

Muslim Ethnic Identity: Its Maintenance, Construction and Reproduction among Migrants in a Municipality in the Philippines

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Abstract Migration is not new in cultural studies. This study dealt mainly on patterns of migration, push and pull factors and coping mechanisms of migrants and the acceptance and/or intolerance of the host community. This paper contributes to an understanding of why migrants maintained their identity while being integrated into the host community. The data needed for the study were obtained using in-depth interviews with the purposively selected Muslim migrants in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya. Their lived experience in the point of origin and destination with regard to their marriage and family, religious, and economic life were explored and used to facilitate a construction of theory that was grounded on their lived experiences. Findings revealed that in as much as the respondents were very observant of their Islamic responsibilities, their inclusion into Solano's mainly Christian population made them enjoy their uniqueness through the practice of their Islamic beliefs and practices. At the same time an inconsequential reconstruction of their Islamic identity was observed that allowed them to be integrated in the host community.

Keywords: migration, coping mechanisms, lived experiences, reconstruction

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1. Introduction

Migration is seen to have an impact not only on demography and economy. Many studies have been made on the consequent effect of migration to a migrant's ethnicity, identity and even self-esteem. The importance of ethnicity has become more visible in many parts of the world. It has been difficult to find a country that is homogenous in terms of culture, religion and ethnicity among others by the end of the 20th century. In western countries like US, Canada and Great Britain, multiculturalism has become the way to view and form a nation [1].

A migrant's identification with a certain group, ethnicity or religion can be paramount in how he involves himself in the host country. The migrant can have multiple identities other than being an immigrant. According to Constant and Zimmermann [2], the identities of the immigrant in the host country can be compatible and reinforcing, but they can also be conflicting. He can identify with different ethnicities and be a cosmopolitan.

In addition, they sought to investigate the nature, role and relationships between ethnic and national identities

by using migrants as the natural innovators. Said investigations revealed that the arrival of immigrants can amplify social challenges and both natives and immigrants can see their identities altering and evolving. The openness of the people in the host country, their embracing of new cultures and their respect towards newcomers can play a major role in how immigrants react and how close they remain with the country of origin. The laws of the host country together with the ideals, the self-understanding and the foundation of the sovereign nation can also affect the identities of immigrants and natives both at the individual and nation-building level.

In the Philippines, the country supplied all kinds of skilled and low-skilled workers to the world's more developed countries since 1970s. An estimated 8.1 million Filipinos or nearly 10 percent of the country's 85 million people were working and/or residing in close to 200 countries and territories as of December 2004. Even though the Philippines is largely a country of emigration, there are still some foreigners who migrate to it. The inflows of foreigners to the country, as well as concerns for unauthorized migration and the use of the Philippines as a transit point for other destinations emphasize a reality in this age of migration: that countries can no longer be

neatly and exclusively classified as countries of origin, transit, or destination [3].

In the study of Flores [4] using Symbolic Interactionism, the social construction of the ethnic group identity of the Badjao in Barangay Malitam Dos, Batangas City was determined. The motivations for migration and the migration routes were documented using face-to-face interviews and 191 photographs taken from November 16-18, 2006. The socio-cultural, economic, and religious changes they experienced over the past three decades were also described. The modified Bogardus Social Distance Scale was used to measure the attitudes of the Badjao towards the Tagalogs in Batangas. The study found that the social reconstruction of the Badjao's ethnic group identity began soon after they made the decision to migrate to Batangas. The identity was transformed from indigenous people to being lower class citizens; from being boat people to being urban squatters; and from being sea nomads to being wandering beggars.

The study of del Rosario [5] whose respondents were Maranao families in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya showed that the basic motivations for leaving their points of origin may be attributed to a dislike for their land, which in turn was related to the conflicts ensuing in Mindanao in the 1970s. Pull factors may be associated with economic or business, family or kinship, educational or social needs as well as psychological factors. It was revealed in the study that Solano responded to their demands for a host community primarily because of the business opportunities it can offer. Housing, medical, educational, religious, as well as political needs were catered to by the host community.

