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Corporate Social Responsibility: A Case Study of Philippines Gaming Industry Agency PAGCOR

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ABSTRACT

Gambling is one of the favorite past times of Filipinos which the Catholic Church denounces as a vice. The government has legalized many forms of gambling in response to its advocates that it becomes a revenue source rather than an outlawed past time of the populace. Gambling is now regulated by the Philippine Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR). PAGCOR's corporate social responsibility thrust is geared toward community development to uplift the lives of Filipinos. The revenue source of these beneficiaries explicitly comes from a vice which the Catholic Church in the Philippines denounces. Nevertheless, the Church charities are also among the beneficiaries of PAGCOR's initiatives to help the poor. Thus, vice (gambling) now is perceived differently from the traditional to a more open-minded view. The study employed the descriptive design using random sampling. The study employed the descriptive design using random sampling. A randomly selected group of one hundred (100) respondents that have been selected regardless of their age, gender, civil status, educational attainment and occupation. A survey questionnaire aligned with the objectives of this paper was the main research tool. Data gathering was done a specific research locales in Camp 7, Benguet, Philippines. Gathered data was treated through descriptive statistics. This study sought to explore how Filipinos view legalized gambling and how corporate social responsibility of non-formal institutions like PAGCOR whose operations differed from the norm and others similarly situated impacted social responsiveness in a cultural setting highly weighed by religion. It aimed to discuss the morality of vice in a country where proceeds from endeavors in this aspect proved to justify the ends if it meant substantial help and benefits for the country's marginalized poor. The study concludes that the legalization of gambling is an attempt to show that it is not a menace to the society. The Pagcor is a state-owned gambling entity mandated by law to share in profits largely with the national treasury and with charity organizations and institutions. This objective, if fully supported and monitored by the government can make the difference in the country's economic recovery. Gambling redeems itself through the benefits that it gives to the less fortunate and the number of lives

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that has been saved and changed through Pagcor's help is a proof that legalized gambling has already crossed the line that questions its morality.

Keywords: *corporate social responsibility, gambling*

I. INTRODUCTION

Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country. Based on 2005 statistics, it has 73.8 million members, making the Philippines the third largest "Catholic" nation in the world after Brazil and Mexico, as well as one of the two predominantly Catholic countries in Asia. The Catholic Church hierarchy in the country has an influential authority over many aspects of Filipino way of life and is openly transparent in its views on certain state issues that it feels its presence should be felt.

Gambling is one of the favorite past times of Filipinos which the Catholic Church denounces as a vice. The government has legalized many forms of gambling in response to its advocates that it becomes a revenue source rather than an outlawed past time of the populace. Gambling is now regulated by the Philippine Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR). This agency of government is responsible for the regulation and monitoring of various forms of gambling including those played in the country's casinos. It is also a staunch benefactor of many non-government charities that help the marginalized in concerns such as education, nutrition and health programs as part of its corporate social responsibility programs. The Catholic Church is one of its beneficiaries.

The Catholic Church hierarchy in the country has an influential authority over many aspects of Filipino way of life and is openly transparent in its views on certain state issues that it feels its presence should be felt. It promotes the Roman Catholic tenets on gambling as a vice and does not condone any form of gambling activity, illegal or legal. Nonetheless, it acts as a medium or the voice of the poor and marginalized in the Philippines to ask government to give attention to their needs especially in times of crisis. PAGCOR is one of the country's funding resource agencies; hence in essence funds coming from the government through the Catholic Church going to the needs of the people come from legalized gambling.

The papers postulates a discussion when gambling viewed as a vice becomes morally comprehensible and acceptable as perceived by Filipinos.

The objectives of the paper are the following:

1. To assess Filipino's perception on the following
 - a. The merits of legalized gambling.

- b. Catholic Church's stand on gambling.
 - c. PAGCOR's corporate responsibility thrust on the helping its beneficiaries coming from legalized gambling revenues.
2. To evaluate how vice (in this case gambling) is viewed when it embraces the social responsibility for beneficiaries of its proceeds.

II. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR): A FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is defined as an obligation, beyond that required by the law and economics, for a firm to pursue long term goals that are good for society². It is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as that of the local community and society at large. It translates into how companies manage its business process that enables it to produce a positive impact on society(Sacconi, 2004;Pitts, 2009)

The principle underlying the thrusts of CSR is to conduct business in an ethical way and with the interest of a wider community but at the same time balancing shareholder's interests. It requires business organizations to positively engage themselves in societal priorities and expectation. Usually, this responsibility comes with the willingness to ahead of the bounds of regulation in a positive way.³

CSR has been view to be similar to business ethics in such that its concepts are focuses on values and objectives that pursue not only profits but the social responsibility of business firms to act socially. Nevertheless, it differs in that ethics is concern with actions that are assesses to be right and wrong by moral principles while CSR is more of the organizations responsibility to all stakeholders and not just the organization's shareholders.

III. PAGCOR AND ITS CSR PROGRAMS

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) is the Philippines second largest contributor of revenue after the Tax Authority.⁴ It is a government owned and controlled corporation first established in by Presidential Decree 1067-A, and entered itself in a contract

² FERNANDO, JASON .(2021). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/corp-social-responsibility.asp>.Last accessed:June 15, 2021

³ Sacconi, L. (2004). A Social Contract Account for CSR as Extended Model of Corporate Governance (Part II): Compliance, Reputation and Reciprocity. *Journal of Business Ethics*, No.11, pp. 77–96.

⁴ PAGCOR (2018).PAGCOR: a responsible partner of the Filipino. <https://www.pagcor.ph/press-releases/pagcor-a-responsible-partner-of-the-filipino.php>.Last Accessed:June 15, 2021

with Philippine Casino Operators Corporation (PCOC) in operating the floating casino in the Manila Bay in 1977. Then under the Presidential Decree 1869 in 1983, it was mandated as the sole government corporation to conduct and establish gaming pools and casinos. In 1986 it was reestablished by H.E. then Pres. Corazon Aquino's government with New PAGCOR as its short name to help raise the government funds. The firm operates 13 Casinos and several VIP slot clubs in major cities across the country. It also sees and regulates more than 180 bingo parlors as well as e-games cafes across the country. The company employs more than 11000 employees.⁵

PAGCOR posted P764 million in total revenues as early as the first quarter of 2022. In view of this, its remittances has increased by P228 million to agencies mandated to receive funding from it. It has been averred that the corporation's performance to the management's unrelenting policies on fiscal prudence. During the quarter, PAGCOR reduced its operating costs by P548 million which resulted in huge savings for the agency.⁶

Its corporate social responsibility programs⁷ include the following:

Medical/Dental Missions. The indigent and impoverished is benefit by the corporation's medical and dental missions which is usually conducted in depressed areas nationwide and those battered by calamities. In cooperation with volunteer doctors, dentists and other health workers, government brings basic health services closer to a community that needs them

Disaster and Relief Operations. The corporation mains outreach missions to give assistance to victims of disasters and natural calamities such as earthquakes, typhoons and floods among others. They given provisions of relief good, medicines and other items ready to mobilized at any time such an occurrence would occur.

Feeding Program. In coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) the corporation has created a feeding program to address the malnutrition situation among indigent children nationwide. Together with partner schools who are beneficiaries of the corporation, children from targeted day-care centers and public elementary schools are benefited by this program.

Support for Kapitbisig sa Ilog Pasig. In the interest of environmental concern, the

⁴ Legal online casinos (2021).PAGCOR – Their Role In The Philippines Gambling Industry. <https://www.legalonlinecasinos.ph/laws/pagcor/>.Last accessed:June 15, 2021

⁶ Porcalla, Dellon.(2011). The Philippine Star. July 15, 2011

⁷ PAGCOR. (2010).Pamaskong Handog ng PAGCOR 2010 gives special Christmas treat to special children and street kids - DAY

corporation supports the rehabilitation and clean-up of the Pasig River through the Kapitbisig sa Ilog Pasig (KBPIP), a project of the ABS-CBN Foundation and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Conversion of Used Slot Machine Stands to School Desks. In support of education, the corporation has innovated the conversion of used slot machine stands to become school desk that it donates to target public schools nationwide. It has delivered a total of 460 (2-seater and 3-seater) desk units to the first batch of school recipients in Cavite.

