Foreign Residents and Illegal Immigrants: Os Negros em Portugal

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Abstract

Foreign residents are a thriving and cosmopolitan group in Portugal. Many are legally registered with the authorities, but a significant proportion enter an underground economy where white European, black African and ethnically diverse South American, search for their fortunes. It is estimated, for example, that as many as 50,000 out of the 100,000 Africans from the former colonies now found in Portugal, are illegal immigrants. This article spotlights the presence of official registrations, the recent wave of illegals, their family dependants and the impact of each of these groups on the development of Portuguese society. Evidence shows that the minority communities are in a difficult position because they are contributing to the socio-economic development of Portugal but, at the same time, they are often viewed as inferior groups by the host population. Some of these groups are manipulated and exploited; prejudice is growing and legal status counts for little. The unevenness of discriminatory practice (particularly with respect to education and housing) is discussed and the need to define the position of all illegal immigrants in Portugal and to try to assist the black sections of the migrant population in a more sympathetic manner is outlined.

Introduction

Emigration is once again at the top of the European Community's [EC's] agenda. Violent scenes of public disorder in immigrant communities in France, racist attacks in Italy and disaffection among East and West Germans have served to spotlight what many have called the cosmopolitan powder-keg. Much of that conflict has been orchestrated by right-wing activists against groups of migrants, which they perceive as a threat. It is true that there is a large and continuing level of immigration into the member states of the EC in the 1990s, and the response from some quarters has meant that the immigrant is now a very sensitive and a very real political issue in Europe.

The situation is a complicated one because the social and economic

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problems created by recent movements of East European populations have tended to shroud the significance of illegal immigration through Europe's 'back door'. Indeed, immigration through the southern European flank of the EC – into Portugal, Spain and Italy, from Africa for example – has now reached unprecedented levels (see Castles 1984; Castles and Kosack 1985; King 1985, 1992; Andall 1990; Carver 1990; Barber 1991; Bond 1992 for details).

The Iberian Peninsular offers a special case-study because of, firstly, its position in the world economic space. Williams (1984) demonstrates the theoretical processes associated with economic underdevelopment and subsequent attempts to Europeanize production processes in this part of southern Europe. We should be equally aware of the second factor – that of Iberia's close proximity to the more advanced nations of western Europe (the Straits of Gibraltar are a potentially rewarding, if hazardous, stepping stone, from north Africa into a new life – see Lewis 1982). Portugal, in turn, offers a shortfall in labour demands in certain sectors of the host economy and is now a country with well established migrant communities, within which new immigrants can readily settle (Alves Morgado 1979; Porto 1984; Kaplan 1991). In theory, and in the New International Division of Labour [NIDL] (see Fröbel, Heinrichs and Kreye 1980; Sassen 1988), the already low wages paid to Portuguese workers (in an EC context) can be undercut still further by the employment of illegal immigrants. As a recipe for modernization and continued capital accumulation, Portugal is well placed to become an export processing zone for factory commodities (in clothing, for example – see Eaton 1990), making full use of those migrants who are 'seeking to sell their labour power for a wage' (Miles and Satzewich 1990, p. 334).

This type of migration is a process fraught with difficulties and the question of illegal immigrants, their civil rights and their contribution to the Portuguese economy has been spotlighted in a series of recent press articles and television reports. It is thought that as many as 50,000 out of the 100,000 Africans from the former colonies now living in Portugal, for example, are doing so illegally, and of the remaining 50,000, many have still to attain full Portuguese citizenship. This article looks at the three types of migrant in Portugal at the present time – the foreign residents and the illegal immigrants, as well as giving some consideration to returned migrants and their family dependants.

The phenomenon of Portuguese out-migration and return was a well-researched topic, especially in the mid-1980s (see Arroteia 1984; CCRC 1984; King 1984; Lewis 1985; Lewis and Williams 1985a for details) but in this article we are more concerned with the well known and easily observable, but poorly documented, influx of non-Portuguese nationals into this western part of the Iberian Peninsular. We are concerned specifically with the processes that have now turned Portugal, formerly

a country of net out-migration, into a country of net in-migration. The author, therefore, argues for a greater recognition of the role of the foreign resident and the illegal immigrant because of their collective and individual contributions to the state's economic development.