With the above literature and studies on ethnic identity and migration, and the data provided by the study of del Rosario [5] with regards to Muslim migration in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, it can be noted that migration has an effect in the construction of identity of migrants as they become involved in any manner in the affairs of the host country. Accordingly, this study determined the maintenance, construction and reproduction of ethnic identity among migrant Muslims in Solano. It determined their lived experiences in their points of origin and in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya in terms of social dynamics, marriage and family, religious beliefs and practices and economic activities.

2. Methods and Sources of Data

2.1. Methodology

This research employed a qualitative method. The Grounded Theory was used as an approach to see the reality of the key informants particularly in their movement to Solano, Nueva Vizcaya and their lived experiences. A theory was derived and/or developed based on the responses of the respondents in order to fully explain migration and ethnic identity.

2.2. Sources of Data

As noted Muslim migrants in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya served as key informants of the study. The purposive and snowball sampling technique was used to identify the

research respondents since the researchers did not come up with a profiling of them. The researchers identified a Muslim migrant from whom referrals were made. Data were obtained from the interviews conducted with the key informants using the semi-structured interview technique.

2.3. Data Analysis

The first step in data analysis was the open coding. The researchers divided the data based on the responses of the respondents during the interview process. In the naming subcomponent, the researchers conceptualized and developed abstract meaning from the incidences that occurred in the lived experiences of the respondents. Subsequently, the researchers named and described the incidences. In the comparing subcomponent, they developed a common name for incidences following a consistent comparison of the lived experiences of the respondents. In the memoing subcomponent, they developed codes and ideas based on what was emerging. After these considerations, the different emergent subcategories were coded.

The second step was selective coding. In this step the researchers filtered and coded data that were deemed reliable to the emerging subcategories. This meant that after filtering and coding the subcategories, the researchers formed core categories.

The third step was the theoretical coding. This was the step where the researchers arrived at a point when data collection reached saturation. It was in this step that they determined that data collection no longer contributed to an elaboration of the lived experiences of the respondents. Theoretical coding allowed the researchers to construct and consolidate the core categories.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Push and Pull Factors of Migration

3.1.1. Peace and Order Issues

Migration has been seen as a mechanism to seek new places relative to the desires and needs of migrants. The respondents of the study described their point of origin and the reasons why they had to leave their homeland and seek a new "home". The declaration of Martial Law in the 1970s resulted to issues of peace and order in the Philippines. In Marawi City, where most Muslims in Solano migrated from, the effect of the declaration was concretely seen and felt by the Muslims. The chaotic conditions in the place pushed them to seek asylum in places where they could find relative peace and order.

Said issues on peace and order in Marawi City were also compounded by issues of tribal wars particularly where killings of this sort took place. Hence, the declaration of Martial law in the place was one of the precursors, but not the sole reason for the many issues of peace and order which confronted the migrants. Clan and tribal wars, of any sort, led most Muslims to seek places where they could live in a peaceful environment, thus the migration.

Solano, Nueva Vizcaya was seen by migrants as relatively peaceful. While some Muslims migrated to

Baguio, Pampanga, Ifugao and as far as Cagayan, migration did not stop for some other migrants. Information received from fellow Muslims about Solano made them migrate further to this direction due to the peace it offered. The migrants also had close contact with the local government and they referred matters to the LGU when they encountered problems with the people of Solano.

3.1.2. Business Prospects

Muslims are traders, and business up to now has been an important part of their lives. Aside from trading, Maranaos are farmers. But the condition of their farmlands, causing them to produce fewer yields, prompted them to venture into other sources of income and invest in other places. Muslims, of any economic status, rich or poor, needed to move out and invest somewhere, thus, causing them to migrate.

