



The Resilience of Catholic Migrant Workers' Marriages: Socio-Religious Challenges in South Malang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the resilience of Catholic migrant workers' marriages in South Malang, Indonesia, within a diverse socio-religious context. The research aims to explore the challenges faced by Catholic couples in maintaining long-distance marriages and to analyze the strategies they employ to preserve marital harmony. Utilizing a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods, this study involves in-depth interviews with two Catholic couples, one of whom works as a migrant worker. The results indicate that couples face dual challenges: economic pressures driving migration and the complexity of maintaining religious identity as a minority. Strategies employed include intensive communication, strengthening faith, and involvement in church communities. Analysis using "superdiversity" and "lived religion" theories reveals how couples negotiate their Catholic identity in a diverse social context. The discussion highlights the importance of contextual pastoral support and interfaith dialogue. In conclusion, the resilience of Catholic marriages in the context of migration and diversity requires complex negotiation between religious teachings, socio-economic realities, and personal interpretations, potentially contributing to broader social harmony.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a fundamental social institution that reflects the cultural, spiritual, and social values of a society. In Indonesia, a country rich in religious and cultural diversity, marital dynamics are often influenced by complex socio-religious contexts. The phenomenon of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI), particularly Female Migrant Workers (TKW), has become a significant social reality, especially in areas with relatively low economic levels. In Purworejo Village, Donomulyo District, Malang Regency, East Java, an interesting phenomenon is observed where a number of residents, including Catholics as a minority group, choose to work as Female Migrant Workers (TKW) to improve their family's standard of living. This decision is made in the context of a religiously diverse society, with the majority of the population adhering to beliefs that have different views on marriage and family life. This diversity creates a unique social landscape where various religious traditions and values interact and influence each other.

The TKW phenomenon in Donomulyo District not only impacts family dynamics but also creates new social patterns in society. Many families have successfully improved their economic status after one of their members works as a TKW. However, behind this economic success, there are complex problems, especially related to household harmony and social integration. Infidelity and divorce become real threats often faced by TKW families. This situation creates a particular dilemma for Catholics who become TKWs, given the Catholic Church's teaching that emphasizes the unitary and indissoluble nature of marriage, while also challenging them to maintain their religious identity amid a non-Catholic majority.

In the theological context, Catholic marriage is understood as a sacrament reflecting the unity of the love of the Triune God. Pope Francis, in *Amoris Laetitia*, emphasizes that the husband-wife relationship is an image of the mystery of the unity of God's love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Bukalski & Falewicz, 2022; Laetitia, 2020). Marriage is not merely a social bond but a profound spiritual calling. Thomas (2002) emphasizes that marriage is more than just a sacred covenant; it is a spiritual discipline designed to help couples know God better, trust Him more fully, and love Him more deeply. This understanding becomes an important foundation for Catholic couples in facing socio-religious challenges in an environment that is predominantly non-Catholic.

The Canon Law of the Catholic Church (can. 1055, §1) establishes two main purposes of marriage: the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children (Butler, 2016; Nemeč & Vladár, 2013; Valdrini, 2024). Raharso (2014) explains that the welfare of spouses (*bonum coniugum*) and the welfare of children (*bonum prolis*) are closely interrelated. Marital harmony is realized when couples mutually strive for good in married life. Fidelity (*bonum fidei*) and indissolubility (*bonum sacramenti*) become important foundations in building the welfare of the couple. In the context of Catholic TKWs in a predominantly non-Catholic environment, these principles face more severe tests due to challenges of distance, time, and differences in religious backgrounds.

Several previous studies have examined the dynamics of TKW families from various perspectives. Maulina et al. (2018) studied the meaning of marriage for TKI

wives in Banyumas, emphasizing the importance of commitment in long-distance relationships. Jamilah and Adilla (2013) examined changes in husband-wife relationships in migrant worker families in Malang, finding significant role shifts. Meanwhile, Yaqin (2022) researched factors of family harmony in TKI families from an Islamic law perspective in Kudus. However, there has been no comprehensive research focusing on Catholic TKW families and linking them to the theological principles of Catholic marriage in the context of a predominantly non-Catholic society.

This research fills a gap in the literature by synthesizing the concept of marital harmony and Catholic Church marriage law in the context of Catholic TKW families in an environment with diverse religious majorities. Unlike previous research that tended to focus on socio-economic aspects or Islamic law, this study provides a unique perspective by integrating Catholic teachings on the sacramentality of marriage with the social-economic and religious realities of TKWs. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how Catholic couples maintain the sanctity and harmony of their marriage amid challenges of distance, changing family dynamics, and differences in religious backgrounds.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on marital resilience in the context of migration of Catholic TKW families as a minority group. This study explores the unique dynamics that occur when Catholic couples maintain their marital commitment amid a society where the majority adhere to beliefs with different interpretations of marital bonds. This context creates a situation where Catholic couples must affirm their marital principles in a social environment that has diverse understandings of the flexibility and permanence of marital bonds. This study not only explores the challenges faced but also analyzes the strategies used by couples to maintain household harmony and their religious identity. By combining Catholic theological perspectives and socio-economic-religious realities, this research offers new insights into how Catholic marital principles are applied and negotiated in a highly challenging and religiously diverse context.

