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Araştırma Makalesi

## On the Other Side of the Greener Pasture: Filipina Migration in Turkey

Julienne Faye Maconocido<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Istanbul Aydin University, Department of Political Science and International Relations

\*Sorumlu yazar: juliennemaconocido@stu.aydin.edu.tr

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### Abstract

This research was conducted due to the scarce resources regarding Filipino and/or Filipina migration to Turkey, hence, this study aims to explore the experiences of Filipinas in the said country. Six migrant Filipina participants with ages ranging from 38 to 52 have been interviewed using the semi-structured questionnaire, and data were then analyzed using the narrative analysis. Findings were generated and based on the Migration Systems theory wherein the elements in the migration process are seen as interrelated and interconnected in a systematic manner. This study explains the Filipina migrant integration in Turkey wherein important points were laid out particularly the cultural, social, and economic dimensions of integration. This article found that life in the greener pastures is not always comfortable and relaxing for a few migrants. For some Filipina migrants, there were overwhelming challenges that they had to overcome in order to carry on with their lives in exchange for financial leverage that they could provide for themselves and for their families.

**Keywords:** Itegration, immigration, migrant, migration systems theory

## INTRODUCTION

Migrants from the Philippines are abundant worldwide. In fact, the Philippines has been sending out over half a million Filipinos abroad annually (Lu, 2014). Camroux (2008) stated that people have become the Philippines' largest export asset with millions of Filipinos living overseas (p.2). The Philippine migration movement ranges from labor to marriage migration by which economic purposes are deemed very common. The Philippines have become an emigration dependent country which mostly relies on its massive human capital being sent out to other countries in exchange for remittances which highly sustains the country. As of 2017, the Philippines is among the top ten origin countries of international migrants according to the data provided by the World Bank (2018) with an estimate of 6.0 million migrants dispersed across the globe (p. 11). It was also indicated that in the year 2017, the Philippines is the third remittance receiver country worldwide, falling behind India and China as first and second remittance receiver countries respectively (World Bank, 2018). The World Migration Report 2020 indicated that in 2018, India, China, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt were (in descending order) the top five remittance recipient countries, although India and China were well above the rest, with total inward remittances exceeding USD 67 billion for each country, and in the year 2019, the Philippines ranked 9th among the top 20 migrant producing countries worldwide (McAuliffe and Khadria, 2020).

Turkey, on the other hand, is a country that has gone through the cycle of all migration movements. Over the past decades, as Turkey experienced various migration trends particularly emigration, immigration, and transit,

Bel-Air (2016) noted that ever since the first major bilateral labor deal was signed between Turkey and West Germany in 1961, emigration patterns from Turkey underwent a number of changes until the 2000s (p.1). An article that was published prior to the massive migration movement of Syrian refugees to Turkey briefly mentioned that despite the fact that emigrants outnumber immigrants in Turkey, the number of people moving to Turkey is on the rise, prompting a tightening of immigration policies (Altunisik, 2011). It is interesting to note that after such major changes within Turkey and around its neighboring countries, Turkey has become an immigration and transit country for the most of the 21st century up to this day. Nonetheless, emigration is still a thing in the country which may be considered scant compared to the fact that it receives and accommodates more migrants rather than sending away emigrants.

With regard to Filipina migration in Turkey, it can be assumed that Turkey is not a very popular choice for Filipinas to migrate for they often go to countries such as the US or the Middle East. The majority of permanent overseas Filipinos live in industrialized nations, with the United States and Trust Territories accounting for 81 percent while the Middle East accounts for roughly 45 percent of temporary abroad Filipinos, while nearby host nations such as Hong Kong SAR, Japan, and Malaysia account for roughly 20 percent (Calzado, 2007). With this, however, Icduygu (2013) briefly mentioned in his study that 14 341 Filipina migrants in Turkey soared as high as 65 272 from the early 2000s (p. 44). Compared to the million Filipina migrants scattered in the globe, it is not undeniable that Turkey hosts a small percentage of them.

As this study intends to explore the experiences of Filipina migrants,

there will be an emphasis on the feminization of migration in particular. Liu (2015) specifically indicated that since 2012, it is estimated that there are about 53 million OFW domestic employees working across borders, with 83 percent of them being women (p. 81). Thus, this article also aims to tackle the prevalence of Filipina migrants working in domestic sectors especially in Turkey.

The context of this research will focus mainly on the experiences of Filipina migrant in Turkey. Although it is mentioned that Turkey doesn't have the highest Filipina immigrants in its country, such a topic will be discussed by analyzing related literature about Filipino migration in other countries and by associating it with Filipina migration specifically in Turkey. Furthermore, this paper will analyze the integration of Filipinas in Turkish society considering the differences of traditions, religion, culture, and surroundings in general. This study, however, does not attempt to explain the entire process of Philippine migration to Turkey but will explore the lived experiences of Filipinas in Turkey - the effects of migration on Filipina migrants, as well as their integration and development in Turkey as the receiving country.