To this end, PAGCOR's corporate responsibility thrust is doing what it is suppose to achieve, doing the ethical thing to do: providing medical care, feeding, educating, assisting the poor in times of calamities. It is doing its mandate of social irresponsibleness, creating funding for social reform, helping correct social problems and at the same time providing entertainment for countless Filipinos.

IV. THE CULTURE OF GAMBLING IN THE PHILIPPINES

Gambling as a Filipino past time has become culturally accepted means of social entertainment for that affects practically all strata of society, in virtually all places in the Philippines. It is considered a leisure, time passing activity that is acceptable rather than having the mind resort to other criminal activities, at the same time it leaves no room for idleness that corrupts the mind. It is also an activity of personal choice since it is volutary and one is left alone to decide whether to gamble or not to gamble. More importantly they give hope to bettors looking for a hope in their lives and bring joy to the winners.

Lastly, it is viewed as an altruistic engagement either on the part of capitalists in "illegal" gambling, or on the side of the operator government working for social development through proceeds from legal corporate gambling. This form of gambling- legalized gambling -is able to give employment to simple people. It is able to hand out money to the poor for their food, to the sick for their medicines. It gives donations in building basketball courts, in buying uniforms, in purchasing trophies. A funding resource during Town and City Fiestas, foundation anniversaries and other community celebrations. School houses are built. Electrification made. Livelihoods given. Charities funded. Developmental projects done. Educational grants given. Roads repaired. Calamity victims helped. Humane institutions helped. Community living standard raised. Government agencies assured of resources.⁸

⁸ Baker, Mollen. (2004). Definitions of corporate social responsibility - What is CSR? <http://www.mallenbaker.net/csr/definition.php>. Last accessed: June 15, 2021

Legalized Gambling Helps Social Reform

Legalized gambling is controlled and regulated by the government and its operations and utilization of revenue are covered by Philippines laws. These GOCCs that handle gambling operations have with them, Corporate Social Responsibility that stresses the need not only to gain profit for the company but also to promote and uplift the lives of every Filipino. It is in the law that GOCCs must take part in nation building through funding of social economic programs of the government. Based on these facts, it is therefore clear that legalized gambling will benefit social programs of the government.

Both the PCSO and PAGCOR have remained the top revenue makers for the government and they also have mandated agency beneficiaries that get a certain percentage of their annual income. Though talks about graft and corruption in these entities loom, the potential of them being effective machines for nation building exists. It can still be assumed that given the proper mandate and political will, transparency can be infused in these institutions to prevent misuse and misappropriation of funds.⁹

V. CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES (CBCP) STAND ON GAMBLING

The CBCP upholds the Catholic Church teaching that games of chance or wagers are not in themselves contrary to justice. They become morally unacceptable when they deprive someone of what is necessary to provide for his needs and those of others. The passion for gambling risks in becoming enslavement (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2413). This moral teaching does not prohibit some forms of gambling in certain situations. In consequence, it does not prohibit people or institutions, even church-related ones, from receiving benefits from such gambling.

Nevertheless, the CBCP representing the Catholic Church in the Philippines embraces the general moral principle specific to the Philippine situation and states that all forms of gambling that is organized, widespread, and systemic, whether legal or illegal, is not desirable. It affirms that this culture of gambling in the country is seriously eroding the moral values of our Filipino People. Therefore, the CBCP has made it a collective policy to denounce illegal gambling in all its forms and prevent its legalization. Furthermore it's stand is to combat the expansion of

⁹.PAGCOR.(2010).Pamaskong Handog ng PAGCOR 2010 gives special Christmas treat to special children and street kids - DAY 6.<http://www.pagcor.ph/press-releases/pamaskong-handog-ng-pagcor-2010-day6.php>.Last accessed:June 15, 2021

organized and systemic legal gambling; to refrain from soliciting or receiving funds from illegal and legal gambling so as not to promote a culture of gambling; and to encourage church personnel and church institutions to refrain from doing the same, even when the objective may be that of helping the poor.¹⁰

The Catholic Church as a Beneficiary of PAGCOR

While the Catholic Church denounces gambling and stands on its principles not to receive money coming from gambling sources, it is a reality that PAGCOR donates to the Catholic Church charities.

