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Introduction

The contemporary world has experienced a large influx of migrants. According to the United Nations more than 230 million people live outside their place of birth. Daily we open the newspapers, websites and blogs on the internet talking about migrations and migrants of all types within their own country and also international migrants. And these is an important factor of social change. Historically, Europe was the main exporter of emigrants as their colonies spread through North and South America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Nowadays it is very different: Asia has replaced Europe, with around 20 million Indian and 30 million Chinese living outside their countries. Since the 80's migrations have taken a global character, they have become faster, more significant and complex.

Causes of migration: Throughout history, there were many reasons for migration such as natural disasters, wars, political, ethnic or cultural persecution and education, but the main inductor of international migrations seems to be economical aspects, people leave their country wishing for a better job and better life perspectives in other nations. And those that don't migrate are also touched by this reality, as family, friends or decedents of migrants, or through changes in their communities, as a result of the departure of neighbours or the arrival of foreigners.

Effects of migration: Most of the current immigrants live in Europe, there are about 56 million, equivalent to 7.7% of its population. In comparison, developing countries do not feel these issues so much: in Asia and Latin America, the number of immigrants is only 1% of the total population, while in Africa it is 2%. Faced with the increase in the number of immigrants, more and more countries have a closed-door policy. Contrary to this trend, the Portuguese government has in recent years launched the Golden Visa policy to attract permanent immigrants. Immigration plays a very important role in urban management. According to the IOM's World Immigration Report 2015, the contribution of immigrants is indispensable for the economic, social and cultural development of both host countries and countries of origin. Immigration can stimulate urbanization and promote future economic development. Immigrants can also support the development of their homeland through cooperation with other countries, thereby promoting international development and enhancing the historical, cultural, religious and socio-economic richness of a city.

Immigration in Portugal

If Portugal closed doors to immigration and only considered its birth and mortality rates, and did nothing to control the emigration rhythm, the population would decrease from its 10,4 million to 7,8 million till 2060, the highest decrease in Europe. It wouldn't have enough qualified people for the country's economy to develop. Nor people working on jobs related to the construction industry or taking care of elderly people. Because the number of the working age population will diminish and old people will rise. As times goes by, Portugal needs more and more people that it doesn't have. Replacement migration is defined as "the volume of migrants needed to compensate for the decrease in the natural balance of the population (difference between births and deaths) and to prevent the decline and the aging of the population". Thus, for Portugal to maintain the population of 10.4 million would require a positive migratory balance of 2.2 million by 2060, which means that it would be necessary to enter, per year, 47 thousand more immigrants than emigrants. So how can we make this happen? João Peixoto, a Portuguese sociologist, said that not only do we have to fight against the low birth rate but also introduce certain measures to attract immigrants. And this is where the new law of immigration comes from.



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Against the opinion of the SEF, immigrants can now be legalized only with a "promise" of work and without an entry visa. The new law also prevents immigrants who have committed crimes such as homicide, violent robbery or drug trafficking from being expelled. The Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF), which had warned of the security risks that this extraordinary regularization could

cause, was surprised by the approval of this law. The SEF also recalls the lack of human resources and sufficient computer resources to respond to the expected increase in applications for residence permits. According to *Diário de Notícias*, a Portuguese newspaper, in one week 4,073 new orders entered SEF, a figure that significantly exceeds the average of 300 requests per week with the previous law.

