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## **CARIM INDIA – DEVELOPING A KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR POLICYMAKING ON INDIA-EU MIGRATION**

Co-financed by the European Union

### ***From Traders to Workers: Indian Immigration in Spain***

**Ana López-Sala**

CARIM-India Research Report 2013/02



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**CARIM-India**  
**Developing a knowledge base for policymaking on India-EU migration**

**Research Report**  
**Case Study**  
**CARIM-India RR2013/02**

**From Traders to Workers:**  
**Indian Immigration in Spain**

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## **CARIM-India – Developing a knowledge base for policymaking on India-EU migration**

This project is co-financed by the European Union and carried out by the EUI in partnership with the Indian Council of Overseas Employment, (ICOE), the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore Association, (IIMB), and Maastricht University (Faculty of Law).

The proposed action is aimed at consolidating a constructive dialogue between the EU and India on migration covering all migration-related aspects. The objectives of the proposed action are aimed at:

- Assembling high-level Indian-EU expertise in major disciplines that deal with migration (demography, economics, law, sociology and politics) with a view to building up migration studies in India. This is an inherently international exercise in which experts will use standardised concepts and instruments that allow for aggregation and comparison. These experts will belong to all major disciplines that deal with migration, ranging from demography to law and from economics to sociology and political science.
- Providing the Government of India as well as the European Union, its Member States, the academia and civil society, with:
  1. Reliable, updated and comparative information on migration
  2. In-depth analyses on India-EU highly-skilled and circular migration, but also on low-skilled and irregular migration.
- Making research serve action by connecting experts with both policy-makers and the wider public through respectively policy-oriented research, training courses, and outreach programmes.

These three objectives will be pursued with a view to developing a knowledge base addressed to policy-makers and migration stakeholders in both the EU and India.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: <http://www.india-eu-migration.eu/>

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## **Abstract**

The Indian community currently residing in Spain is the result of various differentiated migration currents in two very different stages of migration. The first, which began at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and reached its peak in the 1970s, was sparked by investment opportunities in the Canary Islands and the Spanish enclaves in northern Africa for the commercial activities of the Sindhis settled in other areas of the Maghreb and the Mediterranean. Over the decades this flow has created a small, distinctive community of common Indian descent that includes very diverse national and legal affiliations, and also an involvement in business activities. This community is highly visible in the business sectors of the locations in which it settled and enjoys a good reputation and strong institutional relations, despite maintaining weak social ties with the host society. At the end of the 1980s a new flow began to arrive from northern India, especially Punjab and Haryana producing a growing internal diversification of the Indians community in Spain, a traditionally homogenous group. In addition to religious and geographic diversity, there are also differences in migration plans and expectations and legal status, caused by factors such as date of arrival, migration expectations and opportunity to enter the Spanish labor market.

## Introduction

For decades Indian citizens were the principle Asian residents in Spain. Although this group has limited volume, it is still one of the first foreign communities to settle in Spanish territory, maintaining a presence in the country for over a century, and its long history is linked to commerce and economic activities. However, Indian immigration did not spark the interest of experts until changes in migration patterns starting at the end of the 1980s produced new currents from India which transformed the composition of the community in Spain. It is, therefore, one of the least known immigrant groups in the Spanish panorama, despite being one of the oldest and most distinctive within the context of Spain's migration transition. There are diverse reasons which explain why there has been little interest in studying Indian immigration to Spain. First of all, its small size has excluded it from some of the principle immigration data tools and opinion surveys. Second, there are no significant historical links between Spain and India, especially when compared to the countries of much larger groups in Spanish immigration, such as Morocco and Latin American countries. This lack of tradition extends to Spain's academic sphere, in which Asian studies have not been a major focus. Finally, before the new currents from India began at the end of the 1980s, the way in which the traditional Indian communities incorporated themselves into the economic sphere maintained them outside the general economic dynamics and labor market of the country. As we shall see, their attraction to commerce produced a territorial distribution that is anomalous among immigrant groups; moreover, it created a perception among the native population in which the Indian community is not identified with immigration. However, the internal changes that this group has undergone since the beginning of the 1990s has created a dual, diverse and highly segmented community which has become more complicated to analyze both theoretically and empirically due to two processes: first, the drop in the percentage of people dedicated to commerce among the community, coupled with the emergence of new professional and business dynamics among second and third generation citizens; and, second, the protagonism of new flows from Punjab, a recent current which is in an early stage of integration and institutional formation.

### 1. Indian Migration to Spain: A Long And Unknown History

The history of the Indian community in Spain is fascinating not only for its peculiarity within the general dynamics of immigration to the country, but also because it is one of the least known migration inflows, despite being one of the oldest. Indian immigration to Spain began at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century as part of a diaspora of Sindhi traders which, like other merchant communities, is dispersed throughout the world.

The first Indians settled in the Canary Islands during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>1</sup>, many arriving from Mediterranean and coastal African cities. The first wave of settlers had a homogenous profile because their international mobility practices were linked to commerce, an activity carried out exclusively by Sindhi men, leading them to expand and settle in free zones and port cities throughout the world. They chose to settle in Spain's Canary Islands due to business opportunities there, as well as the archipelago's proximity to other settlement areas, such as Gibraltar and the Maghreb countries.

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<sup>1</sup> The date on which the first Indians settled in Spain varies depending on the source. The geographer Murcia Navarro, a pioneer in studies on this community in Spain, indicated that the probable date was some time during the 1880s, coinciding with other migration currents of this group to nearby enclaves such as Tangiers, Casablanca and Gibraltar (Murcia Navarro, 1974). The study by Claude Markovits places the date somewhere around 1890 (Markovits, 2000). Other historical registers indicate that the first Sindhis arrived in Melilla, rather than the Canaries, in 1893 from Gibraltar where they also settled at the end of the 19th Century (see Gómez Bernardi, 2007).

The community of early settlers numbered just over one hundred people, all male, who made frequent trips to areas near the Mediterranean and Northern Africa where they already had other businesses. The male heads of household, and in some cases eldest sons, also returned regularly to India to visit their families, who remained in Sindh, and for religious and social reasons.

The migratory flow of Sindhis to the Canary Islands increased during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but it reached its highpoint at the end of the 1960s and start of the 1970s. The flow increased because the archipelago's economy improved, activated by the boom in national and international tourism, and also due to the community's struggles in other locations, including Sindh itself, which was left under Pakistani rule after the Indian subcontinent was partitioned in 1947. During this period the origins of new arrivals diversified. Sindhi merchants and workers arrived in Spain not only from India, but also from other countries where their trade diaspora had settled, including Hong Kong, Vietnam, Philippines, Curacao or Ghana<sup>2</sup>.

Sindhi immigration in this period was family-based, although in the majority of cases the women came only after their husbands had been settled in the country for a few years. The vibrant economic situation of this period allowed some of the merchants established in the Canaries to expand their businesses to other Spanish provinces, such as Ceuta, Melilla or Malaga, and in Andorra, which also offer advantageous tax regimes (Borra, 2006). In Ceuta and Melilla their businesses flourished for several decades, employing many local workers, thanks to clientele from military bases and their families, who visited during oath of allegiance to the flag ceremonies. By the middle of the 1970s Indians owned more than 200 businesses in Ceuta and Melilla.

In the 1980s, the liberalization of exports and the loss of business opportunities in the Canaries caused by Spain's entrance into the European Union led some Sindhi businessmen to move to other parts of Spain, such as Catalonia, Malaga and Andorra, in search of new opportunities.

Indian migration, with its diversity and evolution, is one of the few historic immigrant communities in Spain, a country that had received little immigration until the 1980s. Over the decades this flow has created a small, distinctive community of common Indian descent that includes very diverse national and legal affiliations (including natural and naturalized Spanish citizens, Indian citizens and citizens of other countries), and also an involvement in business activities (both as workers and owners). The small number of members of this community is in contrast with its economic importance; it was part of the business elite in the Canaries for decades and also played important role in Ceuta's economy.

The "new Indian immigration", much more recent and even less known, started in the 1980s and has grown significantly over the past few years, although its volume remains limited. The composition, economic activity and pattern of geographic distribution of this new migration are very different than that of the traditional Sindh immigration. For instance, it has highly varied origins: the majority of the migrants are Sikhs, but they also include Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists from northern India, especially Punjab and Haryana.

These new Indian immigrants reside mainly in Mediterranean regions, in Catalonia and the Valencian Community, and they have a smaller presence in other traditionally settled regions such as Andalusia, Madrid or the Canary Islands. Murcia and the Balears are emerging settlement areas. This is a masculine flow of unskilled workers, mostly employed in agriculture, construction and the service industry, although some have started to establish their own businesses, especially small food stores. The new Indian immigration's incorporation into the labor market explains why the majority have settled in Catalonia and the Valencian Community where there are more opportunities to find employment.

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<sup>2</sup> The report on diasporas abroad mentions Sindhis from India, Africa, Japan and other southeast Asian countries settling in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Santa Cruz de Tenerife, especially after World War II and before the 1950s and 60s (Indian Government, 2002).

It is less common to find complete families in this new immigration, except among Sikhs, although, as occurs among other nationalities, family reunification is increasingly common. Moreover, as we shall see later, legal instability and irregularity are much higher among this new flow.

