

Article

# Emerging Transitions in the Meaning of Religious Constructs: The Case of the Philippines

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**Abstract:** Recent data from two local empirical studies on religion (Baring et al. 2018) and the sacred (Baring et al. 2017) show how an imminent shift in Filipino youth attitudes articulates new perspectives on religion, religiosity, and spirituality. This paper presents an analysis of three emerging peculiar characterizations of religious experience by young students culled from two previous empirical studies. These newfound descriptions indicate a departure from traditional binary religious categories (e.g., sacred–profane, religious–spiritual) typically employed in many studies. The first describes a peculiar interpretation of religious experience indicating an epistemological shift from an exclusive definition to a diffused interpretation of religious–spiritual categories: as “personal religiosity” and “institutional spirituality”. Personal religiosity reports an unexpected combination of personal ethical forms of de-institutionalized religious views of students. Institutional spirituality represents beliefs that honor institutional affiliation. The second describes the emergence of personal–communal poles discerned from their notions of religion and sacred. The third highlights the ethical orientation of students’ religious perceptions. These peculiar conceptual shifts may have pastoral and theological implications.

**Keywords:** youth religiosity; spirituality; religion; religious constructs

## 1. Introduction

The Philippines is one of only two Christian countries in Southeast Asia dominated by a Roman Catholic population. Several commentators say that the Philippine brand of Catholicism is a blend of its past and present. The past is a long period of engagement with Spanish Christianity while the present displays the merging of eastern and western religious mindsets running parallel with secular ideas. We recall that the secularization thesis theorizes the imminent decline of religion and religious ideas in public life. Its proponents believe that religious belief and practice is incompatible with secular language and culture. The works of social theorists Emil Durkheim (2008), Karl Marx, and Max Weber (Hughey 1979), among others, drive this argument. Later debates with respect to secularization hinge on the perspectives of these theorists (Fox 2010). The gradual historical merging happens parallel to the accommodation of secular ideas at the doorsteps of Philippine Christianity. Backed up by Filipino hospitality and pliant character, local religious and spiritual life took new forms. New religious movements grow (Beckford and Suzara 1994), renewal communities (Alva 2016), new rituals, and new spiritualities emerged. These and other developments worldwide necessitated the dismantling and rethinking of the secularization thesis (Asad 2003; Cassanova 1994; Taylor 2007). The study of religion in the public sphere worldwide also stirred new scholarly interest on the negotiations of religion and secularity in society (Cassanova 2011; Shah et al. 2012). Instead of losing its place in social life, religion resurfaces in unique articulations each time.

Related to these articulations, new meanings are attributed to religion or religious beliefs. Every region has its peculiar attribution to religious and spiritual ideas. Many years ago, Grace Davie’s (1990) revealing

analysis of the state of youth religiosity in Great Britain emerged with the thesis that the youth manifest religious beliefs without a sense of institutional belonging. However, [Voas and Crockett \(2005\)](#) argued that the British youth is neither believing nor belonging. Davie's recent work ([Davie 2015](#)) on the place of religion in British society unpacks explanations that articulate religion's evolving role in social life despite the loss of institutional affiliation. A contrasting view is raised in recent surveys suggesting that the majority of 18–24-year-old British and American youth are without religion ([Underwood 2017](#)). The phrase "spiritual but not religious" has become a popular catch phrase in youth research on religion. How similar or unique are Filipino youth views? In the Philippines, this catchphrase in a sense applies to a growing minority of young students. Filipino religiosity generally remains relatively high in recent surveys ([CBCP-ECY and CEAP 2013](#); [CBCP-ECY and CEAP 2015](#)). Overall attitudes towards religion also remain comparatively high at 85% ([SWS 2017](#)) despite a gradual downturn of attendance in religious services (48%) between 1991 and 2017. Kessler hints, "the old secularization thesis linking modernization to the decline of religion might hold for sociocultural religiosity, but not for orthodox religiosity or charismatic religiosity" ([Kessler 2006](#), p. 576). The resilient popularity of religious devotions ([Pierse 1991](#); [Sapitula 2014](#)) covenanted and charismatic communities ([Wiegele 2006](#)), among others, seem to support Kessler's view. Sociocultural religiosity in Kessler's view is "not rooted in the religious content of religion, but rests rather on the functions of religion" ([Kessler 2006](#), p. 575). The survey reports offer general profiles of Filipino religiosity. Nothing much can articulate the underlying insights behind the statistics. Thus, the need to uncover the shape of religious ideas underneath reported data is necessary. This need extends to research reports covering Filipino youth religious dispositions. The gap in knowledge referring to attributes of Filipino youth religiosity manifests in numerous attempts that articulate the current state of youth religious behavior. In addition, the growing cultural diversities and religious pluralism ([Baring 2011](#)) necessitate a review of the structure of youth religious ideas in the Philippines. A review of the religious mindset of students is fundamental to this inquiry due to their formative years. Basic education students in the country for school year 2018–2019 in both private and government schools is estimated at 29 million ([Malipot 2018](#)). College enrollment stood at an estimated 2.5 million ([CHED n.d.](#)) prior to school year 2017–2018. The transition of the country from a 10-year basic education curriculum to 12 years explains the apparent discrepancy in low college population despite a bigger chunk of basic education students. The transition meant that the country's tertiary schools will have to absorb a zero-college enrollment for most schools or a very lean population in some preferred Higher Education institutions for two years between 2016 and 2018.

