

EXCLUDING MUSLIM FILIPINOS: A STUDY ON EXCLUSIONARY PROCESSES ON MARANAO MUSLIMS IN SALAM COMPOUND

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I. Introduction

A. *History of Muslim Filipinos*

Islam came to the Philippines or the archipelago around the year 1280 (Tan,1993). Studies have agreed that Islam came as a result of the intensive and lucrative trading that occurred at that period in the Southern part now known as Sulu. Trading partners consisted mostly of Arabs, Chinese, and neighboring countries. Consistent interactions with Arabs led to an exchange of culture and also, faith and religion (Che Man, 1990). This area initiated the “Islamization” of the Philippines. As a consequence, Islam gradually spread out in other parts of the country, especially in the nearby Southern area, such as Maguindanao. In the end, existing indigenous ways¹ of living were combined to produce a local version of Islam with a heavy dose of tribal traditions (Tan, 1993).

With the coming of the Spanish in the sixteenth century, for the first time, there was a threat to Islam and Muslims. The Spanish mission was both for Spanish territorial expansion and conversion purposes (Che Man, 1990). As a result of this crusade, the Muslim population started to dwindle. This was a result of massive forced and unforced conversions to Christianity and Spanish offensive on Muslims who resisted and stood ground. However, Mindanao, especially in the Maguindanao and Sulu area proved to remain a stronghold of Islam – the Spanish were never able to completely conquer

¹ Tribes had their own political systems such as datu and sultanate customs and practices

these areas. It was also apparent that during the Spanish occupation, laws were discriminatory against Muslims and there was an explicit attempt to destroy the reputation of Muslims as a whole, by portraying them as savages and barbarians. This started the tension between Christians and Muslims.

Discriminatory practices and structures as authorities changed from the Spanish to the American remained to be anti-Muslim. The Americans, aside from attempting to control Muslims, came up with laws that further led to the minoritization and diaspora of Muslims. Some of these laws include: 1) the declaration of all lands as public for the prerogative distribution of the American government, thus taking away ancestral lands of Muslims; 2) entrepreneurial efforts and policies in the South leading to Christian migration and domination; and 3) efforts and policies towards merging Muslim Mindanao to the general Christian-dominated society. A severed relationship between Muslims and Christians was further institutionalized (Che Man, 1990).

During the last century, particularly in the last four decades, the story of Muslim Mindanao is a story of endless war, stemming from separatist movements from different rebel groups. The story of war-torn Mindanao for this century begins with the infamous 'Jabidah' massacre wherein Moro army recruits were killed in Corregidor. This fanned the flames as not so long after, armed struggle was institutionalized with the coming of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Other groups, such as the breakaway group Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf were also formed. Peace talks have been planned and failed, while a milestone agreement for achieving peace was reached recently in 1996 – however, it has not proven to bear any fruit yet. As a result of all this fighting, thousands of lives have been lost and families, displaced. Peace and order in Mindanao until now has been evasive (Guitierrez et al, 2000).

B. Culture and Composition of Muslim Filipinos

There are several recognized major tribes of which majority of the population are Muslims. These are the following: Maranaos; Maguindanaons; Tausugs; Samals; Yakans; and Badjaos. Other smaller tribes exist which have a small percentage as Muslims. It is also noted that there are members of predominantly Christian ethnic-tribes that have also converted to Islam.

In terms of location, majority of these groups is in the Lanao del Sur, Cotabato, Sulu, and Basilan areas. Both Maranaos and Maguindanaons could be found in Lanao del Sur and Cotabato respectively. Tausugs, Samal and Badjaos are mostly found in the Sulu and nearby Tawi-Tawi areas, while a minority – the Yakans, in Basilan (Gowing, 1974).

Usual occupations for these include farming, trading, and fishing. Badjaos and Samals are mostly fishers. Most of the non-traditional jobs such as trading and shopkeeping go to the Maranao and Tausugs, of which the Tausugs are deemed as superior in social standing in the Sulu region (Gowing, 1974).

Social relations between different tribes are acceptable, however, it is quite a general unwritten rule for intra-marriage to take place. For some, it is okay as long as the groom is of higher standing, as in the case of a Tausug male marrying a Samal woman (Gowing, 1974). However, for other tribes, such as the Maranao, it is quite strict and there is this unique tradition that the Maranao women are for Maranao men only.

Of these tribes, the largest and most popular are the Tausugs, Maguindanaons, and Maranaos.

C. Mindanao Socio-Economic Situation

Mindanao, especially Muslim-dominated areas (i.e. ARMM) have always exhibited a poor socio-economic situation. Poverty incidence has always been one of the highest, if not the highest. Since 1985, the Mindanao region has had one of the worst rates of poverty incidences with ARMM as having the highest from 1994 until the present – 65.3 percent in 1994, 62.5 in 1997, and 71.3 in 2000. At present, all regions in Mindanao have surpassed the national average of only 39.4 percent. Western Mindanao has a poverty incidence of 53 percent, Northern Mindanao has a poverty incidence of 52.1 percent, Southern Mindanao has a poverty incidence of 45 percent, and Central Mindanao has a poverty incidence of 58 percent (National Statistical Coordination Board, 2002).

This is validated by a self-perception survey regularly done by the Social Weather Stations. Every quarter, they conduct what is called the Self-Rated Poverty and Hunger Survey. In 2001, self-rated poverty in Mindanao is 64 percent in March, and 70 percent in July – this is again higher than the 59 percent in March and 66 percent in July, for the national standing (Social Weather Stations, 2001).

However, poverty is not just measured in terms of income – poverty can also be seen in the lack of entitlements and capabilities, usually indicated with lack of access to educational, health, water, and sanitation facilities.

The 1997 Philippine Human Development Report showed that human development, measured by the Human Development Index which is an index composed of economic indicators such as income per capita, literacy indicators, such as enrollment and literacy, and health (life expectancy) Mindanao is inferior compared to other regions in the country. Western Mindanao has an HDI² of 0.524, Northern Mindanao has an HDI of 0.578, Southern Mindanao has an HDI of 0.621, Central Mindanao has an HDI of around 0.412. These figures fall short of the Philippine HDI, which is at 0.660 (Human Development Network-United Nations Development Program, 1997).

Moreover, the provision of public services in Mindanao continues to be poor. In May 2001, the World Bank released the results of the “Filipino Report Card on Pro-Poor Services” which focused on the effectivity of public agencies in providing social services to its citizens. For the provision of health services - 11 percent of Mindanao respondents

² An HDI closer to 1 indicates higher development.

stated that they used private clinics since there was lack of government health facilities. This figure was the highest the other island regions in the country. For education, 41 percent of school-age children in Mindanao are not attending school. As compared to only 11 percent in NCR, 14 percent in Visayas, and 33 percent for the entire Luzon. For water supply, majority of households in Mindanao rely on self-provisioning (i.e. private wells, rain water collectors). It is not just access that is in question but also the quality - the World Bank clearly stated that households in Mindanao are under-served in safe water-supply (World Bank, 2001).

D. Migration

For lack of development and income opportunities, as well as problems of peace and order frequently cited, a substantial number of Muslims from the different tribes, over time have migrated and spread out in the entire archipelago. It can be observed that in almost all areas in the country, there is a Muslim community, however small. Areas outside of Mindanao, such as Cavite, Batangas, and Metro Manila have been the host to a huge bulk of Muslim migrants. In Metro Manila alone, large Muslim communities can be found in Quiapo, Taguig, Baseco, San Miguel, and in Tandang Sora.

II. Nature of the Study

A. Objectives

The study aims to look at social exclusionary processes of a major tribe of Muslims residing in Metro Manila - not just a single major exclusionary process, but two, which are poverty and discrimination. Our belief is that generally, Muslims, being poor in their own provinces, are also poor in the capital region in terms of income and excluded in society, through discrimination and stereotyping practices. Verifying this hypothesis is also an objective of the study.

Correspondingly, information on their coping mechanisms both within the household and community and external assistance are to be acquired. Finally, recommendations to stakeholders such as the government and the general public, for addressing social exclusion both from them and the authors of this study, are expected to be generated.

B. Scope and Limitation

Originally, the team targeted to involve at least the major tribes, if not all ethno-linguistic groups in a Muslim community in Metro Manila. Rich and interesting as it may seem, this was not realized, as logistical problems were apparent. One reason is that inter-tribe relations between Muslims are not smooth as compared to intra-tribe interactions. Stories of inter-tribe tensions rooted in history are present. Another reason is that it would take a lot of resources and time for an inter-tribe investigation. The team

finally decided to pick a major tribe situated in a single community – the Maranaos³ of Salam Compound in Brgy. Culiat in Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

It might be hasty and flawed to assume that a single tribe would be a good representative of the whole multi-ethnic Muslim community. However, a lot of issues as will be discussed later, are similar for other tribes in the community, and perhaps for Muslims in other areas in Metro Manila, if not for most Muslim-inhabited places in the country. Majority of exclusionary issues identified for the Maranaos of Salam Compound are also issues of other Filipino Muslims.

C. Methodology of the Study

With our focus on a single tribe in Salam Compound, we undertook three steps in order to collect necessary information for our study – initial meeting and background check, focused group discussion (FGD), and a slightly modified Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) survey.

The initial meeting was between the member of the team with two of the community leaders. After getting acquainted, a thorough discussion of the study objectives and planned methodologies that will be employed followed. As the team finalized plans and appointments, they succeeded in soliciting background information on such as the history of the compound, typical jobs and hardships of Maranaos in the place. Another objective for this initial meeting was an optical observation of the area for qualitative indicators of poverty. Qualitative observations will be discussed in Section III. In addition, snapshots of their culture and beliefs were acquired during this phase.

The next method employed was the conduct of an FGD with the community leaders of the Maranao tribe. A single FGD was conducted with nine of them, composed of eight males and a single female. This could be an indicator of a patriarchal structure of decision-making in the Maranao culture. The FGD lasted for about three hours and questions discussed were mostly on direct social exclusionary processes at work against their community and their coping mechanisms, with recommendations included. Both the FGD questionnaire module and transcript are located at the Annex. Examples of the questions were:

- *Ano ang inyong pangunahing kinakaharap na problema at isyu sa kasalukuyan sa inyong pamilya/ bahay/ community? (What is the primary problem that you (as a family, household, and community) are facing at present?)*
- *Nakakaranas ba kayo ng pagkabalewala ng mga ibang tao lingid sa inyong komunidad? Eh pang-iiwas? (Have you ever experienced discrimination and exclusion in your community? What about people avoiding you?)*
- *Paano ninyo kinakaya ang pagsasantabi o pagbabalewala ng mga tao? (How do you cope with this exclusion and discrimination of the people?)*

³ Literally “People of the lake”, referring to Lake Lanao wherein majority of Maranaos may be found around this area

- *Sa tingin ba ninyo ay nakakasali kayo sa decision-making process ng pamahalaan?* (Do you think that you have a voice in the decision-making process of the government?)
- *Ano po kaya ang pwede nating maging recommendations para malutas itong mga ito?* (What recommendations can we make so that we can address these things?)

The last and final step was the conduct of a survey which was patterned after the Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) module from the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS) program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Little modification was done to make questions easier to understand in order that a respondent may answer on his own. From the original set of 33 questions corresponding to 33 indicators, the questionnaire consisted of 37 questions. Since there were 97 Maranao households as mapped by the leaders, 50 forms were distributed, targeting roughly half of the households.

Convenience random sampling was employed as the team left it up to the leaders to disseminate and collect the forms. For issues of time and other logistical constraints, questionnaires were left for the respondents to answer by themselves. As the researchers came back to collect the forms, only 27 were returned. Statistically speaking, 27 out of 97 is still be a significant sample representing a total of 97 households.

A potential weakness of this strategy was discovered as the data was being tabulated and analyzed. There could perhaps be strong noise in the data, as the respondents were not guided as they answered the survey questionnaires. Also, the unsystematic randomization could have further added to the distortion.

III. The Maranao Community in Salam Compound

A. Background on Salam Compound and resident Maranao Muslims

During the seventies, Libyan students came over to the Philippines to observe the lives of Muslim Filipinos. After seeing how worse off their Muslim brothers were, they looked for land to uplift the lives of Filipino Muslims somehow. As a form of assistance, the Libyan government bought a patch of land as donation (*wakaf*) in Brgy. Culiati in Tandang Sora, Quezon City, which is now known as Salam Compound. It was intended for landless and homeless Muslims. Since foreigners cannot buy land, the Libyan government had to pass through a conduit - the Islamic Directorate of the Philippines (IDP). An issue on land ownership involving the Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) occurred after that since a group composed of members of different tribes formed a new IDP and tried to sell the land to the INC. But transactions never took place and as the tension grew larger, the concerned parties came to court. The SEC as well as the Supreme Court decided in favor of the 'original' IDP. This gave the Muslims tenure, however, there is only one land title for the entire piece of land and all who occupy land only have rights

and not titles, to prevent another untoward incident as earlier discussed⁴. Some claim however that there were indeed some land that were acquired by the INC as they claim that originally, the land size was much bigger and those areas occupied by INC⁵ and its entities (i.e. New Era) suggest this possibility as they are adjacent to one another.

