Post-MCGI Society Research Team Working Paper

MCGI After-Service Detention: How Blocked Exits Enable Coercive Fundraising

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Abstract

This paper examines reports of "locked-in" practices in MCGI locales after worship services—where members describe being prevented from leaving for one to two hours while financial targets, pledges, and "commitments" are pursued. The central claim is institutional, not personal: when a high-control organization enters post-founder decline and faces a tightening cash-flow problem, it may convert *time* into leverage. A closed door becomes a fundraising tool.

The paper frames the practice through three lenses. First, a rights and legal lens: deprivation of liberty without lawful authority is incompatible with basic liberty protections in international human rights norms and the Philippine constitutional tradition.[1][2] Second, a power lens: Foucault's discipline helps explain how architectural control (exits, guards, surveillance) produces compliance; Gramsci's hegemony explains how "duty language" normalizes what would otherwise be recognized as coercion.[3][4] Third, a political-economic lens: the practice is interpreted as a crisis response to declining intake, rising resistance, and the weakening of charismatic authority previously capable of extracting labor and giving without overt force.[5]

This working paper invites verification, critique, and falsification through process tracing and event-log replication.

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1. The Practice: When "Service Ends" Only on Paper

In ordinary religious life, prayer marks closure. The meeting ends, the body is released, and whatever giving occurs remains a matter of conscience.

But multiple exiter testimonies and field reports describe a different pattern: after the final prayer, members remain seated while exits are controlled; the room shifts from worship to "meeting"; and the content pivots from scripture to deficits, targets, pledges, and follow-up collection. The reported duration—often one to two hours—matters less than the mechanism: *the denial of exit*.

A community can hold a voluntary meeting after worship. The line is crossed when leaving is not practically possible—because doors are locked, because guards stand at exits, because social

threats are deployed, or because members are told (explicitly or implicitly) that they cannot leave without consequence. Consent is not a mood. Consent is the presence of a real way out.

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2. Operational Definition: What Counts as a "Lock-In" Here

For clarity and testability, this paper uses a narrow definition.

A post-worship "lock-in" is present when **(a)** the formal service has ended, **(b)** members are **physically or practically prevented** from leaving the premises for a nontrivial period, and **(c)** the period is used to apply **financial and labor pressure** (pledges, targets, quotas, "toka," sign-ups, urgent staffing, compulsory "meetings").

This definition is intentionally conservative. It does not label every extended announcement as detention. It focuses on the combination of *exit denial* and *pressure extraction*.

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3. Rights and Legal Framework: Liberty Is Not a "Church Matter"

3.1 Liberty as a baseline norm

Internationally, the right to liberty and security of person includes protection against arbitrary or unlawful detention.[1] Locally, the Philippine constitutional tradition grounds liberty in due process guarantees.[2] The reason to start here is simple: the right to leave a room is a minimum condition for meaningful consent.

3.2 The criminal law distinction that critics often miss

Many people reach for "arbitrary detention," but that category typically concerns **public officers** acting without legal grounds.[6] In contrast, a lock-in as described here is alleged to be imposed by **private individuals** exercising organizational authority inside a venue.

Under the Revised Penal Code, provisions addressing private deprivation of liberty include **kidnapping/serious illegal detention** and **slight illegal detention**, alongside related offenses.[7] The statutory language (as summarized in official compilations) explicitly centers on *kidnapping or detaining another, or in any other manner depriving a person of liberty*.[7] The legal classification in any specific case depends on evidence, context, duration, manner, threats, and other elements—but the threshold idea is not complicated:

If a person is not free to leave, the situation has moved from "meeting" toward "detention."

This paper does not offer legal advice or a case verdict. It argues that the **structure** of the reported practice resembles unlawful deprivation of liberty more than voluntary religious participation.

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4. Why This Happens: A Power-Mechanism Explanation

Here is the mistake defenders often make: they treat coercion as something that requires handcuffs, shouting, or explicit threats. That's a cartoon version of social control.

4.1 Foucault: discipline through space, visibility, and routine

Foucault's point was never "guards are evil." It was sharper: modern control often works by arranging bodies in space, regulating movement, and making people feel watched—so they police themselves.[3] In the lock-in scenario, architecture becomes policy. Exits become chokepoints. "Order" becomes enforced stillness. A room designed for worship becomes a room designed for compliance.