Studying transitions in perceptions towards religion among the young require a careful review of students' religious perceptions and attitudes. The recent National Filipino Catholic Youth study of 2014 ([CBCP-ECY and CEAP 2015](#)) shows Catholic youth perceptions' affinity toward religion. The survey covered 13–22-year-old students from Catholic private schools and State-run institutions nationwide. In many ways, the directions of local scholarship in youth research generally show robust descriptions of students' religious orientations. Traditional popular notions of religion show significant conceptual relationship with the sacred ([Wiegele 2005](#)). However, recent views of the sacred worldwide accommodate an expanded interpretation of the sacred vis-à-vis religion. Institutional connotations to the sacred pertaining to religious traditions have loosened significantly due to several reasons. Scholarship examines the sacred with respect to spatial norms ([Baring 2013](#)) or sociocultural contexts ([Lynch 2012](#)). Recent available material drawn from studies on student perspectives of the sacred ([Baring et al. 2017](#)) and religion ([Baring et al. 2018](#)) shows peculiar meanings reflecting new configurations of the Filipino youth's religious concepts. Reading from two previous empirical reports, the present study observes how the current articulation of spirituality and religiosity appear to hold new insights suggesting unarticulated ideas from previous analysis. Hence, the intent of this paper is to analyze three emerging peculiar characterizations of religious experience by college students in terms of: a diffused experience of spirituality and religiosity, 'personal religiosity' and 'institutional spirituality' and, ethical orientation of their religious views. We argue through this

article that these three shifts are drawn from students' perspectives of sacred and religion analyzed in two previous empirical studies. The 'shifts' are construed as a departure from traditional western categories. From these empirical reports, we learn that students conceive the sacred through personal and religious perspectives while they view religion and the sacred in terms of an institutional sense of spirituality and a new form of "personalized religiosity". The following presentation reviews the progressive conceptual development of their religious ideas facilitated first by a collapse of religious and spiritual boundaries of student notions articulated in new forms charged by ethical orientations. Relevant theoretical foundations are explored with respect to these conceptual transformations.

