

Research Article

Refiguring Lived Faith: A Hermeneutical Study of Catholic Migrants from East Nusa Tenggara in South Kalimantan

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Abstract, This study examines the lived faith of Catholic migrants from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) who have migrated to the Muslim-majority landscape of South Kalimantan, Indonesia. These migrants face a profound crisis of identity as they transition from a dominant religious environment to a marginalized minority status, necessitating a research objective that explores how their faith is reinterpreted amidst such socio-religious pressures. Employing a qualitative phenomenological-hermeneutical method, the research utilizes Paul Ricoeur's threefold mimesis - prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration - as its primary interpretive framework. The findings reveal a significant narrative shift from an inherited "communal Catholic habitus" to a "refigured faith" characterized by personal agency and reflective commitment. This transformation is sustained through adaptive relational ethics, such as the sanctification of work and collaborative hospitality, which allow migrants to navigate their vulnerability. The study synthesizes these experiences to conclude that internal migration constitutes a vital *locus theologicus*, wherein the rupture of traditional religious structures does not erode faith but rather matures it into a more resilient, intentional, and relational existential orientation. Consequently, migration emerges as a transformative theological process that redefines the intersection of faith, culture, and minority existence in pluralistic societies.

Keywords: Catholic Migrants; Contextual Theology; Internal Migration; Lived Faith; Paul Ricoeur; Refiguration; South Kalimantan.

1. INTRODUCTION

Migration has emerged as one of the most definitive features of contemporary human existence, representing a structural condition of the modern world rather than an exceptional or peripheral phenomenon (Castles et al., 2014: 123). While global movements across national borders dominate academic and political discourse, internal migration within national boundaries - particularly in the Global South - remains a profound force shaping social, cultural, and religious landscapes (Sienkiewicz, 2020: 25; Pardede et al., 2020: 2). In the Indonesian archipelago, internal mobility is not merely a marginal trend but a central element of national life, driven by a complex interplay of economic necessity, educational aspirations, and deep-seated kinship networks (Wajdi et al., 2017: 254). As migrants relocate from one province to another, they encounter diverse religious landscapes that inevitably transform their understanding of identity, community, and faith (Arifin, 2024: 3; Khumairoh et al., 2025: 2).

Previous theological reflections on migration have predominantly focused on the ethics of international mobility, refugee crises, and transnational labor flows (Groody, 2009: 640; Phan, 2003: 157). These "international-centric" methods often utilize frameworks of hospitality and human rights to address the challenges of cross-border displacement. However, the inherent weakness of these existing approaches is their tendency to overlook the everyday "lived faith" of internal migrants who move from a majority religious context to a minority one within the same national territory (Sudhiarsa, 2023: 1). This gap is critical because internal migration, such as the movement from the Catholic stronghold of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) to the Muslim-majority province of South Kalimantan, involves a profound ontological shift. This transition is characterized by a movement from a "communal habitus"—where religious identity is a taken-for-granted horizon of belonging—to a state of

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heightened vulnerability and existential uprootedness (McGuire, 2008: 15; Laksana & Wood, 2018: 2).

The central problem addressed in this study is how the Catholic faith, which is often lived as a cohesive, communal identity in NTT (Martasudjita, 2015: 129), is negotiated, contested, and eventually refigured when migrants encounter the pluralistic and sometimes alienating social environment of South Kalimantan. In this new context, faith is no longer sustained by the broad social structures of the village or the cultural dominance of the Church; instead, it must be articulated through personal initiative and navigated within a minority status (Sienkiewicz, 2020: 25). To solve this, we propose an integrative hermeneutical framework that combines Daniel Groody's spirituality of migration (Groody, 2013: 140), Peter Phan's diaspora ecclesiology (Phan, 2016: 866), and Paul Ricoeur's theory of narrative refiguration (Ricoeur, 1981: 141). By employing a qualitative phenomenological–hermeneutical approach, this research aims to uncover the “experiential dynamics” of migration as a *locus theologicus* for contemporary Indonesian theology.

