

## Portuguese Emigration by Country of Destination

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# 1 | Spain

Between 2004 and 2008, Spain was the major country of destination for the Portuguese outflows. In 2008, it ranked sixth among the major countries of destination for Portuguese migrants. Both the 2008 world financial crisis and the Spanish real estate crisis had a huge impact in the Portuguese inflow, due to the fast and intense growth in the unemployment rate. The emigration from Portugal to Spain abruptly decreased in 2008 and, after re-emigration and return, also decreased the number of Portuguese residents in Spain.

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Authors: Filipa Pinho and Rui Pena Pires

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## Introduction

Since the middle of the 2000s, in particular in the aftermath of both the financial crisis and sovereign debts crisis, emigration returned to the public agenda, and was generally perceived as a reaction to the growing unemployment rate in the country. By then, some news in the press highlighted new destination countries for Portuguese emigration. Until 2008, Spain was one among these destinations. However, the fast and intense growth in unemployment in Spain, especially in the labour intensive industries where the Portuguese immigrants were concentrated, such as construction, resulted in the slowdown and decline of the Portuguese emigration to that country.

In 1989, 250,000 foreigners had entered Spain, a number that increased to 400,000 in 1993, after the extraordinary regularization in 1991 (Stalker, 1994). Since 1990, a visible trend in increasing immigration took place in Spain, due to the Iberian countries admittance to the EEC. The new migratory attraction of Spain in the European context started both with the bigger intra-European mobility and the favorable status for newcomers from Spain's former colonies, related to work visas and naturalizations (Stalker, 1994). From the European integration until the 2008 world crisis, Spain had immigration from North Africa, with an often dramatic undocumented component. Immigrant entrances have occurred continuously in Spain, as well as in Portugal, up until the end of the first decade of the 2000s.

Spain page at the Emigration Observatory Website

<http://www.observatorioemigracao.pt/np4/paises.html?id=67>

## Flows

Immigration in Spain increased continuously during the first decade of the 2000s: 99,000 in 1999 turned into numbers ten times higher in 2007. Although inflows have decreased since 2007, 2011 still saw 416,000 foreign immigrants entering Spain (see table 1). Immigration in Spain increased in numbers and in diversification of origins. Reverse flows from Latin America and the Caribbean emerged, and countries like Bolivia, Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Equator and Dominican Republic became the major labour exporting countries to Spain (OECD, 2008).

With reference to entries of Portuguese immigrants, increases of 47% can be seen between 1999 and 2001. Although not regular, growth rates of no less than 30% from 2003 to 2007 could be identified. From 2003 to 2004 the growth rate reached 104%, essentially doubling the inflow of Portuguese into Spain in one year. From 2007, the inflows decreased and the growth rate became negative, from -20 to -40% (see table 1 and figure 1).

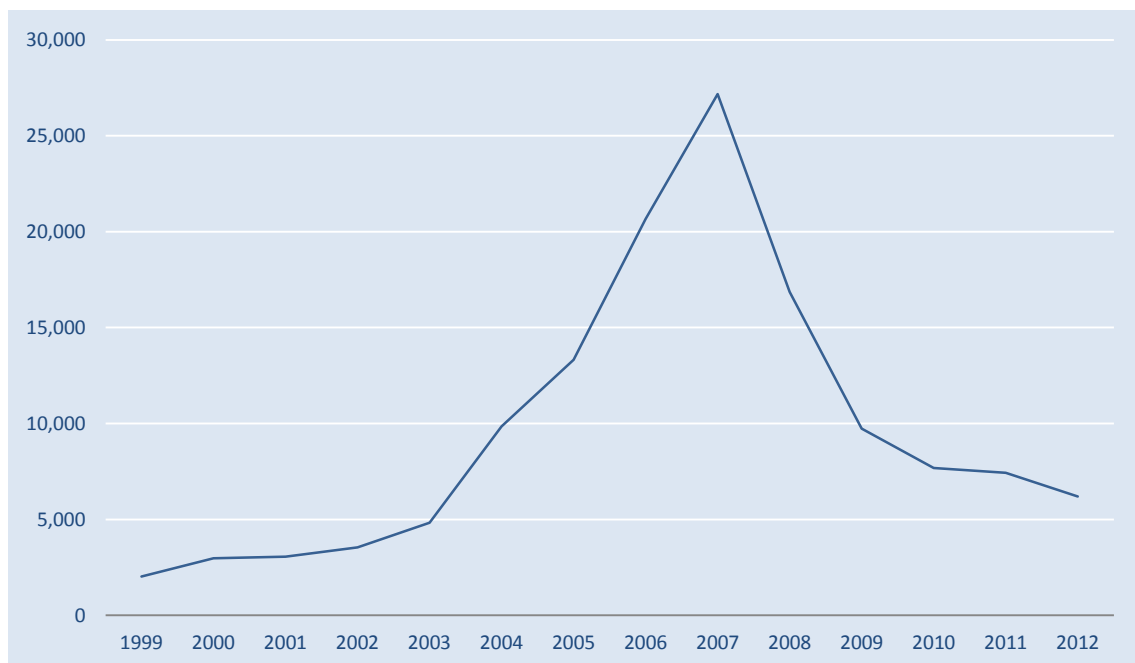
While the Portuguese entries into Spain increased around 36% between 2002 and 2003, it should be noted that total entries decreased. Thereafter, the inflows of both global and Portuguese migration decreased.

