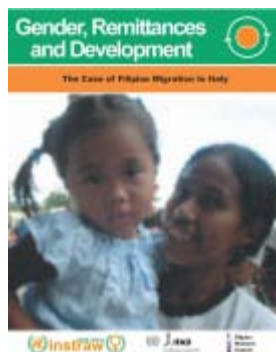


Filipino Migration to Italy

(Country of Origin)

- **Inception and Evolution of Filipino Migration Flows to Italy**

There are two primary reasons explaining the beginning of increased Filipino out-migration in the 1970's. First, the brutal regime of Ferdinand Marcos began during this time, during which he enacted repressive economic policies that rapidly caused the deterioration of the Philippine economy and led vast numbers of Filipinos to seek jobs overseas (1). A second and related reason explaining Filipino migration flows was that in 1974 the Philippine government's establishment an official labor exportation policy that aimed to help repay the Philippines' foreign debt through the Programme for Overseas Filipino Workers. In fact, as a result of conditions imposed on to the Philippines by the IMF's structural adjustment policy, the Philippine peso decreased in value, leaving numerous Filipinos no other recourse but to migrate abroad in search of economic opportunities, a trend which continues unabated today (2,3). Succeeding governmental regimes encouraged labor exports, with Filipino presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos creating various intermediary labor agencies facilitating Filipino labor flows abroad (4).



During the 1970s the main destination region was the Mideast, where mainly filipino men went to work in the manufacturing, construction and transportation sectors. The feminization of migration began with the new industrialization of Asian countries (1980-1990), at the same time that the labour insertion of migrants started in activities related to services. Italy has also been one of the countries that since the 1970s has experienced a sustained growth of filipino labour migration (5). The work previously carried out by women at home is not substituted by public service nor by the participation of men which creates a demand for paid care services.

Filipino women participate in this context. However, the beginning of this flow distinguishes from the others since it has not been planned by the Philippine Government, but rather it arises from an initiative and the connections of the Catholic Church. At present numerous Filipino labor migrants choose Italy as their labor destination not only because of potential economic gains but also because of similarities in culture and in religion (6). Initially, Philippine-Italy migration studies indicate that most Filipinos entered Italy on tourist visas and found work afterwards; the advent of stricter immigration policies in 1986 made this mode of entry more difficult, thereby leading to the establishment of more formal migration channels (7).

It should be noted that political and economic conditions within Italy encouraged an increase in Filipino labor migration. Specifically, rising economic growth and personal wealth in Italy, "labor segmentation" in the Italian economy necessitating migrant labor to work in underrepresented industries (including domestic service), and "the demographic collapse" in Italy, among other factors, have all contributed to growing numbers of Filipino migrant laborers in Italy (8).

- **Number of Filipina Residents in Italy**

According to the Commission of Filipinos Overseas, official 2006 stock estimates showed that there are currently 128 080 Filipinos residing in Italy, of which 23 108 are permanent residents, 84 972 are legal temporary workers, and a further 20 000 are illegal residents/workers (9); of course, it should be noted that other estimates indicate greater numbers of Filipinos residing in Italy, with some figures indicating that there are 200 000 Filipinos in Italy. According to Caritas di Rome (2005) (10) concerning the Filipinos living in Rome, 61% of them are women. Despite these incongruent figures, all of these studies corroborate the fact that within Europe, Italy hosts the largest number of Filipino migrants, followed by Spain, Greece, and Austria (11). It is 6th in the list of (12) the top ten destinations of Filipino migrants, preceded only by Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, and the United Arab Emirates (13). Half of all Filipino migrants in Italy live in Rome.

- **Feminized Migration Flows to Italy**

Of the temporary workers, the Italian Institute for Statistics (ISTAT) indicates that women account for 63%. 60-70% of all the Filipinos in Italy are employed in the service sector, with women workers in the majority (14). In cities like Rome and Milan, female Filipino migrants account up to 70% of all Filipino migrants.

Indeed, Philippine out-migration to Italy has always been dominated by women. The vast majority of Filipino female migrants work in the domestic service sector, with some specific studies showing 95% of all women being employed in the domestic field (15). Nursing and employment in the ‘entertainment sector’ are the other fields where Filipino female migrants are well-represented in Italy. It is important to note that economic recession in the Philippines in the mid-1990’s led to an increased presence of male labor migrants in Italy, although women are still in the majority. Also, Filipino women have made great efforts to reunite their families in Italy, at the same time that they received the support of the Italian migration policies.

Three profiles of migrant women are distinguished. Married women with children, single women and single mothers.

- **Level of Education and Income**

Although it is difficult to garner exact figures that provide specific numbers on the different levels of education characterizing Filipino migrants in Italy, anecdotal evidence indicates that Filipino labor migrants are generally well-educated, with the majority of migrants finishing high school and most having at least some college education. Filipino migrants in Italy would not be classified as being part of lower class social groupings in the Philippines and in fact would likely be classified as being part of the middle-class. (16)

- **Remittances from Filipino Migrants in Italy**

Of the 12.8 billion dollars Filipino migrants sent back to the Philippines in 2005, 44 million dollars were sent from Italy, making Italy the fourth biggest source of remittances (17). Select interviews with Filipino labor migrants in Italy have found that the majority of migrants invest

their remittances in education and household investments (18). More studies need to be undertaken in order to assess how these remittances are being utilized.

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