## 2. First Shift: A Diffused Spiritual Religiosity

Scholars in theology, psychology, and sociology generally admit that a definition of spirituality constitutes a serious challenge (Van der Veer 2009; Speck 2005). This difficulty extends to the notion of "religion" and "religiosity". Their consensus comes from a determination of several factors believed to relate with the concept. Van der Veer (2014) argues that the notion of 'spirituality', like 'religion' (Griffith-Dickson 2003), is a western invention fraught with definition issues. Scholarship traditionally views both concepts as multidimensional and distinct bearing unique meanings. Religion is traditionally regarded as a multifaceted institution (Riesebrodt 2010) endorsing a system of beliefs, ritual, and worship to a divine being. Similarly, several authors regard religiosity in varied senses according to their disciplines (Holdcroft 2006). Holdcroft's review of the classic definitions of religiosity frame the concept in terms of varied dimensions that include belief, rituals, personal and moral life. Scholarship (Stausberg 2009) broadly theorize religion in terms of natural and supernatural categories considering the varied religious experiences and viewpoints of people. Within religion, deep and inspired reflections of the human experience perpetuate the rich symbols of natural and supernatural experiences recorded in the sacred text acclaimed by its adherents as authoritative. In Asia, the struggle for the meaning of "religion" (Josephson 2015) explains how it doubles as a cultural project. Early religious and spiritual beliefs prior to the Spanish rule in the country are deeply spirit- and nature-oriented, devoid of institutional underpinnings (Sabado 1990). Hence, the struggle can be appreciated in view of this original dispensation. Today, contemporary Filipino appropriations of beliefs have taken the popular route (Domingo 2009; Wiegele 2005). Kessler (2006) believes that these popular forms of religious practice have successfully blended with contemporary life. For Filipino theologian José De Mesa (2000), this popular means of religious interpretation is a window to the long-forgotten Filipino primal religions of old. On the other hand, articulations of spirituality abound either within or outside the purview of institutional religion. Within religion, spirituality presents itself as a polarized construct hinged on personal motives against the institutionalizing function of religion. Beyond the seeming tension between religion and spirituality, however, some scholars view both concepts as inter-related (Hill et al. 2000). Outside the religious context, spirituality veers towards humanistic notions (Koenig 2010) directed to the "ultimate meaning and purpose of life" (Wright 2000, p. 7). The lack of consensus (Eaude 2003) in the definition of spirituality makes the meaning of the concept contentious. Hence, an attempt at a new articulation is both a challenging task and promising endeavor in youth research. What is more daunting is when the usual boundaries acknowledged in traditional definitions of being spiritual and being religious are revised or redefined.

These traditional notions of spirituality and religiosity correspond to the sacred–profane (Durkheim 2008) divide reflecting the internal–external differentiation. Both are distinct but interrelated concepts (MacDonald et al. 2015). Another view is inclined towards a differentiated understanding of the concepts due to the secular context (Zwingmann et al. 2011) that dominates the European setting. In highly secular societies the spiritual realm is completely distinguished (Taylor 2007) from material life as the influence and presence of the divine being recedes in history. This binary differentiation operates in everyday dealings and lifestyle. Theologians (e.g., De Mesa 1987; Pears 2010) generally agree that contextual considerations in culture play in the manner that people appropriate religious concepts.

Western scholarship generally follows either the distinction between spirituality and religiosity (Barry et al. 2010; King and Crowther 2004) or the conceptual relationship (Zinnbauer et al. 1997) between the two. Corollary to the proposed relationship of spirituality and religiosity, two recent local empirical reports express overlapping characterizations of spirituality and religiosity. A meaning overlap was noted many years ago when certain authors “frequently interchange” (Zinnbauer et al. 1997, p. 550) the meanings of ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’ in their work. The meaning overlap is theoretically possible through common or shared concepts e.g., Sacred, that forge the merging of meanings between two ideas. Hill and Pargament think the sacred is the “common denominator of religious and spiritual life . . . interwoven into the pathways many people take in life” (Hill and Kenneth 2003, p. 65). In the present study, the overlapping meanings are suggested by the manner that students interchangeably use the two concepts resulting in their fusion as one construct, Spirituality/Religiosity (S/R) (Baring et al. 2016).

To understand the diffusion of meanings, we analyze the aspects of the measure for Students’ attitudes towards religion and the sacred. After factor analysis and validation, the student attitudes towards religion measure (Baring et al. 2018) had three dimensions that show students’ underlying peculiar spiritual–religious mindsets: Religious beliefs, Affective response, and Behavioral response<sup>1</sup>. The first dimension (8 items) represents items that relates to students’ views of religion with respect to institutional affiliation. We look at the diffused senses of religiosity and spirituality in this dimension when we factor in ideas that reflect love for religion, the function of religion, valuing salvation as a function of religious institution, spiritual disposition, and God-centered lifestyle. Notions of religion driven by a deep sense of God and environment are notable in the first dimension. The whole dimension suggests a good mix of the “spiritual” and “religious” in one component putting aside conceptual distinctions. The second dimension (6 items) shows students’ interior dispositions towards God. This dimension reveals a personal–spiritual sense of God. The third dimension (5 items) refers to the behavioral dimension (religious lifestyle). It assesses religiosity outside the bounds of traditional religiosity, e.g., going to church, religious observances. The third dimension speaks of the youthful voice wanting to find the connection between one’s moral life (e.g., doing good deeds, living a disciplined life) and the world “out there” (e.g., rejecting an immoral social order). In summary, the whole attitude articulates dimensions that provide a synthesis of the spiritual–religious diffusion defined by personal spiritual views and ethically grounded religious life. The final construct differed from the originally proposed construct constituting Religious (institutional affiliation, obligation, divine identification) and Human dimensions (interior disposition, social commitment, human development). We also infer that our interpretation of the three dimensions differs from traditional binary categories, e.g., religious and spiritual as shown in our discussion of the diffusion of meanings (First shift), the emergence of the personal–communal poles (Second shift) and ethically charged spirituality (Third shift). Thus, we present this differing result as the main trajectory and reason for the present study.