There may be a research gap in terms of the benefits of migration in the macro and micro levels. It is not clear whether the benefits of migration far outweigh its consequences. The study about Filipinas moving to Turkey in particular may be perceived as a gap itself for no related literature is found regarding this specific topic. Moreover, studies about regular migrants rather than the most commonly known refugee and asylum seeking migration movement must also be studied and put into consideration. Furthermore, there are only few existing literature about Asian migration to Turkey which may

suggest the minimal interaction between the aforementioned parties in terms of migration.

This research attempts to explore the experiences of Filipina migrants in Turkey. This will also fill the gap about the factors of Philippine diaspora and how it is related to the migration movement in Turkey. Moreover, this study delves specifically on the developmental spaces particularly on the economic, social, cultural, and social spaces by which Filipinas are given the opportunity to develop in Turkish society.

## **Literature Review**

### **Migration systems theory**

The study of Mabogunje (1970) which studied the migration system between migration from rural to urban communities, stated that migration is a dynamic process that influences not only the migrants but also a range of administrative agencies, resulting in major and widely differing changes in the region (p. 2). This is therefore expounded with the study of Kritz, Lim, and Zlotnik, (1992) wherein migration takes place internationally between countries, unlike Mabogunje's which only focuses on rural to urban communities. This study will use the international migration systems theory in examining the experiences of Filipinas in Turkey as it will serve as the theoretical backbone in this research.

In this study, Migration systems particularly refer to the international migration as a whole, considering the international migration rather than the internal migration movement in one country. This is supported by the study of De Haas (2014) wherein it is indicated that: developing distinct theories for

internal and international migration does not appear to be very beneficial and does not make a lot of difference. Although international migration is more frequently (though not always) controlled by nations, both types of movement are commonly driven by the same processes of social, economic, and political change. In fact, internal migration is considerably greater in most nations than overseas migration. (p.26).

Migration systems show the essence of the “system” that takes place in the process by which migration movement influences both the host and destination areas. In this part, theories relevant to migration systems will be examined specifically International Migration Systems Theory and, General Systems theory which will talk about the essence of the “system” in migration systems theory. Thus, when such concepts are integrated, it can be much easier to grasp Filipina migration by determining the elements in the migration movement and how such elements interact in order to form a system.

Migration Systems theory examines how migration is inextricably related to other modes of trade, such as the movement of goods, thoughts, and capital, and how this affects the initial circumstances under which migration occurs, both in the source and destination societies (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014). The proponent of migration systems theory, Mabogunje (1970, as cited in de Haas, 2010), defined a migration system as a set of places linked by flows and counter-flows of people, goods, services, and information, which tend to facilitate further exchange, including migration, between the places (p. 43). Kritz et al

(1992), as mentioned before, adapted the same concept but focuses on the migration movement of migrants from one country to another.

This theory is also rooted to Von-Bertalanffy’s (1968) General System Theory which contends that its subject matter is the formulation and derivation of concepts that are applicable to “systems” in general (p. 37). The word “systems” in migration systems theory specifically refers to the exchange of goods, capital, people, services, and information between countries (Boyd 1989; Fawcett 1989, as cited in Gheasi and Nijkamp, 2017). This theory originates from the conceptualization of “systems” in general systems theory which pertains to the complexes of elements standing in interaction into the sociological context of migration systems theory in particular. This is supported by Von-Bertalanffy’s (1968) study which mentioned that as a result, it appears that the general theory of systems would be useful in providing, on the one hand, models that can be utilized in and transferred to multiple disciplines, while protecting, on the other hand, against imprecise analogies that have frequently hampered development in the sciences (p. 34). Furthermore, Mabogunje (1970) specifically indicated that the method of the General Systems calls for the recognition of a specific complex of variables as a system with certain appropriate links common to many other systems. This method calls for the recognition of a specific complex of variables as a system with certain appropriate links common to many other systems, wherein, it has the essential benefits of a conceptual framework within which the particular phenomena under investigation may be addressed to a full series of

questions useful for understanding the structure and functioning of other systems (p. 2). Thus, with its attempt to explain modern (natural and social) sciences with regard to a “system”, General Systems Theory is found to be a derivative in the elements associated with Migration Systems Theory.

