

[Research Notes]

Marrying Foreign Muslims in the Gulf States: A Preliminary Study on the Mixed-Marriage of Overseas Working Filipino Women

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要旨

本稿の目的は、湾岸諸国において外国人ムスリムと結婚するフィリピン人女性海外就労者の実態について予備的探究をすることである。具体的には、フィリピン人女性の婚姻実践状況とその社会的背景を見ることにより、これらの結婚に関連する課題を整理することを目指す。

フィリピンは人口の10%以上が海外就労に従事していることから、労働移住が著しい国として知られている。このような移住に加えて、外国人との結婚のために多数が移住している。婚約、婚姻、慣習婚等で国外に移動するフィリピン人の数は、2006年から2015年の間で毎年2万人を超えており、ほぼ90%が女性である。また、その移動先は、アメリカ、日本、次いでオーストラリアと西側・先進国が圧倒的多数を占める。その一方で、外国のイスラム教徒の男性との結婚もあるが、少数のために注目されていない。しかし、特に南・西アジア諸国の文化や生活様式の適応は、フィリピン人女性の大多数が期待するものとは大きく異なる可能性があり、それゆえに慎重な調査が必要となる。

調査結果によると、国外移動するフィリピン人女性のムスリム配偶者は、主に次の二つに類別されることがわかった。一つは、これらの女性の国外就労先で生活する他国から来た移動労働者であり、もう一つは、就労先の自国民である。出会いや結婚に至るまでの過程は男性の国籍によって異なり、女性の宗教的帰属、生活習慣、法的地位に基づいて、これらの通婚世帯は多様な問題に直面している。そこには、社会的隔離、子供の市民権に関する問題、不安定な就業などが含まれる。

1. Introduction

Against a backdrop of expanding globalization, this paper focuses on Filipino women marrying foreign Muslims in the Gulf States. As a preliminary study, it examines trends and issues in these marriages related to situations and backgrounds of the Filipino women.

The Philippines is known as a major labor-sending country. In addition to labor migration, many leave the country after they marry foreign nationals. The Filipinos who were either engaged, married, or in common-law marriages and left the country between 2006 to 2015 has been keeping more than 20,000 annually, and almost 90% of them were women (CFO 2016a). Regarding destinations in this decade, the United States was first, followed by Japan, Australia, South Korea, and Canada (Table 1)¹. Couples meet through connections in their real lives and through social network services such as Whatsapp and Facebook. These female marriage migrations have been termed “global hypergamy,” the practice of marrying a male living in a country that is better off and has higher economic standards (Constable 2005). Eventually, these women obtain a permanent residence visa, become naturalized citizens of the host country, or attain dual citizenship.

Given the large number of marriage migrants, studies on mixed-marriages have been widely published,

1 This includes marriages with a person of Philippine origin who with their children were naturalized in the host country.

Table 1 Top Ten Destination Countries for Registered Filipino Spouses and Other Partners of Foreign Nationals (2006–2015)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
USA	10190	11789	8333	20111	9411	9442	10194	9743	11456	10920	111589
Japan	8601	6114	4142	3197	2698	2322	2105	1992	1779	1658	34608
Australia	1541	1267	1348	1596	1489	1659	1853	2054	1659	1456	13922
Canada	988	978	1011	960	1089	1061	990	1136	1131	1247	10591
UK	619	600	500	556	702	736	818	915	969	973	7388
Germany	528	441	417	471	521	542	616	654	630	652	5472
South Korea	415	804	809	1551	1694	1903	1754	1572	1005	845	12352
Norway	284	314	253	275	209	313	307	301	408	345	3009
Taiwan	282	207	195	261	247	292	301	251	293	336	2665
Sweden	278	269	256	343	306	279	339	265	286	265	2886
Others	1178	1144	1172	1289	1410	1685	2132	2438	2760	2905	18113
Total	24904	23927	18436	30610	19776	20234	21409	21321	22376	21602	211141

