

REGIONAL AND LOCAL RESPONSES IN PORTUGAL

**IN THE CONTEXT OF
MARGINALIZATION
AND GLOBALIZATION**

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IMMIGRATION IN PORTUGAL AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY – CHANGES AND CHALLENGES¹

Introduction

In the final decades of the 20th century the evolution of the migratory phenomenon, especially in an international context, resulted in a new geography of migrations. The origin of the flows has diversified, the destination areas have expanded, and the countries emerging as receiving countries are territories which tended for a long time to remain on the fringes of this phenomenon.

The development of transport and communications systems, profound economic changes, contrasting levels of economic development and the political upheavals that occurred at the end of the 20th century are among the factors that are forcing us to re-evaluate current migratory flows. Equally significant are the numbers of individuals involved and the distances travelled.

As L. Fonseca (2002) has said, at the turn of the century more than 150 million individuals were living outside their country of origin. The demographic, economic, cultural, and social impacts of this situation make it important to understand this population. However, the characteristics associated with it, particularly its clandestine nature, make it hard to know either the true scale of migratory movements or to discover their socio-economic characteristics and distribution in various sectors of the economy. In Europe, new flows are emerging that are different in direction, volume

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and typology, while in the Community zone of free movement, it is even more difficult to find out about this phenomenon. In this context the countries of Southern Europe, like Portugal, Spain, France and Italy, have become the «gateway» to Europe.

Recent decades have seen the European Community trying to devise policies with a view to restricting these flows. But cheap labour has to be found and this need has led some member-states to sign treaties with third countries, permitting people to enter. Portugal still favours the entry of people from the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), both to keep families together and for humanitarian reasons.

The social, economic and political context in which these flows are developing can, however, help to build scenarios of conflict. The European Union has shown itself incapable of finding solutions that could help to reduce these problems, with the result that the receiving population very often rejects the immigrants, leading to tension and conflict in the areas where there is the greatest concentration and diversity of communities (Fonseca, 2002). But it should be stressed that the presence of immigrants is also beneficial. They can bring new demographic dynamism to an area whose population is rapidly ageing because of low birth and death rates. Mendes considers that «according to the United Nations Population Fund, to maintain the present situation of 4 to 5 active individuals for each retired individual Europe would need to receive 159 million immigrants by 2025» (Fernandes *et al.* 2002: 96).

Nevertheless, migratory movements in the European context are not justified by purely demographic aspects alone. «The loss of jobs in the industrial sector has led to a fall in migration to meet labour requirements; the growth in tertiary sector jobs is driving new intra-European migrations» (Bosque, 2000: 272). The same author reports that tourism has also motivated a considerable amount of North-South movement, a direction that has also been taken by a great many people in search of Mediterranean countries in which to live when they retire. In other words, motivations other than economic ones are beginning to become important; Bosque mentions that «environmental conditions, peace and quiet, lifestyle, are uppermost in the decision to emigrate, as is (...) the attraction of coastal destinations» (2000:

282). It is in this context that we find so many English people wanting to settle in the south of Portugal.

Portugal in the world of migratory movements

The following data (Table 1) allow us to understand the fundamental demographic trends that have characterized the national territory in the last few years. Figures for the last decade of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century are given. The resident population of Portugal shows a slight increase, due in part to the balance of migration, which was positive. This is in contrast to the natural growth rate, which was negative in 2007. Another feature of Portuguese demography is population ageing. Between 1991 and 2007 there was a negative change in the number of young people in the 0 to 14-year-old age group, a lower fertility rate, an increase in average life expectancy at birth and an increase in the 65+ age group. Of particular significance is the fact that in the last 30 years the number of people aged 85 and over has risen by 23%.

Until the 1970s Portugal was a nation of emigrants. Circumstances both at home and abroad have led the country to take on a new role in the world of migratory movements since the 1980s. Whilst still retaining an emigrant population, Portugal is today an important destination for immigrants. Some well-qualified people come to our country to work for transnational enterprises, thanks to the internationalization of the economy; others – the vast majority – are workers coming from less-developed countries, and are poorly qualified. «This contradictory co-existence between emigration and resort to immigration is nothing more than the translation of the semi-peripheral place that Portugal occupies vis-à-vis the process of capitalist accumulation on a world scale, in a dual relation of dependence-domination» (Cavalheiro, 2000: 30).

