



**Effects of Migration and the Challenges Filipinos Encounter
Related to their Religion when they Migrate to Norway**

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Master's Thesis

**Master in Community Development and Social Innovation
Major in Migration and Intercultural Relations**

Word count: 25180

Date: May 15, 2023

Abstract

The religiosity of the Filipinos has a long and rich history that began even before the time of the Spanish colonization when they brought Catholicism to the Philippines. However, we cannot deny the fact that the influence of the Spaniards to the religious aspect of the Filipinos is deep and still manifests until now and touches not just the religious aspect, but as well as the social aspect. In particular, the Philippines, having among the greatest concentration of Catholics in the world, is a manifestation of the Spanish influence to the Filipinos especially regarding their religion. Nevertheless, we can also say that the Catholicism of the Filipinos has already evolved over time and became uniquely Filipino that made it more than just a religion but also, a way of life to most of them.

Given the importance of religion to the Filipinos, this study investigated how the religiosity of the Filipino Catholics was affected when they migrated to a country with low religiosity and the predominant religion is also different such as Norway.

The qualitative research method was utilized in this study with the help of six (6) participants. Pertinent data for the study was collected through individual interviews and participant observations.

The results of the study came from the data collected based on the interviews conducted with the participants. The data was also interpreted with the consideration of different theories relevant to the topic. The effects of migration and the challenges that the Filipino Catholics encountered when they migrated to Norway were explained and better understood as a result of the study. Other concerns also arose during the course of the study such as mental health problems and how they are affected by religion.

In the end, recommendations were formulated based on the concerns and limitations of the study. These recommendations may benefit not just the Filipinos, but also the Norwegian society in general, as well as the future researchers who might be interested in conducting further studies related to this topic.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Professor Frieder Ludwig, for the patience, guidance, encouragement, and support both in this thesis and throughout my master's program.

My deepest appreciation to Assoc. Professor Gerd Marie Ådna for sharing her knowledge and giving suggestions.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to my informants who willingly participated in this study.

I am deeply thankful to all my professors at VID for all the learnings.

My sincere thanks to my friends and family for their love and support.

Special thanks to my husband and son for always inspiring me.

I couldn't have done this without you. Thank you.

Madel Santillan Obinque

May 2023

“As I see it, religion is at its best when it leads us forward, when it guides us in our spiritual growth as individuals and in our cultural evolution as a species. Unfortunately,”

— Brian McLaren

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Chapter 1

Background of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Living in a foreign country is not easy, but it has been a common practice for the Filipino people. There are several reasons why Filipinos migrate to other countries and the most common is employment and to earn a higher salary for their loved ones. It can be said that the Overseas Filipino Workers or “OFWs” are among the main exports of the Philippines, and it can be both good and bad for the country. Working abroad, being a generally accepted tradition among the Filipinos may lead to “brain drain” which is bad for the country’s development. “Migration may hinder development by siphoning of qualified personnel (the ‘brain drain’), removing dynamic young workers and reducing pressures for social change” (Castles, 2000, p.275). On the other hand, it can be also beneficial for the country due to the remittances they would send their loved ones back home which is good for the economy aside from acquiring new skills and experiencing new cultures that they can utilize whenever they decide to return back home. Philippine Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello made a statement during the celebration of the 30th Founding Anniversary of the Bagong Bayani (Modern Hero) Foundation and he said:

We regard your Foundation as our valuable partner in giving due recognition to the OFWs not only for beefing up the economy through their dollar remittances. More so, through their significant efforts in promoting the image of the Filipino as dignified, competent, and responsible workers around the globe ("OFWs' global competency hailed," 2019).

For a nation whose economy greatly relies on the overseas workers’ remittances, it is fitting to call them “modern day heroes”. “Remittances refer to the money and goods that are transmitted to households by migrant workers working outside of their origin communities, either in urban areas or abroad” (Adams, 2011, p. 809). As I mentioned, there are several reasons why Filipinos migrate to another country. Although employment is the most common reason, it can be also because of marrying a foreigner and deciding to start their family in the country where their spouses live, or it can be because of studying abroad and learning a different culture at the same time. Whatever the reason is, living abroad entails a

lot of adjustments and sacrifices in order to survive. The most common things that people need to adapt to when living in a foreign country are language, food, weather, clothing, following a different set of rules and traditions among others. Based on the experiences of the Filipinos living in Norway that I was able to talk to, the weather is one of the most challenging part in adapting to this country since there is no winter in the Philippines. The language barrier is also something that many Filipinos need to adapt to in order to thrive in this country. Listening from their experiences, I can say that they share almost the same story when adjusting to life in Norway. It has always been about learning the Norwegian language, enduring the freezing temperature specially during the winter season, missing the Filipino food that they got accustomed to, observing, and following the rules and customs of this country. However, I observed that there is something missing among those aspects involved during their adjustment period. It is something that is not commonly addressed, but is very important for Filipinos, and I am pertaining to religion. "The Philippines proudly boasts to be the only Christian nation in Asia. More than 86 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, 6 percent belong to various nationalized Christian cults, and another 2 percent belong to well over 100 Protestant denominations" (Miller, n.d.). I can say that Catholicism in the Philippines is not just merely a religion but also a way of life. It has a lot of beliefs and practices that affects a Filipino from birth and throughout his/her entire life. This religion began in the Philippines a long time ago and has been a part of most Filipinos' lives since then. "The Christian history of the Philippines began in 1521 when Ferdinand Magellan landed on the island of Cebu just before Easter. Though he was Portuguese, Magellan was sailing on behalf of the Spanish crown on a journey that began two years earlier in Spain" (Niles, 2021). Understanding the importance of religion for a Filipino migrant to cope during difficult times specially when living in a foreign country is a little complicated. "Religion itself, however, entails a dimension of social practice that is not common to all social interaction, namely a spiritual dimension. Religion is a shared kind of human activity, but defining that domain is challenging" (Ammerman, 2020, p.17). Religion playing a central role in the lives of the Filipinos can be attributed to Spain colonizing the Philippines for a very long period of time. "The Philippines is the only country in Asia in which Christianity is the national religion. This is probably the result of the Spanish Catholic reign in The Philippines for more than 300 years" ("Religion," 2019). Saying that Catholicism as a way of life for the Filipinos and not just a mere religion is based on the system this religion was inculcated by the Spaniards to the

minds of the Filipinos. The people were resettled from isolated dispersed hamlets into Spanish organized “pueblos” or villages to protect the population from Muslim slave raiders. The dominant power during the Spanish period was in the hands of the parish priest wherein the pueblos had both civil and ecclesiastical authority. The church became the center of town life being situated in a central plaza. The pace of the people’s daily life is set by the church calendar that follows the fiesta and liturgical seasons (Miller, n.d.).

Until now, a typical Filipino life revolves around the traditions he/she grew up with such as going to church every Sunday, having their newborn baptized and the boys getting circumcised, and celebrating “fiestas” or festivals to honor the different Catholic Saints. Even common activities such as in making decisions, a typical Filipino asks for guidance not just from God but also from the Saints. Some even practice superstitious beliefs like wiping a piece of cloth on a Saint’s statue or image for good luck:

The results of 400 years of Catholicism were mixed -- ranging from a deep theological understanding by the educated elite to a more superficial understanding by the rural and urban masses. The latter is commonly referred to as Filipino folk Christianity, combining a surface veneer of Christian monotheism and dogma with indigenous animism. (Miller, n.d., para. 5)

Practicing these beliefs and traditions might be affected when a Filipino migrates to another country with a different dominant religion such as Norway. “Religion in Norway is dominated by Lutheran Christianity, with 68.7% of the population belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway in 2019” (“Religion in Norway,” 2022). Although Norway has Christianity as the dominant religion, it is far in comparison on how Filipinos lives are influenced by religion to how Norwegian lives are influenced by religion. “As of the early 21st century, Norway has one of the lowest church attendance rates in the world” (“Christianity in Norway,” 2022). In addition, Norway is also a very secular country meaning it is not subject to or bound by religious rules. In the Philippines, the Catholic church has a big influence on the matters of the state that is why abortion is illegal and it remains the only UN member state without legal provision for divorce.

1.1.1 History of Catholicism in the Philippines

The Philippines is the number one country in Asia with the greatest number of Catholics among its population and it is also ranked the third with the greatest number of Catholics in the world. However, looking back to the history of religion in the Philippines, it has not always been the case. Before the Spaniards brought Catholicism to the Philippines, the Filipino ancestors already have some sort of religion in the form of “animism” or the belief that objects, places, and creatures all possess a distinct spiritual essence and that they are alive. “The pre-Hispanic belief system of Filipinos consisted of a pantheon of gods, spirits, creatures, and men that guarded the streams, fields, trees, mountains, forests, and houses. “Bathala”, who created earth and man, was superior to these other gods and spirits. Regular sacrifices and prayers were offered to placate these deities and spirits” (Miller, n.d., para. 2)

In the present, there is still a small number of indigenous Filipinos practicing animism and they are the ones who belong to tribes and were not converted to Christianity or any other forms of religion. Although Catholicism is a religion not based on animism but is centered on the belief of the “Holy Trinity” comprising the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, it can be said that many of its beliefs based on superstition can be related to the animism that the ancestral Filipinos practiced in the past. This blending of Christianity with superstitious beliefs made Filipino Catholicism even more colorful and unique.

1.1.2 Catholicism and the Filipino Cultures and Traditions

As mentioned earlier, the church calendar sets the pace and rhythm of the daily life of a Filipino Catholic. On a daily or weekly basis, a typical Filipino individual or family prays the rosary and go to church on Sundays to hear the mass. Every Philippine town has a main Catholic church which is more commonly known as a “parish” which means a stable community of the faithful within a particular church and whose pastoral care has been entrusted to a parish priest. In addition, every parish has a particular patron saint whose honored annually through the celebration of a festival commonly known as “fiesta”. This fiesta can be said to be one of the highlights of a Philippine town and every household prepares for this annual celebration lavishly. Even if a particular household is economically challenged, they will do everything, even to the point of borrowing money just to be able to

celebrate this occasion with a lot of food, not just enough to feed the family but also a number of guests. This practice is thought to bring good luck and for the patron saint to bless the family or the entire town with abundance and prosperity. These fiestas evolved to become one of the most popular tourist attractions for people from the other parts of the Philippines and even foreigners to visit a particular town and experience celebrating these festivals. The joy and excitement it brings to the people is astonishing and it brings camaraderie and positivism to the people involved. Street dancing and flamboyant float parades are among the most awaited activities in these fiestas, and they can even rival the “Carnival parades” in other countries. Some of the most popular festivals in the Philippines are: 1. “Sinulog” festival which celebrates a baby Jesus statue called “Santo Niño” that Ferdinand Magellan gave to Rajah Humabon of Cebu in 1521. This is said to have been a big moment, marking a transition from paganism to Catholicism among the Filipinos, 2. “Pahiyas” festival wherein locals offered up their harvest to St. Isidore the Laborer, who is the patron saint of farmers, laborers, and peasants, and 3. “Ati-atihan” festival which is also a celebration of Santo Niño or the infant Jesus. Celebrating fiestas is just one of the activities in a Filipino Catholic’s busy calendar year. In addition, there are also numerous ceremonies celebrated by a Filipino Catholic such as Baptism Ceremonies, Holy Communion Ceremonies, Holy Week Ceremonies, holidays that honor the dead namely: All Saint’s Day and All Soul’s Day, and Christmas season that begins as early as the month of September and lasts until January of the next year. All of these ceremonies and celebrations always include parties and gatherings among relatives and friends that may explain the fun-loving nature and being family-oriented of a typical Filipino. The Holy Week or Lenten season and the Christmas season are among the busiest in a Filipino Catholic’s calendar of events. Although there are similarities with the other Christian denominations in observing these events like celebrating the Easter Sunday and having a feast with your loved ones on Christmas eve, there are several traditions that can be regarded as uniquely Catholic. For the Holy week, there is the Ash Wednesday wherein the Catholics wear a marking of the cross in ash on their foreheads that symbolizes our mortality. On Palm Sunday, the Catholics have processions and distribution of blessed palm leaves, and these palm leaves are special among the Filipino Catholics as they are believed to ward off evil spirits therefore, they are usually attached on the doors or windows of their homes for protection. There are also numerous processions

held wherein images of Jesus, Mary, and the Saints are paraded on the streets. In addition, there is the tradition of church visit or commonly called “Visita Iglesia” which is a pious practice of Filipinos during Holy Week to visit at least seven or 14 churches to pray. It is among the popular Holy Week sacred vows or “panatas” in Tagalog that Filipino Catholics make. I remember when I was younger that this tradition gave our family a reason and opportunity to drive around together to visit several Catholic churches which is a favorite family bonding activity during the Lenten season. The highlight of the Holy Week is the Easter Sunday and while many celebrate it with Easter egg hunting and decorating hard boiled eggs by painting or dyeing, the Filipino Catholics perform a ritual celebration of the Risen Christ, or the resurrection of Jesus called “salubong” or “welcome” in English. It is done before dawn wherein young women lead a procession of two statues, Mary in a black veil and the Risen Christ, towards the nearby church where a number of Catholic parishioners gather together and wait for their arrival. The Christmas season is also filled with traditions and activities that are unique for the Filipino Catholics. The most popular is the “Simbang Gabi” or “Night Mass” which is a devotional, nine-day series of Masses attended by Filipino Catholics in anticipation of Christmas. These Masses usually take place between three and five in the early morning from the sixteenth of December to the twenty-fourth of December. It entails a lot of sacrifice and willpower to wake up very early in the morning to go to church for nine consecutive days. However, a lot of Filipino Catholics endure this because of the belief that they can make a wish and it will come true if they are able to complete the nine days of attending these night masses.

1.1.3 Catholicism and Superstitious Beliefs

We can observe from the Filipino Catholic traditions that were mentioned such as the hanging of the blessed palm leaves on their homes for protection against the evil spirits and completing the nine-day series of Night masses to be able to make a wish that they are based on superstition. “Superstitions” are often seen as vestiges of older popular beliefs and practices that survive some-what out of place in modern culture, influenced as it is by modern science and its notions of what is rational and irrational” (Martin, 2004, p.10). Such superstitions or superstitious beliefs can be said to be a part of Filipino consciousness for generations that originated from their ancestors and passed on through word of mouth. The reasons for such beliefs can be because of cultural traditions and individual experiences.