Source: CFO (2016b)

exploring problems from socio-economic, political, gender, and psychological dimensions (Constable 2003, 2005; Del Rosario 2008; Yang and Lu 2010; Zahedi 2010). However, little has been studied on inter-religious marriages. As represented by Hajar’s autobiography (2010) and Hawwa’s research on Filipina marrying Pakistanis in Hong Kong (2001), there are cases of Filipina marrying foreign Muslims. Table 2 shows that in 2006–2015 nearly half of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) were bound for the Middle East (Table 2), with five among the top 10 destinations located in this region. Moreover, because nearly one-half of the workers are single, they develop relations with the nationals and other guest workers (Table 3). There has been a gradual increase in cases of guest workers marrying other guest workers and living in a third country. This might not be considered “global hypergamy,” not only because the couple come from similar economic backgrounds, but because of their legal, social, and financial vulnerability, especially in the Gulf countries. The negative image of “Muslim” depicted in the Philippine society influences the relationship of the couples and their household strategies as well.

The phenomenon of “marrying foreign Muslims,” as stated in the title of this study, can be investigated based on several situations. First, the husband is a national or a guest worker in the host country. Attaining of citizenship is crucial in this point. Second, whether this Filipino woman is a Muslim or not. This relates to the acceptance and continuity of relationship with the wife’s family, together with her changes of religious affiliation.

The data for this paper were obtained both in the Philippines and the Gulf States: from August to September 2011 and December 2014 in Manila, and February to March 2012, and March 2015 in the UAE and Qatar. The author collected statistical data at the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO); attended a guidance and counseling seminar delivered by the People’s Reform Initiative for Social Mobilization Inc. (PRISM), a non-governmental organization (NGO) coordinated with the CFO; and conducted interviews with a worker at PRISM, a Filipino imam living in Manila with the authority of solemnizing Muslim marriage, and eleven women who had foreign Muslim husbands.

Table 2 Top Ten Destination Countries for Overseas Filipino Workers (2006–2015)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Saudi Arabia	223459	238419	275933	291419	293049	316736	330040	382,553	402837	406089	293049
UAE	99212	120657	193810	196815	201214	234775	259546	261119	246231	227076	201214
HK	96929	59169	78345	100142	101340	129575	131680	130686	105737	85704	101340
Qatar	45795	56277	84342	89290	87813	100530	104622	94195	114511	133169	87813
Taiwan	39025	37136	38546	33751	36866	41896	41492	41145	58681	62598	36866
Singapore	28369	49431	41678	54421	70251	146613	172690	173666	140205	141453	70251
Kuwait	27917	37080	38903	45900	53101	65603	75286	67856	70098	86019	53010
Italy	25413	17855	22623	23159	25595	31704	38407	19556	14727	13997	25595
Bahrain	11736	9898	13079	15001	15434	18230	22271	20546	18958	21428	15434
Malaysia	1054	1474	999	7256	9802	16797	25261	34088	31451	26199	13885
Others	183747	172768	169741	235008	229302	215268	233871	243769	226253	225866	225219
Total	788070	811070	974399	1092162	1123676	1318727	1435166	1469179	1430842	1437875	1123676

Source: POEA (2008, 2013, 2015)

Table 3 Number of Registered Filipino Emigrants by Sex and Marital Status (2006–2015)

Year	Sex			Marital Status			
	Male	Female	Total	Single	Married	Others	Total
2006	39	61	100	49	47	4	100
2007	38	62	100	50	45	3	100
2008	39	61	100	50	46	4	100
2009	40	60	100	52	43	5	100
2010	42	58	100	55	41	4	100
2011	41	59	100	54	42	4	100
2012	41	59	100	52	43	5	100
2013	40	60	100	53	42	5	100
2014	40	60	100	56	40	4	100
2015	43	57	100	57	39	4	100

Source: CFO (2016c, 2016d)

Note: Others include widower, separated, and divorced.

2. Institutions Related to Mixed-marriage and Migration

International labor migration has been an integral part of Philippine society, economy, and politics for the last 40 years. It has become even more common with over one million deployments annually in recent years. As of 2013, 10.2 million Filipinos—nearly 10% of the total population—were working and living in 221 countries and regions (CFO 2016a).

