

# Bradramo - Brain Drain and Academic Mobility from Portugal to Europe

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## COLEÇÃO WORKING PAPERS BRADRAMO

### Working Paper 6 - Questionnaire: General Conclusions

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## QUESTIONNAIRE: GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

This project tells the stories of individual Portuguese men and women who have decided to carry on their lives out of Portugal. They are highly qualified Portuguese citizens who have shared with us their school and academic backgrounds, their social and family origins, their friendship networks, their trajectories in the labour market, their driving aspirations and life expectations, both in the near and in the distant future. Hence, these are the portraits of singular lives and they allow us to identify a whole diversity of worlds as they interweave along their paths.

Singular stories, however, are set in a more general social framework. Individual paths materialise under conditions that were not chosen but were rather the starting point for each individual's options. In fact, the decision to migrate involves structural features corresponding to the external form of the phenomenon that limit or enlarge the effects of individual decisions.

Those structural conditions were characterised through an *on-line* survey-questionnaire answered between May and October 2014 by an intentional non random sample of Portuguese citizens who: were or had been on mobility, or were or had been immigrants in a European country over the last 6 years; had higher education qualifications; or had worked in positions compatible with their academic level. The Portuguese qualified emigration was structurally profiled based on the answers to this questionnaire, and using statistical data from the Emigration Observatory [*Observatório da Emigração*] (2014), from Pordata, from OECD, and from ONS (Office for National Statistics, UK).

Data is presented in the question-answer format.

### 1.1. How many are they?

#### School background and qualifications of Portuguese emigrants aged 15 or older, resident in OECD countries, 2000/01 and 2010/11

Education level	Census 2000/01		Census 2010/11		Growth rate
	N	%	N	%	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 259 829</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1 471 644</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>16.8</b>
<b>Primary school</b>	847 011	67.2	900 915	61.2	6.4
<b>Secondary school</b>	294 899	23.4	404 409	27.5	37.1
<b>Higher education</b>	77 790	6.2	145 833	9.9	<b>87.5</b>
<b>Unknown education level</b>	40 129	3.2	20 487	1.4	-48.9

**Source:** Emigration Observatory [*Observatório da Emigração*], "Emigração Portuguesa. Relatório Estatístico 2014.

**Number of United Kingdom immigrants born in Portugal, according to their education level, per year of arrival**

Education level	TOTAL (residents aged 16 and older)	Arrived before 1981	Arrived 1981-1990	Arrived 1991-2000	Arrived 2001-2011
	N	N	N	N	N
No education	16 581	3 303	1931	4 564	6 783
Education level 1, 2 or 3	20 458	2 070	1587	6 027	10 774
Apprenticeship System <sup>1</sup>	819	125	70	202	422
Education level 4 and higher <sup>2</sup>	14 465	1 450	924	3 134	8 957
Other education level	23 676	1 905	1694	5 316	14 761
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75 999</b>	<b>8 853</b>	<b>6206</b>	<b>19 243</b>	<b>41 697</b>
<b>TOTAL - Europe</b>	<b>2 492 789</b>	<b>660 828</b>	<b>175544</b>	<b>346 144</b>	<b>1 310 273</b>
<b>TOTAL – All categories</b>	<b>6910595</b>	<b>1 836 359</b>	<b>652665</b>	<b>1 183 328</b>	<b>3 238 243</b>

**Source:** Office for National Statistics, UK. Data for the geographic area of England and Wales.

According to the data provided by the Emigration Observatory [*Observatório da Emigração*] (2014), the emigration of qualified Portuguese has had an 87.5% growth between 2000/1 and 2010/11, from a relative value of 6.2% of total emigration to a value of 9.9% in 2010/11, now accounting for 11% of total emigration. Based on the latter value, the qualified emigration flow is estimated to have reached a total of approximately 40 000 subjects in the 2011-2013 period.

However, if we look at the statistics of some of the main recipient countries for Portuguese emigrants, we can see that this number has been underestimated. In fact, for the same period, the statistics agency in the United Kingdom, one of the main destination countries for the latest Portuguese emigration, indicates that 21.5% of the total Portuguese emigrants over 16 have higher education qualifications.

