Exploring the Capabilities of Selected Muslim Women in Baguio City, Northern Philippines

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Introduction

In what way Islam continues to shape and influence women's capabilities (or simply what they can do and be) is a highly contentious issue. In light of the growing popularity of Islamic studies around the world, practical and scholarly debates about Islam's consequences on women's lives and situations in Muslim societies have increasingly focused on how the state and various groups within it are appropriating gender and identity discourses for political objectives. This is particularly marked in discourses concerning the impact of fundamentalist Islam[1] (see for instance Saikal 2004; ul Haq 1986; Muzaffar 1986) on women's lives. In many instances, the place of women has become the 'first battleground' in a society's pursuit of cultural and religious renewal (Anwar in Frith 2002, 3). The tension between Islam and women has fascinated social science scholars in contemporary times because of the implicit and explicit nuances observed in these processes of female resistance, acceptance, and negotiation.

The appropriation of gender discourses by Muslim scholars, jurists, and teachers has often rendered Muslim women either as passive or active objects who are mere recipients of religious perceptions, interpretations, ideology and beliefs, rather than as active participants in their own identity formation. While this is not different from the influence played by other organized religions like Christianity, Islam certainly dictates in a more institutionalized way how Muslim women should think and act.

This paper explores some of these nuances through two general questions. First, in what way do Muslim women identify themselves in terms of career choices, family and society? And second, what can they actually do and be? What are their perceptions in terms of their economic, political and social rights? An attempt is made first by surfacing core issues implicated in the discourse on women's identity processes across a variety of Muslim societies. While it is true that there is not one Islam and therefore not one Muslim female experience, the authors believe it

is still possible first, to determine how Islam's influence on women's rights are perceived by Muslim women themselves to be different from that of other organized religions. Second, it is also possible to pinpoint similarities in their experiences by virtue of living under Islam regardless of their geographic locations and local backgrounds. Later in the paper, several recommendations are advanced for more in-depth studies of this kind.

Islam and state

Nussbaum, in a provocative book entitled *Sex and Social Justice* (1999), lists ten basic human functional capabilities that define a truly human life. These capabilities distinguish a human from an animal: the ability to live; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination, and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; concern for other species; play; and control over one's environment. She argues that the lack of any one of these, no matter what else one has, "will fall short of being a good human life" (Nussbaum 1999, 42).

Capabilities may be divided into three types. First, there are capabilities naturally innate in every individual, which become necessary for developing the more advanced capability. Second, internal capabilities are unique to the person concerned, which determine conditions for exercising particular functions. Third, combined capabilities refer to the environments that provide a favorable venue for the individual to exercise practical reason and other major functions (Nussbaum 1999, 44).

It must be understood that Nussbaum does not define capabilities as rights. 'Capabilities' as a theoretical construct, defined as what a person can do and be, possesses none of the cultural, legal and other practical burdens of 'rights'. Logically, every human being, regardless of gender, cultural differences, religious beliefs or race, has capabilities in order to survive as a human. This is Nussbaum's basic argument, that at its core, there are universal and basic human capabilities that cannot be denied.

In reality, however, the exercise of these capabilities is not always straightforward. Culture, religion, and societal expectations and norms act to put structure to these capabilities and in the process may constrain or limit them for the purpose of collective survival and identification. In the discourse involving women, the constraints placed on their capabilities over the ages have been notable for regulating what they can do and be. In effect, a woman may be born with basic capabilities (i.e., the facility for thinking, living, and being), but religion, culture and political arrangements may so constrain the exercise of those capabilities. Nussbaum further insists that a woman needs to actively

decide to make a norm her own, in consideration of all capabilities at her disposal, which must not be taken as normative for her just because she is affiliated with a particular group or culture (Nussbaum 1999, 46).

In many cases, women are faced with strong socio-cultural and religious constraints, which make it difficult for them and, in some cases, even impossible to determine and ascribe their own personal norms. Worse, deviation from what is deemed to be socially, culturally, or religiously appropriate is often frowned upon. Problem areas posed by religions on women's rights have shown that religious discourse remains a very powerful determinant of what they can actually do and be. The prohibition for women to work outside their home, for example, which is often derived from religious precepts, deprives them of a host of rights including opportunities of earning their own living, achieving economic independence, and enjoying mobility, and the rights of assembly, political participation, and free speech.

In almost all of the world religions, including Islam, one of the most fundamental concerns is the control of women's bodies. These controls have "usually been asymmetrical and, from the point of view of justice, discriminatory" (Nussbaum 1999, 93). For Nussbaum, the central role of public planning should be to ensure the capabilities of all citizens, including those of sectors that have traditionally been marginalized such as women and children, so that they can fully and effectively function as human beings (1999, 42).

The relationship between a liberal democratic state and religion, however, is far from simple (see Mutalib 2004 for the tension between Syariah Islam and liberal democracy). In many democratic governments where minority groups have invoked or demanded autonomy and/or legal recognition of cultural and religious rights, the state is caught in a dilemma. If the government defers to the demands of a particular religious group in the name of religious freedom, a vulnerable group of individuals may lose basic rights. However, the opposite is also true: if the government insists on the primacy of secular laws, it stands accused of disregarding religious and cultural differences. For Nussbaum, the only solution for a liberal democratic regime is to ensure that equal rights are promoted regardless of pressure from any religious party or group (1999, 107). This does not necessarily mean the denial of religious rights, but the subsumation of religion to secular laws that ensure basic human survival.

In reality, again, this is easier said than done. In countries like Singapore and the Philippines with a significant Muslim population, the problem emerges when groups demand special rights under Islam. Kadir (2005), for example, argues that while the Women's Charter in Singapore has provided legal protection for women, Muslim women are exempted from these provisions by virtue of the institutionalization

of the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA). Consequently, although polygamy is outlawed in Singapore, AMLA legally provides for Muslim men to marry more than one wife.[2] In the Philippines, polygamy is legally acceptable under Article 27 of the Code of Muslim Personal Law. In both cases, calls for reform are being made not only with regards polygamy, but also divorce, marriage, financial provision, and custody, guardianship and maintenance of children (see for instance Badlishah 2003; Mir-Hosseini 2003; Sisters in Islam 2001).

Gender issues within the framework of Islam are, unsurprisingly, highly divisive. This divisiveness is partly based on the importance ascribed by Muslim societies on the primacy of families as the basic building block of the Islamic community (*ummah*) and as key to socialization of Muslim values (White 2006, 273-274). It is also based on the consideration that Islamic family laws, which have traditionally enjoyed a level of autonomy, has now become entwined in the discourse on anti-colonialism, Muslim identity, and resistance politics against the "secularizing tendencies of Western-educated elites" (White 2006, 274; Saikal 2004).

Women and Islam

There is wide diversity in the interpretation of women's capabilities and identity in Islam. In general, however, there appear to be four core functions of a Muslim woman (see Hashim 2003, 131-158). First, it is one of family care and home keeping. Like Christianity, the emphasis is placed on the woman to subordinate herself to her family and home. Second, it is one of worship, an injunction to be pious based on the Qur'an. Third, it is one of imparting knowledge. Finally, it is one of female social guidance. These ideals promote her as obedient and submissive to God; guards herself when her husband is away; gives precedence to the rulings of Allah above other rulings, an injunction that is certainly not specific to women; presents herself as a pious woman; remains mainly in the home, in accordance with her nature (*fit roh*) and duties; is not adorned and decorated as women were in the times of pre-Islamic ignorance (*jahiliyya*); performs the obligatory prayers (*sholat*); and, pays the wealth tax (*zakat*) (Extract 3-1 from the *Pondok Pesantren Islam Al-Mukmin* in Fealy and Hooker 2006, 275).