Although such beliefs can be said to be irrational in nature, they can also act as a medium to strengthen the faith of the Filipino Catholics. It was already mentioned that in the Philippines, every town has a parish with a particular patron saint or image who's honored annually through the celebration of a festival commonly known as "fiesta". It is common to venerate these images and liturgical objects by kissing, bowing, and making the sign of the cross to show respect. These images are regarded as reminders of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, or the Saints just like when people look at a picture of their loved one. However, there are also many Filipino Catholics who go beyond these images serving as mere reminders but rather treat them as relics that have supernatural powers that can do wonders like healing illnesses or bringing good luck. A good example is the Feast of the Black Nazarene which is a religious festival held in Quiapo, Manila, Philippines and is celebrated annually on the ninth of January. The highlight of the festival is a procession called the "Traslacion" wherein the image of the Black Nazarene is paraded around the town and is considered as the largest religious festival in Asia. Its popularity also has an infamous reputation of having severe health and safety risks due to panic stampedes and turbulence. Because of the belief that the Black Nazarene, which is a historical image of Jesus Christ is miraculous, it attracts an incredible number of devotees. "In 2019, more than five million attended the Traslacion. Many of them wanted to hold the image with their hands or simply have the image wiped by their handkerchiefs, Father Earl Valdez, the parish priest of Quiapo Church, said" ("More than a million join Black Nazarene feast," 2023). Such belief is something I observed growing up in a devoted Catholic family wherein my mother would wipe her handkerchief on a popular image of the Virgin Mary called "Our Lady of Manaoag" and kept this handkerchief all the time with her for good luck. I also observed that many of my Catholic friends will have their pencils blessed with holy water before taking an important exam. They have this belief that using the blessed pencils in answering the exam can give them high scores. Considering such acts, it is not easy to conclude if they are really based on superstition or faith. While superstition is an irrational belief in supernatural influences, faith is a strong belief based on spiritual conviction rather than proof. An example of a superstitious belief is that the thirteenth of Friday is an unlucky day and that there is a higher probability for bad things to happen, therefore, people tend to be more careful on this day or they just stay home if they have nothing important to do outside to avoid accidents. On the other hand, Catholics and Christians in general believe that the

miracles Jesus performed like healing the sick can still happen even if He is not with us physically anymore as long as we have faith. The miracle of a boy named Luke Burgie is a modern-day example of a miracle based on faith:

For six months, he wasted away. When 4-year-old Luke Burgie fell ill with a mysterious stomach virus in 1998, doctors struggled to find a diagnosis. Then, as suddenly as they had developed, Luke's symptoms disappeared. His doctors were baffled. They didn't know why Luke had been sick and they had no explanation for why he'd improved almost overnight. But Luke's mother, Jan Burgie, had an answer: Prayer. As her son lay in his hospital bed, Jan had called nuns from a local convent—Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration and asked them to pray for him. Over the course of nine days, they did just that, praying to Mother Maria Theresia, the nun who began their order back in 1863. Within a month, the little boy had made a full recovery. "I just remember Luke's brother saying, 'Jesus' healed Lukie! Jesus healed Lukie!" Jan told FOX31. Fourteen years later, the Vatican declared Luke's healing a miracle and Mother Maria Theresia was named Saint Maria Theresia. (Tafone, 2022)

If we try to decipher the reason behind the devotees of the Black Nazarene doing everything just to touch the image for healing or good luck, there will be a very thin line separating between superstition and faith. They might believe that the image itself has supernatural powers that is based on superstition or that the image is a representation of Jesus Christ and through faith, can intervene for miracles to happen.

The superstitious beliefs of the Filipino Catholics can be mostly observed during the celebration of Holy Week. Some of the most common superstitious beliefs that made a Filipino Holy Week unique are the following: 1. You should not take a bath during Good Friday, 2. You should not eat meat on Good Friday, 3. You should not stare at mirrors during Holy Week, 4. Keeping the noise down during Holy Week, 5. Avoid getting injured on Good Friday, and 6. Doing self-flagellation or crucifixion to the cross among some Catholic faithful. Although we can say that these beliefs are irrational, there are actually some reasons to why the Filipino Catholics do them. Not taking a bath on Good Friday and not staring at mirrors are acts of disciplining the body to not be stimulated by worldly pleasures. Ritz Darwin

Resuello, who is a parish priest and canon law student said that “Bathing gives comfort to the body. Looking in the mirror may be a form of vanity. Through these, the spirit of mortification may be lost” (Regalado, 2023). The same thing goes with not eating meat on Good Friday which is also a practice of mortification since meat is considered as a symbol of prestige among the Filipino indigenous communities. Not making noise or keeping the noise down during the Holy Week is done because it is believed that silence is a form of respect for the dead. According to the anthropologist and University of the Philippines professor Christian Rosales, "Silence is a mixture of different expressions of grieving, such as crying, whining, wailing, chattering about the cause of someone's death, celebrating the life of the dead, or the sound of prayers over the dead" (Regalado, 2023). Although it is human nature to avoid getting injured on a daily basis, getting injured on Good Friday is believed to make the wounds and injuries to take a longer time to heal because Jesus died on this day. Rosales said:

Jesus is the "lamb" sacrificed, and on the symbolic day that he is dead, human-controlled spirits and agentic spirits roam around, wrathful and could harm anyone at will. So, one must be careful not to get wounded/injured until such a time the 'sacrificial lamb' could become available. (Regalado, 2023)

A more logical explanation for this is that this belief might have been prompted to make the children behave during Holy Week because their parents wanted to be in a contemplative mood, thus, discouraging their children from engaging in physical activities during this week. Self-flagellation and crucifixion to the cross are considered to be extreme forms of penance, trying to reenact what Jesus Christ experienced from the Roman soldiers. According to Resuello, penance “are practices to pay for one's sins and to help the faithful discipline themselves so they wouldn't fall for the same sin in the future.” Self-flagellation and crucifixion are practiced, inflicting pain as atonement, but are not encouraged by the Catholic church (Regalado, 2023).

1.1.4 Catholicism and the Philippine Politics

The Philippines has a democratic type of government wherein the leaders such as the president are elected by the people, thus, giving the power to the people. There is also the separation of church and state which is written in the Philippine Constitution. "In the 1987 Constitution (Article II Section 6), crafted and promulgated as a post-Marcos document: The separation of Church and State shall be inviolable" (Lazo, 2006, quoted in Cornelio, 2013, p. 38). However, the notion that the people hold the power in a democracy can be said to be capitalized by the Catholic church since the Filipinos are very religious people and almost 90 percent of the population belongs to this religion, therefore giving the Church a big influence in the governance of the country and its people. This influence of the Church on matters of politics and state can be traced back since the time of the colonization of the Philippines by Spain. It can be said that transforming the Philippines into a Christian nation was a strategy of the Spanish colonizers to have a firm grasp on the Filipino people and that the Catholic religion was a vital instrument in making the colonization process much easier. As mentioned earlier, the dominant power during the Spanish period was in the hands of the parish priest and the church. Many of the Spanish priests also known as the "Friars" during the Spanish colonization of the Philippines have abused their powers to satisfy their vile lusts, rob the Filipinos of their lands, and have a lavish lifestyle while the majority of the Filipinos lived in poverty. Such abuses are highlighted in the novels written by the national hero of the Philippines Dr. Jose Rizal and these novels are titled "Noli Me Tangere" which is Latin for "Touch Me Not" and "El Filibusterismo" which means "The Subversive". These novels provided the spark that ignited the fire for the Philippine revolution against the Spanish colonizers to happen. The Philippine revolution succeeded which ended the 300 years of the Spanish colonization of the Philippines. Although instrumental for the success of the Philippine revolution and are important parts of the Filipino history, these books were banned from being studied in schools for a long time due to the role of the Catholic friars in these books. It was opposed by the Catholic Church because reading the novels will abuse Catholic dogmas and will breach freedom of conscience. It was banned in schools until the year 1956 when the "Rizal law" was passed:

The Rizal Law, officially designated as Republic Act No. 1425, is a Philippine law that mandates all educational institutions in the Philippines to offer courses about Jose

Rizal. The Rizal Law was emphatically opposed by the Catholic Church in the Philippines, mostly due to the anti-clericalism in Rizal's books *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. ("Rizal Law," 2023)

The goal of the law which was authored by the former Philippine senator Claro M. Recto is so that the students can read the novels as part of the school curriculum. They teach about how we can fight oppression and that we should not be abused by the colonizers. In the modern time, the role of the Catholic church has evolved not just to provide spiritual guidance to the Filipino people but also as an institution that defends the weak and the oppressed. This was evident during the 1986 "People Power Revolution" which was a non-violent uprising against the military government of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos. The Catholic church played a crucial role in this revolution wherein the Catholic leaders urged the Filipinos to unite together and mobilized millions of people to gather onto the streets of Manila in a matter of hours. Images of the Catholic church as the defender of the weak can be seen during this uprising such as the Catholic nuns blocking military tanks and these images spread around the world. In the present time, the Catholic church continues to flex its influence in the state and politics of the Philippine government such as opposing the passing of the divorce law, the reproductive health bill, and the legalization of abortion. The Catholic church of the Philippines believes that it has a mandate to uphold core values of life and its sanctity like the ones taught in the Bible that is why it is against abortion since it is viewed by the Catholic church as an act of murder. "Abortion is illegal in the Philippines – a majority Catholic country and former American colony – and has been for over a century. Under the law, women found to have aborted their fetuses face prison terms of between two to six years" (Chen, 2022). "Pope Francis described abortion as akin to hiring a hitman" (Chen, 2022). This perspective of the Catholic church with regards to the preservation of life was connected to its opposition against the reproductive health bill which aimed to promote and give the people more awareness about the use of contraceptives. This bill took decades before it was passed and became a law due to the strong opposition of the Catholic church and the conservative groups. "The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012, known as the RH Law, is a groundbreaking law that guarantees universal and free access to nearly all modern contraceptives for all citizens, including impoverished communities, at government health centers" (Goldberg,

2014). The Catholic church, trying to uphold the core values also opposed the passing of the divorce bill because it believes that it can destruct the family and the society. The Philippines is one of the only two UN member countries in the world, the other one is the Vatican City, that does not allow divorce. In the Bible, it was said that “What God joined together, let no man put asunder” (Matthew 19:6). In addition, viewing the family as the basic unit of the society made the Catholic church believe that its destruction through the separation of the husband and wife may affect the society and lead to its destruction as well. However, we cannot deny the fact that there are a lot of negative implications of not having the ability to get separated from your spouse legally, such as in the case of domestic violence. This is an ethical dilemma that argues between breaking the contract during marriage that states the promise of “until death do us part” and being powerless on regaining freedom from a toxic and unhealthy relationship. In the end, the role being assumed by the Catholic church in the Philippines as the “defender of the weak” can be said as a little vague if it is really able to live up to what it is expected to be or it is just advocating in the “oppression of the weak”.

1.1.5 Catholicism and the Filipino Positivity

Given the dark history of Catholicism in the Philippines as a tool to colonize the country which lead to oppression and loss of its freedom, we can still say that there are a lot of good things that this religion contributed to the Filipino traits. The Catholic religion itself is not evil as it promotes having a close relationship with God and doing good deeds to be able to go to heaven. However, those who used the Catholic religion to control the people and do corrupt practices are the ones who are evil. Among the good effects of Catholicism to the Filipino trait is their positivity or having a sunny disposition in life. The Filipino’s ability to be happy and stay positive despite of the difficulties in life can be connected to their faith. “In a way, challenges faced can be overcome as long as they have faith, with a higher power watching over one’s well-being, believing that all obstacles are tests of faith and overcoming it will be the ultimate reward” (The Good News Pilipinas Team, 2018). This positivity brought about by their strong faith can also be attributed to the Filipino resiliency that can be observed every time the Philippines is hit by a disaster such as strong typhoons. Due to its geographical location, the Philippines is prone to tropical cyclones producing heavy rains and flooding of large areas and also strong winds which result in heavy casualties to human life and destructions to properties. Aside from typhoons, earthquakes, landslides, and volcanic

eruptions are disasters that are common in the Philippines, but what is more common is the ability of the Filipinos to smile despite of the sufferings during and after the disaster. “In the 41st global annual survey conducted by Gallup International, the Philippines ranked third in the top ten happiest countries in 2017, with a net happiness score of +84” (de Guzman, 2018). This might be surprising to many since the Philippines is not a rich country and as a matter of fact, still considered to be a third world country. Comparing to rich nations, the happiness of the Filipino people does not come from having the best welfare system, low crime and unemployment rate, or a government that is not corrupt, rather, it is the sense of hope that everything will be ok as long as they stay faithful to God. “A major testament of this belief are the various colorful town fiestas celebrated all over the country, where most celebrations happen after a long and difficult ordeal, while the positive results are rewards attributed to God” (The Good News Pilipinas Team, 2018). However, this attitude cannot always be positive in nature as it may lead to being carefree and not exerting any more effort to improve their conditions as they believe that everything will turn out fine as long as you pray and keep the faith. This can be connected to a phrase commonly uttered by a Filipino in uncertain situations which is “Bahala na” which can be translated to “whatever happens, happens.” This phrase came from the words “Bathala na” and the word “Bathala”, as already mentioned before, was the god of the Filipino ancestors based on animism before Christianity was brought to the Philippines by the Spaniards. This means that this attitude might already be present among the Filipino ancestors long before they became Christians. On one end, it can be an attitude that shows courage and faith in God, but on the other end, it can be a fatalistic attitude that things are out of one's control and whatever will happen will happen. Analyzing further the negative aspect of this attitude may lead us to associate this with what is called “toxic positivity”. “Toxic Positivity is defined as “maintaining positive thoughts or emotions to the point of ignoring negative emotions altogether, or just thinking positive but not initiating ways to address an issue” (Abara, 2022). In a way, the resilience and positivity that the Filipinos exhibit when faced with difficult situations can be their coping mechanism that are expected to come out automatically since it has been a part of the Filipino culture. It might be initially ok but in the long run, may take its toll on the mental health of any individual. “Suppressing our true emotions can impose a greater danger towards our mental health which leads to anxiety and depression and can manifest to physical ailments” (Abara, 2022). However, the negative aspect of these attitudes is

counteracted by another popular Filipino trait which is called “Bayanihan” which means the spirit of communal unity and cooperation. “Culturally, in the face of any traumatic events, we are conditioned to smile and shrug it off because we have this cultural value that allows us to be picked up by others and carry us in times of trouble” (Abara, 2022). This spirit of cooperation or “Bayanihan” can be said as a byproduct of the Filipino Catholic practices such as celebrating the annual fiestas promoting unity for the entire community. Generally, we can say that the good effects brought by the Catholic religion to the Filipino traits still outweigh the negative ones.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

My master’s thesis is about the effects of migration and the challenges Filipinos encounter related to their religion when they migrate to Norway. The Filipinos are mostly Catholics, and they take their religion seriously. The deep root of this religion being embedded in the Filipino culture is a result of a very long history since it was brought to the Philippines by the Spanish colonizers, and it will be also a part of the discussion in this research. Considering the importance of this religion in a Filipino’s life, the effects of migrating to a non-Catholic country such as Norway will be the focus of this research. Learning such effects can help to understand them much better and may provide solutions or recommendations to the negative effects that they might encounter while living in Norway and to improve their quality of life. It may seem that religion would not be of great significance to a migrant’s life especially if it is on a non-Filipino’s perspective, but this research aims to help understand and realize the importance of religion to a typical Filipino migrant’s life. The reasons for a Filipino to migrate to another country such as Norway are diverse, and whatever the reason is, migrating to a very far country such as Norway with totally different culture, weather, and language will be very challenging to somebody from the Philippines. We can say that having a strong Catholic faith can be an advantage for Filipinos to overcome these challenges. However, this strong faith can also add to the challenges a Filipino encounter in migrating to a country such as Norway whose main religion is not Catholicism. As I mentioned, Catholicism is not just a religion to Filipinos but also a way of life. It would be interesting to learn how living in a non-Catholic country can affect the lives of Filipino Catholics since Catholicism affects every aspect of a Filipino’s life. To provide the necessary data for this study, interviews are conducted, and studies of literary works related to this research were

also done. First-hand experiences of the author were also incorporated into the study being a Filipino who grew up in a typical Filipino Catholic family. Being a Filipino Catholic living in Norway can affect the different aspects of a Filipino's life. Missing the conveniences and traditions commonly present when living in the Philippines can be lessened or eliminated by coordinating with the Filipino Catholic community and the community or church leaders to come up with programs catered to this endeavor.

