symbolism of a Badiouan level of maximal existence. To comprehend this better, let us analyze an example where the Church's key frameworks on Filipino youth development can be seen as a representation of Badiou's maximal existence. As previously mentioned, Badiou's maximal existence is defined by the transcendental operation that suggests when a being is equally related to another being, the being's existence is at its maximal level and is exactly identical to the situation it is in.

Considering spirituality can involve analyzing its relationship with religion. Individuals may self-identify as "spiritual and religious" or "spiritual but not religious" (Mansukhani and Resurrecion 2009, 272). In the relations between spiritual and religious, attending church or joining prayer meetings is seen as a way for individuals to communicate with the divine, providing inner fortitude for a purposeful life and defense against unjust forces, both personal and societal, that may come their way undesirably. In his report, Sadje (2020, 20) explained that the "800,000 Filipino Catholics who joined the Feast of the Black Nazarene seemed to be greatly touched by the powerful portrayal of Christ's unwavering love and perseverance during challenging times". Lazar (2015, 3) emphasizes the idea that a "profound spiritual bond that mirrors St. Paul's message in Romans about how we are transformed through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection". In Macairan's (2021) news article "Papal Nuncio tells youth: Develop habit of prayer," Archbishop Charles Brown re-echoes this by emphasizing the importance of young Filipinos forming a habit of praying. The Papal Nuncio underscores the importance of regular prayer to Filipino youth, aiming to persuade them of its significance, inspire hope for salvation, and develop virtues for navigating life's challenges.

Spirituality, not necessarily tied to religion, encompasses feelings of fullness, interconnectedness, and relationships with oneself, others, nature, or the world. Young Filipinos seek authentic purpose and togetherness in

life without fearing challenges. This means that beyond traditional religious practices, young Filipinos are embracing personalized and experiential ways of practicing their beliefs, shifting towards personal encounters with God rather than strict devotion to Catholic beliefs (Cornelio 2016). This change emphasizes ethical values over rigid beliefs, signifying a new way to define religious identity (Cornelio 2016).

Students learn art and sports in school to grow spiritually and physically, turning loss into motivation. This engenders a feeling of belonging, regardless of religious affiliation, where curiosity and active involvement foster mutual respect, trust, and friendliness (Instrumentum Laboris, "Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion" 2014). This brings us to the significance of interfaith dialogue for young people, indicating that it encourages relationships and involvement in communities outside of theological debates (Cornelio and Salera 2012). A non-clergy speaker who talked about the significance of self-value among young Filipinos in the modern era, considering the high regard for social media personas, stresses that embracing oneself as a precious identity not only enhances one's own life but also brings beauty and enrichment to others (CBCPNews 2017).

Prayer, acknowledged for its positive impact on mental health and well-being, has shown high levels of one's sense of self and their connection to others and the world they belong to. For instance, Filipino Catholic youths view private prayer as a way to reach out to God for forgiveness, guidance, and protection during difficult times, seeing it as a helpful religious coping mechanism (Del Castillo et al. 2023). In other words, the Church offers spiritual growth and encourages self-improvement through lifelong learning. Participating in spiritual activities can lead to a stronger connection with one's faith, impacting decision-making processes of Filipino youth, such as values-formation and approaches towards challenges, including environmental awareness (Griffith 2009, 2).

Badiou's transcendental scale in the realm of spirituality, as manifested in its appearances, is symbolized by the Catholic Church's role in Filipino youth development. These appearances include spiritual or non-religious experiences, a profound spiritual connection signifying new beginnings after embracing the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, drawing nearer to the Triune God, establishing connections beyond conventional religious beliefs, and engaging in spiritual practices as a way of life. These

manifestations of spirituality represent a key element of the Catholic Church's identity in Filipino youth development. Denoting this as: Id(ε, ε) = M, the Church's role in promoting Filipino youth development through these spiritual appearances reaches its maximal level of existence.

Young individuals involved in community participation are encouraged to cultivate creativity and recognize the beauty of the world. This fosters self-awareness, environmental responsibility, and an appreciation for the Creator's greatness, ultimately demonstrating the importance of education for personal development and community advancement (Instrumentum Laboris, "Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion" 2014).

Empowerment, focusing on collaborative and respectful societal engagement, examines unjust influences in various areas like economy, politics, society, gender, environment, and culture. Empowering young people through youth programs, it facilitates introspection and self-discovery nurturing their sense of self-worth and dignity, which assists them in developing their moral, social, emotional, and spiritual selves as well as in forming their values (Trabajo 2016, 46). For instance, the Muslim-Christian Youth for Peace and Development, affiliated with the Peacemakers' Circle, an innovative organization under the United Religions Initiative in the Philippines, emphasizes the participation of the local community (Cornelio and Salera 2012). In an interview regarding the importance of interfaith for MCYPD teenagers, it was found that personal ties and community engagement had a greater influence than religious affiliation on their interactions with each other (Cornelio and Salera 2012).

