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# A Total Institutional Breach of the Church's Celibacy Tradition

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this research is to understand the problem of the celibacy tradition in the Catholic church, which is part of the total institution, but in some cases there is sexual abuse. However, the celibacy tradition cannot be fully implemented because human sexual nature cannot be completely eliminated. This research uses Strauss' negotiated order theory to analyse the order that is not fully implemented by the church. The approach of this research method is qualitative with a phenomenological research type that prioritises aspects of experience and meaning of the actors. This type of research leads to interviews to obtain data in the form of experiences and meanings regarding the celibacy tradition and their opinions regarding its prohibition. The results of this study show that those who live in the total institution do not fully implement the rules of celibacy and consider the self-fulfilment of lust to be understandable. However, they claimed to have a solution to the problem.

**Keywords:** Total institution, celibacy, negotiated order, church

#### 1. Introduction

The Higher Seminary is an educational institution that provides a boarding programme for aspiring priests. This institution opens its doors to high school graduates, undergraduates, or individuals who already have work experience. Over time, many regions established Higher Seminaries such as in Malang, Bandung, Sumatra, Eastern Indonesia, Makassar, Papua, and several other places. As a result, today there are at least several Higher Seminaries that educate prospective priests to fulfil the needs of dioceses in Indonesia, including in the Diocese of Venetie of Java. Semarijo Higher Seminary under the Diocese of Venetie of Java is one of the total institutions. The term total institution is used to analyse various institutions that regulate human activities through bureaucratic stages, resulting in physical isolation from surrounding activities (Pujileksono, 2017).

A total institution refers to an institution that can influence some or all of the lives of individuals connected to the institution. As a total institution or total organisation, Semarijo Higher Seminary prioritises the spiritual values found in Catholic teachings so that they become the foundation in creating the rules that apply. Because it is a dogmatic organisation, the students of Seminary Tinggi or often referred to as seminarians cannot avoid accepting the prevailing organisational cultural values. In instilling these values, managers resocialise and desocialise their students. In order to achieve the objectives of the Higher Seminary including the availability of Diocesan Priests who adhere to Christian virtues.

To become a Deosesan Priest or Projo Priest, students not only go through 7 years of education, seminarians are also required to live a life of celibacy. Richard Sipe describes celibacy as a form of self-devotion that arises from a love that is fully invested in the task of service, especially in shepherding souls(Sipe, 1996). Therefore, before they continue their education at the Higher Seminary, they first undergo a one-year TOR (Year of Orientation Studies) to truly convince themselves of celibacy. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the celibate life is a new form of life for which a minister is appointed. If joyfully accepted, this celibate life becomes a source of revelation of the Kingdom of God, and a person who has received the Sacrament of Holy Orders is not allowed to remarry(*Katekimus Gereja Katolik*, 1995). In other words, celibacy is the state of life of a person who does not engage in marriage and active sex based on a free choice to devote himself

to God (Katino, 2012). Richard Sipe defines celibacy as a self-dedication based on complete love in ministry, specifically the shepherding of souls. In the book Celibacy: a way of Loving, Living and Serving, Sipe defines celibacy as a free choice with full awareness to take a sincere vow to devote oneself to the service of the people without engaging in sexual activity(Sipe, 1996).

According to Georg Simmel, sexual life is the basis for the growth of sociability. Humans do not have sex with members of the opposite sex; they make love with special individuals. The subjective experience of love activity is related to the dissonance of desire which tends to include the flow of emotions and creativity. Celibacy is neither a principle nor an action, it is not an aspect of Catholic faith but rather a requirement of church law that governs the desires regarding life for Catholic Clergy, celibacy needs to be distinguished from the vow of religious not to marry (Sitorus,2019).On the other hand, celibacy raises many issues, including the issue of sexual abuse. A former celibate at the Higher Seminary said that many seminarians brought gadgets into the dormitory secretly and one of their fellow seminarians developed a romantic relationship with the opposite sex and was able to interact through gadgets with his lover.