B. Social Exclusion and Coping Mechanisms

Social exclusion can occur in many ways. As earlier stated in the hypothesis for this group, exclusion takes place in poverty and in discrimination. However, the team upon analyzing the results of the data collection, broke the exclusionary processes further into three which still included poverty and discrimination but with a separate category for lack of representation and participation (“no voice”).

In classifying, the team referred to poverty as encompassing deprivation in income and in social services, discrimination as experiences of different treatment with regards to prejudice towards Muslims in general, and “no voice” as weak participation, representation, and organization.

The following section presents these exclusionary processes in the Maranao tribe in Culiati (as well for Muslims in general in some cases) broken down into these three categories as observed in the three methods employed – optical observation, FGD, and MBN survey. Coping mechanisms are then presented after each exclusionary process.

1. Poverty

Optical observation

As mentioned earlier, part of the initial correspondence involved an optical inspection of the area. However subjective this methodology was, it still provided important and substantial qualitative data. The following are the qualitative results.

Upon entering the gate of the compound, the sight of untidy small children, ages probably ranged from four to ten, scattered and running around all over was that which welcomed the researchers. Most of these children were observed to have brown skin, probably because of too much exposure to sunlight. There were also a line up of different makeshift stalls, selling different commodities such as vegetables, cold drinks (sago and gulaman), meals (*carinderia*), snacks (turon, banana cue, suman, et.), and junk food. There was also the presence of a small grocery store and a ready-to-wear (RTW) store.

Traversing through the streets of the place, it was noticed that the main road was considerably smooth, except for a few pot holes while the narrow side streets were all rough road. It was noticeable that the houses were built side by side, however, most

⁴ History of Salam Compound was gathered from interviews and the FGD with the Maranaos

⁵ The ‘grand’ Church, as well as a school and a dormitory of the INC are found within the vicinity of Salam Compound

house constructions were made of hollow blocks with plywoods for division. A common house had a floor area of around fifty square meters (as estimated). The houses that were observed had a toilet and running water, furnished with basic home appliances, such as television. Cars were parked on the narrow streets since only few houses have garages. Moreover, at the center of Salam Compound, one will find the Muslim's sacred Mosque, a basketball court and a post-office.

As for the general cleanliness of the place it was observed that there was practically litter everywhere specially along the small dusty streets. It was also well observed that the streets were not well-lit as the researchers even had to use a flash-light. This was noticed during the second visit to the compound for the FGD. People were also still outside their homes. The researchers came across groups of men playing card games and billiards. The place was observed to still be very lively, probably because at that time, it was a weekend and people were unwinding.

The researchers, having gone to other urban poor communities, observed that many characteristics are similar. Important characteristics described above are: the presence of 'scattered' children running around; the untidy place; the presence of numerous small-scale stores; houses arranged side by side; and unpaved roads. Though in some observable physical aspects (i.e. presence of running water and toilets), the community stood above other recognized urban poor communities in terms of development, the factors identified point to the fact that at first glance, they are poor.

Minimum Basic Needs

As the optical observation was used for a quick and subjective appraisal of the status of the area, the MBN approach was used to validate this using a whole set of poverty indicators, including income and non-income indicators. The results and analysis are presented here.

On Food and Nutrition

TABLE 1

REQUIREMENT	YES	NO	NOT APPLICABLE	DO NOT KNOW	NO ANSWER
Pregnant and lactating mothers provided with iron and iodine supplements	9 (32%)	12 (43%)	4 (14%)	3 (11%)	-
Newborns with birthweight of at least 2.5 kgs	5 (18%)	17 (61%)	5 (18%)	1 (4%)	-

Infants breastfed for at least 4 mos	13 (46%)	7 (25%)	6 (21%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)
No severely and moderately underweight children under 5 years old	5 (18%)	14 (50%)	7 (25%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)

The data above shows that 61 percent of the respondents replied that babies upon birth weighed at least 5.5 pounds and were also breastfed for at least four months according to 46 percent of the participants. These results are positive health-wise indicators for the baby. Studies show that babies breastfed have stronger body resistance and have less LBM episodes.

The table also indicates that 50 percent of the population observed that there were no underweight children under 5 years old. However, 43 percent of the respondents noted that pregnant and lactating mothers were not provided with iron and iodine supplements. With this deficiency, these mothers might have experienced massive blood loss during delivery and poor healing and slow recovery after delivery.

Overall, in terms of food and nutrition, the community seemed to be in a good standing, except for the lack in iron and iodine supplements which is vital. This could possibly be due to a lack of access or even lack of awareness and knowledge of its importance.

On Health

TABLE 2

REQUIREMENT	YES	NO	NOT APPLICABLE	DO NOT KNOW	NO ANSWER
Deliveries attended by trained personnel	13 (46%)	8 (29%)	6 (21%)	-	1 (4%)
0 – 1 year olds fully immunized	10 (36 %)	12 (43 %)	4 (14%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)
Not more than 1 diarrhea episode per child below 5 years old	5 (18%)	16 (57%)	5 (18%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)

No deaths in the family due to preventable causes <i>curable?</i>	3 (11%)	19 (67%)	2 (7%)	1 (4%)	3 (11%)
Couples with access to family planning	7 (25%)	15 (54%)	3 (11%)	2 (7%)	1 (4%)
Couples practicing family planning	9 (32%)	15 (54%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	2 (7%)
Solo parent availing of health services	10 (36%)	12 (43%)	2 (7%)	3 (11%)	1 (4%)

Table 2 indicates that 46 percent of the sample said that deliveries were attended by trained personnel such as doctors and registered midwives. It also shows that a bulk of the participants (57 percent) answered that there was not more than 1 diarrhea episode per child below 5 years old. This result is a consequence of the requirement met in Table 1 which showed that babies are breastfed for the first four months.

Furthermore, majority of the respondents (67 percent) answered that there have been no deaths in the family due to preventable causes. As for the immunization of babies 0-1 year olds, the participants who answered 'yes' showed a 7 percent rate higher than those who answered 'no'. This could mean that most babies were prevented from childhood diseases such as diphtheria, pertusis, tetanus etc.

On the contrary, the table also indicates that majority of the respondents answered that couples had no access to family planning and were not practicing family planning. In both items, there were 54 percent of the participants who answered 'no'. This could be one of the factors why most Maranaos in this compound have large families⁶. This is not a good sign as a large family puts further strain on the household income. Larger families have a greater chance of falling into poverty.

Furthermore, the table also shows that solo parents do not avail of health services as evidenced by 43 percent of the sample.

⁶ Majority of those who answered the question on number of children had at least four kids.

On Water and Sanitation

TABLE 3

REQUIREMENT	YES	NO	NOT APPLICABLE	DO NOT KNOW	NO ANSWER
Access to potable water (faucet/deep well w/in 250m.	18 (64%)	7 (25%)	1 (4%)	-	2 (7%)
Access to sanitary toilets (water-sealed, antipolo, flushed)	25 (89%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	-	1 (4%)

According to 64 percent of the sample, the Maranaos living in Salam had access to potable water within 250 meters from their homes. They also had access to sanitary toilets as evidenced by 89 percent of the participants. This shows that they are not deprived of this important basic need.

On Clothing

TABLE 4

REQUIREMENT	YES	NO	NOT APPLICABLE	DO NOT KNOW	NO ANSWER
Family members with basic clothing	23 (82%)	4 (14%)	-	-	1 (4%)

A majority of 82% of the respondents says that family members of the Maranao Muslims in Culiati, Q.C. have basic clothing. This implies that they have the financial capability for this necessity.

On Shelter

TABLE 5

REQUIREMENT	YES	NO	NOT APPLICABLE	DO NOT KNOW	NO ANSWER
Housing durable for at least 5 years.	18 (64%)	8 (29%)	1 (4%)	-	1 (4%)

Table 5 shows that 64 percent of the participants, which comprise the majority answered that their house constructions were built to last for at least 5 years. This could possibly mean two things: 1) they are financially capable of putting up durable houses and 2) they have security of tenure.

On Peace and Order/ Public Safety

TABLE 6

REQUIREMENT	YES	NO	NOT APPLICABLE	DO NOT KNOW	NO ANSWER
No family member victimized by crime against person (i.e. rape, murder, physical injury)	4 (14%)	17 (61%)	4 (14%)	-	3 (11%)
No family member victimized by crime against property (i.e. theft, burglary, etc.)	2 (7%)	19 (68%)	3 (11%)	-	4 (14%)
No family member victimized by natural disaster	4 (14%)	19 (68%)	2 (7%)	-	3 (11%)
No family member victimized by armed conflict	4 (14%)	17 (61%)	4 (14%)	-	3 (11%)

Table 6 shows that there were only a few cases wherein family members were victimized by both crime against person and crime against property. As indicated above, 61 percent answered not having been a victim of crime against person and 68 percent not having been a victim of crime against property. A majority of 68 percent also answered positively that there were no family members victimized by natural disasters, and a bulk (61 percent) said that there were no family members victimized by armed conflict. This could mean that peace and order in their area is ensured.

On Income and Employment

TABLE 7

REQUIREMENT	YES	NO	NOT APPLICABLE	DO NOT KNOW	NO ANSWER
Head of family employed	21 (75%)	3 (11%)	2 (7%)	-	2 (7%)
Other family members 18 years old and above employed	13 (46%)	7 (25%)	5 (18%)	-	3 (11%)
Families with income above subsistence threshold level	20 (71%)	3 (11%)	1 (4%)	-	4 (14%)

Table 7 denotes that the minimum basic need requirements on the aspect of income and employment are being met by most of them. 75 percent of the sample answered that the head of the family is employed and even other family members who are 18 years old and above were already generating income. Thus, as shown above, 71 percent of the respondents agreed that their family's income are above the subsistence threshold level.

Using the monthly income written in the first page of the questionnaire, the group compared this with the subsistence threshold⁷. The results are as follows:

TABLE 8

Below subsistence threshold	Yes	No
	(17%)	(83%)

With 83 percent of the respondents above the subsistence threshold level and 17 percent below the subsistence level, this affirms the claim that most of the families' incomes are above the subsistence threshold level. This implies that most Maranaos in Salam do not experience 'worse' poverty in the physical hunger sense. However it is still apparent that some, though a minority, experience hunger.

However, a higher percentage of them fell below the poverty threshold⁸. The families' incomes were also compared with this threshold.

⁷ The subsistence threshold for NCR as determined by the NSCB stands at around 900 pesos per month per person. Those who have incomes less than this do not fulfill the required amount to satisfy the minimum food and nutrition intake and thus, are included in the subsistence incidence statistic.

TABLE 9

Below poverty threshold	Yes	No
	(22%)	(78%)

Fortunately, this still indicates that only a minority experience income poverty. However, it should also be noted that there are still a few of them who do so.

On Basic Education and Literacy

TABLE 10

REQUIREMENT	YES	NO	NOT APPLICABLE	DO NOT KNOW	NO ANSWER
Children aged 3-6 attending day care/ pre-school	2 (7%)	13 (46%)	9 (32%)	1 (4%)	3 (11%)
Children 6-12 years old in elementary school	9 (32%)	12 (43%)	5 (18%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)
Family members 10 years old and above able to read and write and do simple calculation	18 (64%)	4 (14%)	3 (11%)	-	3 (11%)

On the aspect of basic education and literacy, though family members aged 10 years old and above were able to read, write and do simple calculations, most children had poor basic educational background. Table 8 shows that according to 46 percent of the sample, children aged 3-6 did not go to a day care or pre-school and neither did children aged 6-12 year old go to elementary school. This has possible negative repercussions in the long-term. Lack of education usually results in a lower capacity of landing in a job with high compensation.

On Family Care/ Psychosocial Needs

⁸ The poverty threshold for NCR as determined by the NSCB stands at around 1,476 pesos per month per person. Those who have incomes less than this do not fulfill the required amount to satisfy the minimum food and nutrition intake as well as provision for basic necessities and thus, are included in the poverty incidence statistic.

TABLE 11

REQUIREMENT	YES	NO	NOT APPLICABLE	DO NOT KNOW	NO ANSWER
Children 18 years old and below not engaged in hazardous occupation	4 (14%)	14 (50%)	8 (29%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)
No incidence of domestic violence	4 (14%)	17 (61%)	4 (14%)	1 (4%)	2 (7%)
No child below 7 years old left unattended	2 (7%)	16 (57%)	7 (25%)	1 (4%)	2 (7%)

On the aspect of psychosocial needs, majority of the answers on all of the three requirements lean toward the notion that family members were being well-taken cared of. It could also imply that the Maranao Muslims in Salam were aware of proper measures to take in establishing the safety and well-being of their household members. Data on Table 10 shows that 57 percent of the participants answered that children below 7 years old were not left unattended and a majority (61 percent) of the sample answered that there were no incidences of domestic violence. It is also indicated above that 50 percent of the respondents replied that children below 18 years of age are not engaged in hazardous occupation.