This paper provides several key contributions to the field of Christian education and philosophy:

1. It conceptualizes the transition of faith from a “communal habitus” to an “individual-reflective” commitment necessitated by the migration process (Sudhiarsa, 2023: 7).
2. It maps the specific multidimensional vulnerability—economic, social, and religious—faced by internal migrants moving within pluralistic societies (Luna, 2019: 89).
3. It demonstrates how “refiguration” occurs through participation in small church communities and interreligious encounters, revealing migration as a site of spiritual growth (Almirzanah, 2014: 235; Cruz, 2010: 121).

The structure of this article is organized as follows: Section 2 provides a literature review on narrative identity and contextual theology; Section 3 describes the phenomenological-hermeneutical method; Section 4 discusses the findings related to vulnerability and adaptive strategies; and Section 5 concludes with the theological implications of refigured faith.

2. Theoretical Framework

To analyze the dynamics of faith transition among migrants, this theoretical framework is constructed integratively by blending philosophical, spiritual, and ecclesiological dimensions. Through the trajectories of thought provided by Paul Ricoeur, Daniel Groody, and Peter Phan, the following sections will delineate how narrative identity and the experience of faith are refigured within the context of life-space relocation

The Hermeneutical Arc: From Communal Habitus to Narrative Refiguration

This study proceeds from the fundamental assumption that migration is not merely a socio-economic phenomenon of physical relocation, but an existential and theological process that fundamentally reshapes lived faith and narrative identity (Groody, 2009: 642; Phan, 2013: 192). To understand this transition, we employ Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics of narrative identity as the primary conceptual scaffolding. Ricoeur (1981: 141) argues that human identity is not a fixed essence but a dynamic construct formed through a threefold mimesis: prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration.

In the specific context of Catholic migrants from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), the “prefiguration” stage corresponds to the communal habitus of their origin. In NTT, faith is embedded in a dense fabric of family life, communal rituals, and social structures where Catholicism forms a taken-for-granted horizon of meaning (Martasudjita, 2015: 129; McGuire, 2008: 12). However, migration acts as a disruptive “configuration” event. It uproots the individual from this supportive symbolic world, placing them in a “configurative” space of vulnerability in South Kalimantan. It is within this dialectic between the lost habitus and the new, pluralistic reality that “refiguration” occurs, a transformation where faith is no longer an inherited habit but a reflective, conscious orientation (Ricoeur, 1981: 144; DeLashmutt, 2009: 604).

The Spirituality of Vulnerability and Inner Geography

To deepen the understanding of this “configurative” disruption, we integrate Daniel Groody's spirituality of migration. Groody (2013: 140) emphasizes that migration creates an “inner geography” where the physical journey resonates with a movement of the heart and spirit. For the NTT migrant, the move to South Kalimantan is marked by a profound rupture of familiar social networks and symbolic worlds (Groody, 2009: 643). This rupture inevitably leads to a state of vulnerability—a condition that is both a site of precarity and a potential space for spiritual transformation (Luna, 2019: 89).

When the “communal habitus” collapses under the weight of minority existence, the migrant is forced to confront their dependence on God in a more personal, unmediated way (Groody, 2002: 120). Groody (2013: 141) suggests that this vulnerability allows for a deeper spiritual encounter, where faith emerges as a conscious resource for resilience. This spiritual movement aligns with Ricoeur’s notion of the “self” being reinterpreted through the narrative of the journey (Ricoeur, 1981: 143). Thus, the vulnerability experienced by the NTT migrant in a Muslim-majority context is not merely a social disadvantage; it is the theological crucible in which a “prefigured” communal faith is tested and “refigured” into a more robust, ethical, and personal commitment (Groody, 2013: 145; Cruz, 2006: 14).