[tables and figures in the next page]

**Table 1** Foreign inflows in Spain, 1999-2012

Ano	Total		Portuguese	
	N	Growth rate %	N	Growth rate %
1999	99,122	73.3	2,015	47.7
2000	330,881	233.8	2,968	47.3
2001	394,048	19.1	3,057	3.0
2002	443,085	12.4	3,538	15.7
2003	429,524	-3.1	4,825	36.4
2004	645,844	50.4	9,851	104.2
2005	682,711	5.7	13,327	35.3
2006	802,971	17.6	20,658	55.0
2007	920,534	14.6	27,178	31.6
2008	692,228	-24.8	16,857	-38.0
2009	469,342	-32.2	9,739	-42.2
2010	431,334	-8.1	7,678	-21.2
2011	416,282	-3.5	7,424	-3.3
2012	336,110	-19.3	6,201	-16.5

**Source:** INE Spain, Estadística de Variaciones Residenciales, Altas por variación residencial con procedencia del extranjero por país de nacionalidad (access to database on September, 4, 2013). [\[LINK\]](#)

**Figure 1** Portuguese inflows in Spain, 1999-2012

**Source:** INE Spain, Estadística de Variaciones Residenciales, Altas por variación residencial con procedencia del extranjero por país de nacionalidad (access to database on September, 4, 2013).

## Stocks

Looking at the numbers of the foreign-born population living in Spain (see table 2), between the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, the number of Portuguese-born was always increasing, and thereafter started to stabilize and to decrease (since 2010). This is not surprising if we take into account the above mentioned inflow decreases, but it also means that not only was there a decrease of Portuguese emigration to Spain, but also returns and re-emigration to other destinations, by Portuguese already immigrants in that country.

Before this, and according to the annual series of the Spanish statistical institute (cited in López Trigo, 1995, table 3), the “Portuguese-born living in Spain” were, in the beginning of the 1990s, just over half of those in 1999. In 20 years, the Portuguese-born population increased 400%.

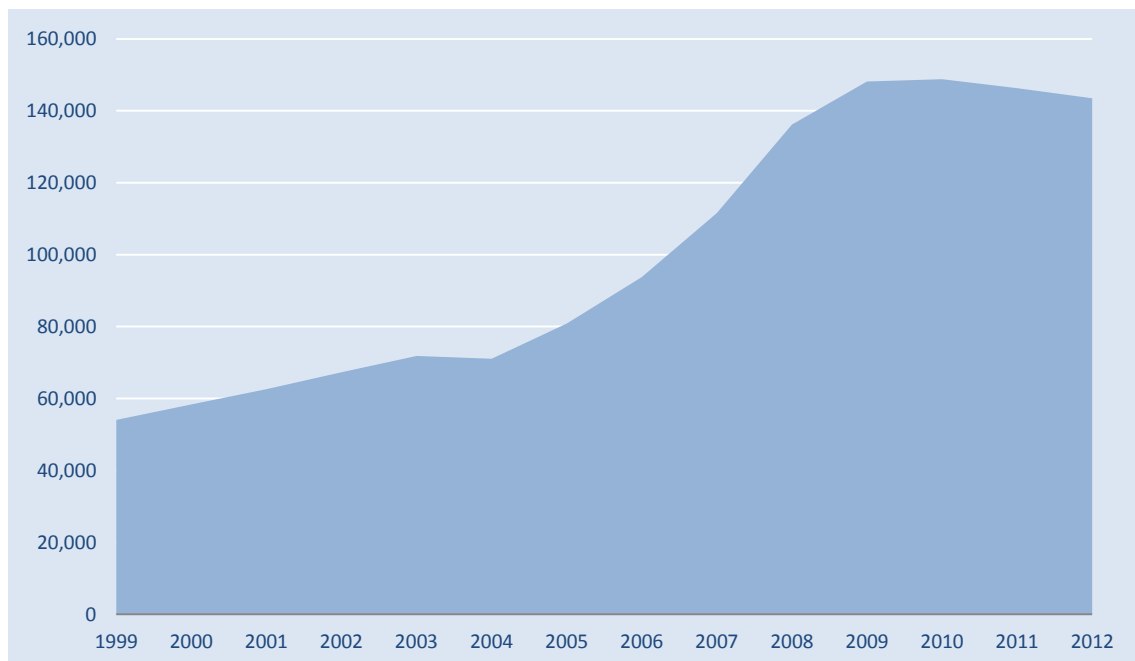
Great variation in the Portuguese-born population during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, before the 1990s, is due to the fact that Portuguese emigration at that time met the seasonal demand for work in the borderland (mainly during the 1950s). During the 1960s, some of the Portuguese emigration to Spain resulted from disrupted journeys to France or Luxembourg. In 1990, those areas close to the border lost their importance as poles of attraction to Portuguese emigration, and were replaced by big cities such as Madrid or Barcelona. This change is linked to a renewed composition of Portuguese emigration to Spain.

