



NORWEGIAN
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The Challenge of Religious Pluralism and Integration of Immigrants in the Western Post-secularism

A Comparative Study of Immigrants Living in Oslo and Minnesota

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Abstract

In the recent decades, the issue of immigration and religion has become the most controversial topic in the political agendas of western world. The dramatic growth of human migration in the contemporary post-secularism has also transformed the religious, sociocultural, socioeconomics and sociopolitical landscape of the host countries. In addition, the arrival of new immigrants in western countries has created a pressure that generates the concept of multiculturalism, political liberalism and religious pluralism. These diversifications initiated the formation of policies for the integration of immigrants into the domestic society. The researcher has thus emphasized integration of immigrants in Oslo and Minnesota in order to answer the principal question of this project. In this project, a qualitative approach was used to investigate the effect of religion on integration of immigrants in these respective host communities. Religion has a significant impartation on academic, cultural, economic and sociopolitical integration immigrants. In the researcher's point of view, integration involves bilateral communications, mutual contributions and participations of the two parties, namely the immigrants and host society, in order to enhance accommodation, respect and tolerance in their midst.

Abbreviation

EU	European Union
U.S.A	United States of America
U.S	United States
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
UK	United Kingdom
MFIP	Minnesota Family Investment Program
RCA	Refugee Cash Assistance
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
VOLAGS	Local Volunteer Resettlement Agencies

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1. Introduction

This thesis argues the issue of religion, immigration and integration in the contemporary Western post-secularism. It mainly focuses on the integration of immigrants in Norway and the United States of America. It then compares the process of integration in these two respective countries in putting special emphasis on immigrants living in Oslo as well as Minnesota. In this introductory section, the researcher will thus give a brief description to introduce the main theme of the thesis and develop a reliable background for further discussions in the successive chapters.

1.1. A Brief Description of the Main Theme

The researcher aims to investigate the project entitled, *“The Challenge of Religious Pluralism and Integration of Immigrants in the Western Post-secularism: A Comparative Study of Immigrants Living in Oslo and Minnesota”*. This title encompasses few key statements such as religious pluralism, integration of immigrants and post-secularism. These leading and fundamental points will be briefly discussed individually in the following paragraphs in order to build a platform where a practical understanding will be developed concerning the main theme. This particular study has thus been selected in order to articulate the challenge and significance of religious pluralism in the process of effective integration in the host society.

1.2. Background of the Study

The issue of immigration and religiosity has been recently coincided in the Western post-secularism. This indicates that religion and immigration are correspondingly studied in the current scholarships. The contemporary researchers are thus recommending the coextensive studies of immigrants and their religion for effective integration in the host countries. Effective integration also needs joint contributions from the two parties, namely the immigrants and host societies. Cesari states on his webpage that “Integrating immigrants, i.e. allowing them to participate in the host society at the same level as natives, is an active, not a passive, process that involves two parties, the host society and the immigrants, working together to build a cohesive society” (Cesari 2013, pp.1). This portrays that effective integration is demanding mutual contribution of the immigrants and host society.

Effective integration has thus paid attention to the issue of religion due to the fact that immigrants are more religious than the Western societies. For instance, the survey conducted in 2011 in the twenty EU member states that immigrants are more religious than the native population of the host countries. The survey shows that “Overall immigrants pray more (30.02%) than native populations (21.86%) and attend religious services at least once a week.” However, the religiosity of some immigrants varies depending on the situations in host countries. This ensures that certain European countries demonstrate high level of immigrant religiosity than others. For example, countries such as Greece, Poland, Portugal, and the UK have exhibited high levels when it is compared with the Scandinavian and Eastern European countries (Csari 2013, pp.1-24).

The Scandinavian has been taken as a place where trust in political institutions as well as the role of the state is greatest in the contemporary globalization. The concept and the development of social welfare in the three Scandinavian countries, namely Norway, Sweden and Denmark, create self-understanding in the political framework. The Scandinavian welfare model has created social forces such as class compromise, gender issues, multiculturalism and the notion of pluralism. As stated on the webpage of Nordicum-Mediterraneum, the Danish-Norwegian novelist Alex Sandemose writes that “Globalisation, individualization and pluralisation, traits that marked the past decades in Scandinavia, have reduced this societal grip on people”. In his point of view, the presence of new immigrants, in the 1960s and 1970s, in the Scandinavian countries has caused the formation of new policies, and the concept of accommodation and cultural pluralism.

This depicts that the arrival of new immigrants in the Scandinavian countries created a pressure that resulted in societal promotion from homogeneity to multiculturalism and religious pluralism. Norway was for example regarded as a nation with homogenous society, culture and religion in the past. Nevertheless, the Norwegian society has recently been advanced from being cultural homogeneous, political conservatism and religious monism to multiculturalism, political liberalism and religious pluralism respectively. As the capital city of Norway, Oslo is considered as one of the metropolis cities in the Western Europe due to its diversified populations. Peoples from different cultural, ideological, philosophical, political and religious backgrounds are currently residing in the city. These diversifications initiated the formation of policies for integrating immigrants into the domestic society. This study will

thus compare and contrast the integration process of immigrants in the respective areas, namely Oslo and Minnesota

Recently, the arrival of new immigrants in the United States has introduced all kinds of pluralism into American society than ever before. These immigrants are varied the racial and ethical composition of the nation. This ensures that the enhancement of immigration has simultaneously increased the population of all racial and ethnic groups in the United States. In addition, the new immigrants are also crating diversity in the religious landscape of the country. This is the reason that the contemporary scholars put special emphasis on religion, racial and ethnicity when they conduct a research on integration of immigrants in the host countries (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000, pp. 3-7).

However, different scholars view differently the recent arrival of new immigrants in the United States. Some scholars have regarded the contemporary incidence of multiculturalism and religious pluralism of the American generation as a threat for its national unification, but others argue that as an opportunity for national capacity building and maximization of its innovative entrepreneurship as a nation (Folley and Hoge 2007, pp. 3-4). This indicates the reason that the issues of religion, immigration and integration become more sensitive and controversial in the contemporary social studies. As mentioned earlier, the current immigrants are more religious than the host communities. Folley and Hoge also describe that “the recent immigrants are more actively religious than other Americans.” According to the survey conducted in 1994, 41% of the new immigrants were attending religious services weekly when compared with 29% of nonimmigrant population in the United States (Folley and Hoge 2007, pp. 3-4).

In the United States, the population of immigrants varies from state to state. For instance, the state of Minnesota is highly dominated by immigrants recently than ever before. In this study, the researcher will thus emphasize on a comparative study of integration of immigrants living in Oslo-Norway and Minnesota of the USA. This ensures the significance of this general background for paraphrasing the main thoughts of this research and laying a solid foundation for further discussions that the researcher hope will contribute for tackling the problem in which this study has been intended for.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The ultimate purpose of this thesis is to articulate the significance of mutual integration for effective accommodation, inclusion and toleration. Religion also plays a pivotal role for the development of mutual understanding and respect in the process of integration. In addition, religion is significantly important to create actual understanding concerning immigrants' socio-capital (Furseth 2008, pp. 147-160). This thesis thus puts special emphasis on various issues such as migration, immigration, integration, and religious pluralism to tackle the problem of societal disintegration in the current globalization.

In globalization, integration is profoundly demanding for the sake of thriving communal life. This is the reason that Western countries are currently developing new paradigm for the incorporation of immigrants in their respective societies. Integration thus helps the immigrants to see the opportunities life in the future and feel at home in a new cultural context irrespective of their religious background.

However, different countries have different policies concerning integration. For instance, Norway has been using an "introduction program" to enable immigrants to incorporate into the framework of Norwegian legal system. As mentioned in the webpage of *International Organization for Migration*, the principal objective of introduction program is to facilitate the resettlement and integration of immigrants into Norwegian society. The program is also intended to empower immigrants through building their capacities in order that they may enhance self-confidence in the integration process. Furthermore, the program develops the level immigrants' awareness concerning Norwegian cultural context, life style and societal setting. It also increases awareness of municipal workers who engage in school activities, health centers and other governmental sectors of social services.

Likewise, the Minnesota Department of Human Service states on its webpage that USA uses an integration program by the name *Refugee Cash Assistance Program* for integrating immigrants into society. The program is normally lasted for eight months, but will be extended until five years depending upon immigrant situations. The primary intention of the program is to serve immigrants during the transition period of resettlement through providing economic support, health care, employment and other social services such as referrals to community service and information on home management, parenting skills, education, integration and transportation. Although the respective countries have been investing to

incorporate the immigrants, there are various problems that challenge the process of integration. This study will thus raise few questions regarding integration of immigrants and the challenge of religious pluralism to articulate ideas that will contribute for solving the main problem of this project in focusing on immigrants living in the respective cities, specifically Oslo and Minnesota.

1.4. Questions of the Study

1.4.1. General Question

This research seeks to solve the above problems through answering the following general question, “What is the practical impact of integration program and religion on immigrants’ long-term survival in the contemporary Western post-secularism? To answer this question, the researcher will also raise few specific inquiries that will contribute for the articulation of main ideas and central themes to arrive at a reasonable conclusion upon completion of the thesis.

1.4.2. Specific Questions

The following questions are developed from the preceding general question in order to articulate ideas in the whole parts of the research. These questions include:

- What is the connection between post-secularism, immigration and religion in the contemporary real life situation?
- What is the challenge of religious pluralism in the integration process?
- What is the significance of integration program on immigrants’ long term survival in the western countries, namely Oslo-Norway and Minnesota-USA?
- What is the difference between integration programs in Oslo and Minnesota?

1.5. Objectives and Limitations of the Study

1.5.1. Principal Objective

- ❖ To examine the significance of religious pluralism for effective integration of immigrants in the western post-secularism in giving special emphasis to the immigrants living in Oslo and Minnesota

1.5.2. Specific Objectives

The following particular objectives are derived from the main objective:

- To investigate the theoretical framework of post-secularism and examine its advantages and disadvantages in the contemporary globalization
- To describe and explain the theoretical aspects of migration, immigration, integration and religious pluralism in the Western post-secularism in focusing on Norwegian and American cultural contexts and societal settings
- To collect data and interpret its findings for the formation of practical understanding regarding integration of immigrants into host countries and articulate the contribution of religious pluralism in its process
- To address practical implications for the contemporary real life situation concerning integration and religious diversification depending on realistic interpretation driven from an analytical process of the research

1.6. Methodology

This thesis will be fashioned through gathering data, information and facts for the advancement new of knowledge in sketching a sort line concerning immigrants and their religions in the contemporary Western post-secularism. This ensures the significance of methodological approach for the completion of this research. It is obvious that researchers may use different type of methodologies while conducting a research in the academic circle. Therefore, as a researcher, the producer of this thesis prefers to use a qualitative approach. This approach involves a detailed description of specific situation using research tools such as interviews, surveys, and observations.

In this study, the researcher will focus on the challenge of religious pluralism in the process of immigrants' integration in order to acquire knowledge and achieve a better understanding of contemporary challenges regarding integration of immigrants in Oslo-Norway and Minnesota-USA. These respective areas are chosen in order to make the comparison in the course of assessment.

As mentioned earlier, the methodology of this research is based on qualitative approach. It mainly uses interviews to cultivate a depth knowledge concerning the leading theme of the research. The researcher aims to gather information from six to ten interviewees those who may work or affiliate with immigrants living in these two respective areas. The researcher will then develop guiding interview questions in considering the challenges of religious pluralism and integration of immigrants in Oslo and the state of Minnesota in the USA. Therefore, a qualitative approach will be used in focusing tools such as interviews, informal conversation and general observations for the development of logical organization of premises that will help to arrive at a reasonable conclusion.

1.7. Source of Materials

This study will depend on various materials and sources to ensure and confirm the credibility of the project. The investigation will thus base on primary as well as secondary sources. The primary source will include different interviews for interviewees at different levels.

The secondary source that the researcher will use includes books and other published materials such as articles, magazines and journals of socio-religious and immigration issues. Additionally, unpublished materials such as seminar papers, theses and dissertations will also be used in the project. Finally, few materials preserved in library's archives, public cultural centers will also be accessed as much as possible.

Some of the literatures that will be referred and used in the production of this project are mentioned in the following few paragraphs. These literatures are categorized into three sections depending on the main theme of the thesis. The first category deals with *secularism*. The book entitled, *Secularism, Religion and Multicultural Citizens*, is edited by Geoffrey Brahm Levey and Tariq Modood and published in 2009; and it focuses on western secularism and multiculturalism. William H. Swatos and Daniel V. A. Olson (2000) also describe the issue of secularism in the book entitled, *The Secularization Debate*. Karel Dobbelaere (2004) additionally examines various levels of secularization his book. These books, including few journals and articles, will have a significant contribution to develop a theoretical framework and explain secularism and its challenges in the western world.

The second classification deals with *religious pluralism*. Kevin J. Christiano, William H. Swatos and Peter Kivisto (2008) state the current impact of religion in sociocultural system in the book entitled, *Sociology of Religion: Contemporary Developments*. This book illustrates

religious challenges and changes that have been taking place in the United States since 1960s. In addition, Inger Furseth and Pål Repstad (2006) published a book by the title, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Religion: Classical and Contemporary Perspectives*. This book examines “sociological theories of religion”. It thus focuses on sociological theories of contemporary as well as classical religious life. This ensures that this book is one of the significant sources to be referred for the completion of this project and its successive use in the future.

In addition, Habermas (2006) articulates post-secular theory of religion in the public sphere. He rises various points regarding post-secular in this article entitled “*Religion in the Public Sphere*.” When the issue post-secularism is raised, it is advisable to raise the issue of globalization and religious pluralism. General speaking, both globalization and religious pluralism are the byproduct post-secularism and inseparably tied with it. The researcher will thus refer various books in order to acquire information in the area of global post-secularism and its influences on the western religious landscape. David W. Shenk, Daniel A. Dobrowski and Mark Juergensmeyer describe the roles and challenges of religions in the modern and secular state in their books respectively (Shenk 1995, Dobrowski 2001 and Juergensmeyer 2008). These literatures mark that these challenges have been taking place due to the intensifications of immigration in the midst of contemporary globalization.

The final classification of the literatures deals with *integration of immigrants*. Khalid Koser (2007) gives a short and precise description on *International Migration*. In this very short book, he highlights the significance of rational debates about global migration. Grete Brochmann (1996) and Niki Papageorgious (2011) focus also on migration European migration frameworks, immigration phenomena and integration policies in Europe. “The Immigrants’ Superpower” by Gerhard Helskong additionally develops a theory of comparison on Somali immigrants living in Minnesota and Norway. Solveig Lisa Schulze also evaluates Helskog’s theories in putting special emphasis on integration process of Somali immigrants in these two respective countries. The researcher will thus refer these literatures and other related sources from various libraries of educational institutions here in Norway and the United States. These institutions primarily include MF, University of Oslo and HiOA. Therefore, these literatures will exceedingly contribute for the development of theoretical explanation that will mark the significance and logical organization of the study.

1.8. General Overview of the Study

1.8.1. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will primarily benefit the current society in giving new enlightenment concerning the integration of immigrants and religious pluralism. The overwhelming wave of international migration ensures that the study of immigration and religion is highly demanding in the modern globalization. Therefore, this study will have a pivotal implications for faculty of social science in universities and public research centers that may apply the recommended approach derived from the results of this study. It will also benefit the academic institutions for training students better and referring it for further production of researches concerning immigration and religion.

Furthermore, governmental sectors, international immigration affairs, and local and international workers of non-governmental organizations will also be benefited from the results of this study. In addition, municipal workers will acquire knowledge from this study on how to help immigrants in the process of integration irrespective of their religious background. This study will also both prospective individuals and group researchers to discover critical areas in the process of social studies, especially international immigration and religious pluralism that were not determined in the past. Therefore, a new theory in studying integration of immigrants and their religions may be explored. Above all, this thesis will personally benefit the researcher himself to acquire more knowledge and maximize the scope of his understanding on this particular theme for further specialization and studies on the field.

1.8.2. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured into seven chapters. The first chapter deals with description of theme, background of the study, statement of the problem, questions of the study, objectives and limitations of the study, methodology of the study, and general overview of the thesis, which encompasses significance of the study and structure of chapters. Therefore this introductory chapter describes general ideas that will be discussed in the entire part of the research.

The second chapter presents the review of theoretical framework depending on published and unpublished literatures. Primarily, it focuses on Western post-secularism in putting emphasis on theory of Habermas. It then describes religion and immigration in aiming to illustrate the

interconnection between them. It will also examine integration of immigrants in the western countries in giving special emphasis on the development of its historical framework.

The third chapter focuses on the conceptual framework of Oslo-Norway and Minnesota-USA. It will primarily give an overview of religion and integration of immigrants in Oslo-Norway. It will also examine the historical context of immigration in Norway and the concept of integration in Norwegian context. It will then explain the concept of welfare state and the issue of religious pluralism in Norway. In addition, this chapter focuses on historical development of immigration and religious pluralism in the United States of America in putting special emphasis on conceptual framework of religion, immigration and integration in the state of Minnesota.

The fourth chapter will emphasize on research methodologies. It will then focus on strategic design of the research. It will also identify the population and sample size of the research that will significantly contribute for data collection. It will finally portray the process of data collection and analysis.

The fifth chapter examines data presentation and interpretation for sake of conducting a comparison depending on findings from these two particular cities, Oslo and Minnesota. In this chapter, the researcher will interpret and reflect on the information gathered from respondents to create a viable understanding for further discussions.