It should be noted, however, that the study is dealing with a grey area in Portuguese society. There are both official and unofficial features to consider. Accurate figures on elements that are often clandestine are notoriously difficult to assess; scientific rationale is therefore diminished, and much of the material is drawn from informal discussion with immigrant elements. As a result of these factors, a great deal of the text is devoted to estimation and assumption built upon or around these grey areas. The article takes on the guise of a discussion document, presenting ideas and musing on the prevalence of discrimination in Portuguese society.

Our central socio-spatial concept surrounds the response from the Portuguese themselves, since evidence suggests that Portuguese society is a tolerant and assimilated national community. On the other hand, there are those who argue that the Portuguese are one of the most prejudiced nationalities in the whole of the EC. In that apparently contradictory situation, then, this work addresses the salient migrant issues and attempts a realistic assessment of the present Portuguese position. At the same time, we acknowledge that there has been relatively little research (with the exceptions of Silva 1984 and Céu Esteves 1991) into this burgeoning sector of Portuguese life (a fact reiterated by Freeman 1991). As a result, the work takes a minor but nevertheless important step into the field of foreign immigration.

Types of Portuguese immigrant

There are several different types of ethnic migrant in Portugual ranging from the north European communities to the Africans, the North and the South Americans. Some are fully-registered foreign residents, others are clandestine immigrants. All have a part to play in the development of the economy and yet little of their overall contribution is understood by the host community.

However, it would be misleading at the outset to view legal and illegal immigrants in Portugal as separate actors. To simply assume that if you are a north European or an American or a Canadian, then you are operating within the law and if you are an African, then you are illegal and you are not operating within the law, is untrue, and clearly a prejudiced interpretation. In the Algarve, for example, there were some 6,850 north European residents officially registered in 1989. Of those, Table 1 shows that almost 4,000 or 37 per cent were British (INE 1990a, p. 257). However, it has been suggested that an additional 20,000 Britons living in the south of Portugal are doing so illegally (Cal

Table 1. *Composition of legal foreigners in Faro Distrito, 1989*

County	Total	(%)	Cape Verdean	(%)	German	(%)	British	(%)	Dutch	(%)	Rest	(%)
Faro –	10,647	(100)	1,595	(15)	1,075	(10)	3,931	(37)	822	(8)	3,224	(30)

Source: INE (1990a, p. 257).

1986; 1987) and they are without question the most visible foreign group in that region. They are thriving in an unregulated economy which is so complete that it is serviced by its own doctors, architects, dentists, lawyers, accountants, estate agents, bar owners, joiners, plumbers, swimming-pool cleaners and in some cases, its own British schools and newspapers. The reason that such large numbers of UK citizens are now living in Portugal is because they are reluctant to pay British taxes and given the fairly lengthy process of taking up legal residence in their chosen country (see Céu Esteves 1991), few decide to do so. Consequently, they do not pay Portuguese taxes and they are therefore 'ripping-off' a country which is generally considered to be one of the poorest and most backward in the EC. Significantly, and if, for example, each of these British passport holders had paid just £200 to the Portuguese government each year (an arbitrary figure but a sum arguably equivalent to a fraction of their real tax bill in the UK), then the state would have received a much-needed windfall of anything up to £40 million per annum and untold development changes. Despite promised crackdowns by the Portuguese authorities on such groups (Cal 1986) concerted action against the British has still to be taken; most probably because of fears of upsetting the tourism industry whose indirect effects on local Portuguese communities are often considerable (EIU 1988, 1989; Lewis and Williams 1991). The process is therefore allowed to continue.

Traditionally, Portugal has exported (both legal and clandestine) emigrants to north European economies such as France, Germany and Switzerland (see Franco 1971; Rocha Trinidade 1975, 1979; Porto 1977; Serrão 1977; Poinard 1979). That population outflow has continued (to attract researchers – Ogden 1985; Miles and Singer-Kérel 1991) during the last decade and even as recently as 1988, some 18,300 emigrants left Portugal to take up either temporary or permanent residence in another country. Europe and North America dominate the trends shown in Figure 1, with the USA and, more significantly, Canada being the favoured destinations, together with France and Switzerland at this time. In-migration was at considerably smaller levels with South America (Brazil dominates), Africa, and to a lesser extent, European sources such as the UK and Luxembourg being important.

This illustration is based on recent official figures (INE 1989, pp. 206, 225) and does, of course, result in a severe under-estimation of the true levels, (particularly) of (in) migration that are taking place. Immigration from Africa (Angola and Mozambique) and, of course, from Cape Verde is much greater than that officially shown by Figure 1 and this is because, as we shall see, the spatial conditions affecting population mobility from each of those countries have changed dramatically since the Portuguese revolutionary period of 1974–75.