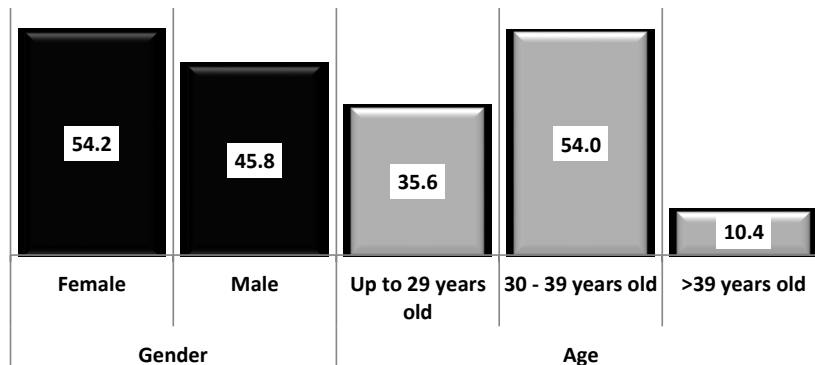
*1.2. What is the demographic profile (gender and age) of qualified emigration?*

Considering a sample of 1011 respondents, women (54.2%) slightly outnumber men. This is a change in the Portuguese traditionally male-dominant emigration profile and certainly the result of a greater presence of women in higher education and, consequently, in qualified jobs.

<sup>1</sup> This level corresponds to a form of vocational training where students receive training in a training centre and a company.

<sup>2</sup> This level corresponds to Bachelor's degree, Masters, PhD or other higher education degrees.

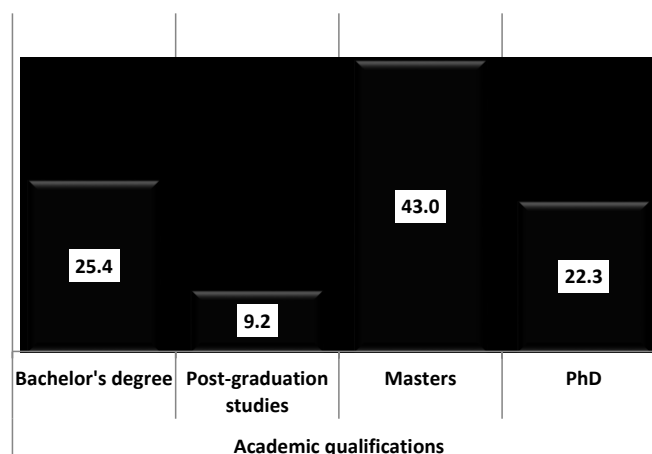
**Social and demographic characterisation of the respondents: gender and age (%)**



In terms of age, the sample is predominantly young (only 10.4% are over 39 years old). This can be justified by an extended juvenile period and delayed transition – into adult life, stable employment, destination family, own house –, but is additionally linked with easier access to transnational mobility networks and the difficulties experienced in finding a position in the Portuguese labour market that is compatible with the acquired qualifications (around 65% hold at least a Masters, particularly in the areas of Mathematics and Computer Studies, followed by Engineering and Social Science).

*1.3. What are the academic degrees of qualified emigrants?*

**Academic qualification of the respondents (%)**



The internal composition of the sample's qualifications shows that the majority of the respondents (74.5%) are postgraduate students – 43% have a Masters, 22.3%

are Ph.D.s and 9.2% finished a postgraduate course –, while the remaining 25.4% only have a Bachelor's degree.