Diaspora Ecclesiology: The Church as a Pilgrim Community

The transformation of the individual migrant is inextricably linked to the reconfiguration of their ecclesial experience. Peter Phan’s diaspora ecclesiology provides the necessary framework to interpret how the Church itself is “refigured” in the migration context. Phan (2016: 860) argues that migration reveals the Church’s fundamental identity as a communion of pilgrims rather than a static, territorial institution. For migrants from NTT, the transition from a “dominant” Church in Flores or Timor to a “minority” Church in South Kalimantan represents an ecclesial shift from power to witness (Sudhiarsa, 2023: 7).

In this diaspora setting, the Church is experienced less as a large institutional structure and more as a small community of solidarity and mutual support (Cruz, 2013: 113). This “refigured” ecclesial life is characterized by relational closeness and participatory witness, where the communal dimension of faith takes on new, more intimate forms (Phan, 2003: 159; Laksana & Wood, 2018: 2). By integrating Phan’s perspective, we see that the migrant’s narrative identity is not formed in isolation but within a “pilgrim community” that shares in the journey of hope and adaptation (Phan, 2016: 849).

Synthesis: Migration as a Locus Theologicus

The integration of Groody, Phan, and Ricoeur allows us to conceptualize migration as a locus theologicus—a human experience that serves as a primary source for theological insight (Schmiedel, 2020: 165; Bevans, 2002: 14). This framework suggests that the refiguration of faith occurs through three interconnected movements (Groody, 2009: 642). First, the prefigured communal habitus of NTT provides the initial symbolic capital. Second, the configured experience of vulnerability in South Kalimantan challenges this horizon, forcing a narrative reinterpretation of the self (Luna, 2019: 89; Ricoeur, 1981: 143). Third, the refigured faith emerges as a reflective, ethical, and relational orientation, lived out within the diaspora ecclesial community (Sudhiarsa, 2023: 7; Brazal, 2021: 221).

By viewing migration through this multifaceted lens, theology moves beyond abstract doctrine to engage with the lived reality of believers (Phan, 2016: 855; McGuire, 2008: 15). The experiences of NTT migrants—marked by economic struggle, cultural dislocation, and interreligious encounter—become the very sites where the meaning of the Gospel is discovered anew (Phan, 2003: 157; Suna-Koro, 2020: 243). This integrated theoretical framework thus provides the conceptual foundation for interpreting the experiential dynamics of internal migration as a transformative process where faith, identity, and ecclesial life are perpetually refigured in the dialectic of the journey (Sudhiarsa, 2023: 2; Khumairoh et al., 2025: 12).

3. METHODS

This section outlines the methodological framework employed to investigate the transformation of lived faith among Catholic migrants. By integrating a qualitative design with phenomenological and hermeneutical principles, the study seeks to capture the depth of participants’ narratives and the interpretive processes through which their religious identities are refigured in a new social context.

Qualitative Phenomenological–Hermeneutical Design

This study employs a qualitative approach grounded in a phenomenological–hermeneutical orientation to understand the transformative dynamics of lived faith among internal migrants (Sudhiarsa, 2023: 2; Khumairoh et al., 2025: 3). The choice of this design is dictated by the research objective: to move beyond behavioral metrics and uncover the existential meanings embedded in the migrants’ relocation (McGuire, 2008: 12). By privileging narrative depth over statistical breadth, the method aligns with Paul Ricoeur’s (1981: 141) assertion that human experience is fundamentally interpretive. The phenomenological dimension seeks to attend to the participants’ lived reality as narrated, starting from concrete experiences rather than predetermined categories (Charmaz, 2006: 50; Honer & Hitzler, 2015: 545). Concurrently, the hermeneutical orientation recognizes that migration is a mediated

process of meaning-making where faith and identity are perpetually reinterpreted (DeLashmutt, 2009: 603; Ricoeur, 1981: 143).

Participant Selection and Data Collection

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, consisting of four Catholic migrants from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) currently residing in South Kalimantan (Arifin, 2024: 3; Sudhiarsa, 2023: 2). Selection criteria included: (1) a Catholic background rooted in the communal habitus of NTT; (2) substantial residency in the destination context to allow for reflective experience; and (3) a willingness to engage in open, narrative articulation. While limited in number, this cohort provides a rich diversity of migration trajectories, facilitating cross-case comparison while maintaining close attention to narrative particularity (Ricoeur, 1981: 143; Laksana & Wood, 2018: 5).