The pattern of migration was that from Marawi City, Muslims would go to Manila. It was here where they awaited for some news from acquaintances or relatives. Those with relatives proceeded immediately from Manila to other provinces like Isabela (Ilagan, Tumauini, Santiago City), Ifugao (Potia, Lamut, Lagawe), Cagayan and even in Bontoc. Hence, those who had relatives in Manila stayed there, while others moved to provinces, like those mentioned. However, some of these Muslims chose to migrate further to Solano, Nueva Vizcaya because of the fewer number of Muslims there. Given this fact, they saw business prospects, put up businesses, and consequently, their business flourished.

The "December Factor" also contributed to the "Mosleming of Solano". It was a recent development where Muslims would go to Manila to take advantage of the holiday rush. Here they met with fellow Muslims from other places and talked about a "potential promise" in places where they had been. Since Solano was seen as a "potential promise", some of them migrated to Solano.

Social pressure was another reason for migration. Due to standards and expectations, their relatives thought that logging, farming and carpentry were inferior jobs, although the main source of income was farming. So they sought migration to escape from such pressures because 'they were confident to try other jobs in other places'.

3.1.3. Spread of Islam

Spreading Islamic doctrines and teachings was also seen as reason for migration. Not only did they venture into trade and other businesses with expectations of greater yields but to spread and share their beliefs to non-Muslims. In places where they migrated, they put up a Mosque for them to practice and subscribe themselves to Islamic Laws. They used their religion as a way to show who they were, doing good deeds to their fellow men. They invited their non-Muslim neighbors at times they had celebrations, thus befriending them. They created an organization known as the Solano Muslim Islamic Association which was their official representation. They also used this as a means to evangelize non-Muslims.

Other than putting up a Mosque and associations, intermarriage was also seen as vital to the spread of Islam. If a Muslim man married a non-Muslim woman, it was his duty to teach or tell his wife about Islam but he still

respected her if she wanted to practice her non-Muslim tradition, and in fact allowed her to attend her respective church. However, based on observations, most of the women who married Muslim men reverted to Islam.

3.2. Coping Mechanisms in the Host Community

One of the problems encountered by the migrants was separation from their immediate family. It is known that the head of the families are males. Apparently, these heads left their respective families in the hopes of finding a place where business flourished and peace abounded. Hence, they got separated from their immediate family and relatives. To cope with this problem, family migration was instigated. The pioneer settlers then were followed by family members and other relatives, after word of mouth reached them about the prospects of settlement in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya. The male relative then invited the wife, then the rest of the family members until eventually other relatives were called to migrate.

Another way to cope as earlier mentioned was the establishment of a Muslim Association. The organization borne from this association served as their official representation in the community at large. To be a leader depended on one's own volition even when this matter was consulted with the rest of the members. Officers were convened for trade purposes, maintenance of camaraderie, facilitation of the solution of problems and discussions with the government. It also served as a legal entity to receive donations from Arabic organizations useful for their mosque and/or for educational purposes.

Muslim migrants also maintained camaraderie. Even before the establishment of a Muslim Association, the idea that even without blood relations, Muslim migrants saw and considered themselves as one body. It was expected that a fellow Maranao would help anyone among his brethren who was in dire need as embodied in Zakat or almsgiving. For the migrants, adjusting to a new environment was quite easy because Muslims were one body and one soul. They helped each other and treated each other as brothers and sisters.

The absence of a venue for Islamic religious practices was also one of the problems of the Muslim migrants. The first people to arrive were faced with how they would be able to fully practice their Islamic faith. It is to be remembered that the migrants' practice of their faith was very important to them. The establishment of a mosque was thus, seen as a rallying point. At the outset, a small mosque was put up in 1980 first in Bayombong then in Solano Nueva Vizcaya. A bigger mosque was then put up in Solano, with the help of the local government unit.

A more critical problem however, was the intolerance of the people in the host community since in the beginning they were not readily accepted by the community. At first they tolerated such narrow-mindedness in the belief that it was a natural reaction among members of the community confronted by strangers. After some time though, their patience was tested so they fought back.