The occurrence of sexual harassment and violation of the norms of decency committed by the priests above in the perspective of humanism is a common thing to happen. On the other hand, from the perspective of the celibate order, it shows a contradiction with what they believe in and what guides the life of the priests. The midpoint of the celibate's sexual life is the Negotiated Order. Negotiated Order is a theory developed largely in symbolic interactionism to describe people negotiating with each other in social organisations. This theory is an attempt to describe social organisations in which social actors have consensus-achieving activities(Pujileksono, 2017). Strauss describes that the rules that are negotiated are through the process of interaction, but when looking at the various problems of the sexual life of celibates there will be many negotiated rules. Therefore, this research will focus on how Negotiated Order in the sexual life of celibate in Semarijo Higher Seminary.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Semarijo Higher Seminary under the Diocese of Venetie of Java is part of the total institution concept. The concept was introduced by Goffman through his book entitled Asylum: Essay on the Social Situation od Mental Patients and Other Inamets(Goffman, 1961). The book consists of several papers on individuals who are positioned in total institutions, which divide them from the world by using high walls and locked doors. Some places that are said to be total institutions include psychiatric hospitals, correctional institutions, boarding schools, and the like. All of these places are often known as asylums. Goffman states that individuals in such institutions endeavour to provide interpretations of their experiences rather than justifications of the system they face. The term total institution is used to examine institutions that limit human action to a bureaucratic level and result in physical isolation from surrounding activities(Pujileksono, 2017).

Total institutionalisation is an institution that affects some or all aspects of a person's life in relation to the institution. Each individual is considered a sub-ordinate who is more dependent on an organisation and individuals who have authority over them. Goffman states that in this condition, life arrangements are fully designed as a replacement for existing self-impressions with new ones, and more easily approved by the institution. This process is known as institutionalisation. A total institution is a place of residence where individuals are isolated from the outside world for long periods of time, and their behaviour is restricted. All activities are subject to existing customs and rules, and conform to the discipline imposed by authorised "officials". An institution is considered "total" when it restricts the freedom of individuals at every turn. They do not have the freedom to create and maintain customs within the institution that are actually considered abnormal when viewed from the outside (Delueze, 1988).

Total institutions according to Goffman (1961)have several characteristics, including involving control by authority and having a clear position. The nature of total institutions is explained through several aspects. Firstly, all aspects of life are carried out in the same location and under one supervision. Secondly, every member is involved in similar activities and has the same ideas. Third, all daily routines are planned and conform to a sequence controlled by formal organisation and supervision. Fourth, all directed and forced activities are aligned according to the original plan to achieve the goals set by the leadership.

Around the late 1970s, a systematic framework was developed as a perspective to support research on organisations and social structures. This perspective, known as "Negotiated Order", was designed to provide an organised view of research into organisations and social structure. The Negotiated Order perspective asserts the importance of knowing the processes of interaction and structural quality in organisational activities. Negotiated Order emphasises that one of the main methods of obtaining many organisational goals is through the process of negotiation, either between individuals or between other groups (Maines dan Charleton, 1985). They explained that the main principle in Negotiated Order Theory is that "Organisations do not integrate merely because of their roles, but because their members, whether consciously or unconsciously actively structuring and refining the order, are always engaged in formal or informal agreements among themselves" (Baïada-Hirèche L. et al., 2011).

Abu Shiraz Rahaman and Stewart Lawrence (2001) conducted research on the "Negotiated Order" perspective in an article entitled "A Negotiated Order Perspective on Public Sector Accounting and Financial Control" In the study, they successfully used the "Negotiated Order" perspective as a social theory to better understand accounting in their organisational context(Shiraz & Lawrence, 2001). The next research that applied the theory of "Negotiated Order" as an analytical tool was Davina Allen (1997). In a study entitled "The nursing-medical boundary: A Negotiated Order?", Allen explored the interaction patterns between doctors and nurses in surgical and medical units in five Swedish hospitals. The findings of this study showed the existence of a negotiation space between nurses and doctors that eventually brought about an evolution in the working relationship between them(Allen, 1997).