[tables and figures in the next pages]

**Table 2** Foreign-born residents in Spain, 1999-2012

Year	Total		Portuguese-born	
	N	Growth rate %	N	Growth rate %
1999	1,259,054	7.3	54,065	5.4
2000	1,472,458	16.9	58,364	8.0
2001	1,969,270	33.7	62,610	7.3
2002	2,594,052	31.7	67,313	7.5
2003	3,302,440	27.3	71,843	6.7
2004	3,693,806	11.9	71,065	-1.1
2005	4,391,484	18.9	80,846	13.8
2006	4,837,622	10.2	93,767	16.0
2007	5,249,993	8.5	111,575	19.0
2008	6,044,528	15.1	136,171	22.0
2009	6,466,278	7.0	148,154	8.8
2010	6,604,181	2.1	148,789	0.4
2011	6,677,839	1.1	146,298	-1.7
2012	6,759,780	0.9	143,488	-1.9

**Note:** foreign-born and Portuguese-born data relate to 1st. January of each year indicated. **Source:** INE Spain, Padrón municipal de habitantes, Población por nacionalidad, país de nacimiento y sexo (access to database on September, 4, 2013; 2012 definitive data). [\[LINK\]](#)

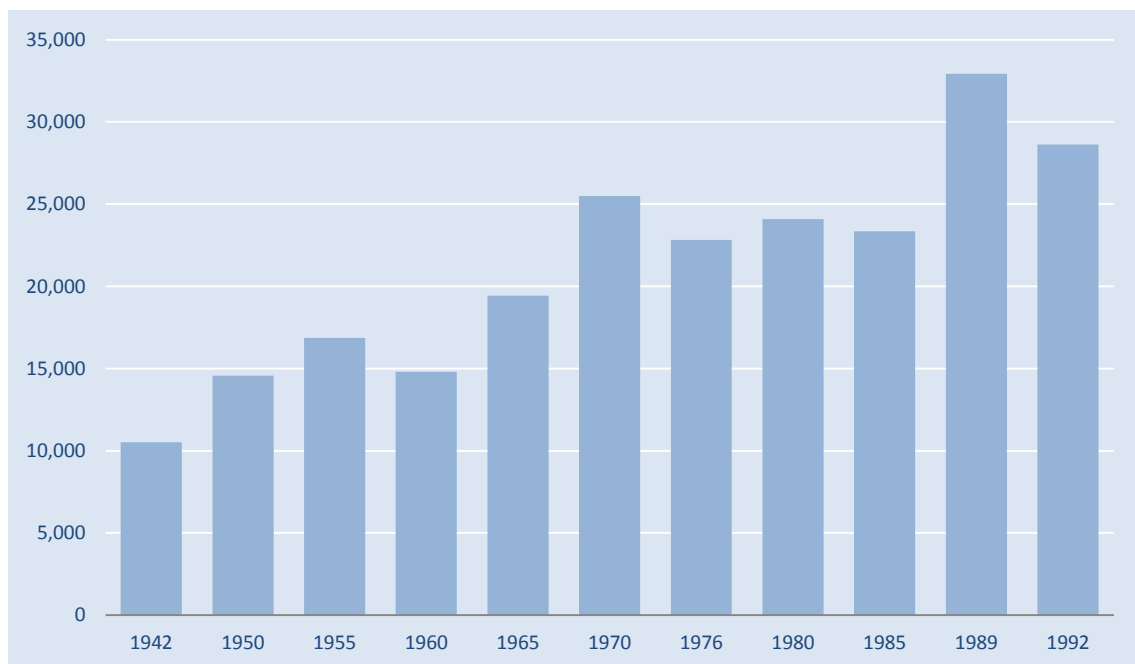
**Figure 2** Portuguese-born residents in Spain, 1999-2012

**Note:** foreign-born and Portuguese-born data relate to 1st. January of each year indicated. **Source:** INE Espanha, Padrón Municipal de habitantes, Población por nacionalidad, país de nacimiento y sexo (access to database on September, 4, 2013; 2012 definitive data).

**Table 3** Portuguese-born residents in Spain, 1942-1992 (some years)

Year	Portuguese-born	
	N	Growth rate %
1942	10,518	—
1950	14,570	38.5
1955	16,871	15.8
1960	14,798	-12.3
1965	19,427	31.3
1970	25,483	31.2
1976	22,823	-10.4
1980	24,094	5.6
1985	23,342	-3.1
1989	32,936	41.1
1992	28,631	-13.1

Source: López Trigal (1995: 114), based in Spanish statistical yearbooks.

**Figure 3** Portuguese-born residents in Spain, 1942-1992 (some years)

Source: López Trigal (1995: 114), based in Spanish statistical yearbooks.



## Geographic distribution

López Trigal wrote in 1995 that the deep crisis of the coal mines and traditional industries in the Northern Spain reduced the attraction of this region, and predicted that in some areas, like Leon and Asturias, emigration would move to other regions and/or immigrants would return to Portugal. By that time, there were opportunities for work in the cities, and of seasonal activities in rural areas. So, probably the geographic distribution of Portuguese immigrants would be reconfigured and characterized by a metropolitan concentration (López Trigal, 1995). This reconfiguration would be facilitated by some dispersion of the Portuguese residents in Spain, with a significant presence in Madrid since the 1980s and some representation in Valencia, Mallorca and Tenerife (López Trigal, 1995: 115).

The change predicted by López Trigal took place during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the 2000s, Galicia, Madrid, Castile León and Catalonia are the Spanish autonomous regions with the biggest Portuguese communities living in Spain, and in both 2004 and 2012, the population of each of these regions is comprised of 10% or more emigrants from Portugal. In absolute values, the number of emigrated Portuguese strongly increased in these regions between 2004 and 2012; but the changes were insignificant in the distribution, the increase was proportional.