This research is important given the increasing number of TKWs from various religious backgrounds, including Catholics, amid a predominantly non-Catholic society. Understanding how Catholic couples maintain marital harmony and religious identity in situations full of socio-religious challenges can provide valuable insights for policymakers, religious leaders, and marriage counseling practitioners. Furthermore, this study can contribute to the development of more effective support programs for TKW families, especially those from minority communities such as Catholics, as well as promote interfaith dialogue and social cohesion in a diverse society.

The main objective of this research is to explore and analyze relational problems that have occurred between Catholic married couples in married life, where one partner works as a TKW in a predominantly non-Catholic environment. By understanding the dynamics and challenges faced, this research aims to identify factors that contribute to tension in relationships, as well as analyze how couples interpret and respond to these challenges in the context of Catholic teachings on marriage and their socio-religious realities.

Furthermore, this research aims to uncover and analyze the efforts made by Catholic married couples to overcome relational problems, maintain married life, and maintain their religious identity, even though one partner continues to work as a TKW in a predominantly non-Catholic environment. By studying the strategies used by couples who have successfully maintained household harmony and their religious identity, this research is expected to provide valuable practical insights for other couples facing similar situations, as well as for pastoral companions, marriage counselors, and religious leaders in providing more effective support and promoting interfaith dialogue.

2. METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design (Englander, 2016; Fuster Guillen, 2019; Giorgi, 1994; Khan, 2014; Tuffour, 2017) to deeply explore and understand the lived experiences of Catholic couples in long-distance marriages as Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs) in South Malang, Indonesia. The phenomenological method was chosen for its ability to "uncover" social reality to its authentic realm Riyanto (2018), allowing for a deeper understanding of the essence of the couples' experiences in maintaining marital harmony and their religious identity.

The participants of this study were two Catholic married couples, one of whom works as an IMW, originating from the Maria Ratu Damai Purworejo Parish area in South Malang. The choice of this location was based on the researcher's familiarity with the area, enabling better access and a deeper contextual understanding. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews via telephone (Azad et al., 2021; Irvine, 2011) on November 26-28, 2023, considering that the participants were currently abroad. The interviews were recorded using an audio recording device and consisted of two parts: an introductory interview containing informative questions about personal profiles and a substantive interview focusing on experiences of marital harmony and the socio-religious challenges faced.

Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher conducted initial observations to understand the participants' life context and develop a semi-structured interview guide that included key themes related to marital resilience, socio-religious challenges, and strategies for maintaining marital harmony. The data collection process began with preparation, including the development of the interview guide and coordination of schedules with the participants (Fritz & Vandermause, 2018), followed by the implementation of the interviews, recording, and transcription of the interview results for further analysis.

Data analysis employed the phenomenological method (Finlay, 2014; Ho et al., 2017) with steps including verbatim transcription of interviews, repeated reading of transcripts, identification of meaning units, grouping of meaning units into themes, synthesis of themes to generate textural and structural descriptions, and integration of descriptions to produce the essence of the phenomenon under study. The analysis framework utilized a normative-judicial perspective based on the Code of Canon Law, particularly canons 1134-1136 on the "effects of marriage," and drew upon relevant literature to compare the subjects' experiences with existing theories and norms.

To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing techniques (Amin et al., 2020). Research ethics were upheld through the application of informed consent principles, confidentiality of participant identities, and respect for participant autonomy. The researcher acknowledges the limitations of this study, including the limited number of participants and the impossibility of conducting face-to-face interviews due to the participants' geographical conditions. Nevertheless, the research method was designed to enable an in-depth exploration of the experiences of Catholic IMW couples in maintaining their marital resilience amidst socio-religious challenges in South Malang, Indonesia.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Marital Resilience in a Socio-Religious Context: The Experience of Catholic Migrant Worker Families in South Malang

This study reveals the dynamics of marital resilience among Catholic migrant worker families in the Maria Ratu Damai Purworejo Parish, South Malang, within a challenging socio-religious context. Through in-depth interviews, the complexity of efforts to maintain household integrity and religious identity amidst their status as a minority group was uncovered. The Maria Ratu Damai Purworejo Parish is located in an area where the majority of the population is Muslim. Central Bureau of Statistics of Malang Regency (2022) shows statistical data from Donomulyo District in 2021 that out of a total of 68,336 residents, 65,626 (96.03%) are Muslims, while the Catholic population only amounts to 1,912 people (2.80%). This condition creates its own challenges for Catholics in carrying out their daily lives, including in the context of marriage. This statistical data can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Adherents of Religions in Donomulyo District in 2021

No.	Religion	Number
1.	Islam	65.626
2.	Protestant	765
3.	Catholic	1.912
4.	Hindu	20
5.	Buddhist	3
6.	Others	10
Total		68.336

Source data: Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of East Malang Regency, Year 2022

The reality of living as a minority amidst a society with diverse beliefs has a significant impact on the social dynamics of Catholic families. Catholic families often face challenges in integration, especially in social community activities, due to fundamental differences in the understanding and practice of marriage. The religious traditions of the majority have a more flexible view of marital bonds, allowing for the

termination of relationships in certain situations, while Catholic teachings emphasize the sacramental and indissoluble nature of marriage and lifelong monogamy (Aquinas, 2016; Dodaro, 2014). Nevertheless, there are active efforts by Catholic families to continue participating and showing their existence as an integral part of the local community, while still maintaining their core values of marriage.