The Philippine government has been trying to provide protection for overseas Filipinos so they will not be involved in crimes or abuse abroad. Along with overseas laborers, would-be migrants are required to attend a pre-departure orientation seminar before leaving the country. This includes marriage migrants. The CFO, under the Office of the President, has had the responsibility for handling the guidance and counseling sessions since 1989 (Satake 2011). Two organizations, PRISM and St. Mary Euphrasia Foundation–Center for Overseas Workers, provide the sessions to those going abroad as fiancé(e)s, spouses, or other partners of foreign nationals.

An attendance certificate is necessary to secure the Guidance and Counseling Certificate and the CFO stamp. These must be presented with the spouse/partner's visa at the immigration office at the international airport on the day of departure (CFO Website).

The 2.5-hour guidance and counseling session comprises three parts: introduction on how to open a bank account and save money (conducted by a bank employee); guidance on mixed-marriage migration and group discussion; and one-on-one counseling with the social worker of the NGO. During the first part of the session, attendees gather in one room, regardless of their destination. However, later they are divided into country-specific counseling sessions. The majority of the seminar participants are women. When the author attended one of the PRISM sessions, only four among 34 participants were male. Thus, the seminars are likely to address gender-sensitive issues. Topics include mixed-marriage and migration, cultural and social realities abroad, visa status and strategies to have a more secure living, their rights in the host country, and stress management as well as information on available support networks for women in trouble. They are taught that they must work things out when facing trouble; otherwise, they will just have to go back to the Philippines without anything, usually money and other valuables, to bring home. Counseling is provided by one of PRISM's female social workers in rotation. In one-on-one meetings, she asks questions about age and occupation of the respondent, the spouse's marriage record, how they met, how many times the man has come to see her, whether her parents agree to this marriage, and if they have any pictures taken together as well as his age, personality, job, and position. If the counselor judges the couple is not ready for married life abroad or it is inappropriate, she withholds the certificate. This is done to avoid domestic violence, a quick divorce, or human trafficking. The social workers get in touch with the Filipinos via e-mail or other means after several months to check on them.

In 2010, only five women planning to migrate to the country of a Muslim husband attended the PRISM seminar. This figure is extremely low compared with the total number of marriage migrants. The husbands, from Lebanon, Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia, met the wives while they were working as domestic helpers and company workers abroad. For these women, the counselors explain that based on Muslim law, they might not be the first wife, but perhaps the second, third, or fourth. Four were married in a Muslim marriage ceremony, and one had a civil marriage. However, those who marry foreign Muslims in their overseas working sites especially in the Middle East, they have no chances of knowing custom and traditions of their spouses, not to mention their rights under Islamic laws. This is where the contradictions and issues arise.

3. Marrying Foreign Muslims Abroad

Some Filipinos meet their future foreign Muslim husbands via the Internet now, yet it is more likely that they actually meet while they are working abroad. Shown below is a posting on the Internet related to a Muslim marriage in the Philippines.

My Muslim fiancé and I have tried to process our marriage license at the embassy outside the Philippines but we had some difficulties compiling all the required documents... We've heard from some friends that it's a lot easier to have a Muslim wedding in the Philippines so we gave it a try (Website: "Required Documents for Muslim Marriage in the Philippines").

In this example, a Filipino and her foreign Muslim fiancé were both working and living outside of the

Philippines. They got married in the Philippines because it was faster and easier to get a marriage license. They went to a mosque in a Muslim community in Metro Manila and met with a Filipino imam who solemnized their marriage on the same day. All they had to do was show their passports and pay the imam a processing fee for the *Sharia* (Islamic) court.

If a Muslim couple of different nationalities want to marry in Manila, they look for an imam with a Certificate of Registration of Authority to Solemnize Marriage, who usually serves in mosques located in Muslim communities². Table 4 indicates the nationality of spouses in Muslim marriages solemnized by a Filipino Imam from 1999 to 2010. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is the most common country of nationality of the husband, followed by Saudi Arabia, Israel and Turkey.