The continued observance of Muslim practices was one of their ways to overcome such hostility. Even though non-Muslims before received Muslims with intimidation and hostility of any sort due to differences in faith and

practices, the latter still continued practicing their faith. According to one key informant "*kalaunan eh nasanay rin sila.*" (They then became accustomed to us). Seeking the intervention of local government officials also aided them in addressing the problem. Not only did they help in the construction of their mosque, but they also mediated to end the conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Intermarriage was also seen as adaptive. This type of marriage allowed Muslim migrants to settle down. Some married Ilokans, Ifugaos and women from other ethno-linguistic groups. Intermarriage helped them in blending with local inhabitants, and to somehow make the latter feel that they were sincere in their dealings with them. They married non-Muslims to be integrated in the community and to encourage them to revert.

3.3. Lived Experiences of Muslim Migrants

3.3.1. Social Dynamics

Maranao Muslims' sense of belongingness was so strong as manifested in their endogamous practice in Maranao City as well as their referral to other Maranao Muslims with regard economic activities.

In Marawi City, a Maranao was expected to marry another Maranao. This meant that in Marawi City the group identity of Maranao Muslims was strongly observed. But when they migrated to Solano they married non-Muslims/non-Maranao Muslims. In this case, they practiced intermarriage, a kind of marriage that allowed them to be integrated with a person belonging to another ethnic group. This boiled down to a point where group formation and social interaction were no longer limited to Maranao-Maranao Muslim but extended to include other ethnic groups. However, it should be noted that Maranao Muslim men valued their religion so much that when they married non-Muslims, these non-Muslims were encouraged to revert to Islam. This was a manifestation that Muslim social interaction and group formation were so resilient that they were able to encourage non-Muslims to join their group.

Economically speaking, concordance among Maranao Muslims was also so strong that they would refer a place where there is a "potential" for business to another Maranao Muslim. Their oneness, being united as one body, has extended to include economic activities as well. They did not worry about other traders because they knew each other, and they were even friends with merchants from other groups like the Batangueños. This reveals that group formation and social interaction were not defined by blood ties alone but also by economic reasons.

When they migrated to Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, their identity as a group was still very important even in economic or business terms. Muslim men were traders/merchants, that when they put up their stalls at the Solano market, they were able to come together as merchants/sellers at Calle Rosa. They were also even able to interact with non-Muslim merchants and they were not considered as threats in the market.

The Muslim Association was also very crucial to their coming together as Muslims which exemplified their group formation and interaction. It also helped solidify and maintain their camaraderie as Muslims.

3.3.2. Marriage and Family in their Points of Origin and Destination

When a Muslim man loves a woman and wants to take her as his wife, he proposes to the woman in the presence of his family. Based on the Koran, the man should give a dowry, though there is no fixed amount as long as there is dowry and that it should correspond to the wealth of the man. Once the dowry is given, the man can never take it back.

Although arranged marriage is customary, a man is allowed only to sleep with the woman until she has reached puberty. For Muslim girls below ten years old, their marriage can be arranged but they are not allowed to live with their future husbands until they reach the age of puberty.

When Muslim men migrated to Solano, the dowry was still practiced. According to the Muslim women, dowry depended on the agreement/arrangement between a man and a woman. Dowry was seen important because it symbolized respect for the woman and her family. It was also a means for the man to show to the woman's family that he was capable of raising a family. With regards to arranged marriages, Muslim women said that marriage can be done but it can be undone depending on the desire of the daughter or son. The practice of asking permission from the woman's parents before courtship and marriage still took place even though they already migrated to Solano, Nueva Vizcaya.

After the parents got acquainted with the man and had received the dowry, marriage would commence. In Marawi City, marriage was endogamous; that is, a Muslim man had to marry a Muslim woman. Women usually stayed at home, while men looked for means/resources. Based on the teachings of Islam, husbands should work but women were not obliged to work.