Finally, since the middle of the past decade highly qualified Indian workers have started settling in Spain. This process is linked to the internationalization of business networks and the transnationalization of services, which has been registered in some official statistics, such as those of the Spanish Ministry of Labor. Although the volume of highly qualified immigration is more limited than that of unskilled workers, India seems to be one of the main nationalities among applications managed through instruments designed by Spanish immigration policy<sup>3</sup>. The establishment of this kind of Indian worker, who is not interested in settling, is the result of mobility derived from the internationalization of multinational enterprises and, to a lesser degree, the demand of the national labor market and the dynamics of migration policies in Spain.

This description reveals that the profile of the Indian community residing in Spain is the result of two kinds of flows in two very different stages of migration. The first, which began at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and reached its peak in the 1970s, was sparked by investment opportunities in the Canary Islands and the Spanish enclaves in northern Africa for the commercial activities of the Sindhis settled in other areas of the Maghreb and the Mediterranean. The new flow began more recently, producing a growing internal diversification of the Indians community in Spain, a traditionally homogenous group. In addition to religious and geographic diversity, there are also differences in migration plans and expectations and legal status, caused by factors such as date of arrival, migration expectations and opportunity to enter the Spanish labor market.

The next chapter will present a more thorough profile of the Indian community residing in Spain through an analysis of the socio-demographic data offered by different population sources.

## 2. Demographic characteristics of the indian population in Spain

Spain has two kinds of registries that can be used to analyze the immigrant population. First, there is the Foreign Residents Register maintained by the Ministry of Labor, which collects data on all immigrants who have been authorized to reside in the territory, from EU and non-EU countries<sup>4</sup>. Second, there is the Municipal Register of Inhabitants<sup>5</sup>, a continually updated registry of the entire population residing in the different Spanish municipalities which provide numbers on the real size of the foreign population. Both registers are useful to gain an approximate idea of the main characteristics of the Indian community in Spain.

Indians are the third largest Asian community in Spain in terms of volume, after Chinese and Pakistanis, with a population of over 35,000 in 2012<sup>6</sup>. However, this increases to 50,000 if we add the numbers provided by the Indian embassy and consulates in Spain on PIOs (persons of Indian Origin), which according to somewhat rough estimates may reach 15,000 in Spain. The limited size of the

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<sup>3</sup> The migration of qualified foreign workers to Spain is managed through Blue Cards, the Transnational Service Workers system and authorizations from the Spanish government's Special Unit for Large Companies and Strategic Economic Sectors (UGE).

<sup>4</sup> The Ministry of Labor compiles data from other ministries with competences involving foreign citizens. This includes, for example, data on the number of visas issued provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or information on foreigners acquiring Spanish nationality from the Ministry of Justice.

<sup>5</sup> The Municipal Register (Padrón Municipal de Habitantes) is the administrative register which records residents in each municipality, including both legal and irregular immigrants and nationals. Its creation, maintenance, revision and custody are the responsibilities of the respective municipal councils.

<sup>6</sup> Provisional data for 2012 place the number at 35,718 people.

population compared to other immigrant groups explains why, as we shall see, public opinion and opinion polls have shown little interest in this community.

Indian authorities consider all residents of Indian descent in Spain, even those who are Spanish citizens or of other nationalities, to be part of the Indian diaspora. This approach to registration, related to the still recent Indian policy on their communities living abroad, establishes a distinction between NRIs (non-resident Indians), in reference to Indian citizens who live abroad, and PIOs (persons of Indian origin), who are persons of Indian descent with other national affiliations. This distinction is the result of a long tradition of emigration by Indian citizens and traders which has created large communities on five continents and who have recently began voicing demands for rights in India. The presence of Indian citizens in Spain over various generations obliges us to take this distinction into consideration; despite its common ancestry, the group we are studying is made up of diverse formal national affiliations. The data used in this report will be, however, official data on foreign population by nationality. But we cannot forget that, as occurs in other cases, part of the Indian community residing in Spain does not appear in the immigration registries.

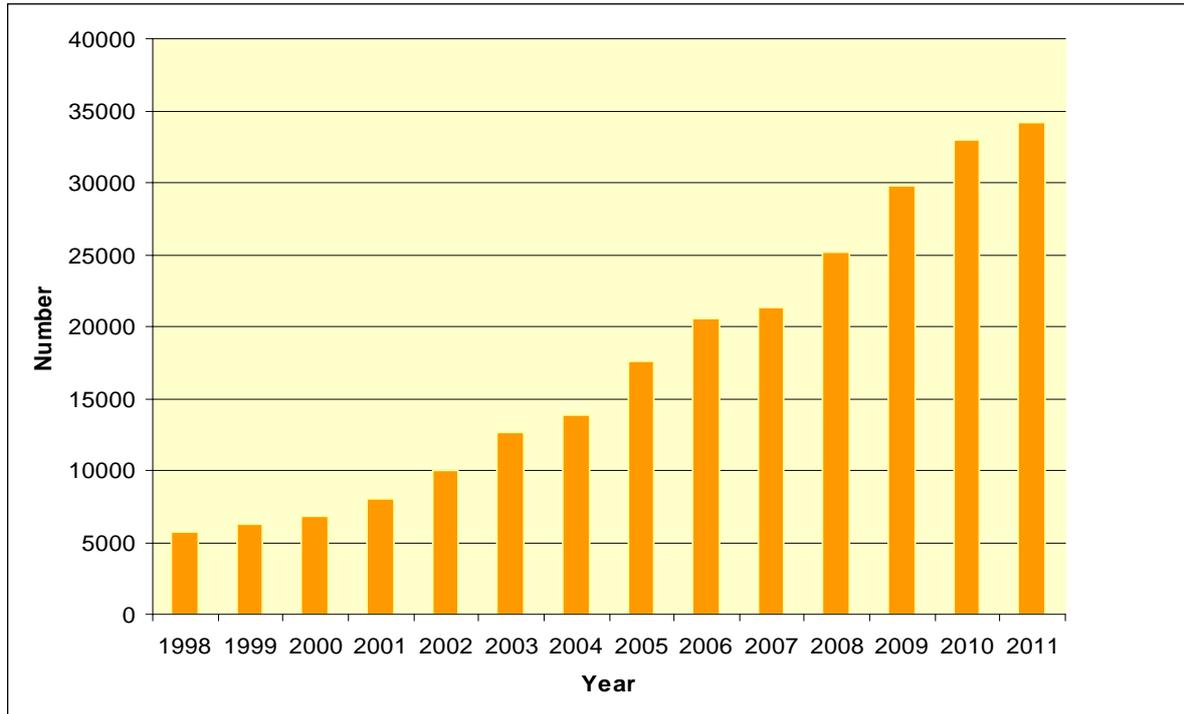
The Indian community in Spain has undergone considerable growth throughout the last decade (see Figure 1). Although it involves modest numbers, the growth was particularly intense at the start of the last decade. In 2002 and 2003 interannual growth was greater than 20% (Table 1). Between 2007 and 2009 there were more than 5,000 arrivals per year, a high number considering the size of the community (see Figure 2). Despite irregular annual growth rates, when viewed from a longer perspective, it can be observed that Indian citizens have settled in Spain at a fast rate over the past fifteen years.

The recent growth of the community has been coupled with an increasing masculinization of the *stock*. The male percentage, the proportion of men within a group, has grown from 48.7% in 1998 to 69.84% in 2012 (see Figure 3 and Table 2). The balanced proportion between the sexes from the start to the end of the 1990s and the first years of this century has gradually transformed into a predominance of males. This change is evidently significant, since throughout the last decade the Indian community in Spain has changed from more or less equilibrium between the sexes to one of the foreign communities with the highest number of males due to the changes in the sex ratios in the flows reflected by the data of the Residential Variation Index<sup>7</sup> (Figure 4).

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<sup>7</sup> The Residential Variation Statistics (Estadística de Variaciones Residenciales) is elaborated based on new registrations and registry removals in the municipal registers of inhabitants due to changes of residence. Annual migration flows are thus obtained, both at a domestic level, between different Spanish municipalities, and at a foreign level between Spanish municipalities and foreign regions.