In summary, the MBN survey yielded both the satisfaction of certain minimum requirements and also some inability or lack. The areas wherein they lacked certain needs were in: 1) food and nutrition as reflected by pregnant women not being provided with iron and iodine supplements; 2) health as reflected by the lack of family planning and a low percentage of solo parents availing of health services; and 3) education and literacy as reflected by low attendance in day-cares and low participation rate in elementary schooling. All other minimum requirements seemed to have been fulfilled by the community.

Focused Group Discussion

As in the MBN survey, the comparison of incomes with the poverty threshold yielded a few families that were poor in terms of income. This is supported by some of them as in the FGD, they admitted that in their community, some Maranaos are in fact (income)

poor⁹. However, they distinguish the severity of poverty (in qualitative terms) by stating that there are no Maranao beggars on the street– which for them, is a sign of the worst form of poverty. The FGD induced data on economic hardship and income poverty both in their hometown (Lanao) and in their present community.

A discussion on the factors which prompted them to migrate to Manila was included. The reasons for such a transfer was a search for greener pasture, aside from a mission of spreading the Islamic Faith and at the same time making the Muslim’s culture known to others. They are here basically to establish their livelihood. Furthermore, the Maranao Muslims migrated to have access to better education thinking that if they finish college here in Manila, it would be easier to get regular employment from both the private and government institutions.

Again, they admit that there was indeed poverty here which demystifies the notion that Manila is the land of promise. In addition to poverty as income-based, for the community, it seems that there was lack of both educational and health facilities. They claimed that the nearest hospital is very far from them and not even a small health center is located within their compound. Even the road system inside the community as both the observation and their statements reveal, is reflective of deprivation of some sort.

Going into coping mechanisms - as explained to us in the FGD, there are three major things that have kept Muslims, particularly Maranaos from becoming extremely poor (i.e. beggars). These are: 1) a strong sense of social obligation to tribe members; 2) obligation to Allah as written in the Qu’ran; and 3) pride.

The first refers to a uniquely strong social capital as they say. They emphasized the importance of family ties as well a ‘clan’ or tribe ties – they talked of stories wherein if they see a fellow Muslim in distress, poverty or not poverty-related, they would help. Even business secrets were shared. If a Maranao “brother” is in need, there would automatically be help from his fellow Maranaos, mostly in financial form. This as they exclaimed is also written in the Qu’ran. There is what is called the poor tax¹⁰ both for those with inadequate income and for those who are really needy already. Finally, the Maranao has pride – they point to the fact that you do not see a Maranao beggar on the streets. A Maranao has pride in the sense that he will for example accept menial jobs (i.e. janitor), or just result or sell even a few merchandise on the street – this is usually from money lent by other Maranaos. They would rather sell just about anything than to be sitting on the sidewalk begging for money..

Moving on, not only is assistance provided internally but external assistance provides help reinforces in coping. As a way to augment incomes and way of life, the team looked at possible additional assistance external to the tribe in the community,

⁹ It has been observed that usually self-perception surveys (i.e. Self-Rated Poverty and Hunger) yield higher incidences of poverty than that of official standards.

¹⁰ A certain percentage of income that should go for donations; this is obligatory for Muslims who have financial capabilities

such as the provision of assistance from people or groups not belonging in Salam Compound

They identified a particular NGO – the Christian Life Program (CLP). This provides the community, particularly the children with pre-school education in the day-care center of which one could be found in the area. In addition, they have a feeding program for a small fee of 125 pesos per month. Aside from this, no other NGO was mentioned – in fact, they almost forgot to mention this group as they were not really aware that any NGO took time out to assist them. They mention off-hand that the neighboring INC sometimes extend their assistance and come bearing gifts, however they suspect these moves as possible ‘sweet talk’ to get into good terms with them and succeed in getting their land.

2. Discrimination/ Different Treatment

With regards to social exclusion outside of poverty, Maranaos have kept on repeating that there has indeed been a different treatment, between Christian and Muslims – Muslims as a whole and not just for Maranaos. Some examples would be an unequal requirement for a Muslim. For example, he or she would have to obtain a certificate from the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA), certifying that he or she is a Muslim in order to get a passport – this causes much delay and causes pain for Muslims waiting. This is significant since they assert that a huge number of them apply for abroad (mostly female) to earn income as they find it hard to earn a living domestically. As they claim, being stranded in Manila for a long time while waiting for forms, puts a lot of strain in finances.

Some ways to cope with this is to fake papers and certificates, sometimes, even to the extent of denying their faith, as in the case of those who pretended (in paper) that they were Christians for faster processing and making an efficient flow in the bureaucracy.

Stereotyping and bias is one thing that they had to live up with. It is apparent that people in Metro Manila avoid contact with them, to the extent of mockery, by prejudice, perhaps by association with rebel groups of whose majority of members are of the Islam faith. They cite instances wherein people make fun of their accent and clothes and call them Abu Sayyaf or Bin¹¹. Thus this permeates all aspects of interaction – from work to socialization.

One clear example of this biased perspective is the way Muslims have found it hard to work, particularly in private companies. It clearly shows in the sample we had during the FGD that only one was working for a private firm (embassy) while others were in the public sector and in trading. They have stories when they would apply and the people in charge of hiring upon learning that they are Muslims either through their bio-data or just

¹¹ Referring to Osama Bin Laden, head of the Al-Qaida network

by hearing their names, tell them that they will have to wait for the company to call them and they never do.

Majority of Muslims result to trading (i.e. vendors in make-shift stalls or locations are Maranaos usually) because it is very hard to get a job, especially in the private sector. This brings about unstable and indefinite income (not to mention risks in health) and causes a low level of income as expressed by most of the respondents – hard economic situation. Overall they say that Muslims are having a harder time than the general public. As they say, “***yung mga hindi nagtitinda noon (sa Lanao), pagdating dito marunong na.***” (“Those who were not selling before (in Lanao automatically learn how to sell and trade upon coming to Manila”) However, this mechanism is not fool-proof as instances of harassment resulting to loss of merchandise occur frequently as most-cited causes are the police confiscating their goods and in some cases, sell them at much lower prices.

As said, coping with it entails settling for the unstable trading sector, which sometimes can be hazardous and risky. Most often than not, they are caught and even abused. Some also resort to migration as a way to cope with this – there is no job opportunity. If regular Christians find it hard to get into jobs in a time of economic slowdown, more so for Muslims.

Another interesting anecdote reflects the prejudice - there was an incident that happened to one of the FGD participants wherein a guard didn't care to look at people's bags upon entrance to a store but when she, a Muslim (with a veil) stepped in, the bag was frisked thoroughly.

Another anecdote would be different interactions with taxi drivers – as one would say, “*Kahit maghintay magdamag, walang magpapasakay sa iyo kung ikaw ay nakaveil.*” (Even though you try and wait for a cab for the whole night, no taxi driver will let you in.)

What happens is that some refrain from displaying their veils in public in order to be treated fairly, or at least equally. Some even result to ‘aggressive talk’ as they find it hard to bear with these situations. They claim that rarely do Muslims, especially them the Maranao, result to physical assault. What happens more frequently is that they try to talk to people and as much as possible give a background on their culture and hope for an understanding of some sort. They claim that almost always after a person (Christian) has gone and sat down with a Muslim, the Christian automatically changes his views and sees what a real Muslim is.

However some Muslims admittedly resort to armed struggle by joining rebel groups (i.e. MILF). On the other extreme is coping by just bearing with the discrimination and exclusion.

It is also apparent in schooling – some schools refuse entry, though sometimes implicitly only. For example, the INC-run New Era College discourages them from enrolling, though New Era has both public and private schools.

3. Lack of ‘voice’

Finally, people’s participation, empowerment and organizational capacities were analyzed. The results are presented below, from the MBN and FGD results.

On People’s Participation

TABLE 12

REQUIREMENT	YES	NO	NOT APPLICABLE	DO NOT KNOW	NO ANSWER
Family members involved in at least 1 people’s organization/ association, community development	11 (39%)	8 (29%)	4 (14%)	2 (7%)	3 (11%)
Family members able to vote at elections	12 (43%)	7 (25%)	4 (14%)	2 (7%)	3 (11%)

Going back to the MBN survey, on the aspect of people’s participation, it is quite note-worthy to point that the most common answers lean to the notion that most of the Maranao Muslims are involved in people’s organizations (POs), as shown in Table 9. 39 percent of the sample answered that family members were in at least PO. To add, a total of 43% of the participants answered that qualified family members exercised their right to vote during the recent national and local elections. This is something positive.

It is however not clear in the MBN if the association referred to was within the community. The scarce presence of POs (only one existing so far) may reflect the weak organization and empowerment within the community. There is the presence of only one PO in the area – the Muslim Madraza Advisory Council which is already registered at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). This is for all Muslims in the area. However, there are recent efforts on the part of the Maranaos to establish their own. They are preparing and planning the organization of the Rahkma Qu’ranic Learning Center Foundation, Inc. to enhance the learning and recognition of the Qu’ran for the Salam residents.

On the macro level, they emphasize having a ‘weak’ or ‘no’ voice since Muslims are a rarity in the executive, legislative, and judicial bodies of the government. In the

judiciary, not even one SC Justice is a Muslim. In the Cabinet, there is only one – Sec. Datumanong (Department of Public Works and Highways). In the Senate, there is none also. In addition, before, the OMA was on the Cabinet level, however, at present, the head only has a rank of an Executive Director, which is lower than that of a Cabinet Secretary. Even for the Armed Forces, Muslims only become generals when they retire, which they said makes the promotion useless and pointless.

The table below provides a quick summary of exclusionary processes and corresponding coping mechanisms as shown and narrated by the Maranaos in Salam Compound.

TABLE 13

SOCIAL EXCLUSION	COPING MECHANISMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income and non-income poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No available jobs • Inadequate income • Lack of education • Lack of health facilities • Lack in nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migrate to Manila or elsewhere • Forced to learn how to sell/ trade in small-scale • Accept menial jobs • Those who are poor/lack income are helped by fellow Maranaos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share secrets • Loan money • Feed and shelter • Resilience & pride • Follow the Qu’ran - obliges assistance to poor • Join rebel groups • External assistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different treatment/ Discrimination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different/ additional requirements for Muslims • Prejudice/ bias/ mock • Hard to get in private companies • Restriction in schooling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fake papers/ documents • Pretend that he or she is a Christian • Trade/ sell • Apply and work abroad • Stop wearing veil/ religious attire • Compromise • Aggressive talk/ threat/ verbal abuse • Retaliation • Explain and make Christians aware of Islam and culture of Muslims • Tolerate injustice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of representation/ “no voice” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of representation and participation in decision-making and key posts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize associations/ POs • Propose sovereignty

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| • Weak empowerment | |
|--------------------|--|

C. Recommendations/ Solutions to government and others¹²

Since there are exclusionary processes, coping mechanisms were used to keep up with them but somehow these mechanisms were not enough. Towards the end of the FGD and also implicit during other parts of the discussion and informal interviews, there were different recommendations given by the group. Relevant recommendations that correspond to the exclusionary processes are presented below.

The first would be efforts at correcting discriminations and stereotyping against Muslims. They are suggesting that this be done through an information campaign, including television, radio, print media, seminars, etc. In addition, criminal or illegal acts committed by Muslims should be presented neutrally. Media should stop generalizing or branding the person as Muslim or as a Maranao. They should just present the name and let the person represent himself.

Second, in order for Maranaos and Muslims to have a voice, there should be equal representation in all levels – executive, legislative, and judiciary, including the armed forces.

Third, recognition and sensitivity to Muslim culture should be developed and improved. One example would include recognizing Muslim Filipinos such as Rajah Soliman as heroes since only a few Muslims have been regarded as such. Another is to have mosques or even at least rooms for Islamic worship, in institutions, such as Camp Crame and in hospitals. Also, more Muslim holidays should be recognized and declared as national holidays. They were appreciative of the President’s move in proclaiming Eidl-Fitr as a holiday, however, they have other holidays too which they want considered. In addition, Islamic type of education should be integrated into the curriculum of the Department of Education.

Fourth, there should be equal treatment - as one points out, the Constitution provides for equal treatment, however, it always fell short of implementation. In particular, they want equal treatment in job opportunities. One’s religion should not matter. The same goes for a specific item, which is the passporting law as earlier discussed, it takes a longer time for Muslims to get passport because of the added certificate required. They want the same requirement regardless of ethnicity or religion – after all as they say, “Kami rin ay Pilipino” (“We are also Filipinos”).

Finally, they also have several recommendations specific to their community in Salam compound – these are the provision of a public school, a health facility inside or very near the community, and major road improvements.

¹² Recommendations from the Maranaos as revealed in the FGD.

IV. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Muslims have long been socially excluded. This has been the case since the Spanish regime up to the American administration - discriminatory practices and structures have been crafted to be Anti-Muslim. The latter part of the previous century has seen war-torn Mindanao as perhaps a result of endless discrimination and exclusion. Up until now, the society in general has maintained these types of discrimination. The stage is the same – it is just that the actors have changed.