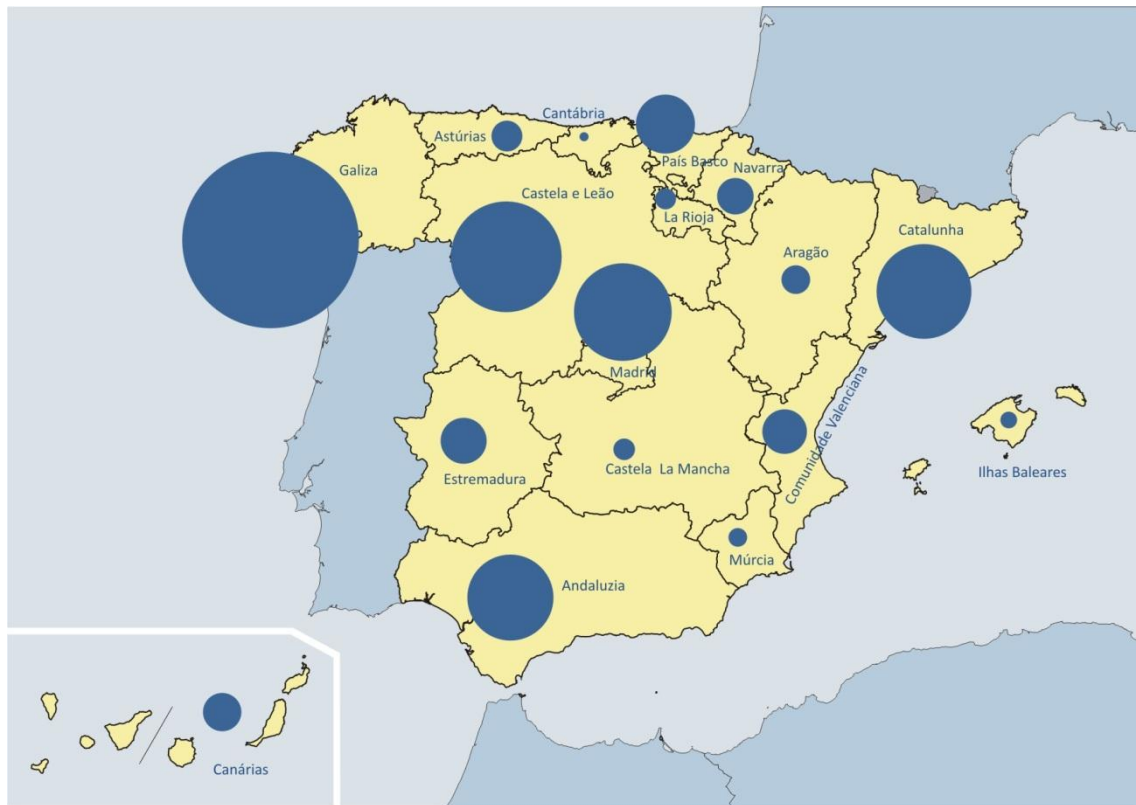
[tables and figures in the next pages]

**Table 4** Geographic distribution of Portuguese-born residents in Spain, by autonomous communities, 2004 and 2012

Autonomous communities	2004		2012	
	N	%	N	%
Total	71,065	100.0	143,488	100.0
Andaluzia	5,711	8.0	13,125	9.2
Aragão	1,195	1.7	4,366	3.0
Astúrias	3,427	4.8	4,717	3.3
Ilhas Baleares	978	1.4	2,552	1.8
Canárias	2,441	3.4	5,850	4.1
Cantábria	492	0.7	1,831	1.3
Castela e Leão	7,498	11.2	16,898	11.8
Castela – La Mancha	1,094	1.5	3,299	2.3
Catalunha	6,660	9.4	14,460	10.1
Comunidade Valenciana	3,123	4.4	6,798	4.7
Estremadura	3,400	4.8	7,019	4.9
Galiza	15,834	22.3	26,949	18.8
Madrid	9,392	13.2	14,895	10.4
Múrcia	599	0.8	2,854	2.0
Comunidade Foral de Navarra	2,345	3.3	5,575	3.9
País Basco	4,992	7.0	9,002	6.3
La Rioja	1,381	1.9	3,189	2.2

**Note:** foreign-born and Portuguese-born data relate to 1st. January of each year indicated. **Source:** INE Espanha, Padrón Municipal de habitantes, Población por país de nacimiento, comunidades y provincias, sexo y edad (grandes grupos de edad) (access to database on September, 4, 2013). [\[LINK\]](#)

**Figure 4** Geographic distribution of Portuguese-born residents in Spain, by autonomous communities, 2012



**Note:** foreign-born and Portuguese-born data relate to 1st. January of each year indicated. **Source:** INE Spain, anual series of Padrón Municipal de habitantes, Población por país de nascimento, comunidades y provincias, sexo y edad (grandes grupos de edad) (access to database on September, 4, 2013).

## Socio-demographic characteristics

As indicated above, the Portuguese emigration to Spain changed after the growth in labour demand for construction. There was an increase in the emigration of Portuguese low-skilled male workers coming from Northern and Central Portugal. The gender inequality became visible with that growth from 2004 onwards, due to the kind of employability of the emigrated Portuguese.