Strauss (1978)emphatically refutes these concerns, stating that Negotiated Order is not an all-encompassing theory of social order and assumes that negotiation is related to other processes, such as pressure, cheating, and appeals in order to achieve a goal, so researchers need to understand and explore these processes simultaneously. Strauss adds that importantly, Negotiated Order accurately recognises how agreements are influenced by wider-reaching structural aspects. In Negotiated Order Theory, social rules are discussed continuously with procedures between negotiation contexts, structural contexts, social interactions, and outcomes(Dokko et al., 2012). Negotiated Order Theory refutes a view of social order as stable, suggesting instead that harmony and stability are the result of a social achievement that requires explanation(Ehrlich & Lui, 2015; Maines, 1982; Strauss, 1978). The central premise of Negotiated Order is that social rules are formed through social interaction. In this perspective, social structures arise through interactions and negotiations between individuals who inhabit and embody social contexts. Negotiated Order theory asserts that if the "consistency or absence of differences" is proportional to the "changes" that need to be "made" to any social structure, then the social structure will have to be changed (Strauss, 1978).

#### 3. METHOD

This research applies the social definition paradigm, focusing on how individuals interpret their social life or how to shape the reality of their social life(Ishomuddin, 2005). The social definition paradigm involves trying to understand the way individuals see and give meaning to the thought process in the context of social action (Wirawan, 2013). This research uses a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach focuses more on the process, because the process of something happening has a higher level of importance than something that exists(Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The qualitative approach is more focused on observing and describing social phenomena that occur in society, as well as analysing the activities carried out by the community (Bogdan & Steven, 1992). The type of research in this study is phenomenological research. Quoting Polkinghorne(1988)Phenomenological research is a study that describes the meaning of a life experience of the research subject about the meaning of life. This study uses phenomenological research data analysis guidelines according to Creswell(2010)This research uses the data validation method, the first stage is the process of validating the data by carrying out repeated reflections on the meaning obtained from the combined phenomena. The second stage, asking for opinions from other researchers who have an interest in similar research cases and consulting the overall results so that the data collected is credible. Stage Three, conducting rational analysis to understand whether the phenomenological explanation of the meaning in totality is logical (Abdul Main, 2016).

### 4. RESULT

Looz and Schutz's statement is not without reason, as it turns out that there is a lot of debate about celibacy in the Roman Catholic Church. War, as the disciplinary prefect of Semarijo Higher Seminary, recognises that there have been requests for a review of the celibacy order.

"Because the existing cases are increasingly hurting the dignity of a person, but there are also certain groups that oppose the church, usually the opposition also exists. Such parties make celibacy to be thought again, maybe celibacy is no longer actual and irrelevant in the church with such things rather than priests falling in such cases, in America and some places bankrupting the church so it is changed, but the pope remains faithful to continue to hold the teaching of celibacy".

War added that there are many cases of sexual offences committed by priests, especially against children and adults. In church law, children are those under the age of 18, while vulnerable adults are people who do not have the strength or ability to defend themselves such as the disabled.

From the point of view of the order, CCC number 2353 describes sexual abuse. This behaviour is also considered a serious scandal because it can damage the morals of young people. Sexual offences committed by priests have occurred at Sang Timur School, West Jakarta. Quoted from Tirto.id, the victim was named Siska.

"He touched me when I knelt for confession beside him. At that moment. How come this is a bit strange, huh? Something doesn't seem right. Only at that time, because we were still children, we couldn't understand it" (Tirto.id, 2023).

Siska had reported to her parents and then reported the matter to the school, but the school did not respond to the incident. The incident was not only experienced by Siska, one of her colleagues named Ellen, who at that time had the task of interviewing the Pastor.

"After the interview was over and we prayed together, he gave me a kiss. Usually, he kisses my forehead and cheek. But at that moment, he tilted slightly and hit my lips. Ah, maybe it was an accident, there couldn't have been any bad intentions" (Tirto.id, 2023).

