



An Indian band performs in Lisbon, Portugal, during a city-sponsored festival to promote integration of the neighborhood's immigrant community.

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# The NEW FACE of immigration

*Portugal has a largely successful story to share with the EU regarding integration of newcomers*

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The link between migration and security has become a matter of priority on the international political agenda. Migratory movements show us clearly that the Earth is shrinking concerning distances among people. For the last decade, every region well-placed in terms of welfare indicators and job opportunities attracts immigrants. Economic globalization and improvements in communication and transportation will inevitably lead to a rise in international migration. The 21st century will be the century of migration, raising concerns in particular about illegal immigration, transnational threats and loss of national identity in host societies. The coming decades will constitute a mix of challenge and opportunity. For most receiving countries, particularly in “Old Europe” with its increasingly high percentages of non-European residents, the impact of such migration flow is difficult to predict in the medium and long run. As far as Portugal is concerned, the consequences will also be significant on various levels.

This article considers two case studies: the European Union and Portugal. European countries and especially EU members face a complex situation. They need immigrants, but they fear them. Portugal, a small southern European state, is challenged by a new reality: It has one of the 10 most aged populations in the world and it became an attractive country for migration less than two decades ago. Its national history of emigration and colonization influences the way migration is linked to security issues and also the way its population sees it.

## THE EUROPEAN CASE

Europe represents a case study of the relationship between migration and security, because it continues to be the main recipient of international immigrants (32 percent of the world's total), which mitigates the effects of its aging population. Today, 9 percent of European residents are foreigners and 76 percent of European population growth is due to migration. The 27 nations of the EU present the highest migratory balances, and their population will continue to increase until 2025 thanks only to immigration.<sup>1</sup> Although migration is part of the solution to ensure economic sustainability and development, the rise in the percentage of foreign residents sometimes negatively influences collective perceptions.

Since the Barcelona Declaration (1995), several initiatives have been taken to delineate a communal immigration policy. European countries are gradually changing from internally managed immigration policies to a common European one. Since September 11, 2001, migration issues have become top political issues. The adoption of the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum reflects this desire, even though the measures on asylum are the more cohesive ones.<sup>2</sup> Europe's immigration policies are structured under four topics:

- **CONTROLLING MIGRATION FLOWS** (in the sense of a progressive hardening of conditions for entry and stay);
- **REDUCING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION** (strengthening external border controls, using joint teams to monitor internal borders, and performing regular labor inspections to deter illegal work providers);
- **CONSOLIDATING INTEGRATION PRACTICES** (promoting stability within the recent communities and helping to provide better social and economic opportunities);
- **DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION POLICIES** (standardizing procedures in receiving countries).

How is security threatened by migration? The way migration and security come together allows us to

understand why immigrants can be seen as threats and explains the success of radical political speeches and the implementation of extraordinary security measures.

Efforts should be directed to a concerted political action focused on minimizing the perceptions of risk associated with migration. Securitization does not solve the challenge of migration, but only makes it harder to resolve. There is an urgent need to develop strategies maximizing the positive effects of migration and reducing the negative. That requires an integrated approach of cooperation to liberalize and streamline regular channels of migration and ensure respect for migrants in education, health, social protection and labor rights. It is also necessary to reduce transit costs, facilitate the process of integration into host societies and rethink immigration in the comprehensive context of development.<sup>3</sup>

We live in an era of uncertainty and re-evaluation concerning the future evolution of migration and the risks eventually associated with it. The consequences will be vast and multilayered.<sup>4</sup> European immigration policy is at a crossroads. Europe has yet to adopt common values and attitudes toward immigration and citizenship,<sup>5</sup> which adds complexity to the security question and heightens the perception of risk.<sup>6</sup>

To what extent can immigration stand as an answer to the challenges that Europe is facing? What roles can immigrants play in these future scenarios? How can relationships be established within the receiving societies? Are there security risks in these migratory movements? We will explore these issues by examining the case of Portugal.

## MIGRATION AND SECURITY

Portugal is a small country with 10.7 million residents in 2011. But this number is expected to decline soon, because of the decreasing number of immigrants, the rise in emigration and the departure of legal immigrants. In spite of the country's small dimensions, we can find six regionally differentiated migration profiles as the result of asymmetric forms and chronologies of economic and social development, each of them illustrating potential challenges, risks and opportunities for the future.