**Figure 1. Indian citizens living in Spain (1998-2011)**



Source: Municipal Register. The National Statistics Institute (INE)

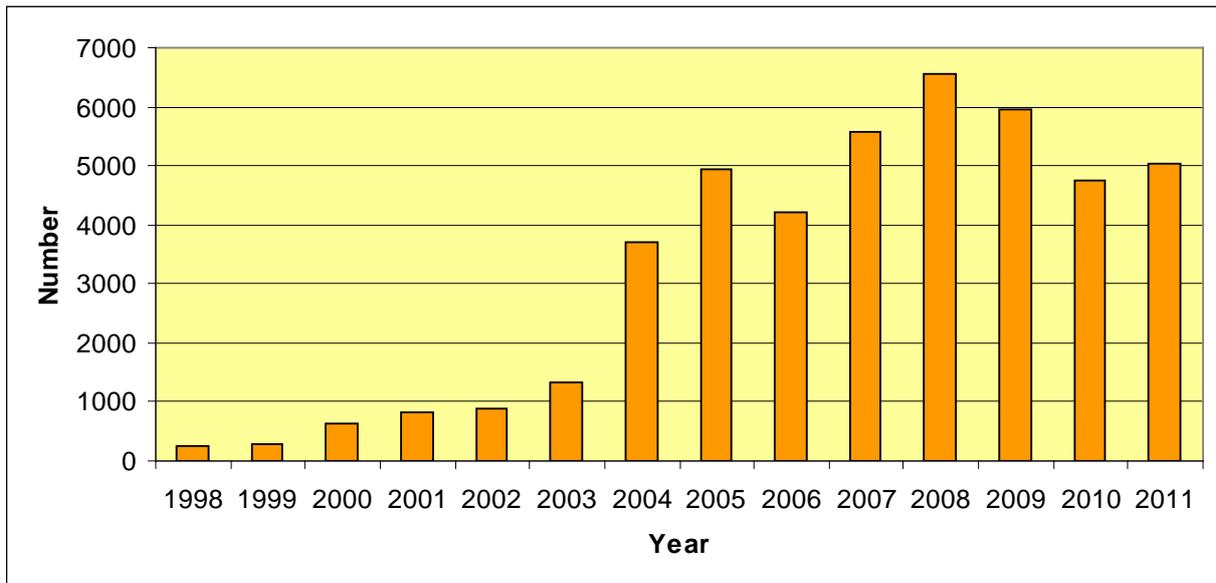
**Table 1. Interannual increase of Indian citizens living in Spain (1998-2012\*)**

	N	Interannual increase (total)	Interannual increase (%)
1998	5680	-	-
1999	6278	598	9.52
2000	6807	529	7.77
2001	7996	1187	14.86
2002	10007	2011	20.10
2003	12657	2650	20.93
2004	13871	1214	8.75
2005	17558	3687	21.00
2006	20550	2992	14.60
2007	21296	746	3.50
2008	25185	3889	15.44
2009	29742	4557	15.32
2010	32947	3205	9.72
2011	34130	1183	3.46
2012	35718	1588	4.44

Source: Municipal Register. The National Statistics Institute (INE).

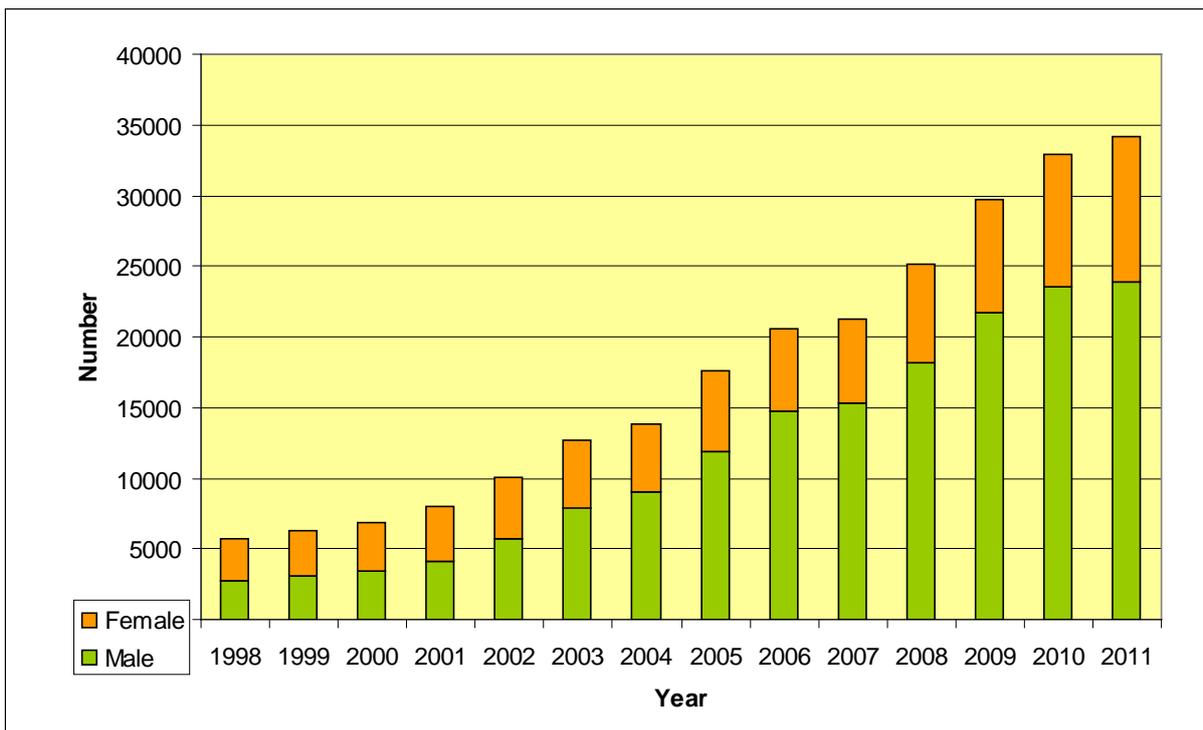
\* Provisional data for 2012.

**Figure 2. Inflow of Indian citizens to Spain (1998-2011)**



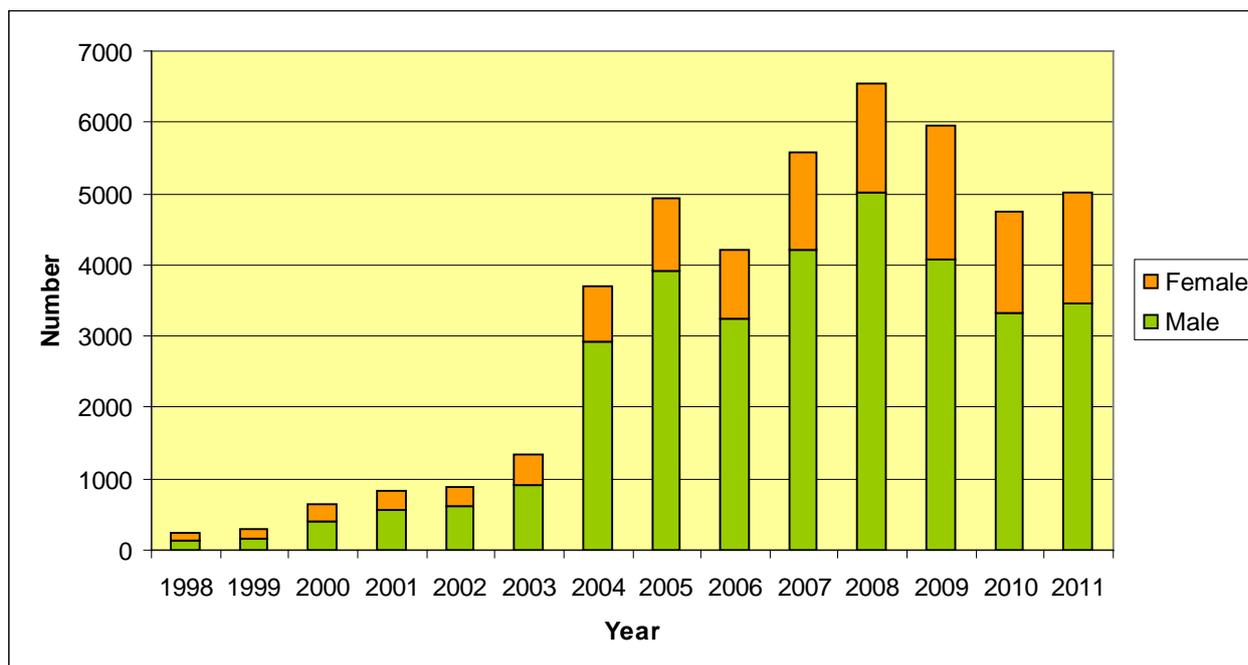
Source: The Residential Variation Statistics. The National Statistics Institute (INE)

**Figure 3. Indian population in Spain by sex (1998-2011)**



Source: Municipal Register. The National Statistics Institute (INE)

**Figure 4. Inflow of Indian citizens to Spain by sex (1998-2011)**



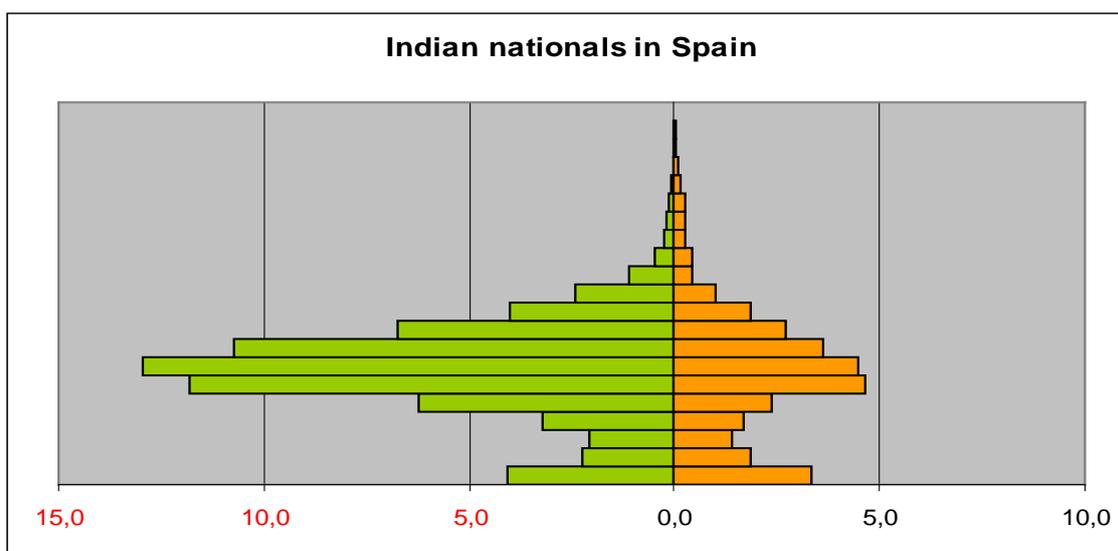
Source: The Residential Variation Statistics. The National Statistics Institute (INE)

**Table 2. Distribution of the Indian population in Spain by sex (1998-2012\*)**

Year	Male (%)	Female (%)
1998	48.73	51.27
1999	48.96	51.04
2000	49.88	50.12
2001	52.13	47.87
2002	57.10	42.90
2003	61.88	38.12
2004	64.99	35.01
2005	67.71	32.29
2006	71.63	28.37
2007	71.96	28.04
2008	72.17	27.83
2009	72.92	27.08
2010	71.41	28.59
2011	69.99	30.01
2012	69.84	30.16

Source: Municipal Register. The National Statistics Institute (INE).