The sixth chapter focuses on discussion of findings to develop reliable premises to achieve a responsible conclusion and forward recommendations for the concerned bodies. Therefore, the final chapter is about conclusion and recommendations that were based upon the findings obtained from the preceding chapters.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introduction

A theory is “a coherent group of tested general propositions, commonly regarded as correct, that can be used as principles of explanation and prediction for a class of phenomena”. It is a set of ideas that explain how and why things have come to be existed in particular social institutions. Its aim is to create actual understanding and viable prediction. This shows the significance of theoretical explanations to conduct predictable academic and socio-religious researches. The contemporary socio-religious studies have different types of theories, such as rational choice, conflict and fundamentalist. For example, functionalism is the dominant theoretical perspective in of sociology of religion, which studies the origins of religion and its roles in a given society (Christiano 2008, pp. 35-36). This depicts the profound affiliations of religion and society in the history of human life.

In the contemporary postmodern era, there is a challenge of religious resurgence due to the fact that human migration has been frequently increased from time to time. The issue of migration and religion has thus become one of the most controversial topics in the west since 19th century. In the 1960s and 1970s, the wave of immigration created a dramatic pressure in Europe and the USA. Immigration and religion then becomes one of the significant issues in the field of social science because of its dynamic challenges. Furseth states, “Migration tends to change the status of women and men in society, family, and religion, and although immigrant women face many of the same challenges as immigrant men, they frequently face a unique set of problems” (Furseth 2006, p. 173). This confirms the challenges of immigration and religious pluralism in contemporary Western post-secularism.

2.2. Western Post-Secularism

Habermas (2006) describes in his article entitled *Religion in the Public Sphere* that post-secular focuses on a global resurgence of religion in the public space. In his point of view, post-secular encourages the idea of religious pluralism for effective and harmonious social interaction. Religious pluralism is thus demonstrating the unification of diversified ideologies of religions in the post-secular world. This issue of religious pluralism brings constitutional freedom of religion that solves political problems through processing the separation of church

and state. It then promotes the idea of religious privatization in the public sphere. This ensures that post-secularism theory brings the issue of separation of church and state, which declines the authority of religion in political and public sphere. In this section, this thesis will therefore discuss the conceptual meaning of secularism to lay a foundation for the explanation of post-secular framework. It then argues theory of post-secularism. It finally explains both challenges and advantages of post-secularism to develop theoretical framework for further discussions.

2.2.1. The Conceptual Meaning of Secularism

The term “secular” was emerged within religious sphere to mark the separation between the church and the world. Robinson (2015) states in his article, “The world has had strongly negative connotation at various points in Christian history, particularly during the Middle Ages”. Then various terminologies such as secularization, secularism and post-secularism have been developed over a period of time by different intellectuals. These intellectuals developed these terminologies to describe and clarify the concept of secular for the current modern generation. For instance, Karel Dobbeelaere focuses on “secularization” to designate the term “secular”. He then explains various dimensions of secularization, namely individual secularization, social secularization and organizational secularization. These dimensions have been discussed in detail in the book entitled, *Secularization: An Analysis at Three Levels* (Dobbeelaere 2004, pp. 17-21).

Secularism also refers to a sociopolitical opposition to religion. It thus signifies the concept that “the state or political authority should not be in the business of imposing or advancing or privileging a particular religion or religious belief or religion in general” (Brahm 2009, p. 4). This depicts the separation between religion and politics in the contemporary Westphalia of global secularism, which creates one of the most significant challenges and dynamic reassertions of religion in the public sphere. Secularism is thus presented as one of the pivotal elements in the western cultural formations and identity formulations. In addition, it focuses on arguments such as epistemological, civic and democratic assumptions in academic research (Sayyid 2009, pp. 186-188). These assumptions can enlighten the interconnection between western secularism and postmodernism generating a sort of understanding concerning the theory of post-secularism.

2.2.2. Theory of Post-Secularism

Habermas describes the development of constitutional state through natural reasoning. In his point of view, the notion of the constitutional state has brought new way of thinking and understanding which relies on natural reason rather than religious legitimization. It has also created a separation between church and state. This separation is occurred as a result of secularization. The constitutional state thus focuses on secularization and modernity, which confirm equality and freedom of all persons regardless of their religious background and doctrines. On the other hand, these equality and freedom open doors for religious dialogue and answer the question of religious pluralism (Habermas 2006, pp. 4-6). As the name indicates, religious pluralism is the co-existence of various religions in the public sphere. Religious pluralism also plays a significant role in reshaping the religious landscape of a given community (Swatos 2000, pp. 13-16). John L. Esposito additionally states that the pluralistic transformational power of globalization has been enhancing social interdependence through leading the global communities to share common factors such as culture, economy, politics and religion (Esposito 2008, pp. 3-6).

The interdependence of global communities becomes realistic when they respect one another and have a goal oriented dialogues in the course of serious catastrophes. David W. Shenk states that “we”, the global communities, should be interdependent in the time of global tragedies. He describes that this interdependence enhances relationship, responsibility, tolerance and wellbeing among the communities living together in a global village (1995: pp. 54-55). Therefore, religious dialogue will solve the challenge of religious pluralism.

Habermas also argues the role of religion in the political sphere. He states that churches and religious organizations have had tremendous impartations on the political process. For example, Martin Luther King protests against the political procedures of the United States of America on behalf of minorities and the marginal group of people in the society. Habermas also discusses the idea of Paul Weithman in describing that churches and religious associations may act in civil society to fulfill functional and impressive action for reformation and democracy (Habermas 2006, pp. 6-7). Wim Hofstee writes that democracy offers equal opportunity for the contemporary generation living in this era of post-secular (Hofstee 2013, p. 27). The contemporary generation should thus maintain and promote democracy through creating a favorable political environment in influencing the current system to create political liberalism.

Habermas also argues the standard of political liberalism that requires secular reasoning. The liberal state of secular reason thus emphasizes the community of faith in order to create a sort of equilibrium between religious ideologies and secular convictions (Habermas 2006, pp. 8-9). This equilibrium is formed when there is integration and interconnection between political matters and religious ideologies (Dombrowski 2001, p. 42). Therefore, the development of conceptual self-understanding is significantly demanding to connect religious convictions and political ideologies together.

Esposito also confirms that the significant impact of Enlightenment in focusing on its scientific advancement. Even though it was brought advanced scientific achievement, the era of the Enlightenment had been challenging the indigenous cultures and traditional religions in the Western world. However, it played a pivotal role for the emergence of post-secularism in which religious and political movements were developed (Esposito 2008, pp. 26-27). This implies that the current communities of faith should also need to maximize the arena of their horizon toward other religions, world views, modern secular science and political ideologies. This also ensures that the transformational power of Enlightenment creates a favorable atmosphere in which both secular and religious citizens to come together and enhance complementary learning process.

2.2.3. The Advantage of Post-Secular Theory

The emergence of secularism causes the manifestation of post-secular. Post-secularism has then playing key roles for the formation of social interconnection, religious pluralism, technological and cultural transformation in a global village (Shenk 1995, pp. 54-66). These points will be individually discussed in the proceeding paragraphs.

a. Social Interconnection

Habermas suggests the notion of societal interdependence when he states that “complementary learning process” is equally expected from religious as well as secular criticizes (Habermas 2006, p.16). Societal interdependence depicts the interconnection of communal life in a global village. The effect of this communal life builds relationship and responsibility among the communities living in the same village. It also secures community’s well-being through creating the awareness of tolerance among the religious institutions and promoting the notion of global religious pluralism (Shenk 1995, pp. 54-55).

b. Religious Pluralism

Religious pluralism is the unification of diversified ideologies of religions in the post-secular world. The issue of religious pluralism brings constitutional freedom of religion that solves the political problems. Habermas writes, “The constitutional freedom of religion is the appropriate political answer to the challenges of religious pluralism” (Habermas 2006, 4). Shenk also states that the idea of pluralism respects a human being as a dignified nature that should deserve freedom and right in the global village. The world becomes the same village because of the tremendous technological and scientific achievements in this post-secularism. The contemporary global communities are thus more privileged than previous generation because they have been benefited from the current technological innovations and advanced scientific communications (Shenk 1995, pp. 58-59).

c. Techno-cultural transformation

The technological advancement, which has been emerging in the current post-secularism, facilitates efficient transportations and effective communications for communities living in the globe. Post-secularism thus brings crucial changes that cause a turning point in the history of human life in connecting communities in the entire world through advanced technological system (Shenk 1995, pp. 65-66). At the same time, it also affects the entire culture of the world in causing transformation and urbanization (Shenk 1995, pp. 69-70). Habermas also points that Reformation and Enlightenment have brought transformation “in Western culture” (Habermas 2006, p. 13). Although all these promises ensure the theoretical advantages of post-secularism, it has also limitations and challenges in the public real life situation.

2.2.4. The Challenge of Post-Secular Theory

As mentioned earlier, post-secular has various challenges. Mark Juergensmeyer (2008) discusses few of these challenges in his book entitled, *Global rebellion: Religious challenges to the secular state, from Christian militias to al Qaeda*. These challenges include rejection and resistance, loss of faith and ideological completion. The following paragraphs will thus discuss these challenges respectively.

a. Rejection and Resistance

Change is inevitably occurred in this world regardless of one’s cultural context, geographical location, political conviction and religious background. However, it is either resisted or rejected when it happens. Juergensmeyer describes that the cultural change happened in a

modern as well as post-modernism was rejected by religious fundamentalists. He argues that the fundamentalists always stand against newly emerged cultures and ideologies. This is the reason that these religious fundamentalists oppose the ideologies and values of post-secular and its systems. Although the fundamentalists categorize themselves as anti-modernism, they themselves are part of the system in using modern technologies such as telecommunication, transportation and education (Juergensmeyer 2008, pp. 4-6). These fundamentalists are not willing to be challenged when they are engaged in a course of debates concerning the challenge of contemporary post-secularism because their main intention is to prevent their faith from being lost in the world.

b. The Loss of Faith

This challenge concerns the communities of faith that have highly been tied to the traditional values of their religion. In a secular culture, a society prioritizes a secular nationalism rather than an organized type of religious institution. This implies that national secularism forces religious based institutions to lose their authorities, powers and beliefs. For example, after the tremendous technological change of late 18th and 19th centuries, Christianity became less important and lost its influence in the public sphere. On the other hand, secular nationalism gained its popularity and triumphed over Christianity. Then the church was regarded as “the temple of reason” and Christianity became “civil religion”, especially after French and American Revolution (Juegernsmeyer 2008, pp. 12-15). The separation between communities of faith and secular nationalism creates an ideological difference that competes one another in the communal real life situation.

c. Ideological Competition

The religious communities and secular citizens have their own ideologies, which always are in competition. For instance, secular rationalism focuses on an individual within the present world. It also bases on unified factors such as culture, education and technology; whereas, religion bases on something beyond the present world at the expense of faith. These ideological competitions focus factors such as technological innovation, economic growth, educational advancement and political achievement. It also seems that there is a sort of competition between Christianity and national secularism regarding claiming patent right for the innovative formation of contemporary Western scientific achievement and advancement (Juegernsmeyer 2008, 17-26). All these challenges mark the seriousness of the issue of religion in the current post-secularism because religion itself is naturally inculcated in humanity in an inseparable way. Therefore, people travel with their own religious beliefs,

political ideologies, philosophical thinking and cultural values when they migrate across boundaries. This depicts the interconnection of religion and immigration in the current global economy.

2.3. Religion and Immigration

In the contemporary globalization, the issue of religion and immigration becomes more controversial than ever before. The issue of religion and immigration is inseparable because immigrants move with their gods. The immigrants are thus taking whenever they cross borders. This may affect the religious landscape of the sending and receiving countries (Conner 2014, p. 8). In this section, this thesis will thus discuss the issue of religion and immigration in the Western post-secularism in focusing primarily on the conception of religion and its theoretical meaning. It will then explain the theoretical framework of religion. It will also describe the theoretical framework of religious pluralism. It finally argues the interconnection of religion and immigration.

2.3.1. The Origin of Religion and Its Conceptual Meaning

The evolution of religion has connected with the origin and history of human beings. In the contemporary global economy, it is thus becoming one of the contentious themes in attracting the attentions of scholars, namely theologians, philosophers, historians, and social-anthropologists. These scholars focus on various dimensions of religion while studying religion as a field of social science. For instance, anthropologists emphasize its origin when they conduct a sort of scholarship and develop theories concerning religion. These theories may affect the type of definition they prefer to use for describing a particular religion. Fiona Bowie states, “Theories concerning the *origins* of religion preoccupied many nineteenth and early twentieth century thinkers, and affected the type of definition they favored” (Bowie 2006, p. 2).

Philosophers also define religion in terms of reason and evolution of human civilization. Then they reject the concept of traditional religion and the existence of supernatural powers. For example, Friedrich Nietzsche, a German philosopher, proclaimed the death of God. This proclamation shows a rejection of supernatural powers as well as the evolution of contemporary religions. Bowie points that “many of the founding fathers of European social science had been raised within the Christian or Jewish faiths, but had reacted against their

religious upbringing” (Bowie 2006, p. 3). This ensures the antagonistic ideas concerning the emergence of religion among the Enlightenment philosophers and intellectuals, which, on the other hand, confirms the existence of animism and primitive concept of religion.

From a theological point of view, the emergences of religion have been understood in relation to biblical account of creation and traditional concept of beliefs. For instance, the recent thought of contextual theology marks the validation of traditional religion. Bowie writes, “Roman Catholic missiologists and theologians involved in ‘inculturation’, for example, may examine African religions in order to discover the seeds of the gospel . . . and use these as an aid to conversion or with the intention of strengthening the faith of converts”. This reinforces the existence of traditional customs, doctrinal beliefs, sacred texts and the prospect of translation with a minimum possible adjustment (Bowie 2006, p. 5).

In a sociological perspective, religion is seen “as means of making symbolic statements about society”. Sociologists are thus more interested in reaffirming the functions of religion in a given social institution than finding its origins because “the *collective representations* of a society exist within and beyond an individual”. This depicts the projection of social values to create certain kind of rules that guide institutional beliefs in light of what is good and right (Bowie 2006, p. 15). Bowie then points that institutional belief includes religious principles, conception images, understanding and knowledge of language, and an awareness of systematic ideologies; and gives a meaningful connotation in the societal practical life situation (Bowie 2006, p. 19).

Bowie points that religion has various dimensions such as ritual or practical, doctrinal or philosophical, mystic or narrative, experimental or emotional, ethical or legal, organizational or social, material or artistic, and political and economic (Bowie 2006, pp. 21-22). Inger Furseth also states the integral dimension of religion, namely “religious belief, religious practice and religious experience”. She then points out that these dimensions may serve to identify and describe inters and intra religious tensions (Bowie 2006, pp. 20-26; Furseth 2006, pp. 24-28). This ensures that the definitions, categories and theories of the origins of religion have influenced what these scholars have investigated and how they have interpreted while conducting researches concerning the issue of immigration and religious pluralism in the contemporary western world.

2.3.2. Theoretical Explanation of Religion

As mentioned earlier, theory is an explanation of how and why things are existed in their original state. Its main intention is to create understandable framework though interpreting and explaining data, which are collected statistically though interviews and observations, to make viable prediction. This confirms that theories carry out interpretive frameworks. Sociologists use functionalist, conflict and rational choice theories in the study of religion (Christiano 2008, P. 35).

a. Functionalist theories

In the 1950s and 1970s functionalism was one the most leading theoretical perspectives in the sociology of religion. As a dominant theoretical approach, functionalism “explains the existence of social institutions such as religion in terms of the needs that the institutions would meet in society”. In the past, sociologists viewed and interpreted society as analogy of body organism in which all parts work together to achieve common goals; and understood religion as the glue that held society together (Christiano 2008, P. 35-36).

b. Conflict theories

As mentioned previously, functionalism focuses on the analogy of organic body structure as its fundamental metaphor; whereas, conflict theory emphasizes on the dynamic tension of physics that creates forces in opposition to one another. Conflict theory is originated from Victor Turner’s anthropological work, which centers on the theory of *social drama*. Christiano writes, “Social dramas are units of aharmonic processes that arise in conflict situations and represent the time axes of fields – in other words, people act out their disagreements” (Christiano 2008, p. 37).

c. Rational choice theory

This theory originates from the classical economic theory of Adam Smith and other figures of the 18th century of Scottish Enlightenment. It centers a view of human being as a rational actor to make choices in calculating cost-benefit analysis. It occasionally refers to Latin term *homo economicus*, which focuses on theoretical orientation of religious choice making. This is a form of decision-making process that incorporates spiritual, marital, material and vocational needs in human life. Rational choice theory also uses emotional decision making in its model because religious decision making process encompasses various aspects of human life (Christiano 2008, Pp. 3941). This ensures that rational choice theory incorporates

philosophical, physical, spiritual and emotional aspects in religious decision making process. This model, therefore, is significantly important to make decision in contemporary pluralistic religious worldview.

2.3.3. The Theoretical Explanation of Western Religious Pluralism

In the current globalization, there is acutely aware of a pluralistic view of culture and religion within midst. The emergence of religious pluralism creates the concept of social pluralism in the western world. McGrath points that it has a common place to say that we live in a pluralist society. Pluralism embraces the diversities of cultures, religions and lifestyles that should be accepted and appreciated (McGrath 2001, p. 534). In McGrath point of view, the issues of religious pluralism were emerged during 1960s and 1970s, and brought paradigm shift in western world (McGrath 2001, p. 545). For example, Christiano states that the issue of religion has become one of the broad focuses in the United States America. He then points that “Americans are the most religious people in the face of the earth” (Christiano 2008, PP. 75-85). This creates new religious worldviews, which promote the idea of accommodation, inclusion and toleration for immediate communal complementation.