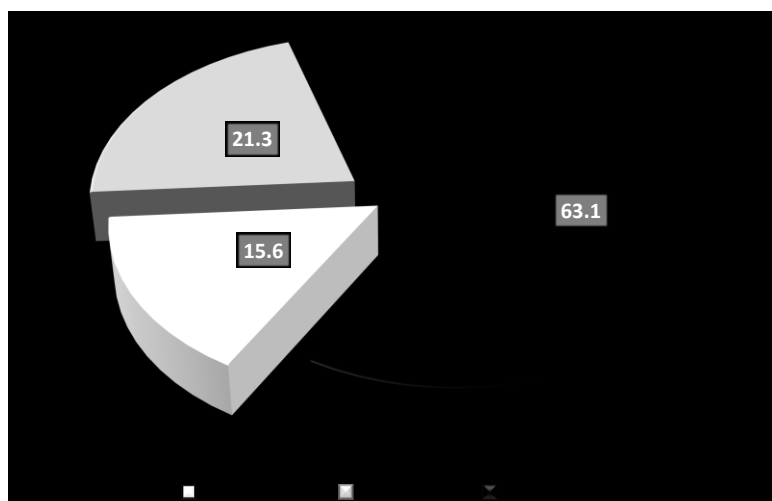
Subjects with Masters and Ph.D. qualifications are clearly overrepresented in the sample, if we consider that the equivalent figure is much lower in Portugal resident population up to 44 years old: 1.7% finished their Ph.D., 11.4% finished a Masters and 86.9% hold a Bachelor's degree. The trend seen in this sample suggests that the holders of higher and more specialised academic degrees account now for a bigger percentage of the qualified emigration in the latest years.

In 2014, only 16.5% of the Portuguese population aged 15 or older had at least a Bachelor's degree. In the age group between 25 and 34, the age group of a large part of our sample, that percentage increases to 28%, according to OECD data for 2012.

Hence, we are in the presence of a group of young people and young adults who have fully profited from the late school democratisation processes in Portugal and from the systematic implementation of a R&D public system.

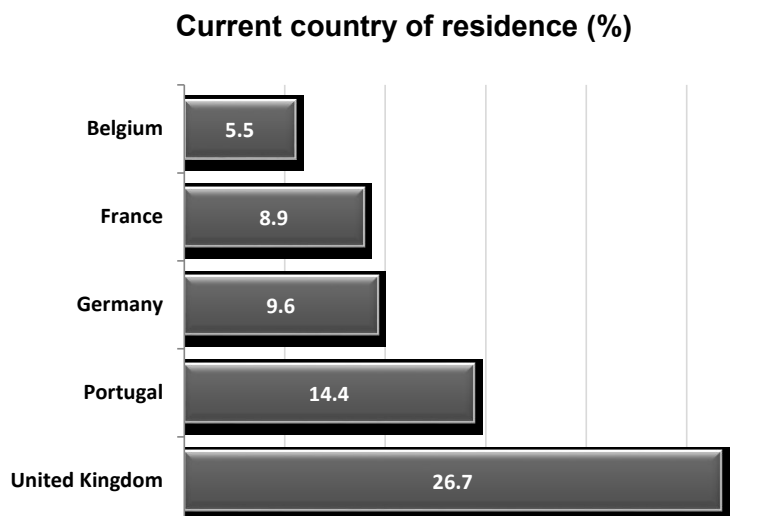
#### 1.4. What was the year of the last emigration period?

**Year of the last departure from Portugal (%)**



Around 4/5 of the sample left Portugal at or after the onset of the crisis, as only 15.6% left the country before 2007. It is known that the impacts of such an intense economic context are not immediately absorbed. However, the number of departures shows beyond any doubt that 2008 was the big trigger: more than 20 thousand emigrants against a mere 7 890 in the previous year (Pordata).