Difficult economic conditions in South Malang are a major driving factor for many residents, including Catholics, to seek livelihoods as Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs) abroad. This decision is often seen as a difficult but inevitable choice, considering that local agricultural yields are insufficient to finance children's education and daily living needs. This phenomenon creates new dynamics in family structures, where couples have to maintain long-distance relationships that potentially give rise to various relational issues.

In the socio-religious context of South Malang, Catholic migrant worker families face a double challenge. On one hand, they must overcome the stigma and negative stereotypes often attached to migrant worker families. There is a general assumption in society that migrant worker families are vulnerable to problems, especially related to household harmony. On the other hand, as a religious minority, they must also struggle to maintain the identity and religious practices of Catholic families in an environment dominated by adherents of other religions.

Another significant challenge is in terms of children's education. The physical absence of one parent impacts the dynamics of parenting and assisting children's education. This demands specific strategies to ensure that children's educational and emotional development remains intact despite the unconventional family situation.

In facing these various challenges, Catholic migrant worker families in South Malang demonstrate strong resilience. They develop various adaptive strategies to maintain household harmony and their religious identity. These strategies include the utilization of technology for long-distance communication, strengthening faith and spirituality, active involvement in church communities both in their homeland and in the country where they work, wise financial management, and creative efforts to maintain family roles and functions despite being separated by distance.

The role of the church community becomes very important in this context (E. Van Eck, 2020; Wallerstein, 2019; Wilcox, 2018). The church is not only a place of worship but also a source of moral, spiritual, and social support for Catholic migrant worker families. Involvement in church activities helps them maintain their religious identity, fill emotional voids, and continue to feel part of a larger faith community.

Theological reflection on the lived experience as Catholic migrant worker families in an environment with diverse beliefs provides a new dimension to their understanding of the sacramentality of marriage. The social context, colored by various views on marital bonds, encourages Catholic couples to deepen and reaffirm the sacramental meaning of their marriage commitment while developing creative ways to live out these values amidst a society that holds diverse interpretations of marriage. The struggles and challenges faced are seen as an integral part of their vocation as a Catholic couple. This deepens their appreciation of the meaning of the

sacrament of marriage and further raises their awareness of the importance of God's grace in maintaining family integrity.

The phenomenon of marital resilience among Catholic migrant worker families in South Malang highlights the importance of a sensitive and contextual pastoral approach from the Church. There is a need to develop support programs that not only focus on spiritual aspects but also consider the socio-economic realities and cultural challenges faced by these families.

Furthermore, the experience of Catholic migrant worker families can be a valuable source of learning for the wider community. Their stories demonstrate how faith, commitment, and adaptive strategies can be a strong foundation in facing the challenges of marriage in the modern era, especially in the context of religious minorities and economic migration.

This research also underlines the importance of interfaith dialogue and efforts to build shared understanding at the community level. The success of Catholic migrant worker families in maintaining household harmony and their religious identity amidst a society with diverse views on marriage can serve as a positive example. It shows how religious diversity and differing interpretations of marital bonds can be peacefully and respectfully lived out, creating space for the harmonious coexistence of various religious traditions within one community.

Thus, the study of marital resilience among Catholic migrant worker families in South Malang not only provides insight into the internal dynamics of families but also highlights broader issues related to religious diversity, economic migration, and social cohesion in Indonesia. These findings can serve as a basis for developing more inclusive and responsive policies and programs to the needs of minority groups in diverse social contexts.

The Experiences of Catholic Couples in Maintaining Marriage Amidst Socio-Religious Challenges

Catholic Family Couple KK and RD

This study examines the experiences of the Catholic couple KK and RD in maintaining their marriage amidst the socio-religious complexities in South Malang, Indonesia. The couple married on April 24, 2020, at the Maria Ratu Damai Parish, Purworejo, in a ceremony led by Rev. Francesco Vincenzo Franky Gare Joseph, O.Carm. With a ten-year age difference, KK (37) and RD (47) have been living their married life for almost three years.

KK's decision to work as an elderly caregiver in Hong Kong since April 2023 reflects the economic reality faced by many families in the region. "The reason is that I want to help the family economy, both my own family and my parents in Tambakrejo. Because if we only rely on my husband's income, not that I underestimate my husband's income, but it's not enough," explained KK. This statement illustrates the economic pressures that drive many community members, including those from minority groups, to seek job opportunities abroad.

In navigating a long-distance marriage, the couple faces unique challenges, particularly given their status as Catholic adherents in an environment where most of the community holds different beliefs. This socio-religious context creates its own dynamics, considering that Catholic teachings have a distinctive view on the nature of marriage, while the dominant religious traditions around them may have more diverse perspectives on the resilience of marital bonds. This situation adds complexity to the couple's efforts to maintain their marriage commitment amidst the cultural and religious differences in the surrounding society. The differing interpretations of the meaning and nature of marriage between the Catholic tradition and some other beliefs held by the surrounding population create a complex social landscape for Catholic couples. Catholic teachings view marriage as a permanent sacrament, while some other religious traditions have more flexible views on the possibility of dissolving marital bonds in certain situations. This diversity of understanding presents its own nuances in the social context where Catholic couples must live and maintain their marriage commitment.