Table 1 – Population characteristics of Portugal, 2007.

Population 2007	10 617 575
Female	5 478 768
Population change 1991/2007	6.5%
Density	115.3
Rate of natural increase	-0.01%
Migration growth rate	0.18%
Infant mortality rate	3.4‰
Life expectancy at birth for resident population	78.48 years
Average number of children per woman	1.33
0/14 year-old population	15.3%
15/24 year-old population	11.6%
25/65 year-old population	55.6%
Ageing index	113.6
Population over 65	17.4%
Change in 0/14 population between 1991 and 2007	- 15.5%

Source: *Anuário Estatístico de Portugal 2007 (2008) (Statistical Yearbook of Portugal)*, and *Estatísticas Demográficas 2007 (2008) (Demographic Statistics)*, Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE) (National Statistical Institute), Lisbon.

The Schengen Convention² was signed on 14 June 1985. This treaty envisages the gradual eradication of barriers to the free circulation of people by removing the internal border controls of Member States, and the establishment of a single entry control within the Schengen region. This agreement was hugely important for the policy of individual movement. It came into force on 1 September 1993 for the seven signatories (Portugal, Spain, Germany, France, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg), and it finally became effective on 26 March 1995, ten years after the Convention was first signed (Brandão, 1999).

Law 244/98 introduced some changes with respect to the right to re-unify families. To remedy illegalities, Decree-Law 4/2001 of 10 January introduced changes to the conditions of entry, staying, leaving and removal with respect to foreigners in Portugal. *Stay permits* are only issued to immigrants who have a valid employment contract, and the immigrant must register with Social Security and pay taxes. This has led to the setting up of networks specializing in the trafficking of workers, and these networks are hard to eradicate.

² Schengen is the name of a small town in Luxembourg, close to the border with France and Germany, where the Convention was signed, and which thus gave it its name.

Legal *stay permits* are granted in Portugal to foreign nationals as long as they have an employment contract. In an attempt at legalization, *residence permits* are also granted to foreign nationals who have a valid residence visa, and who have been legally resident in Portuguese territory for at least six or ten years, and who have not been sentenced to prison terms which, alone or cumulatively, exceed one year.

Some key questions

Up to the mid 1970s the number of foreign residents was not very significant. In 1960 around 29 000 foreigners were living in Portugal³. By 1980 this figure had risen to 50 750 (Fig. 1) and SEF figures for 2007 report that this number had gone up to 401 612 people. This growth in Portugal's resident immigrant population is essentially due to Law 23/2007 of 4 July coming into force. This law harmonized the official documents that enable foreigners to live in Portugal by converting stay permits and long-term visa extensions into residence permits. An exceptional regime was also established in Article 88 of this law, under which nationals of a third country who have an employment contract and are registered with Social Security are authorized to live in Portugal for work purposes. Clause 2 creates certain exceptions to this provision which is reflected in an increase in residence permits.

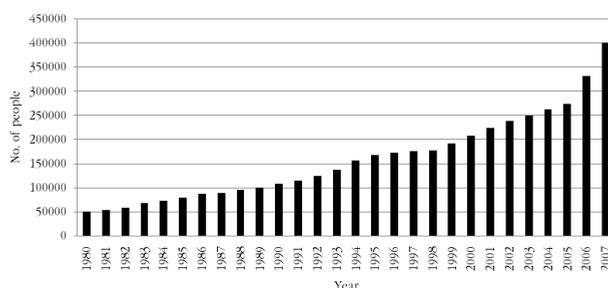


Figure 1 – Evolution of the number of foreign residents in Portugal, from 1980 to 2007.
Source: Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) (Department of Foreigners and Borders), 2009.

³ Esteves, 1991 (cited by Baganha & Marques, 2001).