1.5. *What's the current country of residence?*

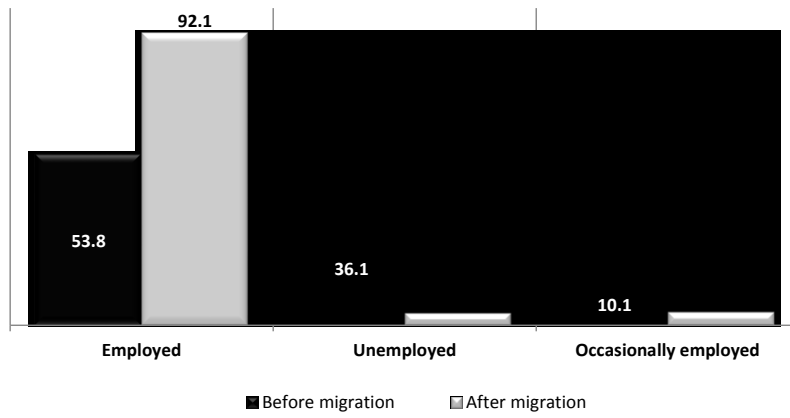


Looking into the current country of residence, we find that the United Kingdom (26.7%) as well as other countries in Central Europe (Germany, France and Belgium) are the major recipient countries. However, an unneglectable part of the sample was living in Portugal when they answered the questionnaire, a situation that may either mean they have successfully returned to Portugal (after credentials, experiences and social capital have been gained abroad) or that a transition is under way to other destinations.

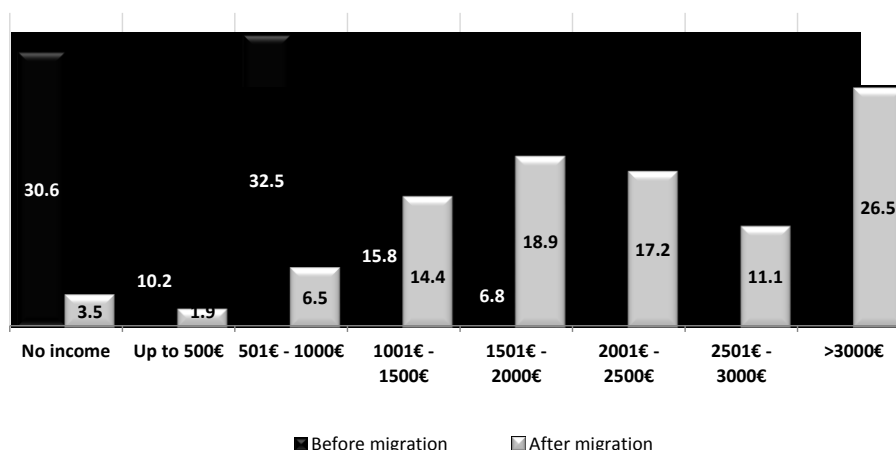
1.6. *What's the employment situation, before and after migration? What's the net monthly income, before and after migration?*

Similarly, departure from Portugal is seen to have a notorious effect on employment: only 3.8% are unemployed at the destination country, whereas in Portugal the percentage was over 36%, an approximate value that is consistent with unemployment rates for these age groups.

**Employment situation before and after migration (%)**



**Net monthly income before and after migration (%)**

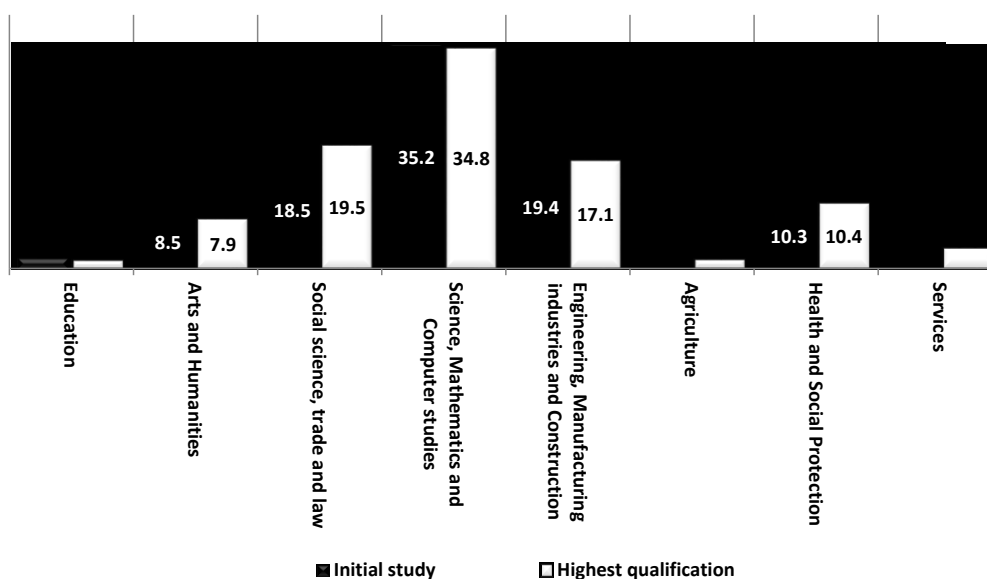


An important difference is also found in net monthly income: before departure, more than 70% earned less than 1 000 euros, whereas, at the destination country, over 50% earn more than 2 000 euros and 26.5% have a remuneration over 3 000 euros.