Requirements to process a marriage license at the embassy outside of the Philippines are the following: 1) three photocopies of each contracting party’s birth certificate, duly certified by the National Statistics Office (NSO) and authenticated by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in Manila; 2) original NSO Certificate of No Marriage of each contracting party, duly authenticated by the DFA; 3) passport copies of the contracting parties; 4) passport copies of the witnesses; 5) two recent passport-size pictures of the contracting parties; (if applicable) parental consent of the parents for applicants aged 18–21, duly authenticated by the DFA; and 6) (if applicable) parental advice of the parents for applicants aged 22–25, duly authenticated by the DFA. The contracting parties must appear personally at the embassy or consulate general when they submit the above documents and apply for a marriage license. The license will then be posted for fifteen consecutive working days prior to the scheduled wedding. The total amount of fees is approximately 5,000 Philippine Pesos (Website: “Required Documents for Muslim Marriage in the Philippines”).

Table 4 Nationality of Spouses in Muslim Marriages Solemnized by a Filipino Imam by Country (1999–2010)

COUNTRY	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Bahrain					1	1		1					3
Cyprus		1						1			3	1	6
Iran		1				1							2
Israel	1				3		7		1		1		13
Kuwait			1		1			1	1	1	2		7
Lebanon	1	1						1				1	4
Oman						1	1						2
Qatar									1			1	2
Saudi Arabia	2	2	3	1	1		1	3		1	3		17
Syria			1						1				2
Turkey					1	2		1	3	1		1	9
UAE	9	14	10	4	4	6	2	7	4	4	6	7	77
Total	13	19	15	5	11	11	11	15	11	7	15	11	144

Note: The country of destination refers to the country where the foreign partner resides permanently or is a citizen.

² The Certificate of Registration of Authority to Solemnize Marriage has been issued at the National Statistics Office in the Philippines since 1988. This is pursuant to Article 7 of the Family Code of the Philippines.

Like the case mentioned previously, Filipino women frequently come back home alone and the men follow them to get married in the Philippines. The hardship is not just the difficulty of furnishing all these documents, but also the social and legal restrictions for Arab nationals when marrying a non-Arab woman as well as the vulnerability of a woman of non-Arab origin living in the Middle East. Thus, getting a marriage license is time-consuming, and efforts are sometimes in vain.

One reason for these difficulties is that in the Arab Gulf countries where there have been a great number of guest workers, marriage of Arab males to non-nationals is not uncommon and has led to a crisis of national identity (Table 5). The high cost of weddings and the exorbitant *mahr* (a mandatory gift from the groom to the bride) claimed by the *wali* (guardian of bride) of the national women have hindered males from getting married at will. In the UAE, for example, the rate of marrying foreigners rose to 47% of all marriages in 1989, mostly to Asians. This spurred the UAE government to establish the Marriage Fund in 1992, which offered up to 70,000 dirham (approximately 19,000 USD as of 1992) for couples who were nationals on “low incomes” to be wed³. The fund proved to be effective, as the rate of mixed-marriage has decreased to approximately 25% today (Ali 2010). Yet, with the large number of guest workers, it is likely that Filipinos, the fourth largest group of foreigners with more female workers than males, become intimate with the nationals (Table 6). Instead of marrying in the host country, where rules related to marrying a non-national are strict, they choose to marry in the Philippines where the process resulting in marriage solemnization is much faster and easier.

The same can be said for Saudi Arabian male and Filipino female couples where the latter must embrace Islam to marry Saudi Muslim men. However, the situation might be a little different when marrying UAE nationals. The UAE has been called an “open country,” meaning lives are easily adjustable for Filipinos, and Islamic values are more relaxed compared with neighboring cities and countries. Filipino women can marry UAE nationals without changing their religion from Christianity to Islam, although they are strongly advised to convert. Table 7 shows that almost all the women who left as spouses of foreign nationals came from non-predominantly Muslim areas in the Philippines in 1999–2010 (Table 7)⁴. In addition, foreign women married

Table 5 Nationals and Expatriate Populations in Arab Gulf Countries (2010)

	Nationals	Expatriate	Total	% of Nationals
Kuwait	1,100,000	2,370,000	3,480,000	31.8%
Bahrain	529,000	517,000	1,046,000	50.5%
Saudi Arabia	17,000,000	8,000,000	25,000,000	68%
Qatar	300,000	1,280,000	1,580,000	18.9%
UAE	923,000	6,837,000	7,760,000	11.9%
Oman	2,800,000	1,000,000	3,800,000	73.7%
Total	22,622,000	22,004,000	42,666,000	53.1%

Source: Horinuki (2011)

3 The amount of Emirati man’s income should be below 19,000 dirham a month in order to receive a fund (Marriage Fund Homepage), when Filipino domestic helper receive about 1,200 dirham, and Filipino nurses receive 15,000 a month. Similar marriage funds also exist in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Qatar (Rashad, Osman and Roudi-Fahimi 2005).