Muslim women's subordination is rationalized as biologically determined.[3] Legitimating discrimination using biological differences and, hence, societal roles and expectations have important implications. Notable is the restriction of female political participation. When Benazir Bhutto became Pakistan's Prime Minister after winning the elections in November 16, 1988, debate was rife.[4] Yet history is replete with women who have taken strong political identities in governing their kingdoms

and sultanates. Mernissi (1994) counts as many as 15 queens from Muslim societies in the past, who had become "symbols of sovereignty, the *khutba* and the minting of coins" (Mernissi 1994, 88).[5]

Islamic family laws in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore also show that gender may either be a liability or an asset depending on which side of the debate one is making an argument. Badlishah (2003, 13-21) lists several issues concerning Muslim marriages. First, there are problems related to marriage registration, where men have been shown to declare their marriages null and void in the absence of such registrations. In Indonesia, registration of marriages based on the Marriage Act and the *Kompilasi Hukum Islam* (Compilation of Islamic Laws) "is viewed as only for public order or regulation, and has no connection with the issue of legitimacy of the marriage" (Badlishah 2003, 13-15). In the landmark case of *Mandra vs. Rina 1996,* for example, Madra promised to register the marriage, did not do so, and was able to successfully nullify his marriage when a child was born. The Syariah court ruled in his favor by declaring no valid marriage occurred, and allowed him to legally rescind responsibility over his child and wife. Second, Islamic law may support a marriage between an adult male and a girl-child, in contradiction to the general condemnation of child marriages in many cultures. It may be done upon the petition of the proper *wali* (guardian), as is the case in southern Philippines. Third, the issue of the bride's consent is contentious. While the doctrine of *ijbar* (compulsion) in marriage has been subjected to incessant controversy and criticism throughout the history of Islamic law, Kelantan in Malaysia supports *ijbar* in its Islamic Family Law Enactment of 1983. Here, the bride's consent is *wajib* (obligatory) if she is not a virgin or if she is a virgin whose *wali* is not *mujbir* (her father or paternal grandfather), and only *sunat* (recommended) if she is a virgin whose *wali* is *mujbir*. Other issues related to marriage laws revolve around *mahr* (dowry), and the prohibitions in property acquisition as well as seeking employment outside the home for married women (see Fealy 2005; Fealy and Hooker 2004; Sisters in Islam 2001; Maruhom 2001; Ibrahim 1978, 1965a, 1965b, and 1965c).

One of the most widely debated issues in Islam is polygamy. Although historical evidence supports the argument that polygamy was not a pervasive or popular practice in early-modern maritime Southeast Asia (see Reid 1988), doctrinal precepts legitimize the taking of more than one wife. Men can theoretically and legally marry up to four wives so long as they can treat them all equally; women, however, may not marry more than one husband (Fealy and Hooker 2006, 280). Bennett (2005) has convincingly shown that polygamy has resulted in a high level of emotional, psychological, and financial toll to women whose husbands decide to take more than one wife and/or use the threat of polygamy to guarantee her subservience to her husband. More

interestingly, although opposition to polygamy is typically strong, those who defend the practice in Indonesia do so by arguing that it is permitted by Islam and its prohibition means an attack on Islam (see Nurmila 2008).

Islamic law also differentiates between male and female in inheritance rights. The inheritance share of men to women is commonly in a ratio of 2:1. Exceptions, however, do exist in many Southeast Asian societies where land and immovable property were historically passed from mother to daughter, as in the cases, for example, of the Minangkabau community in West Sumatra, Negri Sembilan in Malaysia, and Aceh in North Sumatra. In these three cases, the influence of *adat* (local customs and laws) has arguably remained strong. Islamic practice, however, generally shows that daughters inherit half that of sons because social and personal responsibility passes from father (or close male relative/s) to husband upon marriage.

The double standard has also been argued to be evident in the regulation of *zina*, defined as illicit or forbidden sex (Bennett 2005, 22). *Zina* includes premarital sex, marital infidelity, homosexual sex, sex with prostitutes, incest, and rape (Bennett 2005, 22), the last from the perspective of the one committing the act. According to the Qur'an, the prohibition applies equally to men and women. In the cases studied by Bennett (2005) in Indonesia, for instance, *zina* does occur, especially premarital sex and marital infidelity, but the sanctions on transgressors differ according to gender. For men, *zina* is implicitly condoned, which may be primarily due to a prevailing macho culture strengthened by a patriarchal view of Islam. For women, punishment can be very subtle but highly effective, including public slander, sexual harassment, and social exclusion (Bennett 2005, 23). Social blaming of women is also exercised as a way to ensure social conformity, which some women themselves may actively participate in (see Milallos 2007). After the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean that devastated Aceh, for example, social blaming was an effective way of enforcing the *busana Muslimah* (Islamic attire) among women and girls.[6]

Two contrasting positions regarding Muslim women's rights

It is important to note at this point that female Muslim scholars and activists themselves are divided on how to understand Islam's influence on female rights. Two opposing positions emerge. On one side of the debate, there are those who argue that Islam is not oppressive to women. Indeed, according to one, "Western-style feminist struggles have liberated women only to the extent that they are prepared to become sex objects and market their sexuality as an advertising tool to benefit patriarchal capitalism" (al-Ghazali and Rahnavard in Afshar 1996,

123). Hence, Western feminism has not resulted in any significant liberalization; instead, women are made into permanent second-class citizens. By returning to the sources of Islam, women are able to ensure their rights and complementarity with men, which Western feminism has failed to provide. These Muslim scholars often present a sympathetic, almost apologist account of women in Muslim societies. In the 1995 UN Conference in Beijing, for example, Siapno notes how African Muslim women took refuge in Islam to resist Westernization, because "global feminism [has] become the most aggressive symbol of Westernization" (Siapno 2002, 65).

On the other end of the debate, majority of feminists and women's rights activists insist that religious fundamentalism has spelled new forms of oppression for women (see for instance Othman 2005; Anwar 2002; Noerdin 2002). The delineation between old and newer forms of oppression is made based on how religious fundamentalism in its various guises has condoned discrimination based on gender in an age of relative individual freedoms (see for instance Falcon 1995). Thus, polygamy, female sexual mutilation, torture, and female seclusion remain sore issues in many states and societies governed by Islamic law, from Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Egypt, Mauritania, to Bangladesh. Writing and advocating a radical feminist stance, these feminist activists from the Third World object to and raise an issue about the misogyny in Islam and how women are being oppressed in the name of Allah.

The changing status of women in Islam

Clearly, the status of women under Islam has not remained unchanged in history. If women were regarded as chattel during the *jahiliyya* period, commonly associated with the age of ignorance, the arrival of Islam radically transformed women's status. It paved the way towards the recognition of their rights in choosing their marriage partner, divorce, inheriting and owning property, raising children, using and spending their own money (*tasarruf*), and prohibiting the burying of female babies which had been prevalent during the *jahiliyya* period (see Hasyim 2006, 17-18).