*1.7. What's the scientific area of initial study and highest qualification?*

The respondents' initial area of study and the area of their highest qualification are often the same, with greater concentration in science, mathematics and computer studies (about 1/3), followed by social science, trade and law and, with similar numbers, engineering, manufacturing industries and construction. Therefore, there are no academic reskilling processes, but rather a logic of continuity, with the subjects' trend to further their initial areas of study.

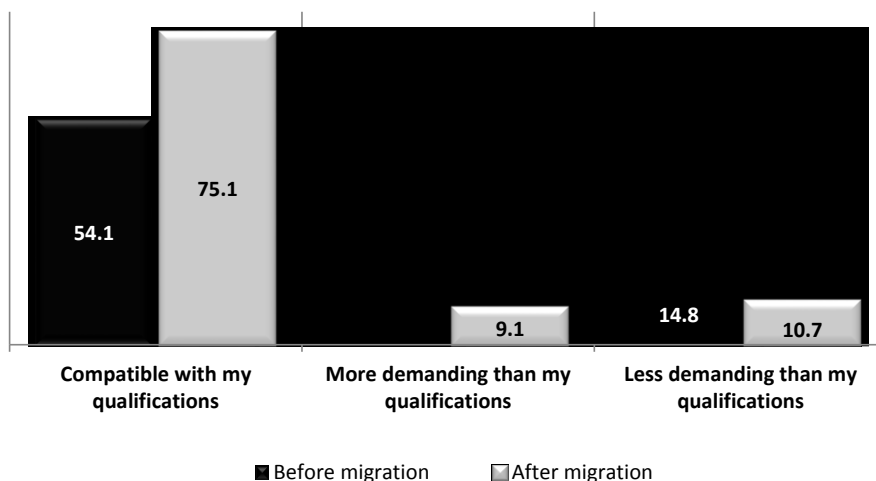
**Scientific area of initial study and highest qualification (%)**





1.8. What's the relationship between job and academic qualifications?

**Relationship between job and academic qualifications before and after migration (%)**

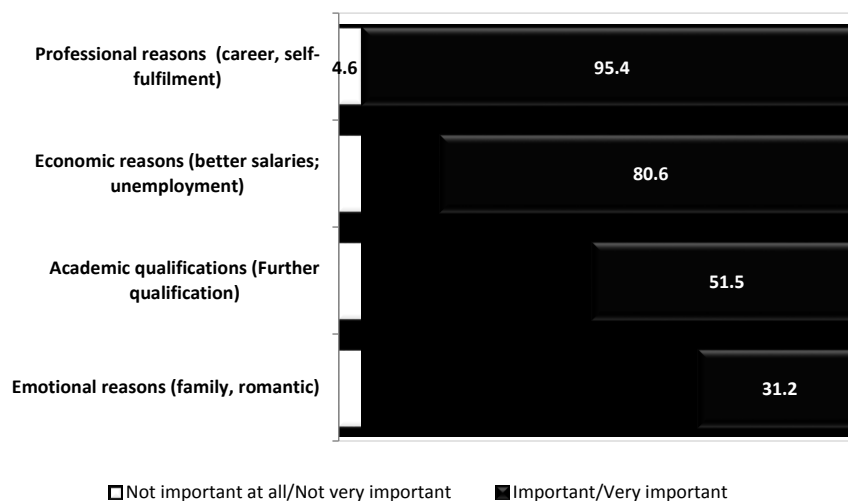


Considering that most respondents had jobs compatible with their academic qualifications, even before they migrated, the obvious conclusion is that the formal recognition of skills and organisational resources in Portugal wasn't clearly matched with the remuneration levels, let alone with career advancement opportunities.