Data were gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews designed to elicit narrative accounts rather than factual responses (Laksana & Wood, 2018: 4; Bhabha, 2014: 184). These dialogical encounters focused on faith in origin contexts, motivations for migration, and the subsequent negotiation of faith in South Kalimantan (Almirzanah, 2014: 235). This narrative approach is essential as it allows participants to express their experiences according to their own horizons of meaning, turning the interview into a space for self-interpretation (Ricoeur, 1981: 144; DeLashmutt, 2009: 604).

Analytic Procedure: The Coding Process

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed inductively through three stages of coding to allow thematic clusters to emerge from the data (Esposito, 2001: 570; Charmaz, 2006: 50). In the Open Coding stage, transcripts were broken down into meaningful units, assigning initial codes that remained close to the participants' original language to avoid premature abstraction (Charmaz, 2006: 52; Ricoeur, 1981: 141). During Axial Coding, the researcher identified relationships among these codes, grouping them into thematic clusters such as "communal habitus," "destination vulnerability," and "adaptive relational strategies" (Sudhiarsa, 2023: 7; Laksana & Wood, 2018: 5). Finally, Selective Coding synthesized these clusters into core descriptive propositions that bridge empirical findings with theological interpretation (Charmaz, 2006: 63; Bevans, 2002: 14).

Theoretical Integration: The Hermeneutical Circle

Throughout the analysis, a dialogical relationship was maintained between the empirical data and the theoretical perspectives of Groody, Phan, and Ricoeur (Bevans, 2002: 15). Within Ricoeur's framework, the analytic process mirrors the movement from prefiguration to refiguration (Ricoeur, 1981: 141). The prefigurative dimension is revealed in the communal faith habitus brought from NTT (McGuire, 2008: 12). The configurative dimension emerges through the disruptive migration experience and its inherent vulnerabilities (DeLashmutt, 2009: 602). Finally, the refigurative dimension becomes visible in the transformation of lived faith as migrants develop reflective and relational orientations in their new context (Ricoeur, 1981: 144; DeLashmutt, 2009: 604). Ethical integrity was upheld through informed consent and pseudonymization, ensuring that participants were treated as agents of theological insight (Almirzanah, 2014: 237; Maćkowiak, 2024: 15).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: THE TRIPLE MIMESIS OF MIGRANT FAITH

The internal migration of Catholics from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) to South Kalimantan constitutes a profound ontological and theological journey. It is a process of meaning-making that fundamentally reshapes lived faith and ecclesial identity. By applying Paul Ricoeur's (1981: 141) threefold mimesis—prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration—this study demonstrates that migration is not merely a geographic relocation but a transformative theological process where faith is tested, negotiated, and ultimately renewed (Phan, 2003: 157).

Prefiguration: The Communal Catholic Habitus

In Ricoeur's (1981: 143) framework, prefiguration refers to the "already-there" symbolic world—the inherited meanings and cultural habits that precede a new narrative event. For migrants from NTT, this stage is characterized by a "communal Catholic habitus" where faith is a taken-for-granted horizon of belonging. Faith in NTT is not a private choice but a collective structure that governs the rhythms of family and social existence (Martasudjita, 2015: 129; Sudhiarsa, 2023: 3).

Subject 1 recalled how religious identity was inextricably linked to family life and communal traditions: "*Parents also supported; wherever the husband goes you follow, staying far apart is not good*" (Subject 1: 15). For Subject 2, this habitus was anchored in deep spiritual lineage:

“Prayer is definitely number one in all worldly affairs... there is no other way to live but with prayer” (Subject 2: 10). These narratives suggest that in the context of origin, faith is an inherited capital—a “communal given” that provides stability and coherence (McGuire, 2008: 12; Groody, 2013: 141).