\* Provisional data for 2012.

**Figure 5. Indian nationals in Spain by sex and age (2012)**

Regarding distribution by age, the population is concentrated in economically active age groups, particularly in the 25-29, 30-34 and 35-39 age groups, with an average age of 31.40, well below the national average among foreigners (34.71) and slightly above the average among Asians (30.47). The population pyramid shows the peculiarities of the distribution of the Indian population by sex and age, which reveals migration selection processes based on related structural conditions, especially the demand of the Spanish labor market.

There are still few children in the community: only 7.4% of Indian residents in Spain are between 0-4 years old, while 4.1% are 5-9 and 3.4% are 10-14 years old.

Regarding their geographic locations, the Indian community is concentrated in the regions of Catalonia, Valencia and the Canary Islands. The next tier of locations includes Madrid, Andalusia, the Balears and Murcia. By province, the largest concentrations are found in Barcelona, Gerona in Catalonia, Las Palmas de Gran Canarias and Santa Cruz de Tenerife in the Canaries, and Valencia in the Valencian Community. This geographic distribution has changed from just over a decade ago (see Table 3), which is a good indication of how the recent flows of Indian immigrants have transformed this community. In 1998 the Canaries was the main region in which they settled, with 45% of the total residing in the islands, followed by Catalonia, Andalusia and Madrid. Six percent lived in Ceuta. Table 3 clearly shows the drop in flows to Andalusia, the Canaries and Madrid, while those to Catalonia have increased over the past 15 years.

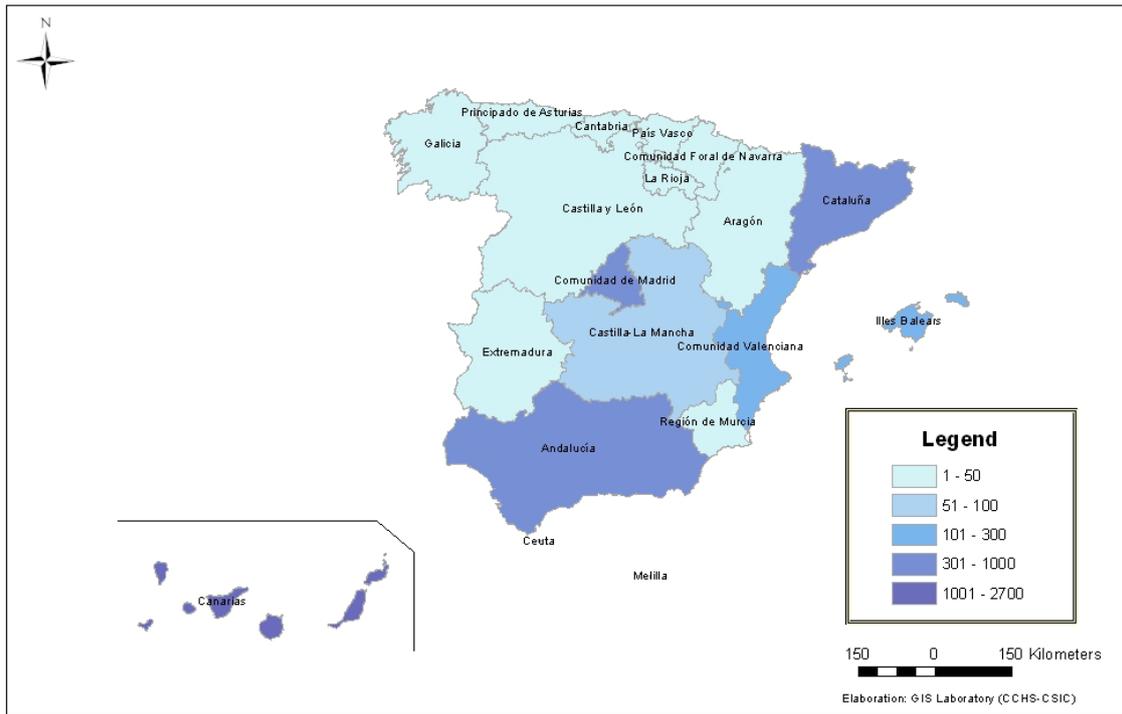
**Table 3. Indian citizens in Spain by region (1998/2012\*).**

Regions	1998 (%)	2012 (%)	2012-1998
Andalusia	13.01	4.82	-8.19
Balearic Islands	3.01	4.87	1.86
Canary Islands	46.80	10.50	-36.30
Catalonia	16.16	55.04	38.88
Madrid	10.74	5.39	-5.35
Valencia	3.84	12.90	9.06
Other regions	7.38	6.48	-0.90

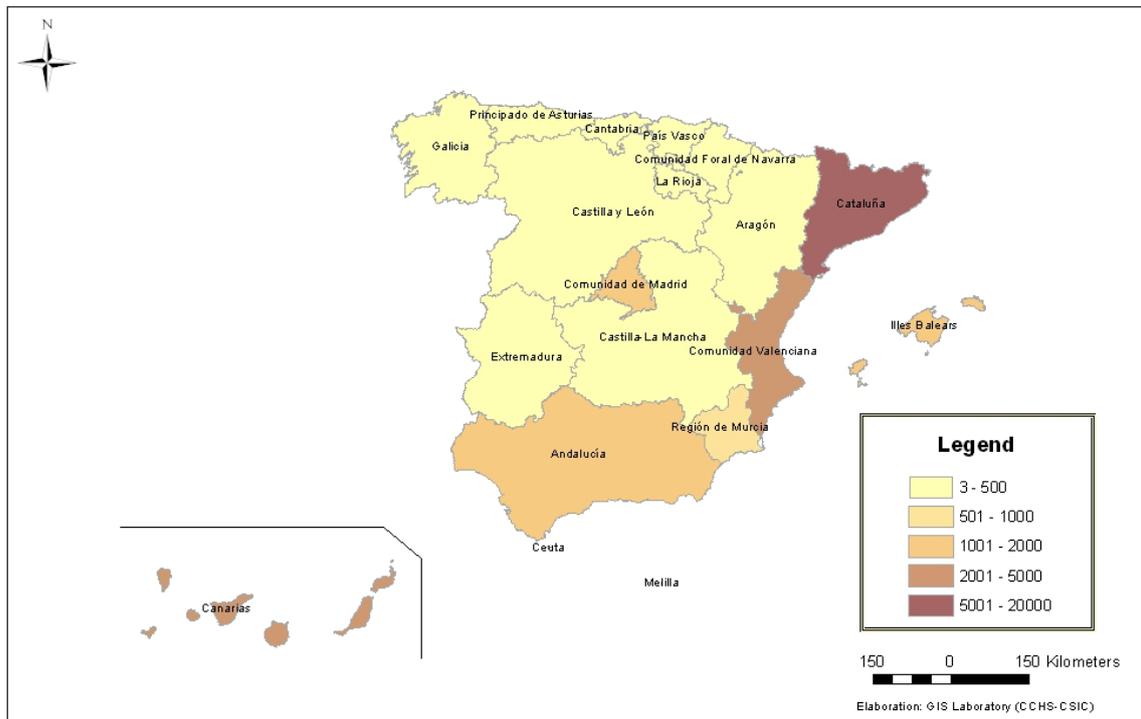
Source: Municipal Register. The National Statistics Institute (INE).

\*Provisional data for 2012.

### Indian nationals residing in Spain (1998)



### Indian nationals residing in Spain (2012)



**Table 4. Indian nationals in Spain by sex and region (2012\*)**

<b>Regions</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>
Andalusia	1720	1100	63.95	620	36.05
Balearic Islands	1741	1313	75.41	428	24.59
Canary Islands	3749	2077	55.40	1672	44.60
Catalonia	19660	13984	71.12	5676	28.88
Valencia	4608	3423	74.28	1185	25.72
Madrid	1925	1200	62.33	725	37.77
<b>Total</b>	<b>35718</b>	<b>24569</b>	<b>69.84</b>	<b>11149</b>	<b>30.16</b>

Source: Municipal Register. The National Statistics Institute (INE).

