



INSTITUTE FOR MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES (IMDI)

## POLICY BRIEFS SERIES #5

---



Having  
more  
female  
than male  
overseas  
Pinoys  
sweeps

# PROVINCES

*A policy brief on overseas workers by gender in the provinces*

by **DAWN NAISA L. MAJADUCON** (June 2009)

*Ms. Majaducan is a graduating Political Science student of the University of Santo Tomas (batch 2010) and a summer 2009 intern of the Institute.*

Data in this policy brief can be found in the *Philippine Migration and Development Statistical Almanac*. See the Almanac at <http://almanac.ofwphilanthropy.org>



WHEN the talk is about Filipinos' migration overseas, a woman's face always comes out.

Filipinas have the most number of temporary and permanent migrants when one looks at national aggregates. Many of them work in service sectors overseas, and Filipinas are also the top remitters to the country—even if Filipinas (especially those doing household and care work) may be earning less.

That is why some advocates for overseas Filipinos float the phrase “feminization of migration,” to highlight the gender-related implications of the international migration phenomenon.

Could this trend be true in all of the country's provinces?

*(Data to be cited here cover from 2004 to 2007, and come from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration to stress the focus on labor migration. In assessing if females outnumber males or vice versa, a count of one is given if one gender outnumbers the other in three of the four years covered by the data. Meanwhile, data on permanent migrants comes from the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, covering the period 1981 to 2007)*

## Temporary migrants

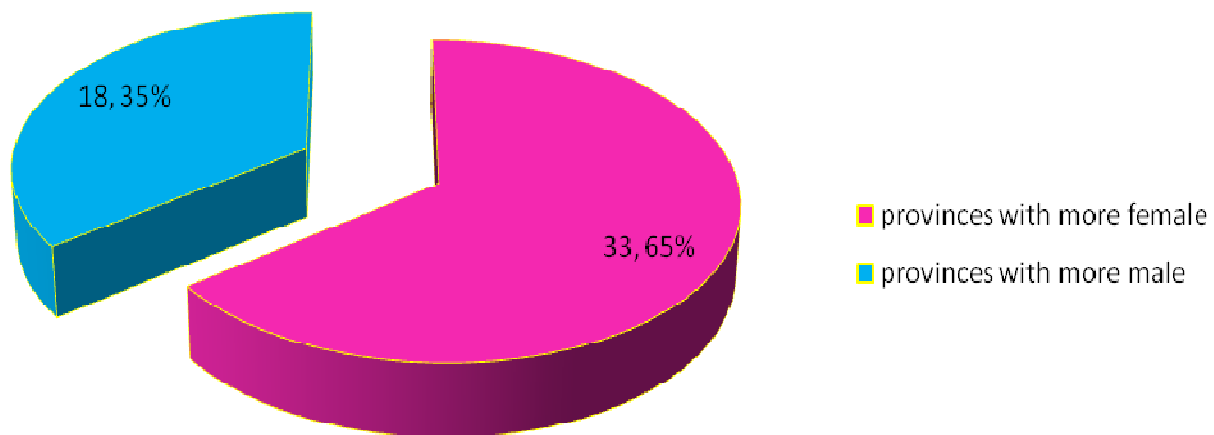
POEA's four-year data show that 33 provinces have more females than males when looking at the *total land and sea-based* workers. Eighteen other provinces had more male overseas workers (land- and sea-based) compared to females. Twenty-one other provinces were not included in the count since females outnumber males and vice versa in only one or two years, of the four years covered by data [see *Figure 1*].

The provinces that have more total female overseas workers than total male OFWs over a four-year period are: Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Aurora, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Catanduanes, Eastern Samar, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, Bukidnon, Davao del Norte,

Davao Oriental, North Cotabato, Sarangani, Sultan Kudarat, Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, Mt. Province, Tawi-Tawi, Surigao del Norte, Abra, Apayao, Benguet, ifugao, and Kalinga.

Surprisingly, no province from Southern Tagalog (Calabarzon and Mimaropa) belonged to the above-mentioned group. Southern Tagalog is the country's leading source region of temporary migrants.