1.2.1 History and Current State of Religion in Norway

Like the Philippines, Norway has not always been a Christian nation. The Norwegian ancestors like in the other Scandinavian countries were the Vikings who were traders and pirates who raided and settled in different parts of Europe. The early Norwegians practiced the Norse religion which is based on Norse mythology and its gods. Some of the most popular gods in the Norse mythology are Odin, who is considered as the greatest among the Norse gods and Thor, who is the god of thunder and lightning. In the present pop culture, these gods are known by the young generation because of the movies made that were inspired by them such as Thor, who was made into a superhero character in the Hollywood movies. As we know, mythology is a collection of myths which means that they are not based on reality or true, but people who believed in them, nonetheless, take them seriously. While the ancestors in the Philippines were considered to be pagans worshipping the spirits and nature, such can be also said as the case among the Vikings. The Old Norse religion of the Vikings is also considered as paganism since the Norse gods, though believed as powerful beings, are not the same with the Christian God. Like in most pagan religions, there were a lot of cultural practices involved in worshipping their gods or the nature and the most common is the practice of offering sacrifices. The Viking ritual of sacrificing called "blóts" are done to worship their gods and at the same time display their wealth and power by supplying food and drink to all. "The primary religious ritual in Norse religion appears to have been sacrifice, or blót. Many texts, both Old Norse and others refer to sacrifices" ("Old Norse religion," 2022). Since the Vikings were raiders and travelled a lot to different parts of Europe, they were immersed with different cultures and some of them were also influenced by the Christian religion of the countries that they raided like England. In particular, Catholicism was the first Christian religion that these Vikings brought to Norway on their return back home from their travels. Eventually, more and more of these Vikings shifted

towards Catholicism and the most influential man in this religious transformation in Norway was King Olav Haraldsson, who was a Viking king. The Vikings are infamous for using violence to get what they want and King Olav, being a Viking king, used force to transform the people to Catholicism during his life. However, his death brought the biggest amount of transformation as there were reports of miracles that happened around his tomb during his wake that made more people to convert to Christianity. Because of his contribution to the Catholic religion, King Olav was eventually canonized and became Saint Olav who is now the patron saint of Norway. Fast forward to the 1500s, the then royal family converted to Protestantism, particularly to Lutheranism that became the basis for the formation of “The Church of Norway” around 1020. The Church of Norway is an evangelical Lutheran denomination of Protestant Christianity and by far the largest Christian church in Norway. “The Catholic Church is the next largest Christian church at 3.1%. The unaffiliated make up 18.3% of the population. Islam is followed by 3.4% of the population” (“Religion in Norway”, 2022).

However, the dominance of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway in this country does not mean that Norway is a religious country like the Philippines who takes its religion seriously. As a matter of fact, Norway is considered one of the least religious countries in the world. “In 2005, a survey conducted by Gallup International in sixty-five countries indicated that Norway was the least religious country in Western Europe, with 29% counting themselves as believing in a church or deity, 26% as being atheists, and 45% not being entirely certain” (“Religion in Norway,” 2022). Although majority of the Norwegian population belongs to the Church of Norway, it can be said that they are “belonging without believing” and the main reason for their being members is as a connection to their cultural tradition. “Most members of the state church are not active adherents, except for the rituals of birth, confirmation, weddings, and burials. Some 3 per cent on average attend church on Sunday and 10 per cent on average attend church every month” (“Religion in Norway,” 2022). Norway, like the other Scandinavian countries often ranks among the top in surveys of countries with the best quality of life. At the same time, Scandinavians are also characterized as having the most religious indifference. The correlation between the two can be explained by the “Existential Insecurity Theory of Secularization”. This theory is based on the perspective that religion arises where people lack economic security. Norway has among

the strongest welfare and healthcare systems in the world, and it can be said that removing the fear of personal catastrophe and improving the condition of life leads to a more secular society like what the Norwegian society has. On the other hand, the most religious countries in the world are most often than not, third world or war-torn countries. In 2009, Gallup surveyed 114 countries about the importance of the role religion plays in people's lives worldwide:

Each of the most religious countries is relatively poor, with a per-capita GDP below \$5,000. This reflects the strong relationship between a country's socioeconomic status and the religiosity of its residents. In the world's poorest countries -- those with average per-capita incomes of \$2,000 or lower -- the median proportion who say religion is important in their daily lives is 95%. In contrast, the median for the richest countries -- those with average per-capita incomes higher than \$25,000 -- is 47%. (Crabtree, 2010)

As mentioned earlier, the Filipinos have this trait of positivity that arises from their strong faith in God. We can say that their faith helps them cope in their struggles to provide for their families and give them a better life. Like in war-torn countries or countries where corruption is rampant, where else would the poor people lean on or ask for help if their own government cannot help them? Although religion and their faith cannot always miraculously give them the material things they need, it gives them this sense of hope knowing that they can always lean on to God and nothing is impossible with Him. If we follow this line of reasoning, we might conclude that not being religious is better than being religious since it means that there is a higher probability of being secured in life and having your needs met. But if that is the case, does it also justify that material things in life are more important than faith in God? Taking a Filipino Catholic who migrated to Norway to work as an example, would his/her migration to a country that can give financial stability make him/her less religious? There have been stories of poor people who had a simple and contented life, then suddenly became wealthy or successful but felt empty inside and unsatisfied in life. Such stories are commonly heard among popular celebrities. The emptiness that these people feel cannot be satisfied by any material thing or security in life and leads to depression or worse, committing suicide. There was a survey conducted by Gallup Polls from 2005 and 2006 showing that more religious countries tend to have lower suicide rates:

It is thus possible that religion serves as an antidote to the lack of purpose that can make a desperate act such as suicide seem appealing. Believing in something bigger than oneself may allow some people to hold onto life in a world where people without such a belief sometimes give up all hope. Another possibility is that some religious people may believe that committing suicide jeopardizes their security in the afterlife. (Pelham & Nyiri, 2008)

As a Christian who grew up in a Catholic family, it has been taught to us from an early age that material things and all the comfort in life are just temporary and faith in God and the afterlife which is believed as eternal are more important. For Christians, it is believed that this world is just a place for us to be tested and judged if we are worthy to go to heaven when our time to depart this world comes. But still, there are rich and successful people that despite of their wealth and fame remained religious and faithful to God. This is something interesting to learn more about and this research being connected to how somebody from a religious country is affected by migrating to a non-religious but rich country may help in enlightening us.

1.2.2 Catholicism in Norway and Other Religious Affiliations

Learning from the history of Christianity in Norway, it is interesting to know that this country was initially a Catholic nation before being dominated by Lutheran Christianity. This shift in the dominance of religion happened when Catholicism was banned in Norway.

“The Norwegian Constitution of 1814 denied Jews and Catholics entrance in Norway. It also stated that attendance in a Lutheran church was compulsory. The ban on Catholics was lifted in 1842, and the ban on Jews was lifted in 1851” (“Catholic Church in the Nordic countries,” 2023). In the present, the Catholics in Norway belong to a minority group with members of just about 3 percent of its entire population. This is comprised of Catholics from different countries including the Philippines but majority of them are migrants from other European countries such as Poland and Lithuania. Although Catholicism can be said as generic whichever country it is practiced, there will be differences in terms of cultural influences from one nation to another. For example, the Filipino Catholic festivals called “fiestas” might not be as numerous nor lavishly celebrated in other countries unlike in the Philippines. These differences in traditions would make a Catholic congregation or organization in Norway that

is made up of members from different countries become a melting pot of diverse cultures and traditions. The dominant religion in the Philippines is Catholicism, but there is also a number of other religions practiced by a smaller number of Filipinos in the Philippines.

The Philippine Statistics Authority reported in October 2015 that:

Based on the 2010 census, 80.58% of the total Filipino population were Catholics, 10.8% were Protestant and 5.57% were Muslims. Of the 108,667,043-household population in 2020, nearly four fifths or 85,645,362 persons (78.8%) reported Roman Catholic as their religious affiliation. It was followed by Islam with 6,981,710 persons (6.4%), and Iglesia ni Cristo with 2,806,524 persons (2.6%). (“Religion in the Philippines,”2023)

The Filipinos who migrate to other countries to work and for other reasons also have different religious affiliations although majority of them are Catholics. In Norway, the first religious group of Filipinos that I got acquainted to is unusually not a Catholic group, but rather Protestant, and they regard themselves as “Born Again Christians”. After getting to know the members of this group, I learned that not all of them are originally or have Protestant backgrounds, but they were just converted and baptized to become Protestants after coming to Norway. There are also some members who are still Catholics but are in the process of learning Protestantism and are also open to being converted and baptized as Born-Again Christians. This has been an eye opener for me and at the same time made me wonder if their conversion to Protestantism an effect of their migration to Norway.

1.2.3 Filipino Migrants in Norway

The Filipinos migrating to other countries is very common and the number one reason is to find a higher paying job. The greatest number of Overseas Filipino Workers are in the rich Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. These are oil rich nations that continuously need skilled workers for their development that is why the Filipinos take advantage of such opportunity. Although employment is the primary reason why a Filipino migrates to another country, many migrate to another country due to better living conditions such as better healthcare system, low crime rates and access to good education.

The Filipino diaspora is one of the largest and most spread-out in the world. Indeed, it is estimated to consist of over 10 million people, 10% of the country's population. Countries with the highest Filipino population are the United States (3.4 million), Saudi Arabia (1 million), Canada (850,000), the United Arab Emirates (680,000), Malaysia (325,000) and Japan (260,500). Australia, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom also boast populations over 100,000 ("The Filipino Diaspora," 2023).

Based on this statistic, Norway is not among the most popular countries that Filipinos migrate to. One of the reasons can be because of the difficulty in finding a job in this country due to the requirement of learning the Norwegian language first. It is also not very well known in the Philippines and many Filipinos think of Norway as a country covered with snow all year round which is not true. Other countries like the United States and Canada also have more immigration programs unlike in Norway making the migration process easier. However, for those who did their research, Norway can be considered as a better country to migrate to because of their excellent social welfare and healthcare systems aside from better equality not just gender wise but also in society in general because of the low inequality in terms of income.

1.2.4 The Challenges of being a Filipino migrant and their mental health

Migrating to a different country is not easy and every country has its own set of challenges. For example, those who migrated to the United States experience racial discrimination that are commonly seen on television news programs especially against those with Asian or African ethnicity. Those who migrated to Japan have the language barrier challenge since most of the Japanese cannot speak English and those who migrated to Saudi Arabia experience the challenges connected to religious freedom since the country has very strict rules in practicing other religions aside from Islam being a Muslim country. In Norway, discrimination is not very rampant compared to other countries and although learning the Norwegian language is important in finding a job, conversing with a Norwegian on a daily basis is not a big problem compared to Japan because most of the Norwegians are fluent in English. However, migrating to Norway also has its own challenges such as adapting to the weather which is usually too cold especially for those coming from a tropical country such as the Philippines. Although the Norwegians can converse in English, it is not encouraged being

nationalistic people and they still prefer conversing in their native language which is “Norsk” that is why we can still consider the language as another challenge. In addition, some of the rules and culture may surprise migrants especially those coming from a conservative and religious country such as the Philippines. Some of such rules are the autonomy of a woman to have abortion if she is over eighteen years of age and for teenagers to be able to engage in sexual activities at the age of sixteen. In terms of cultural differences, we can say that the Norwegians value their personal space very much compared to other countries like in the United States or the Philippines. For example, when riding a public transport such as a bus, it is not common for Norwegians to sit beside a stranger even if there is an available seat next to that person. I myself experienced this and it felt like they find it rude or uncomfortable if you sit next to them especially if there are other available seats. The Norwegians can be also regarded as not very social people relative to the Filipinos or Americans. They are not fond of “small talks”, and they might find it an awkward situation. Filipinos who have lived in Norway longer than me and are already familiar with the Norwegian culture told me that Norwegians might find you weird if you try to engage in a conversation with them and you are a total stranger. On the other hand, it is a normal thing for Filipinos to talk to a total stranger at a bus stop or on the bus. If we try to make sense of it, it might be because of a much smaller population of just over five million in Norway compared to over one hundred million in the Philippines. It might also be because of the climate or maybe they are just trying to be polite. Whatever the reason is, we must learn to respect their culture and on the brighter side, a Norwegian can become one of your most loyal friends for life once you earned his or her trust. Among the different challenges that people experience when migrating to another country, one thing is very common, and it is the challenge of homesickness. Being away from home can take its toll on a person’s mental health and may lead to a more serious mental health problem over time such as depression. In Norway, the feeling of being depressed due to homesickness for the migrants is worsened by what is called as Seasonal Affective Disorder or “SAD”. Unlike the Philippines wherein it is mostly sunny and bright all year round, Norway has the typical four seasons of winter, spring, summer, and fall. Seasonal Affective Disorder usually occurs during the dark times of the winter season when it is cold, and the sun is barely seen. A typical Norwegian winter has long winter nights with just a few hours of sunlight and there are even parts in Northern Norway where the sun does not shine at all. The darkness contributes to one experiencing

Seasonal Affective Disorder which is a kind of depression related to changes in the seasons.

