

Portuguese migration to the United Kingdom is a recent process. As showed by Daniel Melo's work (2007, see table below) the first waves of migrants to the United Kingdom were part of the migratory movement that characterized Portuguese history during the 1960's and 1970's. From these initial moments until the mid – nineties, the number of Portuguese migrants in the UK rose progressively. However, the last fifteen years show a different picture. If there were 50 000 Portuguese living in the UK in 1994, in 2007 the figure arose to 250 000 at least. The great majority of this population lives in London (in 1999, 80000 of 120000 Portuguese, were living in London).

The Portuguese population in London is not homogeneous, a characteristic that defies in a certain way the idea of community. A significant part of the most recent migratory flux of Portuguese to the UK is composed by young and educated emigrants. This contrasts significantly with the social background of the typical Portuguese migration in the United Kingdom.

The first contingents of migrants were gathered in particular areas of cities, namely in London, which contributed to build a communitarian way of life. They explore social networks which already preexisted when arriving or which were in a process of formation. These networks were important to get jobs and housing, but also to provide an essential human framework that facilitated their adaptation. Among this framework, local Portuguese associations were crucial elements of adaptation. The children of this population become a diverse group that shared some of the social and cultural background of their parents. But they also adopt new ways of living; they have different expectations and values which are more close to the life they develop locally. To determine if these generations still maintain communitarian forms of life is one of our objectives. On the other hand, it is crucial to understand the relationship between the new educated emigrants within the Portuguese community the role of football as linking social form.

Therefore, one can assume that the Portuguese population in the UK is composed of three main groups of research when studying the fulfilled role by Portuguese football in the daily life of the Portuguese emigrants: the pioneers, their children and the new emigrants who came largely since the nineties. It is also important to reflect on the two different tendencies: the continuation of the old emigration pattern and the growth of a new pattern of emigration characterized by the flux of young and educated people.

Quadro I: estimate numbers of the Portuguese Community in the United Kingdom (1951-2006)

Data Total of Portuguese Migrants

1951 : 1350
1961 : 2918
1970 : 5418
1962-70 : 12022
1972 : 10000-15000
1973 : 15000-30000
1981 : 27 000
1986 : 30 000
1988 : 40 000
1993/4 : 50 000
1997 : 60 000
1999 : 120 000
2006 : 250 000-300 000

In Daniel Melo, “As Pátrias à Distância: Nacionalidade e Regionalidade no Associativismo Emigrante Português do Reino Unido”, *Negócios Estrangeiros*, 10/2/2007, p.411