4 In the Philippines, five provinces (Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi) and two cities (Lamitan and Marawi) are consisting the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

to the UAE nationals may be granted citizenship in the Gulf States after having a residence visa for some years. However, welfare and political participation rights for these naturalized migrants are not the same as for native nationals. There is always a preference for the latter (Matsuo 2008). This discourages Filipinos from staying permanently even though they chose to marry a national, unlike in Western countries such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom (Table 8).

Table 6 Number of Nationals and Non-Nationals in the United Arab Emirates (1968–2008)

Nationality	1968	1975	1985	1992	1997	2003	2008	% (2008)
UAE	114608	201544	396114	531000	658000	808200	866779	12.8
Bidoon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	100000	1.5
Expatriate	65818	358343	983189	1294000	2038000	3232800	5824102	85.8
GCC countries	n.a.	14000	17575	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	–
Yemen	n.a.	9000	6620	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	60000	0.9
Jordan/Palestine	n.a.	14500	19751	151000	100000	n.a.	200000	2.9
Lebanon	n.a.	4500	8379	34700	n.a.	n.a.	40000	0.6
Syria	n.a.	16500	4788	20800	n.a.	n.a.	400000	5.9
Egypt	n.a.	12500	20350	81800	100000	n.a.	250000	3.7
Sudan	n.a.	1500	8978	45900	n.a.	n.a.	30000	0.4
Other Arab countries	n.a.	n.a.	9038	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	–
Iran	n.a.	n.a.	15083	61200	n.a.	200000	450000	6.6
India	n.a.	n.a.	249266	355501	1000000	n.a.	1500000	22.1
Pakistan	n.a.	n.a.	158011	231600	400000	n.a.	900000	13.3
Bangladesh	n.a.	n.a.	27839	61100	100000	n.a.	600000	8.8
Sri Lanka	n.a.	n.a.	12569	60300	125000	n.a.	250000	3.7
Nepal	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	100000	1.5
The Philippines	n.a.	n.a.	8600	35600	100000	n.a.	279602	4.1
Indonesia	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	74000	1.1
China	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	80000	200000	2.9
Other Asian countries	n.a.	n.a.	15,462	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	17500	0.3
Western countries	n.a.	5000	516	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	133000	2.0
Others/Illegal residents	n.a.	n.a.	174	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	340000	5.0
Total	180425	557887	1379303	1825000	2896000	4041000	6790881	100.0
% of the UAE national	63.5	36.1	28.7	29.1	24.4	20.0	12.8	
Total of Arabs	–	274044	491593	865200	858000	–	1846779	
(%)	–	49.1	35.6	47.4	31.8	–	27.2	
Total of Asians	–	161500	472747	744101	1725000	–	3903602	
(%)	–	28.9	34.3	40.8	64.0	–	57.5	

Note: Figures of the UAE nationals and expatriates (excluding 2008) are taken from government statistics. The 2008 figure is estimated from a local newspaper’s report taken by Horinuki. There are no formal figures of expatriate breakdown. Therefore, Horinuki quote from various sources; consequently, the sum of the breakdown is not coincident with the figures of expatriates.