This study on the Maranao Muslims in Salam Compound validated this idea. The exclusionary processes being faced by these people were broken down into three major areas: 1) income & non-income poverty; 2) discrimination; and 3) the lack of representation or the idea of having “no voice”. These three ideas were the results gathered in the optical observation, focused group discussion and the survey.

Poverty seen in optical observation such as particular characteristics of other urban poor areas are similar to that of the physical characteristics of the Salam Compound. In the MBN survey, poverty was significantly seen as deprivation in the areas of education, health and food and nutrition. This prevalence of poverty was validated in the FGD.

Discrimination was mainly revealed in the FGD as the participants cited situations where they felt most discriminated upon. Such instances included non-employment, different requirements for Muslims, and even restrictions to getting a taxi ride.

The idea of lack of representation, or the idea of “no voice” was seen in both the MBN survey and the FGD. In the MBN survey, though the respondents answered that they do participate in people’s organizations, it was validated in the FGD that inside the community, empowerment is weak since they could only identify a single community organization. The macro level further emphasized this “no voice” situation as Muslims are hard to find in the executive, legislative, and judiciary levels.

On top of the recommendations cited by the Maranaos themselves, as conclusion, the group wishes to express recommendations based on the results of the study. These are the following:

- 1) The general public has to have the initiative to avoid stereotyping and prejudice towards Muslims, as well as take upon themselves to learn more about Muslim culture;
- 2) A lot of development efforts should be made in Mindanao, especially in Muslim-dominated areas;
- 3) Different stakeholders such as civil society and the government have to have constant dialogues with Muslims as well as corresponding actions of benefit to them;
- 4) Livelihood for Muslims has to be ensured;
- 5) There has to be more participation of Muslims in governance and in decision-making; and

- 6) For the community leaders to better organize themselves and come up with more POs within the community.

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Focused Group Discussion

Maranao Muslim Leaders
Salam Compound, Brgy. Culiat
Tandang Sora, Quezon City
Saturday, 23 February 2002
8:00 AM – 11:00 PM

The team, composed of Jay de Quiros and Fran Gonzales, both serving as facilitators and documentors, conducted a focused group discussion (FGD) with some members of the (Muslim) Maranao tribe in Salam Compound on Saturday, 23 February 2002. Present in the FGD were ten (10) community leaders. They are the following:

NAME	SEX	AGE	OCCUPATION
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			

It is worth noticing that out of those leaders present, there was only one female and the rest, males. This could very well reflect their patriarchal culture, as common knowledge provides, and as reinforced through the FGD, as will be seen in the transcript. Not taking into account the gender disparity, the sample was balanced in terms of age and occupation. As can be seen, some were as young as and as old as. Then some were government employees, some in private companies, while others in trading.

The transcript of the session is presented here. Note however that the entire FGD was not captured on tape. Only two sides (roughly 80 to 90 minutes) were captured. After the second side of the first tape, batteries went dead, and the rest of the transcript was reconstructed from written notes. The transcript for the content successfully captured on tape is quite faithful to actual statements and presented in verbatim. Obviously, the unrecorded portion presents paraphrased ideas.

Meron ho ba sa inyo dito na lumaki na dito ... o nagmula pa ho sa ... Lanao o sa Mindanao – Marawi o lahat na ho ba tayo lumaki na rin ho dito ... sa sa Salam Compound, o sa Manila?

Majority, Lanao. Almost all from Lanao, Maranao is from Lanao. Walang lumaki dito. Ako last 1994.

So nag-migrate po kayo ... mula Mindanao? Mga kelan ho kaya kayo lumipat dito?

1993. 1994. 1998. For me since 1991. Dito lang yan sa Salam Compound ha – yung iba kung sa Maynila, simula 1980s pa.

Bakit ho kayo lumipat sa Maynila? May rason ho ba o ...

Actually some of our brothers no ... alam natin, to look for a greener pasture. Dahil alam natin, during those days, alam natin na dahil sa kaguluhan, sa Mindanao, at ang mga Maranao, they are peace loving people, ayaw na nilang masali sa gulo. Ayun ang dahilan kung bakit ang iba naghahanap ng magandang lugar kung san nila mahanap ang kanilang kabuhayan. Ayun ang dahilan kung bakit yung iba, ngunit itong mga Maranao na ito, na ibig sabihin na katangian na kumbaga sa ano na iba sa mga tribo. Unang-una, kapag lumipad ang isang Maranao, dun sa isang lugar na yun, ang unang pangunahin nilang layunin, ay kung papaano lumaganap ang Islamic faith. Yun ang kanilang pangunahin nila na objectives sa paglipat doon.

Actually, yung mga Muslim, di lang dito sa Metro Manila but all over the Philippines. Halos lahat nitong mga sulok na mga lugar sa Pilipinas, ay doon may Maranao. Ngunit matatagpuan mo na kahit halimbawa, 2,3, 4 o mga 5, 6 ang nagsama, meron na silang Mosque. Kahit temporary. Yan ang isang katangian ng mga Muslim ... na Maranao na talagang nainculcate sa kanilang mga puso ang Islam.

Kayo po mismo yung nagtatayo?

Yes!

Baka may gusto pong magdagdag?

Ang secondly, kaming mga Maranao, ang iniisip namin – kaya kami lumipat dito sa Metro Manila, pag mag-apply ka ng trabaho, ang approval ay dito sa Metro Manila. Dito ang central office. Kung mag-apply ka naman ng kwan, employment abroad, dito ka rin makaapply sa Metro Manila. Kung may balak ka naman halimbawa na nangangailangan ka ng tulong tulad ng loan, ang approval dito rin sa Metro Manila. Kaya kahit papaano, umiwas din kami dun sa Mindanao dahil ang paniwla namin ay mabuhay lang kami at sa yung incoming generation namin, tulad yung mga nagsasidewalk, halos lahat makikita nyo, Maranao yan.

Kami naman ang balak namin kaya kami lumipat dito sa Maynila, halimbawa mga Muslim Marano at other tribes, ay kung papaano maipakita rin namin sa mga tulad ninyong Kristiyano na naninirahan dito sa Pilipinas, kung ano talaga ang kaugalian ng Muslim. Pinapakita namin sa mga tao, na ang mhga Muslim ay hindi masasama. Gusto namin ipakita sa

lahat ng mga Kristyano na nakakasala namin dito sa Maynila – ineexplain namin sa kanila kung ano talaga ang Muslim.

Ang mga Muslim kasi minsan, dahil sa may mga Muslim na gumawa ng masasamang gawain, naaapaektuhan ang ibang Muslim. So ngayon sa mga nandidito sa Maynila, pinapakita nila sa mga tao na ang Muslim dito sa Maynila ay di gumagawa ng kasalanan. Kung minsan, napagbibintangan lang sila – na yun ang dahilan kung ba't sumasama ang Muslim. Actually kasi, kung tutuusin din dito sa Pilipinas, minsan inaapi din ang Muslim. Ang dahilan, ako nga nag-aaral ako dyan sa may San Lazaro sa may Congressional Avenue, ang ano kasi kapag ang isang Muslim may ginawang kasalanan, tapos ang ilalagay ng mga newscaster sa mga sinusulat sa dyaryo, ilalagay nila doon – MUSLIM, gumawa ng ganito ganito. So ang problema, lahat ng Muslim ay naapektuhan doon. Hindi naman tulad sa inyo, mga Kristyano. Halimbawa, isang Kristyano gumawa ng krimen, di naman ilalagay doon na, isang Katoliko o Iglesia ni Cristo ang gumawa ng krimen. So yun ang isang ano ng Muslim na parang inaapi doon ang Muslim. Discrimination ng ... kumbaga, kaya kami naririto ngayon sa Maynila upang ipakita sa lahat ng mga nagiging kaibigan namin na Kristyano, na ang Muslim ay napakaganda ng kanilang mga layunin. Ang Muslim ay ganito.

At pagkatapos lahat ng nagiging kaibigan namin, ay pianaabot namin sa kanila ang aming relihiyon, Bahala sila kung di nilang tanggapin ang aming relihiyon, ang importante ay naiparating namin sa kanila. Kasi inaano namin dito sa Pilipinas, kung tutuusin, ang mga Muslim at mga Kristyano, iisa lang tayo dahil tayo ay lahat Pilipino. So minsan dinidiscuss namin sa kanila, na ang Pilipinas na ito dati ay pag-aari ng Muslim. Dinidiscuss namin sa kanila yung nangyari nung unang panahon. Di pa dumating si Magellan ay ang Pilipinas – it is all Muslim. So kung minsan din may naririnig kami na ano dyan pag nag-aaral kami ah sinasabi ng mga Kristyano na ang mga Muslim ay minority people of the Philippines kaya sinasabi nila na lumipat sila ng ibang lugar nila e dito sila - taga-Pilipinas. Kung tutuusin, parang masakit sa amin yun eh dahil kami ay pinanganak dito sa Pilipinas so kami rin ay Pilipino at nagkaiba lang tayo ng relihiyon.

At ang Pilipinas na ito dati ay Muslim lahat dito. Since 1521, ang lahat ng mga tao dito, it is all Muslim. Ngunit nung 1521, dumating si Magellan, ang mga 70 percent ng Pilipino ay to become Catholic – yun ang nagyari. So trenta porsento ng mga Muslim na natira, yung 15 percent, namatay din sa pakikidigmaan sa mga Amerikano, sa mga Hapon, at sa mga Español. So ang nangyari, there are mga 15 percent na lang ang natira sa mga Muslim. So ang limang porsento naman ng mga Muslim dito sa Pilipinas, ay namatay sa iba't ibang klaseng sakit. So ang natira lang, 10 percent. So ang 3 porsento ng mga Muslim, sa ayaw nilang makipagdigmaan at makipag-gulo, ay lumipat sila sa mga ibang lugar tulad ng Calagan, Manobo – dating mga Muslim sila. Kaya lang nakalimutan nila ang kanilang a ... relihiyon. So ang Muslim ngayon sa Pilipinas, there are 7 percent lang. Inaano ng tao na ang mga Muslim ay pinakamaliit lang ngunit sa napag-aralan po natin, mula sa Kolehiyo ay galing ang pilipino sa Malay. Eh ang Malay, it is all Muslims. So ibig sabihin, ang Pilipinas na ito, dati-rati, it is all Muslims. Kaya lang, dahil ang mga tao ay, nadoktrinahan ng Roman Catholic, at ang Pilipinas na ito is open for religion diba? So ang nagyari, there are 72 religions ngayon sa Pilipinas. Napakarami ngayon. So kaya ang nilililaw, pinapaliwanag ng mga Muslim, na lumipat dito sa Maynila ay kung papaano maintindihan ng lahat ng tao sa buong Pilipinas at lalo na sa buong mundo, na ang Muslim ay di

gumagawa ng mga karumaldumal. Tulad ng mga pinaparatang sa mga Muslim – ibinibintang sa mga Abu Sayaff, Yan ang inaano ng mga Maranao na hindi Muslim ang may kagagawan niyan . So ang pinakaano namin ngayon ay kung paano ang mga tao dito ay maintindihan din nila ang relihiyon ng Islam. Baka sakaling magustuhan rin nilang pumasok dito sa relihiyon namin, ay tatanggapin din namin sila. Dito sa Pilipinas ngayon, more than 50,000 dating mga Kristyano at nagpaconvert sa Islam. Actually dito rin sa loob ng compound dito ay may mga Kristyano na nagbalik-loob sa Islam.