In the past, religious institutions had focused on their differences rather than their commonalties. For instance, Christianity perceived others religious beliefs and practices as a threat. However, the relation of Christians to other religious traditions has currently been assumed as an opportunity because it creates the emerging of multiculturalism and religious pluralism in the western public sphere (McGrath 2001, p. 544). Christiano describes that the United States had formerly based on Judeo-Christian tradition but the theory of secularism changed its religious landscape (Christiano 2008, P. 75). This ensures that the issue of religious pluralism becomes a contentious point in the western world due to the influx of migration.

2.3.4. The Interrelation of Religion and Immigration

Furseth examines the interconnection of immigration and religions in the western multiculturalism. For instance, the U.S. has a long history of studying immigrants and their religions. Furseth then observes that the issue of immigration and religion is interrelated with ethnicity, family and traditions. She also paraphrases Lloyd Warner and Will Herberg’s analytical investigations, which emphasize the transformative power of religion on ethnic immigrants living in the United States (Furseth 2006, p. 171).

According to Furseth, the 1960s and 1970s have seen as a dramatic wave of immigration in the USA and Europe. This significantly changes the ethno-religious landscapes of the western world. As result, Islam became the largest minority religion in several European countries and the third largest religion in the United States in the late 20th century. This creates the “tensions between religious identity, secularization, and privatization rose to the surface across Europe, especially related to the role of Islam”. It then brings the new immigrant religions on the table of western scholars for discussion. This confirms that how the role of immigrant religions is becoming one of the controversial issues in the western multiculturalism (Furseth 2006, pp. 171-175).

Charles Hirschman describes the role of religious in the process of immigrant adaptations in the USA. This marks the relationship between religion and immigration. This depicts that the tendency of post 1965s immigration has brought a paradigm shift and a new religious diversity to the U.S. For instance, the issue of mosques and religious temples becomes one of the most controversial points in some major cities of the States. Hirschman writes, “New immigrants are also bringing new forms of Christianity and Judaism that have shaped the content and the language of services in many existing churches and synagogues” (Hirschman 2003, p. 1-2). This depicts the role of communication in the immigrants’ real life situations in the new land.

Communication is a device through which the challenges of immigrants can be solved. This ensures the significant role of communication to tackle the problems of international migration. In the absence of effective communication the immigrants may face difficulties such as traumatization and psychological problems. Hirschman describes, “Immigrants become strangers in a new land with the loss of familiar sounds, sights, and smells. The expectations of customary behavior, hearing one’s native language, and support from family and friends can no longer be taken for granted”. This ensures the necessity of acculturation, assimilation and integration of immigrants in the foreign contexts. Hirschman points that the process of acculturation and socialization take long period of times for immigrants who arrived in the United States as an adult. This confirms that assimilation requires multigenerational processes and demand education and childhood socialization in the new cultural, social and religious contexts (Hirschman 2003, pp. 5-6).

Hirschman additionally depicts the significance of religious practices and the social organizations such as churches, synagogues, and temples because they assist new immigrants

in meeting their material needs. For example, upon arrival in a new social contexts “immigrants need to find housing and employment, enroll their children in schools, learn (or improve) their language skills, and begin to create a ‘new’ social life”. This confirms that religious organizations are one of the most essential sources of provision for tackling the practical problems faced by immigrants (Hirschman 2003, p. 7). Hirschman conducts his investigation in focusing the interrelation of religion and international immigration in putting especial emphasis on the United States.

Dustmann also describes the relationship between religion and immigration in Europe. According to him, “For most European countries, large scale immigration is a more recent phenomenon than for” the USA. Dustmann designates that “*Immigration*” to Europe has a long history, but increased significantly in the late 20th century. Particularly, Western European countries, such as Germany, faced a dramatic immigration crisis in the aftermath of World War II (Dustmann 2012, pp. 4-7).

In addition, Triandafyllidou briefly outlines that ethnic heterogeneity and multiculturalism of the immigrant population is reflected in terms of integration levels in the host society. She also describes that social integration and religious pluralism is a challenging matter for the population of immigrants in the host country because issues such as integration, religious freedom and cultural contingency of immigrants have taken place under “a set of principles and precondition”. She finally suggested that multiculturalism and religious pluralism should be integrated rather than assimilation (Triandafyllidou 2006, pp.120-135).

To sum up, thorough investigation and close understanding of the interrelation between religion and immigration will serve as an aid to solve a problem related to the challenges integration in the West. All the theoretical explanations, developed in the preceding paragraphs, will contribute to lay a foundation for further discussions concerning immigrants and their religions in the contemporary western multiculturalism. Therefore, these explanations will also have a significant contribution for the following theoretical elaborations of immigration and integration in the current western post-secularism.

2.4. Immigration and Integration in the West

Recently, the issue of integration of immigrant populations becomes a core point in the study of social science, particularly in the discipline of sociology, anthropology, law and history. The scholars of international migration focus on social, economic and political integration of

immigrants because these factors profoundly affect “the magnitude and type of future migration flows, the domestic economy of the host country, and the sociopolitical stability in the receiving society”. The issue of integration has thus become controversial and attracted the attention of social intellectuals those who are working in the context of regional economic and political interstation of governments, such as the European Union (EU) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Rich 2010, p. 59). This marks the place of integration of immigrants in the contemporary regional socioeconomics and international politics.

In this section, this thesis will thus discuss various points concerning immigration and integration in the following different subsections. It primarily describes the historical framework of migration and its conceptual meaning to pave a line of understanding and develop hypothesis for further discussions. It also argues the phenomenon of immigration in Europe as well as in the United States of America. It then examines integration of immigrants and its challenges in the West. Finally, it discusses the impact of religion in the process of integration.

2.4.1. The Historical Framework of Migration

Migration is a concept that associates with the origin, movement and expansion of mankind. It has also a strong linkage with the development of human cultures and civilizations. This depicts that the phenomenon of migration and the origin of human being is an inseparable point in the demographic composition of the world. Khalid Koser describes that,

The history of migration begins with the origins of mankind in the Rift Valley in Africa, from where between about 1.5 million and 5000 BC Homo erectus and Homo sapiens spread initially into Europe and later into other continents. In the ancient world, Greek colonization and Roman expansion depended on migration, and outside Europe significant movements were also associated with the Mesopotamian, Inca, Indus, and Zhou empires. Other significant migrations in early history include that of the Vikings and of the Crusaders to the Holy Land (Koser 2007, pp. 1-2).

In the contemporary globalization, the issue of migration has also become more intense than ever before. Migration thus denotes the internal and external movement of goods, services and people. Papageogios states that people move internally from rural to urban due to economic problems. These people are thus moving with the aim of incapacitating their economic constraints and securing better life (Papageogios 2011, pp. 278-280).

Papageogios points that a huge number of people cross borders with the intention of settlement in other countries due to persecution because of their origin, religion, and ethnicity, political or ideological conversion. This confirms the complex nature of immigration and its multidimensional phenomena in the contemporary Western countries (Papageogios 2011, pp. 278-280). Of these western countries, this study focuses on the phenomena of immigration in the U.S and Europe in the following few subtopics in order to develop contextual and theoretical foundations for the collection of data from the respective research fields.

2.4.2. The Phenomenon of Immigration in Europe

Europe has continuously been challenged by the waves of migration due to various factors such as “demographic and climatic changes, commerce, wars, conquests and subsequent establishment of nations, states and empires”. These factors create considerable paradigm shifts in transforming Europe as a pole of attraction for immigrants, which is characterized by the flow of manpower from certain developed European countries, the flow of inter-European population from less industrially developed countries, and the flux of African and Asian immigrants to Europe (Papageogios 2011, pp. 280-281).

Grete Brochmann also articulates that immigration is a recent phenomenon in the history of modern Europe. According to Tomas Hammer, the history of migration in Europe is divided in to four phases (Brochmann 1996, pp. 11-12). The first phase created a huge flow of overseas emigration and continued up until World War I. This period was characterized by uncontrolled international travel, economic liberalism, flow of merchandize, and unlimited work and residence permits in Europe.

The second phase (1914-1945), was categorized as an introduction for the development of new regulation and international control. It affected national labor forces because it created economic depression with severe unemployment. Then, the third phase began just after World War II and resulted in the formation of liberal regulation policy in the Western Europe. In the aftermath of the war, Western European countries demanded desperately a huge number of labor forces for national reconstruction. The emergence of the cold war and process of decolonization created a positive spirit of immigration in Europe during this period of times.

The fourth phase was signified by the metaphor of “immigration stop” of the early 1970s. It was also characterized by the formation of new restrict immigration policy across all immigrant receiving countries in Europe. The restriction policies continued and reinforced in

1980s and 1990s. All these phases confirm that immigration control is a recent phenomenon in the modern Europe.

2.4.3. The Phenomenon of Immigration in the USA

The phenomenon of immigration flow has also created new paradigm and introduced all kinds of diversities into American society. These diversities include culture, ethnic, literature, language, race, religion and so on. These diversifications also challenged the American churches because the new immigrants would like to have their own congregations. Therefore, thousands of ethnic congregations are currently planted in the United States. This confirms that American culture is highly challenged and changed some extent due to the phenomenon of migration (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000, P. 3).

Rose states that approximately 1,000,000 immigrants enter the United States every year. For instance, the 1990 census showed that the number of foreign-born persons has grown in 33% when compared with the results of census in 1980. These immigrants come to the States from the entire parties of the world (Rose 2000, Pp. 3-4). This indicates the impact of ethnic and racial composition in the United States. Immigration thus increases the number of population of the host county due to shifts in immigrant origins. For example, the enhancement of Latino and Asia-Pacific origin populations creates dramatic change in the US in 1980s and 1990s. Therefore, immigration plays a pivotal role in increasing the size of population and creating ethnic and racial diversities.

In addition, immigration creates religious pluralism. For instance, the new immigrants change the religious landscape of the United States through creating religious pluralism. Rose states, “Even though significant numbers of new immigrants are Christian, they are expressing their Christianity in languages, customs, and independent churches that are barely recognizable, and often controversial, for European-ancestry Catholics and Protestants”. Approximately there are about 3,500 Spanish Catholic parishes and 7,000 Hispanic/Latino Protestant congregations, 2,017 Korean Christian Churches and 700 Chines Protestant Churches in the United States. It is also estimated that there are about 1,000 mosques and Islamic centers, 2,000 Buddhist temples and mediation centers, and 400 Hindu temples in the US (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000, P. 4).

Furseth also examines, “In the United States there is a long tradition of studying immigrants and religion”. This study aims to maintain the culture, language and identity of immigrants in

the States. This maintenance of identity is also intended to help the children of immigrants from identity crisis in public sphere. This ensures the rationale behind the development of theoretical dialogue, which focuses on changing the paradigm of assimilation (Furseth 2006, pp. 171-175). Thus, integration is highly preferred than assimilation in the contemporary Western post-secularism.

2.4.4. Integration of Immigrants in the West

In the past, assimilation had been applied in the process of immigrants' settlement in the Western countries. Integration has then become a popular phenomenon for effective settlement of immigrants in a new cultural setting. In this section, integration will thus be discussed in terms of its conceptual meaning, significance and challenge respectively.

a. The conceptual meaning of integration

Integration is the process in which the new immigrants are adjusting themselves with the new cultures, languages and circumstances for the improvement of their socioeconomic position in the host country (Connor 2014, p. 70). In addition, Papageogios describes that integration of immigrants in the host societies is “a dynamic and flexible procedure with multiple dimensions and two main recipients: the immigrants and the host country, official and an official bodies”. According to him, integration deals with physical as well as sociocultural settlement across a new boarder (Papageogios 2011, p. 296).

Murphy also states, “Integration is a contested concept, with some commentators arguing that the idea of integration is predicated on a rejection of diversity by migrant receiving societies”. He then points that the rise of integration has corresponded with the crises of multiculturalism in Europe. This confirms that “the meaning, scope and implication of integration remain controversial” in Western multicultural societies (Murphy 2013, p. 1).

The integration of immigrants into the Western societies has thus triggered a broad discussion in the recent years. Before 1970s, immigrants were only favored for labor market in the Western world. As mentioned earlier, immigrants were significantly contributed for the reconstruction of European countries in the aftermath of World War II. These European countries then developed positive attitude toward immigration and the condition of aliens (Papageogios 2011, p. 285). However, integration of immigrants is currently becoming more controversial and attracting the attention of Western countries such as Europe, the United States, Canada and Australia.

b. The significance of integration

Generally speaking, integration is the process that helps immigrants to settle and feel at home in their new destinations. It is essential to bridge the gap between immigrants and the entire population in the host country. Thus immigrants can easily become familiar with considerable social and demographic effects of the new land. This ensures that integration is significantly important because it helps immigrants to overcome the economic problems that they may face in the host countries. It finally helps the immigrants to feel at home through bridging the gap between themselves and host societies. In general, it is significant to solve any kind of problem created as a result of phenomena such as discrimination, racism and xenophobia. This ensures that “European societies come to terms with the permanent presence of aliens and undertake responsibility for [the integration immigrants] in the host countries” (Papageogious 2011, pp. 285-286).

c. The challenge of integration

Although the issue of migration had a long history in the expansion of humankind, integration of immigrants has been remaining as a challenging factor for the contemporary generation. Integration encompasses economic, social, cultural and political inclusion of immigrants in a new environment (Singh 2016; Carrasco 2015; Daenzer, and Van Aerschot 2014; Halli and Driedger (1999). This ensures that the challenges of integration center in the area of these macro factors. This is the reason that native communities perceive integration immigrants as a treat and attempt to resist the inclusion of immigrants in their societal systems. Therefore, integration is the process that has been challenging immigrants as well as hosting communities. For instance, the hosting country’s integration leadership is challenged while mediating and moderating the gap between native and immigrant populations. In addition, immigrant population gives priorities for their cultures, languages and religious experiences while engaging in the integration process. This shows the roles and impacts of religion in the course of integration.

2.4.5. The Impact of Religion in the Process of Integration

Religion has a significant role in the process of immigrant integration in a new societal setting. For instance, religious institutions can offer spiritual, psychological, physical and emotional refuge for immigrants in providing them “an ethnic community that reminds them

of home and makes them feel comfortable in the midst of all the chaos happening in their lives”. This confirms that religion can help immigrants as a bridge in the process of integrating in a new society. Therefore, religious organizations such as churches, mosques, temples and worship centers can provide immigrants opportunities, which encompass social interactions, learning new languages, understanding new cultures, obtaining job referrals, finding job and learning on how to be effective in a new working environment (Connor 2014, pp.71-72).

The above premises portray the functions of religion in the process of integration of immigrants. Although religion helps immigrants to adapt in the new macroeconomic atmosphere, there might be differences in the way it can serve and hinder the process of integration in various contexts. Connor states that “some scholars describe religion as a bridge for incorporation into American society, while it is a barrier for integrating into European society”. In his point of view, religion has a bridging effect for immigrant integration in the United States of America because the country has had a long history of immigration (Connor 2014, p.72). This also confirms that religion operates differently among immigrants in different places depending on the kind integrations, namely psychological, emotional, economic and social, they are engaged in (Connor 2014, pp.74-75). In general, this confirms that religion has both positive and negative impartations in the process of integration.

2.4.6. Summary

This theoretical framework has numerous roles for writing a comprehensive research based academic thesis. For instance, it provides a context that justifies where the research fits in the study. It also enables the researcher to acquire knowledge from the preceding theories and maximize the scope of his understanding concerning the main theme of the study. It then feels the gap between the previous theories and existing work. It also helps the researcher to focus on reliable resources to achieve the intended goals through answering questions and solving problems. These reliable literatures can thus connect the concepts that were developed in the past with the current data. In general, this theoretical framework will help the researcher to build conceptual contexts for these respective cities, namely Oslo and Minnesota, depending on previous studies.

3. Conceptual Framework

3.1. Introduction

In this section, the researcher will develop a conceptual framework in order to create contextualized descriptions of the respective research fields. Therefore the following core points will be explained in accordance with their contexts. For example, the overview of religion will be given in connection with the integration of immigrants in the Norwegian contexts. In addition, the historical context of immigration and the concept of integration in Norway will also be articulated in order to lay a platform for further discussion in the successive chapters. The issue of religious pluralism and integration of immigrants in Oslo-Norway will also be argued in this section.

In addition, this section will emphasize the state of Minnesota which is highly populated with the population of immigrants in the USA. It will primarily develop the historical framework of immigration and religious pluralism of the United States in giving special emphasis on immigrants living in Minnesota. In general, it will investigate the concept of integration immigrants in the American context. It then argues the issue of immigrants' integration in Minnesota. Therefore, this conceptual framework has a significant roles for building a foundation for effective data collection, critical analysis, viable interpretation and reliable evaluation depending on immigrants living in Minnesota and Oslo-Norway.

3.2. Oslo-Norway

3.2.1. Overviews of Religion and Immigrants Integration in Oslo-Norway

As mentioned on the website, the population of Norway is approximately five million. Almost 75% of the populations live along the coast and about 12% of the total population has an immigrant background. However, the recent Statistics has showed that the immigrant population grows up to 16.3 % of the population in Norway. Although people with an immigrant background were resident in most Norwegian cities and all municipalities, the largest population of immigrants has settled in Oslo. As stated on Statistics Norway, the population of immigrants is tremendously increased in Oslo due to the influx of migration and enhancement of the Norwegian-born to immigrant parents. This confirms that Oslo is highly populated with immigrants than other cities in Norway.