The outcome of another survey on students’ notions of the sacred (Baring et al. 2017) reveals how the personal, ethical, and religious dynamics play in the construction of their religious ideas to create an epistemological fusion. Prior to the survey, the team proposed a four-quadrant construct anchored on the sacred and profane binary. The sacred is set apart from the mundane (Durkheim 2008). However, in the Philippines the trajectory of popular perceptions sees an affinity between the sacred and religious beliefs (Wiegele 2005) shown in four dimensions. After analysis, the four extracted dimensions are (Cronbach  $\alpha = 0.96$ ): (1st dimension) Humanistic–ethical dimension, (2nd dimension) Divine dimension, (3rd) Spiritual dimension, and (4th) Religious–communal dimension. A humanistic–religious appreciation of the sacred emerge from the extracted components. The first dimension reprises human identity and values as concomitant values of the sacred. It speaks

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<sup>1</sup> The 19-item Student attitudes towards religion measure was found reliable: Religious beliefs ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ), (2) Affective response ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ), and (3) Behavioral response ( $\alpha = 0.73$ ) with adequate results for congruence coefficients, factor analysis and Oblimin rotation from the split samples (Factor 1 = 0.99; Factor 2 = 0.99; Factor 3 = 0.97).

about social order arising from positive self-appreciation and personal evaluation of society. The second dimension articulates how certain human spiritual commitments such as divine worship, performance of religious duties, and observance of divine precepts resemble godly quality. The third describes a spiritual mindset grounded on faith and values. The last dimension describes an institutional religious component. From the preceding report, how do we describe this diffused sense of religiosity and spirituality in the context of students' notions of the sacred? This diffused sense sees the inherent connection of one's personal life (ethical, communal) to one's religious aspirations (institutional, Divine). The highlights of analysis from both studies (e.g., religion and the sacred) consistently describe a distinctive transformation of the spiritual and religious Filipino youth mindset describing revised notions of being religious and being spiritual.

When young people subscribe to a different perspective on top of traditional ways of 'seeing' (e.g., the spiritual vs. the religious) religiosity and spirituality, a meaning overlap is observed. Some authors refer to a cognitive lapse rather than an overlap suggesting a low cognitive appreciation, e.g., "virtual ignorance" (Holdcroft 2006, p. 92), of belief while observing religious functions. The young in this instance accommodates unorthodox practices without formally departing from institutional affiliation. Some local authors see this as an "inconsistency between the value . . . the youth ascribe to religion and their commitment to religious practices . . ." (Mansukhani and Resurreccion 2009, p. 276). This attitude, combined with traditional religious identity and youthful lifestyle, explains how a compromised outcome can be achieved between one's religious identity and faith practice. What appears is a cognitive accommodation not covered in western discourse. Moreover, students' appreciation of spirituality and religiosity qualitatively change as they contend with life issues and socialize with significant people (Baring et al. 2016). This insight is supported by a direct relationship between age, spirituality, and religiosity (Argue et al. 1999). The gradual spurt of religious or spiritual growth while they interact with their environment accounts for the individual's resolution of certain needs and existential issues (Baring et al. 2016; Baring 2012).

Corollary descriptions of this intermingling apply to spirituality, which is traditionally described as the interaction between one's subjective dispositions and transcendent being (Elkins et al. 1988). The diffused state supports the view that Spirituality and Religiosity can be proposed as a single scientific construct (Good and Willoughby 2014). A single construct is also seen as a better option (Koenig 2009) since it is difficult to treat Spirituality and Religiosity as differentiated constructs for assessment. Local literature supports the view that Spirituality and Religiosity are inter-related aspects of the Filipino religious experience (Dy-Liacco et al. 2009; Mansukhani and Resurreccion 2009). Apparently, the intermingling of both concepts reflects the Filipino's universally driven worldviews. Filipinos, like other Southeast Asians, generally see the world in terms of the whole rather than the parts. Every part is compared with respect to the larger view.