Even if no one is physically grabbed, the environment communicates a message: *you are not in charge of your own time right now*.

4.2 Gramsci: hegemony and "moral vocabulary" as camouflage

Gramsci helps explain why people comply without visible violence: domination survives when it is made to feel normal, righteous, even honorable.[4] In high-control settings, labor and giving are moralized as *tungkulin*, *gawang mabuti*, *pasanin*, *sakripisyo*. Once that vocabulary saturates daily life, refusal is experienced not as a boundary but as sin—an internal alarm system that keeps the machine running.

So the lock-in does not need chains. It needs *a moral language that makes leaving feel like betrayal*.

4.3 Coercion without "beating": the menace of penalty logic

The International Labour Organization defines forced labor through the idea of work extracted under a "menace of penalty," where people have not offered themselves voluntarily.[8] In a religious system, "penalty" often takes non-legal forms: humiliation, ostracism, moral accusation, being tagged as "iba ang diwa," or being treated as a threat to family peace. The same coercive structure can operate with a smile.

4.4 Fatigue is not neutral: it changes how people decide

A lock-in weaponizes exhaustion. Sleep loss degrades memory and cognitive performance; it increases vulnerability to suggestion in certain contexts.[9][10] Even without grand theory, ordinary experience already knows this: tired people sign things they would question when rested. Tired people surrender time to end discomfort. Fatigue is not a side effect—it is part of the pressure design.

5. Political Economy: Why Lock-Ins Intensify During Decline

The deeper claim of this paper is historical: these practices do not typically flourish in periods of effortless growth. They appear when the institution feels scarcity.

Post-founder succession often produces a legitimacy problem because charisma is not mechanically inheritable.[5] When doctrinal magnetism weakens, organizations compensate through other "technologies" of cohesion—logistics, spectacle, intensified participation, and tighter internal control. In economic terms, the organization faces fixed costs and reputational commitments that do not shrink simply because recruitment slows. Under strain, leadership reaches for the remaining resources it can still command quickly: member time, member labor, and immediate cash collection.

Lock-ins therefore function as a crisis technique: convert the crowd already present into a captive audience for extraction.

This aligns with Post-MCGI Society's broader framework that treats late-stage MCGI as a labor-dependent system whose "fuel" is unpaid work and routine giving, increasingly enforced through engineered compliance rather than persuasive authority.[11][12]

6. Testable Propositions: How to Treat This as Research, Not Just Outrage

A serious critique must be falsifiable. This paper proposes that if lock-ins are a crisis response, they should show observable correlations:

First, the frequency and duration of lock-ins should increase around fundraising deadlines, reporting cycles, major event build-ups, or periods of intensified "patarget" activity.

Second, locales under higher financial pressure should display more aggressive exit control compared to locales with lower extraction demands.

Third, lock-ins should predict secondary effects: higher burnout, increased absenteeism, and more exit narratives that cite time theft and coercive fundraising as proximate causes.

These are not rhetorical claims. They are measurable through consistent event logging.

7. Ethical Analysis: Why "But It's for God" Doesn't Fix the Act

Ethically, the problem is not only discomfort. The problem is **using human freedom as an instrument**.

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A basic rights-based ethic treats liberty as non-negotiable except under lawful authority and strict safeguards.[1][2] A Kantian framing would say it even more bluntly: treating persons merely as means—using their trapped bodies to secure pledges—violates the moral dignity of the person, regardless of the goal.

Even on Christian moral terms, it is hard to reconcile coerced giving with the idea of voluntary charity. A gift extracted by confinement is not generosity. It is tribute.

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8. Evidence Plan: How to Document Without Becoming What You Oppose

This paper recommends a lawful and ethical documentation protocol consistent with open review research:

Maintain an event log: date, locale, end of worship time, start of "meeting," end time, whether exits were blocked, who enforced it, what was demanded (pledges, lists, targets), and whether members were explicitly told they could not leave.

Preserve evidence with redaction: blur faces, names, phone numbers, and identifiers. Focus on systems and instructions, not trapped individuals. Where audio or recordings are involved, comply with applicable local laws and platform rules.

Archive supporting materials in a separate evidence repository with clear labels and timestamps, then cite those items in footnote form inside the paper.