Like other southern European countries,<sup>7</sup> Portugal has historically been a country of emigrants. Until the mid-1970s, immigration was very modest and consisted almost entirely of citizens from the former Portuguese African colonies. Major changes occurred after 1993, when the country became attractive for migration. Since then, immigrants' origin experienced a big change. Today most of them are Brazilians, citizens of Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Moldova and Romania) and Asians (China, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh), countries with which Portugal signed bilateral agreements.

In 2010, legal immigrants living in Portugal numbered 451,742. To these we should add 65,000 to



The Spanish Coast Guard rescues would-be African immigrants 21 miles off the coast of Spain in 2011. Because of their long coastlines and former colonial connections, Spain and Portugal have been forced to deal with illegal maritime migration.

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100,000 illegals.<sup>8</sup> Immigrants are on average four years younger than Portuguese nationals, have at least one more child, are relatively less educated and generally work low-skilled jobs that in some cases are beneath immigrants' skills and educational level. They prefer larger urban centers and coastal regions (Lisbon, Algarve, Setubal and Porto) and this settlement pattern requires specific and targeted attention from authorities to guarantee inclusion and avoid social tensions.<sup>9</sup> The volume of African and European migrants has decreased, and there was a growing number of illegals, particularly women. Nevertheless, a large majority of immigrants have legal status and long-term visas for work purposes, revealing the success with which Portugal has curtailed illegal immigration and harmonized annual entries with labor market needs.<sup>10</sup> Since 2005, owing to the economic crisis, the country has become less attractive and residence permit holders have been decreasing.

#### MIGRATORY REGIONALISM

In Portugal, immigration has been the subject of political reflection focused on the regulation of flows and the adoption of inclusive public policies. Both resolutions reflect national commitments undertaken at the EU level and with our historic partners in the Portuguese-speaking diaspora.<sup>11</sup> We think that at the internal level solving inequalities is more urgent in areas with immigrants, since they suffer greater difficulties with integration owing to their short stay in the country, legal/illegal underage status, and linguistic, cultural and ethnic

differences. The recent increase in cases of social exclusion and crime turned out to be related pressure from new migration flows. The country's XIV Constitutional Government defined a more active policy in this area and created the position of High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities to promote knowledge and acceptance of Portuguese culture and implement laws and policies to fight discrimination and social exclusion.<sup>12</sup> Those measures might explain why only 2 percent of Portuguese place immigration among the two major national problems, half the EU 27 average.<sup>13</sup> In fact, there is no record of social conflicts, instability or violence that can be related to the increase of migratory entries after the 1990s. But the geographical situation and economic crisis might increase this risk and create new tension points, emphasizing the economic and social fragility of certain immigration communities.

Official reports from the interior ministry reject associations between crime and immigration, but recognize that the presence of illegal or irregular immigrants is linked to trafficking in human beings and weapons, forged and counterfeit documents, and money laundering. Document fraud has been growing, raising the risk that potential terrorists could use fake EU travel documents to move around the continent. A new kind of criminality relies on household thefts and has been associated with organized, and in most cases ethnic, groups from the Balkan nations of Albania, Kosovo, Serbia and Croatia. The rise of petty crime is attributed to Brazilian nationals, and the authorities fear that they will coalesce into organized crime networks.



Muslim immigrants in Portugal break their Ramadan fast with an evening meal at a Lisbon mosque.

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Recent investigations also confirmed that segments of the Muslim community are involved in criminal practices such as bogus marriages, a scheme often used to obtain EU residence or even Portuguese citizenship.

Although the country is not considered a probable target of a terrorist attack, there is the possibility of it becoming a platform of logistical support for these activities, thanks to its location on routes between Africa, the Mediterranean and Europe, mainly through the Madeira Islands, the Algarve and the Vicentina Coast. Illegal immigration associated with trafficking of human beings remains a serious crime and a major problem for societies. Portugal is not especially affected by illegal maritime immigration, but the proportion of irregular or illegal entries is increasing through Guinea-Bissau, and on a smaller scale Cape Verde, as inbound platforms to the European continent. We can also identify five routes for illegal immigration and drug trafficking: Brazil, the Balkans, China, the Maghreb and the EU zone.<sup>14</sup>