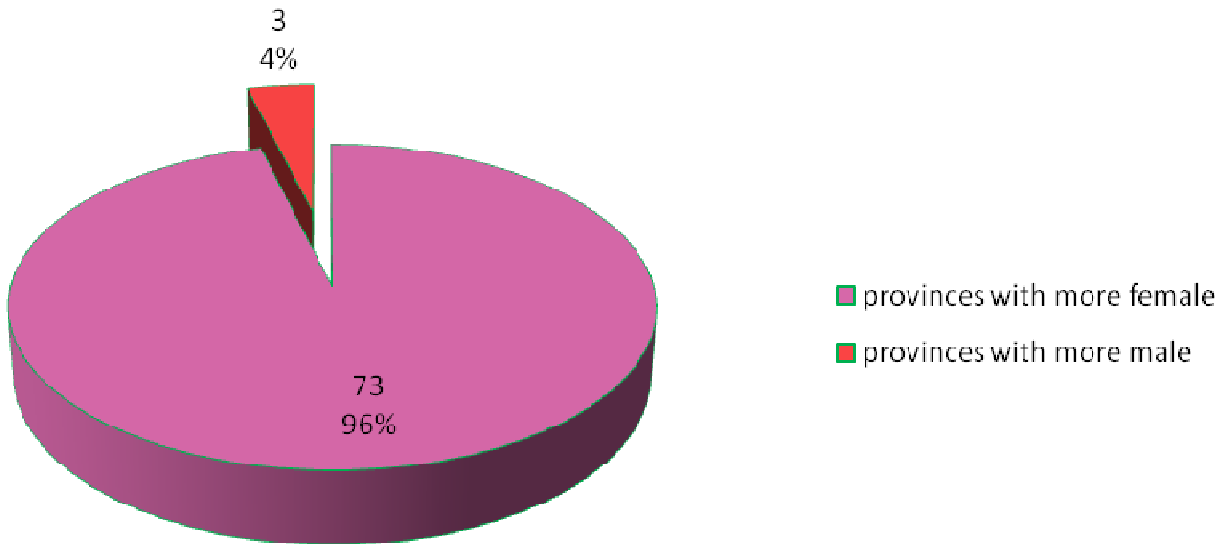
Meanwhile, the provinces of Batanes, Bataan, Pampanga, Zambales, Batangas, Cavite, Marinduque, Rizal, Romblon, Aklan, Antique, Guimaras, Iloilo, Bohol, Cebu, Biliran, Leyte and Southern Leyte had more total male OFWs than their female counterparts.



**Figure 1: Provinces with more female than male total OFWs (land- and sea-based)**

Undeniably, most of the sea-based overseas workers or seafarers are male. But when it comes to land-based overseas workers, females outnumbered males remarkably. Some 73 of 76 provinces with data had more female land-based temporary migrants than males.

The three provinces with more male land-based OFWs are Bataan, Pampanga and Zambales —all belonging to the top ten origin provinces of temporary migrants [see *Figure 2*].



**Figure 2: Provinces with more female than male land-based OFWs**

All the provinces that belong to two regions, the Ilocos Region (Region 1) and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), had more female than male overseas workers in all the four years covered by the data. This is in large part to the female land-based workers from each of these provinces. But even though Region 1 has only four provinces compared to CAR's six, the annual total of overseas workers in CAR is below the Ilocos region's numbers [see *Table 1*].