To meet other characteristics of the immigrated Portuguese population in Spain, the statistics of the social security helped to identify the kind of work contract or economic sector where immigrants are working.<sup>1</sup> The number of Portuguese registered in the Spanish social security is far short of the population registered as inhabitants in the “Padrón Municipal”. Most of them work as an employee (more than 80% in all years considered, in 2006 they make up nearly 90%).

The distribution by sectors of economic activity of the Portuguese workers in Spain has two main concentrations, such as construction and services. In spite of these two strong sectors, the first is in fast decline due to the current crisis in the sector.

Before the boom of employment in the construction and services sectors, the profile of the Portuguese migrant was characterized by a young male with family, with an improving lifestyle, working in diverse activities of construction, mining, domestic services and hotels, with the seasonal workers concentrated in agriculture (López Trigal, 1995: 114).

[quadros e figuras nas páginas seguintes]

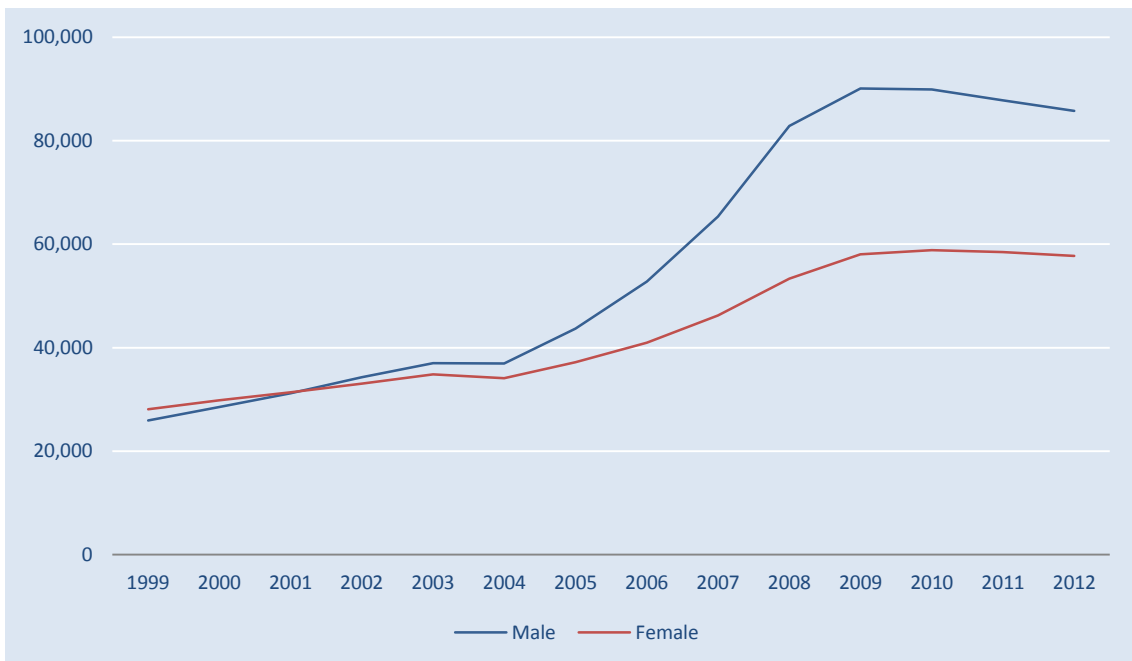
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<sup>1</sup>The statistics of the social security include the foreign workers residents in Spain and not all the residents in Spain who were born in foreign countries. In 2009 – the year of the last report –, there are about 56 thousand Portuguese registered, while there were 148 thousands Portuguese-born residents and 141 thousands Portuguese residents in Spain (both economically active and non-active).

**Table 5** Portuguese-born residents in Spain, by sex, 1999-2012

Year	Total	Male		Female	
		N	%	N	%
1999	54,065	25,945	48	28,120	52
2000	58,364	28,546	49	29,818	51
2001	62,610	31,222	50	31,388	50
2002	67,313	34,267	51	33,046	49
2003	71,843	36,981	51	34,862	49
2004	71,065	36,950	52	34,115	48
2005	80,846	43,659	54	37,187	46
2006	93,767	52,777	56	40,990	44
2007	111,575	65,344	59	46,231	41
2008	136,171	82,848	61	53,323	39
2009	148,154	90,092	61	58,062	39
2010	148,789	89,918	60	58,871	40
2011	146,298	87,803	60	58,495	40
2012	143,488	85,733	60	57,755	40

**Source:** INE Espanha, annual series of Padrón Municipal de Habitantes, Población por nacionalidad, país de nacimiento y sexo (access to database on September, 4, 2013; 2012 definitive data). [\[LINK\]](#)