In the past Norway has a state religion. The Norwegian Lutheran Church was the largest National Church in Norway. However, there has no longer any state religion in the country since 2012. The country is also exercising complete liberalism and religious freedom in the contemporary postmodernism. This ensures that everyone can practice his or her own religion freely in public. This also confirms that every person is free to choose the religion he or she wishes to follow. On the other hand, this depicts that Norwegian population is becoming more secular and liberal than ever before. Religion thus becomes less important in communal real life situation than in the past.

Nevertheless, the Norwegian Church has still the largest one in comparison with other religious institutions in Norway. About 80% of the Norwegian population is a member of this church. Although the church has huge members, Christianity does not play a significant role in communities' real life situations. For instance, the statistics indicate that only 12% of Norwegian population goes to church once in a month and 37% of the population has never gone to the church. However, the church is still significantly important to most populations because they are traditionally affiliated with various ceremonies such as baptism, confirmations, weddings and funerals, and celebration of charismas (sumfunnskunnskap.no).

As mentioned on the website, the Norwegian government is currently treating all religious and spiritual communities equally. For instance, "Religious and spiritual communities can receive economic support from the state government and municipality. Official religions and spiritual communities receive just as much funding for each of their members as the church of Norway". This ensures the emergency of religious pluralism which portrays the inclusion of immigrants within Norwegian population.

3.2.2. Historical Context of Immigration in Norway

Europe has historically linked to inward as well as outward migrations. These migrations have shaped "the continent's social fabric, its historical narratives and national identities, its political economies, labour markets and welfare system". The major migration flux to the United States or the metropolitan centers of Western Europe, particularly from Ireland, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and Southern Europe, happened in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These migration fluxes were caused due to economic devastation and political operation. Afterward, color immigration policies and patterns continued in a few European countries such as UK, Portugal, France and Belgium. The collapse of Ottoman and

Austro-Hungarian Empires, in the Central and South-Eastern Europe, also caused severe immigration flux which mostly affected the Western part of Europe in the early twentieth century (Papadopoulos 2011, pp.23-24).

The contemporary history of immigration has started in Europe in the aftermath of World War II. The ideology of East and West developed in Europe and caused territorial division and massive population movement. Eastern Europe then faced challenges in work schemes, education systems and experience exchanging programs with other Western European communist countries from the late 1940s until the early 1990s. However, Western European countries were experienced a profound transformational development right after the war. This created a huge flow of migration up until 1973. The Western European countries used the wave as an opportunity for national reconstruction, maximizing innovative labor forces, implementing gender equality in the workplace and promoting the notion of decolonization (Papadopoulos 2011, p. 24, Geddes 2003, p. 17).

As one of the Scandinavian countries in Europe, Norway has also a long history of immigration. It is also mentioned on the webpage of Statistics Norway that Norwegian immigration has historically begun from Viking Age, the period from last eighth century to mid eleventh century. In this period, the practice of Royal Intermarriages was introduced in European aristocracies elsewhere. Therefore, “Norwegian kings used to seek their wives from other Royal houses, in order to foster foreign ties with other countries”. In addition, trade, education, workforces and innovation played significant roles for attracting migrants to Norway. This ensures the significance of integration in the Norwegian context.

3.2.3. The Concept of Integration and Norwegian Welfare State

The concept of integration is currently attracting the attention of intellectuals who are engaged in sociopolitical discussions. “Integration is a concept that is taken for granted in much political debate. It is rarely discussed or contested, but instead simply adapted as a taken-for-granted concept which useful in the management of migrant populations” (Anthias and Pajnik 2014, p. 3). This ensures that the issue of integration comes to the table of discussions just for the case of controlling migration and helping immigrants to adapt in a new sociocultural context.

Within European context, it entails parallel concepts such as strict migration control, secularization discourse and policy. Generally speaking, the contemporary discussions within

the EU members is about to “oscillate between a concern with restricting migration and with the integration of migrants and minorities”. The inclusion of immigrants within European context may additionally create cultural and religious pluralism. This is the reason that few Europeans are skeptical to accept the concept of integration immigrants. Nevertheless, “the current European integration-migration management system . . . approaches integration and citizens issues in terms of migrants’ assimilation to the dominant social and cultural national context” (Anthias and Pajnik 2014, p. 3). In Anthias and Pajnik’s point of views, the concept of integration is developed from European documentations and extended beyond migrants’ national background. It also protects migrants’ cultural and religious values from being dominated by the European cultural frameworks. The European integration-migration management thus focuses on the concept of integration to create sustainable multiculturalism in the midst of contemporary global generation.

As a concept, integration encompasses global issues such as sexual, social, political, legal, gender and economic. This shows the interconnection of integration with globalization and transnationalism dialogues. Athias and Pajnik write, “Despite increasing globalization and transnationalism, integration discourse ‘nationalizes’ and ethicizes citizenship, marking populations in terms of national and ethnic characteristics and privileging those who are constructed as inside given national and ethnic boundaries” (Anthias and Pajnik 2014, p. 3). This confirms the significant role of integration in the contemporary global context.

Different countries develop and imply different mechanisms of societal integration in the midst of dynamic context. For instance, Norwegian government developed welfare state for societal rehabilitation and economic integration. This ensures that democratic countries give priority for social services than any other agendas in a political circle. This is the reason that Norwegian government developed the concept of welfare state to serve its own population and secure the sustainability of generation. Why social welfare in Norway?

The concept of welfare state was established in the aftermath World War II but its basic characteristics were largely put in practice and implemented in the late 1960s. Then the issue of “immigration to Norway was close to insignificant”. It was however developed for the reason of domestic community rehabilitation and construction of comprehensive social system. The model was thus formed with the intension of social integration on the base of democracy, modernization and citizenship. The social integration project was not only built nation but also the capacity of the community members in creating awareness concerning

securing territorial expansion, central government institution and, cultural and identity development (Brochmann and Grødem 2013, p. 59).

What is the connection between early development of welfare state and the establishment of current immigration policy? Brochmann and Grødem (2013) state that “Though migration was not a concern for early welfare architects, the welfare model definitely played a part within an immigration policy was put in place in the mid-1970s” (Brochmann and Grødem 2013, p. 60). According to Brochmann and Grødem, the immigration policy needs to be approached in two ways: first, it is significant to control the entrance of immigrants rather than employing favoritism on distribution of social welfare between domestic citizens and newcomers. Second, it is also important to help new immigrants integrating both in working environment and social life. Thus the new immigrants feel at home when their social and financial needs are met.

Brochmann and Grødem (2013) then articulate that Norwegian welfare model will be a pole of attraction for potential immigration, which signifies various opportunities such economic growth, labor force enhancement, competences enlargement and greater flexibility in the labor market. This ensures that immigration may result in national capacity building if the receiving countries use it as an opportunity to exploit immigrants’ innovative experiences for the maximization of competitive entrepreneurship. As Brochmann and Grødem (2013) articulate, it is advisable to realize this opportunity and facilitate the inclusion of new immigrants in productive labor force to a maximum extent than the contemporary figure. The presence of new immigrant in the Norwegian context creates the notion of complementary learning and the accommodation of religious diversifications.

3.2.4. The Issue of Religious Pluralism in Oslo-Norway

a. The Historical Framework of Nordic Religion

Denmark, Norway and Sweden are historically affiliated for various reasons such as geographical location, political alliance, cultural inheritance and religious affiliation. For instance, these countries are religiously “grouped together as Protestant nations in having state churches that were the product of the Lutheran strand of the Reformation” (Bruce 1999, p. 92). What are the rationale behind religious affiliation of Sweden, Norway and Denmark?

Bruce states that “From 1536 to 1849, the evangelical Lutheran Church was the state church because it was the church of the royal family. When the power of the monarchy was revised

with the democratic constitution of 1849, the status of the Lutheran Church was subtly altered by being rested now on people”. Although there was a democratic extension in which people were free to withdraw from state church, 90 % of the population remained in membership until the end of the 20th century (Bruce 1999, p. 92).

Bruce also writes, “From 1523 to 1814 Norway was a Danish colony. It was the granted home rule and joined in a union with its neighbor Sweden, which lasted until 1905s”. Bruce then points that 99% of Norwegian population was ethnically homogenous and economically very poor until the mid-19th century. Since then Norway has been working hard and exporting raw materials which leads the nation to achieve its contemporary success of being one of the richest countries in the world. In addition, Norway experienced various religious revivals that helped the Norwegian Lutheran Church to maximize its horizon and manage diversities through accommodating minorities (Bruce 1999, p. 92).

In comparison with the United States, the Nordic nations persisted homogenous because they had very little immigration flux. Nevertheless, the issue of religious pluralism and revival movements was easily accommodated within the Norwegian national churches than in Britain in the late 19th century. The role of religion in the public sphere then became popular in the 20th century. The notion of religious freedom was therefore becoming the most controversial topic since then and widely established as part of what it meant to be a modern nation (Bruce 1999, pp. 92-95). Generally speaking, the issue of religious, cultural and moral pluralism has been coming more controversial and fascinating points since 1997 in Norway.

b. The Contemporary Dialogue on Religious Pluralism

Geir Skeie (2016) also state, the issue of religious pluralism has been coming more debatable in Norway since 1997. For instance, Norwegian religious education has then emphasized upon issues of impartiality in focusing various concepts such as “neutral, objective, descriptive, critical and pluralistic”. This created a paradigm shift in Norwegian religious education system and abolished the formal practice of Lutheran religious confession in the academic circle. Then a new religious education curriculum was developed in focusing on religion, philosophies of life and ethics that shall normally be attended by all students in same classroom.

Skeie continues stating that,

Religion, Philosophy of life and Ethics is an ordinary school subject intended to bring all pupils together. The Norwegian Education Act demands that the teaching of this subject be objective, critical and pluralistic. This implies that the subject be taught impartially and based on facts, and that the different world religious and philosophies of life shall be presented with respect. . . . This involves treating all religious and philosophies of life in an academic and professional manner based on the distinctive characteristics and diversity of all religions (Skeie 2016. p. 3).

In Skeie's point of view, the intension of designing Religion, Philosophies of Life and Ethics, as an ordinary subject, is to promote mutual understanding, respect and tolerance among students with different religious worldviews and philosophies of life. It also helps for preserving cultural heritage, identity formation, and for maximization of understanding on the contemporary issue of religious pluralism (Skeie 2016. pp. 3-5). This ensures that issue religious pluralism is significantly important in the agenda of the Norwegian governmental sectors and non-governmental organizations. What is thus the challenge of religious pluralism and integration of immigrants living in the current metropolitan cities, namely Oslo and Minnesota?

3.3. Minnesota-USA

3.3.1. Historical Framework of US Religious Pluralism

Bruce states that the Census of Religious Institutions conducted in 1906 confirms the emergence of religious pluralism in the United States of America. The idea of religious pluralism was formerly created negative connotation among Christian commentators because they taught that it would affect the numerical proportion churches membership in the long-range. The researchers continued their assessment in 1920s and 1930s despite the fact that there was strong resistance on the churches side. They finally reached the conclusion that religious monopoly created problem but not religious pluralism. Bruce suggests that "studies of the relationship between pluralism and religious vitality in the USA have found either no connection or the negative effect" (Bruce 1999, pp. 59-60). This ensures that the issue of religious pluralism creates ideological change and brings dramatic shift on American religious landscape.

Although the notion of religious pluralism had emerged in 1906, it has created a profound impact in the United States since the 1960s. This ensures the distinctive role of religious pluralism in the American history and it's exceedingly interconnection with the preceding migrations to the content. It is also interconnected with the history of migration to this

continent. What is then the significance of pluralism in the contemporary American diversifications? Weiner points that pluralism promoted the idea of toleration, inclusion, new expectation and participatory platform of communication for practical implementation of societal agendas in the United States. Pluralism was also used as an alternative to the popular image of '*melting pot*' in the early 1910s. Weiner paraphrases Kallen's argument, "America would be strengthened by its citizens' retaining their ethnic and cultural differences rather than melting them away. . . . Pluralism's advocates have interpreted it not merely as a descriptive term for religious or cultural variety, by describing the proper normative stance one should adopt toward the fact of diversity". He then points that pluralism helps as medium of instruction when it leads religious sects to active engagement, involvement and participation on the issue of their religions. It finally bridges the differences between religious institutions through creating accommodation, mutual understanding, respect and tolerance (Weiner 2014, pp. 183-185). This ensures that the issue of religious pluralism is historically interconnected with the issue of international immigration.

3.3.2. Historical Framework of U.S. Immigration

Philip Martin states that "United States is a nation of immigrants". In the United States, immigrants are viewed as a group of people working for national interest and enrichment. Martin then explains that the role of immigration and integration in a global context and its challenges for the U.S. He also recommends that Americans should revise and evaluate the evolution of immigration and its historical framework (Martin 2004, pp. 51-52).

Immigration to the United States encompasses various waves. The first wave of immigration to the U. S. was begun by English immigrants in 1820. These immigrants moved to the States due to the reason for religious persecution, political instability and economic fluctuation. They faced massive challenges such starvation, disease and death along their way to the destination land. They should also work a certain period of times to compensate of the cost that was paid for their passage upon arrival in the U.S. (Martin 2004, p. 62).

The second-wave of immigration had taken place between 1820 and 1860, with almost 5,000,000 arrivals. Martin writes, "Peasants displaced from agriculture in Europe and artisans made jobless by the industrial revolution were eager to depart, and steamship and railroad companies were seeking passengers". About 40% of the second-wave immigrants were from Ireland. The Irish immigrants were moved to the States due to starvation and poverty in their

respective homeland. They moved with their religion, precisely the Roman Catholicism, and transformed the American religious landscape (Martin 2004, p. 62).

The third-wave of immigration occurred between 1880 and 1914 with arrival from southern and eastern Europe, and Asia, mainly China and Japan. However, the flow of immigration continued from the Great Depression of 1930s until post-World War II of 1950s in a new paradigm. The fourth-wave of immigration “began arriving in the United States after 1965, when the preference system changed from privileging certain national origins to favoring would be immigrants with family ties to the United States or foreigners that U.S. employers wanted to hire”. The flow of immigrants then shifted from Europe to Latin America and Asia (Martin 2004, pp. 62-63). All these premises confirm the significance of integration for effective immigrants’ settlement in a new societal context.

3.3.3. The Concept of U.S. Immigrants Integration

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the United States used methods such as melting pot, cauldron or crumble for the incorporation of immigrants into society in which the immigrants forced to be Americanized. This creates a tension between the immigrant’s desire to keep alive the culture and language they left behind in their homeland and the need to adapt the new environment and societal system. The notion of accommodation of immigrants in American society was then developed over the 20th century. In Martin’s point of view, accommodation encompasses integration and pluralism (Martin 2004, pp. 74-75).

In 1984, a new paradigm was emerged by historian John Hingham. He then proposed new way accommodation system, namely pluralistic integration. Martin states, “pluralistic integration asserts that there is a common U.S. culture to which all individuals have access while also sustaining minorities’ efforts to preserve and enhance their own integrity”. He then points that integration has gone throughout processes and challenges in the history of American. In the past, American leaders openly articulated “racial and ethnic hostility”. This is the reason Martin says that “Integration can be regarded as a glass that is half-full or half-empty” (Martin 2004, pp. 75-76).

3.3.4. The Conceptual Framework of Integration of Immigrants in Minnesota

a. The History of Minnesota

The State of Minnesota has historically been designated with its tributaries, which “flow south to the Gulf of Mexico, east to the Atlantic Ocean and north to Hudson Bay”. The streaming of its waters to these divisions, its strategic geographical locations and its favorable environmental conditions makes Minnesota a pole of attraction for people all over the world. Minnesota had been gone throughout various challenges such as racial discrimination, tribal conflict and battle fields until the eve of the American Civil War, which was included this part of the region into the Statehood.

As stated on the webpage of Explore Minnesota, the state of Minnesota became thirty-second of state of the American Union in 1858. Human beings have started to live in this region since the *last ice age*. The first inhabitants were Dakota and Oljibwe Indians. The history of United States tells that many Indians and other immigrants are still living in Minnesota. Although people with different backgrounds are currently living in Minnesota, history also asserts that the prime expeditors and settlers were Europeans, namely French, Great Britain, Germany and Scandinavians. These European nations were settled in Minnesota in a period between 1600s and 1860s. The European immigrants came to Minnesota with their religion, Christendom.

b. Religious Pluralism in Minnesota

The forms and stories of European immigration into the United States of America in the 19th century are well discussed by the historians. These historians have portrayed the geography, demography and religiosity of European immigrants in America. Many of European immigrants established religious institutions, particularly churches. These churches include, for instance, German Mennonites, German Lutherans, Danish Lutherans and Swedish Covenanters (Krabbendam 2008, pp. 135-155). This ensures the formation of interdomination and diversification in the Christian circle.

In addition, globalization creates intensive emigrational fluxes, which enhances the magnitude of contemporary immigrants and initiates religious pluralism in Minnesota. This has brought profound changes in Minnesota’s religious landscape. As it is stated on the webpage of *Religious Diversity in Minnesota Initiative*, “The visibility and pace of these changes have generated enormous tensions in civic life, as workplaces, public spaces, schoolrooms, hospitals, courtrooms contained with new realities and unexamined assumptions”. Generally

speaking, the immigration of Asian, Ethiopian and Somali communities have brought changes that transform the views of scholars such as theologians, social intellectuals and Politian in Minnesota's public sphere.

c. The History of Immigration in Minnesota

As mentioned earlier, French explorers were navigated to Minnesota in 1600s. Then merchants and company-owners followed them. In the early 1830s, huge number of immigrants, particularly from eastern U.S., Canada, and northern Europe, came to Minnesota to “*work lumbering and farming*”. Subsequently, large number of immigrants moved to Minnesota from Scandinavian countries, namely Norway, Sweden and Denmark, in the 1900s. As cities were expanded and new innovations grew up, people migrated to Minnesota from Finland, Yugoslavia, Italy and Germany.