An increase is also seen in the numbers of those who claim that their job at the destination country exceeds their academic qualifications. The perception of being underemployed is reduced, which might be related with greater career and training opportunities.

1.9. What are the reasons to migrate?

**Reasons to migrate (%)**



The decision to migrate is mainly driven by professional and economic reasons: the pursuit of a career where the subjects feel professionally fulfilled was pointed out by 95.4% of the respondents as the main reason that made them migrate. However, wages, together with unemployment or underemployment, also seem to strongly influence the decision to leave (80.6%). The fact that 46.2% of the sample was once unemployed or underemployed help us understand the relative weight of this reason. Although emotional reasons are relatively important, both family reunification and the existence of friendship networks at the destination countries clearly rank second in the hierarchy of the emigration driving motives.

### 1.9.1. Professional factors

Looking closely at the professional reasons that base the decision to migrate, we see that having academic qualifications that are highly valued at the destination country is the main pull factor (90% of agreement), supported by the subjects' claim that it isn't possible to achieve professional fulfilment in Portugal.

**Level of agreement: professional indicators (%)**

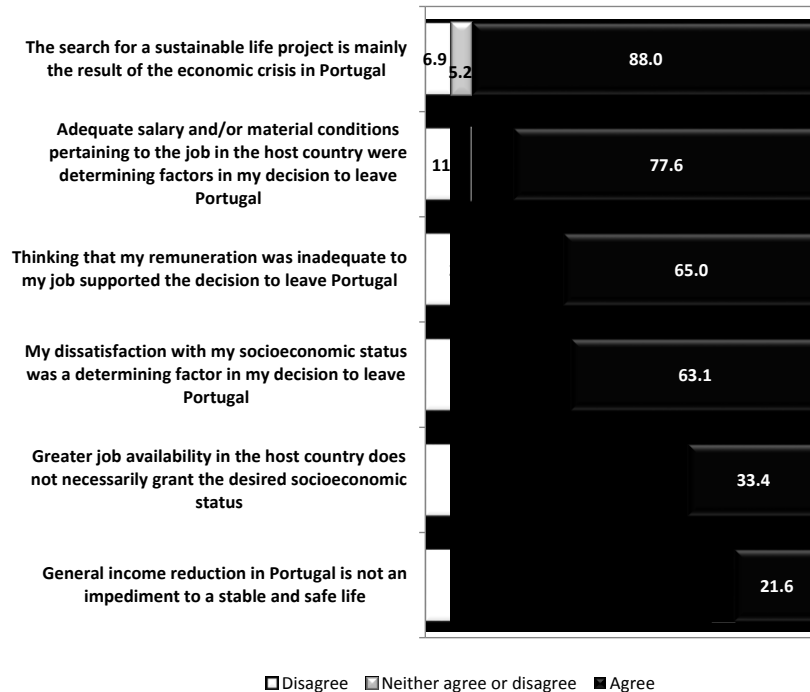


### 1.9.2. Economic factors

The breaking down of some economic indicators shows their relative impact on the decision to migrate: firstly, the economic crisis seen as a push factor; then the inadequacy of remuneration in the country of origin, closely followed by dissatisfaction with their social and economic status in Portugal and the perception of insecurity and instability caused by reduced income. On the other hand, a perception of salary

adequacy and greater availability of jobs at the destination countries stand out as the main economic indicators leading to migration.

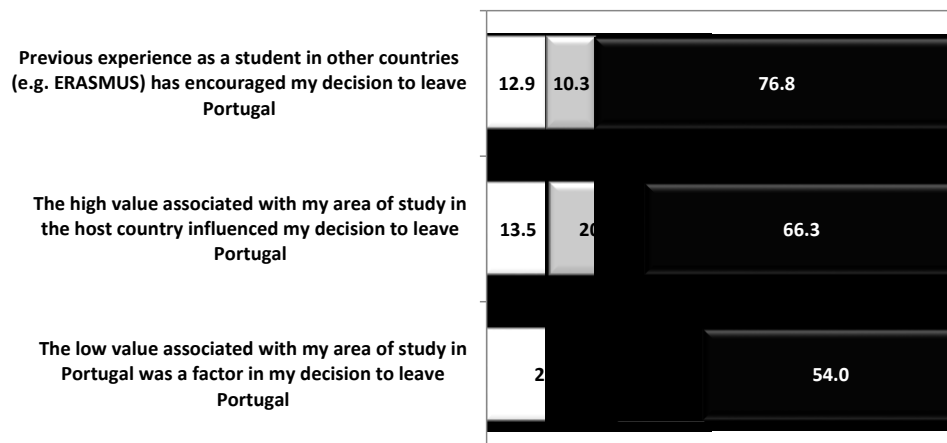
**Level of agreement: economic indicators (%)**