Source: Horinuki (2011)

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Table 7 Number of Registered Filipino Spouses and Other Partners of Foreign Nationals by Province of Origin (1999–2010)

Province	Bahrain	Cyprus	Iran	Israel	Kuwait	Lebanon	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	Syria	Turkey	UAE
Albay				1								
Bataan												1
Batangas				1								2
Bulacan		1	1								1	1
Cagayan					1							1
Camarines Sur							1		1		1	
Cavite				1	2				1			4
Cebu					1		1		1			1
Compostela Valley		1										1
Davao del Norte									1			
Davao del Sur				1							1	1
Eastern Samar		1										
Ilocos Norte												2
Ilocos Sur				1								1
Isabela	1			1		1						2
La Union												1
Laguna					1	1					1	3
Lanao del Norte	1											2
Leyte		1							1		1	
Maguindanao												1
Misamis Oriental												2
NCR 4 th District				2	1			1	2	1		7
NCR 2 nd District			1	1		2		1	2	1	2	12
NCR 3 rd District		1							1			3
NCR, 1 st District									1			7
Negros Occidental									1			2
Negros Oriental											2	
Northern Samar									1			
Nueva Ecija		1										
Occidental Mindoro												1
Palawan												1
Pampanga				1					1			5
Pangasinan				2								3
Rizal				1	1							3
Western Samar												2
Southern Leyte												1
Tarlac	1								2			
Zambales									1			2
Total	3	6	2	13	7	4	2	2	17	2	9	75

Source: CFO personnel

Table 8 Estimates of Overseas Filipino Workers by Top Ten Destination Countries and Residency Status (as of December 2013)

COUNTRY	Permanent	Temporary	Irregular	Total
Saudi Arabia	264	948038	80500	1028802
UAE	1711	777894	42805	822410
Qatar	16	189534	15000	204550
Kuwait	502	191787	6000	198289
Bahrain	91	69307	2685	72083
HK	13251	182843	5000	201094
Singapore	44102	110141	49000	203243
Taiwan	2459	84511	2225	89195
Malaysia	26007	319123	448450	793580
Canada	626668	89615	5295	721578

Notes: Permanent migrants refer to Filipino migrants and legal permanent residents abroad. They may be Filipinos who are Filipino citizens, who are Philippine passport holders, or who have become naturalized citizens in the host country. Popular labels for these kinds of migrants are “immigrants” and “emigrants.” Temporary migrants refer to Filipinos whose stay overseas, while regular and properly documented, is temporary. This is due to the employment-related nature of their status in the host country. Temporary migrants include contract workers, intra-company transferees, students, trainees, entrepreneurs, businesspeople, traders, and others whose stay abroad is six months or more, as well as their accompanying. These migrants are popularly referred to as “overseas contract workers” or “overseas Filipino workers.” Irregular migrants are migrants whose stay abroad is not properly documented. They also do not have valid residence and work permits; they can also be overstaying workers or tourists from a foreign country. The migrants falling into this category have had this status for six months or more. A non-discriminatory label for these migrants is “undocumented migrants”. In Filipino international migration parlance, these migrants are called “TNTs” (tago ng tago or “always in hiding”).

Source: CFO (2016a)

4. Issues related to Mixed-marriage with Foreign Muslims

Issues related to mixed-marriage with foreign Muslims are different in each situation based on the status of both parties as well as the life stage of the household. The following are some cases of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) reviewed during the author’s fieldworks.

4.1. Case (a): A Muslim OFW marrying a host country national

If the couple has children, their citizenship will be one of the main issues when marrying nationals in Arab countries. Nurifa, 32 years old, and a born Muslim in the Philippines, had worked in Qatar for five years as a domestic worker when she got acquainted with a Qatari national⁵. They became “cell phone pals” for eight years while she was working in the country. When she had to go back to her homeland, the man followed her to the Philippines. They got married in one of the Muslim communities in Manila and bought a house where she delivered a baby girl. The husband, who worked as a police officer in Qatar, visited the Philippines annually for several months and encouraged her to migrate to Qatar to have the family united. Nurifa was reluctant in the beginning for fear that her parents-in-law would get custody of the baby and cast Nurifa out of the family. Eventually, when the child turned two years old, the mother and daughter moved to Qatar.

⁵ All the names cited in this paper are pseudonym.