In addition, it is stated on the websites of the State of Minnesota that few African immigrants had come to Minnesota in the aftermath of Civil War to live and work in cities. In the 1920s, huge number of Mexican immigrants came to the state. Then immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries such as the Caribbean, and Center and South American moved to the state. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, immigrants came to Minnesota from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in the 1980s. This ensures that Minnesota has been attracting immigrants for a long period of time due its suitable working atmosphere, which possibly facilitates for effective integration.

d. Integration in Minnesota

According to online publication of *Education Department*, integration involves various issues such as academic, culture, economic, socio-politics, racial and religious. The concept of integration has developed in Minnesota's academic circle from the 1960s into 1990s. Nowadays, the issue socioeconomic integration is one of controversial points in the USA's public sphere. For instance, the *Immigration and Integration Initiative* has been working a tremendous work with business organization, public sector and civil society across cities in the United States to enhance the integration of immigrants in focusing on their socioeconomic contributions. Minneapolis is involved in this initiative dialogue. Additionally, Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) is working with Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) to provide money to refugees who are ineligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for a certain period of time after arrival in the state. Solveig Schulze states that the duration of this program is up to eight months, but can be extended up until five years depending on the

refugee's special needs. This is a brief conceptual frame work of integration of immigrants in the state of Minnesota, but its contemporary situation will be discussed in detail in the following chapters in comparison with Oslo's integration programs depending on data that will be collected from these two respective areas.

3.4. Summary

The development of theoretical and conceptual frameworks in these chapters, chapter 2 and 3, will help the researcher in giving direction for finding variables in previous researches and comparing them with the contemporary ones. These frameworks are thus developed to build up foundations for the intended focus areas in the United States and Norway. This thesis will specifically focus on immigrants living in Minnesota and Oslo through putting special emphasis on comparing the integration of immigrants and the role of religion in the process. These theoretical and conceptual frameworks will help the researcher acquiring informed knowledge and facilitating a precondition for designing preferable method for data collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation that will contribute further discussion of the immigrants' real life situation in the respective contexts.

4. Methodology of the Research

4.1. Introduction

In this section, the researcher will focus on methodologies in order to connect theories cited in the preceding literatures and data collected from the respective areas of the research field. Here the researcher will thus examine points such as strategic design of the research, population and sampling, tools and data collections, processing and data analysis and reflection on field works.

4.2. Strategic Design of the Research

This research is designed to use a qualitative approach in aiming to obtain information through semi-structured interviews and personal observations. The researcher will thus aim to conduct interviews that will depend on 6-10 respondents from the respective areas, Oslo and Minnesota. This ensures that the researcher will conduct a comparative study based on data collected and its analytical comparison.

This comparative study is designed because data will be collected from two different contexts. These contexts should be separately studied to acquire knowledge on how to prepare guiding questions for the interviews. The structure of the interviews will be described depending on its respective context. This confirms that this approach will help the researcher to be more flexible and see the research topic from different perspectives. For instance, the researcher approaches and analyzes the interviews in terms of respondents' point of views and in light of research's questions.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this study intends to answer four specific questions. The first two questions highlight issues such as post-secularism, religious pluralism and immigration. These questions will thus need interviewees' general descriptions and personal reflections from their own experiences and real life situations; whereas, the last two questions emphasize the issue of integration in Oslo and Minnesota. Here information is obtained through interviewing governmental workers and religious leaders who have been working and acquiring experiences in the area of integration of immigrants. These religious leaders will also be interviewed in order to obtain information regarding the challenge religious pluralism and evaluate the role religion in the process of integration of immigrants in the western world. In addition, information published on webpages, regarding contemporary integration, will also be accessed to relate it with observations drawn from some informal interviews gathered at

the time of the research. This ensures that qualitative approach is significantly important to acquire the intended results upon completion of this research.

This justifies that this comparative study is needed to focus specific areas in Norway and the USA and give reasonable examples for the simplicity of data collection process. The researcher is thus aiming to gather information from respondents living in Oslo and Minnesota. The researcher will then process the gathered information as primary sources for the articulation of the entire project in relating them with the theoretical frameworks developed the preceding chapters.

The above premises ensure the credibility and validity of this method of qualitative approach for strategic planning and effective implementation of the project. This research will thus be openly evaluated by other readers due to the fact that transparent description of methodology is indicated in its formation. Generally speaking, the research findings that will be obtained from this study help the researcher as well as the potential readers to draw their own conclusions. Therefore, to arrive at sound and dependable conclusion, this study encompasses techniques such as population and sampling, data collection and analysis, and reflection on field work.

4.3. Population and Sampling

Population and sampling are the primary tools that should be used to obtain the required information in the process of strategic research method. This research is thus aimed to involve at least three respondents as a sample size from each of the two contexts. However the sample size will not exceed five respondents in these contexts. These respondents may vary in age, profession and marital status. Yet they should have affiliations to the issue of religion or immigration in order to share their experiences in detail.

The sample is thus selected to involve religious leaders, government officials and immigrants in contacting them in person or through contemporary advanced social networks. In doing so, the researcher will contact individuals who are appropriate for the population and sampling description. The researcher will also refer religious and governmental institutions' documents such strategic plans, policy and procedural manuals, and collections to acquire viable and relevant information. Furthermore, concerned individuals will be interviewed for effective comparison of immigrants living in these two different contexts.

4.4. Tools and Data Collection

As mentioned earlier, the researcher has been aiming to use a qualitative approach in the study. This ensures that the researcher himself is the main tool in the process of data collection. For semi-structured interviews in the state of Minnesota in the USA, friends will be assigned to collect data for minimization of travelling cost to the State and due to the refusal of Visas to enter the States. This is applied whenever the respondents are not willing to give information on social networks or inconvenient because of their busiest schedules. Interviews will thus be conducted depending on respondents' preferences and availabilities to have enough time and acquire more information related to the study topic. Whenever audio information is provide, transcription will be carried out shortly after the interviews.

The interviews are aimed to cover a set of subtopics that were formulated from the main topic of the project. The researcher is thus designed guiding questions that will help him to articulate conversations with the respondents. The researcher can also be flexible in preparing and changing the style of guide questions depending on respondents' experiences and professions in order that they may articulate their ideas freely during the conversations. However, the content of these questions should be the same for gathering relevant and balanced information from the respondents.

The researcher is currently living in Norway. This ensures that data collection process in Oslo will be easier than in Minnesota. Here the researcher will have a chance of contacting the respondents in person.

In general, a qualitative approach that will be used in this data collection process involves participatory system in which researcher's personal observations and information from different respondents are implied. It uses various instruments in the fieldwork. These instruments include the researcher himself, interview questions, respondents and few representative friends who will assist the researcher to collect data in the USA.

4.5. The Process of Data of Analysis

A qualitative approach demands a continual analysis. The researcher thus prefers to start analyzing the collected data while in the field. As mentioned earlier, information will be gathered from the respondents through semi-structured interviews. Because these interviews are collected from two different fields, the composed information needs systematic identification for logical organization and critical analysis, which will significantly contribute

for effective comparison of the findings. The researcher will thus categorize the interviews into various points in coding them according to the responses from the interviewees and handling them separately as per as their contexts.

The issue of religious pluralism and integration of immigrants is controversial due to its complex dimensions and dynamic natures. It needs thus critical investigation and analysis when studied in the contemporary real life situation. This ensures that conducting a sort of research on the issue of religious pluralism and integration of immigrants has its own challenges.

Some of these challenges will be presented and talked in chapter 5, in taking into account the relationship religious pluralism and immigration, the role of religion in the process of immigrants' integration and the impact of integration in the host country. Although these challenges may create a sort of variation, this study will achieve its predestined aim in examining and evaluating the process of integration in comparing the obtained findings from these respective contexts. The researcher will thus aim to demonstrate and present the results of the complete study in a thematic presentation in comparing the perspective of respondents.

4.6. Reflections on the Fieldwork

4.6.1. Oslo-Norway

The sample for the field work in Oslo, Norway, consisted of three respondents in various ages. These respondents have been working on different capacities at different organizations in the capital. The researcher was thus contacted them in person at their offices or convenient places for the effective interaction. The researcher was also made all arrangements prior to arrive to the location where the interviews were held to complete the work within a given time frame. Therefore, the collected information was then analyzed in terms its relevant literatures in the preceding chapters.

The process of data collection has its own challenges. The researcher has thus faced various challenges in the field work while data was collected. These challenges include the inconvenience of interviewees, the unwillingness of Norwegian government agencies to partaking in the research, financial limitations and limited experience of the researcher in the western world. In spite of these limitations, it is the conviction of the researcher that evaluations could be made in order to arrive at demandable conclusions based on the data collected.

4.6.2. Minnesota-USA

The researcher intended to accomplish the field work at Minnesota in two-to-three, whereof the first week of the month was intended for the researcher to represent a contact person in order to facilitate interviews. The researcher also planned the way he is going to explain the interviewees the principal intention of the project to acquire viable, relevant and contextual information from them.

Nonetheless the researcher was denied USA Visa to go to the state and continue the field works in person. This was the toughest and principal challenge that the researcher encountered concerning field work in Minnesota. The researcher then consulted the adviser, Dr. Gunnar Heiene, and designed new scenario to pursue collecting data from there. The adviser agreed on appointing a contact person who was willingly accepted the proposal of collecting data on behalf of the researcher. The appointed person was very qualified in the area of research and data collection because he was studied Software Engineering in the USA.

Then the represented person contacted respondents from religious and public institutions. He then had informal meetings with them to arrange time further interviews. The respondents were provided guiding questions for brain storming concerning the contemporary challenges of religious pluralism and integration of immigrants. Therefore, the contact person assisted the researcher in finding dependable respondents in Minnesota who are appropriate with the sample criteria of the research.

In general, this methodology has significantly contributed for the completion of this project in giving a direction and designing a strategic pathway. It would also play a pivotal role in bridging and connecting theoretical ideas with data that were collected from fields. In addition, it helped the researcher to be critical and analytical in the course interpreting and presenting the collected data. Moreover, it showed the researcher the way he should go to identify and select approaching mechanisms which would guide to choose viable sample size and arrive at reliable conclusion.

5. Data Presentation and Interpretation

5.1. Introduction

In this section, the researcher will give analytical presentations depending on the findings obtained from the respondents. This section has thus been categorized into two subtopics in which the following points will be separately presented in accordance with their respective contexts. These points include presentation of the respondents, the challenge of religious pluralism and integration process, the impact of religion on the process of integration, the significance of integration program, and the comparison between integration programs of Minnesota and Oslo.

5.2. Oslo-Norway

5.2.1. Presentation of Respondents

Three respondents were participated in this project from Norway. These respondents were interviewed in accordance with their respective contexts in order to acquire information for the completion of the project. These respondents have been educated in the different field of studies and working on different capacities at public as well private organizations. Then they responded from their informed knowledge, experiences and observations. For example, Rev. Dessalegn Mengesha shared the researcher from his religious experiences and practical observations. He is currently working in the Norwegian Lutheran Church as ordained priest. Mr. Ashenafi D. Irana is also studying Biotechnology and Applied Chemistry at one of the Universities in Oslo located at Ås. He was also serving as a teacher in Norwegian public school for more than three years. Finally, the researcher interviewed Mr. Duba Jarso who is currently studying Master in Economics at University of Oslo. Meanwhile, he is working as a part-time employee in the private organization located in Oslo. All these interviewees had contributed a lot from their experiences, observations and up-to-date knowledge.

5.2.2. The Challenge of Religious Pluralism and Integration

The emerging growth of multiculturalism in the face of new immigration waves has been challenged the public understanding of religious diversity. In the contemporary globalization, the issue of religious diversification and immigration thus becomes the most controversial topic. However, different interviewees were differently responded to this controversial theme. For example, Rev. Mengesha described the issue of religion and migration in focusing both on its opportunity and challenge. In Mengesha's point of view, immigrants move with their

religious values, respect and tolerance. Even they want to withhold their own cultural values and religious practices in a new land where they reside as immigrants. Yet religion creates a sort of tension between immigrants and host societies due to the radicalization of extremists in the contemporary globalism.

Duba Jarso also stated that “Globalization is usually associated with secularism as one possible explanation for its existence. When religious divisions narrowed and tolerance emerged the global community started to slowly grow to being one village. After a while globalization did create losers and winners.” In his point of view, the interconnection of globalism, religious pluralism and secularism has its own rewards and drawbacks. For example, there are various advantages such as employment opportunities, free trade movement and industrialization that could be seen as fruits of global post-secularism. On the other hand, globalism creates an atmospheric situation, in which less manpower is needed in the manufacturing firms, the intensification of terrorism that has rooted in religious radicalism, the huge influx of immigration that has hastened the host communities and frustrated political leaders. Therefore, Jarso pointed that “The challenge of religion and immigration in this global crisis is immense”.

In addition, Ashenafi D. Irana examined the interconnection of religion and immigration in the contemporary globalization. In these last two years, the issue of religion and immigration has become more controversial than ever before throughout the entire world. For instance, European countries have experienced tremendous influx of immigrants. When these immigrants came into the host countries, they brought their religious values, tradition and ideologies with themselves. The issue of burqa, hjab, mosques and terrorism can be, for example, mentioned as challenges connected to the religion of immigrants. This causes the formation boarder blocking strategies in Europe and wall-building program in the USA. Furthermore, countries, such as the Great Britain, regarded the flow immigrants into their boarders as a treat for the economic growth (Irana).

5.2.3. The Impact of Religion on the Integration of Immigrants in Oslo

Every society has its own religion. This depicts the inculcation of religion in the history of human being. In history, there was no time where people lived without religion. Therefore, people could not live without religion because it is deeply rooted in them and inseparably united with their lives. This is the reason that people move with their religion when they are

migrated to a new land. Immigrants are thus challenged because of their religion in the process of integrating into the host country. These challenges could be seen in terms of culture, economy, education and socio-politics. These challenges will be presented in the following few paragraphs in line with the integration process of immigrants in Oslo-Norway.

a. The Challenge of religion on cultural integration

Rev. Mengesha responded that immigrants have faced various challenges when they entered into a new culture due to their religions. These challenges might lead them “either to isolation or” to integration. In his point view, immigrants are isolated when they lose their hope due to the challenges that they face in the new cultural context. Then they are always living in their own island rather than adapting and integrating into the new cultural context. Whereas, the other groups of immigrants are doing all the best, probably they pay a cost, in order to effectively adapt a new cultural context. Yet it is obvious that languages, lifestyles, educational background can be seen as barriers that hinder the process of immigrants integration into the host society (Mengesha). Irana also states that culture encompasses various components such as styles of dressing, language, food and etc. When immigrants move to a host country, they take these cultural values with themselves. This ensures that religion and culture are interdependent and interchangeable influencing one another. As mentioned earlier, Muslim brothers have taken their religio-cultural values with themselves and came to Europe. These values create a sort of conflict within the existing values of the host community. In addition, as a Christian immigrant in Norway, Irana observed that Norwegians are very slow to communicate with strangers. However, the Norwegian youngsters are very interested in having parties together where they enjoy with some kinds of alcoholic drinks and secular music in which he is not interested in because his religious values. Here one understands that religio-cultural impacts may affect the process of immigrants’ integration in the host community. In addition, Jarso articulated the dual impact of religion in the cultural integration. For instance, religious overlapping can play a crucial role in the process of cultural integration. Jarso clearly explained the impact of religion as follow,

Norway is a majority Christian country. The impact of religion in cultural integration of immigrant in Oslo Norway depends on whether the religions of immigrants align with this. For instance in Oslo Norway to go out and partying on weekends is an accepted culture that young Norwegians take part in. But religion of Islam doesn’t encourage young Muslim immigrant to engage in this activities. In the other hand young Christian immigrant since they have Christianity as a common denominator with Norwegian youngsters, it is more likely that they would adopt this culture than their Muslim fellow immigrant.

In addition, Jarso articulated the impact of religion on cultural integration in focusing the role of gender. He stated, “In Norway there is and has been relative equality between male and female. This is shaped partly by values of Christianity in this society. But the way Muslim immigrant would look at the role of female is very different from this. This would impact the cultural integration negatively”. This ensures that the challenge of religion for cultural integration may result in the economic disintegration of immigrant women.

b. The challenge of religion on economic integration

Mengesha responded to this point in focusing on work ethics. He states that “Different religion has different ways of approach to work ethics As far as my context is concerned, I do not see a problem in this area. People whom I know in my religious context are hardworking people who value the ethics of work very high. One of the problems even in our fellowship is less participation because of work load”.

Nevertheless, Irana responded that some immigrants value their own religions experiences than integration in the public sphere. This is the reason that they segregate themselves from being integrating into the host society. It is obvious that, in Norway, it is easy to find job through networks and references. When immigrants are disconnecting themselves from social networks in order to observe of their own religious values and traditions, they miss the opportunity of participating in the job market. Therefore, religion may create economic disintegration rather than integration if it is not handled properly in the course of immigrants’ incorporation into the host community (Irana).