**1.9.3. Academic factors**

Among academic reasons, academic mobility experiences in other countries are identified as the most important drive, followed by the perception that their area of study is highly valued at the destination country. These indicators clearly show how academic mobility and the students' cost-benefit analysis of the experience work to turn latent brain drain into a more determined decision to migrate to central European countries.

**Level of agreement: academic indicators (%)**

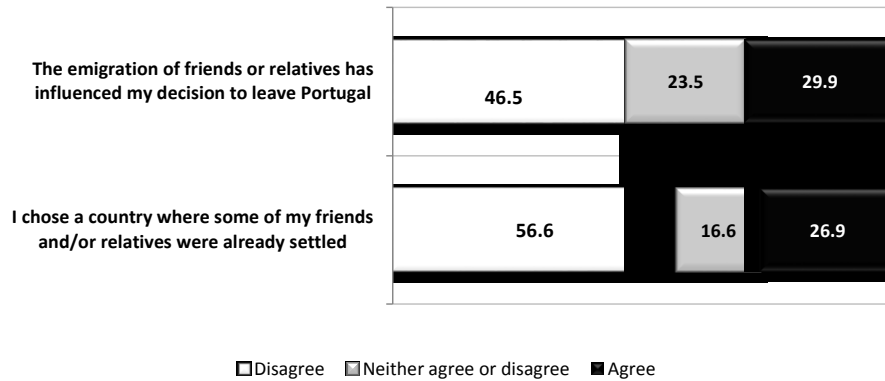


Disagree  
  Neither agree or disagree  
  Agree

### 1.9.4. Emotional factors

Unlike the traditional emigration processes, qualified emigrants find no significant drive to migrate in their family, friendship or emotional networks.

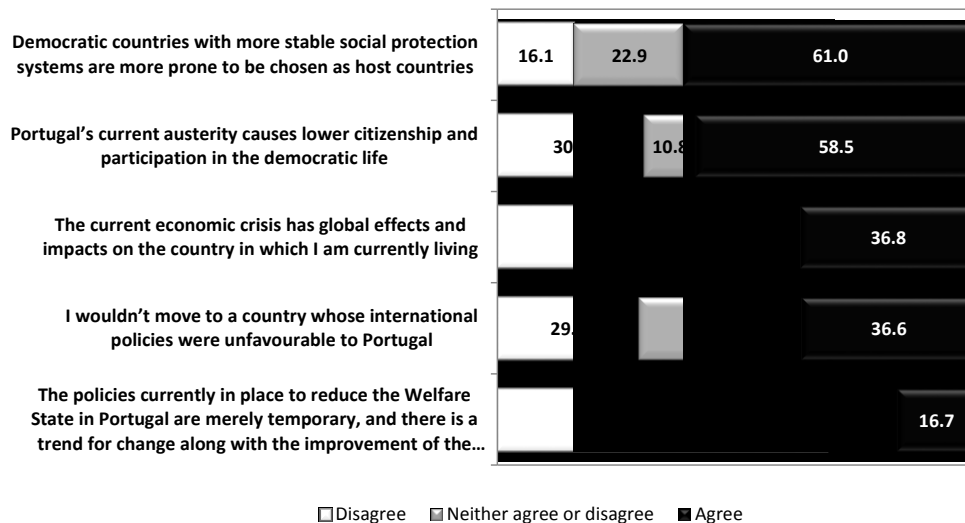
**Level of agreement: emotional and friendship indicators (%)**