However, one of the negative impacts of this massive immigration is the creation of minorities that can sometimes suffer from discrimination. Since the 90s several new waves of Brazilians, Romanians, Chinese and Moldovans have immigrated to Portugal. With the Portuguese policy of the "Golden Visa" standing out, there's a great acceptance among the Chinese people. The geographical, linguistic and cultural distance between Portugal and China is great. Still, the number of Chinese in Portugal has grown and if they initially opened restaurants or shops as a way of living, new immigrants seek to invest and improve their quality of life. According to official immigration data released by SEF, the "Golden Visa" attracted a total of 2,502 investors, of whom 80% came from China. And there might be a little bit of xenophobia against them. While not always being the case, Chinese immigrants in Portugal tend to stay within their own communities. Some members of those communities will stay in Portugal for years without even learning how to speak anything beyond very basic Portuguese, and their accent gets made fun of. So in most cities they will be only known as sellers of cheap, low-quality products and Chinese restaurant waiters. However, no one thinks of them as lazy. They're thought of as people who'll work longer hours for lower wages, and so generally more hardworking than the average Portuguese.

We also have the Brazilians who are the most discriminated group of foreigners according to the report of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). This research states that 74% of Brazilians living in Portugal had been discriminated against. And sometimes it can really affect people's lives, there are some cases of Brazilians with difficulties on renting a house in Portugal for the simple fact of "being Brazilian". With so many cases going on over time, in 2012, a group of Brazilian women made a manifest in repudiation of prejudice against Brazilian women in Portugal.

Emigration

Portugal is today the second European Union country with the highest emigration in proportion of its population, behind Malta. There are more than two million Portuguese emigrants, meaning more than 20% of the Portuguese population lives outside the country of their birth, most of them settling in the United Kingdom, Switzerland, France and Germany, Angola and Mozambique.

The overall trend of Portuguese emigration is stabilization. The number of exits has been reduced and it tends to stabilize, the number of residents abroad will always increase. The majority of emigrants do not have many qualifications and they leave the country looking for better life conditions. However, they are also exposed to discrimination. A study made by Ana Barbeiro found out that in the first year of arrival in Switzerland, 56% of respondents said they experienced an injustice or discrimination in at least one context. The injustices are mainly related to the context of work, housing, day-to-day living and immigration services.



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Refugees

The influx of refugees and migrants into the E.U. that peaked during 2015 exposed the limits of European solidarity. Among the countries that stepped up in support of front-line states overwhelmed by new arrivals was Portugal. While some members erected border fences and sought to sabotage a scheme to relocate refugees from Greece and Italy, Portugal volunteered to resettle up to 4,000 refugees, which was later revised upward to 10,000. This made Portugal third on the list of countries for the number of refugees it would welcome. This initiative came in spite of the country's debt crisis that needed a financial bailout. While many of its European partners faced a populist surge in reaction to media portrayals of the refugee crisis, Portugal's more welcoming stance has enjoyed considerable public support.

Historically speaking, Portugal has received a very small number of asylum seekers and resettled refugees. In the last century, its closest encounter with a refugee crisis came during World War II, when thousands of refugees passed through the country in their way to the Americas. Lisbon's emotive role as a point of departure was immortalized in the final scenes of the movie "Casablanca."

The long period of authoritarian rule under António de Oliveira Salazar saw few refugees settle in Portugal. The end of Salazar's rule led to many Portuguese returning from former colonies in Africa. In the late 1990s, Portugal received many Kosovars, as well as several thousand people who fled the civil war in Guinea-Bissau.

The call from the European Commission in 2015 for member states to share the burden through a quota system essentially presented the country with a novel challenge. While member states such as Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic – known collectively as the Visegrad Four – sought to wreck the responsibility-sharing scheme, Portugal offered to exceed its quota.

This apparent shift in foreign and refugee policies has two aspects – a humanitarian and moral stand, but also a rational recognition of what Portugal stands to gain from this in the European political arena. First, it is important for Portugal to show its European partners that solidarity is key and that the E.U. is more than an economic and bureaucratic body that controls national budgets. This comes after Portugal's severe debt crisis that saw it fall back on the support and solidarity of the E.U. Also, the country needs to attract people to boost economic activity, counterbalancing a falling birth-rate and aging population. "It is in Portugal's interest to be proactive, because there are areas of the country losing population and we have a serious demographic problem," said António Costa Portugal's prime minister.