On the other hand, Jorso argued that,

Having an equal job opportunity between immigrants and native citizen is an important factor in facilitating economic integration. Because of language inefficacy and poor educational background, among other factors, immigrant society in general does not have equal job opportunity with the native in Oslo Norway. They mainly work low paying jobs. Since religion is considered private matter in Norway, it is not common to inquire about each other’s religion at work place. But employers could deduce this information from dressing and similar observation. Therefore I would argue that religion has negative impact on economic integration if the immigrant religion is different from Christianity.

c. The challenge of religion on educational integration

Rev. Mengesha mentioned that language plays a significant role in educational integration of immigrants in the new land. First generation immigrants have thus faced various challenges regarding educational integration because the capacity of adult people to learn new language is very low when compared with children. Mengesha pointed that “The role of religion in this

case is not very much, as far as my religious context is concerned. Christianity encourages actually effectiveness in this area (Mengesha).”

Irena also articulated the role of language for the effective engagement of immigrant students in the Norwegian school system. As a teacher in the Norwegian secondary school, he pointed that the children immigrants are challenged in the process of integrating and competing with the Norwegian children who speak native language. He viewed that these challenges were originated to some extent from their religious background and low language skills.

In addition, Jarso also articulated that religion has an indirect impact on immigrants’ academic integration. He continued saying that,

Teaching of native or official language of the host country to immigrants and providing an opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue is part of educational integration. Religion doesn’t have direct impact in this process. But it could have indirect impact. Being an immigrant of Christian religion may provide a better interaction with other Norwegian and thereby increase a chance to practice the Norwegian language. Having an opportunity to be helped for instance through provision of reference material in an immigrants mother tongue, could facilitate narrowing of educational gap between immigrant and natives. In Oslo Norway there are cases where this is facilitated by religious institutions. Therefore religion has indirect impact in education integration.

d. The challenge of religion on social integration:

Rev. Mengesha pointed that religion is seen as a solid foundation for a certain community. For example, the Oromo Christian Community that has been gathering at Nordberg Kirke, in Oslo, are enjoyed and used their religious meeting for practicing social values of getting together. However, this creates “a huge negative impact on integration in that respective society”. Mengesha continued responding that,

“People prefer to attend social gatherings where they feel at home, where they can hear each other and explain themselves with their own language. It is the place where they share their common social and political values/questions with one another. That leads to the creation of a community with in a community. They meet with people of another culture only when they are forced (for example because of school or work.) but their daily life will be affected more by the social interaction they have with each-other (Mangasha).”

To integrate into the public sphere, immigrants should engage in various social activities as going tours and participating in clubs. As mentioned earlier, immigrants are in locked with their cultural norms and religious values rather integrating into host society. It is advisable for immigrants to have Norwegian friends in order to be included in entire societal system. The

Norwegians should also accommodate the immigrants irrespective of their religious and ideological differences between them (Irana).

In addition, Jarso pointed that the role of social interaction in the process of social integration. He also said the neighborhood relationship may serve as a catalyst for social interaction. However, this kind of relationship is very challenging in Norway due to residential segregation between the immigrants and host society. Jarso explained,

In Oslo Norway one could argue there is a residential segregation into immigrant area and native areas. For instance Grønland area of the city is mainly dominated by Muslim Somali immigrant. Such segregation as a result of religion differences is a sign that religion has a negative impact on social integration. On the other hand, in Oslo, immigrants with protestant religion have a chance to worship with native Norwegians at different churches. This facilitates social interaction and thereby social integration.

e. The challenge of religion on political integration:

Rev. Mengesha responded that immigrants are more engaged in and interested to their own sociopolitical issues than the one in their respective host countries. For instance, he mentioned that Christian immigrants are highly concerned about the politics of their homeland than Norwegian politics. He specifically says that “I have not seen many people in the Oromo church who are very much concerned about the politics of Norway. [For Oromo Christians the biggest] political issue is the politics of the Oromo people” back home (Mengesha).

Irana also articulated that the involvement of Christian immigrants is very limited due to their past religious misconception of politics. In addition, Christian immigrants are getting rid of it because some of the political issues which have been seen as human rights are contradicting with the Christian values and biblical ethics. Although Christians are obliged to defend their ethical values, they have also the responsibility of penetrating into darkness and shine upon it though correcting wrong actions. Therefore, Irana encourages the involvement of Christian immigrants into politics to the extent correcting wrong and doing good for the benefit of communal life.

Jarso saw the political integration of immigrants from two angles: one, from the participation of immigrations in political process of a country and second, from the policy of host country's government in facilitating different types of integration. In his argument, Jarso explained the difference between the Muslim and Christian immigrants.

Jarso then articulated the challenge of religion in the process of political integration of immigrant in the host land as follow,

It is more difficult for a Muslim immigrant to run and win a city council position in Oslo City than it is for a Christian immigrant. Because of this reality those immigrant who consider their religion as a minority religion could isolate themselves from taking part in political process. And this would slow the political integration. It is my observation that immigrant community in Oslo does consider the current government of Norway as an anti-immigrant far right government. This consideration coincides with the feeling that these government policies are fueling intolerance of many forms. Even if it is difficult to link any policy of the current government to any religion, it is not so to link its coming to power to religious intolerance sentiment in the society. Such consideration and feelings could discourage political integration. The role of religion in political integration of immigrant and native community is the same as it is for cultural integration; could facilitate or impeded it depending on the religion of immigrants.

5.2.4. The Significance of Integration Program

Different countries have different mechanisms of helping the new arrived refugees in the process of integration. For instance, Minnesota has the refugee cash assistance program for helping immigrants in the process of integration. In addition, Norway uses introduction program in order to help immigrants integrating into the host society. Therefore, the following paragraphs deal with the significant implications of the introduction program on immigrants' real life situations and long-term survivals Oslo-Norway. Rev. Mengesha responded,

“I have not personally made use of the Introduction program, and thus it is difficult for me to evaluate this. Bus as far as I see it, I think it is a nice program which helps people to come in to the life of the society. During the time when one is in this program, it is possible to use the opportunity to learn the language and more about the society, which is the key to integration”.

Irana also responded to the above question from his own experiences, because he came to Norway as an immigrant and participated in the introduction program which is only last for two years. He says that this program helps immigrants, especially the refugees, to integrate into the Norwegian society and system. However, he articulates that these two years are not enough for complete integration of the immigrants into Norwegian dynamic and sophisticated societal systems, unless they add their own efforts and mechanisms in order to learn Norwegian language which is pivotal important to live and thrive in Norway.

5.3. Minnesota-USA

5.3.1. Presentation of Respondents

Three persons were also interviewed from the USA. These interviewees have also been studied in different areas in social science and working on various capacities in Minnesota. Rev. Dr. Dinku Bato is currently working as a part-time pastor at Our Redeemer Oromo Church held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He has recently studied and earned Ph.D. from Lutheran Seminary in Theology. He wrote his dissertation in the area of Diasporas who are currently residing in the state of Minnesota. Rev. Melkamu Negeri, the senior pastor of Our Redeemer Oromo Church, has served the church for more than ten years. In addition, he has actively involved in the current advocacy of human right. Mr. Bula Atomsa has a diversified educational background from different universities in Africa, Europe and the United States of America. He is currently living in Minnesota and working in one Minnesota's public offices. He is enthusiastically involving in politics, especially in the Oromo's politics.

5.3.2. The Challenge of Religious Pluralism and Integration

As mentioned earlier, the issue of religion and immigration becomes one of the controversial points in the contemporary globalization. Different people have seen these challenges differently. For instance, Rev. Dr. Dinku Bato responded that he would see the issue of religion and migration from the vantage point of its opportunity than challenges. He then points that the wave of migration contributes to the growth of America's economy, multiculturalism and religious diversity. In addition, he says,

“Notwithstanding the challenges associated with migration and religious pluralism, I would argue that therein lies yet untapped potential for cultural enrichment, transfer of knowledge & technology, diversity (to mention but a few) that by far outweigh the potential demerits inherent in these social phenomena. However, some critics hold that this variety of religious traditions can be inimical to the integration of new immigrants into the community of the host country”.

Rev. Melkamu Negeri also states that religious extremists have been creating confusions and high level tensions in our contemporary world. These extremists have been causing physical as well as material damages which force people to leave their own countries and cross borders to live in a new land as strangers. In Negeri's point view, these extremists are driven by egocentrism caused distractions and problems. Extremism is thus one of the rationales behind the current flux of immigration.

In addition, Mr. Bula argues that the contemporary flow migration and the resurgence of religious pluralism have been challenging the entire world. He says that the issue of immigration and religion is particularly challenging the Western Countries. For example, some parties of Europe and the United States of America are currently becoming skeptic “when they are seeing influx of immigrants/refugees from Muslim Countries”.

On the other, Rev. Negeri states the significant contribution of religious institutions in the course immigrants’ settlement. He points that religious institutions have contributed as main actors in helping immigrants in the process of integration through providing mental, moral, physical, psychological and spiritual services. These religious institutions have worked with government agencies in various issues such as advocating on behalf of the oppressed. Such services should be encouraged because it is significantly important and scriptural. This confirms that if the government agencies and religious institutions work together, they can minimize the challenge of migration in the entire globe.

5.3.3. The Impact of Religion on the Integration of Immigrants in Oslo

In this section, the researcher presents the views of respondents regarding the impacts of religion on the integration process of immigrants in the host society. Here the interviews emphasize the challenges of religion on cultural, economic, educational and socio-political integration of immigrants in Minnesota-USA.

a. The challenge of religion on cultural integration

Rev. Bato articulates the challenge of cultural integration in emphasizing both Christian and Muslim Oromo immigrants in Minnesota. He examines,

The presence of large Oromo immigrant Christian and Muslim communities in Minnesota, for instance, makes intra-ethnic (within the same ethnic group) integration easier for members of the respective religious groups by readily offering culturally and linguistically relevant religious practices which immigrant practitioners are attracted to because of its familiarity with their religious background. This tendency, conversely, discourages the inter-ethnic (outside of the ethnic circle) intermingling catalyzed by the mushrooming the digital media and readily available religious resources. As a result, the level of integration with the host community seems to be at its lowest level though there might be age group specific differentials, for instance, the second and the 1.5 generations of the immigrant population usually tend to integrate religiously with the host community compared to the first generation immigrants’ pattern of religious integration. Generally, with good reason, immigrants tend to worship together and the negative side of this is a certain ghettoization with its attendant social problems.

In addition, Negeri articulates the distinctive features of religion and culture. He points that “religion is not culture or local tradition”. Then he argues that religion is the supreme manifestation which is unusually revealed beyond one’s cultural or traditional way of understanding. This shows that religion has a power to guide people as an individual or a group in their daily lives. However there is a mutual influence between religion and culture.

Bula also points out the impact of religion on cultural integration of immigrants in the host country.

When immigrants are migrating from their original countries to Minnesota-USA, they have huge barriers related to system, culture, language and religion. These barriers have huge impact on the integration to the society. For example, Oromo immigrants who came to Minnesota with their religion impact on cultural integration depend on their religion. It is hard to separate culture and religion, both are interconnected. The Christian Oromos are more integrated to Minnesota culture than the Muslim and Waaqefata Oromos. The Christian Oromos celebrate most of religious holidays and cultural holidays with mainstream community compared to Muslim Oromos. For example, Thanks Giving Day, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Valentine’s Day and others which are not religious holidays are celebrated in Oromo churches. I don’t think the Muslim Oromoos they don’t celebrate in their Mosque either the Waaqefata Oromos. Some may celebrate in their home.

b. The challenge of religion on economic integration

Rev. Bato states that immigrants are more concerned for their economic interest than observance of their religious obligations. “Religion seems to play relatively minimal role as regard to economic integration among the majority of African immigrants in Minnesota. On the contrary, immigrants are likely to bypass their religious obligations in the interest of economic gains. Bato examines this which I would like to refer to as “economic over-integration.” Bato then points that the majority of Christian immigrants are likely preferring to work on “Sabbath or Sunday” in paying opportunity costs such as personal recreation, family fellowship, or socializing with friends “to what their religious may recommend”.

As Christian leader, Negeri believes that all believers should live an exemplar life because they are responsible persons for their own lives as well as for others. The pattern of true religion is hard working. From the Christian point of view, the Bible teaches that one should work and be self-contained. This confirms that people satisfy their need when they work, earn money and guide their daily life. In addition, hardworking develops the spirit of trustworthiness between employees and employer. This means, in other words, Christians should be loyal for themselves, their employers and their respective government when they

work hard. In doing so, they may have an impact on the economy a country in which they live.

On the other hand, Bula examines the challenge of religion on economic integration.

Yes, religion has impact on economic integration too. There are religion which doesn't allow you to sell or buy certain types of goods. Again, economic integration for Oromos depends on their religion. For example, it is hard for most of Muslim Oromoos to do business which is not allowed in their religion, such us selling liquors, pork meet and others. In addition, it is forbidden in Islam religion to take loan with interest. Then, it is hard for most of Muslim Oromos to own house and do any business need loan from Bank (Bula).

c. The challenge of religion on educational integration

In his response to this point, Bato argues that “religion doesn’t seem to have more of an impact on educational integration than the impact it has on economy as far as it applies to most African immigrants in Minnesota”. He continues stating that “What is more, most immigrant religious institutions and establishments in the region go out of their way to encourage their young members by rewarding educational achievements which they seem to be succeeding at quite a bit”.

Negeri also articulates that Christianity and education was introduced to the peoples of east Africa, including the Oromo, over centuries ago. He says that “People were taught how to read and write personal and surrounding hygiene and many other life changing educations.” As an institution, the church is obliged to encourage personal development through education. For example, Our Redeemer Oromo Church in Minnesota encourages in order that the members educate themselves as well as their children.

In addition, Bula articulates educational challenges in the process of integration in the host country. He focuses on Oromo immigrants and explains the three major religions that have been practicing among them. He says,

The religion has an impact on educational integration among Oromos and other immigrants in MN-USA even if it is not to the extent of culture and economy. I observed Muslim, Christian and Waqefata Oromos going to schools, colleges, vocational training centers and others. It is challenging for adults who were education system or attended colleges in their original countries to integrate to education than children. For Oromos, the school system including the quality is different in Minnesota compared to Original Country. Some of the graduate and undergraduate fields are not recognized here as it is. For example, the Medical Doctor who migrated from Ethiopia-Oromia, should take a test and pass and do the residence here to practice as MD. Since the education system in Ethiopia is similar to USA, it is better to integrate than other immigrants from different countries. I observed the more the immigrants are religious the more focus in religion activities in their churches, mosques and their region gathering place than education. Some prefer to send their kids in weekends to religious teaching place than other tutoring or training place to get more knowledge related to their schools.

d. The challenge of religion on social integration:

Bato examines both positive and negative impacts of religion in immigrants' real life situation in Minnesota. He says that,

religion seems to promote (most likely) intra-ethnic(within the ethnic group) integration by, for instance, offering physical and temporal spaces for immigrants to come together on occasions of religious and cultural celebration, promoting interdependence through mutual help, mobilizing members for support toward fellow members especially in times of crisis and major mishaps. On the down side, the very fact that most of the social events mentioned above including graduations, anniversaries, celebrations happening at church premises has removed immigrants away from mingling with the host community in the public arena (neighborhoods, parks, public auditoriums, etc.).

In addition, Negeri states that "Religious centers are where people meet for worship and also socialize at the same time. They exchange information and guide each other on many daily life related issues. We can say it is the place they get informed in many angles of life. So, religious gatherings are not only to worship".

Bula also explains the impact of religion on social integration. He describes that "The religious institutions are the place where people socialize, build relationship and after their worship. Those immigrants who attend English Speaking Church are more integrated socially to the mainstream society than others". In his description, he points the interconnection between religion and the social life, which ties the Oromo immigrants/refugees together in the state of Minnesota.

e. The challenge of religion on political integration:

Bato articulates that there is a sort of improvement among immigrant churches regarding religio-political involvement when it's compared with the experiences of churches in the homeland. He views,

Social and political matters were seen as worldly affairs that have nothing to do with the spiritual concerns of the Church. Spirituality has also been understood to be purely private and individualistic. Public affairs and social problems were thought to be beyond the sphere of spirituality. However, one occasionally may hear preachers or the clergy address political issues in relation to the experience of God's people in the scripture or particular teaching in the biblical texts. Here it almost became a common phenomenon to see various immigrant religious establishments designate regular and/or particular prayer times or fundraising events toward the support of and stand in solidarity with fellow ethnic members (back home or dispersed) under oppressive leaders and political systems. On the other hand, it seems that immigrants' commitment to religion (particularly Christianity), seems to lessen temptation to espouse political radicalism, at least, as we see it in our context here.

In addition, Negeri supports the involvement of religious institutions in the political affairs in order to promote equality and human rights. Christian doctrine focuses on the issue of human rights and also informs what believers should do and not to do. For examples, believers are informed, through biblical teachings, to participate in advocacy and bring changes in community. In Negeri's point of view, this implies that religious organizations should teach their followers to be a good and responsible citizen, which is seemed as if it is the only duty of political organizations.

Bulal also explains the impact of religion on political integration of Oromo immigrants in the state of Minnesota. He responds to the question in focusing on Christians and Muslim Oromos and their engagement in the Minnesota's political affairs.

Bula articulates as follows:

The religion has impact on political integration when it comes to Oromo than other immigrants/refugees in other countries in Minnesota. There are presumption that if you are a religious person you don't have to be involved in politics. When I compare the Christian Oromos with Muslim Oromos, the political involvement of Muslim Oromos is better than the Christian. This is when it comes to Oromo struggle including advocacy and activism too. When I look the civic engagement of Oromos in local and national levels, it is very minimum. Oromos settled in state of Minnesota before Somali immigrants/refugees, but we don't have any elected officials at city, county or state levels. Somali community has elected officials at City and state levels. Over all the Muslim Oromos are more participated in Oromo Politics and USA politics than Christian Oromos in Minnesota.