Signs and symptoms of SAD may include:

Feeling listless, sad, or down most of the day, nearly every day, losing interest in activities you once enjoyed, having low energy and feeling sluggish, having problems with sleeping too much, experiencing carbohydrate cravings, overeating and weight gain, having difficulty concentrating, feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty, and having thoughts of not wanting to live. ("Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)," 2021)

Being away from home and experiencing SAD can be very challenging to a Filipino who has just migrated to Norway. It is even more challenging if that Filipino came to Norway alone without any relatives or friends in Norway. That is why it is very important for a migrant Filipino or even to migrants from other countries to connect to their fellow countrymen. Migrants establish reconnecting with their homeland through different ways like joining organizations or communities organized by their countrymen. For the Filipinos, the most common way is through joining religious groups since being able to enjoy the company of your countrymen while sharing your faith and traditions can really make you feel at home. Like in my experience, although I have some of my family members with me in Norway, it made my adjustment period much easier by relating to the experiences of my fellow Filipinos in the Filipino Bible group that I joined. Although not everyone in that group have the same religious background, being able to pray to the same God and pray for each other especially in times of difficulties made everything bearable. I think this is the value of religion in general to a Filipino migrant, Catholic or not. Still, it would be much better if a Filipino can connect to a purely Catholic community wherein they can share together all the traditions and beliefs of being a Catholic. But as the saying goes, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do". This means that it is important that when you are in a foreign land, you should also learn to adapt yourself to the customs and traditions of the people who live in it. This consideration makes the migrants become "hybrids" of their homelands and the land they migrated to. This makes sense since they cannot do the things that they are accustomed to as they were when they were still living in their home countries as a sign of respect for the customs of their host country. However, to not totally forget their own cultures, they have to find ways to somehow blend them with the culture of the country they migrated to. This

blending of the cultures removes the authenticity of one culture but is necessary in order to thrive in a foreign country. I was able to observe this as well in the Filipino Bible group that I joined so I will take it as an example. A meeting of our group is regarded as a “Bible Study meeting” and it is typically comprised of several parts such as reading Bible verses and studying them, sharing personal experiences, singing worship songs, praying for each other especially for the members who need it the most, and lastly, a time to eat together and socialize. Initially, the members of the group were purely Filipinos, but later on, Norwegians particularly the spouses of the Filipino members and even those with other nationalities became members as well. For this reason, the foods that were served are not only Filipino foods but also Norwegian. Sometimes, there are activities that are done to improve the camaraderie among the members and these activities are also hybrids of the favorite past times of the two nations. There are times when the members will sing “karaoke” which is a favorite Filipino past time and there are times when the members will go skiing which is typical Norwegian activity. In terms of interpreting the bible verses, differences in opinions arise due to the different cultural backgrounds but in the end, the exchange of opinions and point of views leads to a more enriching experience. However, the blending of different cultures is not easy, and it does not always go smoothly. There are times when boundaries are taken for granted and differences in culture are forgotten. For example, Filipinos can be regarded as loud and noisy when conversing with a fellow Filipino and it maybe because the Filipinos equate noise with fun. On the other hand, the Norwegians can be said to have a conversational culture which treasures the silences, and this can be also connected to their immense value of their personal spaces. Comparing the two conversation styles, we can say that the Norwegian way is more structured like in a formal debate while the Filipino style is like a round table free-for-all discussion where everyone can butt in that tends for several people to speak at the same time and may lead to accumulation of too much noise. Another difference is the time when the members arrive at the meeting place. While coming on time is the proper thing to do and is also followed by the Norwegians, there is this phenomenon called “Filipino time”. Filipino time basically means being late for a few minutes or up to hours compared to the standard time. This has been a part of the Filipino culture that is said to be another influence of the Spanish colonizers. “According to University of Santo Tomas sociology and political science professor Dr. Louie Benedict Ignacio, being late was once considered a status symbol during the Spanish colonial period” (Chua, 2020). In the modern

time, it is still observed particularly among those who lived in the Metropolitan Manila where traffic conditions can be regarded as severe, and the heavy traffic can make them late for their meetings. For me, these reasons cannot and should not justify this inefficient habit and should be just left in the past during the time of the Spaniards. When these things happen, a sense of awkwardness can be observed and offending the other culture may arise. That is why there should always be a compromise to successfully blend the different cultures and respect should never be forgotten.

1.2.5 Comparing and contrasting the Filipino migrants with migrants from other countries

All of us have different circumstances and so are the migrants in Norway. Every migrant has a story to tell about why he or she migrated to Norway. Although some migrants might have a more significant reason for their migration such as the refugees, the other migrants' reasons should not be disregarded as well:

There are four main reasons for immigration to Norway that are lawfully accepted – employment, education, protection and family reunification. In 2016, most Norwegian immigrants came for family reunification (16,465 people), followed by protection (15,190), work (14,372) and education (4,147). Of the total number of 788,531 people who immigrated between 1990 and 2016, most immigrated for family reunification (283,478), followed by work (262,669), protection (156,590) and education (80,956). ("Immigration to Norway," 2023)

Based on this statistic, family reunification and work are in the top three of the most immigrants in Norway and these are also among the main reasons why Filipinos migrate to another country. Most of the Filipinos I know personally are women who are married to Norwegians, and they migrated to Norway on the basis of family reunification. This reason might not be the most urgent since they could still live in the Philippines without any worries due to security or dying from war. However, hearing their stories about how and why they migrated to Norway, I can say that it has not been an easy journey for them as well and there were also a lot of sacrifices made. Being away from their families is one of the sacrifices because of the very close family bond among Filipinos. Although it is natural to

have a close family bond even among people from other countries, the Filipinos maintain this for life that is why it is common to find three generations living together. It is also a practice for extended families to live close to one another and for the children to take care of their elderlies that is why nursing homes are not common in the Philippines. This is in contrast with the Norwegian culture or even in other western countries wherein independence is encouraged at an early age that is why it not normal for children who are already working to still live with their parents and if they do so, they must pay rent to their parents. For those Filipinos whose reason for migrating is work, there is a greater sacrifice made since the usual scenario is that the family member who migrated to work abroad needed to leave his or her nuclear family in the Philippines. If both of the parents migrate, it is usually the grandparents who take the responsibility of taking care of their child. In return, the family member/s working abroad will send back remittances to the family members who have been given the duty of caring for their children. Moreover, even aunts or uncles who are working abroad send remittances back to the Philippines to support the education of their nieces or nephews. While migrants from other countries work abroad to earn more for themselves or their nuclear families, the Filipino migrant has this bigger responsibility of providing for and supporting not just their immediate families, but even their extended family members. This is like an unwritten rule that whoever is earning more should share their blessings especially with those who need help the most. It might be a Catholic thing since doing good deeds like helping those in need and sharing your blessings are some ways of getting to heaven in the afterlife. Although the intention is good, sometimes, it results to having extended family members who abuse the migrant worker's kindness and worse, becoming too dependent that they do not work hard anymore thinking that the migrant worker is always there to support them. The Filipino migrant workers who migrated to very far countries such as Norway do not always have the luxury of visiting the Philippines because of costly travel expenses, so they usually send a big box called a "Balikbayan box" or "repatriate box" in English to show that they have not forgotten their loved ones back home. A balikbayan box is simply a large and sturdy cardboard box filled with all sorts of items from household goods such as toothpaste, soap, chocolates, and toys to shoes, bags, and even appliances like a microwave oven destined for their loved ones. This Filipino tradition is a way to share with loved ones, even if you could not be there in person. Since these practices are not common in western countries such as Norway, those Filipinos with intercultural

marriages find it emotionally distressing if they are denied sending remittances or even balikbayan boxes since it makes them feel that they failed upholding their duty towards their loved ones back home in the Philippines. For those migrant workers who want to bring their immediate family members such as their children and spouses to live with them abroad can apply for family reunification, but this might take a while, so they have to endure being away from their family for quite some time. Some may argue that they have an option of not enduring this as they can just return back home to be with their family since they are not refugees and do not have security threats. But for those Filipinos who have many dependents back home and whose only way of giving their loved ones a better life is by working abroad, it is not an option for them.

1.3 Objective of the study

I believe that religion is a vital aspect in a Filipino's life as an immigrant that needs further discussion that is why I intend to learn and discover more about this subject. Thus, the effects of migration and the challenges Filipinos encounter related to their religion when they migrate to Norway is my master's thesis. The purpose of this project is to find answers to the main research question and sub questions about this topic. The researcher also intends to address whatever challenges are being experienced by the Filipino migrants related to their religion. The intention is to address and analyze these problems and to possibly give recommendations to solve them. To obtain the necessary data for this research, the researcher will use the qualitative research method by individual interviews and participant observation. The researcher will also try to incorporate archival studies and incorporate the valuable information that can be gathered from them. By organizing the information from different books or resources, it would greatly benefit students and researchers in the future who might also be interested in conducting further studies related to this topic.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research aimed to learn more about the challenges and changes that the Filipino migrants in Norway encounter with regard to their religion particularly Catholicism. This study also wanted to decipher the realities of being a Filipino Catholic in a non-Catholic country that is also regarded as not so religious based on surveys such as Norway. The data

collected and interpreted will help in achieving these goals and as a consequence, would benefit the following groups of individuals:

Filipino Catholic Migrants- This study may provide a deeper understanding on the realities that these migrants experience and for the migrants themselves to have an avenue in voicing out their concerns and feelings about their struggles and experiences. Thus, awareness among the different parties involved might be achieved in return and may lead to better understanding of each other.

Non-Catholic Filipino Migrants- This study may provide them a better understanding about the Filipino Catholics and learn how to respect their beliefs and traditions in return.

Foreign Spouses of the Filipino Migrants- This study may provide them a better understanding on the beliefs, culture and traditions of their Filipino spouses that may help them come up with compromises in order to blend together their differences smoothly and incorporate them in raising their children, who are of mixed-races, better.

Catholic Congregations in Norway- This study may help them become more familiarized with the real situation of their Filipino members and come up or develop programs that are catered for them and address their needs better.

Community Leaders- This study may serve as a bridge between the community leaders and the Catholic congregations and their members to have a better cooperation in developing programs and agreements that might give more opportunities for the members in exercising their traditions and practicing their faith considering that Norway has freedom of religion and has been an advocate for equality in its society.

Future Researchers- This study may provide them with pertinent data that they may need in doing their future studies related to this topic. This may also help to increase their enthusiasm or interest in conducting further studies regarding this topic.

1.5 Scope of the Study

In the context of religion, this research primarily tackled about the most predominant religion in the Philippines which is Catholicism wherein almost ninety percent of its population belongs to. It discussed the importance of this religion to a Filipino's life and how its beliefs and traditions are deeply inculcated not just in a typical Filipino's mind but also in his/her heart. To realize the importance of Catholicism to most of the Filipinos, the history on how it was brought to the Philippines by the Spaniards and became an important institution that touches every Filipino's life from birth, family, education, and even politics was discussed. Although the focus of this research is about the Catholic religion, another religion that some Filipinos in Norway belong to which is Protestantism was also briefly discussed to compare and contrast how this religion affects their lives while living in Norway. However, the history and in-depth study of this religion was not covered in this research. Since the subject of this research is focused on the Filipinos, discussions about the migrants from other countries were limited as well.

1.6 Research Questions

This study investigated the effects of migration, and the challenges Filipinos encounter related to their religion when they migrate to Norway. It also sought to answer the following questions:

1. How does migration affect and transform the religious beliefs and practices of the Filipinos who migrated to Norway?
2. What are the challenges that the Filipino migrants encounter with regards to their religion?
3. How do Filipinos adapt to a different country in terms of practicing their religious beliefs?
4. How do the religious beliefs and practices of Filipino migrants change by living in a foreign country and what are the factors involved in bringing about these changes?

1.7 Research Outline

This research applied different methods of data collection and utilized primary and secondary methods. The primary method utilized the two core approaches to data collection in qualitative research that included interviews and participant observation. This manner of data collection provided the researcher with insightful data that helped come up with more sincere findings. The data gathered was verified through direct observation. Initially, the researcher tried to establish the importance of the Catholic religion to the Filipino migrants as a basis of studying the effects of their migration to Norway to their faith and lifestyle. Relating their being religious people to the current state of religiosity in Norway also helped in introducing the challenges that they encountered that also lead to uncovering more of such challenges and effects. The data that was mostly utilized in this part of the research came from the use of related literature and studies that satisfied the needed information for the topic and it served as the secondary method of data collection.

Chapter 2

Research Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contained and discussed the research design, data collection methods and tools, research and sampling strategies, limitations of the methodology, and challenges encountered in doing this study. The data collection methods and tools discussed the ways and manner of collecting the data that were utilized for this study. The research design presented and justified the key research design choices made in this study that helped in answering the research questions. The key design choices are categorized into the following: 1. data collection methods and tools, 2. research philosophy, 3. research type, 4. research strategy, 5. time horizon, 6. sampling strategy, and 7. analysis methods. The limitations of the methodology discussed the limitations involved when conducting the study. It also discussed the challenges such as the ethical challenges encountered in conducting the study particularly in conducting the interviews among the participants. This study focused on the Filipino Catholics in Norway and the challenges they encounter with regard to their religion when they migrated to this country. It aimed to gather pertinent data regarding the topic

and interpret them to be able to come up with an enlightening conclusion that may also address some of their struggles and problems if any. In addition, this study also wanted to provide a replicable foundation for future researchers who might be interested in conducting similar or further studies regarding this topic.

2.2 Research Design

The research design of this study utilized a qualitative approach to help gain a more detailed and rich understanding of the topic. It also helped in gaining in-depth understanding about the topic through the data collected from the participants and some literary sources such as internet sources, books, articles, and journals. The research design of this study is subdivided into seven key design choices.