In Qatar, as in other Arab countries, the nationality of a child is that of the father, whereas in the Philippines, it is recognized as that of the father and mother. Thus, Nurifa's daughter is a Qatari national even if she was born outside the country. This, Nurifa thought, was the reason her husband's family wanted to keep her as a member of their family. What if she was forced to divorce? Would she still be able to stay in the country close to her daughter so she could see her occasionally? If she did not have a stable job, or any "sponsor", would she be deported? These are the anxieties and insecurities that Nurifa faced. Both the Philippine and Qatari government had not signed the Hague treaty. The differences in recognition of nationality as well as conditions to grant nationality became challenges she had to face, not to mention that she was isolated and had no relatives abroad.

4.2. Case (b): A Muslim OFW marrying a guest worker in a host country

Aisha, a 46-year-old born Muslim in the Philippines, had worked in Saudi Arabia as a nurse for six years when she met a Sri Lankan Muslim engineer. They became intimate but were afraid the *mutawa* (religious police) would find out about their relationship. Thus, they got married in Saudi Arabia. Marriage between guest workers is not too difficult compared with marriage between a guest worker and national, as long as they have been in the country for a long time and earn enough money. As for Aisha's family it was first time to accept foreign Muslim male as a member. They'd never met a Sri Lankan before. The reception happened to be a huge feast as relatives from neighboring country were eager to catch the glimpse of the groom.

Several years later, the family moved to the homeland of the husband because they had seven children, who were registered as Sri Lankan citizens. One of the reasons for this emigration was the costly living expenses, including high tuition fees for the children of non-nationals (education, up to higher education, is free for children of nationals). Second, it was the husband's request to have their children brought up in his homeland, not in a third country, so they could live close to his relatives. After settling in Sri Lanka, Aisha went home for a visit to the Philippines with some of the children once every several years. However, things changed when her husband passed away. To support the family as a widow, Aisha left four children with her husband's close relative, and sent three daughters to her relative in the southern Philippines. She did so as the husband's relative wanted her daughters to marry Sri Lankan male at young age. She started working as a nurse in Qatar and additionally she engaged in other part time jobs to send money for her children both in Sri Lanka and the Philippines. Now she is trying to get dual citizenship for her three daughters in the Philippines because the college tuition fees for foreign nationals are high. Transnational families use and change their citizenship according to the life stage of their members.

4.3. Case (c): A Christian OFW marrying a guest worker in a host country

Mariam, 33-year old, a born Christian Filipino but convert to Islam after marriage, had worked in the UAE as personnel at an internet café since 2003. There she met her Pakistani husband who was frequent customer. They have developed relationship and got married in 2004. She never thought that she would be marrying to foreign Muslims. Like other Filipino colleague, she had dreamt of marrying "white" man to be immigrated to their countries.

Although her husband did not force her to be a Muslim, she started to learn about Islam and began attending classes for new Muslims nearby their house. In the UAE, there are several centers to study Islam and Arabic for the newly converts as well as the longtime Muslims, which are run privately or under the government's

department. It is interesting to say that the biggest number of students there are the Filipino converts, so-called balik-Islam. On Fridays, there are Filipino classes, with Filipino teachers and more or less 100 students. This is the time for them to gather, not only to study but to mingle with other Filipino balik-Islam. Mariam was one of the students in the center, where she developed friends with other “sisters,” and gradually placing distance with her former non-Muslim friends.

After marrying at the Court, it became a pattern that every other year, they would have vacation in the Philippines or Pakistan. Although they have no children, considering their future, they have bought a lot and building a house in her husband’s hometown. She had learnt how to cook Pakistani food for him. Now besides her full-time job, Mariam is earning some money with part time job by selling livingware to support her family in the Philippines as well as to save money. It is their plan to settle in Pakistan when they saved enough money to start business there.

4.4. Case (d): A Catholic OFW marrying a guest worker in a host country

Not all the Christian Filipino embrace Islam religion because of marriage. Some convert by their own will irrespectively of their husbands’ faith, while others do not mind at all. Jessica, a 47-year-old Catholic Filipino can be considered as one.

As an interior designer in the UAE, Jessica and her Iraqi husband had been officemate for a year in 2005. They get to know each other and decided to marry. It took almost a year and half to prepare all the documents required at the Court as the husband had to change his job twice because of the comparatively ill working condition occurred by financial recession in Dubai during 2007-2008. The two wed at last in 2008 in the UAE. It was their choice to get married here to have simple wedding.

