

# Migration corridors: the Bolivia – Spain connection and translocal development



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## Background

Bolivians represent a 'mobile' population: more than 1 out of every 5 Bolivians lives abroad, in the USA, Argentina, Brazil and - recently - Spain (see figure 1). The Bolivia – Spain migration corridor is one of the migration corridors studied by IDS, next to the corridors of Ghana – the Netherlands and the Philippines – Gulf states. Issues to be addressed are the geographical and socio-economic characteristics of these migration corridors, the links these migrants have with their area of origin, the impact of these flows on the areas of origin in terms of translocal development, and the impact of the current crisis on these migration corridors (such as a redirection of migration flows, a decrease of remittances ).

## Methodology

- interviews among Bolivian migrant households in a Bolivian migrant community in Barcelona and with the relatives of migrant households in Bolivia (with MA-students);
- interviews with NGOs in Spain and Bolivia, local governments in Bolivia and key informants (with MA-students);
- analysis secondary material (statistics, other research carried out).

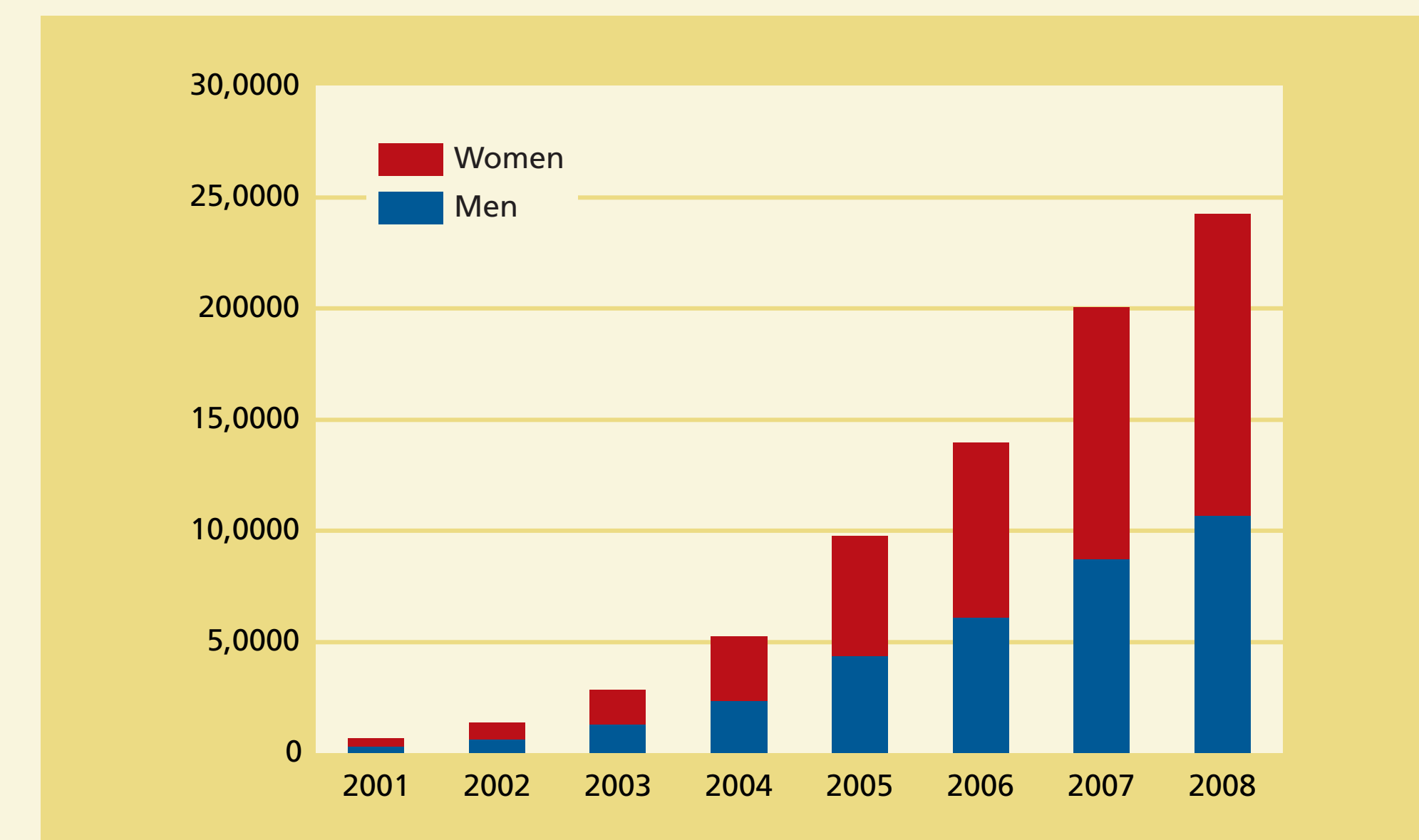


Figure 1: Bolivians in Spain registered at the Padrón Municipal 2001 – 2008 (source: INE 2009)



## Geographical characteristics

Currently, over 240.000 Bolivians live and work in Spain. The most important destination areas are the areas around the large cities and important agricultural regions (Figure 2). Although clustering within Spain exists, some of the migrants are very flexible and mobile: people move around according to the demand for labour.

## Socio-economic characteristics

- Most of the Bolivian migrants are irregular (60%), in the age category 20-45 (86%);
- The Bolivia-Spain corridor is dominated by women (56%) (see figure 1);
- The majority is employed in the domestic service or in construction; horeca is a third sector of importance;
- 86% of the migrants interviewed has a second job, besides their main activity; 23% has three jobs;
- Most migrants interviewed perceive their presence in Spain as a temporary phenomenon: they expect to return to Bolivia within a few (3-7) years to start an enterprise, build a house etc..

## Transnational financial linkages

- Spain is most important source country of remittances to Bolivia (36%), 8.6 % of GDP (through formal channels);
- Almost all migrant households remit money, in most cases approx. 65% of their monthly income; amounts vary from 300 – 600 Euros per month/per migrant.

## Translocal development: some first results

- All recipient households in Bolivia experience an increase in the household income, varying from 10 - 70%;
- Large part of the remittances is labelled money;
- Changing livelihoods: some households report a change in agricultural practices or economic activities.

## Impact crisis

- Too early to evaluate impact in Bolivia, but....
- Overall remittances from Spain decreased by 5-10% last quarter 2009 (World Bank 2009);
- Expectations are that the consequences for irregular migrants will be less severe, compared to other employees (relatively cheap labour, less restrictions).



Figure 3: translocal development: migrant housing in Santa Cruz