In summary, we use the words "personal religiosity" and "institutional spirituality" to refer to students' revised religious and spiritual perspectives reflected in their attitudes towards religion and sacred. Contrary to recent western discourses describing the religious dis-affiliation of youth (Francis and Katz 2000; Voas and Crockett 2005) and privatization of youth religious views (Davie 1990), youth religiosity in this sense is a blend of personal, institutional, and ethical views. Students view religiosity or spirituality in terms of personal, institutional, and ethical commitments. "Institutional spirituality" also proposes a new reading of being 'spiritual'. In the traditional sense, being spiritual implies a preoccupation with interior dispositions which are not essentially interpreted in institutional senses. Abundant literatures in the 1990s viewed spirituality as existential, relational, transcendent-oriented, and power-bound (Chiu et al. 2004). However, current student attitudes reveal how religion may be a factor towards personal/institutional motivations to act on issues with moral and spiritual resolve. The western analysis provided by Lynch (2007) about how "progressive spiritualities" nurture institutional underpinnings offer a parallel explanation to this point.

### 3. Second Shift: Emergence of the Personal–Communal Poles

The second and third dimensions in Figure 1 reveal “personal” poles. The personal poles link the self to God (third dimension) and attribute personal sentiments of well-being (Graham and Crown 2014; Jackson and Bergeman 2011) and security to God (second dimension). The “communal” pole cites the mix provided by dimensions 1 and 3, which links religiosity and spirituality with institutions and social life. It appears that the third dimension (personal religiosity) serves as a converging point for dimensions 1 and 2. The personal and communal poles in students’ attitudes towards religion are also discernible in students’ notions of the sacred (Figure 2). The students view the sacred in terms of two spheres: personal and religious. The personal sphere articulates personal–ethical perspectives (Oviedo 2016). The religious sphere expresses communal and institutional views. Hence, in both concepts the personal and communal poles are discerned.

The conceptual collapse generated by meaning overlap implies the emergence of a peculiar pairing: the personal and communal references to their notions of spirituality and religiosity. The personal–communal poles suggest a shift from the sacred–profane model to the dynamic interaction of the personal and communal dimensions. While endorsing the privatized orientation of religious views suggested in the two studies, the communal pole remains in place throughout the conceptual interpretation.

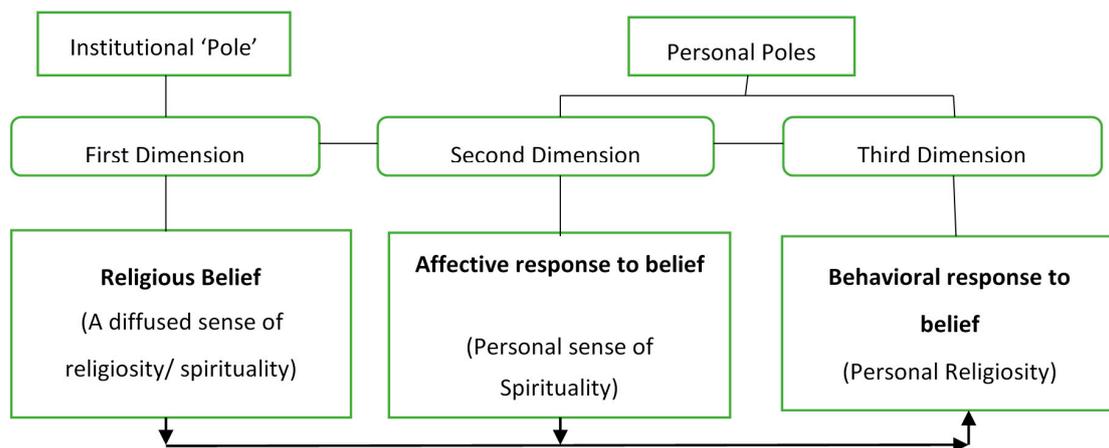


Figure 1. Students’ attitude towards Religion (Baring et al. 2018).