This kind of perception may have been prevalent in Arabic societies, where the context was certainly unique, but it was not necessarily an experience shared by other women in pre-Islamic societies such as in early modern Aceh, Malacca, Riau, Johor, etc. (see for instance Milallos 2009; Reid 1988). In maritime Southeast Asia, women while not equals of men had enjoyed higher levels of economic autonomy and personal freedom (see also Andaya 2006). Hall opines this may be because arable land was abundant in these areas and there was constant need for additional labor regardless of gender (Hall 1992, 183-272). Hence, the

entry of Islam in maritime Southeast Asia did not dramatically change what women can actually do and be. Wazir, in asserting the bilateral tendencies of *adat* vis-à-vis Islamic laws, has earlier argued that the Islamization of the Malay states did not reduce women's power in any significant way. In fact, for women Islam became a source of power during the colonial period because it provided them with an intellectual base for political activity (Wazir 1992, Preface, xiii).

Debate on the link between *adat* and Islamic laws is, of course, rife with controversy. Points of contention include the alleged bilaterality of *adat* (see, for example, Wazir 1992 defending such a position vis-à-vis Munir 2005), the misogyny of Islamic practices and laws, and the philosophical, historical and ideological symbiosis of the two (see, for instance, Tamano 1973 and Buat 1973 about Islam as the source of *adat*). What is clear is that as kingdoms and communities evolved into more structured political units, such as port-cities and later nation-states, women's sexuality and reproductive potential were subsumed into mainstream politics as male-dominated governments and institutions sought to control their female populations. This is important to note because many practices in Islam, specifically the *purdah* or female seclusion, are arguably products of urbanization and the rise of the middle class. Only rich men after all can afford to seclude their womenfolk and free them from labor, a privilege that is as much a contemporary manifestation (see for instance Mumtaz and Shaheed 1987, 29-34) as a historical one (see Milallos 2009).

Contemporary Muslim women around the world have also undeniably reaped the benefits of rising family incomes and rapid modernization. Ubiquitous images abound of veiled women riding motorcycles, drinking Coca-Cola, and living the jet-set lifestyle in many cosmopolitan cities. Of course who and what percentage of any Muslim society's female population can be categorized as enjoying Nussbaum's capabilities is still very much open to question.

Constructing the Muslim female identity

The dynamics of gender relations in Southeast Asia also vary within regions, states and societies. These variances are influenced by unique state-society interactions, which are continually responsive to domestic and international developments. Although it is difficult, even impossible, to determine the extent to which Islam continues to influence the culture of specific societies, and vise versa, it is undeniable that discourses made within the Islamic framework commonly appropriate the social construction of female identity by advancing specific notions of behavior and social interaction. This is not unique to Islam, but unlike

other major religions, Islam, by conflating politics and religion,[7] provides stronger pressure for social conformity.

Muslim female identity based on the literature above emphasizes the following. First, female sexuality is idealized as chaste, pure and virginal (see Bennett 2005 for a rich discussion on Mataram Muslim society). Hence, although there is a diversity of meanings attached to the practice and tradition of veiling (see Soon 2006), it is very much a public exposition of faith. Any veiled woman, including the Catholic nun, at once projects a public image of her faith. The difference between a Muslim veiled woman and a Catholic nun however is that for the latter, the veil imposes chastity, which is not necessarily a precondition of the former. Thus, the act of veiling for a Muslim woman becomes at once a political decision and not merely a religious one. It is therefore not surprising that Muslim veiling is eternally embroiled in a dynamic political discourse. Second, the Muslim female is intimately tied to the family. Bennett, in her fieldwork on Mataram in Indonesia, concludes that "marriage and motherhood are the key signifiers for women's social identity" (Bennett 2005, 27). It is not the women themselves who are actively involved in conceptualizing their identity, although they may certainly be active in perpetuating it; rather, men have preponderantly interpreted women's identity. *Fiqh,* which has a strong influence in the interpretation of identity in Islam, still remains the monopoly of men. Such is also the experience of many Muslim women in Baguio City in northern Philippines.

Identity of Muslim women in Baguio City

Research in the Philippines on Islam in general and Muslims in particular has overwhelmingly focused on southern Mindanao's struggle for independence, its attempts at autonomous governance, the links of some groups to terrorism, and the myriad security issues related to the decades-long armed conflict and its resolution. Systematic scholarly work on Islam as a culture and a way of life and how this has affected women's agency, however, is regrettably scarce.[8]

Compared with studies undertaken in other Muslim societies in Southeast Asia (see for example Blackburn et al. 2008; Bennett 2005; Kadir 2005; Kamaruddin 2003; Siapno 2002; Wazir 1992; Ibrahim 1978, 1965a, 1965b and 1965c), South Asia (Jalal 1991; Mumtaz and Shaheed 1987), and the Middle East (see Saktanber 2002 and Kandiyoti 1991 for a discussion of Muslim women in Turkey; Jalal 1991 for Pakistan), Islam's influence on discourses about reproductive issues (in particular family planning), women's rights, sexuality, and career patterns of Filipino Muslim women has received minimal attention so far. Such a dearth in scholarly work implies serious limitations in understanding

this rapidly growing population and the changes brought about by increasing Islamization and Islamism.[9] More importantly, the evaluation of policies and government programs that aim to improve the plight of Filipino Muslim women is also compromised.

The latest official sex-aggregated data available on the Muslim population in the Philippines is already an old one, published in 1996 and 2000, respectively. National Statistics Office (NSO) data on the Muslim population in 1990 estimates it to be 2,757,020, constituting 4.5 percent of the total Philippine population with a male-to-female ratio of 0.98 (Solivas and Gironella 1996). By 2000, NSO data estimates the Muslim population to be 3,854,315 (about 5.1 percent of the total population), with the majority residing in Mindanao (Human Development Network 2005, 14).[10]

Filipino Muslims who were more likely to be gainfully employed, or who have worked most of the time during the past twelve months, were generally male, 25 years old and over, categorized as a household head, married, illiterate, not in school, with no grade completed or not a degree holder, had come from larger-sized households, and had been employed in the past week (Solivas and Gironella 1996). In 1990, only 22 percent of female Muslims had gainful occupation compared to 66 percent of male Muslims.

Filipino Muslim women's experiences are first and foremost differentiated in terms of tribal affiliation (whether Tausug, Maguindanao, Maranao, or other Islamized indigenous groups), class, educational background, location (whether residing within Mindanao or outside it), and whether Muslim-born or converts (or *balik-Islam*). However, while a thorough discussion of this differentiation process among Filipino Muslim women's experiences is outside the scope of the research and in particular this paper, an attempt is made to explore in what way it is possible to construct an understanding of Muslim women's identity and politics in Baguio City, northern Philippines. The focus on Baguio City is instructive as recent years have seen a high influx of Muslim migrants into this predominantly Christian area (see Florendo 2004). Such an objective, however, is constrained by several considerations which have emerged during the research process as elaborated below.