It is the duty of the Church to safeguard the welfare of the poor and there is no better way to let their voices be heard than through their spiritual leader. Often times, the poor is neglected in the Philippines. More often local government who is mandated to deliver services to the poor do not do its functions to help alleviate the plight of the poor. The Church through its Bishops steps in and mediates with national government to provide for the poor. In essence, it is not the Church's duty to take of Filipino citizens, it the government's duty but the Church always becomes a medium to echo the sentiments of the marginalized being neglected by government.

The money is undeniably from gambling because it comes from the funds which the PAGCOR collected, and if one is faced with life and death situation, when poor homeless old people needs ambulance to rush them to hospitals, or poverty stricken villages plagued with malaria and dengue mosquitoes due to water and mud filled roads threaten their very lives, the bishops does not need to screen the money coming in for the poor's benefits. With this situation, there is no need to be choosy with the money. The Bishops asks money for the poor neither for themselves nor for the Catholic Church itself. With or without the government donations, the Church will still function as a voice for the people. It will still carry out its duty to safeguard the welfare of the poor. It will still serve as the bridge towards the people which the Government often neglects.

In life and death situations, in dire needs and in emergency cases, the Church need not ask who donated the money or if money comes from evil deeds or good deeds. If the money is send by national government, then surely it may have come from one its highest earning institutions mandated to act a funding source for government's socio-economic programs. To this end, even though money is viewed as intrinsically evil, the Catholic Church by using money for good in building schools, establishing orphanages, clothing the naked, taking care of the sick

9. Capalla, Fernando.CBCP Statement on Gambling.<https://cbcponline.net/cbcp-statement-on-gambling/>.Last accessed:June 15, 2021.

and doing various charitable works converts evil into good which is not easily comprehended by narrow minds.¹¹

The list below shows some of the beneficiaries of PAGCOR:

1. Home for the Dying and the Destitute
2. DSWD Center for Abandoned Babies
3. Foundation of Our Lady of Peace
4. Childhope Asia Philippines
5. Trichet Learning Center
6. Tahanan ng mga Abang Anak ni Maria
7. Philippine School for the Deaf
8. Veteran's Memorial Medical Center

Methodology

The study employed the descriptive design using random sampling. A randomly selected group of one hundred (100) respondents that have been selected regardless of their age, gender, civil status, educational attainment and occupation. A survey questionnaire aligned with the objectives of this paper was the main research tool. Data gathering was done a specific research locales in Camp 7, Benguet, Philippines. Gathered data was treated through descriptive statistics.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the results from data survey gathered aligned with the paper's objectives.

Table 1 Filipinos Perception on the Legalized Gambling

Perception	Percentage
Legalized gambling helps bring in revenues for the country.	65
Legalized gambling is still gambling and therefore is overall a vice in itself.	30
No comment on their stand on legalized gambling.	5

¹¹ Caliquid, Franklin, A. 2011. Local gov't rejects Pagcor plan to operate casino in Butuan. <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/40117/local-gov%E2%80%99t-rejects-pagcor-plan-to-operate-casino-in-butuan> last accessed: June 15, 2021.

This table shows perceptions of Filipino respondents on legalized gambling. It reveals that a majority of the respondents (65%) agree that legalized gambling brings in revenues for the country.