#### **Migration as a systematic process**

According to Gheasi and Nijkamp (2017), this theory integrates the macroeconomic and microeconomic processes, and considers migration as a dynamic process where regions and countries are connected by numerous types of linkages (p. 4). Therefore, migration research involves a broader intellectual discussion that includes: individuals and households (related to the migration decision), and economic, social, environmental, and political circumstances. This is in line with Bakewell’s (2014) study which mentioned that researchers must strive to analyse the complex array of interacting elements that define migration processes and try to take account of origin and destination, changing patterns over time and finding some balance between individuals’ decision making and structural constraints. Any attempt to capture this complexity is likely to result in something akin to a system (p. 301). Moreover, Hagen-Zanker (2008) and Massey, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, and Taylor (1993) regard migration as both an initiating and perpetuating form of migration theory (as cited in Serra, 2006, p. 20). This only shows that this theory has a vast scope wherein several elements are involved. It is a continuous process which defines migration as self-perpetuating and an ongoing process.

De Haas (2010) indicated that the fundamental assumption of

migration systems theory is that migration alters the social, cultural, economic, and institutional conditions at both the sending and receiving ends—that is, the entire developmental space within which migration processes operate (p. 7). Furthermore, he mentioned that this theory goes beyond this point in stressing that migration not only affects and is affected by the direct social environment of migrants, but restructures the entire societal – or “developmental” – context of the concrete spaces in which migration takes place, both at the receiving and sending end (p. 233). Thus, it is assumed that apart from the experiences of migrants, researchers must incorporate the migrants’ impact on both receiving and sending countries such as, among other things, the migrant integration in the receiving country and the consequences of emigration in the sending country which creates a culture or a norm within the community that may lead to Diaspora.

Affixing Mabogunje’s (1970) and Kritiz et al’s (1992) idea of migration systems, Bakewell (2014) restructured and exemplified such theory then stated that a migration system is defined by: (1) a set of interacting elements—including flows of people, ideas and goods, institutions in the sense of discourses and associated practices (e.g. ‘culture of migration’, smuggling, inequality), and strategies as in plans for action by particular actors (e.g. individual and household strategies; policies of governments, private businesses, and civil society organizations)—which relate to the migration between localities; and (2) the dynamics governing the way in which the elements (flows, institutions and

strategies) change in relation to changes in both these system elements (feedback mechanisms) and in the wider environment. (p. 310)

### **The micro-, macro, and meso-levels of the migration process**

The aforementioned elements talk involve the situations and the exchange between interrelating components involved in the migration process. The set of interacting elements is related to the research of O'Reilly (2013) which mentioned that migration systems theory, alternatively, understands migration as a complex process incorporating the ongoing interaction of macro, micro, and meso-level elements within a wider migration system. Though de Haas (2014) pointed out that using the macro-, meso- and micro-level explanations of migration, in general, may require different conceptual tools (p.14), in this context, however, such aforementioned levels will be conceptualized in a systematic manner making migration systems theory systematic in nature through the interaction of involved elements.

Micro-level focuses on individual migration decisions (Hagen-Zanker, 2008). It involves an individual's personal decisions and family affairs in the migration process. Migration is not considered as a solitary choice for it is often influenced by the individual's subjective desires and their expectations and goals that they believe they could attain on a particular destination. Family relations also play a major role in this level which is in line with the study of Castles, de Haas, and Miller (2014) which mentioned that micro-structures incorporate migrants' behaviors, familial relationships, and beliefs (p. 26).

According to de Haas (2010), the macro-context influences the amount to which possibilities for migration exist,

either internally or outside, for example, through immigration regulations, labor demand, and income levels. He went on suggesting that such opportunity structures influence the volume, character (illegitimate, legal, labor, political, and family migration), and (tentative) selectivity of migration (pp. 62-63). This coincides with Castles et. al's (2014) definition of the macro-level which refers to large-scale institutional variables such as global political economy, interstate relations, and states' efforts in sending and receiving nations to regulate migration (p. 26). This level focuses more on the broader perspective, particularly with the economic outcomes in the process and consequences of migration.

The meso level, on the other hand, provides an ontology with which to think through and examine how these two levels are interrelated and it enables us to explore daily practice at the intersection of wider forces (O'Reilly, 2011). Furthermore, the study of Hagen-Zanker (2008) explains that level is in between the micro and macro level, e.g. on the household or community level and can explain both causes and perpetuation of migration (p. 5). With this, the perpetuation of the migration process is highlighted in this level which gives light to feedback mechanisms between migrants, one of the most important subjects in migration systems.

By exploring these micro-, meso-, macro levels, this research attempts to disclose the relationships of each levels and relating them with migration system which focuses on such elements.

In studying migration systems, it is important to conceptualize and limit the scope of what the theory is all about in general. Thus, the perspective of migration systems in the research of Massey et al (1993) yields several

interesting hypotheses and propositions which needs to be highly considered: Countries within a system need not be geographically close since flows reflect political and economic relationships rather than physical ones. Although proximity obviously facilitates the formation of exchange relationships, it does not guarantee them nor does distance preclude them.

Multipolar systems are possible, whereby a set of dispersed core countries receive immigrants from a set of overlapping sending nations.