Sexual violence committed by priests has actually been a concern for several senior priests in the Catholic Church. One of them is Father JK, who used to serve as Rector of Semarijo Higher Seminary. He has even written a narrative about this deviant incident in a weekly newsletter belonging to the Tomang Parish edition of 8 December 2019. The narrative was titled Sexual Abuse in the Indonesian Church: An Iceberg Phenomenon. JK said that in 2019 he found limited data from informants regarding victims of sexual abuse. A total of 21 victims were seminarians and brothers, while 20 others were sisters, and 15 others were laypeople. The time span between the incident and when the victim confessed in counselling was very long, with 33 priests and 23 non-priests being the perpetrators. JK was also surprised that many of these incidents occurred in educational institutions for prospective priests.

The rise of sexual violence committed by some unscrupulous priests led the Indonesian Church Guardian Conference to form the Indonesian Priestly Advancement Cooperation Agency and create the Guidelines for Professional Ministry of the Catholic Church. From these guidelines, the definition of violence against women taken from Komnas Perempuan is any action that is based on gender differences and can cause psychological and physical suffering or misery to women. Being at risk of such incidents, arbitrary restriction of freedom, whether it occurs in public or private life (UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women). Ar, the rector, said that the brothers here are trained in relationships with the opposite sex. In addition to what Mar and Ar have said, the Indonesian Conference of Church Guardians has also taken anticipatory measures to prevent sexual violence by unscrupulous priests, namely by providing prevention strategies.

The prevention strategy is divided into three stages: 1) Self-knowledge, giving greater energy to self-examination and self-knowledge by knowing more clearly the dynamics of male and female, heterosexual and homosexual, and what they imply in relationships. It is hoped to be able to recognise the need for intimacy for danger signs when countertransference takes over and leads pastoral ministry towards sexual attraction. 2) Self-nurturing, the priest does not have enough energy to attend

to the needs of others if we do not honour the priest's own needs. If we enter the pastoral relationship in a fragile state because the priest is not taking care of himself, then we should not be surprised when we experience countertransference that leads us to an abusive relationship. 3) Self-Disclosure, maintaining an effective accountability structure in a priest's life. Many pastoral ministers have no further supervision in the practice of ministry after they have completed formation. The absence of ongoing supervision is one of the serious ingredients for sexual misconduct. Without accountability structures, countertransference can go unchecked.

Responding to this, the Rector of Semarijo Higher Seminary said that it became commonplace. When you are stressed or something, sometimes you open a porn site, then there is a desire to masturbate and that's where you are invited to process, for example, the frequency, if every day this is addictive, you may not be able to see the three evangelical counsels, one of which is purity as a form of life offering. Ar's statement was reinforced by Mar's statement as the person responsible for the discipline of the celibates. He said that it is normal to masturbate, but what needs to be controlled is the intensity. It becomes a problem when masturbation becomes an addiction, a frequency that is beyond reason and disturbs the sanctity of celibacy. "If it's like that, how can you live celibacy?" he said (War, 30 January 2023).

In contrast to Mar, Wd as one of the senior priests was more cautious in stating the phenomenon of masturbation. Wd considers masturbation in a celibate order to be a grey area. Bs said that to meet Widi, he chooses a place that is a little far from his church or a place that is not so crowded to anticipate if there are people who see him. In addition, Widi usually invites her friends to meet Bs. Another challenge of being a priest has also been experienced by Bs. He was asked to marry a woman when he had been celibate for five years. The woman, Sri, a psychologist at one of the hospitals, once proposed to Bs. The encounter began on Facebook, Bs who was active on social media often uploaded funny things, making Sri ventured to contact him personally.