However, it appears that, overall, emigration from Portugal is con-

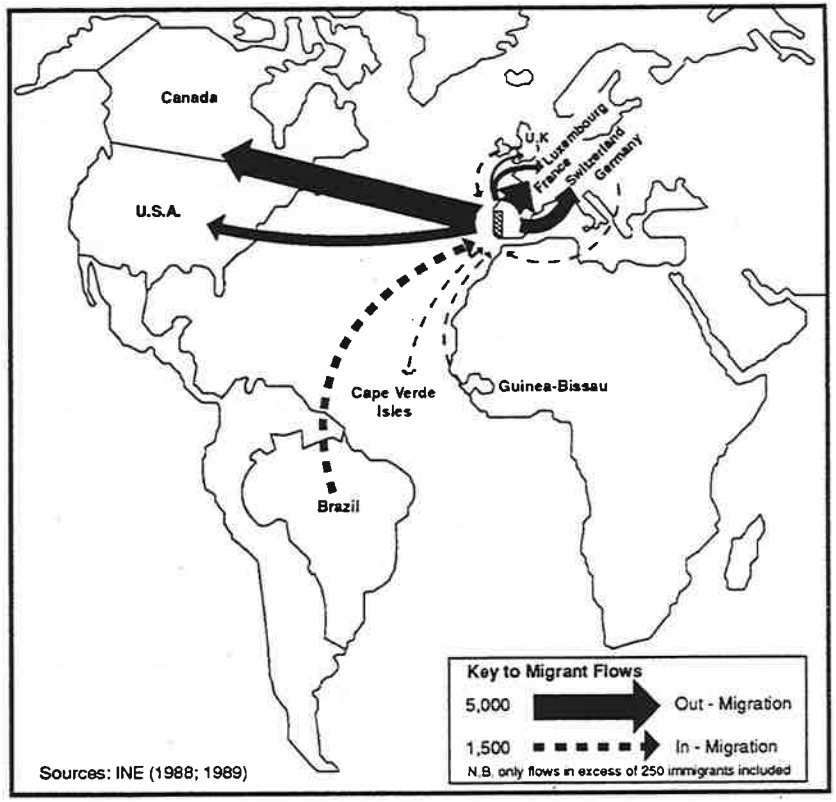

Figure 1. Major Portuguese Migration Flows, 1987–88.

tinuing to outpace immigration to Portugal; the net loss between 1987 and 1988 was 13,600 temporary and permanent emigrants. If we change the definition and focus only on persons who have emigrated permanently from Portugal (i.e., those who have stated their intention to live abroad for more than one year) then the net difference is a much smaller loss of nearly 1,875 persons. In this situation, there may be an explicit intention to return to Portugal once a temporary (work) post has finished, although that return will bring with it further complications to an already complicated demographic situation.

Nevertheless, the *classic* step-wise clandestine migration trails from rural poverty in Tras-os-Montes, north east Portugal, to relative urban affluence in Paris (which dominated pre-revolutionary movements and motivations from Portugal – see Anon. 1967; Castles and Kosack 1985; Cónim and Carrilho 1989) are now being replicated in Portugal. This time, the in-migrants are usually black, often native or second-language Portuguese speakers and, invariably, individuals from former colonial outposts such as the Cape Verde Islands, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Moz-

ambique and São Tomé. Most of them do the work in the 1990s (construction, manufacturing, service industry, etc.) that the Portuguese refuse to do themselves in their own country but which, ironically, they travelled to do in the 1960s and early 1970s in northern Europe. This transformation from a country of emigration into one of immigration coincides with a phase of European integration that allows many of the newer migrants a chance to gain a foothold in the EC space. That area for subsequent (and legal) movement is encapsulated in the first instance by the Schengen Agreement,[1] but secondly, will allow the immigrant to travel throughout the whole of the European Single Market area (see Werth 1989 for a fuller explanation of the spatial implications here[2]). In time, that migrant will be able to move unimpeded throughout the amalgamated space of the EC and the European Free Trade Association [EFTA] countries – in the so-called European Economic Area (see DTI 1992). The rewards in the long term and in terms of spatial opportunity means that the potential benefits outweigh the short-term risks for many of these immigrant groups, and this helps to explain the motivational factor.