The creation in 2015 of the Refugee Support Platform (Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados) has enabled the country to overcome its own limited refugee reception services. It brings together a wide range of national, regional and local public and private bodies, from nongovernmental organizations to universities and religious institutions throughout the country, it has helped to maintain calm around refugee issues and build support for their integration.

Resettled refugees receive support from local authorities for accommodation, vocational training and finding a job. Additionally, Portuguese language courses are offered and children have access to public schools and healthcare. Refugee families have been distributed throughout the country, avoiding geographical concentration, but also taking advantage of local support from councils.

Despite being this open, the number of refugees arriving in Portugal has been low so far. At the end of 2017, 1520 refugees had arrived in the country but 50% of them left. Far from the refugee camps of Eastern Europe, Portugal is rarely associated with the term



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“refugee”, as the location is distant from where they begin their journey. Many refugees aim for Central Europe because of the perceived wealth, with Portugal never appearing on their radar. But the Portuguese prime minister is determined to change the idea. With the help of the European Union, Portugal is increasing refugee quotas, and welcoming unprecedented numbers. Also, The World Health Organization (WHO) introduced a five-day course for medical professionals to educate them on refugee health. Portugal has sent representatives to the course in order to become prepared for the increase of refugees to which it has committed. The experience of Portugal refugees shows that this Western European country could soon be centre stage in terms of migrant numbers.

Mohamad Abou Ras has a cell phone full of questions from migrants in Turkey and Greece, and others who have reached more western parts of Europe, who want to know what the situation in Portugal is. Abou Ras answers them all, sharing his own experience as a refugee and referring them to official sources where possible. After only eight months in the country he has become a guide to others looking to settle here. Despite volunteers like him and a community willing to help, a generous state offering safety and security, and a favourable climate and relaxed culture, Portugal is finding it hard to attract refugees in any significant numbers, let alone keep those who arrive.

There is little of the right-wing rhetoric seen in countries such as the United Kingdom, focused on the “burden” of migrants. Portugal offers 18 months of free housing, a monthly stipend of 150 euros (\$177) for each migrant and access to language classes to help integrate new arrivals into society.

Why then, does the country struggle to fill its quotas?

- First, there is the lack of established ethnic communities. Portugal simply does not have a history of immigration comparable with Germany, France and Britain, particularly from Arabic-speaking countries. “There are no family networks and no friend networks that support the arrival of other refugees. The number of refugees and asylum seekers is still very, very small in comparison with other countries.
- Second, the state’s generous welcoming package is hampered by poor management and a patchwork of competing systems, so some of what is promised is poorly delivered.
- Third is jobs. Although Portugal’s economy has been recovering since the financial crisis, it is heavy on service and tourism-based jobs that require good language skills. Most new arrivals speak neither English nor Portuguese.
- Finally, some refugees find themselves placed not in the bustling cities of Porto or Lisbon but in rural areas where the cultural isolation and language shocks are more pronounced.

Refugees Step In

These are problems Abou Ras wants to help migrants overcome through an association he recently founded with a handful of other asylum seekers, called “Families of Refugees” for better connecting the newcomers with the various institutions that offer support. It also hopes it can eventually partner on cultural events and employment projects with the main institutions responsible for refugees here.

We have other institutions trying to help the refugees, like The Portuguese Council for Refugees (CPR), a non-profit, independent and pluralistic NGO, inspired by a humanist culture of tolerance and respect for the dignity of other peoples. Working with the



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UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency that provides housing and legal aid to new arrivals, among other services.

Time Running Out

The al-Hasan al-Khedeir family from Aleppo, Syria, now live in Lisbon. When living in Aleppo became impossible, the family of seven headed for Turkey, found steady work there, and over three years built a new life. But their middle son, 15-year-old Lawrence, had an eye condition that required a special operation, and they were advised to seek treatment in Portugal. A year later, Lawrence has yet to be seen by a specialist and the family are fast approaching the end of their free housing and financial support. Yusef and Mona have had a hard time finding work, meaning they will soon rely on social security and council housing – yet another bureaucratic challenge to master in a language they do not speak. They found a volunteer to teach them Portuguese, but they had to walk for an hour-and-a-half and sometimes the teacher would not show up.