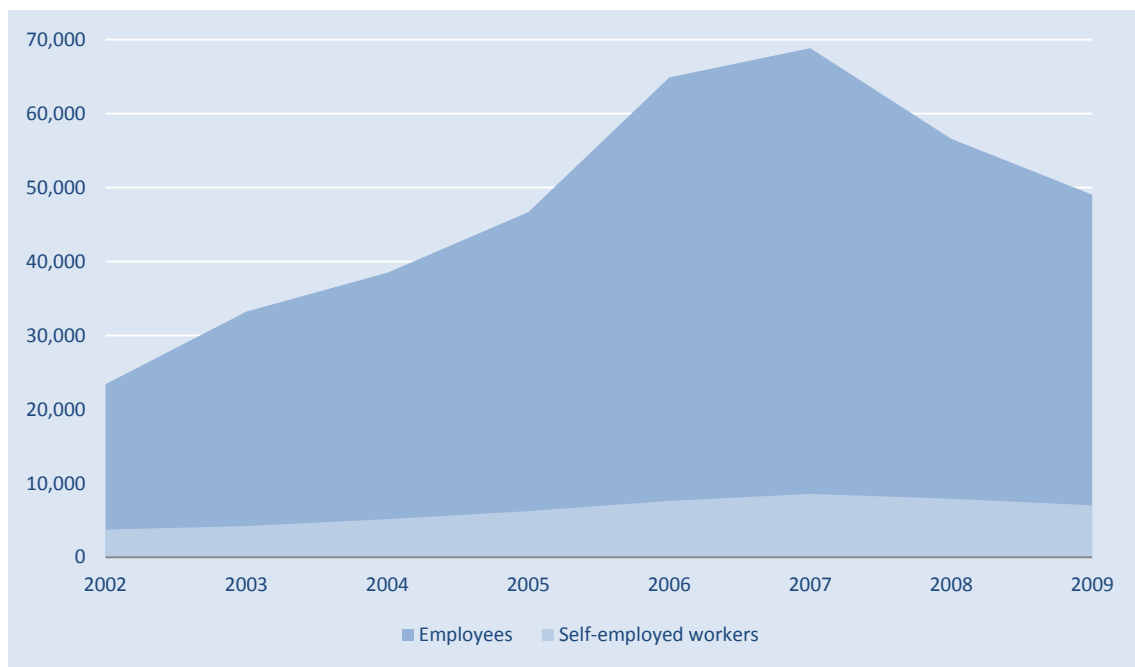
**Figure 5** Portuguese-born residents in Spain, by sex, 1999-2012

**Source:** INE Espanha, Padrón Municipal de Habitantes, Población por nacionalidad, país de nacimiento y sexo (access to database on September, 4, 2013; 2012 definitive data).

**Table 6** Foreign economically active population registered in Spanish social security, 2001-2009

Year	Foreigners	Portuguese		
		Total	Employees	Self-employed workers
2001	627,795	23,951	n.d.	n.d.
2002	868,288	27,122	23,392	3,730
2003	982,365	37,422	33,213	4,209
2004	1,140,426	43,620	38,475	5,145
2005	1,757,081	52,900	46,663	6,237
2006	1,930,266	72,494	64,880	7,614
2007	1,981,106	77,396	68,837	8,559
2008	1,882,223	64,483	56,575	7,908
2009	1,811,879	56,043	49,025	7,018

**Source:** Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social, Trabajadores extranjeros afiliados a la seguridad social en alta laboral. [\[LINK\]](#)

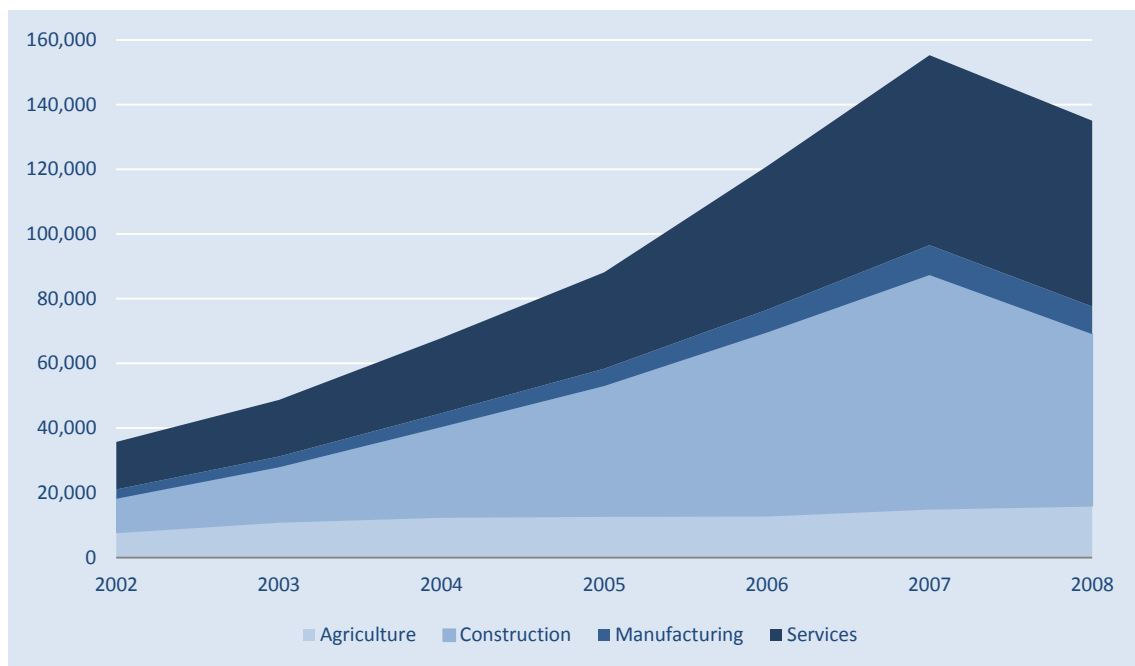
**Figure 6** Portuguese economically active population registered in Spanish social security, 2002-2009

**Source:** Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social, Trabajadores extranjeros afiliados a la seguridad social en alta laboral.