Ako naman. Sa akin, ang pinakapunto ko kaya ako nandito bilang isang pulis, isang law enforcer, doon ako na-assign. Kaya lumipat kami rito ay apat na aspeto – unang-una ay yung politika. Sa politics ay sabi nila, ito ang nagiging central na government. Unang-una yang sa politics, ang mga politicians dito sila nagsisimula, mula semento o kung anuman sa political machinery. Now in terms sa education, karamihan ay dito rin nag-aaral, yung mga magaganda na education, dito yan. Kasi sa kanila kapag taga-Maynila ay highly-educated sa kanila. Mataas ang tingin nila. Kung halimbawa nakatapos ka sa local college, halimbawa sa Mindanao – kwan lang yan eh – di marunong magTagalog. Yan ang pinakapunto doon. Yung sa education no. Kung dito, madaling makapasok sa isang trabaho, halibawa isang private o government. Mas maganda dito kasi galing Maynila. Dun naman sa socio-culture, ay nakikita ko ay yung ginagawa namin doon na pagsisikap, ay di namin kayang gawin doon kasi nahihiya kami sa aming kapwa na, pero kung yung aming ginagawa dito ay doon namin icompare, ay mas maganda yata kung doon kasi mas gaganda ang mga lupain namin doon. Ang problema lang doon, ay nung martial law, ay alam ninyo ay nagiging - ayun 7 percent ng forces ng gobyerno ay pinadala dun sa Mindanao, particular sa mga area ng Muslim at ang nangyari, paano ka makakapagtrabaho? Paano ka makapaglivelihood? Ay, operation dito, operation doon. Nasisira ang mga hanapbuhay namin, Ang mga magulang namin, kapatid namin, kamag-anak namin, naisip na mas mabuti na magbusiness na lamang – yun ang nangyari. So yun talaga ang pakay namin dito, Ang pinakamotibo ay yung tinatawag trade - walang ibang layunin kundi livelihood. Para medyo mapaginhawa yung buhay namin bilang Mulsim. Yung tinatawag naman sa religious aspect, sabi nga ni brother Ustad na kahit, yung Maranao – kahit saan, sa sulok ng Southern, Northern Luzon, especially sa National Capital Region, walang isang lugar na walang Maranao na walang mosque o yung tinatawag na – kahit 2, 3 o sampu, dapat magtayo kami ng isang worship place. So yung socio-cultural naman, tyung pakikisalamuha – kasi yung isang Muslim Maranao, ay kung ang isang Muslim, ang Maranao Muslim ay kung nasa kanya ang doktrina ng Muslim, ay walang magiging problema sa pakikisalamuha sa ibang tao. So ang pinapunto namin ay maghanapbuhay – walang iba., Hindi magbomba, hindi pumatay-tao, hindi para pumugot ng isang tao, at yung nakikita din namin, ngayon na pinapakita nila sa show, na yung pugot-ulo, ay doon sa amin, mga 200 officers, ay uminit ang ulo kasi negative yung impact. Sa tingin nila – itong Muslim pala namumugot ng ulo. So ako naman, pinapaliwanag ko sa kanila. Yan lang ang masasabi ko dyan.

Baka meron pa hong gustong magdagdag? Gusto rin ho naming maliwanagan tungkol dun sa land disputes. Kasi medyo na-explain ni Ate Saira na binili ata ito ng government. Yung Libayn government.

Itong lupa ay wakaff – kumbaga, donation. Yung brother Muslim sa Libya, binigay lang ito para sa mga Muslim, either Maguindanao, Tausug, iba-iba. Kasi ang lahat ng Muslim dito sa Maynila

ay nangungupahan lang dito, eh nung nalaman yun ng ibang country na Muslim din, na Libya ay bumili sila ng lupa para din sa mga Muslim, through IDP kasi hindi naman pwedeng bukili ang foreigners. Yung IDP ay Islamic Directorate of the Philippines.

So kung kayo for example, dito kayo naninirahan, wala kayong binabayaran na upa o?

It has been decided by the Supreme Court na talo ang Iglesia.

May ibabalik ho ba ang Iglesia? Ano ho ba ang consequence ng pagkatalo nila?

Ibig sabihin ay yung kanilang pagbili ay binalik siguro sa kanila yung pera. Kine-claim nila na nagbayad sila sa mga Muslim pero walang nangyaring ganun. Walang deed of sale na naganap. Kung ano ang paliwanag ni Saira sa inyo kasi nung nagkakaroon ng gulo, isa sya sa mga nangunguna doon sa rally. Oo kaya, kung ano ang explanation sa inyo, ganun din ang ano. Kung alam niyo, kami rin ang nag-impeach kay Justice Narvasa. Nagdesisyon sila in favor of Iglesia.

So walang Muslim na nangungupahan dito?

Meron naman. Yung may mga bahay dito, na wala yung kapwa naming Muslims, na wala pang bahay dito, nangungupahan sila dun sa may mga meron. Yung mga nauna dito – dati kasi wala pang mga bahay dito e. Dati kasi magbayad ka ng 300 pesos ay registered ka na tapos tumaas ng 500 tapos nung matagal-tagal na, dinemolish sila. Bale pangalawang generation kami. Yung mga unang nakatira dito, nademolish, then akala ng Iglesia na that time makukuha na nila kasi nga nademolish na ito. Dahil sa mga paninindigan ng mga Muslim, na kailangang ipagtanggol ang mosque, kapag kapag ang lupa ay sa Muslim, even sa last drop of our blood, gagamitin para ipagtanggol ang mosque,. Ganoon kasagrado ang mosque para sa amin. So ayun, naging 2nd generation kami nguint mahal na ang pagbili namin. Kahit nanalo na kami sa Supreme Court, hindi maiaward sa kanya-kanya ang titulo dahil, wakaf at pag inaward, baka magbenta-benta. Kung ayaw na ng iba, pwede ng ibenta yung rights nya sa kapwa nyang Muslim. Ang gusto ng Libyan government na nagdonate nito, para sa mga Muslim. Muslim Filipinos.

Ang ibig sabihin nito ay walang isa man na pwedeng sabihin, akin ito – we are only a guardian. Kung tutuusin ito ay para lang sa kapakanan ng Muslim sa buong Pilipinas. Ito dapat ang tatawaging Islamic Center ng Philippines. Yes, yung Salam Compound. Ang tawag sa amin ay guardian of Salam Mosque Compound.

Ito brother Jay, ipaliwanag namin ang main objective namin dito. Nung early 70s, may mga nag-aaral dito na galing charity institutions na taga-roon at nakita nga ito at naghahanap ng lupa para mapaginhawa ang buhay ng Muslim dito. So ang problema nila ngayon, sino ang magiging trustee, so during that time, nandoon (during the time of Senator Tamano) nandoon si Judge Mama Busran at si Alonto, sila yung mga matatataas doon ay gumawa ng tinatawag na Islamic Directorate of the Philippines. Yung IDP ngayon – dun pinagkatiwala ng governemnt itong lupang to. So eto yung problema. Nung ngayon medyo di nag-ano na yung mga tao dito, a nagpatayo na ng mga bahay dito. Pagktapaos may bagong nagtatag ng IDP composed of different tribes – pinangungunahan ni Carpiso at Abdulramah Insad. Insad is a convert Muslim. So yun - nagtatag sila at yun ang nagbida sa lupain dito. Ni-negotiate nila ang Iglesia ni Cristo

para ibenta itong lupang ito. Pero di na rin nagtagumpay yung sa kanila. Naghearing sa SEC kung kanino talaga ang original – mga 1991. Sumama ako sa kanila't pinaglaban sa hearing. Hindi nga nagpakita si Carpiso at Insad dahil ang alam nila kapag nakita sila ng Muslim ay gigitain sila. O bakit ito bineneta, anong karapatan nila? Dahil ito'y donation, di pwede itong ibenta. So natalo sila ngayon sa SEC. Dun palang natalo na sila na di pala sila yung original na IDP. Hanggang sa umabot sa Supreme Court, ayun yung dahilan kaya natalo sila. Yun ngayon ang present situation ng Maranao Muslims at different tribes, Pero alam naman natin na dito sa Pilipinas, there are six major groups ng mga Muslims, Maranao of Lanao. Maranao means people around the lake – nakatira sa Lake Lanao. Tapos yung Sulu – peoples of the sea, Maguindanao of Cotabato – ppl of the Rio Grande river sa Cotabato. Dabaoeño – sa Davao province. Yung Yakan, at sa Zamboanga, mga Samal, Balingi, maliliit lang na grupo yan. Halos lahat ng mga ito ay nandito na sa compound. Kasi itong compound na ito ay open for all Muslims. Ito ay para sa pangkalahatang kapakanan ng mga Muslims dito sa Pilipinas. Yung karagdagan dun ay yung sabi ni Saira.

Pwde bang ikumpara yuung inyong pamumuhay, for example nung 1994. Pwede kayang ihambing yung pamumuhay nyo noon. - yung buhay niyo dati sa Mindanao bago kayo lumipat dito at yung kalagayan niyo po ngayon.

Yung pagtitinda dito sa Metro Manila ay napakaganda eh. Kahit anong paninda mo, ay okay. Nung nagsimula siguro ako nung 1996, etong si Maganto ang siyang humawak sa ... MMDA – lahat ng may mga pwesto, dyang mga bangketa ay sa demolition. Nagkaroon kami ng kwan doon – naghirap-hirap ang mga Muslim. Sa mga Muslim, makatinda lang ng kaunting ganyan na pwesto ay mabubuhay na ang pamilya – ano man ang paninda mo, madali kang makabenta pero nung si Maganto – wala na – hirap-hirap na ang panininda. Ang business sa Metro Manila parang mahirap.

Dinemolish po?

Oo. Demolition. Walang patawad. Sinasaga mga paninda mo. Kinukuha yung binebenta nyo. Kaya mahirap, kumpara ngayon, mahirap ang buhay ng mga Muslim, especially for the Maranaos.

Humirap po kayo ngayon kasi dati?

Oo, kaysa dati.

So mas maaluwal (?) ang buhay sa Mindanao noon?

Dito lang kami magsacrifice kaysa native land namin sa Mindanao. Kasi halimbawa yung naipon namin dito, dinadala namin pabalik sa kanila. Kahit gaano kaganda ang pamumuhay dito, mas mahal namin ang land namin doon. There is no place like home ika nga – diba? Yan naman eh. Kung galing ka dito tapos dumating ka doon, para kang superstar doon.

So may plano ho kayong bumalik?

Ay talaga! Hundred percent! Yes, no place like home eh. Yan ang balak namin – isang palatandaan na talaga ah.. Minsan pag may namamatay ibabalik namin ang katawan nya dun sa Mindanao. Marami dyan na namamatay na Muslim na Maranao na talagang binabalik dun ang bangkay nila. At saka may pinapanindigan din kami eh – yung sabihin nila, “Ang taong di marunong lumingon sa pinanggalingan, ...”. Kaya kami lahat nakapagcommit - there is a time, babalik kami doon.

So panandalian lang?

Alam mo, ang Mindanao, masyadong naaapi. Simula ng panahon ni Marcos, Martial Law, lahat ng mga presidente, gulo na. Maliit pa ako nung panahon ng martial law – maraming pinapatay. Operation. Kapag mahaba ang buhok mo, dadakipin. Nakapanood ka ba ng :Bagong Buwan?” Yun yon. Yung mga Muslim sa Mindanao na ayaw nya – na magmiyembro ng MNLF, ng MI, o Abu Sayaff, nandito na sa Maynila kasi naghahanap-buhay lang – business, para mabuhay ang pamilya, mabuhay ng mapayapa ang pamilya. Ang pinakamasakit doon, ako 1986, nandito na ako sda Maynila e. Ang pinakamasakit dito, ang trabaho ko lang dito ay tinda lang ako. Minsan, pumunta ako sa preobinsya – pumupunta ako sa kwan. Ang pinakamasakit, naaapi yung mgsa pobre. Halimbawa, kami – nagtitinda kami – halimbawa naglalako kami, nagsasidewalk kami. Pag kinuha yung paninda namin, ang masakit dun, kinukuha, nila, di lahat ng pulis ay ganun. Kinukuha nila yung paninda, tapos – halimbawa, tulad nung CD no. illegal na yan ngayon no? Bawal na yan. Ang problema – ang tinitira nila ay mga pobre, di nila tinitira yung mga milyonaryo, mayaman – yung pinanggalingan. Pag nahuli nila yung CD, kinabukasan, binebenta nila sa iba. Yun ang masakit doon. Mabuti sana kung sinusunog nila yun. Nung nagtinda kami doon sa SM, inuwi nila yun gpaninda namin – eh ubos na yung paninda namin. Eh makikita mo naman – yun yung masakit doon eh – kukunin nila tapos pagbalik sa yo, konti na lang ang natira. Kaya ang hinihiling namin sa Presidente na wag nya masyadong intiindihain yung mga naghahanapbuhay dito sa Pilipinas. Wag sanang pahirapan yung mga naghahanapbuhay na maralita para di lalo mas magulo dahil baka tayong mahihirap ay bumalik sa Mindanap at walang hanap-buhay. Magmiyembro na lang ng MI kasi walang makukuha dito sa Maynila. Magtinda kla tapos huhuliin ka – kulong ka pa. Wag masayadong pahirapan ang mga Muslim. Talagaang api na api na ang mga Muslim ngayon sa Pilipinas.

Yun din kasi yun. Yung mga Muslim dito, ano naman yung hanapbuhay nila. Hindi naman sila lumalabag sa batas ng gobyerno. Ang problema kasi dito, ang nagtitinda, pagkatapos mahuli yung kanyang paninda – punta ka sa Recto – doon binebenta. Yung nahuli ng mga pulis – yung iba – syempre ang paninda mo, kilala mo eh, syempre sa yo yun eh. Yung iba, mga paninda nya nandoon sa Recto, nandoon. O, tapos mura pa! Dyan din eh sa Luzon Avenue. Meron din dyang nahuhuling Maranao na nagtitinda. Sa Maranao, yung ano talaga nila ay yung pagtitinda. Dyan naman sa Luzon kung minsan, may Muslim na nahuhulian ng ganun – ng mga CD. Sop, yung ibang mga pulis dyan, minsan ibebenta pa sa amin, Minsan seven pesos. Yung hinuli nila, ibebenta din sa amin! Tapos hinuhuli na naman. Minsan, nagpapabayad pa sila para hindi hulihin. So nagbibigay lahat ng nagtitinda doon. Tapos mga isang linggo walang huli. Magbabayad na naman. Pagkarelieve ng naka-duty doon, iba na naman yung darasting, huhuliin na naman yung mga ano. Sasabihin – eh diba nagbayad na kami? Eh iba naman yun eh. Halos lahat ng paninda nila napupunta halos sa mga ano. Yun minsan ang problema n g mga nagtitinda dito.