This is how the critique stays credible: transparent method, minimal sensationalism, maximum verifiability.

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9. Preliminary Modeling and Expected Correlations

Because this is an open-review working paper, this section does not claim a finalized dataset. It states **projected patterns** based on initial field reports, then defines **replication criteria** and **conditions for falsification**. The Post-MCGI Society Research Team invites independent verification using the event-log method described in Appendix A.

Data Log: October 2025

Date	Event Type	Financial Urgency (1-5)	Exit Barrier (1-4)	Minutes Detained
Week 1	Prayer Meeting	1 (Low)	1 (Open)	0 mins
Week 2	Worship Service	2 (Medium)	2 (Verbal)	15 mins
Week 3	Worship Service	3 (High)	3 (Guards)	45 mins
Week 4	Worship Service	5 (Critical)	4 (Locked)	120 mins

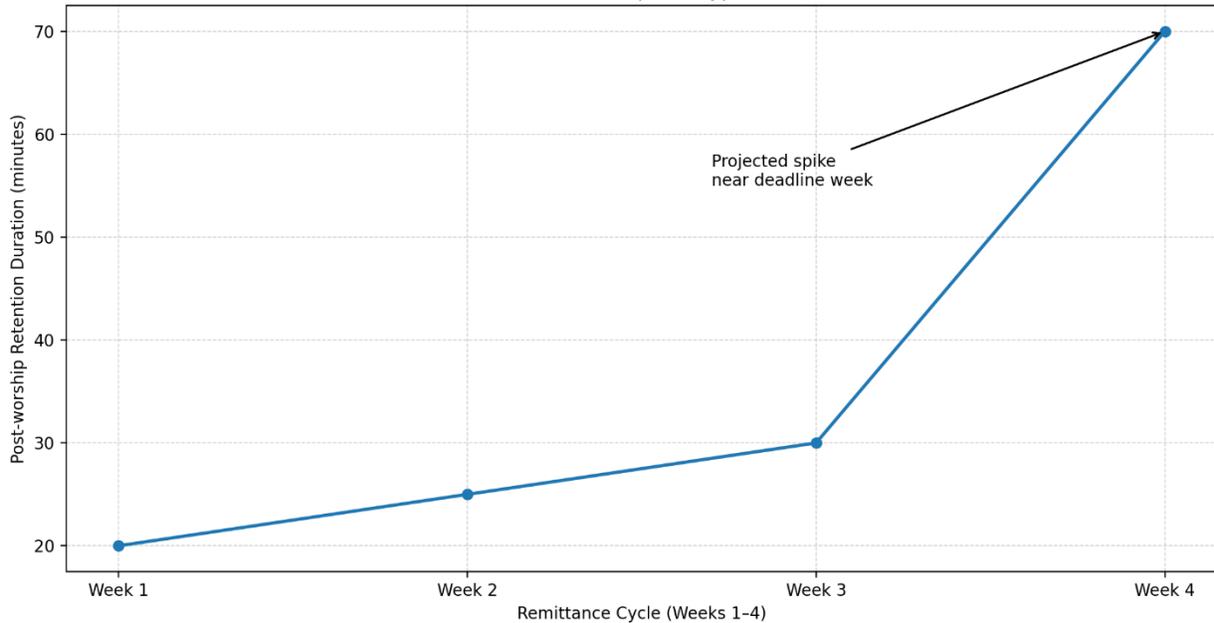## 9.1 The Temporal-Administrative Link: The "Deadline Spike"

If post-worship retention were a purely spiritual phenomenon—an unplanned extension of worship due to the "moving of the Spirit"—it should occur randomly, or correlate with liturgical themes. Initial field reports suggest a different driver: the administrative calendar.

Model prediction: retention duration increases in a cyclical pattern that correlates with **financial reporting or remittance deadlines** (weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly cut-offs).

Expected pattern: retention remains relatively low during non-reporting weeks, then spikes as remittance deadlines approach. This resembles a "crunch period" dynamic: the closer the deadline, the more the system converts attendance into leverage.

Falsification criterion: if retention duration shows no clustering near reporting deadlines—or if spikes occur randomly with no administrative timing—the "deadline spike" model weakens.

Note: Illustrative projection based on initial field reports; use dated event logs to verify or falsify clustering near reporting deadlines.