**Table 7** Employed Portuguese residents in Spain, by economic activity, 2002-2008

	Total	Agriculture	Construction	Manufacturing	Services
2002	35,725	7813	10,342	2,881	14,689
2003	48,711	11,043	16,841	3,336	17,491
2004	67,848	12,573	27,755	4,281	23,239
2005	88,160	12,864	40,147	5,350	29,799
2006	120,905	12,951	56,575	7,046	44,333
2007	155,271	15,106	72,197	9,248	58,720
2008	135,012	16,035	53,004	8,529	57,444

**Source:** Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración, Anuario Estadístico de Inmigración, Contratos registrados correspondientes a trabajadores extranjeros según sexo, nacionalidad y sector de actividad. [\[LINK\]](#)

**Figure 7** Employed Portuguese residents in Spain, by economic activity, 2002-2008

**Source:** Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración, Anuario Estadístico de Inmigración, Contratos registrados correspondientes a trabajadores extranjeros según sexo, nacionalidad y sector de actividad.

## Remittances

In the recent past, the remittances received in Portugal remained an important resource transfer, as a result of the Portuguese emigration of the 1960s. In recent years, there was a decrease in the amount of remittances from the countries where the Portuguese were immigrants since that decade. This was partially offset by the remittances received from the countries of destination of the recent emigration, such as Spain.

Remittances are therefore an indicator of the migratory activity, particularly in labour migration. Sending remittances from the reception country is a tendency of young labour migration, in particular when the movement was caused by local macro or micro economic constraints to help support households.

In table 8 and figure 8 below it is clear that there is a consistency in the values of remittances sent from Portugal to Spain, in contrast with the movements in the opposite direction. Between 2006 and 2008, there was a big increase in remittances, and then a reverse trend took place up until 2011. These variations are consistent with the flows from Portugal to Spain. In 2012 there is an upturn, but there is not enough data to explain it, since there is no evidence of a Portuguese emigration increase.

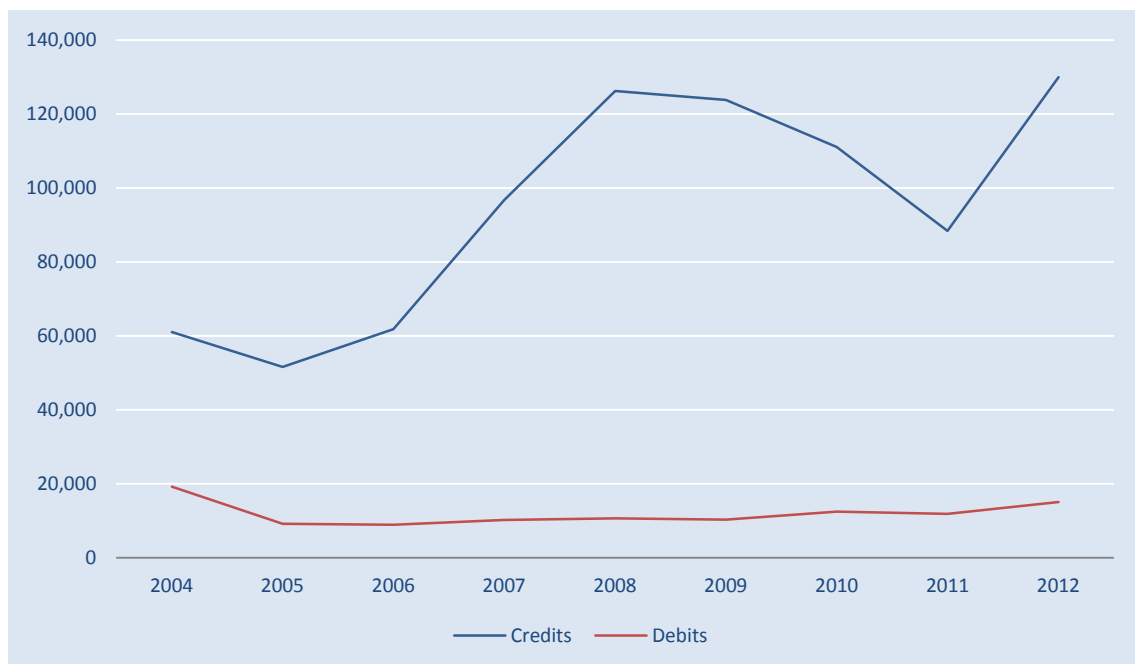
[tables and figures in the next page]



**Table 8** Remittances from and to Spain, credits and debits, in thousands of euro, 2004-2012

	<b>Credits</b> (remittances from Spain)	<b>Debits</b> (remittances to Spain)
2004	60,971	19,154
2005	51,557	9,125
2006	61,812	8,892
2007	96,694	10,179
2008	126,233	10,640
2009	123,816	10,247
2010	111,033	12,433
2011	88,409	11,830
2012	129,910	15,035

Source: Bank of Portugal, Statistics of the Balance of Payments. [\[LINK\]](#)

**Figure 8** Remittances from and to Spain, credits and debits, in thousands of euro, 2004-2012

Source: Bank of Portugal, Statistics of the Balance of Payments.