Minsan pa ngayon, sa kapanahunan ngayon, maririnig mo pa yung sabi ng mga tao na Bin, Bin (Laden). Datirati kasi nung di pa magulo ang mga Abu Sayaff, nagtrabaho din ako dun sa may PhilAm- sa may malapit. Nagtrabaho ako dyan. Nung nagtrabaho ako doon, tanggap na tanggap yung Muslim kasi wala pang bad record yung Muslim. So ngayon, nung bumalik din ako dito kasi umuwi din ako nung 1999, namatay yng lolo ko, pagbalik ko dito – aaply muli, magulo na kasi, pag narining yung pangalan mo – pangalan ng Muslim. Kasi actually, ang pangalan ko sa iskul ay di naman actually Muslim. Jimson ang pangalan ko, tapos apilyido ko kasi Abdulmajid e. So pag nakita nila – Muslim. Oo, Muslim. Sasabihin nila na balik ka na lang, tatawagan ka na lang. Yun ang problema – kahit san ka magpunta. Di tulad nung una, kahit san kami magpunta, nung nag-aaral pa kami, pumunta ka sa SM, tatanggapin ka. Ngayon, kung pumunta ka doon, lumuhod ka, magluha ka pa ng dugo, kahit ipakita mo record mo dito sa Maynila. Nung nakita nila record ko nung una, sabi nila, “tanggap ka” kaagad. Pero ngayon, bumalik ako doon, ayaw na nila. Parang inaapi ka pa doon sa loob ng opisina mo. Muslim, ano na bang nangyari sa kapatid mo? Minsan, tinatawag pa nila na Bin Laden. Iinit ang ulo mo eh. Minsan din pag naglalakad ka dyan, sasabihin nila na “Abu Sayaff” yan. Eh ano bang pakialam mo sa Abu Sayaff?!

Pwede magtanong lang? Kung nagbebenta kayo, naa-identify talaga na Muslim kayo?

Palatandaan lang. Di naman kasi pwede na ganito. Kumbaga magsuot ka na lang ng normal na suot pag nagbebenta ka pero di mo naman tinatanggi na Muslim ka. Kasi minsan din may loko-loko din kun gminsan., yung nagsasalita ng ibang salita. “Hoy Muslim, anon bang ibinebenta mo ba?” (mimic with accent). Maiinis ka eh, oo.

Kasi, para bang kwan. Nakasanay na nial na naki,ita ni la sa langsganang itong mga Muslim na nagtitinda. Kahit na may nakiita silang nagtitinda, ang presumption nila, mga Muslim yan. Kaya minsa kung ano rin ang sinasabi nilang panlalait sa mga Muslim. Minsan gumagawa pa sila ng “Anong pangalan mo?” (mimic again) Kahit sa opisina ka – ganun! Nung nag-aaral din ako, ganun eh. “O Muslim, anong gusto mong mangyari Muslim?” (mimic again) Pst, loko to eh – bakit, ganyan ba ang pagkarining mo sa aming salita loko ka. Miunsan naiinins an rin – kahit kayo. Marami ngang Kristyano, pumunta sa Marawi, naghanapbuhay – pagbalik dito sa Maynila, wwalang masabi. Ang Muslim ay di masama. Ang inaano din kasi ng Muslim ay kung paano iconvert bilang Muslim din. Tulad ng nag-aral dun sa Mindanao State University, tulad ng Kristyano, kaibigang nila Muslim – karamihan din nagiging Muslim. Kasi pinapakita ng Muslim kung gaano kabait ang Muslim, ganito – kinukuwento din ang mga kasamaan na ganyan. Ang sabihin nga naman nila – kahit saan gubat may ahas diba? May mga loko-loko din sa amin – ganun din sa inyo.

Eh madalas, nagaganun ka diba? Napipikon ka ba?

Kung minsa lang pero pagkakilala mo yung tao na parang ano – ganun din (sira-ulo), pinapabayaang na lang din. Sabi ko, umuwi ka na lang eh – lasing ka na eh. Parang nasanay na rin kami pero nung una parang. Pero minsan din, lalo na kung marami kami, tulad nung nangyari sa amin sa may San Fernando, La Union nung 1998. Kung minsa yan din ang sinasabi ng ating mga kapatid na Kristyano. So ang naisip namin, ang siinsasabi ko sa mga kasamahan namin – kasi

minsang sinasabi na poatulan kaya natin ito, sumosobra na – sabi ko , kung minsang, wag naman sana ganun kasi, di kami pumunta rito upang makipag-away. Pumunta tayo rito sa Maynila para maghanap-buhay. Ayun, iniwasan namin. Kung di talaga maiwasan, bajala na ang diyos doon. Minsang, di na talaga maiwasan.

So may mga pagkakataon na nagiging bayolente ka?

Oo, kung minsang din ganun eh. Pero salita lang, oo. Tulad nung mga dalawang araw na ata. Pumunta kami ng Quiapo. Kasi, nakaganito kami lahat. Lima kami. May nakasakay kaming matanda, lasing. Nag-uusap kami doon sa sasakyan. Ang pinag-uusapan namin, tungkol sa relihiyon namin. Yung matandang yon, biglang sumingit sa amin. Sabi nya ano ba naman yang mga muklo kayo? Diba Maranao kayo eh muklo kaya? Eh bigang sum,akit ang tenga namin. Sabi ng isa sa amin, matanda ka na kasi, wag ka na sanang magsalita ng ganyan. Pinagsabihan lang namin sya at sinabi ko sa kanya – alam mo, tatang – itong Pilipinas ay it is freedom of constitution diba? Kaya kung ano ang ginagawa namin, wag mong pakialaman – pabayaang mo na alng. Naiinitndahan mo naman kami kung ang kagandahan namana ng relihiyon ang pinag-uusapan namin. Ipaparining din namin sa inyo na sakaling mapag-isipan nyo rin, so bigla ka na lang sumingit na binabastos mo kami, ako kung di lang ganito ang mga suot namin, malilintikan ka sa amin. Sana, sa uulitin, wag mo na yang gawin sa mga Muslim. Kapag may problema, tapos yun pa ang ina-ano mo...

-----END OF SIDE A-----

... kasi actually, I have been with the recruitment industry for 12 years cause I have been...

You still are?

Yes. So alam natin na dito sa mga Muslim dito, almost 50% nag-aapply for abroad, lalo na yung mga ibang tribo, tulad ng mga Maguindanao at Tausug pero karamihan mga Maguindanao lalo na yung mga kababaihan – they apply for abroad. Yung iba dyan, they apply as domestic helper. Iba ang categories nila. So ngayon, ang problema na nahaharap nitong mga ito, unang-una, kasi actually nung mga 1991, 1992, hanggang 1995 ata, napakadali lang ng kumuha ng passport. Dahil for Muslims, ang requirement lang, ay you have to get ang tinatawag na permit of birth diba – yun lang ang kailangan doon. Certificate of birth lang - di tulad ngayon. So kukuha ka pa ng mga Office of Muslim Affairs certificate certifying that you are Muslim. So napakadali lang – siguro, magpasspoort ka, magstart ka ng magbarko, one week lang.

So ngayon, talagang nahihirapan ang mga Muslim. Karamihan dyan, talagang nakabaon na sa utang. Dahil passport lang, di nila makuha kaagad eh dahil unang-una, dahil yung passporting law ng DFA, ay kailangan ng birth certificate duly certified by the NSO galing sa NCR. Napakatagal. Minsang aabot pa ng dalawang buwan. Minsang, kung minamalas ka, di na dumating dito yung galing sa NCR na certificate na galing sa Local Civil Registrar. So maghihintay ka ng – biruin mo pag dito sa Maynila pag nakatambay ka dito wala kang source of income, mahihirapan ka talaga. So habang naghihintay, pupunta ka naman sa Census, eh ang haba-haba naman ng pila – siguro kung madaanan mo yan, ilang kilometro yan kung talagang titignan mo. Kung talagang medyo ano yung interes mo sa pagkuha, tatamarin ka na. So ang

tagal pa bago makuha. So ngayon, pag nakakuha ka naman ng certificate, yung sinasabi nilang SecPA (?) na galing sa Census, na tinatawag na security papers na yung security papers na yon, ay yun ang papel na ginagamit ng NSO na yung tinatawag nilang ibig sabihin na yung tamper-proof. Ibig sabihin di pwedeng matamper – merong parang watermark sa ilalim. Yung merong luminous sign na pag nilagay sa detector, malalaman mo doon kung ito ay peke, kasi alam natin na marami din na kung sabihin natin ay “in every forest, there is a snake” – we cannot avoid evils diba? Kahit sino talaga. So yun ang ginagawa ng iba. So ngayon, di nila pwedeng mafake.

So ibig sabihin, pare-pareho na ngayon ang requirements ng Muslims at non-Muslims. Ang problema nga lang, ang mga Muslim, ay nirerequire pa sila ng Office of the Muslim Affairs na certificate. So ang problema nga dito, siguro nung two weeks ago, nakausap namn yung isang Office of the Muslim officer tungkol sa DFA at sinabi ko sa kanya na dapat ay baguhin yung passporting law para sa mga Muslims kasi nahihirapan sila kumuha ng passport nila dahil unang-una, noong di pa naimplement yung SecPa, yung security papers nga, ay pwede nilang iimplement yun na kumuha sila ng OMA certificate, mga NBI ganun pero ngayon, pare-pareho na ang requirements nila at yung non-Muslims at saka yung to identify if you are Muslim or not ay dun na makikita na dun sa pagtatak ng Visa. O halimbawa, papunta ka ng Saudi, ito (points to participant) is working with the Saudi Embassy – yung kapatid natin so alam nya yun. Siya, more than ten years din ano sa Saudi Embassy. So alam nila doon ngayon na tinatatakan ngayon na ma-identify wheter you are Muslim or not, dun sa Visa ay sabi kung Muslim. So sabi ko dun sa officer ng DFA na Muslim, ano ba ito kasi minsan nahihirapan sila kasi minsan isang linggo, di pa dumadating yung transmittal o certificate ng OMA – di pa natransmit sa DFA kaya hinihintay pa ngayon. Ang haba ng pila, minsa umabot pa ng... Pumila ka ng alas sais, tapos matatapos ka siguro mga hapon na. Pagkatapos mo doon sa window, sasabihin nila doon, “yung transmittal mo, hindi pa dumating dito.” Pero yung certificate na yan, original yan dahil galing talaga sa Office of the Muslim Affairs because yung Office of the Muslim Affairs is under Office of the President tulad nyo.

So ngayon, yun ang problema nila – balik na naman sila ulit sa OMA para sabihin sa kanila na di dumating yung transmittal ninyo sa DFA. Pabalik-balik yung ganun. “Paano, ano yung kaibahan nun?” sabi ko. Dahil nung wala pa yung SecPa na ito, ay dapat merong OMA. Pero ngayon, pareho na ang Muslim at non-Muslim. Ang kanilang requirement, dapat ganun din - pare-pareho dahil we are all citizens in our country. Hindi naman tayo yung tinatawag na Moro citizens dahil lahat tayo mga Pilipino. Ganun. Sabi naman na kapag nagkaroon sila ng ano, pero mas maganda ito kung halimbawa maisali nyo sa ano ninyo na recommendation na pag-aralan nilang mabuti kung paanong – parang may discrimination doon eh. Kung bakit ganun. Kasi kung pupunta ka ng Saudi, pupunta ka ng Middle East, doon na nila ngayon makikita na either you’re Muslim or not dahil doon sa Visa.

Kahit halibawa, meron isang instance na may isang tao na talagang purely Muslim – ang nanay at tatay niya Muslim. So noong di na sya makakuha ng passport, kasi nga matagal ng di dumating kasi ang Office of Muslim Affaris certificate , ay three months lang ang validity. Kapag halimbawa ay pumunta ka after three months, sasabihin na pumunta ka uli kasi wala na yung transmittal, tinapon na namin. Magbabayad na naman ulit. Tignan mo kung gaano kahirap ang inaano ng mga Muslims. Ang nangyari dun sa Muslim na yon, sabi nya, “Sige, mag-apply na lang ako bilang Chrisitan.” Nung bigla syan naging Chrisitan, nakakuha na sya ng pasport. Total

sabi nya pagdating ko doon, kilala naman nila ako na I am a Muslim. Matatatakan ngayon ng Muslim yung Visa nya kasi kapag ang isang Muslim, whether you are Muslim by birth, kapag ang embassy, di nya tinatakan na Muslim, you are not allowed to enter the two holy cities, the Mina, the city of Madina, and the city of Makkah. Yun ang restricted areas. Only Muslims are allowed to enter the vicinity of the city. Di ka talaga pwede – kahit ako halimbawa, nakatatak dun sa aking visa ay Christian ay di na ako pwedeng pumasok doon. So ibig sabihin, dun lang nagkakatalo kung bakit kailangan yung mga requirements sa DFA. Hindi naman talaga sila yung mag-ano na you are Muslim or not. So ganun ang nangyari dun – sabi nya, “Sige ilagay nyo na lang Christian pero di naman nakalagay sa passport na Christian ka. Dun lang talaga nagkakatalo kasi yung mga passport dun, ibig sabihin, walang nakalagay dun na religion. Dun lang nagakatalo sa pagtatak ng visa. Dun ngayon parang nagkakaroon ng discrimination sa mga Muslims dahi alam natin yung alam natin na almost 50 percent of all Muslims ay nangingibang bansa dahil unang-una, wala ng capital.