The figure above relates to legal immigration. It must be remembered, however, that illegal immigration increases this figure. Some authors believe that the foreign population stands at around one million (10% of the total population). At the beginning of the 1980s this was due to immigration from the Portuguese speaking countries of Africa (*Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa* – PALOPs), and for many years these immigrants were the most numerically significant in terms of Portuguese immigration as a whole⁴.

Portugal's revolution of 25 April 1974, decolonization, and the socio-economic conditions in the former colonies, to say nothing of the armed conflicts that raged there until a very short while ago, explain this figure, which contributed to a significant increase in the number of immigrants in the 1980s and early 1990s. «(...) The 1980s saw the crystallization of a new migratory pattern, one that was marked by the consolidation of the social movement of worker migration originating in Cape Verde, and its progressive extension to the other PALOP countries» (Saint-Maurice, 1997: 54).

The growth observed in the 1990s (Fig. 2) has quite a different explanation, since the flows are distinct from the previous ones in terms of origin, qualification, and social structure. In 1992 the Portuguese government embarked on an Extraordinary Regularization Process⁵ for illegal immigrants, but it contained major limitations: it took place in a short space of time, and the illegal population was neither well-informed nor adequately prepared to deal with this bureaucratic process quickly. This is evident in the increase seen in 1993-94, in Figure 2. Around 39 000 applications for legalization were submitted in that period. During a Second Extraordinary Legalization Process in 1996, about 35 000 legalization applications were handled. The effects of this can be seen in the figures for 1999-00 in Figure 2. The change in the law brought about by

⁴ Baganha & Marques (2001) believe that it is hard to talk about immigrants when we are referring to people from PALOP who had held Portuguese nationality all their lives, as did almost everyone who came to Portugal from the Portuguese Speaking Countries before 1981.

⁵ Non-EU citizens living in the country prior to May 1992, and who had been working to ensure their economic subsistence, and those citizens from PALOP countries who had been in the country continuously since 1 June 1986.

Decree-Law 4/2001 of 10 January allowed employed foreigners who have a stay permit to get a residence permit after five years. This was particularly useful in regularizing the situation of people from Central and Eastern Europe, notably Ukrainians. The rise in the number of residence permits in 2005-06 (Fig. 2) is due to an increase in marriages with Portuguese or EU citizens. In addition, being a parent of a Portuguese citizen allowed some foreigners to apply for residence permits. And there was the further possibility of converting stay permits to residence permits (SEF, 2007: 9.10).

Immigration (particularly of an illegal nature) was favoured in the 1990s by a large number of public works: Expo'98, the Vasco da Gama Bridge, the Lisbon metro, the surface metro in Porto, the Alqueva dam. With the exception of the Alqueva dam project, therefore, immigrant communities tended to concentrate in the metropolitan areas. At the same time, there was a renewal of Portugal's housing stock, which led to a significant rise in the number of immigrants. Currently, the construction sector absorbs the overwhelming majority of people who come to work in Portugal, and there is a great ethnic diversity involved, due to the new geography of migrations.

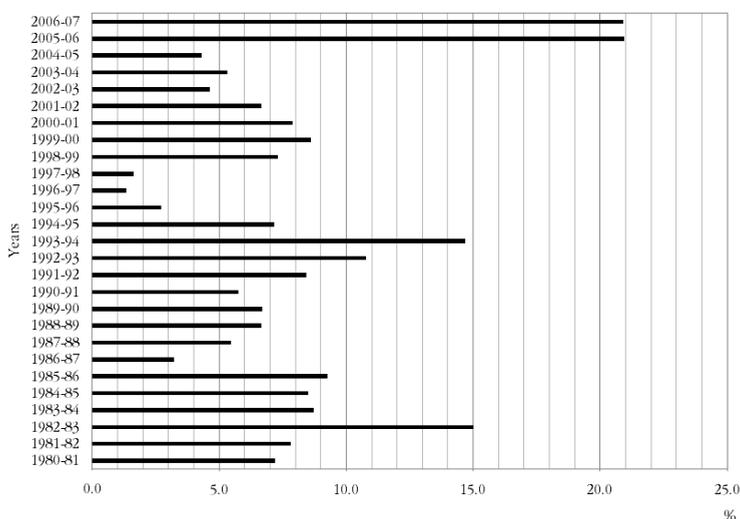


Figure 2 – Change in the number of foreign residents in Portugal from 1980 to 2007.
Source: Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) (Department of Foreigners and Borders), 2009.