(1) Nations may belong to more than one migration system, but multiple membership is more common among sending than receiving nations.

(2) As political and economic conditions change, systems evolve, so that stability does not imply a fixed structure. Countries may join or drop out of a system in response to social change, economic fluctuations, or political upheaval. (p. 454). By integrating the following knowledge acquired from different related studies, this will boost the potential of this particular theoretical framework. The aforementioned information will serve as a backbone which will assist the production of the entire study as a whole. Migration Systems Theory is an ideal framework for this study because it involves the major aspects of developmental spaces in the migrants' lives. This research aims to study the interacting elements in the life of a migrant Filipina woman in Turkey with regard to incorporating such involved elements as a system. This study also attempts to explore the effects of migration on both the receiving and sending countries.

## **Methods**

### **Research design**

This research intends to explore the lived experiences of Filipinas in Turkey.

The present study is qualitative in nature therefore the research method/instrument which has been utilized in this study is in-depth interview, among others. Narrative inquiry have been used during the data collection process, by which the collected information have been analysed using narrative analysis. Qualitative research emphasizes the socially formed essence of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is being investigated, as well as the situational restrictions that form the investigation by which the value-laden nature of the investigation is addressed, and by which researchers aim to pursue answers to questions that emphasize how social experience is generated and given meaning. (Denzin, N., Lincoln, K., & Yvonna, S., 2005, p.10). This is in line with the researcher's attempt to examine knowledge taken from open-ended questions that allows the researcher the ability to dig further into participants who share their own personal testimonies without any constraints about what they are going to share for the research method is rather subjective rather than objective. Just as what Clandinin (2007) stated, qualitative analysis takes shape around perception and human behavior assumptions and is not particularly focused in prediction and control, but in understanding (p.4). Since this research seeks to understand the lived experiences of Filipina migrants in Turkey through the prism of their own personal life experiences and stories, this study attempts to use narrative inquiry in the data collection process. Chase (2005) present narrative inquiry as a special form of qualitative inquiry through which contemporary narrative inquiry can be defined as all the amalgam of interdisciplinary analytical frameworks, multiple methodological

approaches, and both conventional and creative methods all revolving around an interest in biographical details as narrated by the individuals themselves (p. 651). This aims to emphasize the participants' life story by exploring the different areas of their lives in the migration process and experiences according to the testimonies and narratives that they share during the data gathering process. This is further explained in the study of Connelly and Clandinin (1990) which mentioned that the main objective is apparent when people both live their stories in a continuous experiential manner and tell their stories in words as they focus on life and justify themselves to others (p. 4).

We live in an interview society, according to Denzin et al (2005), a society whose members seem to believe that interviews generate useful information about lived experience and its meanings (p. 642). One of the most notable data collection tool in narrative inquiry is the unstructured interview (Clandinin and Connelly, 1990, p.5). As data will be gathered according to what the participants share in their stories, there is no strict guide or structure therein, thus the information flows freely as the conversation carries on. This is supported by the study of Scârnci-Domnişoru (2013) which mentioned that this kind of method does not give participants choice-answers in interrogative research situations, but allowing them to speak freely and in unguided manner (p.1). Though it is suggested that this type of study should use an unstructured interview, this particular research, however, had used a semi-structured interview in order to establish a semi-guide during the interview in case the participants are answering objectively and are looking for specific questions. During the interview, the researcher prompted the

participants to tell their story but the participants tend to seek for specific questions and because of that, questions regarding important elements such as their cultural and social adaptation, as well as the process of legal documents have been included.

With regard to data analysis, on the other hand, narrative analysis have been utilized. The themes that have been gathered together were analyzed using the narrative approach. The research focuses on stories-- with the *hows* and *whys*, and it intends to explain the data in a narrative style. Oliver (1998) describes that narrative analysis is the processing of facts into a narrative or narratives that provide an explanation, convey meaning to an experience, or gives insight into the rationale and purpose behind a series of events (p. 251). By having an approach that retells the analyzed version of the data, this method aims to arrive to a concrete and explainable research outcome based on stories and chains of events. This also integrates the elements of storytelling which includes settings, characters, and plot.

Furthermore, since individuals make sense of their lives by the stories they tell, individuals who study human experiences are suggested to employ a technique that links to how individuals build the meaning of their life experiences (Oliver, 1998, p. 244). Using this method makes it easier to understand the people's subjective experiences by living through the participants' stories and testimonies.