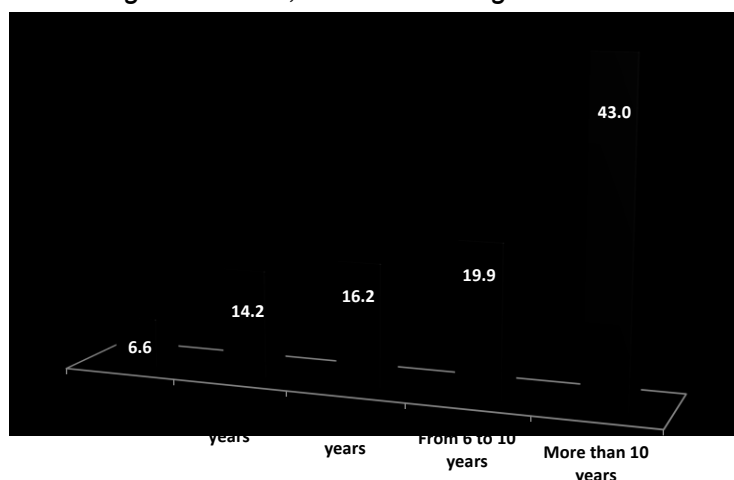
### 1.9.5. Social and political factors

The nature of a country's social contract is important in the choice of the destination country. Subjects tend to choose countries where the social welfare state and the citizen participation are fully consolidated. On the other hand, respondents claim that the policies meant to limit the social welfare state in Portugal are not temporary, and that equivalent policies haven't got such serious and obvious consequences in the countries where they are currently living.

**Level of agreement: social and political indicators (%)**



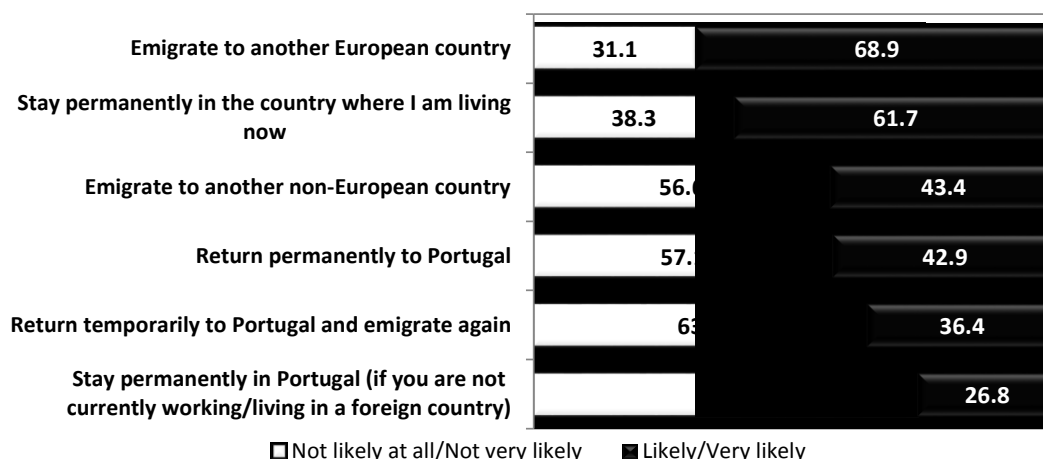
1.10. Is the decision to migrate a short, medium or long-term decision?



One of the aspects that may cause a loss of human capital in the country of origin is the duration of the emigration period. The majority of respondents state that mobility was initially planned as a temporary solution but their actual experience turned the initial plan into a medium (30.4%) or long-term (62.9%)<sup>3</sup> expectation.

Most respondents accept the idea of “lifelong” emigration in the current country of residence or in other European countries (61.7% and 68.9% respectively). The perception of a long-lasting crisis in Portugal is also associated with the decision to work abroad for a longer period and with the expectation to return only when their professional career has been consolidated (42.9%).

**Expectations for the future (%)**



<sup>3</sup> Within this study, “medium-term emigration” includes the expectation to live out of Portugal for a 2 to 5 year period and “long-term emigration” includes the expectation to live out of Portugal for 6 or more years.