Yung iba naman, gaya kaninang umaga, anim na babae ang pumunta sa akin para mag-apply dun sa agency namin. So ang problema – yung mga tao na yun galing Cavite at iba-iba pero dati silang nagtitinda. Sabi ko, bat ngayon ninyo pa naisipan eh taposa na yung visa. Sabi nya, “Eh paano, anong magagawa namin, hinuli ng pulis yung aming mga paninda. Yung iba dyan nagtitinda sa may overpass. Yung mga overpass, nakikita nyo nyan – mga Muslim yan. Hinuhuli nila –ayun, minsan yun, last week, ay may isa, dala-dala pa naman yung anak eh dumating yung mga pulis. Eh ayun, lahat ng kanilang mga paninda, talagang nawala. Kahit isang suklay, walang natira. Kaya umiyak ako nung isang araw na bumisita ako dahil, “Paano nga ito Kuya, anong mangyari sa amin? Mag-apply kaya ako abroad?” Biruin mo yon.

Yun ang dahilan kung bakit ngayon, talagang pahirap na ang economic situation ng Metro Manila, lalo na sa mga Muslim. Halos lahat ng mga nagtinda doon, Muslim. Eh kung hinuli yun anong mangyayari sa pagkain nila araw-araw? Pambili ng gatas? Kaya yung iba nag-iisip na baka may visa dyan na pwede ako. Kaya maraming mga daily order (?) na talagang pinapasukan, kahit janitor o janitress dahil dito sa pangyayari na ‘to. Biruin mo yan, tapos yun yung problema, pagkanais nilang mag-apply, hirap din naman sa mga papeles. Buti na lang ngayon lumuwag-luwag ng konti yung pagkuha ng NBI. Isang araw lang. Pero ang pinakamahirap pa rin ay yung pagkuha ng certificate mula sa NSO. Yun talaga ang pinakamalaking problema sa mga Muslim.

Lilinawin ko lang no – sa Maynila, traders talaga kayo no? Nagbebenta, ganun. Kung hindi OCW, ayun, nagbebenta. Ganun din ho ba sa Lanao? Yun din ba ang source of income?

Marami ding mga kwan doon – farmers. Kasi dun sa Mindanao, dun sa Lanao, unang-una yung mga traders tapos yung mga employees, tapos yung mga farmers. Tapos fishing - yung mga nanghuhuli ng isda dun sa Lake Lanao. Yun ang apat na source of income. Yung mga nasa Lake Lanao, dun din nman ay nagsasaka. Mga hacienda, mga palay.

Yung pagtitinda pa rin ho yung pangunahin doon?

Yung mga hindi nagtitinda doon, pagdating dito marunong na e. Kasi doon sa amin, mahihiya ka kapag maliit lang yung paninda mo. Sa Lanao pag nakita nila ganyan lang kaliit yung paninda mo, pagtatawanan ka nila e. Tatanungin nila na ba’t yan lang ang paninda mo?

Kung minsan, yung di na kayang magtinda doon, pumupunta na lang sa Maynila kasi dito kahit ganun lang kalaki ang iyong paninda, di ka naman nahihiya. Kasi doon pag nagtinda ka ng ganun, pagtatawan ka. Kung gagawin dun sa Lanao yung paglalako na yung ganun na nakasalamon, pagtatawan ka talaga. Pero dtio, normal lang ba. Sasabihin nila, “Naano na ba ang utak mo? Wala ka bang naisip na ibang paraan para kumita ng pera?” Parang ginaganun ka roon. Sasabihin na kung ganyan ka, pumunta ka na lang sa bukid, mag-ano ka doon para makakita ng malaki. Pero dito sa Maynila, kahit gaano kakonti yung paninda mo, hindi ka pinagtatawanan. Kasi minsan, kapag wala kang hanap-buhay doon, kasi syempre magulo doon eh. Kung maisip mo na walang hanap-buhay, maisip mo na lang na ee-MILF na lang ako ‘ka ko. Mahirap yun – mas maganda dito sa Maynila para walang gulo. Kung gusto mo ng gulo, sama ka sa kanila, Kung ayaw mo ng gulo, punta ka dito sa Maynila.

Marami sa inyo, iniwan ho ninyo yung pamilya nyo, o dinala na rin ho ninyo?

Ah dun lang sa barrio namin no, ang natitira lang dun ay yung matatanda. Konti lang ang natitira doon.

So nag-migrate na talaga?

Yung iba naman, umuwi pag eleksyon. Yung iba, di na talaga umuwi. Yung iba naman na nag-migrate dito, kapag may malalaking okasyon, tulad nga nung Edil-Addha, kung saan gustong magtipon-tipon yung mga pamilya, ayun umuwi sila. Tapos pag may namatay, ayun, uuwi din sila. Pagdating ng mga eleksyon, umuwi na rin sila. Yun ang ganun dun. Di naman na iniwan na talaga nila yung mga nandun. Kung minsan yung mga matatanda, nandun pa rin sila. Dindalaw nila ngayon yung kanilang mga parents na naiwan doon. Halimbawa, yung nanay ko at tatay ko ay naiwan sa Mindanao. Kapag medyo sabik na namin makita, uuwi kami dun. Mga isang buwan, ganun. Parang bakasyon lang ba – ganun.

Yung kapatid ko sa Batangas, yung pitong anak nya- dito na nag-asawa, Muslim din. Dun pinanganak, dito lumaki. Nag-high school na yung panganay. Karamihan ng mga Muslim, dito lumaki, dito nag-asawa. Dito kinasal, at dito rin lumaki ang mga anak. Isa ring problema dito, yung anak ko, dito na pinanganak sa compoiund na ‘to. So problema nga lang dito, pag nage-enroll yung mga bata – dun sa New Era. They totally discriminate yung mga Muslim dyan. Ito ay public school – eh ang public school ay kahit sino diba? May private, may public. Pag dun sa public ng New Era, kapag mag-reenroll ay taga-rito, sasabihin nila na nandyan ang Culiati Elementary School, dyan kayo mag-enroll. Pati na sa New Era private school din, ganun din pero most probably lahat ng religion, kailangang may guarantor ka na Iglesia ni Cristo. Kukuha ka ng sponsor na from Iglesia ni Cristo.

Siguro maliban doon sa mga sinasabi ny kanina, baka meron pa ho ba tayong mga pangunahing problema dito? Siguro sa loob mismo ng compound. Napag-uspaan na natin yung problema halimbawa ng traders sa labas. Pero dito naman ho mismo sa loob ng Salam Compound?

Anong ibig mong sabihin? Peace and order ba? Economic?

Siguro kung kaya natin maisa-isa- kung ano talaga yung mga pinakamabigat na problema. Issues ba.

Eto sa akin no. Unang-una, walang sovereignty dito ang Muslim sa Barangay. Di tulad sa Quiapo, ay talagang sovereignty doon. Dito wala eh. Kung tutuusin ay mas marami ang Muslim dito kesa dun. We have reached the required population to create a new barangay. Actually, two years ago, meron na silang position paper na ginawa sa panunguna ni Attorney Omar – yung sa Tausug. Tapos yun nga, gumawa sila ng position papers na yung baka sakali itong compound na to ay macreate na newly barangay. So hindi nagmaterialize yun kasi yung iba di yata nagsuporta. Sa political yun.

Eh yung mas maselan ho siguro – yung economic problems ho siguro.

Meron din siguro dapat na public school dito. Halimbawa sa New Era. Pati clinic wala dito – walang health center dito. Yun ang pangunahin talaga – yang mga health center na yan. Maraming Muslim dito – yung sa Islamic Center wala din. Yung ambulance wala yun. Pero ngayon may proposal na ibibigay si GMA na – proposal pa lang ito. Puro proposal lang. Drawing pa lang. Baka siguro sa tulong nyo, ng mga survey at recommendations ninyo – baka sakaling mabigyan ng pansin. So dun naman sa peace and order – ako naman ay alagad ng batas. Dapa ito malagyan ng isang police force. Dapat visible na police team. Dapat meron yan pero dito wala. Yung visible ba na nagpapatrolya. Dapat ay yung kinatatakutan. Yung tinatawag na public servant.

Ano pa ho ba kaya yung iba pang problema dito sa Salam? Sa Maranao ho?

Isa pang problema – siguro nakita nyo yung kalsada namin. Yun! Yung mga kalye! Kung maganda ang kalsada namin, siguro dito sa loob mo na ipapark ang kotse mo. Kapag nagtaxi ka, sinabi mo Culiat compound, di ka pasasakayin. Ibig sabihin, masikap ang daan. General na yan hindi Maranao lang. Ang sinasabi ni...

Isa pa – diba naikwento ko na sa inyo. Kapag sumakay kami ng taxi, ayaw na kaming pasakayin. Tama, yung mga taxi. Ako kapag gabi ako nagtataxi, di ako nagsusuot ng veil. Kasi once na nagwewear kami ng veil, kahit siguro magdamag ka doon. Pag sasabihin mo na Tandang Sora ka.

May isang pinagalitan ako eh – dun sa Crame. Nung ayaw. Sinabi ko na “Sige, sa Crame tayo dun tayo. Anong gusto mo?” Nagsosori sya sa akin.

At kapag nakita na Muslim, ipapasakay ka lang kapag ikokontrata ka. Kasi meron ding ibang mga tribo na hindi Muslim na nagpapanggap na Muslim. Like example yung mga drug addict na pag walang pambayad sa taxi, bababa dyan sa may gate namin – kunwari tagarito, papasok sya para di sya hahabulin ng taxi driver. Ang ano lang doon – ang common sense doon – walang Muslim na naka-sleevelss at naka short pants. Kaso para hindi sya mahabol ng taxi, dito sya papasok sa amin. Ngayon ang taxi driver naman, sasabihin nya, “Yang mga Muslim na yan, masasama ang ugali dahil sasakay sa taxi, hindi magbabayad.” Pero not a muslim – kasi Muslim, maraming bawal yan. Lahat ng kasalanan, hindi nila ginagawa. Kaming mga babae,

wala kang makikita na naka-wear ng short pants. Ang talagang required sa amin ay nakatakip ang buhok.

Pero ang tanong ho – ano kaya ang particular sa Maranao na problema o issue? Kasi yung mga nasabi ho nating problema ay dito ho sa Salam – pangkalahatn, oo. Meron ho ba tayong sa Maranao lang ang problema? Hindi naman problema ng Tausug o Yakan?

Wala.

Pero kung makikita mo yung tribo ng Maranao, maniniwala kayo siguro na ang Maranao ang very, best tribe ng Muslim. Kasi, we are very close. Parang isang katawan yan. Ang sakit ng isa, lahat makakaramdam. Parang ang sakit ng kalingkingan, buong katawan ang makakaramdam. Ganyan ang mga Maranao. Kung ano ang problema ng isa, problema ng lahat – tulong tulong kami.

Tama ang sabi nya dahil napatunayan ito ni - sa libro ni Peter Groeing , isang Amerikano, sa kanyang libro na “Muslim Filipinos”. Itong si Peter Groeing ay matagal na siguro to kasi he is very fluent to speak in our dialect. Sabi nya na sa lahat ng tribo sa buong Pilipinas, ang Maranao ay natatangi talagang pinaka-ano. Mula doon sa mga carvings, sa mga crops, hanggang dun sa pinakamalaki – number one ang Maranao. Pero itong mga kapatid natin na ibang tribo, talagang saludo sila sa Maranao. Umamin sila. Hindi naman ibig sabihihn na ‘blowing our horn’ pero based on our experience, yung mga nagsabi naman ay di Maranaos. Yung libro na yun ay nasa National Bookstore. Kung gusto nyong magsaliksik, yun na talaga yun. Matagal na yan – 1994 pa yata o 1995. Yun lahat yun nandun – lahat. Yung mga customs, tradition. Nilagay nya doon lahat, pati music – lahat ng mga tribo.

When it comes to religion naman, lahat yan. Ayan si Ustad, kumbaga sa tinatanong nyo sa akin-Edhil-Addha, hinid ko inexplain sa inyo kasi sabi ko na sya ang pakinggan ninyo.