### **Participants**

As this study focuses on Filipina migrants, six migrant Filipina participants with ages ranging from 38 to 52 have been interviewed. One works as a part time babysitter, two participants work as a full time maid, one works as a pedicurist/manicurist in a parlor, one works as a money sender, and one works



in the office setting. This research requires that the participants must have been staying in Istanbul Turkey for at least a year and are currently residing within the said area. In this study, the participants have been living in Turkey for as long as 8-12 years. Participants have been selected through snowball sampling technique. Legal documents and the legitimacy of their stay in Istanbul Turkey was highly perceived as an important requirement in participating in this study, by which terms and conditions surrounding age and residence permit or status have been implemented through a thorough verification of legal documents.

#### **Techniques**

First, a pre-interview have been conducted amongst potential participants in this study. Requirements regarding legal documents have been scrutinized in order to determine whether or not a particular Filipina migrant is qualified for the study. Those who became official participants were set up for an online interview arranged in Facebook messenger. The consent of the participants have been sought regarding the condition that the entire interview will be recorded. The interview took place within 45 minutes - 2 hour time duration, depending on each participant. Data were then transcribed and laid out in a narrative manner and analysis. Such data were then compiled together and written out as part of the findings of this study.

#### **RESULTS and DISCUSSIONS**

As this study incorporates Migration Systems wherein the interacting elements are viewed as a functioning system as a whole, this will talk about the exchange of goods, capital, people, services, and information between countries. This is based on the aforementioned statements made by

Boyd (1989) and (Fawcett) 1989 which enumerated such exchange of elements (as cited in Gheasi & Nijkamp, 2017; p. 4). Results in this study show the exchange of goods, capital, people, information, and services. First off, the exchange of goods is presented in the form of remittances sent by migrants to their families. Capital exchange on the other hand refers to the financial cost spent in the migration process. The exchange of services talks about the labor costs in the form of the migrants' work. The exchange of people does not only tackle the migrants and the migration process in itself but also the migration process in general.

#### **Migrant integration in the host country**

The open, simple concept of integration, according to Penninx (2005) entitled *Integration of Migrants: Economic, Social, and political dimensions*, encompasses at least three conceptually separate elements of becoming an accepted member of society: the legal/political, the socio-economic, and the cultural/religious components (p. 141). Additionally, in its widest context, integration refers to the process of assimilating immigrants and ethnic minorities into the host country's society, economy, and political life; as it has been laid out and organized into four different dimensions that tackles cultural, social, economic, and political aspects (Boswell, 2008). *Cultural integration* entails knowledge of the host country's language, some awareness of its society, and adherence to its fundamental principles or basic norms. *Social dimensions* applies to the insertion of an immigrant to the education and welfare systems. *Economic dimension* refers to the insertion of an immigrant into the labour market *Political integration* comprises the right to vote and run for office, which

is often obtained by citizenship. (p. 75). These four aspects are important when it comes to determining how well-integrated an immigrant is in the host society. By finding out the conditions of only one of these dimensions, it goes without saying that the other dimensions are also affected. The following will lay out the four aspects of immigrant integration process that covers migration in terms of the studies of Boswell (2003) and Penninx (2005) and aims to explain the aforementioned dimensions and apply it with the participants' narratives.

### **Cultural Integration**

Hamberger (2009) noted that the most fundamental concept of acculturation or cultural integration is that immigrants undergo cultural transformation during this process (pp. 6-7). This explains that the immigrants have to blend in and get along with the country's cultural elements which involves language, food taste, religion, and values, among many others. These particular points stress the importance of cultural integration in the society wherein the immigrants may feel involved in the host country.

### **Language**

In Lily's case, she found it very difficult to deal with people whenever she wanted to express herself due to the language barrier. Her exasperation is evident during the interview. According to her, she formally studied the Turkish language in order to catch up and interact with the people around her. Lani's case, on the other hand, is different. Since her work does not require her to speak Turkish and also because her employer is non-Turkish but Greek, thus, her knowledge in the Turkish language is fairly limited. This study claims that without being exposed to the presence of people in the host society, the integration will most likely be unsuccessful when culture, particularly language, fails to

connect the immigrant and the host society. Needless to say, the other dimensions will most likely be affected as well. Furthermore, Lani's narratives confirm this idea by mentioning that her interaction with Turkish people is minimal therefore she doesn't have notable encounters with them. With these, it is only reasonable to infer that the limited opportunities for interaction between the immigrant and members of the host society impedes the integration process. This, again, is shown in Lani's experience by informing the interviewer that her employer isn't Turkish so she reasoned out that she didn't have to adjust with Turkish culture and tradition that's entirely different from the Philippines. Karla's case, however, is somewhat the opposite of Lani's experience. According to Karla, she did not gain formal education in the Turkish language. The fact that her in-laws seem to be keeping distance from her only pushed her to interact with the other people around her, which, at that time, were her neighbors. The contrast between Lani and Karla's experiences is highly visible. One may say that because of the differences in how they were able to connect with Turkish people, one of them learnt to speak Turkish while the other could not. Learning an entirely different language, without doubt, takes many years to master. It may not be easy for immigrants who have already established their own identity via their own culture particularly in terms of their own languages, but it may be easier for those who have lived in Turkey a lot longer than most participants in the study. This is supported by Penninx (2005) who thoroughly discussed that immigrants get closely familiar with the culture and language of their settlement society through informal connections in the neighborhood starting in early childhood, and notably via involvement