Their school-aged children are isolated by their lack of language and community. They speak in the language of food now, owning a small catering enterprise to subsidize their income, cooking Syrian food for a handful of people she knows in the larger refugee support community in Lisbon. Yusef started importing Syrian products – coffee, sweets, fruit and tobacco – and selling them to Middle Eastern restaurants through a Facebook page he set up.

Meanwhile Mona's sister, who was relocated to Sweden, has found steady work there, bought a car and just went on her first vacation. Do they regret coming here? Yes. But now they have no other choice.

Such experiences are not uncommon, even though that they could help the country's demographic decline and provide an economic pick-me-up to sleepy rural areas, does the country provide the necessary structures for short-term integration? Faced with many voluntary departures, organizations as CPR are learning from their experiences and reassessing their course of action. Placing individual families in remote corners of Portugal where there are limited services, for example, has not helped them integrate or build a sense of belonging.

Another example is Mahmoud Zamzom, who was accepted in Portugal and right on arrival the family was placed in a small village near Porto. The house lacked heating, and they felt isolated. He asked the organization responsible for them if they could be placed in Lisbon or a larger city, but he was told the village would be their home for the next year and a half. Five days after arriving, he and his family were on their way to Germany. Now his asylum request in Germany has been rejected, and under the E.U.'s Dublin Agreement covering responsibility for refugees his family will need to return to Portugal. Zamzom is set on fighting the decision. "We have family here, and I know I can find a job easily," he said of Berlin. This is just one example of why the Dublin Agreement simply doesn't work, in the foreseeable future what you will have is a very large number of people being forced back to Portugal when they really don't want to be here. Even though we want to support people, we will never provide people with what they need, which is their families and their friends. And Portugal is a poor country without expectations of getting a job easily: it's not an attractive country to stay. It is important to remember that many of the problems refugees face are similar to those that confront poor Portuguese people.

Abou Ras, meanwhile, is determined to make it work here – for himself and for others. He is working on a website for his association and setting up regular food events in Lisbon to bring Syrians and locals together. He started taking classes in human resources management hoping it will make finding a job easier. "Portugal is still the best



Sušice



San Isidro



Oulx



Gala



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place for refugees,” he said “People here are nice, they want to help. Elsewhere they hate us.”

We don't think that everyone hates the refugees, and that only in Portugal there are tolerant people but we do believe that the image of these people is often darkened by media portrayals leading to prejudice and discrimination.

Take for example, there was this tweet, it's no longer available, purportedly showing an immigrant in London setting fire to a bus and then walking away, however this video contained scenes from two different incidents, the first part shows footage of a 15-year-old immigrant from Birmingham on local bus as he set fire to newspaper and then flees, in 2015. The second part depicts the moment a double-decker bus in Lewisham, burst into flames, in 2016. A 13-year-old later admitted arson. So they were basically trying to make the immigrant look like the perpetrator when he clearly wasn't.

Other example is: photos of one 19-year-old refugee's taking a selfie with Angela Merkel after she opened borders to Syrian asylum seekers, went viral after it was claimed that he was one of the Brussels bombers and that the photo proved the attackers had pretended to be refugees.

Of course, not all people go through this, but if you're thinking about being an international immigrant someday, you need to start thinking about your attitudes today. Do you want to be a victim of prejudice and discrimination? Nobody wants it, does it? Many European countries have their policies for immigrant integration that include legislation on discrimination. In the latest survey released this year, Portugal ranked second among the countries studied with the best policies for integrating immigrants. However, people's daily lives are not only about politics but about people who have their beliefs, their values - and their prejudices.

(Diana Ines - Ricardo Nuria)