**Table 1: Provinces in Region 1 and CAR having more female**

## land-based overseas workers than males

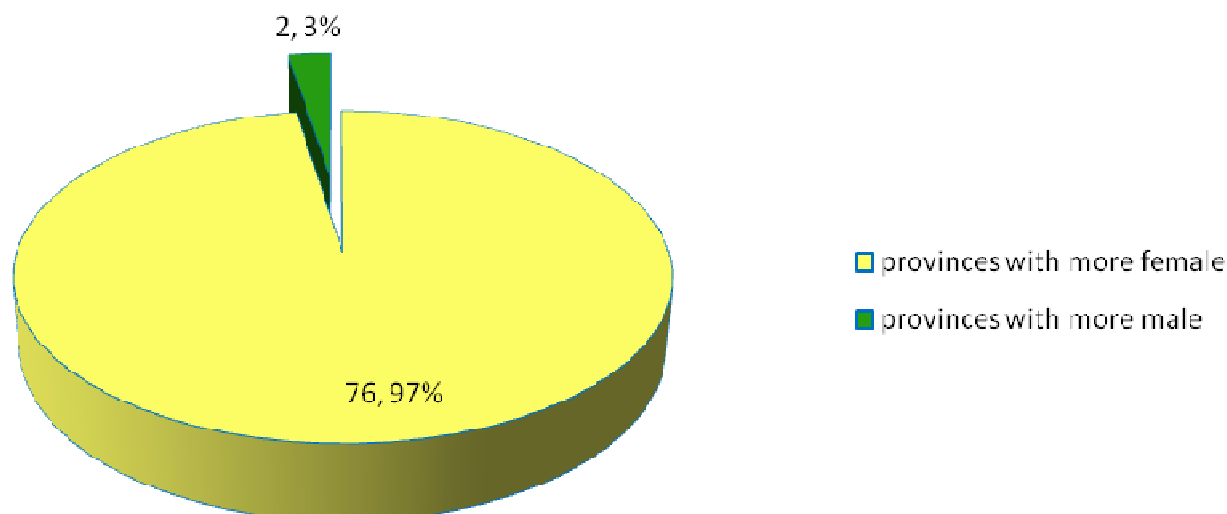
Province	Total female land and sea-based overseas workers	Total female land-based overseas workers
<i>Region 1 - Ilocos</i>		
Ilocos Norte		
2004	1,336	1,335
2005	2,218	2,209
2006	1,713	1,708
2007	1,902	1,889
Ilocos Sur		
2004	2,003	2,000
2005	3,270	3,261
2006	2,942	2,931
2007	3,124	3,107
La Union		
2004	1,923	1,923
2005	2,998	2,994
2006	2,096	2,086
2007	2,653	2,636
Pangasinan		
2004	6,145	6,142
2005	9,851	9,832
2006	6,820	6,779
2007	7,104	7,038
<i>Cordillera Administrative Region</i>		
Abra		
2004	524	523
2005	1,009	1,004
2006	no data available	no data available
2007	851	847
Apayao		
2004	273	273
2005	484	481
2006	248	247
2007	178	178
Benguet		
2004	2,112	2,108
2005	3,952	3,940
2006	3,805	3,792
2007	2,480	2,458
Ifugao		
2004	338	338
2005	574	573
2006	321	320
2007	260	259
Kalinga		
2004	243	240
2005	414	403
2006	299	296
2007	245	245
Mt. Province		
2004	228	220
2005	486	473
2006	421	412
2007	294	294

Source: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

See the Philippine Migration and Development Statistical Almanac (<http://almanac.ofwphilanthropy.org>)

## Permanent migrants

Females undeniably outnumbered males as permanent migrants. A 27-year dataset from the CFO shows that 76 provinces, of the 78 provinces with available data, have more female permanent residents and emigrants. Only Aklan and Tawi-Tawi had more male permanent residents and emigrants than females.



**Figure 3: Provinces with more female than male permanent residents and emigrants**

## Rural development has an overseas Filipina's face

Filipinas abroad, like other women overseas migrants worldwide, will continue to serve working families, soothe the sick, comfort the elderly, show their professional expertise, and commit to support a quality of life that many take for granted.

On a provincial level, overseas Filipinas have contributed a lot of resources quietly yet visibly, and have helped improve their birth provinces' quality of life. This is not without a cost, however, since female overseas migrants are vulnerable to human rights abuses —both as migrants and as females (United Nations Population Fund, 2006 — State of the World Population Report 2006).

Women play a major role in rural areas, though this fact is least scarcely appreciated compared to that of men. Despite having an important place in rural labor, women are hardly ever acknowledged as producers or are held responsible for the management of natural resources through their productive work (International Labor Office-CINTERFOR, no date). Through their overseas migration, Filipinas abroad prove without doubt that without them, rural Philippines would have not buoyed somewhat.