However, this prefigured faith is often unreflective. Subject 3 noted that in Flores, one simply followed the crowd: “When in the village... we just went to mass then went home... we were not chosen to be in a church role” (Subject 3: 12). This confirms that while the habitus is strong, it lacks the personal agency that will be required in the diaspora. The prefigurative stage provides the symbolic foundation—the “memory of solidarity”—that migrants carry into the disruption of the journey (Ricoeur, 1981: 141; Groody, 2013: 141).

Configuration: Vulnerability and the Rupture of Habitus

Ricoeur’s (1981: 143) second movement, configuration, occurs when a new event disrupts the prefigured world, forcing the individual to “plot” a new story. In the destination context of South Kalimantan, this disruption is experienced as a profound rupture of the communal habitus, thrusting migrants into a state of multidimensional vulnerability (Luna, 2019: 89).

The emotional dislocation of this rupture is vivid in Subject 1’s account: “The first time I came here I cried because all I saw around me was palm oil, so it felt like living in the middle of a forest” (Subject 1: 15). This physical isolation is mirrored by social and religious vulnerability. Unlike the supportive environment of NTT, South Kalimantan presents a pluralistic landscape where Catholics are a minority. Subject 3 reported severe stigmatization faced by her children at school: “Our children were almost suicidal... every day mocked. Saying [it’s] haram, impure, basically. Your religion is not right” (Subject 3: 14).

This configurative stage is what Groody (2013: 140) describes as an “inner geography” of loss and longing. The “communal habitus” that once made faith effortless now becomes a source of tension. Subject 2 recalled the “war of the spirit” when pressured to convert for material gain: “At that time it was promised, do you want a house? We will find it, do you want a car? We will find it, your job will be at a higher level... even brought to a hotel for three nights just to discuss that” (Subject 2: 12). Here, configuration is a site of trial. Faith is no longer a given; it is a contested identity that must be consciously negotiated (Arifin, 2024: 3; Sienkiewicz, 2020: 27).

Adaptive Strategies: Relational Ethics and Security

To survive the crisis of configuration, migrants develop adaptive strategies that Ricoeur (1981: 144) identifies as the process of narrative synthesis. These strategies are not abstract but emerge as practical relational ethics (McGuire, 2008: 15).

A primary strategy is the sanctification of work. Professionalism becomes a medium for religious witness. Subject 2 used relentless diligence to overcome prejudice: “I showed more that I have shown through work alone; so the more I was distanced, the more I sought work, I sought work, basically 2 AM I was working” (Subject 2: 12). By proving their value, migrants create a space of “relational security.”

Furthermore, migrants adopt a posture of “lowering oneself” to win trust. Subject 2 explained: “We who are the minority perhaps must humble ourselves and win hearts, we must not show that we are the greatest” (Subject 2: 15). Subject 3 described managing the “haram” stigma through collaborative hospitality: “We cook, so our way is to call them here, those who cook are them... invitations both written and oral, come to eat or not, the important thing is we have prepared” (Subject 3: 16). These relational practices demonstrate that in a minority context, the Gospel is expressed through “relational ethics” (Brazal, 2021: 221; Sudhiarsa, 2023: 7).

Refiguration: The Emergence of Reflective and Diaspora Faith

The final movement, refiguration, is the stage where the new narrative transforms the life of the migrant. Faith is refigured from an inherited habit into a reflective orientation (Ricoeur, 1981: 143; Kim, 2025: 17).

Subject 1 noted that her faith only truly grew in the crucible of difficulty: “From that point I felt what true faith is. We pray... Don’t just work... Arrange the time so it works” (Subject 1: 16). Subject 3 echoed this, stating that her faith matured only in the migration region: “Closer, meaning my faith began to grow here in my personal opinion... here after being chosen as the station head and also frequently doing home spiritual activities, that is what awakened my faith” (Subject 3: 16).

