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Filipino Marriage Migration

ABSTRACT: *This study focuses on the phenomenon of Filipino marriage migration. It examines the scale and patterns, as well as the issues and concerns of Filipino spouses/partners of foreign nationals. The study argues that marriage migration is undeniably important in the migration of Filipinos. Official records show that the number of Filipino marriage migrants has increased more than two-fold from 1989 up to 2012. This paper also claims that while there are successful couples in intermarriages, they have experienced a myriad of issues and concerns, among others: irregularities in the requisites of marriage; multiple/serial sponsorship; domestic violence; mail-order bride scheme and marriage brokers; laws and immigration policies of some countries; new culture and language; and social construction of Filipino women. In order to address the aforementioned concerns, the Philippine government and other groups recognize the need to address the issues and concerns of Filipinos marriage migrants. Among the activities and programs for marriage migrants are the mandatory counseling program before departure, provision of list of support network and client feedback, conduct of community education program, establishment of cooperative partnership, and conduct of study visit abroad and passage of relevant national laws. This study notes that the various initiatives to address the concerns of those in intermarriages are laudable. There is, however, a need to harmonize, document, evaluate, and monitor the efforts of various instrumentalities.*

KEY WORD: *Filipino spouses/partners, marriage migration, foreign nationals, issues and concerns, and counseling program.*

RESUME: "Migrasi Pernikahan Bangsa Filipina". Penelitian ini memfokuskan pada fenomena migrasi pernikahan bangsa Filipina. Ianya mengkaji skala dan pola, serta isu-isu dan keprihatinan pasangan suami-istri Filipina dengan warga negara asing. Studi ini menyatakan bahwa migrasi pernikahan merupakan hal sangat penting dalam migrasi bangsa Filipina. Catatan resmi menunjukkan bahwa jumlah migrasi perkawinan bangsa Filipina telah meningkat lebih dari dua kali lipat dari tahun 1989 sampai dengan tahun 2012. Makalah ini juga menemukan bahwa sementara ada pasangan yang sukses dalam perkawinan antarabangsa, ada juga mereka yang mengalami segudang masalah dan keprihatinan, antara lain: penyimpangan dalam syarat perkawinan; beberapa/seri sponsor; kekerasan dalam rumah tangga; pengantin pesanan dan pernikahan perantara; hukum dan kebijakan imigrasi beberapa negara; bahasa dan budaya baru; serta konstruksi social perempuan Filipina. Untuk mengatasi masalah tersebut, pemerintah Filipina dan kelompok kepentingan lainnya menyadari perlu segera mengatasi masalah dan keprihatinan migrasi pernikahan bangsa Filipina. Diantara kegiatan dan program pernikahan migran adalah konseling wajib sebelum keberangkatan, penyediaan daftar dukungan jaringan dan umpan-balik klien, melakukan program pendidikan masyarakat, pembentukan kemitraan kooperatif, serta melakukan studi kunjungan ke luar negeri dan kajian hukum nasional yang relevan. Penelitian ini mencatat bahwa berbagai inisiatif untuk mengatasi masalah dalam perkawinan antarabangsa tersebut adalah patut dipuji. Ada juga kebutuhan untuk menyelaraskan, mendokumentasikan, mengevaluasi, dan memantau upaya berbagai perangkat pendukungnya.

KATA KUNCI: *Pasangan suami/istri Filipina, migrasi pernikahan, warga negara asing, masalah dan keprihatinan, program konseling, dan berbagai perangkat pendukung.*

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How to cite this article? Cabilao-Valencia, Minda I. (2015). "Filipino Marriage Migration" in *SOSIOHUMANIKA: Jurnal Pendidikan Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan*, Vol.8(2) November, pp.161-170. Bandung, Indonesia: Minda Masagi Press and UNIPA Surabaya, ISSN 1979-0112.

Chronicle of the article: Accepted (September 27, 2015); Revised (October 30, 2015); and Published (November 30, 2015).

INTRODUCTION

International marriage migration or intermarriage or marriage involving couples of different race or ethnic or national backgrounds is increasingly becoming a global phenomenon (Cahill, 1990; and Heikkila & Yeoh, 2010). It has also increased significantly in the Asian region over the past few decades (Belanger, Hong & Linh, 2013).

In the Philippines, official data show that marriage migration component is important in the migration of Filipinos. From 7,189 Filipino marriage migrants in 1989, the figure has increased more than two-fold to 21,409 by 2012 (CFO, 2011 and 2013).