The research undertaken from 2007 to 2008 is exploratory in nature by force of circumstance. Its principal objective is to open a discourse on identity and politics among Muslim women in a metropolitan and urbanized setting like Baguio City. Using a qualitative approach, mainly through focus group discussions (FGDs)[11] and key informant interviews[12] a major difficulty emerged. The lack of a good sex-aggregated census estimate of Muslims currently living in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), in particular Baguio City, severely limited the scope of this research. Hence, the number of Muslim females born

each year, the rate of conversion to Islam among Christians, in-migration rates from southern Philippines to CAR, and settlement patterns of Muslim communities in this part of the country are all unsubstantiated with hard data as of this research period. The consequence is that respondents were identified using the snowball method, which has implications on the generalizability of the findings. An invitation to attend a Muslim wedding[13] in Baguio City in 2008 also provided an opportunity at observing Muslim customs.

The ages of the seven *balik-Islam* and three born-Muslim FGD respondents ranged from 22 to 58 years. Of the nine who gave their ages, six were 35 years or younger and three were more than 35 years old. Their professional occupations include medical doctor, flight attendant, call center agent, student, businesswoman, public elected official (as *kagawad*), and *madrasah* teacher. These professions imply that the level of education among the respondents is high, attaining at least university level. Finally, majority of the respondents were married. These characteristics of our respondents are consistent with Solivas and Gironella's data, which show the relatively young population of Muslims in the Philippines with 25 as the median age in 1990, and that more married Muslims are gainfully than non-gainfully employed, with the odd ratios indicating that the likelihood of married Muslims to be gainfully occupied is 3.42 times more than single Muslims (Solivas and Gironella 1996, 13).

These general characteristics place the respondents squarely in the small minority of Muslim women who are educated, gainfully employed, and residing outside Mindanao. Among those who had converted later in life, the transition to Islam was made because they had resided and worked in Muslim societies such as Brunei, Singapore, and Saudi Arabia, or had close family members who did so, again supporting the observation that this is a socio-economic group with opportunities for economic mobility.

Nevertheless, the purposive sampling method adopted in the research deters any attempt at making conclusive statements regarding a general profile of Muslim women in Baguio City. As *balik-Islam* respondents also outnumber born-Muslims, observations are skewed towards the former. Where appropriate, a distinction is made to either group in the analysis of responses. The decision to confine this exploratory research to the educated and socio-economically mobile women is guided by the consideration that this group is often at the forefront of public discourse and therefore plays an important role in determining the social acceptability of certain behaviors and attitudes.

Identity as closely linked to family and Islam

The close interlinking of family, Islam and female identity discussed in the earlier part of this paper is affirmed in this research. For the respondents, Islam has become the center of their lives, defining their choices and life patterns, including decisions such as what recreational activities and career choices to pursue. One respondent insists,

> [For] recreational activities, *yung iba pakikinig ng* music, *panonood ng mga* movies. Instead of doing that, we do other things *na may kapakinabangan sa* religion *like* read Islamic books, *mag*-memorize ng Koran. *Pakikinig ng music, isa sa pinagbabawal sa* Islam ([For] recreational activities, others listen to music, watch movies. Instead of doing that, we do other things that are beneficial to the religion like reading Islamic books, memorizing the Qur'an. Listening to music is one of the prohibited things in Islam).

Islam also becomes an important consideration in choosing children's recreational activities. This is particularly important to young girls who must be closely guarded against gender mixing:

> *Yung mga anak ko, binibigyan din ng* sports *para* balanced *ang buhay. Napili namin ang* archery. Individual sport *siya. Yung babae hindi kelangan na naka*-uniform *na naka-shorts. Hindi kelangan makihalubilo sa mga lalaki na* players *din* (Our children were given sports so they can have a balanced life. We chose archery. It is an individual sport. A girl does not need to be in shorts uniform. There is no need to mingle with boy players).

At least for one respondent, a woman's career is irrelevant insofar as it takes her away from her religion and family. Teaching, because it allows proximity with children, is perceived as the most honorable profession:

> On education*, ang pinakamagandang trabaho sa babaeng* Muslim *ay ang pagtuturo. Para maturuan ang mga bata* (On education, the best profession for a Muslim female is teaching. In order to teach children).
>
> *Ang pinipili,* especially for married Muslim*, ang alagaan ang mga anak (*as a career/vocation) (The choice, especially for married Muslims, is to raise children [as a career/vocation]).

In general, there is a shared perception that marriage is sacred, and a wife must be subservient to her husband at all times as befits her nature (*fitroh*):

> Muslim women usually belong in the house.

It is the way she was created by Allah. *Pwedeng gumawa ng mga bagay/trabaho na makakatulong sa pamilya namin pero dapat andun sa mga* limits *ng* teaching *ng* Islam (Pursuing other things/work that can help the family is permitted, but should be within the limits of the teachings of Islam).

Although the wife does not make the final decisions for the family, she is still consulted. However, the perception is also strong that a woman does not have a voice in the family, and that she must always defer to her husband:

Sa Islam, *sumusunod ka sa asawa mo. Pero iko-consult sa babae. Ang babae walang* say. *Walang boses* (In Islam, you follow your husband. However, the wife is consulted. She does not have a say. No voice).

It is clear for all respondents that once a woman is married, the husband assumes all responsibility for her well-being and day-to-day life. Whether this is explicitly advanced by doctrinal Islam is open to debate, but what is interesting is the attitude of acceptance among the respondents themselves. Generally, the belief that a Muslim woman can have no opinions, recreation, or life separate from her family is one that the respondents declare matter-of-factly. A good Muslim woman is generally a follower, first of her parents and later of her husband:

Hindi pwedeng magpasok ng bisita na hindi pumayag ang asawa. Kahit may sakit ang magulang, hindi siya pwedeng lumabas ng bahay kung hindi pumayag ang asawa (You cannot invite a visitor inside the house if your husband did not allow it. Even though the parents may be ill, she cannot go out of the house if the husband does not allow it).

Hindi siya pwedeng mag-fasting na hindi gusto ng asawa. Inuutos ang pagrespeto sa asawa at sa pamilya (She cannot fast if her husband did not want it. The law says to respect your husband and family).

Kung kailangang bumoto at ipinagbawal ng husband na bumoto, alamin ang dahilan. Kung valid *ang* reason, *makikinig sa asawa. Kung ayaw ng asawa mo na umalis ka ng bahay para bumoto, hindi talaga* (If you need to vote and your husband forbids it, ask your husband why. If the reason is valid, listen to your husband. If he does not want you to leave the house to vote, then you cannot vote).

Sa Muslim na babae, nasa talampakan ng paa ng lalaki ang surga (paradise). Makukuha ang paradise *kapag lahat ng gusto ng asawa susundin namin basta nakapaloob pa rin sa* Islam (For a Muslim woman, paradise is at the feet of the man. We will be able to

> attain heaven if we follow all that our husbands ask so long as these are within the bounds of Islam).

Born-Muslim respondents themselves confirm this complete subservience to the husband is what separates a Muslim from a non-Muslim woman:

> *Bilang may-asawa, ang pagkakaiba talaga, malaki ang respeto sa asawa mo. Lahat ng opinion, ipapaalam sa asawa ko. 'Pag di siya pumayag, hindi pwedeng suwayin* (As a married woman, the real difference is that you have a high respect for your husband. I share all my opinions with my husband. If he doesn't give his permission, I cannot go against his wishes).