Pope Francis emphasized in his document "Global Compact on Education" the importance of embracing new ideas to tackle current issues, promoting risk-taking, and fostering a desire for a meaningful life (2020). This is how the Church addresses the challenges of youth rebellion by relying on the teachings of Jesus and Mary, along with strong Catholic doctrine (Sison 1957). This is not a deficiency in the Church's moral leadership, but an opportunity to collaborate with the state to convey its enduring wisdom to the contemporary world.

In addition, according to the Union of Catholic Asian News (UCA 2019), a significant number of Filipino adolescents pledged to participate in a global initiative focused on fostering environmental awareness during the campaign's launch in the Philippines in 2022. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines accurately designates the youth as "agents of

change" (Molino, 2022), highlighting their crucial role in fostering a stable and secure future. Playing their part as caretakers of the environment goes beyond just big gestures; it starts with incorporating simplicity into daily routines, a practice that echoes the familiar classroom mantra: "Separate biodegradable waste from non-biodegradable waste." This embodies the concept of intentional stewardship, covering God's diverse creation.

Moreover, social media exerts a considerable influence: the Church advocates for young individuals to use it for disseminating the gospel, as Fr. Stephen Cuyos, MSC asserts that "there exists substantive potential in both social networking and social media" (CBCPNews 2012). The "Pastoral Guidelines on the Use of Social Media," published by Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, offer young Filipinos organized counsel regarding the utilization of online platforms, along with a definitive enumeration of behaviors for mindful and Christ-centered engagement in the digital realm (Villegas 2017). In accordance with Cardinal Tagle's counsel, the youth can utilize digital channels to responsibly enhance the dissemination of the Gospel message (Patinio 2023). Countering falsehoods with easily obtainable facts and knowledge helps them to avert the harmful spread of "deception and untruths." This proactive method involves identifying individuals spreading incorrect information, assisting others in recognizing credible sources, and avoiding potentially misleading media sites (CBCPNews 2017b).

Badiou's transcendental framework regarding social justice awareness encompasses the recognition of individuals as divine social beings, the advocacy for empowerment to actualize the teachings of Jesus Christ, and the promotion of harmony, equity, and sustainability within society through transformative initiatives, collaborative efforts, and the respect for each person's intrinsic value. With this, the manifestations of social justice awareness signify its role as a fundamental aspect of the Catholic Church's identity in the development of Filipino youth. This can be expressed as: $Id(\varepsilon, \varepsilon) = M$, signifying that the Church's contribution to Filipino youth development manifests through representations of social justice awareness, expressing a maximal mode of existence.

The Church's mission principles lead to creative spiritual growth and pastoral care, enabling young Filipinos to excel in a quickly evolving world by genuinely serving themselves and others, subsequently enhancing their abilities, talents, and intellect to improve the society they live in.

5. Conclusion

The study examines the role of the Catholic Church in the Philippines in promoting the development of Filipino young people. It specifically investigates the relationships between Catholic social teachings of spirituality and social justice awareness and Badiou's existential philosophy. We have understood that spirituality and social justice awareness align with Badiou's notion of maximal existence such that their respective manifestations contribute to the development of Filipino youth. In Badiou's philosophy of existence, when two beings are identified together in a situation, their existence is at its maximal level. To put it simply, if multiple beings exist together and play an active role in the situation they are in, they are seen as expressing what it means to exist on a maximal level.

The Catholic Church's mission for Filipino youth aims to empower, unite, and sustain them in their communities through spirituality and social justice awareness. This is because the Church's role in youth development is shown as engaging and cooperative, both inside and outside its community. Moreso, the Church's social teachings of spirituality and social justice awareness exemplifies Badiou's notion of maximal existence, representing the ability of Filipino youth to lead purposeful lives through civic engagement, living truthfully and serving the Philippine community and the global world.

In conclusion, the Church has demonstrated its societal role by providing essential values-support systems to help Filipino youth navigate the challenges in their development and attain their desired quality of life in the contemporary world. They advance a fair and all-encompassing society by focusing on the welfare of young Filipinos and offering them necessary resources to enhance the communities they are part of, particularly in the Philippines. Analyzing the development of Filipino youth can be done through examining youth leadership, fostering creative thinking in youth development, or finding new methods to enhance positive youth development, among other aspects.

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