There are many elements at play, which may explain this migration flow. Factors such as international movement of people, sex ratio imbalances, changing family and societal patterns, facility of travel and communication overseas, employment opportunities, perceived better life chances overseas, and offer of marriage, among others encourage the trend.

This paper aims to examine the phenomenon of Filipino marriage migration. The first part of the paper looks at the scale and patterns, the socio-demographic profiles of these migrants as well as their reasons for migration, choice of life partners, and their manner of meeting their partners, among others.

The second part of the paper analyzes the conditions and experiences of Filipinos in intermarriages. It specifically deals with their issues and concerns on account of their stint abroad.

The third part of the paper discusses the policies and strategies undertaken by various agencies and groups in addressing the issues of marriage migration. In particular, it examines the migration management policy of the Philippine government concerning its nationals migrating for the purpose of marriage.

METHOD

The data for this study were based on the information provided in the pre-departure registration forms completed by Filipino spouses/partners of foreign nationals,

before they underwent the mandatory guidance and counseling program of the CFO (Commission on Filipinos Overseas) in 2013. The CFO is an agency of the Philippine government under the Office of the President of the Philippines, which is mandated to promote the interests of Filipino emigrants, including those in intermarriages (CFO, 2013).

Other data were obtained from government records and literature review. In addition, interviews were conducted with CFO Counselors and concerned entities.

SCALE AND PATTERNS OF FILIPINO MARRIAGE MIGRATION

As of December 2012, stock estimates of overseas Filipinos indicate that about 10.4 million Filipinos, or approximately 10% of the total Philippine population, are residing overseas. Of this figure, about 4.22 million or 40% are overseas workers; 4.92 million or 47% are permanent residents overseas; and 1.34 million or 13% are considered irregular migrants (CFO, 2013).

Records of the CFO in 2013 also reveal that the marriage migration component is important in the migration of Filipinos. In 1989, there were only 7,189 registered Filipino spouses/partners of foreign nationals, who underwent the guidance and counseling program of CFO. This number increased more than two-fold to 21,409 by 2012 (CFO, 2011 and 2013).

The latest data show that from 2003 to 2012, the CFO provided guidance and counseling to 206,728 Filipino spouses/partners of foreign nationals or an average of 20,000 counselees every year.

The highest number of marriage migrants, who registered with the CFO, was in 2006 with 24,904 or 12% of the total number of registered permanent migrants. This was followed in 2007 with 23,927 or 12%; then, in 2012, with 21,409 or 10%. There was also a 6% increase of registered Filipino spouses/partners from 2011 to 2012.

During the ten year period, the number of Filipino women marriage migrants outnumbered their male counterparts. Women accounted for at least 92% or 189,215

and men at 8% or 17,513 of the total figure. This shows that Filipino marriage migration is highly feminized.

From 2003 to 2012, the USA (United States of America) was consistently the top destination country for Filipinos who emigrated, due to marriage-related reasons accounting to 45.12% (CFO, 2013). The other major destination countries of Filipino spouses/partners of foreign nationals were Japan (22.36%), Australia (7.3%), Canada (4.76%), South Korea (2.41%), United Kingdom (5.09%), Germany (2.79%), Norway (1.29%), Taiwan (1.27%), Sweden (1.28%), and other countries (6.33%).

While the number of marriage migrants South Koreans declined by 8% from 2011 to 2012, the overall number marriage migrants for South Korea still continues to rise over the last five years. There was a rise of 118% from 2007 to 2012 or an annual average of 21% (CFO, 2013). In the case of those bound for Japan, the number has annually declined by an average of 20%, with a 76% decline from 2006 to 2012 (CFO, 2013).

In terms of age, about 30% of Filipino spouses/partners belong to the age bracket of 25-29. Some 23% belong to the age bracket of 20-24, and about 20% came from the age range of 30-34 (CFO, 2013).

When asked about their knowledge of their destination countries, only 32% had sufficient knowledge; some 61% had limited knowledge and 8% had no knowledge at all. The data show that most of the marriage migrants are not prepared for the society and culture of their spouses/partners (CFO, 2013).

In regard to the educational background of the Filipino spouses/partners, 31% were college graduates, 18% had some tertiary education, and about 6% finished post graduate studies. Some 17% of the Filipino spouses/partners were high school graduates (CFO, 2013).