Kasi yung Edil-Addha, parang festival yan e. Pagtitipon ng mga Muslims – ang pinaka-ano dun ay yung pagsakripisyo nung panahon ni Abraham. Prophet Abraham. Sinacrifice nya yung panganay na anak niya. Nasa bible din yan no? Pati sa Qu’ran. Yan ay cinecelebrate ng buong Muslim – yung pagsakripisyo ni Abraham. Yun ang pinapunto noon, at nakikita nyo na nagHajj, yung nagpilgrimage no sa Makkah. Di lang sa Pilipinas, pati buong community ng Muslims sa buong mundo nagtipon-tipon sa isang lugar dun sa Saudi Arabia na tinatawag ay Mina. Dun sila nagkita-kita. Nandoon ang iba’t ibang klase ng tribo sa buong mundo. Buong mundo yan ha, di lang sa Pilipinas. Aywan kung ilan ba ang nakapag-perform na Filipino Muslims. Marami ata eh. Mga 4,000 plus, composed of Maguindanao, Maranao, Iranon. Baka meron pang Bisaya of Huluano, o kaya ay Ilocano. Yun ang pinapakay dun – in commemoration of the sacrifice of Prophet Abraham. Every year ito. Yun ang pinakapunto doon.

Yung pilgrims na sinasabi na alam natin ay it is one of the five pillars of Islam. Yun ang pinakahuli. Mga tao na ibig sabihin na meron syang kakayahan financially, physically. Yun nga ang commemoration dun sa sacrifice ni, kaya nagkaroon ng Eid-il Addha.

So ibang topic naman ho siguro tayo. Kasi nung Sabado nakausap namin si Miss Saira at si Major. Akala ho namin nung umpisa, naclassify namin itong compound dito sa Salam na urban poor. Ang dating ho sa labas, urban poor ho itong Salam compound. Sabi naman ni Saira, hindi naman daw talaga urban poor ito. Meron ho kayang mga Maranaos dito sa community na naghihirap sa buhay?

Ay precisely meron! Meron yan, meron. Presently meron yan.

Ang sinabi ko naman sa inyo, wala kayong makikita na Maranao na beggar. May mga naghihirap pero hindi mga beggar. Wala kang makikita na Maranao Muslim na naghihingi dyan sa daan daanan. Wala. Kasi kahit nga – yung sinasabi namin na nahihirapan nga, pero yung makikita mo ...

Tinutulungan namin, tinutulungan namin.

Kaya sinasabi ko sa inyo nun na mali naman yung urban poor naman kami. Kasi kahit na yung mahirap na mahirap sa amin, naghahanapbuhay – yung mga sidewalk vendors, yung mga naglalako. Yun. Wala kang makikitang Maranao na umaasa sa iba. Basta kahit na gaano kahirap, marunong makibaka ang mga Maranao sa kahirapan ng sariling paa, sariling pawis. Hindi sila umaasa sa tulong ng tao. Halimbawa, wala kang makikitang Maranao na nakaupo dyan sa kalsada na nanghihingi. Mas mabuti sa Maranao na yung isang bilao dyan sa sidewalk na may dalang pagkain. Yun ang mga Maranao.

Meron akong tanong sa inyo.

Ay, ano po yun?

Meron bang criteria to be considered, na sasabihin natin na urban poor. Ano ba ang sinasabi na urban poor? Ano ba yung mga yan?

Siguro po dalawa. Pag sinabi pong 'poor', dalawa hong aspeto yan. Pwede hong dalawa po yung indicators – bale income at saka non-income. So kunwari pag medyo kapos ka sa pera, automatic sinasabi natin na naghihirap ako. Pero meron din na kahit okey naman yung kinikita mong pera, pero nagkukulang ka naman kunwari sa edukasyon – di ka nabibigyan ng tamang edukasyon, di ka nabibigyan ng tamang health services, di ka nakatira sa medyo hindi maunlad masyado na bahay o kaya, community, pwede rin natin i-classify as poor. Ang poor kasi ho, hindi lang ho income, pati ibang material na bagay.

Yung hand-to-mouth existence?

Yun po yung extreme. Extreme poverty. Pero pagsinabi nating poor, medyo malawak po siya. Pag nadeprive ka ng isang pangangailangan na dapat meron ka, kunwari meron ka dapat edukasyon, meron ka dapat pera pang-kain, meron kang health services. Pag na-deprive ka sa kahit isa doon, maituturing ka na rin na urban poor.

Ayun, so ibig sabihin itong mga tao dito maaring maclassify din.

Like pag sinabi nyo rin po na hindi kayo nabibigyan ng boses sa gobyerno. Malawak ho, malawak ho ang definition ng urban poor. Kadalasan ho natin ituring na poor pag wala kang pera. Pero maliban po sa pera, may iba pa hong indicators.

Sa discrimination, malaki. Marami kaming na-encounter dito sa Maynila. Pero pagkahalimbawa, in every group, pagka Muslim, iba ang tingin. Pero bigyan mo lang kahit isang oras no, nag-iiba ang tingin nila kasi naiintindihan nila. Tulad ninyo – nung una, iba ang tingin nyo sa amin. Pero ngayon siguro, naintindihan nyo na. Kasi usually kami dito, si Alim (?) from Saudi embassy, si Ustad meron siyang agency – recruitment agency, papuntang Saudi. Si Major, taga Camp Crame. Ito ang mga businessman sa amin. Si Jeril (?) , Jamil (?), si Romy (?). Ako alam nyo na kung saan. Fifty percent of Maranao here, na nakitira ay government employee and the fifty percent is businessman.

Eh yung mga nag-oOCW, kinaclassify nyo as? Saan ho?

Yes marami.

So masasabi naman ho natin na yung mga professionals, maganda naman ho ang kita, maganda naman ho ang hanapbuhay. Pero pagdating ho siguro sa traders, kasi medyo hindi ho steady yung income, meron ho bang naghihirap in terms of pera ho – pera, income?

Itong sa akin no. Yung ating level of income, nasa lower class. Sa tingin ko ha. Kahit kami ay nasa gobyerno, ay di ka naman nakakaano. Di mo naano yung social obligation mo. Kasi kung tutuusin, yung education ha, mga anak natin. Yung maintenance sa bahay. Yung medical – medicine. Yung social obligation – tabang, pagbibigay ng support, tulong. Hindi pa kasya. Ako, more than 28,000 yung sahod ko, pero di pa umabot ng kwan yun. Baka yung sahod ko ng two months, nawala na. Kung tutuusin ha. Maliban lamang kung ikaw ay nasa masamang iscalawag. Yun ang tingin ko ha. So, sa akin ay...

General yan – di lang tayong mga Muslim ang nakakadanas nyan. Buong Pilipinas siguro. Ang nakakaangat lang na government employee, is yung meron syang sidekick. Yung meron syang mga monkey business sa office.

Ilan ba ang ratio ng below poverty line?

Ano po ngayon – sa buong Pilipinas, 33.7 percent ng mga pamilya. Pamilya po, pamilya. Pagdating po sa mga tao, mas malaki – nakalaimutan ko na – close to 40 pag tao po yung bilang. Pero pagpamilya, 33.7 %. Households. Income po ha – income poverty.

Ang susunod naman ho naming tanong. Kung pwede ho isa-isa ho kayong sumagot. Kasi plano ho naming itanong, ano sa tingin nyo yung kahirapan? Personal ano ho. Ano ho yon para sa inyo?

Yung nahihirapan sa buhay?

Pagsinabing poverty, ano ho sa tingin nyo ang ibig sabiin?

Not only personal opinion, but in Islam, yung sinasabi na ...

-----END OF SIDE B-----

***At this point, batteries went dead and the rest of the transcript is constructed from written notes.**

In Islam, there are general definitions of poverty, *riskah* (?) and *pokarah* (?). The first refers to a situation of poverty wherein income is not adequate or sufficient. The latter refers to a situation of poverty wherein the person is classified as “most needy” already. Obviously, the worst form between the two is *pokarah*. In Islam, there is the duty of each Muslim to contribute, or to give to their fellow poor – a certain percentage of your income will be given and that is referred to as the poor tax. For example, for every 40 pesos, one peso is the poor tax.

In the Maranao culture, there is pride. No one will be that poor since they will borrow or ask assistance from fellow Maranaos to get a livelihood. That is for the poor’s side – but for the ‘provider’, there is support coming from instructions in the Qu’ran, which is translated into faith.

Isa pang halimbawa ay yung importansya ng family ties. Hindi hinahayaan lalo na ang kapamilya. Halimbawa, kapag may patay, tulong (saddakah) agad yan.

Kumusta naman ang pakikitungo ninyo sa ibang tribo ng Muslim?

Tungkol naman dun sa common knowledge daw na Tausug and Maranao conflict (away), it is a misconception. May mga posibilidad nga ng conflict pero kapag ang parehong miyembro ng magkabilang panig o tribo ay true Muslim, walang mangyayaring ganyan.

Dito sa Maranao, ‘close’ ang mga tao. Halimbawa sa business, we share secrets. Hindi ganyan sa iba – sa iba, tago lang, kanya-kanya. Ang Muslim din ay sinasabi na ‘single brotherhood’. Halimbawa nung isang gathering of all Muslims na kasama si Sec. Reyes (DND). Napamangha si Reyes ng nakita nya na peaceful yung gathering na yun – gathering ng napakaraming Muslims at iba-iba pang tribo yan.

Ito nga palang damit namin na nakikita nyo (‘uniform’), ang pagkakapareho nito sa amin ay sign yan ng pagkakapare-pareho namin – walang nakakakaangat. Pantay-pantay at magkaisa.

Ang Qu’ran nga pala ay original di tulad ng Bibliya na ‘edited’.

Sa Islam din, walang separation ng State and “Church” – may tinatawag nga na Shariyah court.

Sa Maranao naman, isang tradition (they emphasized that this is tradition and not due to faith), women are not allowed to be married to males from other tribes. Sa amin, ang masusunod ay lalaki. Tapos pati yung talukbong ay required – ang obligation naman ng males ay ipagtanggol ang mga babae. Ang pagsisinungaling naman ay isang major sin sa Islam.

Sa tingin ba ninyo ay nakakasali kayo sa decision-making na proseso ng pamahalaan? May boses po ba kayo?

Hindi kami marinig. Humihiling nga ng Mosque eh halimbawa – di man lang mabigyan. Sa legislative naman, hinaharang eh. Wala pang top-level na Muslim sa AFP. Nagiging general lang pag retired na – anong saysay nun? Sa Cabinet naman, 1 lang. Sa Senate, wala. Dati pa yan sa Commonwealth. Ang Muslim tinitignan na rebelde. Never talaga na-satisfy. Pati autonomy initiatives, “paper autonomy” lang – pati ang Shariyah courts kulang din. Yung Eidl-Addha, bakit hindi din national holiday. Tuwa naman sila nung dineklara ni GMA na holiday yung Eidl-Fitr.

Bakit nag-aalsa ang Muslim? Sa judiciary, wala. Dati, ang OMA ay Cabinet level, ngayon ay Executive Director na lang ang head. Palala ng palala na ang sitwasyon ng Muslim dito. May pangako nga si GMA na monthly, magkakaroon ng medical team, at magkakaroon na ng ambulance, mula sa PCSO (eto nung pumunta sya dito nung January 17) – di pa rin natututupad! Pangako din ay mga 1 million para sa renovation nitong mosque namin.

May tumutulong ba sa inyong NGO/POs? Paano sila nakakatulong sa inyo.

Wala naman. INC kung tinuturing na NGO ito. Yung INC nga ay sa tingin namin, ‘lollipop approach’. Skeptics kami.

Meron pala – yung CLF: Christian Life Program, nung 1994 ay nagtayo ng day-care center. Nung una, tinuturuan yung mga kids (pre-school) tapos may feeding program – mga P125 a month lang ang binabayad namin. Kumpleto na yan.

May naitatag na ba kayo na mga asosasyon?

May existing for the whole compound – Muslim Madraza Advisory Council. Ito ay registered na sa SEC. May gusto ngang itayo yung mga Maranao – yung Rahkma Qu’ranic Learning Center Foundation, Inc. – ito ay mag-aaral to recognize the Qu’ran.

Recommendations/ Solutions to government and others

1. Correct discriminations. Do this through an info campaign (TV, radio, seminars, etc.)
2. Integrate “Islam education” to DepEd.
3. Correct perception – don’t ‘generalize’ in mass media. Just say the name – don’t mention tribe or religion anymore.
4. Politics. Equal representation in all levels to ensure voice – AFP/PNP, executive, judiciary, legislative.
5. Socio-cultural. Recognize struggle of Muslim Filipinos like Rajah Soliman. There are only a few distinguished Muslim heroes.
6. Economic. Equal treatment in jobs. Everything is in the bill of rights (i.e. equal protection of law) – just implement it! Have prayer rooms (minimum) or even mosque at institutions (i.e. Crame, hospitals)

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