2.2.1 Data Collection Methods and Tools

Sticking with the main method used in this study, the data collection method that was chosen is the qualitative method of data collection. “Qualitative data is defined as the data that approximates and characterizes. Qualitative data can be observed and recorded. This data type is non-numerical in nature. This type of data is collected through methods of observations, one-to-one interviews, conducting focus groups, and similar methods” (Surendran, 2022). The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the participants of the study and utilized participant observation while conducting the interviews. Through personal participation and first-hand observation of the researcher on the participants, pertinent data were collected and a more personal connection between the interviewer and the interviewee was established. This helped in coming up with more sincere data output while the researcher was also able to collect non-verbal information such as their body language during the interview that also provided subtle nuances and may aid in the analysis and interpretation of the data. Individual interviews were utilized since this is more efficient compared to a focus group interview. This helped in the scheduling of the interviews for a shorter period of time and gave flexibility to the style of how the interview was conducted. The researcher opted to conduct the interview in an informal style to provide a more relaxed and comfortable environment for the interviewee. Although the researcher believed that this is the best way of maintaining authenticity in their answers, the subject can also easily

prepare for such interviews that may bring the possibility of their answers being scripted or “rehearsed”.

To collect the data from the participants, the following interview guide questions were utilized as a data collection tool:

1. A. Which religious denomination are you a member of and how did you practice your religion when you were still living in the Philippines?

B. Have you experienced living in other countries (apart from the Philippines and Norway)? If so, how can you compare and contrast how you practiced your religion in that/those countries to your religious practices when you were living in the Philippines and now that you are here in Norway?

C. What are the differences you observed with regards to the religious practices you have when you were still in the Philippines and now that you are living in Norway?

D. What are the factors involved or considered that may affect your religious practices when you migrated to Norway?

2. A. Would you consider it difficult practicing your religious belief while living in Norway?

B. Do you think Norwegian rules and people give you enough freedom to practice and express your religious beliefs?

3. A. Can you give examples on how you are able to practice your religious belief and practices despite of living in Norway?

B. How strict or dedicated are you with regards to your religious practices?

4. A. Have you considered changing your religion because of living in a country with different dominant religion such as Norway?

B. Does peer pressure or meeting new people with different religious beliefs influence you easily with regard to your religion?

2.2.2 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy of the research design determined the beliefs on how the data of the research should be collected, analyzed, and used. "Research philosophy is classified as ontology, epistemology, and axiology. These philosophical approaches enable them to decide which approach should be adopted by the researcher and why, which is derived from research questions" (Saunders et.al., 2009, quoted in GuhaThakurta & Chetty, 2015). For this study, the researcher opted to utilize "interpretivism" as its research philosophy. This was chosen on the basis of the size of the sample, which is considerably small, but the method of data collection was in-depth. This approach also suits well the qualitative method of research because it is based on social life and deals with the individual's actions.

"Interpretivism is a branch of epistemology which is focused on the assessment of the differences between humans as social actors. In this philosophy, the interpretation of social roles has been presented with respect to their own set of meanings" (GuhaThakurta & Chetty, 2015).

2.2.3 Research Type

For the research type, there are two possible choices, and they are the inductive and the deductive methods. This study chose to use the inductive approach since it is more associated with the qualitative method which was mainly utilized in this study. "The main difference between inductive and deductive reasoning is that inductive reasoning aims at developing a theory while deductive reasoning aims at testing an existing theory" (Streefkerk, 2023). The raw data collected by the researcher from the interviews and literary studies will be interpreted to derive concepts, themes, and new theories applicable to the topic. Through the comparison and analysis of the participants' answers to the research questions, a pattern will be recognized and may help in coming up with a general conclusion.

2.2.4 Research Strategy

The researcher had the opportunity to observe and capture the perceptions of some of the participants of the study in their natural environment, particularly their homes because some of them have a personal relationship with the researcher. "Ethnography is a

methodology based on direct observation” (Gobo & Marciniak, 2016, p. 103). The researcher was able to immerse herself with some of the participants’ daily routines and habits with regard to their religion through observation and interaction in their real-life environment.

2.2.5 Time Horizon

Due to time and budget constraints, the researcher opted to use the cross-sectional study design. “While longitudinal studies repeatedly observe the same participants over a period of time, cross-sectional studies examine different samples of the population at one point in time.” (Thomas, 2022). Collecting data at a single point in time is cheaper and less time-consuming which also allows the researcher to compare many different variables at the same time. This is ideal relative to the participants of the study since their availability is a concern due to their busy schedules.

2.2.6 Sampling Strategy

The non-probability sampling strategy, particularly the purposive sampling technique was used in the study. It is a non-random and non-representative method of selecting units from a population that is going to serve as the subject of the study. “Purposive sampling is a non-probability form of sampling. The researcher does not seek to sample research participants on a random basis. The goal of purposive sampling is to sample cases/participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions” (Bryman, 2016, p. 408). This sampling strategy was chosen by the researcher due to ease and convenience, practicality, and resource constraints. However, to every advantage, there is a corresponding disadvantage. One of the disadvantages of this sampling method is the risk of being biased in terms of sample selection since there is no way of accurately knowing the probability of any one element being included in the sample, in other words, the selected sample is just an assumption of being the representative of the population. In the end, the researcher still believed that this sampling strategy will serve the purpose of the study well because aside from it being the most convenient and inexpensive way, there will also be a lesser burden on the respondents in terms of participating. The sample is composed of six participants in the age bracket of twenty (20) years old to seventy (70) years old. This age bracket was selected considering the variability in the participants’ perspectives based on the differences of their

generations and experiences. The participants also have varying biographical data in terms of their professional backgrounds, reasons of migrating to Norway, and personalities, but there are two things that they have in common. The first one is that they all have a Filipino ethnicity, but not all of them are still Filipino citizens since some have already converted to become Norwegian citizens and the second one is that they all have a Catholic religion background. Although all of the participants have a Catholicism background, it has a varying degree in terms of their devotion to the religious beliefs and practices of being a Catholic and some of them are also in the process of converting to other religious denominations. The gender variation of the participants in the sample is not distributed equally since it is composed of only one (1) male and five (5) females). This is due to the researcher's familiarity and being acquainted to more females than males in Norway, particularly in Rogaland. Utilizing the non-probability sampling strategy, this was a compromise the researcher had to make in exchange for the ease of being able to invite the female respondents to participate in the study. The educational and professional backgrounds of the participants vary, four (4) finished higher education levels while two (2) reached up to secondary education levels. In terms of marital status, three (3) are married to Norwegian nationals, two (2) are married to other nationalities, and one (1) is single. In terms of the length of their stay in Norway, three (3) have been living for more than ten years, one (1) for more than five years, and two (2) have been living in Norway for more than three years only.

2.2.7 Analysis Methods

The data collected in this study were analyzed based on two fundamental data analysis methods commonly used for qualitative data interpretation. The first one is the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis or IPA which was used by the researcher to help in analyzing and understanding the personal experiences of the subject such as the changes they experienced when they migrated to Norway. "Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a qualitative form of psychology research. IPA has an idiographic focus, which means that instead of producing generalization findings, it aims to offer insights into how a given person, in a given context, makes sense of a given situation" ("Interpretative phenomenological analysis," 2022). The topic of the study is very subjective, and the result will be based according to how the participants interpret their experiences with regard to

the effects of their migration to their faith and religion. Although the researcher has made initial investigations about the topic through reading of literary works and relating the background of Filipinos as religious people to how it might affect their faith when migrating, these preconceptions are suspended in an attempt to focus on the experiences of the participants. "IPA's hermeneutic stance is one of inquiry and meaning-making, and so the analyst attempts to make sense of the participant's attempts to make sense of their own experiences, thus creating a double hermeneutic" ("Interpretative phenomenological analysis," 2022). The second data analysis method utilized in this study is thematic analysis by looking at patterns in the data set collected from the subject during the interview. "Thematic analysis (TA) is a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning ("themes") within qualitative data" (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297). This is useful when trying to find out about the subject's experiences, views, and opinions. Grouping the data according to similarities that might come up when analyzing the data can give pertinent information about how the participants feel about a particular theme such as their faith or migrating to Norway. Another method that was also helpful in the analysis of the data in this study is narrative analysis. By analyzing the answers of the participants through their stories and the manner of how they were told, powerful insights into their perspectives can be uncovered. These analysis methods were primarily chosen by the researcher due to their potential in giving a more thorough and in-depth analysis of the data, however, due to their being subjective in nature, the possibility of having a bias in the interpretation can be a disadvantage so keeping an open mind is essential in utilizing these methods of analyzing data.

2.3 Limitations of Methodology

The limitations of the methodology were basically connected to time and budget constraints. As a new mother to a two-year old baby, time constraint is a limitation in conducting the study with a bigger number of participants that could have potentially generated more comprehensive data. The time constraint limitation is not just applicable to the researcher but as well as to the participants of the study. Since most of the participants are working aside from having their own families to take care of, their availability in conducting the interviews became a challenge. However, proper communication and

flexibility in scheduling the interviews on the researcher's end were able to address these problems. Being a full-time student also means that the researcher has financial limitations in conducting the research. This limitation made the researcher unable to cover a wider area in the sample selection that could have made the demographic of the sample more spread out and random. These limitations consequently lead to a small number of sample and the sample being skewed heavily to a particular demographic such as having more females than males and having more married than single participants that might result to decrease in representation. As mitigating actions, the researcher devised the interview questions to not be dependent on the sampling limitations but can still generate a comprehensive output relative to the sample size. In addition, the number of each group of the sample can be said to correspond to the actual population such as selecting more participants who are married to Norwegian nationals than those who are married to other nationalities. Having more participants whose reason for migrating to Norway is family reunification followed by work then studies is also in accordance with the actual statistics of the entire population of Filipino migrants in Norway that can make the representation factor to be more justifiable. In general, despite these limitations, the researcher believes that the study is still valuable considering that this topic is not commonly tackled since religion is usually taken for granted. As already mentioned, the most common things that people need to adapt to when living in a foreign country are language, food, weather, clothing, following a different set of rules and traditions but religion is not usually considered as a part of these adaptations. Furthermore, this study is quite new and can provide a foundation or a valuable resource for future researchers who might want to conduct further studies in line with this topic.

2.3.1 Ethical Challenges of the Study

There are several factors to consider in terms of the ethical aspects of this study and upholding a high ethical standard in conducting this research is one of the primary goals of the researcher. In this manner, trust between the researcher and the participants will be established that may result in more sincere answers making the data collected more reliable. To achieve this, there are three fundamental ethical considerations that the researcher considered as ethical challenges that must be satisfied. First is codes and consent referring in particular to 'informed consent'. "This means that research subjects have the right to know

that they are being researched, the right to be informed about the nature of the research and the right to withdraw at any time” (Ryen, 2016, p. 32). To satisfy this, invitation, and consent letters to participate in the study were given and the rights of the participants are clearly stated in the letters as well as having the right to decline the invitation or withdraw from participating in the study anytime regardless of the reason. Having a personal relationship with some of the participants does not justify just giving verbal notices or consent because putting everything into writing is the ethical thing to do as it is also more formal and respectful. The second ethical consideration in conducting research is confidentiality. According to Ryen (2016), “confidentiality means we are obliged to protect each participant’s identity, places and the location of the research” (p. 33). To satisfy this, the researcher had to be careful at all times in protecting the anonymity of the participants and that there is no sensitive or personal information that they are uncomfortable to share that was asked from them. Even in the writing of this master’s thesis, the words used were carefully selected by the researcher to ensure that no information about the participants will breach their confidentiality. The third and last ethical consideration is trust. This “refers to the relationship between the researcher and the participants, and to the researcher’s responsibility not to ‘spoil’ the field for others in the sense that potential research subjects get reluctant to be studied (Ryen, 2004, quoted in Ryen, 2016, p. 33). This study being qualitative in nature may yield subjective interpretations of the data and lead to biases. The researcher tried to satisfy the third ethical consideration by not including information that was not directly given by the participants. Non-verbal cues from the participants are also not used haphazardly by the researcher to avoid drawing irrelevant assumptions.

2.4 Summary

This chapter gave an outline on how the necessary data was collected for this research. The choices made by the researcher in selecting the methods used for this study were carefully done and justified through the consideration of different factors such as the resources available to the researcher and the ethical aspects of the research among others. Through the discussion of the research methodology of the study, the objectives, dilemmas, or concerns related to the study were hopefully clarified and the future researchers can utilize this as a guideline in conducting further research relevant to the topic.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the core foundation of theories that were utilized to build upon the study. The most relevant theories to the study were selected through evaluation and comparison of different theories. The theories chosen were used as a basis for interpreting the results of the study. The theories were also utilized to critique or challenge some claims in the study. In addition, the studies made, and the perspectives of different sociologists and philosophers were also considered in the discussion and interpretation of the data gathered in this study.

3.2 Relevant Theories and Sociological Perspectives

This study selected the following theories that are relevant to its claims, and they are: the existential insecurity theory of secularization, functionalism theory, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism theory. Different sociological perspectives of popular sociologists and philosophers about religion were also considered such as Sigmund Freud's perspective of religion as an "illusion", Karl Marx's perspective of religion as an instrument to prevent social change, and Max Weber's perspective of religion as an agent of bringing positive social changes to the society.

3.2.1 Existential Insecurity Theory of Secularization

The Existential Insecurity Theory of Secularization states that "religion meets a need for security and therefore societies where people feel secure have a low level of demand for religion" (Thompson, 2018). This theory argues that a society with a high level of insecurity due to the presence of life-threatening risks has a higher level of religiosity while a society with a higher standard of living and a low level of insecurity has a lower level of religiosity at the same time. This belief can be explained by the need of the people for a way to cope in times of difficulties and insecurities that is why they resort to praying and being religious as it provides them with a sense of hope. On the other hand, a society that is well-developed

and have a higher security such as in most Western countries, the demand for religion decreases as they put more value on the secularization of their society that increases equality and the sense of freedom among their citizens.

This theory can be related to the perspective of Sigmund Freud, who is considered as the father of Psychoanalysis, about religion. "Freud's psychoanalytic perspective viewed religion as the unconscious mind's need for wish fulfillment. Because people need to feel secure and absolve themselves of their own guilt, Freud believed that they choose to believe in God, who represents a powerful father-figure" (Cherry, 2020).

This theory was the foundation utilized by the researcher in interpreting the high religiosity of the Filipinos who are from a third-world country compared to the low religiosity in Norway that is a well-developed and rich country.

3.2.2 Functionalism Theory

Emile Durkheim, a renowned French sociologist argued that religion serves the society different functions, thus, forming the basis of the functionalism theory of religion. These functions include: "(a) giving meaning and purpose to life, (b) reinforcing social unity and stability, (c) serving as an agent of social control of behavior, (d) promoting physical and psychological well-being, and (e) motivating people to work for positive social change" ("Sociological Perspectives on Religion – Sociology," 2016).