Legalized gambling refers to gambling activities that are recognized, allowed and regulated by the government. The Philippine government has been promoting and expanding gambling through Government Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCC) such as the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes (PCSO) and Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR). Despite the big revenue that the government can gain from further legalizing other forms of gambling, the previous and present governments have refrained from legalizing other forms gambling activities for the primary reason that the Catholic Church is totally against it. Legalization of gambling is a moral issue and being a predominantly Catholic nation; the government opted not to make any bold move to legalize it further, in respect to the Church's strong opposition to it.

However, from a wider perspective, the economic gain derived from legalized gambling generally outweighs the negative effects it brings. Legalized gambling boosts government revenue through taxes, provides jobs and employment, promotes tourism by making the country attractive to gamblers abroad, lessens criminal activities because funds for drug use or other illegal trade are diverted to gambling, and supports government's social economic projects. The downside of legalized gambling on the other hand includes the adverse effect that it brings to the individual once it becomes uncontrollable or addictive. Too much gambling may affect one's health and productivity, it may cause unrecoverable financial losses, families can be separated due to neglect when one is too engrossed with gambling and on a bigger scale, it can lead to corruption of officials due to the lack of transparency in the operation of these gambling activities.

Table 2 Filipinos Perception on The Catholic Church Stand on Gambling

Perception	Percentage
They agree with the Catholic Church.	25
They do not agree with the Catholic Church	60
No comment	15

This table shows perceptions of Filipino respondents on whether they agree with the Catholic Church's stand on gambling. It reveals that a majority of the respondents (60%) do not agree

with the Catholic Church stands. This indicates a shifting perception on the merits of gambling as it is legalized by the government.

According to the Catholic Church, gambling in itself is not a sin provided that it does not deprive someone of what is necessary to provide for his needs and those of others. In other words, gambling as a passion or hobby is not bad at all, but if it becomes an unbreakable habit or addiction then it becomes one.

The Church has no law that specifically states that they are not allowed to receive gifts or donations from gambling. But being a subject of issues on morality, the Catholic Bishop Conference of the Philippines took a collective stand against the legalization of gambling and encouraged Churches not to accept donations sourced from such. Being the guardians of the public's morale, this step is commendable, but considering the current economic situation that the country is in, money is very scarce and receiving funds from gambling to treat the sick seems to be a more laudable and dignified choice than allowing the sick to die without receiving any medication.

Morality should never be comprised in exchange for material gain, in any form, but all of this depends on the individual's assessment of what is really of more value to him. As what the former Cardinal Sin once said "If Satan appears to me and gives me money, I will accept the money and spend it all for the poor. It is not the practice of the Church to ask donors where their donations come. Our duty is to make sure all donations go to the poor. The devil remains... my enemy but I will use his resources to feed the poor." This statement has been a subject of debates and controversies, but it reflects the Cardinal's depth and sensitivity when it comes to deciding what is best for his flock.

Table 3 Filipino's Perception on PAGCOR's CSR Thrust That Benefits Its Beneficiaries

Perception	Percentage
They perceive that PAGCOR is doing a lot of beneficiaries good with their CSR program.	55
They perceive PAGCOR's assistance to its beneficiaries is money that still dirty money since it came from gambling revenues.	40
They do not know how to perceive the merits of PAGCOR's help to its beneficiaries.	5

This table shows perceptions of Filipino respondents regarding PAGCOR's corporate responsibility thrust that helps its beneficiaries. It reveals that a majority of the respondents (55 percent) perceive it to be good for its beneficiaries since the various programs included in their CSR program helps a lot of different sectors.

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) is a government-owned and controlled corporation established to regulate all games of chance in the Philippines. It is a vital arm of the government in nation building and was created to oversee the operation of gaming casinos, to generate funds for the government's developmental projects, and to help curb illegal gambling. Pagcor has fully supported its mandate of nation building by adapting a Corporate Social Responsibility thrust that fully supports the generation of funds for government's social civic national development efforts.

These projects include medical/dental missions, disaster/relief operations, feeding programs, environmental projects to help indigents and impoverished Filipinos, in coordination with local government units as well as private organizations. Corporate Social Responsibility entails the task of improving the quality of life of each and every member of the society, and this implies that the act of giving out support should not be limiting or selective.