In regard to their employment, 41% the Filipino spouses/partners reported that they were employed prior to their departure. Of this figure, 15% were engaged in professional, technical, managerial, executive, and administrative work; and 26% in clerical, sales, service, armed forces,

agriculture-related, and production-process-related occupation. Some 21% reported that they were unemployed with 19% as housewives. About 38% of the Filipino spouses/partners did not report any occupation (CFO, 2013).

CFO records also reveal that Filipinos met their spouses/partners through various means (CFO, 2013). A significant 31% of the Filipinos met their spouses/partners through personal introduction by their friends or relatives. The others met their foreign spouses/partners in their place of work (22%), through the internet (20%), and through referrals by friends and relatives (20%).

While personal introduction remains the common mode of introduction between the Filipino and the foreign partner, not to be discounted is the increased use of more innovative means of advertisement and matching of partners through the internet.

Less than 1% of Filipino spouses/partners were matched by marriage bureaus. This is due to the passage of RA (Republic Act) 6955 or the Anti-Mail Order Bride Law, which penalizes mail-order bride arrangements (RA, 1990).

When asked for their reasons for marrying a foreigner, most of them cited love as their primary motivation. Others invariably revealed that their decision was due to their spouses'/partners' personal or physical attributes as well as their exemplary domestic capabilities or ability to provide for their needs. The others said that they were encouraged by their friends and relatives to marry a foreign national (interview with CFO Counselors, 17/7/2015).

During the in depth counseling, however, others believe that marrying a foreign national coming from a developed country would accord them prestige in the community. The foreign national is usually seen as a *"knight in shining armor ready to rescue a damsel in distress"* or a *"passport to the good life"* (interview with CFO Counselors, 17/7/2015). Many women in intermarriages are motivated by a strong desire to go abroad, and escape poverty. The reasons for migration, thus, reflects that the migration flow of Filipino women in intermarriages is class, gender, and race-mediated.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS IN INTERMARRIAGES

This paper argues that there are successful intermarriages as couples have tried to negotiate their differences. It is unquestionable, however, that marriage migrants have experienced a myriad of issues and concerns in as much as both migration and marriage separately involve risk-taking. These issues and concerns involve irregularities in the requisites of marriage; multiple/serial sponsorship; domestic violence; mail-order bride scheme and marriage brokers; laws and immigration policies of some countries; new culture and language; and social construction of Filipino women, among others.

Irregularities in the Requisites of Marriage. In the course of providing pre-departure counselling services for Filipino marriage migrants, the CFO (Commission on Filipinos Overseas) has identified a number of illegal practices undertaken by marriage brokers to circumvent the Philippine government's policy. At times, these misdeeds are done in conspiracy with the victims themselves and/or their relatives, who force or threaten these women to such unfortunate situations.

In violation of the Family code of the Philippines, certain essential and formal requisites of marriage are tampered with by marriage brokers, who render certain unions voidable from the very beginning. These include altering the age of the Filipino in the birth documents to reflect that he/she is of legal age even if the Filipino is still a minor; illegally obtaining a marriage license; forging the signatures of the bride's parents to obtain parental consent or advice to marry; misrepresenting oneself to obtain a legal capacity to contract marriage; and conniving with solemnizing officers who have expired registration certificate.

Multiple/Serial Sponsorship. A multiple sponsor refers to a foreigner who has previously petitioned for the immigration of more than one partner, with no derogatory from the said earlier partnership(s). The reasons for sponsoring another partner may be due to death of or divorce from his/her

Filipino partner, among others.

A serial sponsor refers to a foreigner who has previously petitioned for the immigration of more than one partner, with a derogatory record from the said earlier partnership. Cases range from domestic violence, pornography, and drug addiction, among others.

In view of the above, the Philippine government does not discriminate or ban foreigners with records of multiple sponsorship from petitioning their Filipino spouses/partners. However, those who have been sponsored by foreigners with records of serial sponsorship are subjected to a more rigorous counseling process.

Domestic Violence. Some Filipinos in intermarriages experience various forms of domestic violence. These cases range from physical, verbal, emotional, psychological, financial, and sexual abuse. A case in point is that many of the Filipino women are pressured to work harder by their husbands "to be worth the money" in bringing them to their husbands' countries (interview with CFO Counselors, 17/7/2015).

There are foreign partners who treat their partners as domestic helpers, farm workers or sex slaves. For them, sponsoring a Filipino partner is for their own personal advantage and merely an economic transaction.

There are also a number of Filipino spouses/partners who are not aware of the bona fides of their foreign partners. They cannot even state the complete names, birth dates, or address of their foreign counterparts. Such lack of information may make them vulnerable to domestic violence.