There are, however, problems associated with this migration trail and even more irony is revealed when it is realized that despite the African's role in bringing democracy to Portugal (they helped in destabilizing the Caetano regime through colonial warfare in the early 1970s for example) and their immeasurable help in the construction and development of the country, few are recognized as nationalized citizens. They do not have the right to vote, they have no welfare rights, many have no basic human rights of any kind. The main reason for this statelessness is that most do not satisfy the conditions necessary for Portuguese residency. Permits[3] are available to persons who, firstly, have lived in Portugal for six years; secondly, have a job and, thirdly, are considered to be 'socially adaptable', thus the majority of illegal immigrants fail to satisfy all these requirements.[4]

Yet at the same time, the blacks in employment are acknowledged as good, hard and diligent workers, willing to do any job (no matter how dangerous) that a boss may demand of them. Recent observation of a large building site in Praia da Rocha, in Portugal's Algarve, would echo this. Black workers were working from sunrise to sunset for sometimes fourteen hours a day (longer, when floodlights had been installed), seven days a week, in the height of summer temperatures in excess of 35° centigrade. They were observed constructing apartment blocks at the phenomenal rate of one storey a week, with no safety equipment, little apparent supervision and primitive living conditions. As we shall see, it is this precarious lifestyle which lays many of them open to prejudice, manipulation and outright exploitation.

Table 2. *Legally registered foreigners in Portugal, 1989*

Country of origin	Total number
Cape Verde Islands	27,972
Angola	4,842
Guinea	3,447
Mozambique	2,980
São Tomé	1,873
Other African countries	1,675
USA	6,438
Canada	2,092
Other North American countries	207
Brazil	10,520
Venezuela	4,886
Other South American countries	532
Asian countries	3,741
Great Britain	7,761
Spain	7,294
(West) Germany	4,482
France	3,019
Netherlands	1,670
Other European countries	5,021
Oceanic countries	347
Others (with dual- or without nationality)	212
Total for Portugal[1]	101,011

Note
[1]All figures quoted for Portugal include foreigners found on the autonomous islands of Azores and Madeira.
Source: INE (1990a, p. 257).

Foreign residents (recent trends and future predictions)

The official position on Portuguese immigrants is shown by Table 2. In 1989 there was a total of just over 101,000 legally registered foreigners in the whole of Portugal (including the islands of Azores and Madeira); of which by far the largest group was that from the Cape Verde Islands (a population totalling almost 28,000). In second place came the Brazilians (10,500), third were the British (7,750), fourth, the Spanish (at approximately 7,300 registrations) and fifth, were residents from the United States (6,400). In relative terms, black Africans officially formed about 0.4 per cent of the overall Portuguese population and as many as 65 per cent of those were from the Cape Verde Islands. Brookshaw (1992) suggests that this influx is a legacy of the economic deprivation orchestrated by the Portuguese colonists, but clearly even the onset of