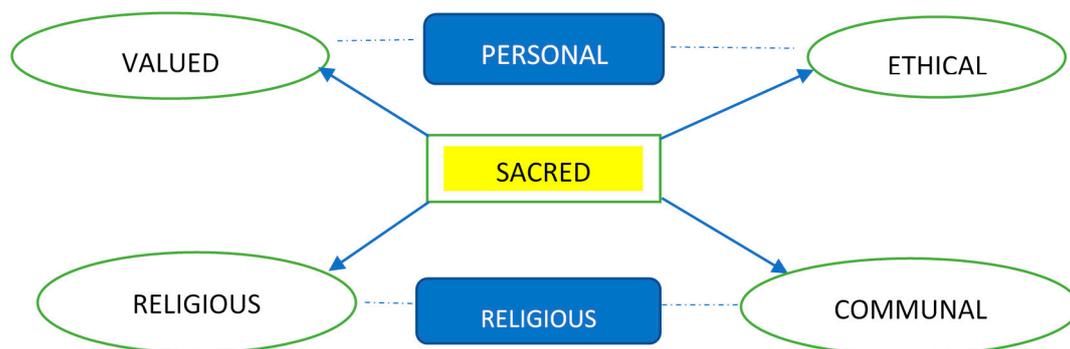


Figure 2. Aspects of the sacred (Baring et al. 2017).

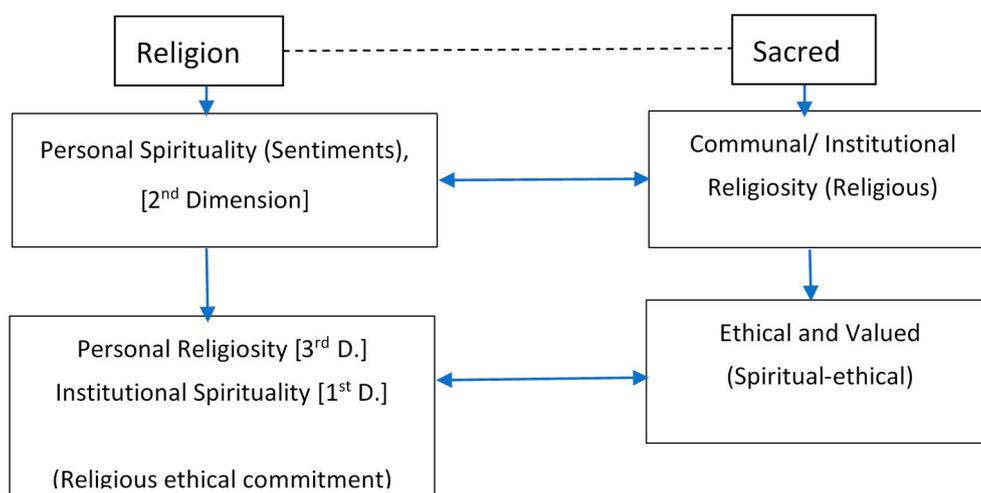
### 4. Third Shift: Towards an Ethical Spirituality

The collapse of the conceptual boundaries paves the way for new articulations of spirituality and religiosity appearing in a mixed-up state. Building up on this development, we now examine the ethical character of this diffused condition. First, the religious dimension (Figure 2) of students’ notions of the sacred articulates institutional and divine categories while the personal dimension offers

ethical and personal values. The personal and religious dimensions underscore the fluid interaction between the sacred and temporal entities. The sacred is a dynamic notion covering the self and one's moral constitution with others and the world. Hence, the third shift describes the movement from exclusive private spiritual appreciations of faith towards an ethically charged spiritual view. Departing from Durkheim's old categories, the sacred is not placed in contrast to the profane. Rather, it relates to the personal subcomponents which accommodate ethical views and personal dispositions. It is interesting to note that ethical views and personal dispositions can be found in students' attitudes towards religion and the sacred (Figure 3).

Second, the third dimension in students' attitudes toward religion (Figure 1) relates religiosity with interior dispositions, social commitment, and well-being. The ethical tone of student religiosity is suggested early in the first dimension ("Institutional spirituality", Figure 1) then becomes prominent in the third dimension (personal religiosity). This notion of religiosity is concomitant to maintaining personal and social order contrary to disagreements about the relationship between religious belief and behavior (Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle 1997). One can find a detour from the traditional pairing of religiosity with religious observances and institutional identity in favor of humanistic values. Hence, we use the word 'personal religiosity' to refer to a sense of religion driven by ethical ideals. This notion projects an 'inward' movement yet ordered towards an 'outward' outcome (social commitment). Notions of the sacred, on the other hand, are also deeply associated with religiosity and religious belief (Wiegele 2005).