Moreover, while there may be Filipinos who are aware that their foreign spouses/partners have already petitioned another Filipino before and that such previous relationship led to an abusive relationship, the situation is never seen as a potential problem area. As some CFO (Commission on Filipinos Overseas) Counselors would put it, there are Filipino spouses/partners who despite undergoing several counseling sessions remain "willing victims" (interview with CFO Counselors, 17/7/2015).

Mail Order Bride Scheme and Marriage

Brokers. One issue among marriage migrants is the mail order bride scheme or the practice of some unscrupulous agencies/individuals of matching Filipinos for marriage. This scheme is also one of the means to perpetuate trafficking in persons. Based on the guidance and counseling session for spouses/partners of foreign nationals, most victims fall prey because they are made to believe that earning money will be easier if they marry a foreigner instead of working abroad.

Some of the Filipinas, however, find difficulty staying in the marriage, because of unfamiliarity with the husband and false expectations. Marriage brokers continuously stereotype Filipina brides as loyal to the family and obedient to their husbands, in the same way that foreigners looking for wives are wealthy. As a consequence, both the Filipinos and their foreign spouses/partners suffer because contrary to their expectations, they are given limited information or time to decide about their marriage. More often than not, marriage brokers also give false promises or incorrect information on the partners to expedite decision making.

Another trend among mail-order bride victims is participating in what is referred to as "show-ups". This is when young Filipina from urban areas and far flung provinces take part in a line up of women inside a hotel, restaurant, condominium, or even inside a cramped vehicle where foreigners choose their future bride. After just a few days, the marriage is held between the foreigner and the Filipina regardless if they barely knew each other or have yet to undergo the legal procedures prior to contracting marriage.

International marriage brokerage is considered a lucrative business. In South Korea alone, there are about 1,000 agencies which are actively involved in the industry (Yang, 2014). In Japan, according to the *Straits Times* on June 24, 2005, there are 3,100 match making agencies, and the industry is worth 30 billion Yen or USD (Dollar United States of America) 280 million (cited by Jones, 2012).

In addition, based on reports received by

CFO (Commission on Filipinos Overseas), a marriage broker will sometimes charge a steep fee from the foreigner per match. While the foreigner believes that the amount he paid was for his bride and her family, the money is in fact shared among the marriage brokers, organized syndicates and fixers (CFO, 2011 and 2013).

The set up sometimes lead to the perception among foreigners that their Filipina brides are properties they bought whom they can use, abuse, and sometimes trade like a regular commodity. Women stuck in this kind of relationship are perpetually victimized and continue to be vulnerable to more serious cases of abuse, domestic violence, and even human trafficking.

In spite of the laws which prohibit such practice, there are Filipinos who continue to marry their foreign partners through contracts with introduction agencies or through newspaper ads. The internet is also increasingly used to advertise prospective brides and promote match-making activities. These trends support the observation of G. Jones (2012) that the use of matchmaking agencies and the internet in looking for partners has undeniably influenced and impacted the international marriage market.

Laws and Immigration Policies of Some Countries. The laws and immigration policies of some countries may not be favorable to Filipino spouses/partners. International marriage migration has become the ground of contention over rights, privileges, and access (Guzman, 2009). There are issues relating to the granting of citizenship as well as the concerns of rights and access to social benefits and employment.

In Japan, for instance, the residency status of the foreign spouse depends on the length of his/her marriage to the Japanese national. This is due to the fact that the Japanese spouse serves as the sponsor of the foreign spouse's visa. Hence, upon divorce, the Japanese spouse is no longer under obligation to sponsor his/her foreign spouse's visa.

In the case of Filipino marriage migrants

in Korea, their concerns and problems occur before they acquire their Korean citizenship (Han, 2005). Prior to the revision of the Korean immigration law, there is no permanent residency status given to alien or foreign spouses upon admission in Korea. The law provides citizenship eligibility for alien spouses who marry Korean nationals after two years of marriage and with the spouse's or partner's consent.

These citizenship requirements complicate the problem since spousal abuse usually occurs during the first few months of marriage. More often than not, most Korean men who marry foreigners do not agree to sign for their spouse's citizenship for fear that these women would eventually run away.

This condition supports the argument of S. Castles & A. Davidson (2000) and M. Kim (2011) that in many countries, legal factors increase women's vulnerability: women who separate from their partners as a result of violence or incompatibility may lose their residence status and be forced to leave the country. The legal status of women married to foreign nationals is completely dependent on the goodwill of their husbands. As such, when marriages are dissolved during the period of conditional residency, women also lose their right to remain in their husbands' countries (Castles & Davidson, 2000; and Kim, 2011).