The first function which is to give meaning and purpose to life tried to make sense of the mysteries in life such as life and death for example. For the Catholics, life is temporary and only serves as an arena to prove themselves worthy of going to heaven in the afterlife which, for them, is eternal. Some of the participants of the study who were members of Catholic church organizations back in the Philippines found their purpose through serving God and doing socio-civic programs through these organizations.

The second function, which is reinforcing social unity and stability means that religion is an important agent of socialization that brings people together by giving them a common set of beliefs according to Durkheim. This function explains the need of the Filipino Catholics in

finding and becoming members of organizations or church congregations that share their traditions and practices when they migrated to Norway.

The third function which is to serve as an agent of social control of behavior means that to become good members of the society, good moral behavior should be observed such as in following the Ten Commandments of God in the Bible. By following these commandments and doing good deeds, the probability of going to heaven in the afterlife is also increased. This explanation was considered in exploring the importance of religion to the Filipino Catholics which is related to their fear of the afterlife that guides them in maintaining their good morals and avoiding in doing bad things.

The fourth function which is to promote physical and psychological well-being claims that “religious faith and practice can enhance psychological well-being by being a source of comfort to people in times of distress and by enhancing their social interaction with others in places of worship” (“Sociological Perspectives on Religion – Sociology,” 2016). This function of religion was also considered in interpreting the religiosity of the Filipino Catholics due to the comfort it brings them every time they pray or go to church to attend the Sunday mass.

The final function which is to motivate people to work for positive social change related religion as being instrumental to the positive social changes that happened in the past such as Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights activists in their fight against racial discrimination in the United States. This was also similar to how the Catholic church and the Filipino people toppled the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr. and his military government through peaceful revolution. Bringing positive changes in modern society with the help of religion was also explored in this study with the foundation of this function of religion.

3.2.3 Conflict Theory

The conflict theory of religion states that, “religion reinforces and promotes social inequality and social conflict. It helps convince the poor to accept their lot in life, and it leads to hostility and violence motivated by religious differences” (“Sociological Perspectives on Religion – Sociology,” 2016) This theory explains why the Filipinos settled to being poor while the Spanish Friars held the power during the Spanish colonization of the Philippines

through inculcating in their minds that it is ok to be poor because what is more important is the afterlife.

This theory can be also related to the perspective of Karl Marx, a renowned German philosopher and sociologist, about religion. "According to Marx, one of the main 'functions' of religion is to prevent people making demands for social change by dulling pain of oppression" (Thompson, 2018). This purpose of religion can be attained through the consideration of several factors such as: 1. the belief in the afterlife as being more important than worldly wealth, 2. viewing suffering as a virtue that is why being poor is more favored by God than being rich, 3. the sense of hope it brings to the people that everything will turn out fine as long as you believe in God which makes the people to not exert effort in making their conditions better, and 4. the justification of the social order in the society such as the Friars as having a higher position than the common Filipinos during the Spanish era in the Philippines.

The Conflict theory and Karl Marx's perspectives about religion served as a foundation in interpreting the reasons why the Philippines is still a third world country, and the social changes are prevented from happening due to the Filipino religiosity. On the other hand, this point of view was challenged by another German sociologist with the name of Max Weber. If Karl Marx believes that religion prevents social change, Max Weber argues that religion can indeed bring about social changes in society. This argument was pointed out in his book "Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism". In his book, he credited the development of modern capitalism to the foundations laid upon by Protestantism, which is an example of how religion can bring about a positive change in society. The same belief can be applied to how Martin Luther King Jr., with the help of religion, brought about a positive social change in the American society by ending racial segregation. The positive social change that can be brought about by religion was considered in this study by exploring the possibilities of utilizing religion as an instrument in decreasing the incidence of depression and lowering the suicide rate in the Norwegian society.

3.2.4 Symbolic Interactionism Theory

This theory explains how religion plays an important role in how people interpret their religious experiences. According to this theory, “beliefs and practices are not sacred unless people regard them as such. Once we regard them as sacred, they take on special significance and give meaning to our lives” (“Sociological Perspectives on Religion - Sociology,” 2016). This theory also explains the importance of religious symbols to Christians such as the cross and the religious rituals and ceremonies done by the Catholics. This theory was considered in the study in interpreting the need of a more immersive Sunday mass experience for the Filipino Catholics in Norway and how their rituals and traditions can provide them a deeper meaning in their religious experiences.

Chapter 4

Field Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on presenting the findings of this research in a natural and objective manner. This chapter’s goal was to simply provide a roadmap about the findings of the study for the readers to have an easier navigation of the research without providing interpretations which will be done in the next chapter. The bulk of the findings were based on the interviews conducted among the participants in the study which were done in a qualitative way. These findings were presented with various themes that were based on the various questions asked to the participants that satisfied the problem statement of the study.

The problem statement of the study revolved around the effects of migration and the challenges Filipinos encounter related to their religion when they migrated to Norway. The religion that this research focused on is Catholicism since this the religious denomination most of the Filipinos belong to. The aim of this study was to provide awareness and better understanding about the challenges and effects of being a Filipino Catholic in Norway. The data gathered provided the information for these goals to materialize. It also gave an avenue for the subject to voice their concerns and opinions regarding the topic that might be often

taken for granted or given little importance. Another aim of the study was to provide recommendations and measures that could be utilized by people or group of people involved such as religious and community leaders as well as the Filipino Catholic community in Rogaland. The findings were presented with the use of various themes that were based on the problem statement, but other themes also arose during the conduction of the study such as during the interviews and study of related literatures.

4.2 Presentation of the Findings

This part of the study presented the key relevant findings of the research. It was composed of the different themes that were based on the key interview questions asked to the participants. These were: the Filipino religiosity and the Filipino diaspora, the Norwegian religious freedom, the challenges of being a Filipino Catholic in Norway, migration to Norway and the effects to Filipino Catholicism, addressing the concerns and recommendations, and the concluding summary. The responses of the participants of the study were the basis of the result and key findings that were utilized for the interpretation and discussion of the results. Codes such as participant 1,2,3,4,5, and 6 were utilized to refer to which participant the data or information came from.

4.2.1 The Filipino Religiosity and the Filipino Diaspora

The religiosity of the Filipinos in Norway was established by asking about the importance of religion, particularly Catholicism to their lives. The differences in terms of the level of their devotion to their religion varied from the time when they were still living in the Philippines and when they migrated to Norway. Some of the participants have also tried migrating to other countries first before they migrated to Norway, and it showed that this experience also had a different effect to their religiosity. While all of the participants have a Catholic background, only four are still Catholics until now (participants 1,2,3, and 4), one is in the process of converting to another religion (participant 5), while one has already converted to Protestantism (participant 6). They all shared the same experiences growing up in Catholic families in the Philippines although the level of intensity in terms of their devotions have varying degrees. All of them shared the same practices when all of them are still Catholics such as going to church every Sunday to hear the mass, observing the traditions during the

Christmas season such as attending the Night Mass, and joining processions during the Holy Week or the Lenten Season. They also shared the habit of praying to God specially in times of trouble. Those who are more devoted have this habit of praying the rosary together with their family members and they even know all the prayers such as the Hail Mary and Our Father by heart (participants 1 and 2). Also, those who are more devoted believe in the common superstitious beliefs of the Filipino Catholics such as wiping the images of Jesus Christ, Mary, and the Saints with their handkerchiefs for good luck. There are also three participants who were active in their church organizations such as “Legion of Mary,” (participant 1), “Knights of the Altar” (participant 2), and even as a choir member (participant 3) when they were younger, and one is still a member of an organization called “Knights of Columbus” until now (participant 2), although not active anymore since this organization is in the Philippines. They gave credit to these church organizations as an essential part of honing their social skills and leadership skills as they were able to organize different socio-civic programs or activities that helped the poor and their communities in general. For the importance of their religion in their lives, they all agreed that it is important although they have different reasons regarding its importance. To the Catholics, three of them answered that it is very important because they do not want to go to hell when they die, showing that the importance of their religion is connected to their fear of the afterlife (participants 1, 2, and 4). Five of the participants based the importance of religion on their lives because it makes them feel better when they have a problem by going to church to hear the mass or by praying on their own (participants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5). The one who converted from Catholicism to Protestantism who regarded herself as a “Born Again Christian” has a different basis in terms of the importance of religion (participant 6). She said that it is not religion that is important but rather her personal relationship with Jesus Christ as her savior is more important. Comparing her belief as well when she was still a Catholic with her being a Protestant now, she does not pray on the basis of having her problems solved or wishes granted but rather, she prays for her salvation when the judgement day comes. In terms of the intensity of their devotion to their religion, among those who still belong to the Catholic denomination, three (participants 1, 2, and 3) said that their devotion is as strong as ever, while one (participant 4) said that it is not as strong as before. Participant 5, who is in the process of converting to another religion is unsure about the intensity of her faith and she is more open minded in terms of understanding the different

beliefs and religious denominations now than before. Interestingly, participant 6, who already converted to Protestantism mentioned that the intensity of her faith is much stronger now when she migrated to Norway than when she was still in the Philippines with Catholicism as her religion.

Four of the participants have Norway as the only country they migrated to from the Philippines, but the other two have been to other countries like Singapore and Saudi Arabia before migrating to Norway. One of them (participant 5) has been to Singapore which is a melting pot of different religious denominations such as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism with a small number of the population who are Christians. According to her, her experience living in this country made her faith stronger due to the hardship of her life there. Even though she was not able to practice her usual religious practices due to her hectic schedule, she made praying her source of strength. The other participant (participant 4) had an experience migrating to Saudi Arabia before migrating to Norway and according to her, the strict rules with regard to practicing other religions aside from Islam made her forget being a Catholic for a while. Although she still prayed privately, the fear of the consequences if she gets caught practicing her religion openly made her religiosity dwindle.

4.2.2 The Norwegian Religious Freedom

All of the participants agreed that they felt that they do have the freedom of expression in terms of practicing their religious beliefs when they migrated to Norway. In particular, participant 4, who experienced working in Saudi Arabia before migrating to Norway observed the big difference and even felt a sigh of relief knowing that she would not be persecuted anymore when she openly practices her religious beliefs in this country. Although they all agreed that freedom of religion exists in Norway, they have different opinions about it. Three of the participants (participants 2,3, and 4) claimed that they felt that religion is some kind of a “taboo” topic in Norway meaning it is quite embarrassing or offensive to be talked about specially with Norwegians. While the other three (participants 1, 5, and 6) did not have this feeling and they felt that it just depends on the open-mindedness of the Norwegian that they are talking to if they will find this topic offensive or not. One of the participants (participant 1) pointed out that having a freedom of religion in Norway does not always mean that there are no limitations in practicing the Filipino Catholic

traditions as well. According to this participant, the cultural differences is a significant factor for such limitation such as celebrating fiestas or festivals every month would not be in line with the Norwegian culture as it will be too extravagant for them who usually prefer simple but cozy celebrations. Another limitation that the participant mentioned is the availability of Catholic churches or facilities as they are not as ubiquitous compared to the Philippines wherein every municipality has its own parish church and even small communities have their own chapels. Due to her house being far from the Catholic church, it limits the frequency of her going to the church as well citing the long travel time as an inconvenience. According to her, these limitations are related to the freedom of religion that is supposed to be present in this country since it hinders her from practicing being a Catholic as freely as she wants.

4.2.3 The Challenges of Being a Filipino Catholic in Norway

The challenges that the participants experienced when they migrated to Norway with regards to their religion are varying, but also have similarities in some ways.

Growing up as a devoted Catholic, the main challenge of being a Filipino Catholic in Norway is how to continue doing the traditions that were commonly practiced in the Philippines. Filipinos being fun-loving people miss activities such as celebrating fiestas with the whole neighborhood and this can make one feel a little depressed sometimes. Also, traditions as joining processions in the streets are not done here which is something dearly missed as a devoted Filipino Catholic in Norway. The inconvenience of traveling far just to go to a Catholic church in Norway is also a challenge since the Catholic church back in the Philippines is usually just within walking distance or a short trip away from one's house. However, this is understandable due to the sparse distribution of the population in Norway compared to the Philippines and the geographical landscape is also made up of lots of mountains and fjords. The harsh weather specially during the winter season when it is too cold outside, and the roads tend to get slippery at times can also hinder one from traveling far to attend a Catholic Sunday mass. (Participant 1).

Being a Catholic in Norway means that you belong to a minority in terms of religious denomination. For somebody who is active in church organizations and activities, it is a challenge losing this venue of serving the Lord and the community. Having this venue adds a

deeper meaning or purpose to a Catholic's life which cannot be found in other things such as work or other socio-civic organizations. These organizations are also important in the social aspect of a Filipino as they bring camaraderie among the members and give the opportunity to interact with people who share the same values and beliefs. Although Catholic organizations are present in Norway, interacting with its members who are of different nationalities can be a challenge as well due to the differences in culture and traditions aside from the language barrier as not everybody is fluent in English or Norwegian languages (Participant 2).

For somebody who has been living in Norway for a relatively short period of time only, not being good at speaking the Norwegian language is a challenge. As the church masses are usually held in Norwegian, the language barrier often times make the experience of attending a Sunday mass less immersive. For example, the sermon of the priest might not be properly conveyed to someone with a limited Norwegian vocabulary. Following the flow of the mass is also challenging due to unfamiliarity with the prayers and responses that are also in Norwegian. The Filipino church music that a Filipino Catholic is very accustomed to is also missing adding to the Sunday mass experience being less immersive. It is a fact that it is the duty of the migrants living in Norway to familiarize themselves with the Norwegian language to become integrated in the culture and society. However, it is also a daunting task to the migrants as the Norwegian language is not easy to learn and may take a while before one becomes fluent with it. (Participant 3).

Not being familiar with your new environment is a challenge for a Filipino Catholic who migrated to Norway. The limitation in terms of connections due to not having relatives or friends in this country make the adjustment difficult because there is this feeling of being lost in a society wherein everything is different from what you were accustomed to. The lack of awareness can be brought about by not getting enough information as to where one can find a Catholic church, congregation, or a Filipino Catholic organization that one can join. It might be because of the fear of asking around especially to someone who has a shy personality type, or it might be also due to the lack of adequate information dissemination. Such information would be very helpful to the Filipino Catholic migrants who wish to connect with their fellow countrymen. It would be much appreciated if there would be an

increase in awareness about the Catholic groups or activities particularly in Rogaland and if such information is easier to access or readily available to the general public, migrants, and locals (Participant 4).