The passive nature of the Muslim woman reflected in the following statement is interesting because conversely the man is seen as having primary responsibility for marrying and starting a family. A woman can refuse a man simply by saying so, but her consent is already guaranteed if she is silent on the issue:

> *Lalaki ang namimili ng asawa. Hahanap siya ng asawa kapag nasa hustong gulang na. Sasabihin sa* parents. *Kakausapin ang* parents *ng babae. Tatanungin (*similar *to namamanhikan). Pag hindi niya talaga gusto, pwedeng magsalita ang babae. Pag hindi kumibo, ibig sabihin pumapayag siya* (It is the man who chooses a wife. He seeks a wife when he is at the right age. He tells his parents. The parents talk to the girl's parents. They will ask [for her hand] (this is similar to the courting period). If she really doesn't like [the guy], the girl can say so. If she doesn't say anything, this means she has given her consent).

A born-Muslim respondent was quick to say that a woman's passivity must not be taken as constraining her ability to determine her own choice of marriage partner. Forcing a woman to marry against her will invalidates a marriage.

> *Sa Islam, may karapatan ang babae at lalaki na magkagustuhan, 'pag mature na yung babae. Hindi siya pwedeng pilitin* (In Islam, both girl and boy have a right to fall in love, if the girl is mature enough to do so. She cannot be forced).

The attitude of passivity extends to the issue of divorce, where a woman is perceived to be a recipient rather than an initiator of divorce proceedings. An exception, however, is made when a wife has a valid reason for wanting to dissolve her marriage, among others if the husband has an incurable disease, is insane, engages in homosexual relations, or cannot fulfill his marital obligations.

> *Hindi pwedeng mag-initiate na maghiwalay ang babae. Lalaki ang magsasabi na maghiwalay.* Unless *may* valid reason *ang babae* (A wife cannot initiate divorce proceedings. It is the man who decides on divorce. Unless the wife has a valid reason).

If passivity and subservience are marks of a good Muslim wife, to go against the husband is considered a major breach of Islamic teachings.

Veiling as an identity-marker

At the core of discourses involving women and Islam is the issue of veiling, which has a rich and diverse history, tradition and practice in different Muslim societies (see Soon 2006). As such, it is highly political, being simultaneously a personal choice and a societal, albeit sometimes very subtle, imposition, both a matter of faith and conformity. Thus, not all Muslim women decide to use the veil or have their daughters use them.

For all ten respondents in this research, the veil symbolizes piety, being very much a personal decision to protect their dignity against dishonor. A common response is that, "*Na*-preserve *ang* dignity *mo. Hindi ka basta babastusin*" (Your dignity is preserved. You are not easily dishonored). The veil is a practical protection that can only be discarded when a woman is no longer viewed as desirable.

> *Pag may edad na, lipas na ang* beauty, *pwede nang alisin ang belo* (When one is old, and no longer beautiful, the veil can be removed).

When one respondent was asked why she continued to wear the veil even though she was already 58 years old, she replied that she felt naked without it and cannot bring herself to go out uncovered. At least for all respondents, the wearing of the veil is obligatory:

> *Kung mag*ri-risk *ng buhay*—a matter of life and death, *pwede mong tanggalin ang* veil. *If it's a matter of life and death, laws may be bent* (If life is at risk [you can choose not to wear the veil]…you can take off the veil).

The veil also forwards a negative conception of the male as someone always consumed by lust, against which the woman needs to defend herself.

> *[Sa] pagsusuot ng belo, nababawasan ang pag-iisip ng lalaki.* Hair, *nakakadagdag sa* beauty *ng babae. Iniiwasan ito sa pamamagitan ng pagsusuot ng belo* (When a woman wears the veil, the man's passion

is diminished. Hair adds to the woman's beauty. This is avoided by wearing the veil).

The negative conception of the world as dangerous and unsafe begins from the moment a Muslim girl has to interact with it on a regular basis. When asked at what age a girl is made to wear the veil, an *ustadz* replied that parents make this decision for their daughters. There are some who make their daughters wear the veil as early as four or five years old; there are those who require it when their daughters begin menstruating; and there are still those who leave the decision to their daughters. For his own daughters, the *ustadz* made them wear the veil as early as possible to better socialize them into the Muslim way of life emphasizing piety and morality.

For a Muslim veiled woman, pursuing a career can prove to be a challenge because interaction and physical proximity with males who are neither blood relatives nor husbands are strictly prohibited under Shariah laws. As one respondent noted, who was working as a call center agent:

> *Hindi pwedeng maki-pag*-shake hands*, hindi pwedeng hawakan ng mga lalaki, hindi pwedeng makipag-usap sa mga lalaki na kami lang* (Shaking hands is not allowed, we cannot be touched by men, it is also not allowed to talk to men alone).

When asked whether this was something she opened to her prospective employers early on, she affirmed:

> *Upon hiring, sinasabi ko na sa kanila para alam nila ang* values *ng* Islam*. Sa* interview *pa lang,* curious *na sila sa* look/appearance. So they ask questions*.* So *na*-explain *mo na agad kahit hindi ka pa* hired (Upon hiring, I already told them so they know the values of Islam. During the interview, they were already curious about the look/appearance. So they ask questions. So you have already explained [this] even though you are not yet hired).

Another respondent, however, does interact with the opposite sex on a regular basis because she is a public elected official. As a *kagawad,* she does not see anything wrong with shaking the hands of men because this is what is expected of her as a public servant.

What is interesting is that it was only born-Muslim respondents who were able to clarify why Islam forbids interacting with unrelated males:

> Generally*, bawal ang maki*-interact *sa lalaki sa* Islam*. Pero depende kung ano ang* context *din. Halimbawa kung* business-related, teacher-student consultation — *[kung] ang dahilan naman ay hindi para magkagustuhan sila. Depende kung ano ang pinag-uusapan* (*kung hindi*

> *naman sa pakikipag-relasyon). Ang Islam ay hindi nagpapahirap sa mga babae* (Generally, Islam forbids females to interact with males. But this also depends on the context. For example if it is business-related, teacher-student consultation—if the reason is not to pursue a relationship [it is alright to interact with unrelated males]. Islam does not make things difficult for women).
>
> *Ang dahilan kung bakit ipinagbabawal ang* interaction *ng hindi magkaano-ano na babae at lalaki ay dahil iniiwasan na mabuntis ang babae na hindi ikinakasal. 'Yun ang bawal, mabuntis na hindi "legal"* (The reason why unrelated males and females are forbidden to interact is to prevent unwanted pregnancies of unmarried females. That's what's forbidden, to become pregnant when it's not legal [to do so]).
>
> *Lahat ng ipinagbabawal sa Islam ay may explanation at hindi lang basta bawal. Hindi lang naiintindihan ng iba* (All that is prohibited in Islam has explanations and not merely to prohibit for prohibition's sake. Others just don't understand why [there are prohibitions]).

In practical terms, the career options in the Philippines open to Muslim women who share similar sentiments may actually be small, considering the limited variety of jobs that do not entail mixing with the opposite sex. The other option is, of course, more popular, that is to stay at home and become financially dependent on her husband's income. As one respondent insists,

> *Hindi sila pwedeng mag-asawa na hindi sila handa. Ang lalaki, kelangan buhayin ang babae. Ang hanapbuhay ay para sa lalaki* (They [referring to men] cannot marry if they are not ready for it. The man has to support the wife. Keeping a profession [for financial purposes] is for the man).