Not only Sri, there are other women who have been close to Bs. One of them was Suti, who was also one of Bs' devotees. Suti is married and does not live with her husband for work reasons. As a devout believer, Sri often visits the church where Bs serves, which is also one of the spiritual tourist attractions in the southern Jogja area. Their closeness began when Bs was known to be close to small children and Suti always took her children to church. Under the pretext of spiritual consultation, Suti tried to get to know Bs better. It was not uncommon for Suti to contact Bs at night when she was free. Suti also did not hesitate to call Bs Beb when communicating on social media. Suti also sent several photos with vulgar poses to Bs to make Bs fall in love with her. Even more reckless, at one point Suti expressed her desire to have a child from her relationship with Bs.

On social media, Bs also often enjoys viewing pornography on the social media platform twitter. After morning prayers, he opens the hashtags on twitter one by one. Once he found the hashtag #sangeah which contains vulgar content. In the content there is a contact person of the content owner, whose purpose is to carry out worldly satisfaction transaction activities. But so far, Bs has never contacted the number, he is aware that his position as an imam must be an example for his people. According to him, the duration of the video on twitter, which is only two minutes, is enough to arouse his passion as a man, besides that twitter is also easy to access. So far, Bs can still control the frequency of his masturbation, because according to him he doesn't really like to masturbate. Bs is a person who likes physical touch, he thinks it might be a different story when he is touched directly by a woman rather than just looking at a mobile phone screen.

Addressing the big challenge of priests in this digital era, War said that it is indeed very difficult to deal with it. If it is restricted, what is restricted and how to restrict it,

"For example, some sites and applications that potentially contain pornographic content have been blocked by the government, but I've found some children's mobile phones that use VPNs, so it's the same thing," he said.

In addition, he said that there was an incident where one of the brothers made a *video call* with a sister, although he did not share the details, but it was difficult for him to penetrate the virtual wall. In a virtual community, there is the possibility of exploring identities or playing with identities, even to the point of using multiple identities(Van Dijk, 1997). From the point of view of the order, vulgar or pronographic content on various digital platforms has actually been described in KGK number 2354,

which is clearly referred to as a destroyer of purity. In addition to the CCC, in the CCC Compendium produced by the Indonesian Conference of Church Guardians number 492, it is stated that mortal sins against chastity differ according to their object: adultery, masturbation, infidelity, pornography, prostitution, and homosexual acts. In the first decree of Canon 33 of the Synod of Elvira in Spain it was reaffirmed that all members of the clergy, including bishops, priests, and deacons are absolutely forbidden to cohabit with wives and have children. Violation of the rule would result in dismissal from the clergy(Fitriyana, 2013).

### 5. DISCUSSIONS

Negotiated Order refers to the human activities through which social order is performed and organised(Maines, 1982). In this context, the high seminary is a total organisation. Structurally, the celibacy order is not an organisational order, but because Semarijo Higher Seminary is a dogmatic organisation that will produce Catholic Priests, the celibacy order is automatically instituted in the Semarijo Higher Seminary organisation. The broader structure is the Roman Catholic leadership structure from the highest level, the Pope in the Vatican, to the dioceses. More clearly, the position of Semarijo Higher Seminary is equivalent to a Parish. According to Ar, there are different functions between seminaries and Parishes. The Parish takes care of the people in a certain territory at the subdistrict level, while the Higher Seminary has a function as an educational institution for prospective priests. The following is the structure of the instructive line between the diocese and Semarijo Higher Seminary.

According to Mar, the Diocese of *Venetie van Java* has five Kevikepan spread across northern and southern Java. Semarijo Higher Seminary is the only Higher Seminary owned by the Diocese of Venetie van Java which has a very large area, so it is natural that Semarijo Higher Seminary becomes the backbone of the school for prospective priests in the diocese. The highest leader of the seminary is the rector, who is responsible for the entire formation process for the priestly candidates at Semarijo Seminary. With the help of other coaches, the rector is responsible for the implementation of the five areas of physical formation (formation of personality, spiritual life, intellectual, pastoral and communal life).