Immigrant profile and social integration

Immigrants are usually young men, of working age, often with high levels of education. They enter an insecure economic and social situation in which they earn low wages and endure long working hours. Those arriving without employment contracts cannot take advantage of the social, health and education services.

Although they are mostly concentrated in the metropolitan area of Lisbon, these immigrants are to some extent scattered all over the country, living principally in the suburbs like the other communities, where we find a spatial segregation resulting from their social circumstances (see Cross & Waldinger, cit. Fonseca, 2002: 353).

In the towns the phenomenon of immigration has assumed such a numerical significance that there are shopping centres and districts that are markedly ethnic. Immigrants are often the victims of racism and social discrimination and so they tend to establish their own territories, which they demarcate and dominate.

It is in the metropolitan area of Lisbon that the associative movement has become very significant (Albuquerque, 2000: 2). Associations are an important forum for social contact, education, communication, socialization, training, information, solidarity, mediation between their society of origin and the host society. They play an increasingly important role in their members' socio-economic integration, and their political activity in the defence of the citizens they represent is growing.

Integration is sometimes made easier by family re-grouping, since this helps to perpetuate the ways of life of the country of origin, and the children usually attend school, which helps their parents to learn the language.

Countries of origin and destination regions

Brazilians top the list of the thirteen nationalities being granted the largest number of *stay permits* in Portugal, followed by Ukrainians and Moldavians (Fig. 3). These people are better qualified than immigrants from

the PALOPs, and they are scattered around the country. «In the last few years, the geography of immigration to Portugal has changed significantly. Besides the greater diversity of the geographic origins of non-Community immigrants, a fall in the relative importance of the annual flows from the PALOP (...) and a very large rise from Eastern Europe has been observed (...)» (Fonseca, 2002: 356).

Brazilians choose Portugal for its closeness in cultural terms and for the language. Indeed, many are descended from Portuguese emigrants. They are usually young and of working age, and mostly work in the «more modern» tertiary sector.

A smaller number of residence permits was granted to Cape Verdeans, Angolans and Guineans (Fig. 3), which has caused a certain amount of conflict, since they see themselves as being cast aside in favour of immigrants from the East, who are better qualified. This conflict is beginning to assume a certain dimension. «The migratory wave from Eastern Europe is well-received by the Portuguese, on the whole, and there is a marked preference shown by many employers for citizens from the East, to the detriment of African immigrants, and even of some Portuguese citizens» (Fonseca, 2002: 366).

The arrival of Chinese and Indians has also been noteworthy. Some are connected to the toy trade and catering, and there has been a proliferation of restaurants specializing in the food of these countries. According to Malheiros (1996) these Asians have a younger age structure than the Europeans, but they are not as young as the Brazilians or Africans.

Of the foreigners from the European Union legally resident in Portugal, (Fig. 4), those from the United Kingdom, Romania, Spain and Germany clearly predominate, with figures of 14 946, 13 653 and 11 160, respectively. A high number of them are not professionally active.