Figure 1. Projected Retention Duration Relative to Remittance Deadline (The "Deadline Spike")

This figure visualizes the working paper's prediction that post-worship retention is not random or "purely spiritual," but **cyclical and administrative**. The X-axis represents a typical remittance cycle (Weeks 1–4). The Y-axis represents retention duration in minutes after the closing prayer. The expected pattern is a "staircase" or late-cycle spike: retention stays relatively low during non-reporting weeks and rises sharply as the remittance deadline approaches. If independent event logs fail to show clustering near deadline weeks, the "deadline spike" hypothesis weakens.

Note: This is a projected pattern based on initial field reports and is presented here as a falsifiable expectation pending broader replication through event logs.

9.2 The "Cost of Freedom" Correlation

The central economic thesis of this working paper is that **time is being converted into leverage**. If this is true, we should observe a direct, positive relationship between the intensity of the financial ask and the strictness of exit control.

We propose the following relationship:

Exit Restriction ∝ Financial Deficit

Where "exit restriction" refers to the practical difficulty of leaving (locked doors, positioned guards, verbal discouragement, intimidation cues), and "financial deficit" refers to the magnitude and urgency of targets (shortfalls, quotas, pledges, accumulated locale debt, event-ticket obligations, emergency drives).

Expected pattern: as financial demand rises, exit barriers become more rigid. This supports the claim that retention is not incidental to fundraising, but an instrument of it.

Falsification criterion: if high-deficit meetings consistently occur with open exits and low restriction, or if strict restriction occurs without financial pressure, the "cost of freedom" mechanism weakens.
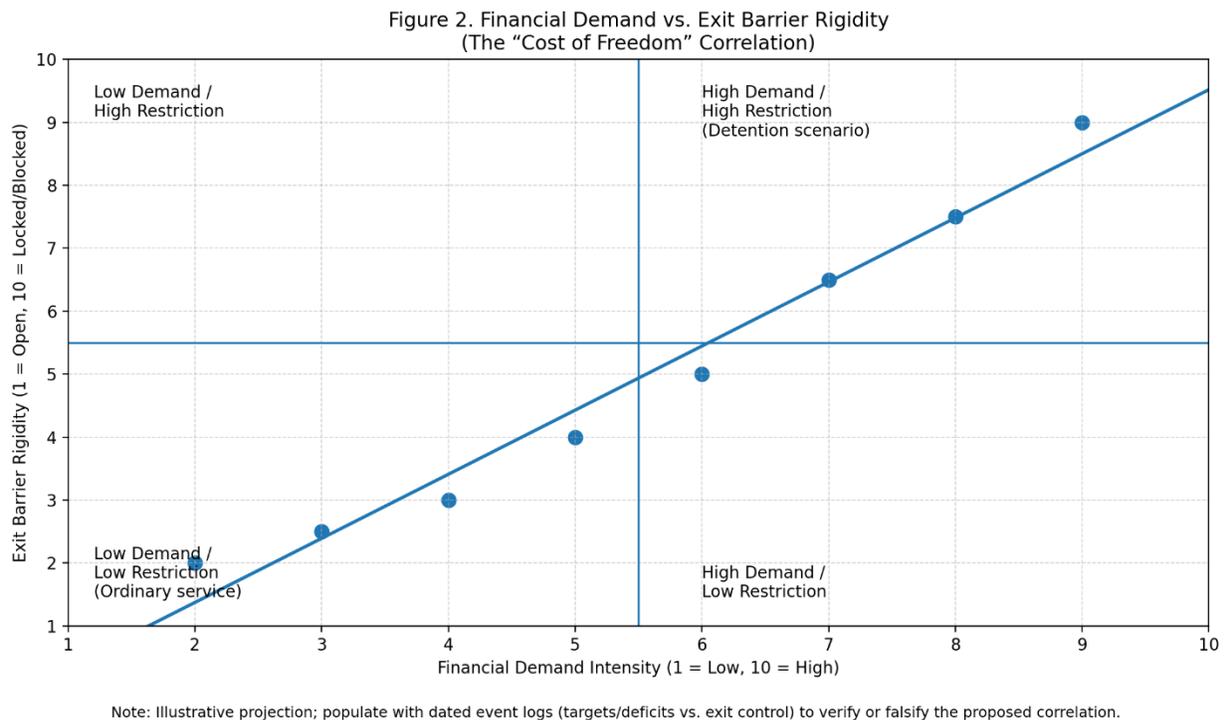

Figure 2. Financial Demand vs. Exit Barrier Rigidity
(The "Cost of Freedom" Correlation)

Note: Illustrative projection; populate with dated event logs (targets/deficits vs. exit control) to verify or falsify the proposed correlation.