KK emphasizes the importance of the marriage vow as a strong spiritual foundation. "I always remember with my husband until now that we made a promise before God, until we really cried, and that's what makes us, no matter what the situation, we must keep the marriage vows that we made to God." This emphasis on the sacredness of the marriage vow reflects the fundamental difference in the understanding of marriage between the Catholic tradition and the broader social context in which they live.

Challenges in maintaining marital harmony often arise in the form of differences of opinion, albeit in trivial matters. KK explains, "What is it, just a difference of opinion, frater. There are no big challenges. Just differences of opinion. Mostly trivial, frater." The couple's ability to overcome these minor differences demonstrates their resilience in facing larger challenges, including social and economic pressures that may arise from their minority status.

The role of the Church as a supportive institution is strongly emphasized by this couple. KK states, "Yes, it plays a big role. Like how do you say, maintaining the marriage. In fact, the one who diligently invites me to church is my husband." Active involvement in the church community not only strengthens their faith but also provides a safe space to express and practice their beliefs in the midst of a predominantly non-Catholic society.

In navigating a long-distance marriage, the couple practices Catholic values such as loving communication, patience, and forgiveness. "Yes, it's like this. Forgive each other if there are mistakes. As in the Our Father prayer, forgive those who trespass against us," explained KK. These practices not only strengthen their marital bond but also reflect universal values that can bridge differences between religious communities.

Transparency and open communication become key in maintaining a long-distance relationship. KK affirms, "I am always open, I always talk. I am a person who doesn't want to keep a problem. What I have to say, I say it to my husband." This approach is important not only for the health of their relationship but also in the broader context where openness and dialogue between communities are crucial.

The decision to work abroad has a positive impact on the family's economic life. "The direct impact, when I decided to work abroad, how do you say it, it can be more, that's it, because of the economy, the economy is more stable. So, in the household, it can run smoothly," said KK. This economic stability not only improves the family's well-being but also enables them to participate more actively in their social and community life.

The couple emphasizes the importance of fulfilling their rights and obligations as parents, especially in educating their child, Or. "My husband and I always strive so that Or can grow up to be a good child and fear God, and as parents, we always try to meet Or's needs like milk, diapers, and others," revealed KK. The focus on providing a good education rooted in religious values reflects the couple's efforts to maintain their religious identity while preparing the next generation to live in a diverse society.

In closing, KK highlights the importance of trust in maintaining a long-distance marriage. "That's it, about the marriage vow. Guided by that, and just trust each other. Because there are many, *frater*, who end up not being in line anymore because of becoming a migrant worker. It's not easy, indeed, but it doesn't mean that marriage can't be maintained. What's important is trust and willingness to communicate, that's the key." This advice is not only relevant for couples in similar situations but also underscores the importance of trust and communication in building harmonious relationships between communities.

The experiences of KK and RD provide valuable insights into how Catholic couples, as minorities, can maintain their marriage and religious identity amidst socio-economic and religious challenges. Their success in managing a long-distance marriage while preserving core Catholic values demonstrates resilience and adaptability that can serve as a model for other couples, not only within the Catholic community but also in the broader societal context.

This case study also highlights the importance of interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural understanding in Indonesia's diverse society. The couple's ability to maintain their religious identity while integrating with the surrounding community reflects the potential for greater social harmony. Their experiences can serve as an example of how religious and cultural differences can be successfully navigated through communication, respect, and mutual understanding.

Overall, the story of KK and RD offers a unique perspective on Catholic marriage within the context of minority status in Indonesia. Their resilience in facing economic and social challenges, while upholding the core values of Catholic marriage, demonstrates that religious and cultural diversity can be a source of strength, not division, in Indonesia's multicultural society.

Catholic Family Couple HP and UK

This study examines the experiences of the Catholic couple HP (32) and UK (36) in living and maintaining their marriage amidst a society with diverse views on marital bonds. The couple married on August 31, 2012, at the Maria Ratu Damai Parish, Purworejo, in a ceremony led by Rev. Yosef Arnoldus Devanto, O.Carm. After nearly

eleven years of married life, the couple faces various challenges that reflect the complexities of living as a religious minority within a diverse social context.

HP's decision to work as a nursing home caregiver in Taiwan since August 2019 reflects the economic reality faced by many families in the region. "The reason I work as a migrant worker in Taiwan is because at that time I was experiencing an economic crisis in my family, while I also had to continue financing my children's needs. Moreover, I also had to pay off debts because I collapsed in the crypto business," revealed HP. This statement illustrates the economic pressures that drive many individuals, including those from minority communities, to seek job opportunities abroad.

In navigating a long-distance marriage, the couple faces unique challenges, especially considering their status as adherents of a minority faith in an environment with diverse understandings of marriage. The differing interpretations of marital bonds between Catholic teachings and other dominant beliefs in the local community create a complex social context. Catholic teachings emphasize the sacramental and indissoluble nature of marriage, while some other religious traditions have more flexible views on the possibility of terminating marital bonds in certain situations.

HP expresses difficulty in finding spiritual experiences that help maintain marital harmony. "So far, sorry frater, how do I say it, there is none, frater. After getting married, it's just like that. The experience of ups and downs to work and meet daily needs. Moreover, now I have two children. More needs," she explained. This statement reflects the challenges in maintaining the spiritual dimension of marriage amidst economic pressures and responsibilities as a parent.