5.3.4. The Significance of Integration Program

Bato articulates that Minnesota's integration program makes the region a pole for attraction of immigrants than other regions in the USA. He states, "Minnesota is one of the few states in America to have a wonderful refuge and asylum resettlement package (not only RCAP) that attracted a lot of immigrants to the state from all over the world, particularly from Asia and East Africa". This indicates that integration program has its own negative and positive implications on immigrants' real life situation and long-term survival. In Bato's point view, the positive side of integration program includes acceleration of adjustment process, provision of socio-economic resources, and attraction of more immigrants to the state and promotion of their retention in it; whereas its negative side encompasses immigrants long-term dependence

on the state government, discourages immigrants' entrepreneurship and their involvement in of business enterprise, and the intensification of refugee status in the state.

Negeri also points the significance of temporary financial support for new immigrants in Minnesota because it helps them to easily integrate and be self-reliant eventually. "Yet, immigrants are not supposed to aim to have cash support for a long time as this makes them dependent of the government". If the immigrants are intended to be dependents throughout their lives, it may affect their long-term survival and personal confidence.

In addition, Bula also states the significance of refugees' settlement through the Local Volunteer Resettlement Agencies, namely VOLAGS, in the state of Minnesota. He points that "These agencies assist the refugees by their Case Managers starting from welcoming them to Minnesota at Air Port and connecting them to available resources related to Public Assistance, Employment, Housing and other related social services". When new refugees, especially the families, arrive in Minnesota, they receive temporary resettlement cash assistance from the local VOLAGS.

Furthermore, Bula continues mentioning that,

The single adults receive Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) monthly for eight months and the families will be connected to their Counties they settled and apply for Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) which is a package with Cash and Food Support. The Cash Assistance amount is depends on the size of the households of the families. This program is for 60 months in their life time. When I look the cash assistance program for single adults and families are not enough to rent affordable house and survive without additional support from community, church and their family members already settled here. If they will not get those additional supports, they may end in shelter. For examples, the rational of the 8 months RCA for single adults is that refugee will learn English, employed and integrated to the community and become self-sufficient within eight months. This rational did not work for many refugees who were in refugee camp for more than 10 years without school, health care, foods and others. For families, the MFIP program is better since it has employment services program and childcare in addition to Cash and Food support. Also it is five years program. Over all the cash assistance is I call "something is better than nothing" It is not sufficient enough to survive. So far the refugees are survived with that assistance become self-sufficient and integrated to the community.

5.4. Comparison of the Findings

The preceding analytical presentations create a solid foundation for the comparison of the challenge integration process in the respective fields. The responses on the first research question were almost the same except few differences in point emphasis. For instance, Mengesha articulated the issue of religious pluralism and integration of immigrants in Oslo

through emphasizing both its opportunities and challenges; whereas, Bato emphasized its opportunities than its challenges when he responded to issue of immigrants in Minnesota. This probably ensures that the issue immigration is more challenging to the Norwegian than Americans. Yes, it seems challenging to the Norwegians due to various reasons such as ethnic homogeneous, population size and geographic size of the landscape.

Regarding the second question, religion has been challenging the life of immigrants living in Oslo as well as in Minnesota in various angles. For example, intra religious gathering was mentioned as one of the hindrances from inter-community-integration in each of the respective contexts. In addition, religion affected the economic aspect of immigrants' integration in Minnesota. Especially, the Muslims have been challenged to compete in some American job markets. For example, they are not allowed selling alcoholic drinks and pork products. The Oslo respondents were also described the disconnection of immigrants from inter-social-networks which probably cause economic disintegration. In general, religion has been challenging both Oslo and Minnesota immigrants in the area of economic integration. For example, the Oslo immigrants are challenged regarding securing job whereas the challenge of Minnesota's immigrants lies on participating in a certain business.

The data collected concerning integration programs are slightly different. In Minnesota, the Refugee Cash Assistance has mainly emphasized on temporary financial support whereas the Norwegian Introduction program has focused on the long-term survival of immigrants into the host community. Therefore the Norwegian integration system was designed to help the refugees through giving them the opportunity of learning Norwegian language, partaking in various training and teaching them the Norwegian societal systems.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter presented the responses of the interviewees from the respective fields. It has thus seen an intermediating point between the earlier chapters and the following ones. Without this part is hard to pursue working this project and call it a research. This confirms that presentation of the above findings is significantly important to build a solid ground for further discussions that will profoundly contribute in order to arrive at viable conclusions and then forward dependable recommendations.

6. Discussion

This study has focused the challenge of immigrants in the process of integration in the western post-secularism. The immigrants have been challenged and face various problems in the course of integration. The researcher has thus collected data from the respective cities, namely Oslo and Minnesota, in order to draw a comparison of these specific contexts. In this section, the researcher will also discuss the findings from the respective areas in order to answer the research questions in light of relevant theories in the preceding chapters. The researcher will thus emphasize the actual rationale behind the differences for the successive discussions.

6.1. The Challenge of Religion and Immigration in the Global Post-secularism

The first question focuses on the challenge of religious pluralism and integration of immigrants in the two respective areas. As mentioned earlier, the researcher intended to emphasize the challenge of integration process in the Norwegian as well as American contexts. Therefore, the respondents gave their observations in accordance with their own contexts. For instance, the respondents from Norway emphasized the interconnection between religion and immigration when they articulated the contemporary challenge of post-secularism. As it was stated in the theoretical framework (Chapter 2), Furseth (2006) also examined the interconnection of immigration and religions in the western multiculturalism. She then observes that the issue of immigration and religion is interrelated with ethnicity, family and traditions. This interconnection has its own challenge as well as opportunity. This is the reason that the respondents from Oslo have also seen the interconnection of religious pluralism and immigration from two different vantage points. Primarily, they observed it as a challenge due to new cultures and languages, different systems and resettlement const. Then they noticed it as an opportunity for opens doors for accommodation, complementary learning, entrepreneurship, experience exchange, innovation, respect and toleration.

On the other hand, the American respondents have seen the question from different angles. For example, one of the respondents focused on the opportunity of immigration than its challenges, whereas the others two respondents emphasized religious pluralism and its challenges. Why did these respondents more emphasized on religious pluralism? As mentioned earlier in the literature review, the issue of religion has become the most controversial point in the United States America.

Christiano (2008) pointed that “Americans are the most religious people in the face of the earth”. Habermas (2006) also stated the issue of religious diversifications thus brings constitutional freedom of religion and solves political problems in the western post-secularism. In addition, Shenk (1995) examined that the notion of religious pluralism creates human respect, respect, freedom, equality in the global village. These theoretical premises ensure that presence of religious pluralism and multiculturalism confirms the flow of immigration to the state of Minnesota. The respondents from Minnesota also pointed that religion is not problems by itself but the misconception and egocentrism behind it may challenge to the community in which they exists. This ensures that religious pluralism needs proper management in order to benefit its respective communities.

To sum up, thorough investigation and close understanding of the interrelation between religion and immigration will serve as an aid to solve a problem related to the challenges integration in the host communities. All the theoretical explanations that were developed in chapter 2 and 3, have thus significantly contributed to lay a foundation for such discussions concerning immigration and religious pluralism in the contemporary western multiculturalism. In addition, these theoretical elaborations will also be used in further discussions as a key factor to identify and discuss the impartation of religion on the integration process of immigrants in the respective contexts.

6.2. The Impact of religion on the Integration of Immigrants

The second research question sought to discover a pattern with regard to the impact of religion in the process of immigrants’ integration. This impartation concerns various aspects immigrants’ lives both in Oslo and Minnesota. These include: ***First, the impartation of religion on cultural integration:*** Religion has its own impact on cultural integration of immigrants. In America, religion has huge impact on immigrants’ intra-ethnic as well as inter-ethnic integration. Nevertheless, if there is imbalance between intra-religious-integration and inter-religious-integration; it may affect the immigrants’ long-term survival in the host country. One of the respondents highlighted that the Christian immigrants are more integrated into American cultures than the Muslim immigrants because they share common religious values, perspectives and holidays with the Native American.

In addition, religion has also challenged the immigrants as they enter Norway and try to adapt the Norwegian cultures. When immigrants are not properly integrated in the culture of the host country, they are pushed to the room of isolation, hopelessness and disintegration. For

instance, the Muslim immigrants are isolated and created their own island in order to preserve their religions and keep their cultures. Christian immigrants would also like to use their own languages than Norwegian in their worship services. On the other hand, this may affect the immigrants' future life for it hinders them from learning the Norwegian language and integrating into the society.

As it was mentioned in chapter 2, Conner (2014) examined that integration is the process immigrants' adjustment to the new cultures, languages and circumstances for the improvement of their socioeconomic position in the host country. In addition, Papageorgiou (2011) described integration as dynamic and flexible procedure that deals with the physical as well as sociocultural settlement of immigrants in the host communities.

The above premises underline the significance of cultural integration in the process of immigrant's resettlement in the new land. For instance, cultural integration improves the socioeconomic position immigrants, which, on the other hand, benefits also the host government though raising its financial gain from the taxes. In addition, it highly contributes for physical, psychological and sociocultural settlement of immigrants in the host country. This can also create a sense of ownership, friendship, at hominess and confidence in the mind of immigrants and lead them to live as responsible persons in the midst of the host communities.

However, the lack of cultural integration is probably widening the gap between the immigrants and host communities. This may also create misunderstanding and mistrusting among them. As it was mentioned by Murphy (2013) in the theoretical framework, the raise of cultural integration has then regarded as a crisis of multiculturalism. This has additionally enhanced the concept of rejecting the issue of religious and cultural diversifications in both cases.

In one hand, it challenges the immigrants to stick to their own cultures and religions rather than accommodating the religions of the host societies and integrating into their cultures. As mentioned earlier by the respondents, this probably pushes the immigrants to the room of isolation and hopelessness. In addition, it will affect their long-term survival in the host communities through exposing them to economic disintegration. Furthermore, it leads them to think negatively about themselves as well as others due to their incapability of integrating into host communities.

On the other hand, the host communities have also challenged due to the issue of immigrants' cultural integration and religious diversifications when they regarded it as a treat and bypass opportunities behind it. They have seen the working immigrants as robbers their opportunities in job markets and the refugees as trouble makers. This may thus create the gap of misunderstanding and mistrusting between the immigrants and the host communities.

In conclusion, religion has huge impartations on the life of immigrants in the course of integrating into a new culture. For example, intra religious gathering has likely slowed the acceleration of learning new language. Therefore, it is advisable if the two citizens are mutually influencing one another for the common good. In doing so, they can minimize the gap of misunderstanding and mistrusting in their midst, and leave a legacy of producing responsible generation in the contemporary globalization.

Second, the impartation of religion on economic integration: The Christian Oromos who reside in Oslo have highly valued the ethics of hardworking. They believe in economic self-independent. Some of the members of Oromo Evangelical Church in Oslo even work on Sunday. To some extent, this ensures the economic integration of Christian Oromos because they can earn more money; as much as they work, and pay taxes which probably secure their further pensions in Norway. This hardworking has also helped them to purchase their own personal living houses. In contrast, this forbids them from regular attending of Sunday services. Here religion is being challenged by economic gain than challenging the immigrants in the process of integration.

According to the American respondents, religion additionally has very minimum impacts on economic integration of African immigrants in the state of Minnesota because they likely prefer to work than worshiping on Sabbath and Sunday. Christians are also obliged to work and be self-contained for the Bible teaches them to do so. However, the Muslim immigrants are occasionally challenged in the area of economic integration because they are not allowed to sell liquors, pork meet and others. In addition, it is forbidden, according to Quran, to take loan with interest. This ensures that Muslim immigrants are challenged to have their own personal residence and engage in the contemporary digital business. This ensures the challenge of religion in the course immigrants' economic integration in the host land.

As mentioned in chapter 2 and 3, the scholars of international migration has recently focused on socioeconomic and political integration of immigrants because these factors profoundly affect "the magnitude and type of future migration flows, the domestic economy of the host

country, and the sociopolitical stability in the receiving society” (Rich 2010). Then, Rich stated that the issue of integration of immigrants becomes the most controversial in the context of regional economic interstition of governments, such as EU and NAFTA. This ensures the significant role of immigrants’ integration in the contemporary regional socioeconomics.

In addition, Brochmann and Grødem (2013) articulated that immigrants’ inclusion in the Norwegian welfare state has various contributions such as economic growth, labor force enrichment, innovation and entrepreneurship development, competences enhancement, and the maximization of flexible market opportunities. This signifies the advantages of immigrants’ inclusion in the host communities.

To sum up, this also confirms that economic integration of immigrants is crucially needed to secure their daily life. It also helps them to be competent in the current global market. In addition, it ensures the role of hardworking for immigrants economic self-contained. Immigrants can also contribute to the regional economic growth if they work and pay taxes. However, the American respondents pointed that few immigrants are challenged in Minnesota in the case of economic integration due to their religious experiences. This leads them to be economically dependent on the regional government; and limits their potential of participating in the global business at the same time. In this regard, the government is obliged to create awareness through empowering the immigrants and help them fitting in the western multiculturalism and pluralistic environment.

Third, the impartation of religion on educational integration: Although there is a huge chance for young immigrants in America, uneducated adults are challenged to adapt the American education system and integrate into the society. Even though they are educated, the adult immigrants are also faced challenges such as certifying their documents, having license on their professions and finding jobs. Nevertheless, the immigrant churches, such as Our Redeemer Oromo Church, encourage the adults to educate themselves and adjust to the environment.

In Norway, adult immigrants are also confronted the same challenge regarding educational integration because their capacity of understanding new language is very low. The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education is not approving some documents from abroad. This is one of the greatest challenges that educated immigrants/refugees have been facing in Oslo-Norway because it hinders them from pursuing further education at universities. In

comparison to Minnesota, immigrants' educational integration is more challenging here in Oslo.

However, regarding children immigrants it is almost the same in both cases. Children immigrants are those who crossed borders and entered new countries with their parents as refugees. Especially, Muslim children are probably faced more challenges than the other children due to various reasons. For example, they were traumatized because of wars and inhuman practices that they experienced in the past. They are additionally challenged in line for the differences between languages. They probably began primary schools with Arabic which is totally different from Latin alphabet (or English and Norwegian languages). Therefore, children immigrants are challenged to compete with the native children of the host country. In addition, digitalization and modern schooling systems may also challenge children immigrants, especially the refugees. These children may finally become less competent in the school because of their parents limit knowledge of the medium of instruction.

Why do the immigrants become less competent in the western educational system? As it was stated in the literature review, Juegersmeyer (2008) pointed the difference between religious communities and secular citizens. Immigrants regarded themselves as religious communities and the host communities as secular citizens. These communities have their own ideologies, which always are in competition. For example, secular rationalism emphasizes theoretical facts such as technological innovation, economic growth, educational advancement and political achievement. As the community of religion, immigrants categorize education under secular rationalism and try to escape from it. Therefore, educational integration is one of the toughest processes for immigrants due to the competitions between their religious experience and western dynamic educational system.

To sum up, the immigrants have various challenges that hinder them to integrate in the western education system due to various reasons. These challenges include age limitations, none educational background, language barriers and religious experiences. One may overcome these challenges through hardworking, accommodation and perseverance. This ensures that if the immigrants are successfully integrated the western education system, they can easily adjust to the context of host society irrespective of various religious impartations.

Fourth, the impartation of religion on social integration: The Minnesota Oromo immigrants have celebrated various intra social gatherings such as cultural days, graduations, anniversaries and religious holidays. The Oromos have been practicing three major religions

in Minnesota. These three major religions include Waaqeffanna (the Oromos indigenous religion), Christianity and Islam. The Oromos have thus met at their own religious centers where they socialize, build harmonious relationship and acquire spiritual edification. In the contrary, these intra religious gatherings may also affect the integration of these immigrants to adapt the inter-public-sphere.

The Oslo Oromo immigrants have similarly faced the challenge of inter-communities-integration. They prefer to attend intra-social-gathering to share their common agendas through their own language, Afan Oromo. For instance, the Christian Oromo immigrants that have been gathering at Nordberg Kirke in Oslo are enjoyed and used their own language to lead the Sunday services and other spiritual meetings. Here they feel at home in experiencing the aroma of their own sociocultural practices. However, they lose inter-communities-integration which probably affects their daily life as well as long-term survival in Norway.

Inter-communities-integration may create social interconnection. As mentioned in chapter 2, Habermas (2006) suggested the concept of societal interdependence when he indicated the complementary learning process. He pointed that societal interdependence describes the interconnection of communal life that builds relationship and responsibility among the societies living in the same village. In addition, Shenk (1995) examined that inter-communities-integration secures societies well-being through creating the awareness of tolerance among the religious institutions and promoting the notion of global pluralism.

In general, the immigrants should thus engage in inter-social activities as sports, parties, clubs and other religious meetings in order to integrate into the public sphere. As mentioned earlier in the preceding chapter, immigrants are in locked with their sociocultural norms and religious values rather integrating into the host society. Nevertheless, if the immigrants have Norwegian or American friends, they can easily be included into the entire societal system. This may create a sense of accommodation, toleration and respect between the immigrants and the host communities in respective of their religious as well as ideological differences between them.