in public institutions, primarily educational institutions (p. 143). Dina, on the other hand, has been learning the Turkish language from the children whom she babysits. She also indicated that the kids learn how to speak English because of her. Learning is an ongoing process and therefore she claims that she still tries to learn more from them. One of the other participants, Rose, stated that she learned Turkish in the parlor “I didn’t study, I learned it in the parlor.”. It is only reasonable because interacting with people is part of her job. As a result of her conversations with them, she was finally able to speak Turkish without completing a formal Turkish language course.

Marie, on the other hand, is reluctant with interacting with Turkish people, and so she appears indifferent with the language--“Even with their language, I’m just not interested that’s why I don’t speak their language”. Like Lani, she also has a non-Turkish employer therefore the use of the Turkish language is not necessary for her. Her strong dislike for the people also hindered her from being able to speak their language. In sum, result shows that language is a very important aspect in terms of cultural integration within any host country. Hamberger (2009) pointed out that the recipient country's language is required for successful integration in all other aspects (p. 8). This is also supported by Potot (2013) which stated that while language proficiency is not a goal in and of itself for integration, it is considered a prerequisite for success (p. 210). Thus, language is certainly a prerequisite in blending in the society in terms of relating to its people. Knowing the language means being familiar with their music or television dramas, for instance. It also helps an immigrant to become aware of what is going on in the area by keeping up with the local news

distributed in the host society’s own language. Though there is a universal language, the English language, countries like Turkey does not have an educational curriculum that covers such language. This, therefore, exhibit the need for immigrants to learn Turkish in order to connect with the people.

### **Religion**

The geography of Asia Minor affected not only the Ottoman Empire and Turkey’s art, literature, politics and lifestyle but also its own religious landscape (Hendrich, 2011, p. 1). Turkey has a rich history, having been occupied by empires after empires. Conspicuously, the Islamic domination in the country has influenced its culture, religion, traditions, norms and values, which are still being practiced for decades on end. Nonetheless, the differences in terms of religion (as well as the culture that it entails) between the Christian migrant Filipinas and Turkey, the Islamic host country is very much prominent, yet very much tolerable. The participants in this study have not, in any respect, been treated poorly which comes with the clashes of certain religious beliefs and tradition. Though some of them, particularly Marie, pointed out that she did not like the country because it is an Islamic state, she has never faced harrowing conflicts fueled by religion. Her narrative could only mean that even though she does not like the religion, staying in Turkey has been somewhat tolerable for her. It’s not an urgent matter for her to leave just because of the country’s main religion. Lily’s account, however, is somewhat peaceful. She explained how harmonious it is for her and her husband even with their differences in religion. This also goes the same for Rose, by which she explained that she and her husband tries to understand one another in order to avoid conflict in the household. For Dina’s

case, however, it seems good in the exterior for she tend to assist her mother-in-law with her schedule for her Muslim prayers, and Dina, on the other hand, tends to have a separate prayer time in a secluded area. On the other hand, there was a bit of a conflict with her and her late husband who wanted to change her religion in her citizenship ID. Though her husband insisted on changing her religion, Dina's husband passed away before she could obtain her citizenship, and so she ended up not changing her religion and her citizenship card identifies still her as a Christian. Davie (2010) pointed out that religion is certainly resurgent in many areas of the world [...] but it is also becoming more widely acknowledged as a persistent and strong factor in both individual and collective life (p. 161). This shows that an individual's life is most likely influenced by the majority around them. This supports Dina's experience with her husband wherein he wanted her to blend in terms of religion by officially declaring via documents her conversion from Christianity to Islam. This study claims that there is no religious conflict of any kind among the participants and the Muslim recipient society. Considering the fact that Turkey has been catering to Muslim refugees from Islamic countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, and most African countries, tending to its Christian counterparts such as the Philippines should be assumed as an overwhelming challenge when it comes to religion. The result in this study, however, shows that there is no significant relation to religion and the successful integration process. Tolerance and acceptance are entirely different things, and as long as there is respect and understanding between the religious differences, harmony is undoubtedly attainable. Thus, religious integration is different from language

fluency. One can be a Turkish-speaking Christian and can still able to relate and interact with a Turkish-speaking Muslim in the society, and vice versa.