Ecclesial experience is similarly refigured. The Church is no longer a socially dominant institution but a “pilgrim community” (Phan, 2016: 860). Subject 4 emphasized maintaining this identity despite material pressures: “I often remind my children: Don’t let your pursuit of this or that lead you to leave the Church... it’s fine to look for money but never let us forget God” (Subject 4: 16). This refigured ecclesiology is relational; the Church becomes a “community of solidarity” that sustains faith in a pluralistic world (Phan, 2016: 861; Sudhiarsa, 2023: 8).

Synthesis: Migration as a Locus Theologicus

The internal migration from NTT to South Kalimantan serves as a locus theologicus—a human experience that reveals the dynamic nature of God’s presence in history (Phan, 2016: 856; Bevans, 2002: 14). The triple mimesis of these migrants suggests:

1. **Refigured Identity:** Migration acts as a narrative event that transforms faith from an unreflective inherited habit into a conscious, resilient existential commitment.
2. **Relational Ethics:** In pluralistic environments, ethical living—expressed through work, tolerance, and “humbling oneself”—becomes the primary mode of contextualizing the Gospel.
3. **Pilgrim Ecclesiology:** The transition to a minority context reveals the Church’s fundamental identity as a diaspora community of solidarity rather than an institutional power.

Ultimately, the narratives of these migrants prove that lived faith is a dynamic arc. It begins in the comfort of a communal habitus, suffers the configuration of vulnerability, and is finally refigured into a more resilient form within the concrete realities of the diaspora. Migration thus becomes a theological site where the “pilgrim people of God” find new ways to live their faith in a world of difference.

Comparative Analysis: Internal Migration and Global Theological Patterns

The findings of this study suggest that internal migration within Indonesia reveals existential and theological ruptures that mirror international migration patterns, while maintaining unique characteristics of “relational ethics” within a pluralistic state.

Existential Rupture: Internal vs. International Vulnerability

While international migration literature often emphasizes legal and national borders, the internal movement of NTT Catholics to South Kalimantan generates a similar “configurative disruption.” Theoretically, internal migrants are expected to face fewer hurdles; however, the transition from a Catholic-majority region to a Muslim-majority environment creates a state of multidimensional vulnerability. Subject 1’s emotional dislocation, expressed as: *“The first time I came here, I actually cried because all I saw around me was oil palm... so it felt like living in the middle of a forest”* (Subject 1: 15), resonates with Groody’s (2013: 140) “inner geography” of loss. This confirms that crossing cultural and religious boundaries within a nation can be as ontologically taxing as crossing sovereign borders.

Sanctification of Work as a Universal Survival Strategy

Consistent with global patterns of migrant spirituality, this study finds that work serves as a medium for restoring dignity and gaining social acceptance. Just as migrants in the West use labor to assert their humanity (Groody, 2013: 141), Subject 2 utilized extreme diligence to navigate social marginalization: *“I showed [my worth] more through my work alone... the more I was distanced, the more I sought work... basically, I was working by 2 AM”* (Subject 2: 12). This “sanctification of work” acts as a universal response to what Luna (2019: 89) describes as “social vulnerability,” where the migrant’s professional contribution serves as a silent witness to their faith and integrity.

Ecclesial Transformation: From Institution to Diaspora Solidarity

A significant comparative shift is observed in the ecclesial experience. In NTT, the Church is a dominant “communal habitus” (Laksana & Wood, 2018: 2), but in South Kalimantan, it evolves into a Pilgrim Church (Phan, 2016: 860). The “taken-for-granted” faith of the village is replaced by a reflective commitment. This is evident in Subject 4’s refusal to abandon his faith despite pressures to convert for professional gain: *“Every night we have evening prayers, and I often remind my children: Don’t let your pursuit of this or that lead you to leave the Church... it is fine to seek money, but never let us forget God”* (Subject 4: 16). This mirrors international diaspora communities where being a minority paradoxically strengthens religious resilience through solidarity.