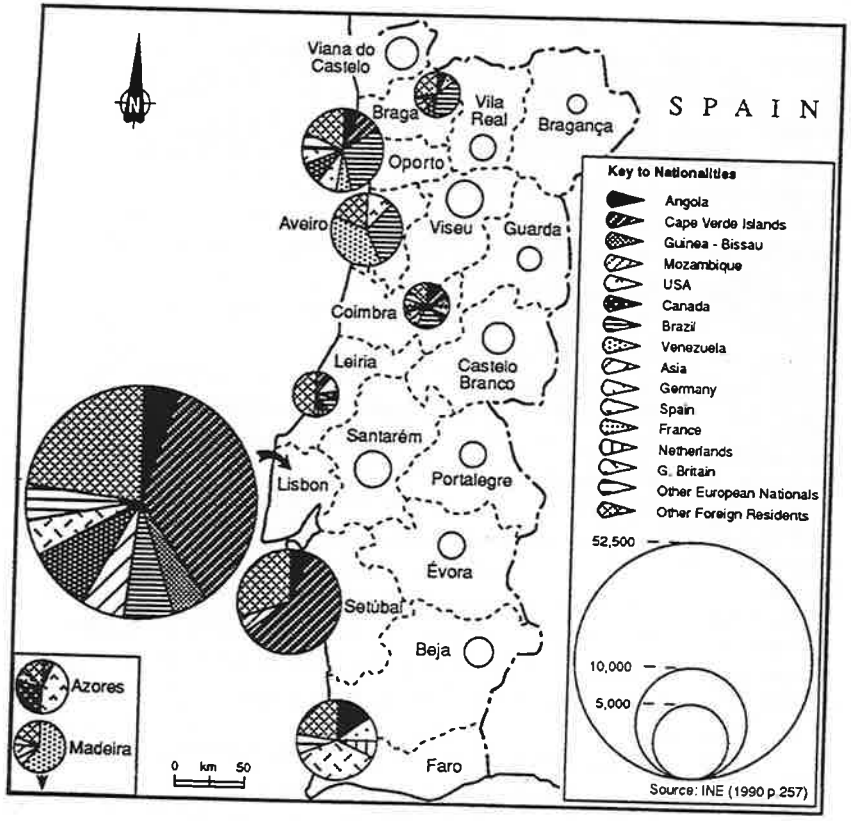

Figure 2. Distribution of Foreign Residents in Portugal, 1989.
Note: only *distritos* with foreign residents totalling more than 1,000 are sub-divided by nationality.

independence (and the imposition of a revolutionary socialist government in Cape Verde) did little to change the conditions at home. It is therefore a series of socio-economic difficulties that continues to force out individuals. The figure of 28,000 represents those who have attained official registration status and yet there are certainly many thousands more who have yet to appear on the Portuguese government's 'books'.

The distribution of registered foreign residents in Portugal is shown in Figure 2. Lisbon has by far the largest concentration of *estrangeiros* (foreigners) with over 52 per cent of the total number, followed by the *distritos* (counties) of Faro (10.5 per cent) and Setúbal (10 per cent). Lisbon also boasts the single largest community of foreign residents (some 18,350 from the Cape Verde Islands). While these figures are not entirely accurate (taking no account of illegals, of course) they do certainly reflect the general patterns associated with in-migration to Portugal and can therefore be taken as a useful guide to the location

and impact of many of the immigrants. Areas such as the Algarve and in the industrialized cities of Setúbal, Oporto and the industrializing centres of Aveiro and Braga where job opportunities are invariably greater and living conditions are relatively better (Naylon 1987; Wise 1990; Pimpão 1991), will theoretically and inevitably attract a larger proportion of immigrants.

Further information is now available for the foreigners registered in Portugal, as of 1991, but this remains provisional – it is still too early for definitive Census 91 results to have been produced on this particular topic. These figures should therefore be taken as a guide only to any changes which may have occurred since 1989. Heeren (1991) states that

> the foreign community registered in Portugal increased by 6.7% between 1989 and 1990, with the majority of the new immigrants originating from the former colonies and from Brazil (40.2% of the total) and the EC member states (26.7%). Cape Verde has the biggest foreign community here, representing 26.7% of all registered foreigners.

Certainly, at face value these data would tend to support the trends identified earlier. Cape Verdeans still dominate, along with immigrants from former outposts in Africa and South America, although increasingly a foreign influx from the rest of the EC is becoming recognizable and, of course, is likely to increase as the barriers to free movement of labour in Europe come down. The stepping-stone movement discussed earlier is not a one-way manual-worker process from Africa to Iberia, and then perhaps on into north western Europe. There is, in fact, some movement in the opposite direction, although in terms of qualifications the assumption is that this latter flow is of a higher quality (managerial and professional classes) – the flow-line from Luxembourg, for example, suggests that there has been an important flow of EC personnel into Portugal since full membership was attained in 1986.

An additional factor that could affect the future movement of migrants is the recently signed peace accord for Angola and protracted negotiations on the future of Mozambique currently taking place in Lisbon. With greater stabilization of these countries, the conflict and military conscription conditions that forced emigration in the first place may well change, and so the influx of immigrants to Portugal from Africa may not be as great in the future as it is today.

However, a further complication needs to be considered because at the end of this decade, Portugal's last remaining colony Macão (like Hong Kong) reverts to Chinese control and an unsettled destiny. There are around 100,000 Portuguese citizens (all with passports that allow access to the EC) now living in the colony. All will be free to travel throughout the Common Market in 1997 and it is possible that many

will attempt to return to their homeland. Portugal coped reasonably well with an influx of 2,000 refugees from East Timor (an ex-colony invaded in 1975 by Indonesia) in the mid-1970s, but clearly far greater contingency provisions will have to be made to absorb the potential influx of nationals from Macão in the near future. While this return migration will not be on the scale of the *retornados* (Portuguese nationals repatriated when the African colonies were granted independence in 1975 – see Pena Pires 1987, 1990; Saint-Maurice and Pena Pires 1989), there could well be a substantial immigrant influx to be absorbed by Portugal in the next ten years (a trail emanating not just from Africa but also from the Chinese subcontinent). The state has learnt (the policy success of the *retornado's* Aid Agency [IARN][5] is proof of this) and will continue to learn that immigration will simply not go away. It is an intractable problem and the sooner suitable solutions are found to the situation in Portugal, then the quicker those lessons will be learnt for the good of future generations (both here and in the rest of the EC). These solutions should now be seen as imperative, particularly in view of the following section.