### **Social Dimension**

The Concluding Document of Helsinki (1992) clearly agreed that the participating states acknowledge the necessity of establishing environments that favor equality of opportunity for legal resident and working migrant workers in terms of working conditions, education, social security and health services, housing, access to trade unions, and cultural rights (pp. 171-172, par. 37, 38; Yazarsız, 1993, pp. 171-172 Huddleston, 2013, p. ii). This demonstrates that the sending and receiving societies should work together to provide the required legal documents for migrants to stay in the host nation. Furthermore, as legal papers are obtained, the migrants' social welfare rights and benefits should not, by any means, be limited. This is shown in Dina's narratives wherein she mentioned her pension and health insurance by mentioning that she never had the chance of having incentives and health benefits in the Philippines and how she has only managed to receive it when she started working in Turkey. Dina's religious faith reverberates on her narratives as she expressed her gratefulness to God for blessing her with numerous social welfare benefits in the form of pension and health insurance in Turkey, which she did not obtain in the Philippines. When she was asked about her future plans to move to the Philippines, Dina disclosed that as much as she wants to, she won't be able to get a portion of her social welfare benefits unless she stays in Turkey. The majority of the other participants does not share the same experience with Dina, since the most of them are not Turkish citizens, which means that even though they are working

in Turkey, they are not eligible to apply for a monthly pension once they retire. While Lily is a Turkish citizen, her babysitting job does not grant her the eligibility to obtain retirement pension and healthcare. Such benefits are instead carried alongside with her husband via marriage documents. Back at Dina, when her husband passed away, she found it hard to process her documents because she fell short of the required years and specific requirements that the Turkish embassy is looking for. This type of situation is explained in Huddleston (2013) which states that: after three years, any adult family members are eligible to apply for short-term residence permits without the assistance of their sponsor. Special provisions safeguard families' residences in the event that their sponsor dies, however divorce procedures are limited to spouses of Turkish nationals. The primary disparity in rights is that reunited family members do not have the same right to job, self-employment, education, and training as their sponsor. (p.4). Dina's case was challenging, but for some kind of miracle, she had managed to convince the embassy by writing a letter to the designated office. According to her, there was only a slim chance of her obtaining a residence permit but then, she had managed to acquire some tips which eventually allowed her to obtain legal documents of stay. In Marie's case, it is evident that she is only waiting for the rewards and benefits in the form of pension and health care that were produced out of her patience and hard-work as she worked in Turkey for many years. Her dedication to stay despite of her strong sentiments against the country is noteworthy. These narratives show that there are indeed far greater benefits for migrants in Turkey as they exert their effort in their job and are finally able to gain access with the incentives that are

appropriate for them, especially when such migrants are Turkish citizen. Munck (2009) stated that social inclusion is an ongoing procedure (p. 16). This goes without saying that migrants are socially included in terms of the social welfare benefits that the government offers for their own native citizens. As long as the requirements are met, there will be no selectivity just because these migrants does not have Turkish blood running in their veins. It does not have a definite limitation as the Turkish government provides for them, in terms of social welfare, just as they do for their own Turkish people.

### **Economic dimension**

Calzado (2007) pointed out that the more Filipino families are relying on remittances from their OFW family members. As a result of such revenue coming into Filipino families, certain regional groups have resulted in a reduced rate of poverty (p 7.). This coincides with the study of Balgoa (2018) which mentioned that the rise in remittances from OFWs is what is now keeping the Philippine economy afloat in which, given these circumstances, it is apparent that overseas migration remains the sole choice for three out of every ten hardworking Filipinos seeking a better life (p. 1). This is reflected in Marie's narratives, in which she believes that the only reason why immigrant Filipinas stay in Turkey is for financial gains. Despite her disdain for the nation and its people, Marie is happy that she stayed in Turkey since she has reaped many advantages from her job, and despite the fact that she is very much perturbed in some aspects in the country, she is, surprisingly, very well integrated in her job. Perhaps the main reason why is that her employers are not Turkish. In line with this, Lani, on the other hand, had expressed how she was only concerned for the finances that she earns in Turkey-

- “I’m after the salary.” -- were her exact words when she had shared her sentiments. She had also expressed the exact same words numerous times during the interview. Lani’s employment integration is quite remarkable. She narrated how relaxing her job is, with only few chores and responsibilities. On top of that, she also has a relaxing and comfortable lodging under her employer’s house. As Lani showed her room, the researcher took notice of the luxurious furnitures, beautifully adorned walls, her wide and comfortable looking bed, and the huge windows that gave her the breathe taking view of the Bosphorus bridge. Moreover, Lani also talked about how relaxing her daily routine is, mentioning that their food comes from restaurants that serve them on a regular basis, her work schedule, even her exercise schedules. She highlights how she does not consider her work as something burdensome but rather relaxing and enjoyable. This goes to show how well-integrated Lani is in her job. She have been acclimatized in her work environment for she have been working in Turkey for several years now. Considering her great work condition, having a high salary is something that signifies how lucky she is with her job. In Rose's situation, however, despite the fact that her salary in Turkey is far beyond what she earned in the Philippines, she claims that it is very much insufficient for her. Rose did not struggle that much in terms of finances. According to her, her husband is there to shoulder their family’s basic needs and she does not have to worry too much. Though Rose is considered well integrated in the society especially with her work, her salary, however, impedes her satisfaction regarding her job. In Lily’s case, on the other hand, though she claims that her salary isn’t much prolific, she still considers it plentiful for

