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Transition to America

Many Filipino's immigrate to America for many reasons even if they are living a good life already in the Philippines. Some may move to America because of the "American dream" of freedom and success and having family obligations. To find out about another persons experience I decided to interview my father Bobby Flores, who was the first generation in his family to migrate to America. This interview and *Pinoy Capital* written by Benito Vergara, can be linked in many ways because Vergara brings up many good points about Filipino immigration. *Pinoy Capital* gave me a better understanding of why there are so many Filipinos here in Daly City and made me wonder more about my fathers story. Although moving to America can create a new beginning, it can also lead to personal problems like nostalgia. With so many Filipino's immigrating into America every year, Filipino immigrants tend to face the issues such as the misconception of the American dream, family obligation, assimilation, and nostalgia along with betrayal that can affect ones thoughts and feelings about their own culture and themselves.

The misconception of the American dream misleads many foreigners to believe that life is better in the United States. In Vergara's ethnography, he interviewed a couple of people who claimed that they had a better life in the Philippines, so why did they decide to move to the US? The interviewees believed that it was easy to find a well paying job that will buy them a fancy car right away. Although, it isn't impossible, it is very hard to achieve. My father who has a very

strong sense of pride within the “Flores” name, chose to move to America to create a new life for him and his family. Bobby talked about how his parents were disappointed in him because he was a young immature kid growing up in the Philippines and felt like he needed a change. Originally, Bobby’s father, Ernie, wanted Bobby to join the Navy to follow his fathers footsteps, but instead, Bobby made a decision to turn his life around in America. My father chose moving to the US over the Navy because he felt as though he can make a better life with his family than to travel all over the world while in the Navy. My father did not believe in the misconception of the American dream because in reality, anyone who is willing to work hard to earn a great life in the future and that is what happened to Bobby. He has earned the big house and fancy Mercedes-Benz because he earned it.

My family had a feeling of family obligation when my father moved to America. Out of my family, my father moved to Colma, CA to live with his brothers family to get situated. Bobby did not have enough money yet to bring over his wife and daughter with him. After a couple of years my mother felt obligated to make the family complete and decided to also go to America with my older sister May. My father also felt obligated to his older brother because he gave him a roof to live under and an opportunity to have a better future. Until this day my father feels obligated to have Ernie’s back not only because they are family but because he paved the way in America. Having that family obligation for my father was really tough because he felt as if he was in America for only that reason.

When people immigrate to the US, it is very hard for anyone to assimilate to the culture. During the interview with my father, Bobby told me that it is the hardest thing to do while living

here. It is a very tough and challenging transition because people will look at you differently if you still live like you're in the Philippines. Bobby told me a story during the interview about a white man calling him names at the Serramonte parking lot. I asked my father if he stood up for himself and he replied "No, because I became smarter and I didn't need to fight him because it is different in America than the Philippines." My father was called derogatory names like, 'FOB' and was stuck in the back of my fathers mind. This created a problem for my father because he had doubts of coming to America. He questioned whether or not it was worth being a Filipino-American but fortunately my father kept fighting and succeeded by having a better life in America.

With the difficulty of assimilating of a new culture, nostalgia can play a big role on a new citizen in the US. If a person fails to assimilate at least a little bit, then they will suffer from nostalgia. In Vergara's book, there are some interviewees who get nostalgia just by watching The Filipino Channel on television. This also happens to my father when he flips channels and listens to old CD's while relaxing in the living room. Sometimes I can catch Bobby reminiscing about the Philippines and telling my family stories at the dinner table. Recently, my father went to the Philippines last month and he did miss the homeland environment. When my father arrived back in the US, he claimed that after one week he wanted to be back to his real home with his immediate family in America. Bobby said it is hard to deal with nostalgia because he cannot just leave everything he has built in the US and go back to his roots in a snap. My father says that the best way to deal with it is just to look at all the positive things you have going on for you in the US instead of thinking about the negatives. Along with nostalgia, I asked my father if he ever felt like he betrayed his own family and friends back home and he sighed for a couple of seconds.

Betrayal can leave someone thinking about their people back home because it feels as though they left them. Bobby thought about the question even more and claims that he made the decision because it was the best for him and his family and he didn't care about what others thought about him. Even though nostalgia and a sense of betrayal has affected Bobby in some ways, he chose to overcome the problem.

Filipinos who immigrate to America can have a better living for themselves and their families if they make the best of it and work hard. *Pinoy Capital* written by Benito Vergara was a great example of many interviewees thoughts and feelings about Filipinos in the US. Although, moving to America can be a great step to succeed, it can also lead to issues such as the misconception of the "American dream", family obligation, assimilation, and nostalgia.

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