In the next few years, Portugal can expect other nationalities to arrive, given the significant differences between those who are today legally in the country and those who are applying for residency. Citizens of the EU, Eastern Europe and Africa account for 77 percent of total foreign residents. But of the groups seeking authorization to live in Portugal, 38 percent are of African origin (Angola, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau), 38 percent come from South America (Brazil and Venezuela) and 21 percent are Asian citizens (more than half from China). The difference between the two groups is particularly evident for Asia, which today accounts for only 5.5 percent of legal immigrants, but 21 percent of aspiring

immigrants. These figures reflect the new routes of international migration and the transformation of the Portuguese immigrant profile, increasingly from Asia and South America.

Migrant communities represent about 5 percent of the country's population, a number unlikely to change in the next decades or to endanger the stability and security of Portuguese society.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, to guarantee sustainable immigration, the Portuguese government suggests the following policies:

- a greater commitment to preventive integration measures, taking into account different immigrant profiles and their asymmetric distribution;
- concerted action between central political power, security forces, local authorities, citizens' associations and nongovernmental organizations;
- knowledge sharing and information exchange between migrants and non-migrants, which should take into account different levels of access and information understanding, given language skills and education levels;
- consolidation of second- and third-generation groups, mostly of African origin.

Although only 2 percent of Portuguese consider immigration a problem and Portugal ranks near the top in rankings of countries with the best integration practices, we recommend the adoption of measures guaranteeing real and visible security to all residents, sustained by public policies of citizenship and dedicated to fighting new types of crime. The country must devote itself to transnational security, supporting external cooperation agreements with particular emphasis on issues of illegal immigration,

trafficking of human beings and terrorism, which should embrace the participation of other national actors, including the Armed Forces. Portugal must make a distinction between short-term measures, which imply political decisions such as establishing entry quotas, and longer-term preventive measures seen as risk reducing.

Can evolving immigration flows into Portugal represent a security risk in the coming years? Discussion of risk must distinguish internally developing risks, although their assessment is more difficult today than in the recent past, from the external risk, more unpredictable and subject to the globalization process. In terms of internal assessment, we would highlight three aspects:

- risks for legal and illegal immigrants are not very different, except with respect to integration problems;
- the growing variety of ethnic, linguistic and religious profiles and the gap between qualifications/skills and professional performance can cause discrimination and resentment and lead to risk behaviors (miscellaneous crime);
- the emergence of geographical risk areas owing to greater demographic pressure, an asymmetrical social and economic welfare environment and structural weaknesses due to the multiplicity of intervention spheres of security forces.

At the external level, two aspects must be referenced:

- Portugal sits in a privileged geographic position linking Europe, the Mediterranean Sea and Africa. It has a wide coastal frontier accessible to residents of former African colonies using easily obtained forged identity and travel documents. International networks must be used to fight drug trafficking, terrorism and other crime;
- the country presents conditions more favorable to serving as a base of logistical support for terrorism rather than as a target of terrorist attack.

In the coming years, regulating immigration and defining its rights and its duties will continue to be the state's responsibility. But what is truly important for the country's future is its ability to respond to the inevitable change in migration profiles. Integrating immigrants must be a priority, given the positive implications for internal security. That's even truer if immigration flows stabilize or decline.

In a country where the "migratory issue" does not lend itself to securitization, future security policies must bet on sustainable planning involving integrated actions between authorities and supported by new information technologies. Another integrative measure worth considering is opening the Armed Forces to immigrants (today only nationals can join their ranks), as is the case in the United States and Spain. In fact,

even in a recession with increased levels of unemployment, volunteer enlistments still reach only 92 percent of desired numbers. Joining the Armed Forces or Security Forces could provide a path to citizenship.

The future requires a new "culture of immigration." This will ensure sustainable migration flows of increasingly complex resident communities, evaluate the needs of economies (national, EU, global), and promote human rights and security. At the European level we are referring to complex interventions of varying degrees by national governments. In the short term, Europeans must respond quickly to problems such as crime and terrorism as they relate to immigrants. But ultimately the continent will be rated on how well it manages immigration, anticipates problems and improves integration. The results will be predictors of the future. Migration is more a challenge than a problem.<sup>16</sup> □

Statistical information provided in part by Paula da Velha, inspector, Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service, and a Marshall Center alumna.

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