Finally, the impartation of religion on political integration: In the past, socio-political affairs were regarded and categorized as secularism where worldly issues and spiritual problems have dealt separately. Christian ministers have then gradually begun to address political issues through their preaching. In Minnesota, Oromo Christian immigrants are currently been involving in political affairs to show solidarity and stand with the fellow ethnic

members back home through intercessory prayer times, fundraising, protesting and contacting government sectors. This confirms the role of religion in the affair of socio-politics. As it was stated in the literature review, Habermas (2006) also argued the role of religion in the political sphere. He states that churches and religious organizations have had tremendous impartations on the American political process. For example, Martin Luther King, as a religious leader, protested against the American's political dictatorship on behalf of the minorities and the marginal group of people in the society. However, the engagement of Christian Oromos in the issue of politics is less when it is compared with the Muslim Oromos in Minnesota.

The Oslo Oromo immigrants are also more interested in intra-sociopolitical issues than the Norwegian politics. According to the respondents, the Christian Oromo immigrants are highly concerned for the politics of their homeland. They are currently participating in fundraising for the support of the afflicted Oromos back home. In addition, they are participating in arranging protest and advocate on behalf of the oppressed and voiceless fellow Oromos in Ethiopia. Meanwhile, it is also advisable if they are doing their best to engage and participate in Norwegian politics, at least in the section of Oslo municipalities, in order to ensure their sociopolitical integration. In participating in politics, they can offer something to promote democracy. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Hofstee (2013) described that democracy offers equal opportunity for the generation living in this era of post-secularism. The contemporary generation should thus maintain and promote democracy through creating conducive political environment in influencing the current system to create political liberalism.

Nevertheless, some Christian immigrants are not interested in the western political ideologies due to various reasons. For example, they think as if it is difficult to bridge the difference between religious experiences and political ideologies. They also try to avoid the contradiction between immigrants' view of biblical ethics and the liberal view of human rights. However, the divorce of Christian immigrants from political environment will not be a solution because of their roles and responsibilities in their respective society.

Christians have various roles in a given society. They are called to be a light and shine the darkness, to be a salt and preserve generation, to act as a change agent, to represent truth as God's ambassadors and to work diligently as true stewardship. If they have turned off to politics, how could they have fulfilled all these roles and responsibilities in their respective societies? This is the reason that one of the respondents from Oslo suggests the engagement of Christians into the political issues for the purpose of correcting wrongs and serving wellbeing

communal life. To do so, Christians should know the intentions of political liberalism parallel with their scriptural knowledge.

As mentioned earlier, Habermas (2006) also argued the standard of political liberalism in line with secular reasoning. In his point of view, the liberal state of secular reason thus emphasized the community of faith in order to create a sort of equilibrium between religious ideologies and secular convictions. In addition Dombrowski (2001) pointed that this equilibrium is molded through integration and interconnection of political matters and religious ideologies. Therefore, the development of conceptual self-understanding is significantly demanding to connect religious convictions and political ideologies together, and maintain political integration.

6.3. The Significance of Integration Program on Immigrants Long-term Survival

The third question focused on the two respective research areas in order to investigate the significance of integration program on immigrants' (specifically refugees') real life situation and long-term survival in the new environment. As mentioned in chapter 2, Papageorgios (2011) examined the significance of integration program. In his point view, integration program is designed to help immigrants for resettlement in their new destinations. It is significantly important to bridge the gap between immigrants and the host society. The integration program can also solve the socioeconomic challenges of immigrants in the host countries. In addition, it is significant to solve the challenge of discrimination, racism and xenophobia. Papageorgios (2011) finally stated that the recipient countries will be continually challenged with the presence of immigration unless they undertake responsibility for immigrants in their midst. All these premises confirm the significance of integration program for the immigrants as well as the hosting communities.

For instance, Minnesota has used various programs in order to help the newly arrived refugees in the process of integration such as the Local Volunteer Resettlement Agencies (VOLAGS), Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). Through these integration programs refugees are provided temporary cash assistances during their resettlement process in the state of Minnesota. According to the respondents, these financial assistances attract immigrants/refugees to the state of Minnesota than other states in the USA. This implies the positive and negative aspects of an integration program on immigrants' successive life in the host communities.

For example, the integration program can accelerate the adjusting time immigrants to the host community, satisfy the socio-economic needs of immigrants, possibly attract more productive immigrants to the state and promote of their retention in it. All these points ensure that the integration program plays a significant role to determine immigrants' long-term survival in the host country. Yet, it has its own negative implications on sustainable life on immigrants in the host society. These negative implications include lifelong dependence of immigrants on charitable organizations and government agencies, limitation of immigrants' entrepreneurship and innovative abilities and intensification of refugees flux to the state.

According to the census cited on the webpage of Educational Department in Chapter 3, integration in Minnesota involves issues such as academic, culture, economic, socio-politics, racial and religious. Although the concept of integration was developed in 1960s, the issue of socioeconomic integration has been remaining controversial in the American public sphere. Therefore, the Immigration and Integration Initiative organizations have diligently worked in order to enhance the integration of immigrants in focusing on their socioeconomic contributions. Schulze (2010) then stated that the duration of the integration program in varies depending on the refugee's special needs.

On the other hand, Brochmann and Grødem (2013) stated that the Norwegian welfare state and the intention immigration policy were established in 1970s. The immigration policy focused on how to help new immigrants integrating both in working environment and social life as well. This ensures that complete integration can solve the problem of immigrants' dependency on welfare state for successive financial support. This is the reason that Norway uses introduction program to help immigrants to integrate into the host society. This program aids the immigrants to learn Norwegian language and secure their future either through finding jobs or pursuing education.

In conclusion, one the respondents from Oslo pointed that the integration program plays a key role in shaping the life of immigrants and directing them to their further destination. However he commented that two years are not enough for helping them to master new language, adapt new culture, adjust to new socio-political environment and secure socioeconomic needs. He then suggested that integration is also demanding immigrants' maximum efforts in order to penetrate into all the hindrances that prevent them from complete incorporation in the host society.

6.4. The Comparison of Integration Programs in Oslo and Minnesota

The final research question was emphasized the comparison of integration program in the respective contexts. In Norway, the integration program is intended to guide the partaker either to work or education. For example, the partakers who need to continue primary or lower secondary education may use this as part of their program. The program is thus contained courses that prepare the participants for further careers. The goal of the individual should be closely seen in line with the labor market and the existed opportunities for creating job. In addition to this, the beneficiary is used to learn about 50 hours of the Norwegian society course in the areas of history, geography and way of life, children and family, health, education and learning, working life, democracy and welfares society.

In addition, Minnesota is assisting the newly arrived immigrants in offering them temporary financial support. For example, Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) is currently working with Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and providing financial support for refugees who are incapable for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for a certain period of time after arrival in the state. In Minnesota, the intention of integration encompasses subjects such as culture, education, economics, socio-politics and religion. These factors are significantly demanding for the long-term survival of immigrants in the new land. Nevertheless, it is challenging for them to adjust to these factors within a short period of time.

To sum up, the Minnesota integration program focuses on short-term refugees cash assistance, which has its own negative and positive aspects on the life the beneficiaries. For instance, the refugees who are receiving money in cash are using as their own preferences. In one hand, this may create a sense of self-confidence and self-determination in their lives. This may also help them how to train themselves to be economic self-contained. On the other hand, this may challenge the illiterate who are not plan-oriented and do not know how to lead their lives with a very limit amount of resource. Furthermore temporary cash assistance is not sufficient for immigrants to adapt the American educational system and integrate in its sociocultural, socioeconomics and sociopolitical. In comparison with the Norwegian Introduction Program, the researcher has found a slight difference between them. Here the main emphasis of the program is on how to securing long-term integration of immigrants in the host society. The package includes Norwegian language, primary and lower secondary school, short-term trainings and fifty hours of classes on Norwegian societal system.

7. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

7.1. Summary

Post-secularism is considered as one of the most significant phenomena in the current studies of social science. It becomes a fertile ground for the emergence of globalization in which people move across national and international borders. This enhances the influx of migration and the formation of religious pluralism in the western world. The issue of integration of immigrants and accommodation their religions is then becoming the most controversial question in the contemporary agenda of EU countries and the United States of Americas. The researcher was thus dealt with the project entitled, “*The Challenge of Religious Pluralism and Integration of Immigrants in the Western Post-secularism: A Comparative Study of Immigrants Living in Oslo and Minnesota*”. Depending on this title, the researcher intended to investigate the challenge of religious pluralism and the impact of integration program on the immigrants’ real life situation in the contemporary Western post-secularism in putting especial emphasis in Oslo-Norway and Minnesota-USA.

The researcher was thus raised four sub-questions in order to answer the principal question of this project. The first sub-question focuses on the interconnection and challenge of religion and immigration in the contemporary post-secularism. The interconnectivity of religion and integration of immigrants is currently becoming a center of discussion among social intellectuals. For example, Furseth (2006) pointed that the issue of religion becomes the most controversial theme in the western multiculturalism because it is deeply rooted in the ethno-traditional aspect of human institution. Therefore people move with their own religion when they migrate and cross boarders to live in a new land, as immigrants. This implies that religion and immigration are inseparable. This interconnection may thus be seen an opportunity or a challenge. For instance, the immigrants are preferring intra ethnic gatherings than inter social integration of the host country. The formal and informal intra ethnic ties seem to affect the integration of the immigrants through limiting their potential of employments, education opportunities and socio-political incorporation. In addition, it may lead to the risk of losing appropriate information that play a significant role in the process of integrating into the labor market and bridging the gap between the immigrants and the host society.

The second question deals with the impartation of religion during the integration of immigrants in the host country. Connor (2014) observed that the integration of immigrants is

the process adjusting to new cultures, languages and environments for the improvement of their socioeconomic position in the host country. Here one may examine the role of religion on cultural integration of immigrants in the new land. This implies that inter-social contact can also provide the immigrants psychological scarification and help them to overcome cultural shock. However, the immigrants are often enjoyed intra-ethnic-socialization than integrating into the host communities. In addition, religion has seldom challenged the Muslim immigrants in the area socioeconomic integration in the United States of America. Lack of socioeconomic integration may thus result in sociopolitical instability (Rich 2010). In other word, immigrants' economic disintegration challenges the political perspective the host communities. This confirms that socioeconomic integration has a pivotal contribution for the formation communities' wellbeing through creating inter-social accommodation, toleration and respect. Academic integration also helps immigrants to adjust the dynamic digital system through acquiring updated information. It may thus open doors for innovation and entrepreneurship. Academic integration is a fundamental groundwork and stepping stone for sociocultural, socioeconomic and sociopolitical integrations.

The third question examined the significant contribution of integration program regarding securing the future of immigrants in the respective areas. In Minnesota, temporary cash assistance has been used to help the newly arrived refugees in the process of resettlement whereas the Norwegian introduction program has been putting special emphasis on integration of immigrants through learning language (Norwegian), societal systems in order that they have their own personal decisions and determinations to choose their further destinations. Yet the intention behind integration program is to aid the immigrants to incorporate in to the host society. Brochmann and Grødem (2013) also stated that the focus of the immigration policy is on how to help the newly arrived refugees/immigrants adjusting to the new working atmosphere and societal systems as well. This ensures that the host communities are also responsible for building a bridge of communication in order to maintain mutual integration.

The final question emphasized the comparison between integration programs in Oslo and Minnesota. For example, the integration program is intended to guide the newly arrived refugees either to work or education in Oslo. However, the Minnesota integration program focuses on supporting the refugees with temporary cash assistance. As mentioned in the previous analytical discussion, the researcher has found a slight difference when he compared

and contrasted the integration programs of the respective contexts. He then recommended the Norwegian integration system just for its emphasis on immigrants' future integration.

7.2. Conclusion

Based on the previous theoretical and conceptual explanations, data presentations, investigations and discussions, the following conclusions are drawn. First, the investigations that were conducted in this study indicate both the challenges and opportunities of diversifications in the contemporary flux of global migration. Traditionally, migration is attached to the origin and history of human beings. The flux of migration is unstoppable force. If the host countries are able to manage and irrigated the inflowing stream of migration, it will be a cause for change rather than challenge. It will be a cause for prosperity, unity and strength rather than chaos and distraction. For instance, the United States of America is one of the strongest and unified continents in the world. This makes the continent competent in various angles such as academic, economic, esthetic, sport and so on. In this 2017, the American athletes are winning several gold medals in the competition of the World Championships held at London. Therefore, the American strength depends on its unity in diversity.

Second, religion is an inseparable and instinctive force that has been inherently grown within human life. There is no person existing without religion on this earth. Some believe in the existence of something but others are not. For example, the atheists do not believe in the existence of the Supreme Being. Conversely, they believe in the non-existence of the Supreme Being. Therefore, unbelieving is a belief for those who are atheists. This ensures that there is no immigrant moving without religion. Therefore religion has a pivotal role in the process of academic, sociocultural, socioeconomic and sociopolitical integration of immigrants in the host countries.

For instance some Muslim immigrants are seldom challenged to adapt the western secular education system due to their religious observations. In addition they are not willing to participate in some business for the Quran forbids them selling pork products, alcoholic drinks and loan with interest. This confirms the impartations of religion on immigrants' socioeconomic integration which may likely affect their daily life as well as future survival in the host countries. However immigrants are challenged in the process of integration because they want to keep their past religious experiences in the host countries.

Third, integration is the process of adjusting new culture, language, system and environment. It is a learning-teaching process. This depicts the dual purpose of the integration program and its mutual influence on immigrants as well as the recipient communities. The immigrants are learning the new language in order to access new working environment and adjust different societal systems of the new land. At same time, the host communities also learn the cultures of the immigrants and acquire a kind of knowledge in the area of their religions. For example the Norwegian educational system has also been changed due to the formation of religious pluralism in the land. In the past, the education system was only focused on the formal practice of Lutheran religious confession in the academic circle. The Ministry of Education has then designed a common subject, namely Religion, Philosophies of Life and Ethics, for the inclusion all students in the same level. This was intended to promote mutual understanding, respect and tolerance among students regardless of their different ethical background, religious worldviews and philosophies of life. Therefore, integration program is significantly important for the formation of complementary learning among the two citizens, particularly the immigrants and host communities.

Fourth, the flux migration is a reason for the formation multiculturalism, religious pluralism and integration program in the western world. These factors are dramatically impacted the sociopolitical landscape of the host countries. Although the issue of integration becomes the most controversial themes both in Norwegian and American politics, their areas of emphasis are different. For example, the package Norwegian introduction program encompasses language courses, elementary and primary secondary schools, and short-term trainings and 50 hours of social course; whereas the Minnesota Refugee Cash Assistance emphasizes temporary financial support. The Norwegian Introduction Program is thus preferable than the American Refugee Cash Assistance for it emphasizes on immigrants future survival than short-term financial support. In general, these remarkable conclusions are based on the theoretical framework, investigations, observations and discussions in the previous sections. These conclusions will thus profoundly play a significant role in laying foundations for the next recommendations.

7.3. Recommendations

Depending upon the preceding conclusions the researcher would like to forward few recommendations in the following paragraphs. These recommendations will address the immigrants and the host communities, and considerably the academic institutions in the area

of further research. These recommendations thus include: First, the investigation revealed that mastering language is a significant prerequisite for effective integration into the host society. However, learning a new language has its own challenge. One may need times for acquiring knowledge and mastering it. The advice here is that two-three years is not enough for immigrants to learn and acquire sufficient knowledge of a new language.

The recommendation is concerned both receiving government and the immigrants. For instance, the host governments is obliged to work on how to develop language improvement programs parallel with the existing packages through extending the time learning, selecting the partakers according to their ages and educational background, and arranging tutorial classes depending upon beneficiary's interest and captivity of learning. Likewise, it is also advisable if the immigrants exert their full efforts to learn the language of the host countries which likely services as a mater key to penetrates through all the challenges in the course of integration.

Second, this research also highlighted an intra-ethnic-gathering as one of the challenges that hinder effective integration. Furthermore, the main focus of this study is to indicate possibilities of overcoming limitations that may challenge immigrants in the process of integration. For instance, religion is seen as one of the principal challenges that affect academic, socioeconomic, sociocultural and sociopolitical integration of immigrants in the host country. It is important that government and nongovernment agencies carefully evaluate the reason behind these challenges in order to help the immigrants overcoming them through creating awareness regarding religious pluralism that may promote accommodation, toleration and respect. In addition, it is recommendable if the immigrants should also walk out of their comfort zone and think and look out of the boxes that hinder them from the participation of inter-communities integration.

Third, the study also confirmed that integration is a learning-teaching process which likely demands a dynamic social interaction. This indicates that the process integration is thus not a one way communication system but a dynamic social interaction whereby the host communities are called upon to influencing the community of immigrants and being influenced by them as well. The recommendation is that a mutual self-understanding and influence is significantly important for the formation of a common platform where the integration is actively functioning through knowledge sharing and experience exchanging. It

is also important to tackle challenges such as ethnic supremacy, racism, radicalism, terrorism and xenophobia.

Fourth, this study has a significant limitation to investigate the issue of children immigrants and their integration in the western society. This is a recommendation for further research in the field children immigrants and their challenge in the process of integration in the new land. For instance, the tragedy of Mediterranean route on the contemporary African immigrants, and the case of children immigrants and their integration in the western European countries have not been yet investigated. The reason research would be needed in this dimension is that the children immigrants have passed through difficulties such as starvations, terrorizations, traumatization, and dehumanization prior to reach the land of their destination. These challenges may incapacitate the potential of their integration in the host country. Lack of proper integration may also lead them to the challenge of identity crisis, psychological problems, extremism and the likes. Here what the researcher would like to suggest is that if the challenge of childhood migration and integration in the new land would be taken into consideration, probably surprising results would be achieved.

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- Mr. Bula Atomsa (February 2017)
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