Norway is one of the most expensive countries to live in and to have a good quality of life, one must work hard to afford it. For a Filipino Catholic living in Norway, work is very important as Filipinos usually send remittances to their loved ones in the Philippines as well making earning money a priority. There are many migrants in Norway who are doing several jobs to be able to provide for their needs and for the needs of their loved ones back home. However, this scenario becomes a challenge to a Filipino Catholic as the time that is supposed to be devoted for doing Catholic religious practices such as going to church every Sunday usually ends up being used to work even on a weekend. Aside from work, there are also other responsibilities that occupy a migrant's schedule such as taking care of the kids, doing household chores, among others, as hiring helpers to do such things can be costly in this country compared to the Philippines where everything is relatively much cheaper (Participant 5).

For a Filipino migrant who is married to a non-Christian Norwegian and have children as well, it is challenging doing religious practices not just for the Catholics, but even for those who belong to other religious denominations such as Protestantism. It is due to Norway being a secular country and going to church or doing other religious activities are not usually prioritized. As the church day commonly falls on a Sunday, which in Norway is also regarded as a family day or a day to spend with friends, going to church to hear the mass is not usually a part of the agenda as other activities such as playing sports, hiking, or other healthy activities are prioritized. This becomes more challenging due to the differences in culture between the Filipino wife and the Norwegian husband as having a compromise is not always achieved, therefore, going to church is sacrificed more often than not. If a compromise is achieved, it is done by spending one Sunday on religious activities and the next Sunday for physical activities which make going to church every Sunday not being done religiously. Convincing the children to go to church or join in other religious activities during weekends is also difficult as spending time with their friends to play sports or just hang out together is more enticing for them (Participant 6).

4.2.4 Migration to Norway and its Effects to Filipino Catholics

For the Filipino Catholics, migrating to Norway has different effects both positive and negative. It is interesting to know what these effects are and how they changed them with regard to their religion as well as how they were able to adapt or cope with such changes.

Being a Filipino, it is common to have a fun-loving personality as they are accustomed to a lot of celebrations related to being a Catholic such as the fiestas. These celebrations are usually loud and extravagant and not being able to do such traditions in Norway may result to negative effects such as having the feelings of depression and homesickness sometimes. The effect of not being able to attend the Sunday mass regularly due to the challenges of long travel times going to church or bad weather conditions was having this feeling of guilt for not being able to adhere to their religious duty as a Catholic. However, these are parts of the sacrifices of being a migrant and being able to adapt is important to thrive in their new environment. Although fiestas are not celebrated in Norway, the happiness and excitement that accompany such celebrations can still be felt through inviting some Filipino friends at home to cook traditional Filipino foods together that are commonly served during fiestas. Being creative in celebrating birthday parties by incorporating some Filipino fiesta themes in the decorations and playing some Filipino games such as “pukpok palayok” which is the Filipino version of “piñata” can help ease the feeling of homesickness and depression as well. (Participant 1).

Filipino migrants in Norway did not always have an easy path in terms of integrating in the Norwegian society. Finding a job is vital to be able to support themselves, which is the initial part of integration in society by becoming self-sufficient. Some of the Filipinos who came to Norway to work had a difficult journey before they landed their jobs as they had to begin as students first to learn the Norwegian language and they had to do this fast in order to start applying for a job sooner. Some began as “au pairs” before they found a job. The hardships they had to endure by juggling studies, household chores, while looking for a job coupled by the uncertainty of achieving their goals or not and the feeling of homesickness made them hold on to their faith even more. Thus, the effect of their migration to Norway was that it made them become more prayerful as it gave them hope especially during the times when they were about to give up (Participants 2 and 3).

Migrating to a predominantly Protestant country such as Norway has effects to a Filipino Catholic in terms of being influenced by the predominant religious denomination. While Catholicism and Protestantism are both religions based on Christianity, there are significant differences in terms of their beliefs and teachings. For example, the Protestants do not believe that Mary or the Saints can intercede for the prayers to be granted by God that is why they do not give as much importance to them unlike the Catholics who even have annual fiesta celebrations in honor of Mary and the Saints. Also, the Protestants do not believe that they have to do good deeds in order to have salvation or go to heaven as long as they accept Jesus as their Savior and God, it is enough to receive salvation. These Protestant teachings can make sense to a Catholic specially if it is coupled by the guidance of a Protestant through discipleship and bible studies. It is also a big factor being acquainted to more Protestants, Filipinos or Norwegians, for a Filipino Catholic to convert his or her religion. Thus, being more open to the teachings of another religion such as Protestantism (Participant 5) and completely embracing Protestantism through full conversion (Participant 6) are some of the effects of migration to a Filipino Catholic.

4.2.5 Addressing Concerns Through Proper Communication

Through the interviews conducted with the six participants of the study, different concerns and opinions surfaced. One of the goals of this study was to address these concerns in order to come up with relevant actions and/or recommendations.

The number of the Catholics in Norway is rising due to the influx of Catholic immigrants particularly those coming from the neighboring European countries. It can be, therefore, a justifiable concern to have more Catholic churches available and accessible to the Catholic people from different parts of Rogaland. In addition, having a freedom of religion in Norway cannot be considered as absolute if practicing religious traditions such as processions during the Holy Week or parades in celebrating a fiesta are limited indoors. The possibility of being able to do these traditions publicly will not just benefits the Filipinos but can also improve the perspective of the Norwegians regarding their multicultural society and the richness of other nations' culture especially that Norway is advocating for social justice and equality (Participant 1).

Catholicism is a religion that is more commonly practiced by the immigrants in Norway as the Norwegians are predominantly Protestants. For this reason, conducting the mass in a language that is more universal such as English would be better for them. In addition, the possibility of hearing the mass in their own language from time to time would be a great deal for them as it will make the experience more immersive (Participant 3).

Although Catholic organizations particularly for the Filipinos exist in Norway, the awareness of their existence especially among those who are just new in the country and do not have many connections is very low, if not absent. There are many Filipino Catholics who are longing for a sense of belongingness and wanted to join and learn more about these organizations. It would help them a lot to be more aware about these organizations if there is a better information dissemination regarding their whereabouts, programs, and activities (Participant 4).

Protestantism, being the predominant religion still in Norway, many migrants who belong to other religious denominations such as Catholicism are becoming more open in learning more about this religion. Despite the differences in beliefs and teachings, a positive feeling and more welcoming attitude towards each other should be encouraged (Participant 5).

Norway is becoming a more multicultural society due to the influx of immigrants and refugees. Multicultural families are also increasing particularly with one of the parents being a Norwegian and the other of another nationality. This scenario becomes a challenge especially in raising multicultural children. It affects not just the cultural aspect but also the spiritual aspect specially when the parents have different religions or beliefs. Although the Norwegian culture should be learned by the children, the foreign parent's culture and traditions should not be disregarded as well. A better understanding regarding the differences in culture and respect towards each other's culture should be addressed properly between the parents and among the children as well. A counsel or a group that can facilitate this discussion would be beneficial in addressing the concerns and coming up with a compromise (Participant 6).

Chapter 5

Discussions of the Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the interpretations, opinions, and explanations of the results of the study. It also evaluated the research findings by discussing the significance and implications of the results. The relevance and/or significance of the findings to the research was explored and utilized in drawing conclusions for the analysis. Relevant theories were also utilized in the discussion, explanation, and interpretation of the findings. The themes of the discussions were categorized based on the differences in perspectives and dilemmas formed that were also analyzed and explored.

This study aimed to investigate and learn more about the challenges and changes that the Filipino migrants in Norway encounter with regard to their religion particularly Catholicism. It also intended to decipher the realities of being a Filipino Catholic in a non-Catholic country that is also regarded as not so religious such as Norway.

The following research questions were also intended to be answered in the study:

1. How does migration affect and transform the religious beliefs and practices of the Filipinos who migrated to Norway?
2. What are the challenges that the Filipino migrants encounter with regards to their religion?
3. How do Filipinos adapt to a different country in terms of practicing their religious beliefs?
4. How do the religious beliefs and practices of Filipino migrants change by living in a foreign country and what are the factors involved in bringing about these changes?

5.2 Religion: Faith or Illusion?

Sigmund Freud stated in his book, "New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis" (1933) that "religion is an illusion, and it derives its strength from its readiness to fit in with our

instinctual wishful impulses” (Cherry, 2020). Based on this perspective, it quantified the religiosity of people to satisfy their need of wish fulfillment. This is because their belief to an all-powerful God can make them feel secure. This need of wish-fulfillment and feeling of security can be related to the religiosity of the Filipino Catholics and why religion is a very important part of their lives. Based on the data gathered from the study, the participants pray in times of trouble to give them hope that everything will be better as long as you trust in God. Having a source of hope is very important among the migrant Filipinos since migrating to a different country such as Norway entails a lot of hardships and sacrifices that can lead to feelings of homesickness or depression. In this way, religion to Filipinos also serves as a coping mechanism that might be one of the reasons for them being resilient in difficult situations such as during the time of disasters that are very common in the Philippines.

Religion is very important to all the participants with five (5) of them basing the importance of their religion to the good feeling they get every time they pray due to the sense of hope that everything will be better in God’s grace. This can be explained by the theoretical perspective of “functionalism” with regards to religion. The French sociologist Emile Durkheim studied about the functions of religion in the society. According to Durkheim:

Religion serves several functions for society. These include (a) giving meaning and purpose to life, (b) reinforcing social unity and stability, (c) serving as an agent of social control of behavior, (d) promoting physical and psychological well-being, and (e) motivating people to work for positive social change. (“Sociological Perspectives on Religion – Sociology,” 2016)

The good feeling one gets after praying and the sense of hope it gives during difficult times can be attributed to the function of religion in promoting physical and psychological well-being. Another function of religion that was observed on the data gathered from the study is serving as an agent of social control of behavior. This is also based on the functionalism theoretical perspective of religion and can be related to the uncertainty of the afterlife. The Filipino Catholics are guided by this in maintaining their good morals since they believe that doing good deeds can help in getting them to heaven and doing bad things can get them to hell in the afterlife. This was also mentioned by three (3) of the participants in the study

citing the importance of religion in their lives as connected to the fear of the afterlife. This is really helpful to the Catholics in discouraging them from doing bad things such as committing crimes that explains the social control of behavior as one of the functions of religion. In addition, this function of religion is also related to the low incident of committing suicide in religious countries due to their fear of going to hell by doing such an act.

Going back to the argument of Sigmund Freud regarding religion as an illusion formed in an attempt to control the external world, it can, however, be argued that the religiosity of the Filipino Catholics is not a mere illusion but rather, a belief. While an illusion is a deception of senses by misinterpreting reality, a belief is the acceptance of something being true or real. It can be interchangeable with the word faith, which is believing without the need for proof or evidence. The Filipino Catholics' belief or faith in God has been a part of their whole lives with a very long history. Some may drift away from their faith from time to time, but most of the time, find their way back to reconnect their relationship with God.

5.3 Practicality or Spirituality?

The challenges that the Filipino Catholics in Norway encounter with regards to religion are commonly related to the differences in terms of priorities in life. According to a survey conducted by Gallup International in 2005, Norway was the least religious country in Western Europe. This showed that spirituality is not among the top priorities of this country. On the other hand, the Philippines has among the greatest number of Christians in the world and almost ninety percent of its population belongs to the Catholic denomination, showing its high importance on spirituality. However, when quality of life was compared based on economic security, it showed that Norway is way ahead than the Philippines. As the Existential Insecurity Theory of Secularization explained, "People who live in economically less developed and more inegalitarian societies that are characterized by high levels of existential insecurity are more religious than people who live in highly developed and more egalitarian countries" (Höllinger & Muckenhuber, 2019, p. 23). This theory made sense based on the data gathered from the participants of the study. Most of the participants answered that the intensity of their devotion to their faith is the same, if not stronger, when they were still living in the Philippines compared to when they migrated to Norway. However, in terms of practicing the Catholic practices and traditions, particularly in attending the Sunday Mass,

which is considered as a Catholic duty, it showed that there was a significant decline. Some of the reasons mentioned by the participants are their busy schedules due to work, the inconvenience of long travel time due to low proximity of Catholic churches in the area where they live and prioritizing physical or leisure activities with friends and family among others. Such reasons can be regarded as having practical basis such as working on a Sunday instead of going to church because money is very important specially when you are living in a country with a high cost of living aside from thinking about the remittances you need to send your relatives back home. The same thing goes with prioritizing leisure and other fun activities, it is more practical to do such things instead of going to church on a Sunday since it improves the quality of life, thus, Norway has among the highest quality of life in the world based on surveys. In addition, when one does not have to worry about personal catastrophes due to a strong welfare and healthcare system in society, going to church to have a sense of security in life becomes pointless. For the low proximity of Catholic churches in the area, it is also somehow, based on practicality since a welfare society such as Norway will prioritize spending its resources in providing the basic needs of its society rather than spend it in building more churches.

5.4 Social Norm or Social Change?

“When in Rome, do as the Romans do”. As cliché as it sounds, this is the social norm in any country. To a Filipino Catholic, migrating to Norway that has a lot of differences in terms of its traditions, practices, and predominant religion, following the social norms of this country is the right thing to do. In the study, some of the participants have tried migrating to other countries such as Saudi Arabia and Singapore before migrating to Norway. The participant who migrated to Saudi Arabia had to stop doing Catholic practices openly due to the strict rules of this country in terms of practicing religions other than Islam. The one who migrated to Singapore also had to diminish doing religious practices due to hectic schedule and Catholicism being a minority which is the norm in this country. In Norway, there are also social norms that are expected to be respected by the migrants and not following things such as the rules and regulations of this country is detrimental to maintaining order in its society. The low importance of religiosity in Norway as the social norm is a little challenging for the Filipino Catholic migrants to follow being generally religious people. Some of the participants of the study wished to have changes in the society by increasing the proximity

or the number of the Catholic churches in their areas and being able to do some Filipino Catholic traditions openly such as having processions in the streets just like when celebrating their fiestas in the Philippines. These changes mean putting religion as a priority, which might disrupt the social norms of this country. One of the functions of religion in society according to the functionalism theoretical perspective is motivating people to work for positive social change. In the perspective of the Filipino Catholic, increasing the religiosity in the Norwegian society is a positive social change, besides, Norway can be regarded as a religious country in the past based on its history. Maybe it is time to bring the importance of religion in this country back? This can bring positive social changes such as diminishing mental health problems like depression and suicidal thoughts due to renewed faith in God and giving importance to the afterlife. Several philosophers and sociologists pointed out that religion is instrumental in bringing social change:

Max Weber argued that the social norms instilled by Protestantism laid the foundations for modern capitalism. Martin Luther King was very much inspired by Gandhi's religiously inspired practice of Non-Violent Direct Action of peaceful protest and resisting violence in order to bring about social change (Thompson, 2018).