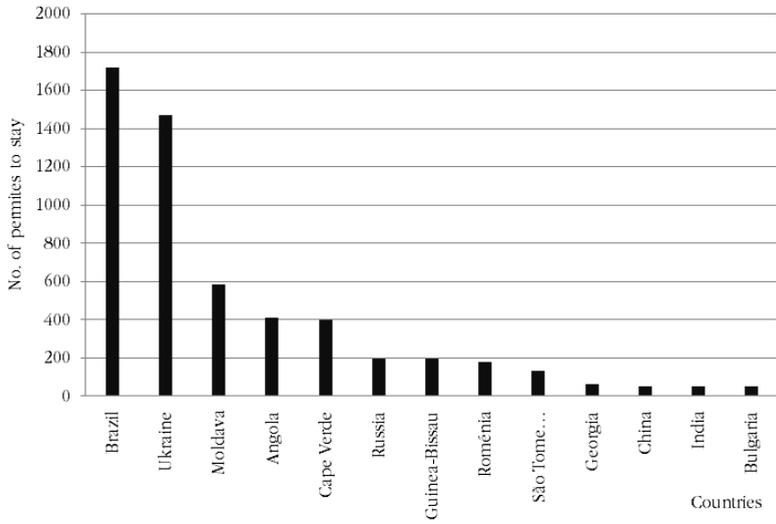


Figure 3 – Nationalities of individuals with *stay permits* in Portuguese territory in 2007.

Source: Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) (Department of Foreigners and Borders), 2009.

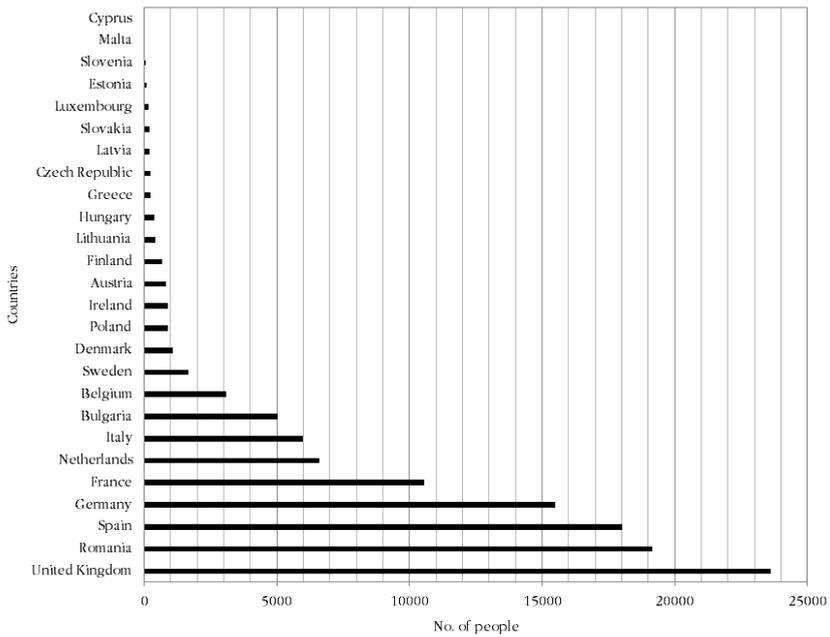


Figure 4 – Number of immigrants from European Union countries legally resident in Portugal in 2007.

Source: Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) (Department of Foreigners and Borders), 2002.

Examination of the spatial distribution of immigrants in Portugal reveals two major concentrations, both in coastal districts: Faro, Lisbon and Setúbal (Fig. 5).

As mentioned above, metropolitan areas and suburbs attract the largest number of foreigners. The same holds good for the more industrialized areas. All these regions are located on the coast. According to Baganha & Marques, «the resident foreign population in Portugal shows a pattern of settlement similar to that expected for poorly qualified economic migrants» (2001: 16). The same authors report that 64% of the immigrant population lives in the metropolitan area of Lisbon. People from the PALOPs settle in the metropolitan areas, Brazilians do not exhibit such a concentrated distribution, and Europeans tend to be in the Algarve. In the case of the latter, their choice is linked to tourism activities. Many immigrants settle there and work in the hotel and catering industries. Quite a few citizens from the United Kingdom and Germany choose to live in the Algarve; many of them are retired and are attracted by both the environment and the lower cost of living.

Immigrants form a volatile population and their number varies constantly. The change in immigrant population in the period 2000-2007 (Fig. 6) was greatest in Castelo Branco. The districts of Beja, Évora and Bragança, further inland, experienced a similarly important dynamics. The better labour supply of the coastal districts is gradually spreading practically throughout the country. This change is in part due to the Alqueva dam project, mentioned earlier, which is stimulating other sectors of activity, and also to the proximity of these districts to the Spanish border.