\*Provisional data for 2012.

A further breakdown of the data allows us to come to some interesting conclusions regarding the differences in the distribution by sex among Indian residents in different Spanish regions. Although this is a masculinized group, the predominance of men over women in the Canaries, Madrid and, to a lesser degree, Andalusia is not quite as pronounced, although they still represent the majority. In these regions, the male percentage is 55.40%, 62.33% and 63.95%, respectively (see Table 4). These are the regions with the longest history of Indian immigration, particularly the Canary Islands (where the distribution by sex is the most balanced) and Andalusia, where the community's commercial activity was traditionally located and where complete family units have been found since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

In contrast, the Spanish regions in which this community has grown most quickly over the past few years are precisely those in which the distribution by sex is most imbalanced, with a masculinity ratio significantly higher than the national average. This is the case in the Balearic Islands (75.41%), Catalonia (71.12%) and the Valencian Community (74.28%), regions in which this group is notably masculinized.

The data also allow us to come to conclusions on the distribution of Indian nationals by legal status. The main registry of foreign citizens in Spain, the Municipal Register of Inhabitants, includes all foreign citizens settled on Spanish soil, regardless of their legal situation; that is, the numbers provided by this official registry include both regular and irregular Indian immigrants. Over the past decade, registering in the Municipal Register has been a way for immigrants to gain access to social and rights and healthcare, making it the best source to gauge the true size of different immigrant groups. In the absence of specific numbers provided during regularization processes, the habitual way to indirectly estimate the weight of irregular immigrants has been to compare the numbers given by the Municipal Register with those provided by the Ministry of Labor on the number of residence permits issued<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> In some cases, this number is estimated including the number of residence cards issued, asylum requests and study permits.

**Table 5. Regular and irregular Indian immigrants in Spain (2002-2011)**

Year	Municipal Register (A)	Residents (B)	Irregular immigrants (C) (A)-(B)	% of irregular immigrants
2002	10007	9555	452	4.52
2003	12657	10327	2330	18.41
2004	13871	11814	2057	14.83
2005	17558	15273	2285	13.01
2006	20550	16348	4202	20.45
2007	21296	20776	520	2.44
2008	25185	22807	2378	9.44
2009	29742	26435	3307	11.12
2010	32947	27207	5740	17.42
2011	34130	31635	2495	7.31

Source: Municipal Register (INE) and Ministry of Labor and Immigration.

As can be seen in Table 5, the proportion of immigrants with an irregular status within the Indian community has been highly variable during the past decade. The percentage of irregularity in the group remained high between 2003 and 2006 (year in which it reached 20%), low in 2007 due to the regularization process carried out in the middle of the decade, and increased again from then until 2010. During the amnesty in 2005, 5,064 applications were made by Indian citizens, meaning that one out of every three Indian citizens residing in Spain at the time had an irregular status. Furthermore, only 54.83% of those applications were approved for processing, which is a high level of rejections compared to other groups. This elevated rejection rate was due to the fact that in 2005 a large segment of the group was still made up of recent arrivals who did not meet the requisites to have their documentation legalized (proof of residence via the municipal register from at least the middle of 2004 and an authorization application from the employer that was going to hire the worker and who committed to contract them during at least six months).

There was some media attention linking Indian immigration to irregularity between 2007 and 2010 due to two incidents that reveal how difficult it is to enter Spanish territory. First of all, in the middle of the past decade a Western Mediterranean route for irregular migration flows to Spain by sea (López-Sala, 2009; López-Sala and Esteban-Sánchez, 2010b) was activated and used by some Indian immigrants. Although the number of arrivals was small, the incident that captured national attention was the presence of more than 300 Asians on board *Marine I* at the beginning of 2007, a boat that was intercepted after a two month journey en route to the Canaries on the high seas off the coast of Mauritania and taken to the port of Nuadibú. During the long identification and repatriation process there were some discrepancies between the numbers reported at different times on the different nationalities of the occupants, many of whom claimed to be Indian. The repatriation process was carried out through collaboration between Spanish and Indian diplomatic authorities, who eventually identified and repatriated more than 80 people, although originally more than 150 had declared that they were Indian nationals.

The second incident involved protests by Indian citizens in Ceuta in danger of expulsion at the start of 2010, protests which were repeated at the start of 2011 after the visit of some consular representatives. The Ceuta Indians are immigrants who arrived in Ceuta in 2007 and who have remained in temporary immigrant centers (CETIs) located in the city or fled to irregular camps located around the city whenever they fear they will be expelled<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Their applications for refugee status have been rejected, but the repatriation process has not been initiated because there is no agreement on this issue with the government of India. This situation led the European Commission to recommend to

The demographic data on Indian citizens leads to several preliminary conclusions. This is a small community with very modest numbers which has undergone a profound change over the past fifteen years. The historic community made up of Sindhi traders has been transformed by the arrival of new nationals with a very different profile, giving the community enormous internal diversity and a predominance of Punjabis. These new flows explain the increasing masculinization of the community, the changes in geographic distribution, with a majority presence in Mediterranean regions, and the relatively high rates of irregularity<sup>10</sup>.

### 3. Economic Activity And Insertion Into The Labor Market

The socio-economic activity of the Indian communities residing in Spain is also internally segmented as a result of its different migration histories and trajectories. The data available allows us to offer only a general perspective of this activity which includes a division between the traditional commercial activity of Spanish citizens of Indian descent, who are part of the more established Sindhi diaspora, the business activities of newer arrivals and, finally, that of employed workers. This section will describe in general terms the socio-economic integration of Indian immigrants through the available registers and the information gathered from the in-depth interviews of members of this group between 2006 and 2011 in different Spanish regions<sup>11</sup>.

Every year the Ministry of Labor compiles and publishes data on foreign workers registered in the Social Security system, that is, immigrants who have entered into the formal Spanish labor market. This register provides a series of characteristics of Indian immigrants working in Spain. There is another register, the Economically Active Population Survey (EPA)<sup>12</sup>, which allows data on informal work to be analyzed in the case of larger groups, but it is not useful for smaller groups, such as the Indian community.

The growth of the Indian community in Spain has been coupled with a continuous increase in the number of Indian nationals registered in Social Security, which surpassed 13,000 in 2011 (Figure 6). The growing masculinization of the group is not observed among economically active members. The percentage of women registered with Social Security has always been much lower and this has not changed significantly over the past few years. In 2001 only 14.3% of the Indians registered with Social Security were women, while in 2011 the percentage increased only slightly to 16% (Table 6). Low levels of economic activity are observed both in Sindhi women as well as among the women of more recently settled families from Punjab and other areas of India. However, there is an exception among a small segment of second and third generation women who are Spanish citizens of Indian origin and who work not only in family businesses but also present a pattern of successful integration into the labor market, mainly in occupations that require mid to high levels of qualification in the financial and services sector.

(Contd.)

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Spain in the 2011 Report against Racism and Xenophobia (ECRI) which exhorted Spain to end this situation (recommendation 196 and 197) and inspired the story behind the prize winning documentary “Los Ulises”, by Alberto García Ortiz and Ágata Maciaszek (2011).

<sup>10</sup> This pattern of high levels of irregularity in the early stages of the migration process is, however, observed in other immigrants groups as well. The Spanish migration model over the past decade has been defined as a model based on “tolerated irregularity” (Izquierdo, 2012) which has allowed more or less lax, informal means of entering the territory and labor market. Periodically repeated processes of regularization have allowed the majority of non-EU foreign migrants in Spain to reactively obtain legal status. This is why there is a higher level of irregularity among recently arrived groups.

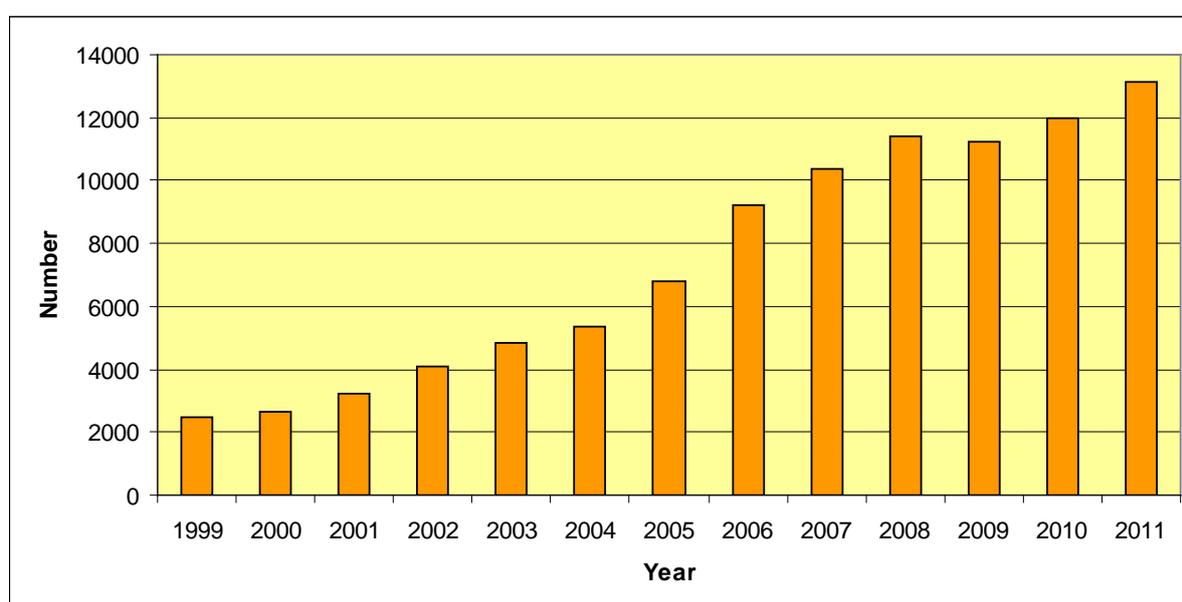
<sup>11</sup> Between 2006 and 2011 the author carried out within the RICA [Asian Communities in Spain Research Network] framework two studies of the Indian communities in Spain, financed by the Asia Program of the CIDOB Foundation and the Permanent Observatory on Migration (Ministry of Labor).