Ethical Adaptation: Integration without Assimilation

Unlike some migration models that emphasize total assimilation, NTT migrants practice “selective integration.” Subject 3’s strategy of developing a relational ethic facilitates peaceful coexistence while maintaining core identity. By inviting Muslim neighbors to participate in their celebrations: *“We cook [together], so our way is to call them here, and they are the ones who do the cooking”* (Subject 3: 16), they manage the “haram” stigma through collaborative hospitality. This suggests that internal migration in Indonesia offers a model of “relational hospitality” (Cruz, 2010: 127) that is often more advanced in its everyday practice than the segregated models seen in some international contexts.

5. CONCLUSION

The following concluding sections synthesize the research findings, offering a final reflection on the theological and philosophical significance of the migration journey. By weaving together the participants' lived experiences with the theoretical constructs of Ricoeur, Groody, and Phan (Ricoeur, 1981; Groody, 2009; Phan, 2016), this conclusion delineates the study's original contributions and provides strategic recommendations for the evolving landscape of diaspora ministry and Christian education.

Synthesis: The Refiguration of Faith as a Narrative Achievement

This study concludes that internal migration among Catholic NTT migrants in South Kalimantan is fundamentally a narrative achievement that functions as a locus theologicus (Phan, 2016: 856). While the Comparative Analysis in the previous section validated that these migrants face existential ruptures akin to international movements (Groody, 2009: 642), this synthesis emphasizes the internal transformation of the self. Through the Ricoeurian movement from a communal habitus to refigured faith (Ricoeur, 1981: 143), migration acts as a catalyst that strips away the “taken-for-granted” structures of inherited religion. What emerges is a faith that is no longer sustained by external social dominance but by an internal, reflective commitment. The journey from Flores to the palm oil plantations of Kalimantan (Subject 1: 15) is, therefore, a movement from a passive identity to an active, ethical agency.

Original Contribution to Christian Education and Philosophy

The original contribution of this research lies in its demonstration that internal migration in a pluralistic state like Indonesia is a primary site for “existential education.” In the field of philosophy of religion, this study challenges the notion that religious stability is the ideal state for spiritual growth. Instead, it posits that vulnerability is a necessary configurative stage for the maturation of faith (Groody, 2013: 141). For Christian education, the findings suggest that the most resilient form of faith is not one learned through rote communal tradition, but one refigured through the “encounter with the Other” in the diaspora (Phan, 2003: 157).

Practical Implications: From Institution to Relation

Theologically and pastorally, these findings necessitate a shift toward Peter Phan's model of the Pilgrim Church (Phan, 2016: 860). Since the diaspora experience refigures the Church from a dominant institution into a relational community of solidarity (Cruz, 2013: 113), ecclesial policies must adapt accordingly. Recommendations include:

1. **Relational Pastoral Care:** Moving beyond administrative-heavy parish models toward supporting small base communities (Stasi) where migrants can practice “relational hospitality” (Cruz, 2010: 127).
2. **Ethical Witness:** Encouraging the “sanctification of work” (Subject 2: 12) and “winning hearts” (Subject 2: 15) as the primary modes of evangelization in pluralistic environments, rather than institutional expansion (Sudhiarsa, 2023: 7).

Limitations and Future Research

This research acknowledges its boundaries, focusing on the depth of first-generation migrant experiences. Having established the comparative patterns and the process of refiguration (Ricoeur, 1981: 143), future studies should explore the intergenerational transmission of refigured faith (Subject 4: 16). Specifically, research is needed to examine whether the “relational ethics” developed by the first generation are successfully passed down to their children, who may not possess the original NTT “communal habitus” as a reference point (McGuire, 2008: 15; Sudhiarsa, 2023: 7). Furthermore, exploring the role of digital connectivity in maintaining the prefigurative link to the homeland could offer a new dimension to the study of migrant spirituality in the modern era (Groody, 2013: 141).

In the final analysis, the faith of NTT migrants in South Kalimantan proves that lived religion is a dynamic arc (Phan, 2013: 192). Through the movement of migration, faith is not lost; it is refined, moved, and ultimately refigured into a more resilient form that finds God in the concrete realities of the diaspora (Groody, 2009: 642; Phan, 2016: 860).

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