Clandestine immigration

Slavery was abolished in Portugal in 1836, although it took another fifty years to enforce the prohibition (Kaplan 1991). Portugal's link with Africa is historic; the great discoverers colonized the continent more than 550 years ago (see Duffy 1959; Wallis 1986). They were thought to be the first modern Europeans to set foot in Angola and Mozambique, and their mission of spreading the Catholic and Christian faith, while exploiting gold, spice and human resource riches, some would say, made them latter-day economic pirates.

Despite criticism of the colonial regime (*The Times* 1968) and the widely welcomed decolonization (Ferreira 1974), piratism of human beings still takes place, although no-one knows the full extent of illegal migration into Portugal today, nor the absolute levels of manipulation or exploitation that the different types of black immigrant undergo. Press reports on female slaves in Portugal have surfaced on occasion (Joliffe 1990a; Rosado 1990) and there was a story circulating in 1990 that claimed to have exposed a (slave) contract male labour scheme (Joliffe 1990b). It is a grim, and if true, a double-edged story.[6] Large numbers of Africans, mainly Angolans fleeing the civil war in their own country, were involved. A press journalist (one Sr Arturo Queiroz) went 'undercover' to pose as an employer. He 'bought' fifteen Africans to work as builder's labourers for the fee of £1 per hour; less than half the going rate in the construction industry – a very low figure even for legal workers. The only condition the employer had to meet was the provision of a blanket and a place to sleep for each worker. Their

wages were paid to intermediaries who would often keep their passports as security against desertion. Estimates of the numbers involved are obviously vague, but it is thought that there are at least 15,000 Africans working illegally under these informal conditions in Lisbon alone.

This network of wage labourers is often controlled by university students (usually African scholarship holders from the former colonies) who see it as a way of making extra money and, increasingly, as a means of helping youths to evade forced conscription into the Angolan army back home. Known as the 'Freedom Train', the migration path starts in the black markets of Luanda with the purchase of a passport (retailing exorbitantly at some £620). When they arrive at Lisbon's Portela airport they are met by intermediaries who provide an address to guarantee entry to Portugal on a tourist visa for three months. These workers are then spirited away to live in the densely-populated shanty towns in Damaia and Amadora on the outskirts of the capital. They are hidden until the agent sells them, either to factory owners or building companies in Lisbon, northern Portugal, or the Algarve.

Those workers whom Queiroz interviewed stated that the middlemen would often disappear with their wages. Since most arrived in Portugal with few possessions other than the clothes they were wearing, contractors or employers would usually stand credit for the first month. Of course, if the agent does disappear the worker immediately becomes indebted to the factory owner and a downward spiral of controlled debt becomes inevitable. One example is known of a law student from Guinea-Bissau who supplied fifty workers to a factory, collected their wages and fled to Paris. Not, one should add, to provide for himself or his family, but simply to allow him to travel and set up the same 'business' in France. Meanwhile, the workers were left behind to face hardship and came completely under the control of the employer, who when he was so inclined, would only pay pocket money for workers to buy basics such as food. These illegals live in constant fear of being stopped by the police and deported, hence they very quickly risk becoming captives in their work and captive in the wider Portuguese society.

In fairness, many of the young men did say that they preferred having a job – several used the expression 'semi-slavery' – rather than having to fight in Angola. Most indicated that the small wages they receive in Portugal could be converted into relative riches in their home country and it was this economic motivation that had encouraged many more Africans from Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and even Senegal and Zaire to join the trail. This better level of life is a tangible element for many migrants to grasp and keep hold of, although this double-edged example is also a classic case of dependency on labour migration, whether illegal or legal in its nature, for both personal and often familial development.

A similar type of dependency is often felt among Portuguese families

themselves; here the younger members will sometimes be forced either by parents, employers or, in some cases, by themselves into employment when barely out of junior school. Similarly, for first-generation illegal migrant children it will often be they, who are forced out to work in the marginal economy at ages as young as nine or ten. It is this section of the workforce (which shares many of the characteristics facing the older 'newer black workers') to which the article now turns.