The main challenge faced by this couple in maintaining marital harmony is communication. HP states, "The most obvious challenge is communication, frater. I am here, my husband is in Malang. The distance that separates us, I don't know what my husband is doing. Sometimes communication is quite difficult." This difficulty in communication is exacerbated by the history of infidelity that occurred in their marriage, which was revealed through an interview with UK.

The background of HP and UK's marriage, which began with a premarital "accident," followed by a series of infidelities committed by HP, adds complexity to their situation. Although UK initially tried to forgive, this experience eventually eroded trust and emotional bonds between the two. This situation reflects the additional challenges faced by Catholic couples in maintaining their marriage commitment amidst a society that may have different views on divorce and fidelity in marriage.

Regarding the role of the Church in supporting marital harmony, HP acknowledges the limitations of her involvement in the church community. "The role is very minimal, or maybe it's me who is less active in the church environment," she said. This acknowledgment highlights the importance of active involvement in the faith community as a source of support for Catholic couples living as religious minorities.

In the effort to embody Catholic values such as loving communication, patience, and forgiveness, HP expresses her difficulties. "There is none or maybe never, frater. After getting married, I tried to be a good wife, and sometimes I am still considered

not good. So, to apply what you asked, frater, it's difficult for me," she explained. This statement reflects the challenges in applying religious values in the context of a marriage under pressure.

HP's decision to work abroad has a dual impact on their married life. On one hand, the family's economic situation improves. On the other hand, physical distance further deteriorates the relationship between husband and wife. "Regarding the direct impact, the positive direct impact is that the economy is getting better. The negative direct impact, frater, is about communication and the relationship between husband and wife that is getting worse," revealed HP.

Despite facing various challenges in marriage, HP remains committed to fulfilling her responsibilities as a parent. "That's right, frater. The results of my work are mostly for my children, Ay and Ol. Starting from their school and daily needs. I keep trying for that, apart from my husband. This is purely my own income," she explained. This commitment demonstrates resilience in maintaining certain aspects of family life, even though the marriage relationship itself is experiencing difficulties.

The experiences of HP and UK provide valuable insights into the complexities of maintaining a Catholic marriage in the context of a society with diverse views on marriage. This case illustrates how factors such as economic pressures, physical distance, history of infidelity, and lack of community support can affect the stability of marriage, even for couples who are formally bound by a sacramental understanding of marriage.

This case study also highlights the importance of interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural understanding in Indonesia's diverse society. The difficulties experienced by this couple in maintaining Catholic marital values amidst an environment that may have different views on divorce and fidelity indicate the need for greater dialogue and support for religious minority couples.

Furthermore, HP and UK's experiences underscore the importance of the church community's role in providing pastoral support for Catholic couples, especially those in long-distance relationships. The lack of active involvement in the church community, as acknowledged by HP, may have contributed to their difficulties in overcoming marital challenges.

This case also illustrates the dilemma faced by many couples in dealing with economic demands versus maintaining physical and emotional closeness in marriage. The decision to work abroad, while bringing financial benefits, also carries significant consequences for relationship dynamics.

Finally, the resilience demonstrated by HP in fulfilling her responsibilities as a parent, despite difficulties in her marriage relationship, reflects the complexity of family roles in a diverse socio-religious context. It shows that even when marital bonds are under pressure, commitment to children can be a stabilizing factor in family life.

In conclusion, this case study provides a real-life picture of the challenges faced by Catholic couples in maintaining marriage amidst a society with diverse views on

marital bonds. The experiences of HP and UK highlight the need for a more contextual pastoral approach, more intensive interfaith dialogue, and stronger community support for religious minority couples facing challenges in their marriages.

Analysis of Catholic Marriage Resilience in the Context of Socio-Religious Diversity

The experiences of the two Catholic married couples who were the subjects of this study present a complex picture of how religious minority couples negotiate their marriage commitments amidst a society with diverse views on marriage. Both couples, whom we refer to as Catholic Family Couple KK and RD and Catholic Family Couple HP and UK, demonstrate different struggles and strategies in maintaining their marital bonds while facing significant economic, social, and relational challenges.

Catholic Family Couple KK and RD exhibit strong resilience in maintaining their marital harmony, despite having to navigate a long-distance relationship due to economic demands. KK's decision to work as an elderly caregiver in Hong Kong reflects the economic reality faced by many families in their region, including religious minority groups. This choice, while bringing its own challenges, also demonstrates the couple's commitment to jointly pursue family well-being. In the context of a society that may have different views on gender roles within the family, this decision can be seen as a form of adaptation by the Catholic couple to the demands of the modern economy while still maintaining their core marital values.

Catholic Family Couple KK and RD emphasize the importance of the marriage vow as a strong spiritual foundation in facing challenges. This emphasis on the sacredness of the marriage vow reflects the fundamental difference in the understanding of marriage between the Catholic tradition and the broader social context in which they live. Amidst a society that may have more flexible views on marital bonds, this couple chooses to hold fast to Catholic teaching on the sacramental and indissoluble nature of marriage. This demonstrates how religious minority couples can maintain their religious identity while adapting to a diverse social environment.

Intensive and quality communication becomes key for Catholic Family Couple KK and RD in maintaining their emotional closeness despite being separated by distance. The use of technology for daily video calls not only helps them stay connected but also becomes a means to practice Catholic values such as loving communication, patience, and forgiveness. In the context of an increasingly digital society, this strategy shows how Catholic couples can leverage modern technology to strengthen their marital bond while bridging the physical gap caused by economic migration.