Figure 2. Financial Demand vs. Exit Barrier Rigidity (The "Cost of Freedom" Correlation)

This figure models the paper's economic thesis that **time is converted into leverage** during post-worship detention. The X-axis represents financial intensity (size and urgency of targets, deficits, quotas, remittance pressure). The Y-axis represents exit restriction (degree of barrier to leaving: open exits vs. guarded exits vs. locked or practically blocked exits). The model predicts a positive relationship: as financial demand rises, exit barriers become more rigid—consistent with

the claim that detention functions as an instrument of fundraising rather than an accidental overlap.

Interpretation uses a simple quadrant logic. Low demand with low restriction reflects ordinary services where voluntary giving is sufficient. High demand with high restriction reflects the detention scenario where extraction pressure coincides with blocked exits. If high financial "asks" routinely occur while exits remain freely open—or if strict exit restriction appears without fundraising intensity—the "cost of freedom" mechanism weakens.

Note: The plotted points should be drawn from dated event logs to allow independent verification and falsification.

9.3 Semantic Analysis: The Shift from Pastoral to Extractive Language

The "after-service detention" is not defined only by blocked exits. It is also defined by a distinct shift in vocabulary once the exits are secured.

Preliminary reports suggest a measurable bifurcation:

Phase A (Worship language): Peace, Salvation, Thanksgiving, Pag-big (Love), Faith, Gawang Mabuti (Good Works), Obedience.
Phase B (Extraction language): Target, Kulang (deficit), Toka (quota), Remittance, Commitment, Pledge, Emergency, Abuno (defray)."

This linguistic transition matters because it provides qualitative verification that the event is no longer worship. It becomes an administrative extraction meeting imposed on a captive audience.

Method: event logs should record the top recurring terms and the time they appear (pre-prayer vs post-prayer). Keyword frequency can then be summarized without needing advanced software.

Falsification criterion: if language remains consistently pastoral after prayer with no administrative pivot, or if extraction terms are absent in reported retention periods, the semantic-shift claim weakens.

Conclusion: What Brought MCGI to This Practice

If the reported lock-ins are accurate, they reflect more than "strict leadership." They reflect a late-stage organizational dilemma.

Charisma has thinned. Recruitment yields have weakened. Exit narratives now circulate publicly. The institution faces an economic squeeze and a legitimacy squeeze at the same time. In that condition, control tightens, and time becomes a collectible resource.

A locked door is not pastoral care. It is a coercive technology—one that sits uncomfortably beside any serious claim of "walang pilitan." Consent ends when exit is denied. Faith does not annul freedom.

Notes and References

[1] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, Article 9 (Right to liberty and security of person).

[2] *1987 Philippine Constitution*, Article III (Bill of Rights), Section 1 (due process; liberty).

[3] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977).

[4] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971).

[5] Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (1978) (charismatic authority; succession problems).

[6] Scribd compilation summarizing "arbitrary detention" as a public-officer offense under the Revised Penal Code (used here only for the public-officer vs private-individual distinction).

[7] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Revised Penal Code of the Philippines*, provisions on kidnapping/illegal detention and related offenses (Arts. 267–269).

[8] Walk Free (citing ILO Forced Labour Convention No. 29 definition: "menace of any penalty" and not offered voluntarily).

[9] Newbury et al., "Sleep Deprivation and Memory: Meta-Analytic Reviews…" (2021).

[10] Blagrove (1994), "Interrogative suggestibility: The effects of sleep deprivation…"

[11] Post-MCGI Society Research Team, *Charismatic Insulation and The Great Collapse in a High-Control Religious Organization* (Working Paper, Open Review edition, 2026).

[12] Post-MCGI Society Research Team, *MCGI: A Modern-Day Slavery Economy* and *Beyond "Free Will": Debunking the Volunteerism Defense in MCGI's Labor System* (Working Papers/Addenda, Open Review edition, 2026).