PAGCOR has the prerogative to support any organization that they deem worthy. They make donations to charitable institutions and other private organizations that is why they don't see any difference if religious organizations such as the Catholic Church will accept donations in behalf of its people.

For PAGCOR, giving its share to the needy through religious organizations is an effective and prudent way of disbursing funds because these organizations possess the spiritual as well as moral ascendancy that guarantees proper allocation of such. Moreover, they have a track record of successful charitable projects and activities that merit support and funding. Pagcor is an apolitical body and has no religious affiliations, so placing malice or self-serving motives on the support that they give to projects of religious organizations should be set aside in favor of the welfare of those people who will benefit from it. The issue on whether or not they should continue helping the Church should never be magnified and although some sectors of the Church have stood firm against gambling and casinos, Pagcor will never stop doing what the law requires them to do, and that is helping out people regardless of their class, race and creed.

Table 4 Filipino's Perception on the Morality of Vice (Legalized Gambling)

Perception	Percentage
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Vice (gambling) even if its legal, can never be moral.	32
Vice (gambling) becomes acceptable when it helps the poor and the marginalized.	46
It is not a question of morality.	12

This table shows perceptions of Filipino respondents on the morality of vice. It reveals that a majority of the respondents (46%) feel that the perceive vice (gambling) becomes acceptable when it draws merits through the proceeds it extends to its beneficiaries.

A vice such as gambling will never be a moral issue if taken in the context of it being a form of entertainment or leisure activity. It only becomes evil when the individual becomes enslaved by it. It now becomes a moral issue because being addicted to gambling can make one lose control over his life. An addicted gambler is disoriented and tends to lose his priorities, finances and even his family. This is the stage where the individual becomes prone to committing wrongful acts, and gambling in the end, will now be singled out as the reason for such immoral actions. Everything that is taken outside moderation becomes dreadful and being totally engulfed by it will lead to the eradication of all positive things there is. The deterioration of man should never be blamed on something that he can have total control of from the very start.

VII. CONCLUSION

The legalization of gambling is an attempt to show that it is not a menace to the society. The Pagcor is a state-owned gambling entity mandated by law to share in profits largely with the national treasury and with charity organizations and institutions. This objective, if fully supported and monitored by the government can make the difference in the country's economic recovery. Gambling redeems itself through the benefits that it gives to the less fortunate and the number of lives that has been saved and changed through Pagcor's help is a proof that legalized gambling has already crossed the line that questions its morality.

The reality remains that the Philippines remains to be one country steep in poverty. The poor and indigents are among the national government's primary concern hence it has mandated an institution to act as a sourcing fund to fuel initiatives that alleviate the plight of the poor. The Church in the Philippine is congruent to national government efforts to fight poverty. The Church remains a conduit to remind the government in the Philippines of marginalized sectors that they need to give attention to. But because the Church retains its different orientation on certain matters, government and the Church collides on certain issues in reality, their goal is one and the same.

Corporate social responsibility requires organizations to the ethical thing, the socially responsible avenue to serve the public interest especially those that need it most(Sun et al, 2010). PAGCOR's mandates commands this and the institution is doing its best to conform to its mandate. Whether the perception of others who does not share this mandate as acceptable, it remains that it the organization is helping millions of indigent beneficiaries' nationwide remains a fact.

The Catholic Church whose stance on gambling remains relentlessly strong in denouncing it as a vice as softened in the light of the more immediate need of helping the poor in the Philippines. It has averred that the source of money intended for the poor need not be questioned particularly on the current issue of the use of gambling money for charity. In light of the interest of the poor and the needed which the Church has vowed to help. The Church has initiated moves to convert the merits of the vice into something noble and good. In a country where economic impoverishment continues and the poor remains the marginalized in need of immediate and dire help, the vice becomes ethical and the Catholic Church in the Philippines though not denouncing demerits of gambling feels strongly that in light of true humanitarian purpose, the proceeds of gambling has become a big source of hope for countless Filipinos. To this end, the paper concludes that from this vantage point, the vice has become moral.

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