Catholic Family Couple KK and RD also demonstrate good ability in managing differences of opinion and minor conflicts. Their ability to resolve disputes without allowing them to linger reflects the application of Catholic values in everyday life. This sets a positive example of how religious minority couples can apply their faith teachings in a broader context, potentially contributing to social harmony in a diverse society.

On the other hand, the experience of Catholic Family Couple HP and UK illustrates the heavier challenges in maintaining marital harmony. The history of infidelity

committed by HP has created a deep wound in their marital bond. This situation reflects the tension between the Catholic ideal of fidelity in marriage and the reality of challenges faced by couples in a broader social context, where views on fidelity and divorce may be more diverse.

Despite facing a crisis of trust, Catholic Family Couple HP and UK still strive to maintain the integrity of their marriage, especially for the sake of their children. Their focus on fulfilling their responsibilities as parents, even amidst personal conflict, reflects the application of Catholic teaching on parental obligations towards their children. This shows how religious values can be a source of strength and guidance for minority couples in facing marital crises, even when the emotional bond between the couple is under strain.

The lack of active involvement in the church community, as acknowledged by HP, may have contributed to the difficulties of Catholic Family Couple HP and UK in overcoming their marital challenges. This highlights the importance of the faith community as a source of support for Catholic couples living as religious minorities. In the context of a diverse society, active involvement in a religious community can be an important means for minority couples to strengthen their religious identity and gain support in facing marital challenges.

Both couples face challenges in balancing economic demands with efforts to maintain physical and emotional closeness in marriage. The decision to work abroad, while bringing financial benefits, also carries significant consequences for relationship dynamics. This reflects the dilemma faced by many couples in an era of globalization, where economic opportunities often require sacrifices in the form of physical proximity.

In the context of Catholic canon law, specifically canons 1134-1136 (Berg & Otto, 2023; Spiteri, 2014), both couples demonstrate efforts to fulfill their obligations and rights as husband and wife, albeit with differing degrees of success. Catholic Family Couple KK and RD are more successful in maintaining the "permanent and exclusive" bond emphasized in canon 1134 (Enemali, 2023), while Catholic Family Couple HP and UK face serious challenges in this regard due to the presence of infidelity.

Both couples demonstrate a strong commitment to their obligations as parents, in accordance with canon 1136. They strive to meet the needs of their children, both materially and emotionally, despite having to navigate long-distance relationships. This reflects how Catholic teaching on parental responsibilities can be a stabilizing factor in family life, even when the marital relationship itself faces challenges.

The difference in experiences between the two couples in terms of engagement with the church community and the living out of spiritual values in marriage highlights the importance of these factors in maintaining the resilience of Catholic marriage in the midst of a diverse society. Catholic Family Couple KK and RD, who are more active in church activities and more frequently remind themselves of their marriage vow, seem to be more successful in maintaining their marital harmony compared to Catholic Family Couple HP and UK.

The experiences of these two couples also underscore the importance of interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural understanding in Indonesia's diverse society. The difficulties experienced, especially by Catholic Family Couple HP and UK, in maintaining Catholic marital values amidst an environment that may have different views on divorce and fidelity, indicate the need for greater space for dialogue and support for religious minority couples.

The resilience demonstrated by both couples, albeit to different degrees, reflects an inner strength rooted in their Catholic faith (Parise et al., 2017). Catholic Family Couple KK and RD demonstrate how commitment to the marriage vow and Catholic values can be a source of strength in facing the challenges of distance and economics. Meanwhile, Catholic Family Couple HP and UK, despite facing a heavier crisis, still strive to maintain family integrity for the sake of their children, reflecting the application of Catholic teaching on parental responsibilities.

The experiences of these two couples also illustrate how Catholic couples as religious minorities must negotiate their religious identity in a broader social context. They must navigate between adherence to Catholic teaching on marriage and the need to adapt to existing socio-economic realities. This reflects the broader challenges faced by religious minority communities in maintaining their identity while fully participating in society.

Both cases also highlight the importance of more contextual pastoral support from the Catholic Church. The Church needs to develop pastoral strategies that are more responsive to the realities of couples in long-distance relationships, as well as couples facing marital crises in the context of religious minority status. Such support can help Catholic couples more effectively apply Church teaching in their concrete life situations.

Furthermore, the experiences of these two couples can serve as a basis for reflection for the wider Catholic community on how to maintain Catholic marital values in the context of an increasingly diverse modern society. This includes how to address economic challenges, technology, and social change while remaining faithful to the Church's core teaching on marriage.

In a broader context, the experiences of these two couples can provide valuable insights for policymakers and community leaders about the specific needs of religious minority couples. This may include policies that support family unity in the context of economic migration, as well as programs that promote interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural understanding.

Ultimately, the resilience demonstrated by both couples, albeit to different degrees, reflects the potential of Catholic marriage as a source of strength and stability in a diverse society. Despite facing significant challenges, their commitment to Catholic marital values and responsibilities as parents shows how faith can be an important resource in facing the challenges of modern life.