<sup>12</sup> The Economically Active Population Survey (Encuesta de Población Activa) is a continuous quarterly survey that targets households, and its main objective is to obtain data on the labor force (subcategorized by employed and unemployed), and on people outside the labor market. The theoretical sample varies from 65,000 households per quarter, to approximately 60,000 currently interviewed households (approximately 180,000 people).

Indian immigrants are most commonly registered in the General Regime of Social Security, followed by the Special Regime for Self-Employed Workers, which accounted for 17.5% in 2011 (Table 7). Until 2007 this percentage was only surpassed by Chinese workers among Asian residents in Spain, but they were also passed by Pakistanis in 2009, with 18% registered as self-employed. Self-employment is usually used to talk about residents who have started and maintained some business venture. In the case of Indian residents this commercial activity falls in three classes. The first is made up of traditional Indian-owned businesses, including bazaars, electronics and textile stores. This first kind of business is found in Ceuta, Andalusia and especially in the Canary Islands<sup>13</sup>. Second are the new businesses directed at tourism, which focus on selling souvenirs and beach products, located on the coasts of Catalonia and the Balears (López-Sala, 2007; López-Sala and Esteban-Sánchez, 2010).

There is also a propensity to create businesses among recently arrived Indians. The profile of the new businesses is different as they are directed at the local population and include stores selling food, daily essentials, fruit and some call shops. Despite this tendency, the economic insertion of new Indian residents is much more diverse and includes not only self-employment but also employment in sectors such as agriculture, industry and services.

**Figure 6. Indian workers registered in Social Security (1999-2011)**



Source: Labor Statistics Annual Report (2011). Ministry of Labor

**Table 6. Indian workers registered in Social Security by sex (2001 & 2011)**

Sex	2001		2011	
	N	%	N	%
Male	2884	85.60	11047	84.01
Female	484	14.36	2003	15.99
Total	3369	100	13149	100

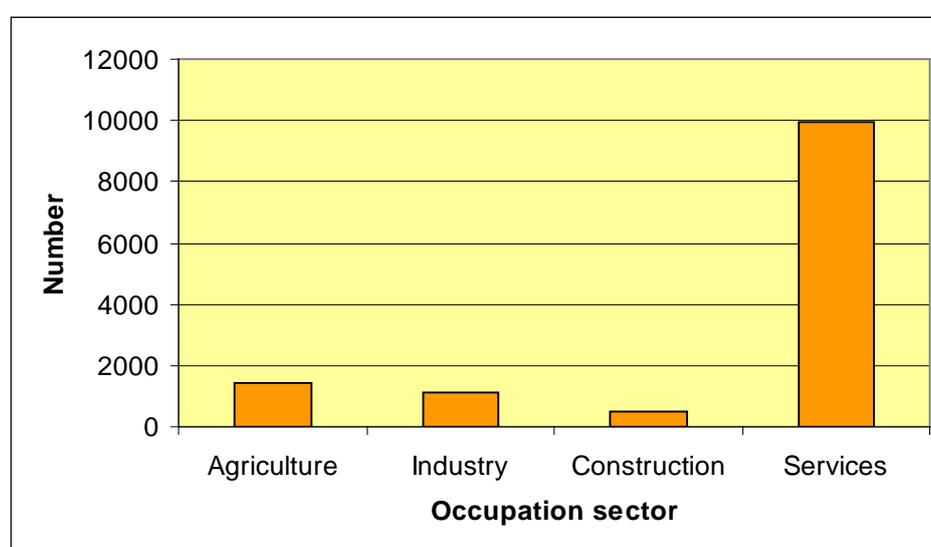
Source: Labor Statistics Annual Report (2001 and 2011). Ministry of Labor.

<sup>13</sup> Since the beginning of the 1990s new types of businesses have been established which include computer retailers, jewelers and luxury item shops which are located in new and more exclusive tourist areas.

**Table 7. Indian workers registered in Social Security by regime (2011)**

Economic regime	2011	
	N	%
General Regime	9020	68.59
Special agriculture regime	1356	10.31
Special maritime regime	3	0.01
Domestic workers regime	365	2.77
Autonomous workers regime	2305	17.52
Total	13149	100

Source: Labor Statistics Annual Report (2011). Ministry of Labor.

**Figure 7. Foreign workers registered in Social Security by occupation sector (2011)**

Source: Labor Statistics Annual Report (2011). Ministry of Labor.

The distribution by sector in the formal labor market shows a heavy concentration of employment in the services sector (75%). The high number in the services sector concentrates both the traditional activity of the Sindhi traders, owners of their own businesses, and the activity of the more recent arrivals. The new Indian migrants from Punjab and residing in Mediterranean regions have carried out less specialized work in agriculture (mainly in the regions of Murcia and the Valencian Community), construction and the industrial sector, especially in the food industry and in cutting plants and slaughterhouses.

The data on registered contracts provide information on contracting Indian workers as employees and also on the sectors and geographical areas in which they work<sup>14</sup>. In 2007 84% of new contracts given to Indian nationals were located in three autonomous communities: Catalonia (45.2%), Murcia (23.3%) and the Valencian Community (15.6%). Only 4.8 of these contracts were in the Canaries and 3% in Madrid (Table 8). Murcia is a particularly interesting case, a region that had not had a significant Indian population before. This pattern, observed before the onset of the economic crisis, continues today. In 2011, 80% of the contracts given to Indian nationals were located in the three Mediterranean regions mentioned above.

<sup>14</sup> We must remember that the number of contracts does not coincide with the number of workers, since a migrant may have more than one yearly contract.

**Table 8. Contracts registered to Indian workers in Spain by region (2007 and 2011)**

Region	2007		2011	
	N	%	N	%
Andalusia	628	2.73	842	3.65
Balearic Islands	645	2.80	1147	4.97
Canary Islands	1111	4.83	1206	5.23
Catalonia	10387	45.17	9534	41.34
Valencia	3583	15.58	3937	17.07
Madrid	694	3.01	559	2.42
Murcia	5361	23.31	4937	21.41
Ceuta & Melilla	15	0.01	2	0.01
Other regions	568	2.53	893	3.87
<b>Total</b>	<b>22992</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>23057</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Labor Statistics Annual Report (2011). Ministry of Labor

Spanish citizens of Indian descent, the most well established members of the community residing in Spain and mostly dedicated to commerce, usually have a mid-level education. Education and training are directed at improving business opportunities, with particular value placed on applied and practical education in economics, accounting and financial management. Educational resources are combined with social capital to maximize economic success. The Sindhi diaspora is a highly cohesive network through which information, capital and workers flow to establish businesses in different enclaves, learn the trade and later establish businesses of their own.

The more recent Indian migration from Punjab is characterized by a low level of education, which largely explains why it integrates into sectors that do not require a great deal of specialization and that have a high demand for labor and which are also unattractive to local workers. It can also be stated that a significant number of the new Indian workers are employed in the informal economy, in both agriculture and services.

These two largest segments mix with a very recent and small slow of highly qualified workers. A specific set of data requested from the Ministry of Labor allows us to provide very succinct information on this migration current (little more than the percentage of Indians among the group of qualified migrants who receive documentation via these channels). In 2011, 8% of the blue card permits issued in Spain was given to Indian nationals<sup>15</sup>. Since 2007 a part of the qualified immigration from third countries to Spain is managed by the Special Unit for Large Companies and Strategic Economic Sectors (UGE)<sup>16</sup>. Between 2007 and 2011 close to 12,000 permits were issued to foreign citizens via this unit, just over 1,000 Indian nationals (10.3%). In addition, between 2008 and 2011 India has remained one of the top four nationalities in number of permits received, second in 2009 and 2010, surpassing 13% in both of those years.

Despite the different volumes involved, the Indian community residing in Spain is the result of three kinds of flows caused by differentiated factors and structural conditions and that have different strategies and patterns of economic integration. First, the Sindhi traders, who establish businesses in areas with special economic and tax regimes and in tourist areas; second, a migration flow made up of unskilled workers attracted by the intense growth of the Spanish economy and the high demand for workers in sectors that do not require specialization, and which mostly hire workers informally, such as services, industry and agriculture; and third, a highly qualified migration current, which rather than respond to market demand, is produced by the flow of workers that accompany the processes of internationalization of business networks and the transnationalization of services<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> By nationality this percentage is only surpassed by U.S., Canadian, Chinese and Columbian citizens. Only a few hundred of these kinds of permits are issued a year.