In marrying a Muslim, the husband did not oblige her to change her religion. He was professional; he had a dentist and a teacher for his siblings and a pilot for his father. His mother came over to the UAE to meet Jessica, who learnt basic Arabic to entertain her. It seemed that the whole family did not mind having Filipina wife, although her husband wanted Filipina for his wife as they were known to be devoted and family-loving people. For Jessica’s family, her sister claimed why she chose a foreign Muslim man, but in end, she was persuaded by her mother who also stayed with Jessica before her marriage for three months in the UAE.

Because of the contemporary situation in Iraq, the two have no plan of living in Iraq. They are looking for a work in the United States, but will probably settle in the Philippines. They are now started to save a little for they can put us a business in the Philippines, as both of them are in mid-40s, before long they have to leave this country. They are gradually preparing for their next life stage.

5. Discussion

Filipinos generally work abroad as individual, whether they are married or not. In the Gulf States, though they might have co-bedspacer in the accommodation, Filipinos spend working alone in their worksites under the environment where they might not only be laid off anytime but also have to leave the country once they have no job there. In such vulnerable situation, the workers look for spiritual and emotional fulfillment by searching for another religious belief and/or partners in daily lives.

As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, the issues that the mixed-marriage Filipino women face differ according to her religious background and the nationality of the male. Case 1 dealt with a Filipina Muslim

with a child, who faced the differences in recognition of nationality as well as conditions to grant nationality. Her being of Muslim did not help her much to get a place in the larger context of family in Qatar; her nationality and being a domestic worker raised the hurdle for her to be part of the family members, especially in clan-based society in the Gulf.

For the Case 1, the mixed-marriage couple takes it granted to live in Qatar as it is a home country of the husband. Yet for the expatriate mixed-marriage couples based in the Gulf states, they have to choose whether their countries of origin, or the third country to settle down. For Case 2, the family moved from one place to another and negotiated the citizenship of their children according to the life situation of their members. For this Filipina Muslim mother who later become widow, she thought of the best she can do, thus keeping more vulnerable daughters in her own relative's hand, while leaving sons to the care of in-laws. This was attributed from the difference between the two societies on affording educational opportunities to daughters, though they were the same Muslims.

For Case 1 and Case 2 mixed-marriage couples, religion did not matter to them much since both of them were Muslims. For Case 3, a Filipina Christian marrying to Pakistani, religion was a big issue for her, not only about her conversion but social relation with her families and co-Filipinos. She became Muslim, though she said it was not for the sake of her husband, and developed friends with other "sisters," gradually placing distance with her former non-Muslim friends. Economic imbalance has also become an issue over the couples as both send money to their own families, but the wife's shouldering more labor burdens to save for their future. This is what she would have wanted to avoid by marrying to "white" man so as to enjoy a plain housewife life.

Thousands of workers from war-torn Middle East countries come to work in the Gulf countries. Having such a man as a husband, the possibilities of the mixed-marriage couple to stay is either the Philippines or the third countries, such as United States, the United Kingdom or Canada where they can attain green cards. It would be presumably not too difficult if they are professionals, but if they are casual workers, prejudice against Muslim hampers them to immigrate to these countries. For Case 4, the couple's probable choice is to go to the Philippines after early retirement, though they may still have to suffer bias toward Muslim male in the Christian-dominated society.

6. Concluding Remarks

In the age of globalization, international labor migration has fostered Filipinos marrying people with different affiliation, including foreign Muslims. In this study, Muslim spouses of Filipino women were mainly divided into two types: guest workers in the receiving country or nationals in the Gulf States. The marriage setting differed according to their nationality, and the issues these women faced varied by original religious background, life stage, and legal status. There were issues for these women, including social isolation, problems related to citizenship of their children, and unstable job condition. These circumstances seem far from what Constable (2005) calls "global hypergamy."

The study requires further data and analyses to support the issues described in the cases. Empirical studies are needed that focus on chronological changes and specific topics. In particular, research on families living in a third country and families of native nationals is necessary to understand transnational mixed-marriage Philippine families in this age of globalization.

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