However, endogamy was not very much observed when migration to Solano took place. Intermarriage is now practiced for community integration, and since they marry someone outside their group, marriage relationships as practiced in Maranao have changed. Because of education, non-Muslim traditions and the Solano environment, women can now work outside the home so long as important parts of their body are covered. Whereas woman should not travel without their husband, women can now travel alone to other places like Manila. Husband-wife roles now depend on the agreement between the two as attested by the respondents. Muslims practice polygamous marriages but this depend on the capacity of the man.

If a Muslim man intends to have a second wife, he needs to marry her. According to the Muslim women, the husband should ensure that the two wives are treated fairly and both are well-taken care of if not he is committing a sin. Thus, it is sinful on the part of the husband if he will favor one wife over the other. The husband should also ensure that both wives are in good terms and are living harmoniously.

Marrying more than one however, is not very much practiced nowadays, as it is seen as a big responsibility inasmuch as whatever is given to the first wife and children should also be given to other wives and children. This explains why the residential set up is such that houses of co-wives are identical and adjacent to each other.

This allows the husband to ply from one house to another with little discomfort and complaints from the wives. Furthermore, if a man intends to marry another, women are given the chance to choose who the husband marries, so that if they are agreeable, there would be no questions asked. Having many wives depends on the man if he can provide the needs of the wives financially, spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally. If the man wants to marry another woman, sometimes the first wife recommends the woman so that feud/conflict among co-wives rarely happens.

3.3.3. Religious Beliefs and Practices in their Points of Origin and Destination

Muslim migrants' beliefs and practices remained intact. For instance, their belief on food and clothing were practiced and observed by heart. As mentioned, women were expected to highly observe covering important body parts, since they regarded Mary as the embodiment of purity. Moreover, Muslim women cover themselves fully and remain faithful to the rules of modest dressing to safeguard men and themselves from improper behavior and temptation and to show modesty and conservatism.

In terms of food, Muslim women distinguish *halal* (allowed/lawful) from *haram* (unlawful/prohibited). *Haram* foods include pork, double dead food and foods listed in the books of Deuteronomy, Leviticus and Isaiah. When a Muslim man marries a non-Muslim woman, it is his duty to teach his wife about their religion. If she wants to eat pork, she should eat outside and in restaurants and should not such cook meat inside the household. However, given that they reverted to Islam, Muslim women already observe such practices. According to the Muslim women in Solano, the only difference between Marawi Muslim and Solano Muslim women is that the latter is exposed to *haram* foods whereas most of the available foods in Marawi are *halal*. Statues are also forbidden; hence, a non-Muslim woman should not bring statues into the household.

While Muslim migrants still live by faith their religious beliefs and practices, some have been however, influenced by their new environment. Some Muslim men who migrated to Solano have started drinking liquor which is prohibited in the Islamic religion. Moreover, while children are taught about Muslim religion, they have the freedom to choose their own religion.

Muslim migrants however, continue to worship five times a day. They worship Allah first, when they wake up in the morning; second, at noon time; third, at 3:30PM; fourth, at 5:30PM; and lastly, at 7:30 in the evening.

Children from ages seven to ten may participate in these five times a day worship. They also perform ablution, the practice of cleansing or washing: this is so since they believe that they must be clean in the outside and in the inside which means that they must worship willfully and with a genuine heart. They also observe a prayer mass every Friday from 12:00PM to 1:00PM where an *imam* leads.

For them, praying involves renewal, reminders like giving pieces of advice to members, and teaching about the Koran in the context of daily living. This explains why fasting is so essential to them. While matured and capable men and women can perform fasting from 4:00AM until sunset, those who are pregnant, menstruating and sick are

exempted from fasting. Fasting is observed during the two most important events: *Eid'l Ftr* and *Eid'l Adha*.

According to the Muslim women, Islam is so important that they have big responsibilities towards the enculturation of their children, and that while some of them have reverted to Islam, whatever those that are in the Bible must be observed. They said that men are much more expected to observe Islamic beliefs and practices which explain why they are much more prayerful than women.