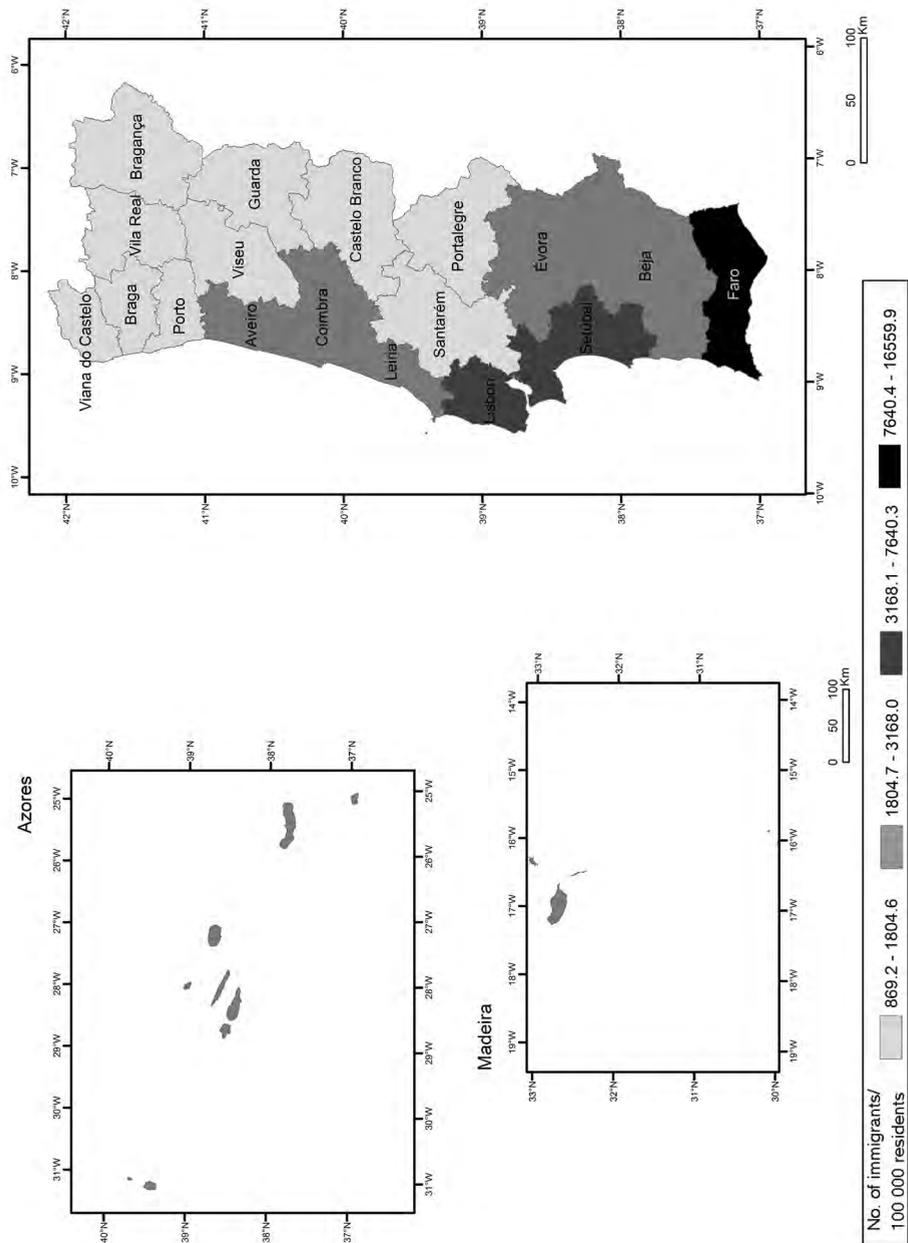


Figure 5 – Number of immigrants in Portugal per 100 000 residents, by district (2007).
 Sources: Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) (Department of Foreigners and Borders), 2009, *Estatísticas Demográficas 2007* (2008) (Demographic Statistics), Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE) (National Statistical Institute), Lisbon.