New Culture and Language. Migration for some Filipinos may not be easy, because of the need to adjust to new environment, climate, and language. There are climatic differences between the Philippines and countries with temperate climates. Moreso, while most Filipinos speak English, some find the idiomatic expressions of some English speaking countries as strange. There is language barrier in Germany, Japan, and other European and Asian countries. Communication problem becomes a more serious obstacle to meaningful relationships if the partners neither comprehend nor speak their partners' language.

Some Filipinos also realize how different they are culturally from their spouses/partners when they reach their destination

countries. Filipinos have to contend with the various cultural differences in lifestyle, language, cultural assumptions, gender structures, and family roles, among others. In certain instances, they experience "culture shock" and differences from the food they eat to religious practices. There are also foreign partners who live in the "outback" or provincial areas. The feeling of separation, having no support group makes the Filipinos' adjustment difficult.

Due to the language barrier and different cultures between the Philippines and their host countries, most Filipino marriage migrants are also marginalized in terms of access to information. There are some marriage migrants who are not even aware that they are entitled to public welfare services, such as social support, social security benefits, and health care benefits due to lack of information.

Social Construction of Filipino Women in Intermarriages. There are varied perceptions regarding Filipino women married to foreign nationals. These women are regarded as "*poor women who get married for money*" or "*who go abroad through fake marriages or marriage bureaus*". Since these modes of introduction usually involve money, some foreigners often have a low opinion of Filipino women in intermarriages and the latter normally suffer from prejudice and discrimination. The negative stereotypes can be a form of victimization as it leads some foreigners to regard their Filipino wives as slaves, maids, or second class citizens.

These varied images of Filipino women could be a burden for some women. Such perception becomes a stumbling block to their full integration in their host country. They sometimes feel they have to work doubly hard to have a successful marriage.

There have been attempts by some Filipinos in intermarriages, however, to dispel this negative stereotype by being involved in community activities, such as providing free tutorials in English to local children. Some cope by looking for a part time job and, at the same time, trying to establish and maintain harmonious relations with the husband and the in-laws.

THE PHILIPPINE RESPONSE

The aforementioned concerns of Filipino marriage migrants, nonetheless, do not mean that all those in intermarriages are problematic. There are many Filipinos in intermarriages who have well integrated in their spouses' / partners' societies.

The Philippine government and other groups, however, recognize the need to address the concerns of Filipinos in intermarriages. Cognizant of the challenges and vulnerabilities faced by Filipino marriage migrants, the Philippine government and various entities have taken efforts to implement various activities and programs.

Mandatory Counseling. The government has taken the initiative to empower migrants and those in intermarriages through education and information. A directive from the Philippine DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs) requires passport applicants who are proceeding abroad as spouses/partners of foreign nationals to undergo the guidance and counseling program of the CFO or Commission on Filipinos Overseas (*cf* DFA of the Philippines, 1994 and 1997).

The country-specific counseling aims to provide adequate information and advice on the realities of international migration and intermarriages, thereby enabling prospective migrants to make informed decisions, and prepare them for their adjustment and settlement overseas. The program is also a means for screening potential victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.

During the counseling sessions, "would be victims" are easily detected through the GCIS (Guidance and Counseling Information System). The database allows CFO Counselors to identify foreign petitioners, who have petitioned more than one Filipino for marriage or those with derogatory records. This database is being used by CFO Counselors in providing advice and safeguards for marriage migrants, who may be unaware of the status of their partners (interview with CFO Counselors, 17/7/2015). Sources of data on these nationals are Philippine Embassies and Consulates, various government and non-

government agencies, and victims, among others.

List of Support Network and Client Feedback. After the counseling sessions, all Filipino marriage migrants are also provided with a list of migrant support network in their countries of destination. These migrant organizations extend support to migrants such as post-arrival service.

The CFO (Commission on Filipinos Overseas) has also maintained linkages with overseas Filipinos through clientele feedback forms and exchange of personal correspondence between CFO Counselors and Filipino marriage migrants. The latter are encouraged to send back the completed clientele feedback forms that are given to them during the counseling sessions. This is being done to identify on a continuing basis, critical areas where government intervention might be necessary (interview with CFO Counselors, 17/7/2015).