<sup>16</sup> For example, this unit manages the concession of permits for top executives, researchers, artists or other kinds of workers whose professional activity include economic, social or labor interests.

<sup>17</sup> The number of student residence authorizations given to Indian citizens has not surpassed 500 a year.

#### 4. Legal status and naturalization

Legal status largely determines if immigrants residing in Spain are able to achieve social integration and access to the labor market. Although Spanish immigration policy has been reactive, it has promoted the legal status of the foreign population by repeatedly organizing processes of regularization. Recent empirical analyses show that despite the fact that discontinuous irregularity has been the norm, the amnesties have had a positive effect on the legal status of migrants and their incorporation into the labor market (Izquierdo, 2012).

The latest available data, from June 2012, indicate that the number of Indian nationals with residence permits was 32,668, of which 2,103 (just over 6%) are included in the community regime. Among those included in the general regime, 59.5% have long-term residence permits and 33.8% have temporary permits. Just over 14% obtained their residence cards in 2012 via family reunification.

A large number of Indian immigrants in Spain have legal status (immigrants that have a permanent residence permit or who are under the community regime) around 70% (see Table 9). There is an evident division between one segment of the community that has resided in Spain for decades and has legal status through permanent residence permits, and another segment made up of recent settlers, with initial and renewed temporary permits, accounting for over 30% of the whole. The internal segmentation of the Indian community, in terms of legal status and types of permits, is another reflection of the two phases of the history and dates of settlement among this group.

**Table 9. Indian immigrants by type of residence authorization (2012).**

Type of authorization	Number	%
<b>Community Regime</b>	<b>2096</b>	<b>6.52</b>
<b>General Regime</b>		
Initial temporary permit	4726	14.69
Initial temporary (1st renewal)	2782	8.65
Temporary (2ne renewal)	3404	10.58
Permanent	19160	59.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>30072</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Ministry of Labor (2012)

A large number of studies in Sociology of Migration have stopped at the analysis of access to nationality of the receiving country, considering it the final stage of a migration process. Although this is a controversial assumption, because many immigrants seek permanent resident status rather than citizenship, the propensity to seek naturalization can provide some insight into the integration of migrants, how much they identify with the country of residence, and how committed they are to it. Legislation regarding Spanish nationality is based on the principle of *ius sanguinis*. It differs from other European countries in that it allows privileged access to Spanish nationality to certain countries (Latin Americans and nationals of other former Spanish colonies) after a two-year residence period<sup>18</sup>, compared to the general requirement of ten years of residence. This largely explains the different patterns of naturalization that can be observed among immigrants in Spain (Álvarez, 2008).

The number of Indians granted Spanish nationality doubled between 1996 and 2006 and has continued to increase ever since. However, in order to interpret this piece of raw data it must be related to the size of the community via the naturalization rate. We can observe that the naturalization rate generally remained stable, although with a few dips and surges, between 1997 and 2004 and then decreased until it stabilized at around 1% a year, possibly due to the increased volume of the group in

<sup>18</sup> It also allows for the possibility of double nationality for these nationals.

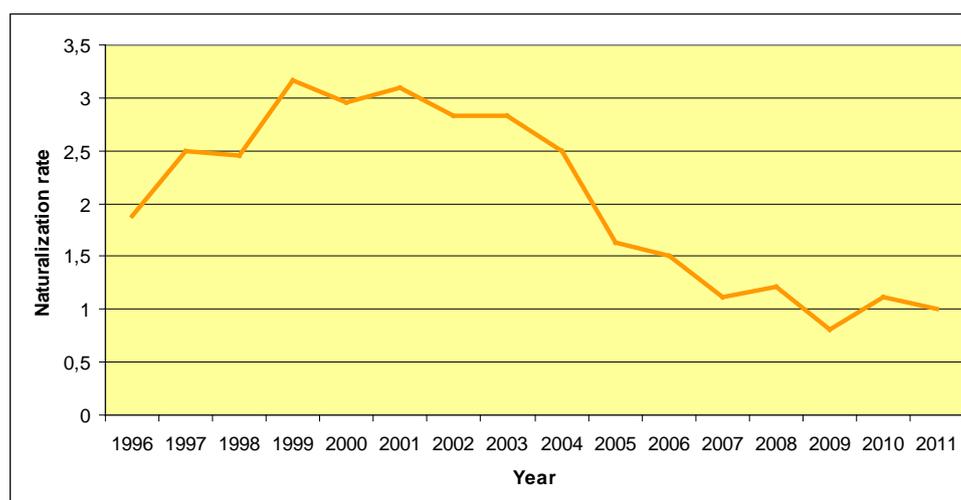
Spain. We should not forget that according to Spanish law Indian citizens are required to reside continuously in the country for ten years in order to apply for nationality. Evidently, recent arrivals are not eligible to apply due to this restriction. The data from 2011 indicate that 47% of Indians who acquired Spanish nationality did so through prolonged residence, 12.5% via matrimony and 40.25% because they were born in Spanish territory<sup>19</sup>. The geographic distribution and legal mechanisms through which nationality can be obtained explain why in 2011 the majority of cases in which Indians acquired nationality occurred in Catalonia and the Canary Islands and why the naturalizations were concentrated in the 0-4, 5-9 and 34-39 age groups.

**Table 10. Access to nationality among Indian citizens in Spain (1996-2011)**

Year	Number of residents	Number of Indians who acquired nationality	Naturalization rate (%)
1996	6790	128	1,88
1997	6882	172	2,49
1998	8144	200	2,45
1999	8515	270	3,17
2000	7813	232	2,96
2001	9271	287	3,09
2002	9555	271	2,83
2003	10327	293	2,83
2004	11814	295	2,49
2005	15273	248	1,63
2006	16348	250	1,51
2007	20776	231	1,11
2008	22807	280	1,22
2009	26435	215	0,81
2010	27207	307	1,12
2011	31635	320	1,01

Source: Ministry of Labor (2011)

**Figure 8. Naturalization rate of Indian nationals in Spain (1996-2011)**



Source: Ministry of Labor (2011)

<sup>19</sup> Although Spanish nationality is granted on the legal principle of *ius sanguinis*, a person born in Spanish territory can be naturalized after a short period of residence.

## 5. Socio-cultural integration

Spanish integration policy is characterized by three traits. First, it recognizes a broad range of rights for both regular and irregular immigrants. Second, its construction and implementation is the result of a concerted effort by a wide range of social actors, including social and business organizations, trade unions, immigrant associations and local and regional governments. This collaborative policy, which seeks consensus among diverse actors and interest groups, is the result of both the tradition of cooperation in the elaboration of public policy which dates back to before the Spanish democratic transition and also the decentralized Spanish political system, in which competences over integration are in the hands of regional and local governments. The third trait of Spanish integration policy is that it still in an early stage in the area of granting specific cultural and religious rights, despite its inclusive approach which seeks to guarantee different cultures living together harmoniously. To date the emphasis has been focused on constructing an inclusive policy that guarantees the rights of immigrants living in Spain. All of these traits are reflected in the process which approved the 2007 *Plan Estratégico de Ciudadanía e Integración* (PECI) [Strategic plan for Citizenship and Integration] and its later renewal as a policy paper articulating how to integrate immigrants into Spain (PECI 2011-2014). Thus, the migrants have been granted the right to access to the obligatory levels of the education system and to receive healthcare regardless of their legal status<sup>20</sup>. Incorporation into the Spanish public school system is universal and it includes all immigrants regardless of their legal situation. The latest data provided by the Ministry of Education, from the 2011-2012 school year, indicate that there are over 780,000 foreign students in the Spanish school system, of which only 4,378 were of Indian nationality, 60% of them in Catalanian schools.

The formation of families in Spain is also increasing. In 2007 9% of Indians who acquired a residence permit did so via family reunification; in 2008 the proportion increased to 14%, and the percentage has remained stable at this level ever since. Throughout the past decade women of Indian nationality gave birth to nearly 3,500 children in Spain and in 2011 over 100 mixed nationality marriages were registered according to the latest data from Vital Statistics (*Movimiento Natural de la Población*, MNP)<sup>21</sup>.

An analysis of integration processes should take into consideration the diverse groups at the heart of the community, their social relationships and the conformation of cultural and religious associations.

Today, Sindhis make up a small, transnational community with multiple national affiliations. Internally, the community is very cohesive due to a multitude of family and economic ties that transcend national borders, forming an intense social network through which goods, services, capital and credit, information and people circulate. Concepts such as nationality and “locality” do not form part of their identity, while economic practices and religious faith permeate and shape the community’s self-identity and sense of belonging. An extensive and multinational family, multilingualism and intense social relationships via the network are other aspects commonly mentioned as articulating their sense of belonging and reproducing their identity (López-Sala, 2009).

A long tradition and specialization in commerce, a strong sense of community and trusted networks in different parts of the world have facilitated the development of their businesses in Spain, first in the Canary Islands and later in other cities in Andalusia and Catalonia. The business sphere in the Sindhi world is exclusively masculine, although this situation can change slightly in the context of migrations, as has been observed in other countries in which they have settled (Thapan, 2002). The

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<sup>20</sup> Until the recent reform carried out in 2012 by the Partido Popular, currently the ruling party, which only grants healthcare to legal immigrants.