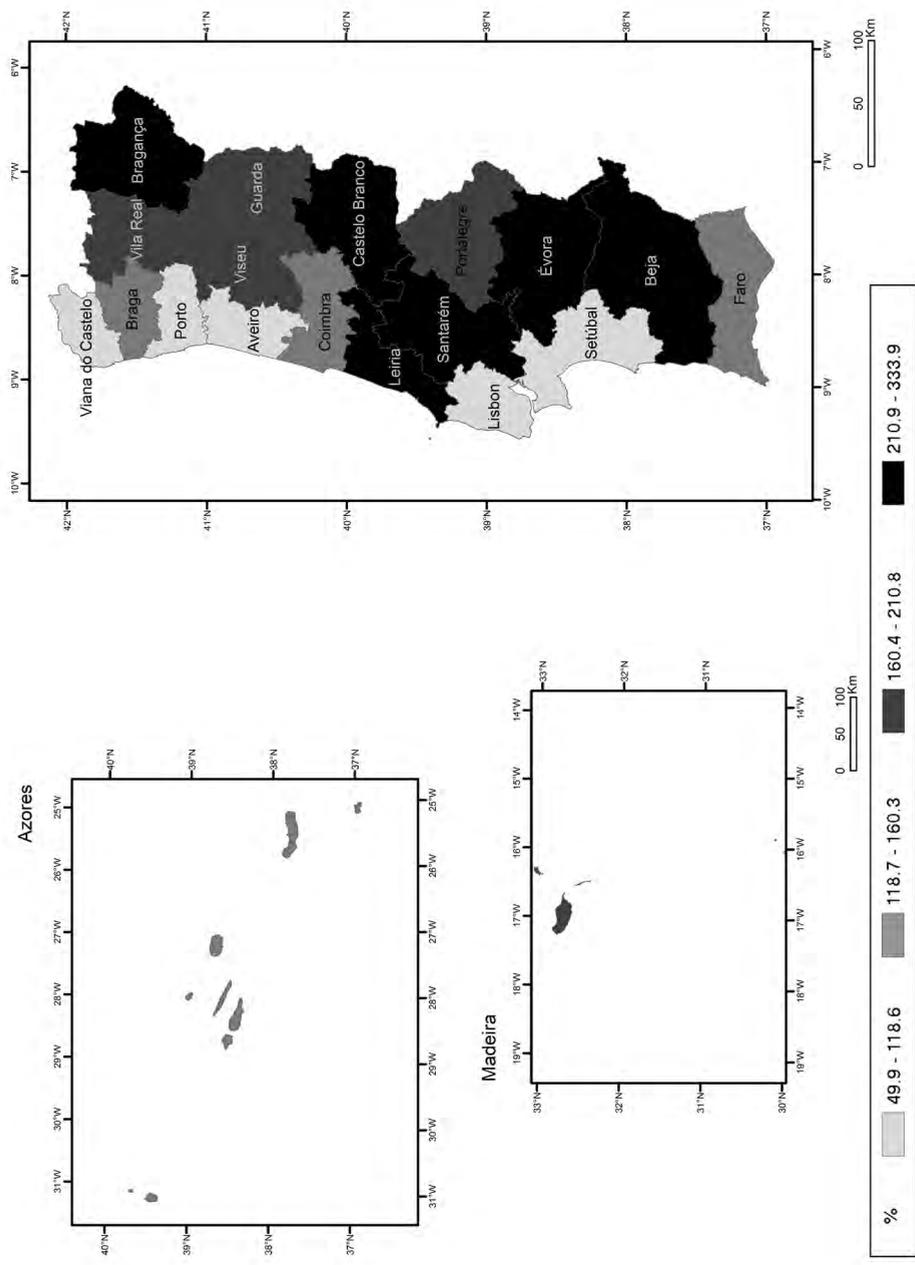


Figure 6 – Number of immigrants in Portugal districts: 2000-2007 percentage change.
 Source: Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) (Department of Foreigners and Borders), 2009.