In terms of their functions and duties, the structures most concerned with the celibate purity of the candidates are the disciplinary prefects, spiritual prefects and spiritual directors. The disciplinary prefect has the responsibility to maintain discipline and order in the common life of the candidates, with the aim of helping them to organise a good personal life in the context of each other's company. The spiritual prefect is responsible for planning and carrying out the spiritual formation of the community through joint (e.g. recollections, retreats) and individual spiritual exercises. The spiritual prefect is responsible for the spiritual formation of candidates for the priesthood and arranges for each candidate to have an appropriate spiritual director. Judging from the order of celibacy within the structure of the Roman Catholic Church, both the papacy and the seminary are clearly total institutions or total organisations.

Semarijo Higher Seminary as a school for prospective priests automatically has to follow the single plan set by the Pope, although in its journey the prospective priests in perceiving the celibacy order also have dynamics, especially in sexual life. When viewed in the facts that occur in the field, there are several celibacy orders that are violated but the priests still carry out their duties. In the findings, there are several phenomena that can be said to damage the purity of the celibate vocation. The phenomenon of sexual abuse by unscrupulous priests has actually been smelled by the Indonesian Catholic Bishops' Conference (KWI) for a long time, therefore KWI anticipated by making the Catholic Church Professional Service Guidelines. JK said that this phenomenon could become an iceberg if it only becomes a passing wind. As stated in the results section, masturbation among Catholic priests is in a grey area. Why is that, on the one hand priests are required to live purely, devoting their whole life to the church by avoiding sexual life, but on the other hand as ordinary humans, they still have a sexual life that must still be accommodated.

The phenomenon of masturbation among Catholic priests seems to be an interesting thing, because masturbation can be a way to accommodate the sexual needs of celibates in the midst of the demand for celibacy. Ar as the rector also said that masturbation is a very human thing, plus the swift flow of information that can provide various stimuli for masturbation, one of which is pornography. From a

structural point of view, the way the management of Semarijo Higher Seminary overcomes the phenomenon of masturbation among celibates is by holding an internum forum, which is a forum to discuss all celibacy problems including the frequency of masturbation. Critically, the existence of a masturbation journal cannot be used as a benchmark to see the purity of celibacy among prospective priests, because sexual life is the personal domain of each actor. Institutions cannot or find it difficult to penetrate the personal perception of each actor.

From the point of view of the celibacy order, based on CCC number 2352, it is clear that masturbation is an act that breaks the purity of celibacy. However, institutionally, Mar explained that masturbation does not necessarily invalidate celibacy. He added that what can make a priest's celibacy defective is when masturbation becomes an addiction in his life. Strauss calls this phenomenon the Negotiated Order, when a rigid institutional order can be reconstructed by its members to produce a new order that can be a middle ground for actors to perceive the rigid order. In a social context, Simmel categorises sexual life as part of social interaction. Sexual life does not have to be about intimate relationships between men and women. By sending photos to each other, expressing affection, providing attraction which can invite eroticism can also be said to be sexual activities that can provide stimulation. From a sociological perspective, what the celibates do above is part of the Negotiated Order. Celibaters try to negotiate with the very binding order of celibacy. Strauss' theory explains that, Negotiated Order does not accept the idea that the basic social structure remains stable and suggests that harmony and stability are the result of the social gains described(Ehrlich & Lui, 2015; Maines, 1982; Strauss, 1978).

### 6. CONCLUSION

The tradition of celibacy, which is a total institution in the Catholic church tradition became a sensitive issue when several cases of sexual abuse came to light. Conceptually, this tradition should require every individual who wants to become a priest to stay away from their sexual desires to serve the Kingdom of God. However, from a humanist point of view, the desire for human lust is still there and even some priests still masturbate. Interestingly, the church still considers this to be an understandable thing. In this perspective, there is a negotiation of the order of the total institution, which ultimately leads to an excuse for the celibacy tradition. Although the church allows this phenomenon to occur, they still maintain the total institution by controlling the sexual appetite so that it does not run wild through a psychological approach. So that the church can carry out celibacy as a total institution in a slightly different way.

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