In conclusion, the analysis of the experiences of these two Catholic couples provides a rich picture of the complexity of maintaining Catholic marriage in the context of Indonesia's diverse society. They demonstrate how religious minority couples negotiate between fidelity to their religious teachings and the need to adapt to existing

socio-economic realities. Their experiences highlight the importance of community support, the living out of spiritual values, and effective communication in building marital resilience.

Moreover, these cases illustrate how Catholic marriage can be a microcosm of the broader interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural understanding in Indonesian society. They show that despite facing significant challenges, Catholic couples can play a positive role in building social harmony through their commitment to family values and social responsibility.

This study also underscores the need for further research on the dynamics of marriage in the context of religious minorities in Indonesia. A deeper understanding of how couples from various religious backgrounds negotiate their identity and commitments in a diverse society can provide valuable insights for efforts to build a more inclusive and harmonious society.

In the context of canons 1134-1136 of the Code of Canon Law, the two couples demonstrate different efforts in realizing Church teaching. Catholic Family Couple KK and RD are more successful in maintaining the "permanent and exclusive" bond of marriage as emphasized in canon 1134. They show how the marriage vow can be a source of spiritual strength in facing the challenges of distance and economics. Meanwhile, Catholic Family Couple HP and UK face serious challenges in this regard due to the presence of infidelity, illustrating the complexity of applying Catholic ideals in a challenging reality of life.

Both couples, however, demonstrate a strong commitment to their obligations as parents, in accordance with canon 1136. They strive to meet the needs of their children, both materially and emotionally, despite having to navigate long-distance relationships or face crises in their marriages. This reflects how Catholic teaching on parental responsibilities can be a stabilizing factor in family life, even when the marital relationship itself faces challenges.

The experiences of these two couples also highlight the importance of the Church's role in providing more contextual pastoral support. The Church needs to develop approaches that are more responsive to the realities of couples in long-distance relationships or facing marital crises, especially in their context as religious minorities. Such support can help Catholic couples more effectively apply Church teaching in their concrete life situations while maintaining their religious identity in the midst of a diverse society.

The difference in experiences between Catholic Family Couple KK and RD and Catholic Family Couple HP and UK in terms of engagement with the church community and the living out of spiritual values in marriage highlights the importance of these factors in maintaining the resilience of Catholic marriage. Couple KK and RD, who are more active in church activities and more frequently remind themselves of their marriage vow, seem to be more successful in maintaining their marital harmony. This shows that active involvement in the faith community can be a significant source of support for Catholic couples living as religious minorities.

Both cases also underscore the importance of interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural understanding in Indonesia's multi-religious context. The difficulties experienced, especially by Catholic Family Couple HP and UK, in maintaining Catholic marital values amidst an environment that may have different views on divorce and fidelity, indicate the need for greater space for dialogue. This can help religious minority couples better negotiate their identity and marital values in a broader social context.

The experiences of these two couples also illustrate how Catholic couples as religious minorities must negotiate between adherence to Catholic teaching on marriage and the need to adapt to existing socio-economic realities. This reflects the broader challenges faced by religious minority communities in maintaining their identity while fully participating in society.

The resilience demonstrated by both couples, albeit to different degrees, reflects the potential of Catholic marriage as a source of strength and stability in a diverse society. Despite facing significant challenges, their commitment to Catholic marital values and responsibilities as parents shows how faith can be an important resource in facing the challenges of modern life.

Furthermore, the experiences of these two couples can serve as a basis for reflection for the wider Catholic community on how to maintain Catholic marital values in the context of an increasingly diverse modern society. This includes how to address economic challenges, technology, and social change while remaining faithful to the Church's core teaching on marriage.

In a broader context, the experiences of these two couples can provide valuable insights for policymakers and community leaders about the specific needs of religious minority couples. This may include policies that support family unity in the context of economic migration, as well as programs that promote interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural understanding.

In conclusion, the analysis of the experiences of these two Catholic couples provides a rich picture of the complexity of maintaining Catholic marriage in the context of Indonesia's diverse society. They demonstrate how religious minority couples negotiate between fidelity to their religious teachings and the need to adapt to existing socio-economic realities. Their experiences highlight the importance of community support, the living out of spiritual values, and effective communication in building marital resilience.

This study also underscores the need for further research on the dynamics of marriage in the context of religious minorities in Indonesia. A deeper understanding of how couples from various religious backgrounds negotiate their identity and commitments in a diverse society can provide valuable insights for efforts to build a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Finally, the experiences of these two couples show that despite facing significant challenges, Catholic marriage can be a source of strength and stability, not only for the couple themselves but also for the wider society. Their commitment to Catholic marital values and responsibilities as parents, even in the midst of difficulties, reflects the potential of marriage as an institution that can contribute to social harmony and interfaith dialogue in Indonesia's diverse society.

Catholic Marriage Resilience from the Perspective of Diversity and Interfaith Dialogue

The research findings and analysis of the experiences of Catholic Family Couple KK and RD and Catholic Family Couple HP and UK present a complex picture of the resilience of Catholic marriage amidst socio-religious diversity in South Malang, Indonesia. To gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play, we can draw upon various theoretical perspectives on diversity and the views of Catholic scholars and intellectuals.

The concept of "superdiversity" proposed by Steven Vertovec (2023) provides a useful framework for understanding the complexity of the situations faced by both couples. Vertovec (2019) describes how various variables such as ethnicity, religion, legal status, and economic background interact in highly diverse societies. In the context of this research, Catholic couples not only face religious differences with the majority population but also have to negotiate their identity within a complex web that includes their economic status as migrant workers, differing interpretations of marriage, and local social dynamics.