## Naturalizations

Apart from being indicators of integration, naturalization statistics are also a way of evaluating the direction of statistical variation on stocks of emigrated Portuguese. In fact, the number of the emigrated population in a country, when measured by the statistics of citizenship/nationality, may fall by the naturalization effect. However, naturalizations have no decreasing effect if the migration is measured, as it should, by the statistics of the foreign-born.

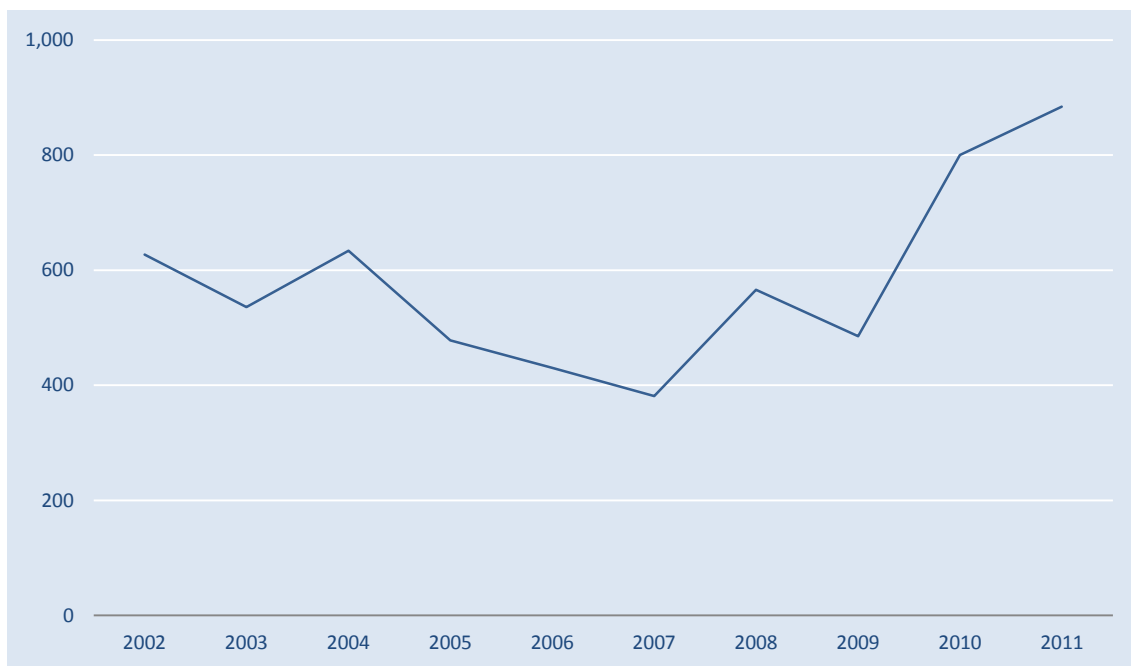
It is possible to verify that the number of Portuguese migrants in Spain acquiring Spanish nationality is increasing: the number of naturalized whose former nationality was Portuguese (see table 9 and figure 9) doubled in six years. If the emigration continues to decline at this rate, the number of naturalizations will, possibly, be more significant. By now, those statistics have no noteworthy impact in the stock numbers of the Portuguese nationals immigrated in Spain.

[tables and figures in the next page]

**Table 9** Naturalizations of foreigner residents in Spain, 2002-2011

	Total	Portuguese
2002	21,805	627
2003	26,556	536
2004	38,334	634
2005	42,832	478
2006	62,337	430
2007	71,806	381
2008	84,171	566
2009	79,588	485
2010	123,715	800
2011	114,599	884

**Source:** Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración, Concesiones de nacionalidad española por residencia. [\[LINK\]](#)

**Figure 9** Naturalizations of Portuguese residents in Spain, 2002-2011

**Source:** Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración, Concesiones de nacionalidad española por residencia.

## References

The recent Portuguese emigration to Spain is not unknown, but it has not yet been analysed in detail. López Trigal, a Spanish scholar, worked on Portuguese emigration prior to 2000.

According to the author, a first reference to the Portuguese emigration to Spain can be found in a study by Arminda Cavaco in 1971, where she said that it was composed by Portuguese from Eastern Algarve, who work in fishing fleets and in canning factories in the Andalusia Atlantic coast. This emigration would have its origins in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and would remain, until the 1970s, related to the Moroccan coast (López Trigal, 1995: 111). In the 1990s, Portuguese immigrants were in temporary agricultural work in Huelva. However, this migration was seldom studied by Portuguese or Spanish researchers. López Trigal also indicates a study by Michael Poinard, from 1991, where he only points out that the Portuguese population in Andorra is smaller than the one with Spanish nationality. Another work from López Trigal, in 1993, focuses on Portuguese and Cape Verdean emigration to Spain and accounts the presence of the former in Leão.

Other studies deserve reference. Focused on commuting to Spain, see Monteiro and Queirós (2009). For an analysis about the main characteristics of the Portuguese population immigrated in Spain, based on the “Encuesta Nacional de Inmigrantes de 2007”, see Moreira (2010).

López Trigal, Lorenzo, and I. Prieto Sarro (1993), “Portugueses y caboverdianos em Espanha”, *Estudios Geográficos*, 210, pp. 75-96.

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