Child labour

One of the biggest problems with Portuguese society is a reluctance to react positively to what would normally be viewed as the scandalous. Recent public outcries over the use of child labour, the non-payment of salaries to workers and the sweatshop working conditions often found in Portuguese factories (EIRR 1987, 1989a; Campbell 1989) have received scant reward. President Soares was moved to condemn the use of child workers (those under the age of fourteen) in 1989, but only after an investigative British television crew was attacked by a textile factory owner and his family in Braga, northern Portugal (EIRR 1989b). Soares has been quoted as saying: 'The eradication of child labour represents a genuine national imperative' (Frean 1991), although the official line remains the same. In September 1991 the Secretary of State for External Trade denied that child labour actually existed in Portugal. Sr Neto da Silva said: 'I never saw one child working during my numerous visits to companies in the north of Portugal, while Director of the Confederation of Portuguese Industry' (*APN* 1991a).

Perhaps it should have been pointed out to the minister that in his official capacity he was unlikely to visit sweatshop factories in the first place and when he did, attempts would have been made to clean up the working conditions and to have had the juveniles removed. Neto da Silva contends that the television programmes on this issue, and on that of black illegals, have been manipulated and are biased; he even suggests that international organizations have invented the story so as to detract from the wider and improved performance of the Portuguese economy. Few of these excuses are credible, official data found 16,000 children between the ages of twelve and fourteen at work in 1988, but the Portuguese labour inspectorate when investigating (with a view to prosecution), detected just 290 (EIRR 1988). Both Hooper (1991) and Frean (1991) have suggested that as many as 200,000 children are working, and not surprisingly therefore there is a consensus that child work still goes on, albeit illicitly.

Legislative power to tackle the problem is minimal, prosecutions are rare, a bond of silence (similar to many southern European communities) is common and to complete the equation – it is very hard to eliminate a form of exploitation that has existed (and has been

accepted) for generations. Anti-Slavery International [ASI] are shortly to report to the United Nations on the incidence of 'child slaves' in Portugal and this follows on from the International Labour Office's [ILO's] Report (1985) on the social situation in Portugal, which roundly condemned the inadequacies of the labour inspectorate. It cited a severe lack of health and safety inspections on the ground and blamed this on lack of resources and poorly motivated staff (EIRR 1985; Joliffe 1985). Indeed, when the revelations outlined earlier came to light, the Portuguese department of labour sent inspectors to factories in Aveiro (central littoral Portugal) but they failed to detect any cases of foreigners working illegally, nor in exploitative conditions, nor as slaves. It seems odd that in an area where human rights are concerned, those charged with monitoring and altering the situation should apparently be so lax in their work.

It is even more odd when one realizes that eight years have elapsed since the ILO document was published and little or nothing has changed with respect to child labour or, more recently, to the incidence of 'black contract workers'. It is likely that ASI will recommend prison sentences for employers of under-age workers and increased powers for labour and schools inspectors, as well as making a demand for all future international aid projects to include an assessment of their impact on child labour. The response to this stricter control from the Portuguese authorities is keenly awaited, although the tacit assumption that children and blacks act as the corner-stone of Portugal's economic development remains (Anon. 1988). It is the relationship between Portuguese society and the black immigrant to which we now return in order to appraise the level of discrimination involved.

Violence against immigrants

In contrast to the general situation in western Europe (Miles 1982; Castles 1984) and the national situations in France (Ogden 1987; Webster 1991), the United Kingdom (Nugent and King 1979; King 1987), Italy (*Economist* 1990), Germany (Paterson and Payne 1991) and even Sweden (Associated Press 1990), physical violence against black Africans in Portugal is virtually unheard of. Civil dissent of an extreme kind is rare, with instances such as the clashes between the paramilitary police and the ordinary police force in April 1989 being a single case in mind (the police were arguing for a right to form their own trade union).

However: 'There have been some ugly incidents here in recent years: a sort of growing racism' (an anonymous Portuguese restaurant owner stated in 1987). In theory one might expect to be able to find evidence of these 'incidents' and this 'racism'. In fact, the comment is misleading, since it does not refer to the Portuguese treatment of blacks but rather

to visiting English tourists' attitudes towards the native Portuguese population. There is therefore a sort of 'inverse racism' at work, whereby the Portuguese are in the middle of a huge revolving exploitation racket (being exploited by and, in turn, exploiting different types of package tourist and labour migrant respectively). It is not a situation loaded in favour of the host population, particularly where north Europeans are concerned and so many Portuguese tend to hide behind a mask of humbleness. That humility is reflected in the fact that the Portuguese are generally seen as a peaceful population and Kaplan (1991, p. 168) considers that 'Portugal lives easily with thousands of African and mixed-race immigrants'.