The experience of Catholic Family Couple KK and RD demonstrates how they successfully navigate this "superdiversity" by maintaining their Catholic identity through an emphasis on their marriage vows and Catholic values while adapting to economic demands by working abroad. This reflects what Meissner and Vertovec (2017) calls "modes of adaptation" in a superdiverse context, where individuals develop strategies to maintain their identity while negotiating complex socio-economic realities.

On the other hand, the experience of Catholic Family Couple HP and UK illustrates the challenges that arise when negotiating identity in a superdiverse context becomes more difficult. The infidelity that occurred can be seen as a form of "cultural dissonance" that emerges when traditional values (in this case, Catholic teaching on fidelity in marriage) collide with a more complex and diverse social reality.

Meredith McGuire's (2016) theory of "lived religion" offers a valuable additional perspective. This concept emphasizes that everyday religious practices often differ from official doctrine and that individuals actively negotiate and interpret their religious teachings in the context of daily life. This is clearly seen in the way both couples practice their Catholic faith in the context of a long-distance marriage and economic challenges.

In her work "Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras" (2014), Diana L. Eck emphasizes the importance of active pluralism in diverse societies. According to Eck, pluralism is not just passive tolerance but active engagement with diversity. This perspective is relevant for understanding how couples like KK and RD and HP and UK must actively negotiate their religious identity while interacting with the broader community.

Catholic theologian Hans Küng, in "Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic" (2004), advocates for the importance of a global ethic that transcends

religious boundaries. Küng's perspective can be applied to the micro-context of Catholic marriage in a diverse environment, where couples need to develop a "marriage ethic" that remains faithful to Catholic teaching yet is also responsive to diverse social realities.

Indonesian Catholic scholar Franz Magnis-Suseno emphasizes the importance of dialogue and openness between religious communities (Magnis-Suseno et al., 2015; Saumantri & Bisri, 2023). Magnis-Suseno's view is relevant in understanding how Catholic couples can maintain their religious identity while remaining open and adaptable to a diverse social environment.

Julie Hanlon Rubio, in "A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family" (2003), highlights the importance of understanding Catholic marriage within a broader social context. Rubio's perspective can help understand how couples like KK and RD and HP and UK negotiate between Catholic ideals and their socio-economic realities.

In "America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity" (2005), Robert Wuthnow discusses the concept of "reflective pluralism" where individuals not only acknowledge diversity but also critically reflect on its implications for their own beliefs and practices. This concept can be applied to understand how Catholic couples in Indonesia reflect on and reaffirm their marriage commitment in the context of diversity.

David Tracy, in "Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope" (1994), emphasizes the importance of hermeneutics in understanding religious texts and social reality. Tracy's perspective can help understand how Catholic couples interpret and apply Church teaching on marriage in their specific life contexts.

J.B. Banawiratma, an Indonesian Catholic scholar, emphasizes the importance of "contextual theology" that responds to local realities (J. B. Banawiratma, 1994). Banawiratma's view is relevant for understanding how Catholic marriage in Indonesia needs to be contextualized without losing its essence (J. B. G. Banawiratma, 2016; Setyawan et al., 2023).

The concepts of "religious hybridity" from Peter van der Veer (1994) and "everyday multiculturalism" from Amanda Wise and Selvaraj Velayutham (2009) are also relevant in understanding how both couples adapt their religious practices and negotiate their identity in daily interactions with the broader community.

This analysis demonstrates that the resilience of Catholic marriage in the context of diversity in South Malang involves a complex process of negotiation between official Church teaching, socio-economic realities, and personal interpretations of faith. Catholic couples must navigate "superdiversity" (Vertovec, 2020; Vertovec et al., 2024) while maintaining their religious identity, resulting in unique forms of "lived religion" (McGuire, 2016; Nagar & DasGupta, 2015). Understanding these dynamics can provide valuable insights for the pastoral efforts of the Catholic Church and social policies aimed at supporting families in diverse societies, as well as contribute to broader interfaith dialogue in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

This research reveals the complexity and dynamics of the marital resilience of Catholic migrant workers in South Malang within a diverse socio-religious context. Catholic couples face a dual challenge: economic pressures that drive migration and difficulties in maintaining their religious identity as a minority group. Nevertheless, they demonstrate strong resilience through various adaptive strategies. Intensive communication, strengthening of faith, and involvement in the church community are key in maintaining long-distance household harmony. This research also highlights the importance of complex negotiations between Church teaching, socio-economic realities, and personal interpretations of faith in the context of "superdiversity." The role of the church community and contextual pastoral support has proven to be crucial in helping couples face challenges. Furthermore, the experiences of these Catholic couples have the potential to contribute to broader interfaith dialogue and social harmony in Indonesia's diverse society. These findings emphasize the need for a more responsive pastoral approach and the importance of interfaith dialogue in supporting Catholic marriage amidst socio-religious diversity. Finally, this research shows that despite facing significant challenges, Catholic marriage can be a source of strength and stability, not only for the couple themselves but also for the wider society, reflecting the potential of marriage as an institution that can contribute to social cohesion in the context of diversity in Indonesia.

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