Obviously, the choice of seeking paid employment outside the home is not open to all Filipino Muslim women; those who have husbands with incomes sufficient to provide for the family on their own belong to a small economic group. A *balik-Islam* respondent observed,

> *[Yung] Muslim sa sidewalk. Pinto [sila] ng mga tao sa mga Muslim. Bakit sila nagtitinda? Kulang sila sa pag-intindi sa Islam. Kailangan din nila ng kabuhayan. Alam nila yon. [Pero] mas malakas ang* pull *ng kabuhayan. Hindi sila* informed ([About] Muslims on the sidewalk. They reflect what Muslims are to other people. Why are they vendors? They have less understanding of Islam. They also need income. They know this. But livelihood has a stronger pull. They are not informed).

The Muslim women on the sidewalks referred to above are the vendors who can be found along Session Road and at the Public Market. They are mostly Maranao migrants who own *ukay-ukay* (secondhand clothing and apparel) shops and stalls selling CDs and DVDs. They are easily identifiable as Muslim to other Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In fact, the common face of Muslims in Baguio City is the female Maranao vendor, who *balik-Islam* women consider as not being proper Muslims. Many of these vendors, according to these respondents, are careless about leaving ears and hair uncovered, and they wear tight clothes even with the veil. One respondent notes,

> *Nakasabit lang sa leeg ang* veil *nila. Ang tamang pagsuot ng* veil… *Merong sumusunod at hindi sumusunod. Nakikita tuloy ng tao na ganun ang suot. Hindi dapat nakikita ang form ng katawan. Ang beauty ng babae, para sa asawa lang. Ang pwede lang makakita sa kanya, anak at asawa* (They only hang their veils on the neck. There are those who follow and do not follow the proper way of veiling. Consequently, people see that's how we wear the veil. The form of the body must not be seen. A woman's beauty is only for her husband. The only ones who should see her [beauty] must be her children and her husband).

The decision not to wear the veil, however, invites derision and prejudice from fellow Muslim men and women who see these 'naked' females as unchaste, immoral, or untaught in Islamic teachings. While veiling is supposed to be the norm, unveiled Muslim females are seen as misguided, largely uninformed by parents, and in need of Islamic education.

Stereotypes and prejudice

The practice of veiling can be both a refuge for women from dishonor and a reason for discrimination. Veiling is an act of faith, says one respondent, because it is a public proclamation of being Muslim when Islam is popularly and traditionally viewed in this country with suspicion. Because the veil is the ascribed identity marker of a Muslim woman, it can invite a variety of stereotyping and prejudicial behavior from non-Muslims, which are mostly verbal in nature.

> *[Impression ng tao] lahat ng Muslim, Abu Sayyaf,* member of a terrorist *group, bobo, mangmang,* uneducated (People's impression is that all Muslism are Abu Sayyaf, a member of a terrorist group, stupid, ignorant, uneducated).

> *Napagkamalan na madre ako* (I was thought to be a nun).

[May] verbal comments or attacks on them as Muslim—like "terrorist" or "ninja" lalo if fully covered—*mata lang ang kita. Tinatanong agad kapag* Muslim *kung "apat ang asawa mo?"* (There are verbal comments or attacks on them as Muslim—like "terrorist" or "ninja" especially if one is fully covered up and only the eyes are visible. If they find out you're a Muslim they quickly ask if you have four wives).

In looking for employment in areas where Muslims are a minority, a veiled Muslim woman experiences many challenges and problems.

Disadvantage *sa paghahanap ng trabaho.* Example *sa* dresscode. *Makikiusap kung pwedeng mas mahabang uniform. May* employers, *nag-aalala na baka maapektuhan ang* business, *dahil sa* Muslim employees (There is a disadvantage in looking for a job. Example is the dresscode. You will have to ask permission to have your uniform in a longer length. There are employers who worry that having Muslim employees will affect their business).

Interaction with non-Muslims in getting driver's licenses, in school settings, and even in public transports also entails a level of difficulty for Muslim females who decide to wear the veil.

[There is] difficulty in getting IDs, driver's license. Example, *pinipilit na alisin ang veil* (There is difficulty in getting IDs, driver's license. For example, there are those who force us to remove the veil).

Sa school, *nag*-change course from nursing to midwife because of the Practicum (the practicum required having a male partner). *Hindi pwedeng mag*-partner *ang babae sa lalaki. Sa* practicum ng nursing, I'm not wearing a cap. *Pero, magpapalit ako ng* bandana *na* sterile. *Pero, kinu-question ng instructor* (In school, I had to change courses from nursing to midwife because of the Practicum. A female cannot have a male partner. During the nursing practicum, I'm not wearing a cap. But, I would change into a sterile bandana. However, the instructor would question this).

Pag sasakay ng jeep, kini-question ang pagiging student (I think, it's because they look older because of the *hijab*/veil?). (When riding a jeep, [the driver] questions whether [I am] a student).

The stereotyping in Philippine media of Muslims is a concern among the respondents. When a Muslim commits a crime, for instance, the media often portrays him first as Muslim. This is not often the case when the criminal is a non-Muslim.

It must be noted here that the respondents in the two FGDs, divided into converts or *balik*-Islam and born-Muslims, as well as interviews for which the statements above were noted, belong to a wide network

orbiting a particular *ustadz*, who hold regular discussion sessions about the Qur'an among Muslims in Baguio City. The rhetoric among the respondents is thus unsurprisingly similar. It would be highly interesting to explore more deeply whether the majority of Muslim women in the Philippines in general and Baguio City in particular share these conservative notions of the female role, family and marriage. While there is also obviously a big gap between what is rhetorically said and actually done, these responses do support the rhetoric expressed in other parts of Southeast Asia (see for instance excerpts in Fealy and Hooker 2006), which denotes a shared ideological and philosophical foundation across different Muslim societies. More importantly, there appear to be no discernible differences in the perceptions of born-Muslims with regards their practice of Islam in Baguio City, supporting the findings of Florendo that migrant Muslims in the Cordilleras do not experience an increased or decreased level of Islamic belief or practice (see Florendo 2004).

Balik-Islam vis-à-vis Born-Muslims

There is a perception among the respondents that the practice of Islam is different for *balik-Islam* and born-Muslims. Converts perceive Muslim migrants from Mindanao as identifying themselves first according to their ethno-linguistic affiliation (whether Maguindanao, Maranao, Tausug, or some other group) and Muslim only as a secondary marker.

> *Kultura ang nangunguna, hindi ang batas ng Islam* (Culture predominates, not Islamic laws).

A born-Muslim respondent confirmed that there are some practices, notably in marriage, that are not based on Islamic teachings but remain prevalent due to local traditions.

> *Hindi pwedeng mag-asawa ng hindi* Muslim. *Sa Pilipinas, may* thirteen tribes of Muslims.... *May mga* tribes *na kailangan Maranao na* Muslim *lang ang pwedeng maging asawa. Pwedeng makasal sa kapwa Maranao lang.* But this is based on cultural tradition, not based on Islam (It is not allowed [for a Muslim] to marry a non-Muslim. In the Philippines, there are thirteen tribes of Muslims.... There are tribes where you can marry only another Maranao Muslim).