Brief analysis of the case study

In 2002, a survey was carried out on one hundred immigrants working in the Central Region of Portugal. Of this sample 80% were male and 70% married; 56% were younger than 30 and 94% aged below 40. As regards their countries of origin, 54% were from Ukraine, 14% from Romania, 10% from Moldavia and 8% from Russia. As already mentioned, a considerable number were university graduates, 51%, while 42% had completed secondary school. Hardly any had been to another country before coming to work in Portugal. The highest figure, 5%, had worked in Italy. In relation to jobs in their country of origin, 32% were engineers and 13% doctors. In Portugal, 63% were working in the construction industry, 10% in catering and 6% in trade.

While the level of income was not high, it was considerably higher than in the country of origin. About 10% were earning over 750 euros, 63% between 500 and 750 euros, and 27% less than 500 euros. Only 58% said they had an employment contract. Cultural affinity is important with respect to the place of work/residence. Sixty percent were living with people from the same country and in rented accommodation (74%). Integration into Portuguese society revealed some conflicts. In the opinion of 62%, Portuguese people were friendly, while for 54% of those asked tensions were largely with those from other continents. Language was the biggest obstacle to integration. Issues of a cultural and religious nature were also mentioned. Integration into Portuguese society is a concern for many of these immigrants, as it is, too, for the Portuguese government and various Institutions. Nine percent of those asked were attending Portuguese language courses. The Gulbenkian Foundation, for example, runs a scheme under which doctors from Eastern Europe attend a course to enable them to work in the national health system.

Final comments

The migratory phenomenon stems from the globalization process that typifies these flows and everything indicates that it will intensify, with areas

of origin becoming increasingly diverse. The internationalization of the economy will continue to attract a European and North American population that is qualified to work in transnational corporations.

We would like to draw attention to the fact that an increasing number of Spaniards are coming to live in Portugal. They fill a need in certain areas, especially in the provision of medical care. They are also linked to a growing number of businesses established in Portugal. Along with this we have witnessed the arrival of unskilled labour to work on major public works – stadiums for Euro 2004, urban regeneration projects, and so forth.

In demographic terms, the arrival of immigrants may, albeit occasionally, re-size the population. In some cases it mitigates the rate of ageing. In relation to the active population, some consequences are already becoming apparent in the significant proportion they account for in Portugal's total active population. The signing of peace in Angola could eventually lead to some Angolans returning home, but this will only begin to be noticed in the medium/long term.

The trend for increasing numbers of immigrants to come from Eastern Europe will continue and in fact the recent enlargement of the European Union will intensify these flows. Although the metropolitan areas are likely to remain the chief recipients, geographic distribution will tend towards dispersion and the occupation of urban areas further inland, and even of rural areas.

The fact that Portugal is short of labour, both qualified and undifferentiated, means that the borders will exhibit some degree of permeability. There are certain jobs that we know will not be filled by Portuguese workers. The pressure from Africans, Asians and South Americans will continue. The unpredictability that characterizes migratory movements makes it difficult to plot future scenarios. But the various states seen as destinations by immigrants should try to act to resolve illegal immigration, which leads to submission, exploitation, discrimination.

The European Union is currently trying to standardize immigration control. The aim is to restrict the entry of citizens from non-member states and give preference to countries that belong to the EU. Governments, particularly the Portuguese government, must define the maximum acceptable

contingents and this should be done in terms of the needs of the different sectors of activity.

A 2002 study by the Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional (Institute of Employment and Vocational Training) defined the sectors most in need of labour and the respective contingents of workers at national level: construction (11 200), followed by tourism (5 200), and agriculture (2 740). Entry should be adjusted to the needs of Portugal's economy so as to take advantage of the levels of qualification of immigrant labour, and this can only be achieved if the migrant population is properly understood. Immigrants should be allowed to enjoy the rights and duties of any other citizen.

Finally, it is worth stressing that, despite the conflicts, society is already showing positive signs, notably of a cultural nature. We believe that this is one of the most positive facts of this phenomenon. Miscegenation, linguistic enrichment, the influence on music and food, and, above all, the way of looking at and perceiving the *other*.

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