<sup>21</sup> Vital Statistics (*Movimiento Natural de la Población*) which basically refer to births, marriages and deaths in Spain. Currently statistics are elaborated in collaboration with Autonomous Communities, mainly based on information from the Civil Registers.

role of women is limited to the domestic realm. However, they are in charge of maintaining the cultural traditions at the heart of the community's identity, including matrimonies and religious practice. This is articulated through the temples of diverse branches of Hinduism. Notable branches in this regard are the *Geeta Ashrams*, *Guru Mandir*, and other centers in the *Satnam Sakhi*, *Radha Soami* or *Sai Baba* tradition in the Canaries, and the Hare Krishna Temple, the Radhasoami Satsang Beas Hindu Meditation Center and the Sai Baba Center in Catalonia. There are more progressive versions of Hinduism within the community, and others that are stricter and more conservative (see Verona, 2008; Estruch, Gómez i Segalà, Griera e Iglesias, 2007)<sup>22</sup>.

The traditional economic success of the community has been coupled with weak social ties with the rest of Spanish society. In general terms, Indians businessmen are respected by Spanish society for their work ethic, initiative, ability to save and austere lifestyle. Sindhis are also perceived as a reserved and discrete community, which is not very visible, except via their businesses. This discrete public profile is coupled with the idea that it is a community which maintains excellent relations with political and economic institutions. However, the Spanish population perceives the way that it interacts with the host society as merely instrumental, and it occasionally accuses them of a lack of loyalty and little identification with Spanish society and its customs. It is seen as a highly endogamic community in which sentimental and personal relationships with people outside their group are very limited.

The field work carried out in the Sindhi community between 2006 and 2011 has also allowed us to establish a series of conclusions on the caste system among Indian traders settled in Spain and its links to the creation of identity. In general terms, Sindhis place little importance on the caste system. The majority of people interviewed indicated that they belonged to the Lohana caste, but they usually only referred to themselves as Sindhi Hindus. For example, among groups of traders residing in Spain it's quite common for members of different castes to get married and to take meals together. The little importance placed on the caste system has also been observed in this community settled in other parts of the world. For instance, Dieter Haller's study on Sindhi settled in Gibraltar underscores that one of the most noteworthy and distinctive elements of this community is precisely the lack of importance placed on the caste system, in contrast to all other Hindu groups (Haller, 2005).

However, the weak influence of the caste system on the structure of Sindhi social life was first indicated by Barnouw in the mid-1950s. In his opinion, the minimization of its importance was consistent with the religious and social traditions of Sindh, where the influence of Muslim doctrines of Sufism and Sikhism and of some reform Hindu currents such as Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj, which defend the abolition of this system, seem to have somewhat weakened class distinctions (Barnouw, 1954; 1966), resulting in a more liberal and eclectic religious practice. In addition, contact with different parts of the world, and other cultures have given this community a cosmopolitan attitude, including a great deal of tolerance toward religious and social diversity.

This is not the case with the Punjabis recently settled in Spain; for this group, the caste system is an important factor in the internal structure of the community and it continues to affect their social life. This contrast has produced significant tension within a traditionally cohesive national community. The majority of Punjabis residing in Spain have declared themselves as members of Ravidassia, and Lubana caste groups, and also a small group that declares they belong to the Jat caste. The Lubanas are employed in the meat industry in Catalonia and in agriculture in other Mediterranean regions such as Valencia and Murcia. A particularly interesting process has been how a large segment of traders established in some coastal tourist areas, such as Lloret or Calella, have defined themselves as Ravidassias.

There is very little integration of Sindhi merchants into Spanish business and social organizations. In the 1950s and 60s they created their own cultural associations, known as Indostanic clubs, which became one of the main meeting places of this community for years. Many economic agreements were carried out in these clubs, since they served as a place where local businessmen could meet with other

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<sup>22</sup> Many of the Indian merchants in Lloret de Mar and Calella are also Ravidassias.

businessmen who were visiting family or on business trips. In contrast to other Asian immigrants, “Indian associationism” has been highly concentrated and formal (see Beltrán, Betrisey, López-Sala and Sáiz López: 2006b; Beltrán, Betrisey, López-Sala, and Saiz-López, 2006a).

Among the more recent flows from Punjab, the community has not been articulated around business ventures, but rather via religious associations and temples<sup>23</sup>. Sikh immigration is more family based and geographically concentrated. The earliest arrivals, in the 1980s, settled mainly in La Rioja and later in Catalonia and Valencia. Many of the early families came from other European countries. Some of the cities in which there is a significant Sikh presence are Olot in Girona (Farjas, 2006a and 2006b), Badalona and Hospitalet, in the province of Barcelona. For example, Olot has the largest Sikh community, employed mainly in the meat industry.

Over the past few years these communities have gained visibility by holding various religious celebrations in Spain, under the auspices the communities and local authorities as part of their integration policies. These celebrations include the Vaisakhi festival, and similar festivals held throughout Catalonia, particularly Badalona, as well as the Guru Nanak birth anniversary in November.

As a consequence of the growing number of Sikhs among Indian residents, over the past few years more than 18 temples have been established in different parts of Spain. The region with the most temples is Catalonia where there is also a Sikh Council (the *Consell Sikh de Catalunya* created in 2005). The *gurdwara*<sup>24</sup>, which opened in 1991 in the Sans neighborhood is still open, but the one later established in Las Ramblas, which eventually moved to Raval (currently on Carrer Hospital), concentrates the community’s religious activity for the entire province. Throughout the past decade new temples have opened in Santa Coloma de Gramenet and Olot, in the county of La Garrotxa. In Valencia the Guru Nanak Association and the Orriols *gurdwara* have been established (Buades and Vidal, 2007) and in Murcia a temple in the Pozo Estrecho district in the municipality of Torrepacheco.

In addition to being places of worship for the community, the temples have also become spaces for the exchange of information and solidarity between their members. In fact, the *gurdwaras* are essential resources for many families that are having financial difficulties due to the crisis, especially among those who were employed in construction and agriculture. The ties between communities stretch between regional borders and associations in different parts of Spain frequently contact each other and take part in the same activities. There are also very strong relations between the Sikh associations in Spain and other located in different European countries and India.

Despite the fact that Sikhs are still recent arrivals in Spain, the local populations in the areas where they reside view them as good workers and family men<sup>25</sup>. However, members of this community indicate that, in general, Spanish society has little knowledge of Sikhism and that they are often mistaken for Muslims or even as Muslim extremists. This has led to some discrimination that has often obligated members of the community to hide or to stop using some of their outer religious symbols, such as the turban. In 2011 this situation led to some protests in the city of Madrid to increase their visibility and to make Spanish society aware of the importance of maintaining their religious symbols in public, even in schools or workplaces.

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<sup>23</sup> In Spain, religious freedom is guaranteed by the Constitution and respected in practice. However, although Spain is a non-denominational state, the Catholic Church is granted substantial privileges compared to other religious creeds. Various agreements have been made between the Spanish state and the largest minority religions throughout the past decade that have promoted religious diversity and inter-denominational dialogue, particularly via the Office of Religious Affairs (Ministry of Justice). Beginning in 2005, the new, government-funded Foundation for Pluralism and Coexistence, based in the Ministry of Justice, provided funds directly to minority religions in order to promote religious equality and dialogue among religious groups. The foundation's board includes representatives of most government ministries as well as members of the religious groups themselves.

<sup>24</sup> Which literally means, “the gateway to the guru”.

<sup>25</sup> Because of the limited size of this community, it has not been included in surveys carried out by the Centre for Sociological Research (CIS) or in the Xenophobia and Racism Observatory (OBERAXE) reports on xenophobia and racism. Therefore, we are unable to measure how public opinion perceives Indian immigrants residing in Spain, beyond the information obtained in our field work.

## Conclusions

The Indian community currently residing in Spain is the result of various differentiated migration currents. The first flow, which occurred throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, was characterized by Sindhi merchants and workers who settled in prosperous areas of Spain in order to take advantage of the business opportunities offered by the free zones and the boom in mass tourism. Although small in volume, this immigration has a long, well-established history in Spain and has had a great deal of economic success and obtained legal status. This community is highly visible in the business sectors of the locations in which it settled and enjoys a good reputation and strong institutional relations, despite maintaining weak social ties with the host society. The Sindhi community is articulated around Indostanic clubs, business activity and the practice of Hinduism, elements that are all more important to their self-identity than nationality and place of residence, as can be observed in other trade diasporas. However, this group has gradually lost predominance within Indian immigration to Spain. At the end of the 1980s a new flow began to arrive from northern India, especially Punjab and Haryana. This new, far more diverse, medium to low-skilled and masculinized flow has settled in Mediterranean provinces to find work, particularly Catalonia and the Valencia Community, and has higher levels of irregularity. As it is still a recently established community, it is still in the early stages of creating institutions. However, the community appears to be stabilizing, with an increase in family reunification and the appearance of religious centers through which they articulate their social lives and solidarity within the community. Finally, a small new flow of highly qualified Indian migrants who do not display a desire to settle in Spain has been recently observed as a result of the internationalization of business activity. Despite the limited numbers of this latest flow, it stands out among the trickle of non-EU highly qualified migration to Spain.

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