On the other hand, there is also the perception that being born into the faith has its advantages:

> *Iba ang nalakihan ang Islam (*born-Muslim) versus *balik*-Islam. Advantage of Muslims from Mindanao—*marunong sa* Arabic *ang*

> *mga* born-Muslim. *Isang quality na sana kaya rin ng balik*-Islam (It is different for those who grew up with Islam [born-Muslim] versus converts. The advantage of Muslims from Mindanao, born-Muslims know Arabic. This is one quality that hopefully converts can also do).

The value of knowing Arabic is still linked to being a pious and learned Muslim who is able to read the Qur'an. However, whether converts are more conservative in their adherence to Islamic practices and beliefs is something that needs to be investigated further.

Among born-Muslim migrants from Mindanao who have relocated to Baguio City, the history and experience of violence and counter-insurgency policies pursued by the Philippine government against the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) reinforce their sense of difference and separateness from the mainstream Christian society. The 2001 all-out war policy of the Estrada government against the MILF-dominated areas still evoke strong emotions to those who had experienced violence and reflect deep trauma, even though they have already migrated to Baguio City since then. One respondent, who is a medical doctor from a prominent political Maranao clan in Mindanao, was tearful when recounting how she saw the army herding women, children and the elderly into trucks and how Camp Abubakar, which was a community rather than an MILF garrison, was bombed and the mosque desecrated.

Reproductive health and other issues concerning Muslim women

The doctrinal and official position of Islam on population control is similar to that of the Catholic Church, which is anti-abortion, pro-life, and pro-choice. Such methods as sterilization and other more permanent means of inhibiting conception are strongly prohibited. However, unlike the Catholic Church which takes an unequivocal position condemning contraception, Islam does allow it in cases where the mother's life is clearly endangered (see Pangandaman-Gania 1994, 36).

Among the respondents, family planning is not a big issue, so long as the method used is permitted under Islam. This means pills, contraceptives or abortifacients are strictly unacceptable. Respondents, however, were quick to add that ligation, abortion and contraception are allowed within reason, such as when the health of the mother is at risk. When this is the case, contraception ceases to be a moral issue.

On the issues regarding the minimum age of marriage for girls and the consent of the child-bride to a marriage, polygamy, divorce, financial provisions, and custody and maintenance of children, the respondents

do not consider these very significant. One respondent allowed her daughters to marry whoever they wished provided they were Muslims, too. One of her daughters married an Indian man and now lives in India, occasionally coming home to visit. The *ustadz,* however, argued that one of the roles of good parents is to look for worthy husbands for their daughters. As he himself had two wives, with one wife living abroad, and children from two marriages, he believes that polygamy is acceptable only insofar as the husband can adequately provide for all, and avoid favoritism among his wives and children.

The notion of females as being unable to run for elected office is also reiterated among *balik-Islam* respondents.

> One thing, *sa* politics *naman, hindi pwedeng maging* leader *ang babae. Ginawa tayo ni* Allah *na* emotional *talaga ang babae. Kahit matalino pa siya, bagsak pa rin nyan* emotional *ka pa rin* (In politics, a woman cannot become a leader. Woman was made by Allah to be emotional. Even though she is intelligent, she will still be emotional).

Whether such a prohibition is supported by Islamic teachings is not clear to *balik-Islam* respondents.

> *Hindi sinabi na hindi pwede. Tayo lang ang nakaisip na kung pwede huwag na lang* ([Islamic teachings] did not prohibit it. We just thought if possible [women must not go into politics]).

On the other hand, another respondent noted:

> *Pero, sinabi ng Propeta na ang babae hindi talaga siya pwedeng maging* leader. Because of the emotional aspect (But, it was the Prophet who said [a woman] cannot become a leader).

Regarding *mahr* or dowry, a born-Muslim respondent clarified why it was actually economically advantageous to the woman. The common misconception that dowry was a practice of selling daughters through marriage, according to a respondent, disregards the fact that dowry is the woman's right. It belongs to her, and is usually what the newly-weds need to start their life together. If the man is poor and cannot afford to give monetary dowry, Islamic books may be given instead.

The expression of alternative sexualities is also strongly discouraged, particularly cross-dressing. For born-Muslim respondents, Islam clearly permits only two genders—male or female. While homosexuality does occur in some cases, homosexuals are expected to be low-key and circumspect at all times.

Conclusion

It certainly appears that Muslim women are more often recipients rather than initiators in their own process of identity formation. The respondents in the FGDs and interviews for this research were certainly well-educated and economically mobile women who actively choose to adhere to Islamic teachings and practices. While these teachings and practices may constrain the personal freedoms often taken for granted by other non-Muslim females, such as going out without a veil, gender mixing, involvement in recreational sports, and career, these Muslim women do choose to be in these situations.

There are differences in how Islam is practiced and/or interpreted by born-Muslim and *balik-Islam* women. Notable is the higher probability among born-Muslims to have the ability to read the Qur'an and explain prohibitions based on Islamic teachings. However, the similarities outweigh these differences:

- Islam determines all aspects of life, including marriage, family life, career, expressions of sexuality, and recreation;
- Family is the key to understanding the identity process of Filipino Muslim women. A good Muslim woman subordinates herself to her family and her husband;
- Marrying is far more agreeable than not marrying. As such, the husband is accorded with very high consideration. He has complete responsibility over his wife's total well-being;
- Veiling is perceived as obligatory; and,
- Stereotyping against Muslims, particularly veiled women, is an experience shared by both groups.

Nonetheless, Muslim women can do whatever and be whatever they want, provided these are within the bounds of Islam's teachings. The responses affirm the centrality of Islam in all aspects of their lives—career, relationships, family, and societal expectations. At least among the respondents in this research, the choices open to a Muslim woman should always be viewed within the framework of Islam, and may not necessarily be perceived as constraining their potential to become full and active citizens.

Recommendations for further research

Future research trajectories may be pursued for more in-depth studies about women and Islam in the Philippines:

- Are converts or *balik*-Islam women more conservative in their practice than born-Muslims? At a more scholarly level, this question promises a rich discussion on the process of Islamization in areas that are previously Christian-dominated, such as Baguio City. In addition, it will also be able to open discussions on the process of Islamism if it occurs. The high level of in-migration into these areas and the increasing interaction of converts, born-Muslims and non-Muslims in urbanizing areas provide important insights into issues such as migration, urbanization, and employment.

- Are Muslim women able to fully utilize government services, such as reproductive health services, social services systems, education, etc? In what way are their interests aggregated and expressed? What social services are they lacking access to, and why? What policies are already in place that protect and promote their well-being? Are these policies being implemented? Are they effective? These kinds of questions directly deal with how Muslim women negotiate their rights and identities vis-à-vis the Philippine society.

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NOTES

1. The term 'fundamentalism' has historically referred to the anti-modern and militant Protestant religious movement, which started in the early 1920s. The term 'fundamentalist Islam', however, has often been linked to such terms describing Islam as militant, resurgent, extremist and radical. Pipes (quoted in Othman 2006) defines this movement as "misanthropic, misogynist, triumphalist, millenarian, anti-modern, anti-Christian, anti-Semitic, terroristic, jihadistic, and suicidal." See also Muzaffar 1986; ul Haq 1986.