3.3.4. Economic Activities in the Points of Origin and Destination

There are many ways to earn a living in Marawi City as long as a person is hard working. Some of the sources of income are farming, logging and carpentry. Other than these, Muslims are also traders. In Solano, Muslim traders did not have to worry about other traders like Batangueños because they know each other. The Muslim men maintained that women in Marawi City stayed at home while men had to earn a living. But Muslim migrants maintained that Solano offered a new and alternative way of earning a living so much so that wives are now allowed to work and can even travel to other places, particularly in Manila, by themselves.

They now have stalls put up at the Solano public market. They upheld that, though they are Muslims, people in the market are not threatened by their presence as they became good friends with them. This clarifies why Muslim migrants have easily put up their business at the Solano public market since they have befriended other people – a situation which is similar in Marawi where the Muslims had no problems with other traders.

Muslim migrants sell in the same area and give the same prices for the same products causing no rivalry or ill will among them. Whereas farming was their main source of living in Marawi City, now they have retail stores and are engaged in buying and selling.

These experiences, as recounted by the participants, display a transition in their economic activities from farming, logging and carpentry to selling businesses: a reminder that indeed they left their land in Marawi City. However, trading activity among them is still ingrained.

Muslim women said that although Muslim women are obliged to stay at home, they are now allowed to work if their own husband permits them to. Hence, the woman-at-home in Marawi City has been altered to a woman-at-work in Solano depending on the arrangements of the couple.

3.4. Grounded Theory and Respondents Lived Experiences

The common names derived during the Open Coding were “Muslim Camaraderie”, “Connections with People”, and “Community Acceptance”, classified under the emergent subcategory “Migration as Integrative”. The code “Connection with People” allowed Muslim migrants to search for places where “potential promise” awaited them. In this case, migration encouraged Muslims to participate in the movement pattern by way of referrals and invitations from fellow Muslims. The code “Muslim Camaraderie” was classified under the subcategory, Migration as Integrative inasmuch as it emphasizes “one

body” of the Muslims in the place of destination whether they were related by blood or merely by ties of religion. “Community Acceptance” was another code classified under Migration as Integrative since they fought altogether against hostile hosts and showed oneness and eventually accepted and integrated into the host community.

Migration has never been without abrasion. With the many difficulties experienced by the migrants in their homeland like armed- and clan-conflict, social pressure, and economic issues, they sought new asylum where they could “escape and find new life”. Other than “Homeland Difficulties”, these migrants experienced “Community Intolerance” of any form, which pushed them to seek for “Government Intervention”, the reason why Government Intervention was a code classified under “Migration Issues” since there can be no government intervention where there are no hostilities.

When the migrants sought a new place for new life, as much as they could, they practiced their Islamic faith, which here was coded “Continuance of Islamic Practice”. They still found means for them to worship, pray, and above all, put up mosques for the observance of Islamic faith, and enculturation of non-Muslims who were then “reverted” back to Islam. This enculturation of non-Muslims was coded as “Non-Muslim Encouragement”. Migration is seen as instrumental since, all the social and economic conditions in their homeland impeded and complicated their Islamic beliefs and practices. These “Continuance of Islamic Faith” and “Non-Muslim Encouragement” were classified under “Muslim as Instrumental”.

Muslim migrants practiced exogamous marriage and thus intermarried with the local inhabitants of Solano, Nueva Vizcaya. Even though they married Ilocanas, Muslims migrants respected the non-Muslim beliefs of their respective wives, as long as these non-Muslim manifestations were not practiced in the household of the Muslim men. This situation manifests that migration has allowed Muslim migrants to perpetuate in a mainly non-Muslim environment. This was coded as “Recognition of Non-Muslim Beliefs”. Because of “education”, the “environment in Solano”, the adaptation that wife-at-home and husband-at-work to the extent that wife can work outside and even travel to other places for economic reasons, was made possible. These were then coded as “Household Role Changes”. However, since most Muslim men married non-Muslim women, who were then encouraged to revert, they have more authority in the family than the “reverts”.