Community Education Program. Another preventive program to safeguard the interests of Filipinos in intermarriages is the conduct of a nationwide CEP (Community Education Program) on international migration in major provincial origin of migrants. Since 1987, the CFO (Commission on Filipinos Overseas), in cooperation with other government and non-government agencies, the academe, and church groups, has been conducting the CEP to generate community involvement in migration concerns. It aims to raise public awareness about migration and intermarriage issues, and policies and programs directed against illegal recruitment, documentation fraud, and human trafficking, among others (interview with CFO Counselors, 17/7/2015).

Cooperative Partnership and Study Visit. The CFO (Commission on Filipinos Overseas) has also continuously established cooperative partnerships with the host governments of destination countries of Filipino marriage migrants. In 2012, the CFO and the Korean Ministry of Gender Equality and Family agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, which aims to facilitate the adjustment and integration of Filipino

marriage migrants to South Korea (interview with CFO Counselors, 17/7/2015).

In addition, CFO Counselors regularly conduct study visit to destination countries of Filipino marriage migrants. The activity, which is often in cooperation with embassies and other organizations, aims to determine the conditions of Filipino marriage migrants in their communities and enhance partnerships with concerned local and state agencies (interview with CFO Counselors, 17/7/2015).

National Laws. The Philippine government has also passed the following laws to protect its nationals who are married to foreign nationals:

Republic Act No. 6955 or the Anti-Mail Order Bride Law of 1990 penalizes the matching of Filipino women for marriage to foreign nationals on a mail order basis and other similar practices, including the advertisement, publication, printing or distribution of brochures, flyers, and other propaganda materials (RA, 1990).

Republic Act No. 9208 or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 further emphasizes the prohibition of matching or contracting marriage between Filipinos and foreign nationals for marriage for the purpose of acquiring, buying, offering, selling or trading the Filipino to engage in prostitution, pornography, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery, involuntary servitude or debt bondage (RA, 2003).

Republic Act 9262 or the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004 recognizes the need to protect the family and its members, particularly women and children, from violence and threats to their personal safety and security (RA, 2004).

Republic Act No. 8042 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 aims to institute the policies of overseas employment and establish a higher standard of protection and promotion of the welfare of migrant workers, their families and overseas Filipinos in distress (RA, 1995).

CONCLUSION

By way of concluding, intermarriage is indeed a reality in Philippine society. While there are successful stories, these Filipinos in

intermarriages have invariably experienced issues and problems. Interestingly, the Philippine government is aware of the realities of intermarriages. It recognizes the instrumental nature of the union and its vulnerabilities to struggles and conflict, even ending with the victimization of the Filipino spouse/partner. The assumption is that identifying and managing the issues of those in intermarriage with a set of ready interventions will prevent greater conflict.

There is still much to be done and explored, however, to protect the interests and welfare of Filipino marriage migrants. The Philippine government, through the help of civil society, may expand the pre-departure program for Filipino marriage migrants by including the family in the counseling program so they too will become aware of the conditions faced by Filipinos in intermarriages.

Cooperative partnerships with governments of destination countries can also be further enhanced by working towards the implementation of an orientation on Philippine culture and society for foreign nationals who intend to marry a Filipino.

In regard to the ongoing programs for those in intermarriages, these must be done in collaboration with agencies in the Philippines and paralleled by agencies of the same dynamics in the destination countries to ensure their sustainability. Institutionalization of social protection mechanisms, both in the places of origin and destination, must be part of the management of marriage migration. The Philippine government may forge more bilateral agreements and replicate its cooperative partnership with South Korea in other host countries of Filipino marriage migrants.

Other initiatives to address issues of Filipinos in intermarriages are laudable. The challenge lies on how to harmonize, document, evaluate and monitor the initiatives, and efforts of various instrumentalities in addressing the complex issues of Filipinos in intermarriages.¹

¹*Statement:* I, hereby, certify that this paper is my own work. Due acknowledgment is made in the text for materials written by other authors and researchers. I also declare that this paper has not been submitted to other publishers and not been published by other scholarly journals.

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Filipino Marriage Migration

(Source: <http://www.filipinodatings.com>, 9/10/2015)

Intermarriage is indeed a reality in Philippine society. While there are successful stories, these Filipinos in intermarriages have invariably experienced issues and problems. Interestingly, the Philippine government is aware of the realities of intermarriages. It recognizes the instrumental nature of the union and its vulnerabilities to struggles and conflict, even ending with the victimization of the Filipino spouse/partner. The assumption is that identifying and managing the issues of those in intermarriage with a set of ready interventions will prevent greater conflict.