However, religion can be said to be a double-edged sword as it can be instrumental in convincing people to not bring about social change in this life as well. "According to Marx, one of the main "functions" of religion is to prevent people making demands for social change by dulling pain of oppression" (Thompson, 2018). It is also related to the theoretical perspective of religion called the "conflict theory". According to this theory, "religion reinforces and promotes social inequality and social conflict. It helps convince the poor to accept their lot in life, and it leads to hostility and violence motivated by religious differences" ("Sociological Perspectives on Religion – Sociology," 2016). This was the reason why the friars inculcated these beliefs to the minds of the Filipinos during the Spanish colonization of the Philippines to maintain their power in the society while the Filipinos settled on being poor. This mentality of relying on the hope brought about by faith and religion and not doing anything to help improve their current situations might be one of the reasons the Philippines is still a third world country. However, the positive social changes can also happen in the Philippines if those Filipino migrants in Norway can act as catalysts in

bringing about the necessary changes for the Philippines to advance as a nation by imparting their learnings from the Norwegian society which can be regarded as a prosperous one.

5.5 Adapt or Evolve?

To match a situation or environment, people adapt; to completely change something over time, people evolve. In other words, it can be said that adaptation is temporary, brought about by the current environment or situation that the person has while evolution is permanent by fully embracing the change/s that happened in the person's life. In the study, some of the participants remained Catholics and tried to adapt to their new environment by blending their culture with the Norwegian culture and becoming creative in coming up with ways to still practice their religious practices despite of the limitations and challenges. On the other hand, some of the participants evolved and fully converted their religion from Catholicism to Protestantism or became open in the conversion of their religion. Those who converted to Protestantism fully embraced this different religion due to the influence of their new environment that is predominantly Protestant. A feeling of belonging is also felt by sharing the same religion especially with the people that they were acquainted with. "Freud critiqued religion for being unwelcoming, harsh, and unloving toward those who are not members of a specific religious group" (Cherry, 2020). Every species in this world that survived including humans, either adapted to their environment or evolved. Such is also the effect of migration to Norway of the Filipino Catholics with regard to their religion. It does not matter whether they remained Catholics or converted to another religion, as long as their choice suits them well in maintaining their faith in God.

Those who remained Catholics, due to Catholicism being a minority in Norway, had a hard time finding a Filipino Catholic congregation or group. To adapt to this situation, they settled in joining Catholic groups or even Protestant groups that have members from different countries. The differences in culture made it a melting pot of different traditions. In this manner, although blending different traditions to adapt to the multicultural nature of such congregations is inevitable, we cannot deny the fact that authenticity is sacrificed. The same thing goes to the Filipino Catholic participants who experienced going to a Sunday mass conducted with the Norwegian language, hymns, and responses. This made the experience less immersive diminishing its meaning to them. It can be related to one of the theoretical

perspectives of religion called “Symbolic interactionism”. “This perspective focuses on the ways in which individuals interpret their religious experiences. It emphasizes that beliefs and practices are not sacred unless people regard them as such. Once they are regarded as sacred, they take on special significance and give meaning to people’s lives” (“Sociological Perspectives on Religion – Sociology,” 2016). The symbolic interactionist approach is the basis of the Filipino Catholic rituals and ceremonies that are deeply intense that may involve crying and being emotionally one with those around you. This is difficult to achieve in a mass not catered to the Filipino Catholics. They can resort to continue adapting or come up with a better solution to address this concern.

The theoretical perspective of religion based on functionalism states that one of the functions of religion is to give meaning or purpose to life. The participants who were very active in Catholic groups when they were still in the Philippines have this longing of belonging to such groups again when they migrated to Norway. These groups did not just hone their social and leadership skills, but also gave a deeper purpose to their lives. It can also help them in overcoming feeling of depression by being able to socialize with people who share the same passion and beliefs. However, the awareness of such groups is limited and necessary improvement in terms of information dissemination regarding their whereabouts and activities is needed.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This chapter contains the concluding summary of the study based on the main problem and questions of the research and relating them with the gathered data. It synthesized all the major points covered in the study and tried to view the study from a broader perspective. The main problem was: What are the effects of migration, and the challenges Filipinos encounter related to their religion when they migrate to Norway? At the same time, it tried to answer the following questions:

1. How does migration affect and transform the religious beliefs and practices of the Filipinos who migrated to Norway?

2. What are the challenges that the Filipino migrants encounter with regards to their religion?

3. How do Filipinos adapt to a different country in terms of practicing their religious beliefs?

4. How do the religious beliefs and practices of Filipino migrants change by living in a foreign country and what are the factors involved in bringing about these changes?

Furthermore, it discussed the contributions of the study and reflected on its limitations. Lastly, it provided recommendations and proposed future research opportunities in relation to the topic.

The study aimed to learn more about the effects of the Filipinos' migration to Norway with regards to their religion, particularly Catholicism. One of the results indicated that the Filipino Catholics maintained or even increased the intensity of their faith when they migrated to Norway. On the other hand, it was observed that although their faith was maintained or even became stronger, their being religious relative to doing religious practices was affected in a negative way. One example is the frequency of doing an important Catholic duty which is going to mass every Sunday. The effect was the decrease of its frequency due to several factors. These factors were usually related to the practical reasons such as work and the need to earn more money, the inconvenience of traveling to church to attend the Sunday mass due to the low proximity of Catholic churches in Rogaland and prioritizing other activities on Sundays as an influence of the Norwegian society norm and culture. The social norm in Norway nowadays is the low prioritization of religion in its society which can be due to the high level of social security it enjoys as explained in the Existential Insecurity Theory of Secularization. However, the study did not show any correlation between the high level of social security and life quality in Norway to the level of religiosity of the participants as most of them were able to maintain their intensity of faith despite of living in a country with better living conditions.

The study also showed that some of the main reasons for the importance of religion to the participants' lives are: 1. As a coping mechanism that helps them to maintain positivity especially during the difficult times and 2. As a social behavior control that helps them avoid doing bad things such as committing a crime and doing good deeds to become good people

due to their fear of the afterlife. The first reason, which is as a coping mechanism in difficult situations, resulted in a decrease in their feeling of homesickness or depression. It also provided an explanation regarding the low suicide rate among religious countries such as the Philippines.

Another question answered in the study is about the way/s Filipinos adapt in Norway in terms of practicing their religious beliefs and practices. It showed that Filipino migrants adapt to the social norm of this society by blending their religious practices with the situation in their new environment. However, they feel a lost in the authenticity of their being Filipino Catholics by trying to blend their practices with the culture of this country. In order to retain the authenticity of the traditions, some of the participants tried to be creative in their private celebrations with Filipino families and friends by celebrating them with a Filipino fiesta theme and preparing traditional Filipino fiesta food.

One of the participants wished to have changes in the social norm in the Norwegian society in relation to the Filipino Catholic practices and traditions. Some of these are having the possibility of attending masses in the traditional Filipino way or having processions in the streets just like in a typical Filipino fiesta. The actualization of such suggestions may result in the attainment of absolute religious freedom not bound by limitations. On the other hand, it may be too much and disrespectful to the Norwegian society as the migrants are expected to follow the social norms of the country they migrated to and not the other way around.

Another effect of migration to Norway in terms of the participants' religion is converting or being open to conversion to the predominant religion in this country which is Protestantism. This was brought about by the influence of their peers and their new environment.

Some of the participants who were members of Catholic organizations when they were still in the Philippines have this yearning of becoming members of such Catholic organizations as well when they migrated to Norway. This is because of the good effects it may bring them by being members of these groups such as giving them purpose in their lives, decreasing their feeling of depression, and honing their social and leadership skills. However, awareness of such groups needs improvement through better advertising or information dissemination.

The study's contributions to the field, though minimal, are still meaningful and valuable. First, the concerns about being a Filipino Catholic in Norway were addressed such as the challenges they encountered in practicing their religious practices in Norway. At the same time, a deeper understanding regarding the importance of religion to Filipinos was attained. Second, it uncovered issues that might have been taken for granted such as the differences in religious beliefs and importance among multicultural families that may lead to challenges in rearing multicultural children and may result in confusion. By addressing such issues, respect, better understanding, and keeping an open mind may lead to compromise and coming up with better solutions on how to deal with their differences that will be beneficial to the development of their children in a multicultural family. Third, it provided an avenue to the possibility of bringing positive changes in the society such as the realization of the value of religion in Norway in decreasing the rate of suicide and depression. A deeper understanding about the influence of religion to the lack of prosperity in the Philippines and how it can be changed was also realized. To bring about such changes, religious organizations can be formed and utilized in influencing the youth to become more religious. The youth themselves can utilize their creativity and familiarity with modern technology in increasing awareness about such religious organizations. By the use of modern ways such as social media, the problem related to information dissemination can be solved while honing the creativity of the youth members at the same time. Last, communication channels through those who have the authority can be opened to talk about the possibility of achieving some changes that some Filipino Catholics wish to have and clarify if such wishes may be too much and crossing the borderline already.

The limitations of the study are also acknowledged such as limited samples that may reduce the generalizability of the findings. The sample being skewed heavily to a particular demographic such as having more females than males and having more married than single participants that might result to decrease in representation and the possibility of being bias. The study did not also investigate further about the possibility of addressing changes that some Filipino Catholics want such as the possibility of doing processions on the streets, more Filipino themed masses, and the construction of more Catholic churches.

Some of the recommendations based on the limitations of the study that future researchers can consider are:

1. A bigger sample can be utilized to make the study more comprehensive and bring more generalizable findings.
2. Utilize a different approach such as the quantitative method to compare and contrast the results with the qualitative method that was the basis of this study.
3. Conduct a further study about the low religiosity in Norway, which is an interesting topic that arose from this study to dig deeper about the real causes and effects of this phenomenon.
4. Explore the feasibility of enacting social changes such as the possibility of having some fiesta traditions done publicly since it can enrich the knowledge of the Norwegians about other cultures and can benefit those who are suffering from depression or experiencing Seasonal Affective Disorder due to the fun atmosphere of these traditions.

In general, the study's aim of investigating and learning about the effects of migration, and the challenges Filipinos encounter related to their religion when they migrate to Norway were hopefully satisfied. Some issues and concerns were unraveled during the course of the study and recommendations for addressing them were also formulated.

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Appendix 1

Letter of informed consent

**Are you interested in taking part in the research project
"Effects of migration and the challenges Filipinos encounter related to their religion when
they migrate to Norway"?**

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to learn about the effects of migration to religion and the challenges Filipinos encounter when they migrate to Norway. In this letter I will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The purpose of this project is to find answers to my main research question and sub questions about my topic. I also intend to address whatever challenges are being experienced by the Filipino immigrants related to their religion. The intension is to address and analyze these problems and to possibly give recommendations to solve them.

Research questions:

1. How does migration affect and transform the religious beliefs and practices of the Filipinos who migrated to Norway?
2. What are the challenges that the Filipino migrants encounter with regards to their religion?
3. How do Filipinos adapt to a different country in terms of practicing their religious beliefs?
4. How do the religious beliefs and practices of Filipino migrants change by living in a foreign country and what are the factors involved in bringing about these changes?

This is a research for my master's thesis at VID specialized University (Master in Community Development and Social Innovation Major in Migration and Intercultural Relations)

Who is responsible for the research project?

I, Madel Obinque is responsible for this research project in cooperation with my supervisor Frieder Ludwig.

Why are you being asked to participate?

I am asking you to participate in my research because I would like to interview five to ten Filipino immigrants who have been living in Norway particularly in Rogaland for 3 years and more, mostly members of the Catholic Church but some may belong to a different denomination or religion.

What does participation involve for you?

If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve an interview. It will approximately take 30 minutes to one hour. The interview includes questions about your experiences living in Norway as a Catholic or any other denomination you belong to and the challenges you encountered with regard to your religion. I will record the interview electronically through the use of a digital recorder and I will take notes while conducting the interview. The interviews will be conducted separately for each participant and will be scheduled at your most convenient time.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

I will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. I will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

I, Madel Obinque and my project supervisor Frieder Ludwig will have access to the personal data in this project.

To ensure that no unauthorized persons are able to access the personal data, I will encrypt sensitive files by using passwords, physically secure devices and paper documents by storing them in locked areas, and I will dispose data that is no longer needed appropriately. In addition, I will replace your name and contact details with a code or pseudonym. The name of the participants will be kept anonymous but some personal information that will be published will include age, occupation, religious denomination, and number of years living in Norway.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end in spring 2023. The personal data will be securely stored at the end of the project because I might use it for my own follow up academic work. The data will be stored in an encrypted file and can only be accessed by me. If any participant does not consent the storage of their data for future use, the collected data of that participant will be anonymized. Any digital recordings will be erased.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

I will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with VID, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

- If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:
- Researcher/student : Madel Obinque by email (mcs1786@yahoo.com) or by telephone (93994067)
- Frieder Ludwig at *VID Specialized University*, by email frieder.ludwig@vid.no or by telephone 92291995.
- Our Data Protection Officer: [Nancy Yue Liu](#)
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Frieder Ludwig
(Supervisor)

Madel Obinque
(Researcher/student)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project 'effects of migration and the challenges Filipinos encounter related to their religion when they migrate to another country' and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in an interview
- for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognized such as ethnicity, age, religious denomination, and occupation.
- for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project for follow-up studies and future research.

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. spring 2023.

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix 2

Interview guide questions

1. A. Which religious denomination are you a member of and how did you practice your religion when you were still living in the Philippines?

B. Have you experienced living in other countries (apart from the Philippines and Norway)? If so, how can you compare and contrast how you practiced your religion in that/those countries to your religious practices when you were living in the Philippines and now that you are here in Norway?

C. What are the differences you observed with regards to the religious practices you have when you were still in the Philippines and now that you are living in Norway?

D. What are the factors involved or considered that may affect your religious practices when you migrated to Norway?

2. A. Would you consider it difficult practicing your religious belief while living in Norway?

B. Do you think Norwegian rules and people give you enough freedom to practice and express your religious beliefs?

3. A. Can you give examples on how you are able to practice your religious belief and practices despite of living in Norway?

B. How strict or dedicated are you with regards to your religious practices?

4. A. Have you considered changing your religion because of living in a country with different dominant religion such as Norway?

B. Does peer pressure or meeting new people with different religious beliefs influence you easily with regard to your religion?