The ethical–personal appreciation of the sacred and religion (Figure 3) remains in need of discussion in the Philippine context ever since youth religious attitudes have shifted towards privatized appreciations of belief (Davie 1990). Thus, in this context to say that the youth's appreciation of faith is privatized and not religious means that the perceived norms of being 'religious', e.g., religious views are now embedded in personal ethical views towards self-order and social order. Thus, the fluid interaction between the religious and spiritual characterized by an ethically charged spiritual mindset is a compelling basis for an "ethical spirituality".



**Figure 3.** Conceptual inter-relationship of students' notions of sacred and religion.

What then is an 'ethical spirituality'? How is it as an expression of youth spirituality? Many contemporary spiritualities today draw inspiration from ethical norms. In Malaysia, students' ethical perspectives are said to be influenced by religious formation (Saat et al. 2009). In Catholic scholarship, the notion of Justice and Integrity of Creation for instance is a contemporary spiritual perspective anchored on a deep appreciation of life and creation. Hence, the inclusion of ethical norms in the youth's spiritual–religious notions in this respect appear to divert from youth discourses that describe them as indifferent and insensitive to social or environmental concerns. This notion of spirituality also strengthens previous links between socially oriented behavior and religious belief

(Batson et al. 1993). The youth's ethical spirituality describes the ethical basis of their religious views. It describes the ethical thread that runs beneath their religious perceptions and unspoken dispositions. This ethical–spiritual orientation opens the way for students to articulate their religious identity and act with respect to it. Damon and Anne (1997) explains that when the youth considers the importance of “a value or a lifestyle” (Nisan 1996, p. 78) in articulating self-identity, they find the need to act consequently. Religious perceptions in this context are value-laden (e.g., Religious–ethical and Spiritual–ethical, Figure 3), not value-free. It is primarily ethical because their personal appreciation of the sacred (not restricted to institutional belief) and religion is anchored on ethical interpretations of values. These values are honored in immediate relationships that they hold important in their developmental years. Relations are value-laden in the same regard that they view religion.

This value-laden character of religious views among the youth is evident in their sensitivity towards life experiences and issues of belief. Western scholarship is divided about whether college life indeed positively influences religious faith and practice (Lee 2002; Zajonc 2003) or diminishes it (Bowen 1997). The contradictions and connections they find are significant materials through which they wrestle with questions and personal issues.

## 5. Conclusions

There are views suggesting that the center of Christianity has shifted from the West to the global South (Granberg-Michaelson 2015). Data tells how the Asian brand of religiosity retains its form in the face of sociopolitical and cultural developments. In contrast to views which argue for the loss of religion in various contexts (Voas and Crockett 2005), religious beliefs of Filipino student respondents in the present study remain anchored on institutional moorings while embracing an expanded appreciation of spiritual and religious life. The changes in the conceptual meanings of religious constructs validate the importance (Cnaan et al. 2004) attributed to religion by the youth in contemporary times. The respondents' reception of religious ideas in this context qualitatively suggests peculiar religious meanings: a personal sense of religiosity, an institutional/communal view of spirituality, and an ethical spiritual sense. The present study presented supporting explanations for the diffused state of religiosity and spirituality from youth notions of sacred and religion. We remind the reader that the present study drew interpretive insights from two previous empirical results taken from a sample of 3412 Filipino tertiary student participants coming from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. It does not include data from students outside the Philippines, the Filipino out-of-school youth, adult participants and those students coming from the basic education programs. Due to the interpretive nature of analysis rendered, the whole discussion does not purport to suggest insights directly from an empirical point of view. We recommend further validation of the dimensions analyzed in previous empirical reports from a methodological perspective.

The present study also did not cover an intercultural reading of students' notions of religion and spirituality. Due to the rich potential value of a comparative intercultural analysis of students' religious ideas, it is recommended that future research is dedicated towards this end. Such research may include a meta-analysis of students' notions of religion or a comparative empirical validation of their religious constructs in a regional setting. We recommend that future research also consider adult studies for an in-depth understanding of their religious profile considering that dimensions of adult religiosity and spirituality are distinguished from the young students.

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