2. Kadir (2005), however, while quick to admit that AMLA theoretically offers substantial regulation of polygamy in Singapore, also argues that AMLA disadvantages Muslim women in several ways. First, they are exempted from legal additions and improvements aimed at raising the status of women in general as enshrined in the Charter. Second, AMLA exempts Muslim women from CEDAW. Third, AMLA ties Muslim women to Syariah courts in Singapore on matters relating to marriage, divorce,

custody and inheritance—courts that have remained very conservative in the interpretation of the law.

3. See for instance extract 13-3 from *Pesantren Putri Pondok Modern Gantor* (in Fealy and Hooker 2006, 279). For example, menstruation, as perceived, reduces the ability to control emotions, increase susceptibility to hallucinations, induce changes to the immune system, slow down mobility, and worse, decrease understanding, intelligence and strength of mind.

4. There are those who believe for instance that, "Women are permitted to hold government office, such as that of queen, president, prime minister and the like, *so long as they are not in the highest rank, that is, the Great Authority.* For the same reason women may not be judges, *as that work generally requires the strength of mind and endurance of a man"* (italics supplied) (Extract 13-21, Syariah Online on Fealy and Hooker 2006, 312). A specific Hadith is also used to support such bias against female leadership: "No community will prosper (have success) if they entrust their affairs to women" (Hadith in Fealy and Hooker 2006, 280-1). Nonetheless, the prohibition on women becoming Syariah judges is not uniformly observed. In Malaysia, for instance, upholding such a practice has been shown to have implications to the backlog of matrimonial cases in the Syariah courts (see Kamaruddin 2003, 60-102). This is not the case in Indonesia, where women have been appointed in the Syariah courts to deal with family law matters that come under the jurisdiction of the Marriage Law of 1974.

5. Included in this list were the Turks Radiyya who took power in Delhi in 634/1236, and Shajarat al-Durr who mounted the throne of Egypt in 648/1250. There were the two queens of the Mongol Kutlugh-Khanid dynasty, Kutlugh Kathun (also called Turkan Khatun in the documents) and her daughter Padishah Khatun (who is also referred to as Safwat al-Din Khatun) during the 13th and 14th centuries in Kirman, a Persian province situated to the southwest of the great central desert, the Dasht-I Lut. There was Absh Khatun, the 9th sovereign of the Persian dynastry of the Atabeks known as the Sulghurid dynasty from the name of its founder, Sulghur, chief of the Turkoman tribe, which migrated to Iran. She ruled the Persian kingdom from 662/1263 to 686/1287. Dawlat Khatun acceded to the throne after the death of her husband 'Izz al-Din Muhammad in 716/1316, the 14th sovereign of the Bani Khurshid dynasty, which governed Luristan for almost 4 centuries beginning in 591/1195, an area situated in southwestern Persia. In 739/1339, the Mongol queen Sati Bek came to power, and the *khutba* was proclaimed in her name and coins were minted with the following inscription: *Al-sultana al-'adila Sati Bek Khan khallad Allah mulkaha* (The just sultana Sati Bek Khan, may Allah perpetuate her reign). However, she only reigned for 9 months. Another Mongol queen, named Tindu who belonged to the Jallarid dynasty, a branch of the Ilkhan dynasty, which governed Iraq during the 14th and 15th centuries from 714/1336 to 814/1411, ascended the throne in 814/1411. A last Mongol queen, Sultana Fatima Begum, whom the Russians know under the name of Sultana Sayyidovna, may have ruled the Ilkhan kingdom of Qasim in Central Asia between 1679 and 1681. Seven sultanas, in Mernissi's list, reigned in the Indies. There was Sultana Khadija, daughter of Sultan Salah al-din Salih Albendjaly in the Maldives, who reigned from 1347-1379. On her death, she was succeeded by her sister Myriam until 785/1383, who was in turn succeeded by her daughter, Sultana Fatima, who ruled until her

death in 790/1388. In Indonesia, Mernissi lists the 4 queens of Aceh: Sultana Tadj al-'Alam Safiyyat al-Din Shah (1641-75); Sultana Nur-al-'Alam Nakiyyat al-Din Shah the fifteenth (1675-8); 'Inayat Shah Zakiyyat al-Din Shah the sixteenth (1678-88); and, Kamalat Shah the seventeenth (1688-99). Nonetheless, Mernissi also insists that these queens were not and could never attain the title *caliph,* which can only be defined as male. Instead, these queens were *sultanas* and *malikas.* (See Mernissi 1994, 88-111.)

6. Cuevas for instance observes: "...many community members and religious leaders [during a focus group discussion on gender and recovery in Banda Aceh, March 2006] actually accused women of causing the tsunami. The tsunami was a punishment for the inappropriate conduct of the women, in particular those that [sic] sometimes do not use a head cover or dress in very tight clothes' (Cuevas 2006, 21).

7. Carl Brown (in Fealy 2006, 207) has, however, pointed out that Muslim history in general "has been characterized by the largely successful attempt to bar government from proclaiming (and then enforcing) religious orthodoxy." This position is in contrast to the oft-repeated statement that in Islam church and state are one, and that politics is an integral element of Islamic life.

8. One of the more recent ethnographic works is done by Florendo (2004), which focuses on migrant Muslims in the Cordilleras. Although this work does not directly deal with how Muslims, particularly women, practice their religion in new migrant communities in the northern provinces of the Philippines and has instead focused on the pull and push factors for migration out of Mindanao, it is a valuable source of contemporary information on Muslims in the Cordilleras.

9. Fealy defines Islamization as either the "conversion of non-Muslims to Islam" or "the intensification of Islamic belief and practice among those who are already Muslim" (Fealy 2005, 167). He contrasts this with Islamism: "the commitment to implement comprehensively an ideological vision of Islam in the state and society" (Fealy 2005, 152).

10. This approximation, obtained from the public use files of the 2000 Census of Population and Housing (CPH) conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO), has been contested. The Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA) believes that the NSO data undercount the Muslim population almost by half, leading some to refer to this undercounting as "statistical genocide" (see Human Dev elopment Network 2005, 14-15.)

11. Two focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted by Prof. Balmores on two separate occasions. The first, on June 13, 2008, was conducted at the Grand Mosque in Baguio City from 12:30 nn to 1:40 pm, with seven respondents. All seven of the respondents during the first FGD were converts or *balik-Islam.* The second FGD was conducted on July 1, 2008 from 2:30-4:40 pm at Mandarin Restaurant, also in Baguio City, which involved three born Muslim women. Two respondents begged off in the second FGD.

12. Two informant interviews were conducted. The first was with an *ustadz,* who was Muslim spiritual director of a university in Baguio City. The interviews with him occurred on several occasions, but did not utilize a structured questionnaire. The primary objective of such interviews was the establishment of rapport and the determination of respondents. The second interview was with a medical doctor who was working at the Office of

Muslim Affairs (OMA) in Baguio City conducted in 2008. Both were Maranao migrants from Mindanao.

13. Ms. Milallos was fortunate to attend in December 2007 a wedding ceremony between a Muslim female Ifugao convert and a Turk inside the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) grounds.

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