After the open coding, selective coding was done to form core categories. Migration as Integrative and Migration as Instrumental were coded as one. Hence, in the selective coding three core categories emerged: (1) Migration Issues, (2) Migration as a Symbolic Tool, and (3) Migration as Adaptive.

Migration Issues was not filtered anymore since its characteristics do not fit into any of the characteristics of the three other subcategories. In like manner, Migration as Adaptive was also not further filtered. The main classifying theme was “oneness” of the Muslim people, and their “oneness” with the community; another classifying theme was the “oneness” of the Muslim migrants in the practice of their Islamic faith, and their “oneness” with the Muslim reverts. Hence, the two

subcategories were filtered as one with the code “Migration as a Symbolic Tool”.

Migration as a Symbolic Tool was coded as a core category since migration has allowed the Muslim migrants to communicate with fellow Muslims during the process of migration; and due to their desire to blend in the new community as a migrant, they intermarried with local inhabitants and even encouraged them to revert; hence, the code Migration as Symbolic Tool.

After the selective coding, theoretical coding was done which allowed linking and investigating the connections of core categories: linking and investigating the connections between concepts allowed the theory to emerge. The core categories then are Migration Issues, Migration as a Symbolic Tool, and Migration as Adaptive.

Going back to the accounts of the respondents, it can be gleaned that migration has been a form of escape for them – an escape from conflicts, social pressure and economic difficulties. These issues, in one way or another, complicated their observance of their religious belief and practices. When they moved to other places, they had been confronted with issues – community intolerance, absence of venue for religious observance – that again complicated their practice of their Islamic faith. So their migration to Solano, Nueva Vizcaya allowed them to practice their Islamic faith and find means to cultivate it more in Solano. From these, it can be gleaned that Islam is ingrained among the Muslim migrants and that migration has further cultivated it in them.

Migration also motivated them to modify some of their beliefs, and practices. These adaptations permitted them to blend in the community where they migrated – in this case, Solano. It can be noted that a Muslim migrant can marry a local inhabitant, and the non-Muslim women’s beliefs and practices are respected provided these were not seen by their husbands. The codes and identifiers also revealed that Muslim men exert much more influence in the family household even though household roles changed. From these, it can be inferred that migration has allowed Muslim migrants to encourage non-Muslims to revert, and non-Muslim women were influenced by their Muslim husbands. Furthermore, migration became a symbolic tool for the Muslims to spread Islamic teachings.

Hence, the emergent grounded theory of Migration and Muslim Ethnic Identity can be summarized as: “Migration issues prompted Muslims to look for new places where they can freely practice their Islamic faith; and while these issues complicated their religious practices, they were motivated to keep their faith. Migration allowed them to alter and reconstruct some of their identities but they still maintained an integral bond with their religion. Migration tolerated them to reproduce Islamic faith by way of intermarriage. Thus, migration was a symbolic tool of the Muslim migrants for Islamic diffusion.”

4. Conclusion

Muslim migrants embodied concordance and opulence. They left their homeland in search for a peaceful place and at the same time look for an environment that provides them economic opportunities. Migration proved uneasy for Muslim migrants particularly at their arrival from their

point of destination. Although they had been met with some sort of hostilities, Muslim migrants were assertive of their Islamic faith while living harmoniously with the people of the host community. Granting that Muslims were migrants, migration to a new place permitted them to maintain their ethnic identity; that living in a multi-ethnic community fostered Muslim group formation and closer interactions with one another. Muslim migrants' ability to harmonize themselves in a multi-ethnic community allowed them to encourage reverts and "enculturate" them with Islamic teachings. This is a manifestation of Muslims' ability to maintain their ethnic identity at the same time breed or reproduce it. Muslim migrants were also flexible in their economic activities and some of their beliefs that were anchored in their religion. This allowed them to reconstruct their ethnic identity to blend in the host community. Muslim migrants thus maintained, reconstructed and reproduced their ethnic identity as Muslims in the host community.

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