her and her child back at her home country whom she was supporting. Lily made sure to mention the Filipinas’ English speaking skills which offer them migrants an advantage in the job market. Dina, on the other hand, made very specific points regarding the stark difference between her white collar job in the Philippines and her domestic job in Turkey. Dina’s account proves Calzado’s (2007) statement in which it was written that savings and investments are given top priority in a household where fundamental necessities are already fulfilled, and only when there is a remittance surplus from an OFW family member (p. 7). In Dina’s case, she was able to support many of her family members with their education, and because her earnings are considered above average she was able to buy properties for her and for her family. Karla, on the other hand, had no trouble with her employment integration for she have been working under the business of a fellow Filipina. With all things considered, results found out that the need for financial leverage via overseas work is highly prevalent among Filipina migrants. Based on the narratives of the participants, this study concludes that the economic integration of Filipinas in Turkey via their employment demonstrates that Filipina migrants have been successfully integrated into Turkish society. This could also indicate that they wouldn’t have held on to staying in the country if their earnings are not sufficient enough for them and their families.

## CONCLUSION

Life beyond the plain wilderness is not always composed of milk and honey. There are times that life in the greener pastures could be gloomy, with sudden thunderclaps that catches people off-guard and brings them on their knees.

Either they do so in order to pray, to collect themselves, to gather their resolve, or a mix of everything in between. The experiences of Filipina migrants in Turkey are not always positive. Filipina migrants have lost and gained a lot as they embarked their journey towards Turkey, one of the many countries that is considered as a place of hope for them, a place where the brightest future is found for themselves and for the people that are on the backs of their heads as they strive to overcome their hardships and to stand on their own two feet, carrying the burdens and responsibilities that they have decided to carry once they stepped out of the Philippine soil. The narratives that were gathered in this research are inspirational and eye-opening stories that inform others about the migrants' life in Turkey, or abroad, in general. Amongst millions of Filipinos who are experiencing the same fate with the participants in the study, it is worth considering that the migration process and integration are full of challenges and life-lessons. This research is able to identify the many important points about the experiences of Filipina migrants in Turkey. First off, integration is not done overnight, especially in a country where English is not the spoken language, and the ways of life are entirely different. These did not, however, stop migrants to be integrated at least in their work environment. Moreover, costs have also been laid out, indicating labor, emotional, and financial costs. Money is found to be the main motivation that encourages migrants to stay. However, money is not easily found without so much of a hardwork outside of the Philippines, unlike what most people think. Results found that the main motivation why migrants move to Turkey, is mainly because of money. They have a strong drive to progress in life and so they try

their best to reach it by working overseas. The salary in the Philippines is extremely low for the same amount of work a person exerts in another country that offers a fair amount of wages and benefits. Other than that, migrants have made up their mind to leave Turkey after achieving their goals in life and after fulfilling their investments and savings. International migration support development in the Philippines in terms of remittances. The drawbacks of international migration, however, far outweigh the benefits, thus, with the brain and brawn drain in the Philippines, the country doesn't really have a concrete advantage if it keeps losing its high skilled workers. In Turkey, on the other hand, as migrants are being absorbed in the society, the most prominent and refined developmental space, where migrants are well integrated, is in the economic dimension. Some of them may not be very fluent in the Turkish language which impedes them from communicating with the people in the society, however, their work environment is very light and beneficial for them, and they have already adjusted well enough in their work. This could only mean that migrant integration is a remarkable success for Filipina migrants in Turkey who are in need of financial leverage in the country more than anything else. As they have attained their intentions by having a safe and secure job and work condition, and most importantly, by having a high salary, it can be assumed that the migrants are contented with their integration situation in Turkey. The international migration support foreign diplomatic relations in the Philippines and Turkey by the continuous coordination between two countries. The relationship of Filipina migrants to their Turkish host society has a very huge impact in the relationship between both

countries. As Filipina migrants are given rights, benefits, and protection in the country, it implies that there is no strain between the relations of these nations and that Turkey have been loyal to their LFIP law regardless of the undertaken type of migration. There are major advantage and disadvantages in the migration movement as a while. Filipina migrants in Turkey are found to be very resilient when they're dealing with their problems just so they could overcome the challenges in life and become the source of hope to those whom they have left behind in the Philippines. They could only hope for a better life on the other side of the greener pastures.

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