Indeed, this would be the view of the average Portuguese person in the street (Cal 1988, p. 12 reinforces this viewpoint); their tolerance borne out of centuries of supposed cultural assimilation and cooperation. However, despite this rather idyllic statement, racial discrimination (on the part of the host population) does manifest itself. The European Value Systems Study Group in 1992, for example, ranked Portugal top in a list of overall intolerance[7] towards neighbours from minority groups (they used the somewhat-dated terminology of foreign workers, people of different races, criminals, drug addicts, etc., to describe each group). In relation to neighbours of a different race living next door some 15 per cent of the Portuguese interviewed objected, and in terms of overt racism in the EC the Portuguese came second only to the Belgians (for further details see Rosenbaum 1992). This is revealing evidence because the finding is often translated into discrimination in certain areas of Portuguese society such as housing and education.

Discrimination in education

For Cape Verdeans, Portuguese is the official language but children in that country start learning Creole first – a difficult proposition in itself – since it is claimed that even in a small population of 350,000 islanders, up to 50 per cent are illiterate or semi-literate (Brookshaw 1992). This makes it doubly difficult for them if they have migrated with their parents and are entering the Portuguese schooling system for the first time. The Cape Verdean children struggle to understand and to be understood and the same goes for their Portuguese teachers. There is also a danger with the children living in an isolated community that they may become alienated from the wider society and so lack spirit or motivation when faced with the difficulties of school-leaving or getting a job. These are all genuine problems experienced by first- and second-generation children not only in Portugal (see Saint-Maurice and Guerra 1988), but throughout western Europe (see Chelminski 1980; Castles 1984) and so far little has been done to assist them.

There are some new initiatives to help migrant children in Portugal; classes are being made smaller to provide for closer teaching practices, the under-fives have been targeted, extra lessons have been laid on to help them catch up, and older children are helped in special, out-of-school time groups. This is only the tip of the iceberg; many more children fall behind in their studies and others lose interest and this can quickly become the first step on the road to educational deprivation. Indeed, recent evidence (*APN* 1991b) suggests that, next to primary-school children from gypsy families, it is Cape Verdean and São Toméan children who have the highest drop-out rates in Portugal at the present time. Failure levels as high as 60 and 35 per cent respectively have been recorded for the two groups, and so the new measures outlined above are showing little sign of improving the local predicament for immigrant children, and a major reassessment of those initiatives is clearly needed. Furthermore, the reasons for those drop-outs may be more deep-rooted and related back to what was said earlier regarding child labour. It is precisely these types of marginalized migrant-children who are easily marketable (i.e., cheap), and will have their education neglected in favour of tangible remuneration for their family when circumstance and neglect dictate. Here again, the controlling influence of capital in the form of construction companies or factories exerts itself, and the shadowy underworld of these enterprises makes it difficult for the labour inspectorate to penetrate, thus allowing the conditions for exploitation to continue to flourish.

Discrimination in housing

Portugal suffers at a national scale from a housing crisis. The two main symptoms are a shortage of homes and a poor quality of existing houses (Paiva 1985). These problems are compounded amongst disadvantaged groups and have led to spatial concentrations of deprivation in certain parts of Portugal (Lewis and Williams 1984; Cardoso and Pimenta 1989). Most of the illegal workers, for example, live in the surrounding areas of major towns, or in the run-down inner city areas of Lisbon (see Figure 3).

The proliferation of shanty towns in districts such as Areeiro, Chelas, Damaia, Amadora and Benfica around the capital have their roots in the *bairros clandestinos* identified and then examined over a thirty-year period by Freitas (1961); Pereira (1966); Salgueiro (1977; 1985); Silva (1981); Williams (1981); Soares (1982); Cardoso (1983); Soares, Ferreira and Guerra (1985) and Cardoso (1985). A *bairro*, when literally translated, would be a district or a suburb but the label has become synonymous with the notion of a town comprising illegal and informal dwellings. These homes, which people thought would be temporary dwellings in the 1960s, are now established communities in Portugal.

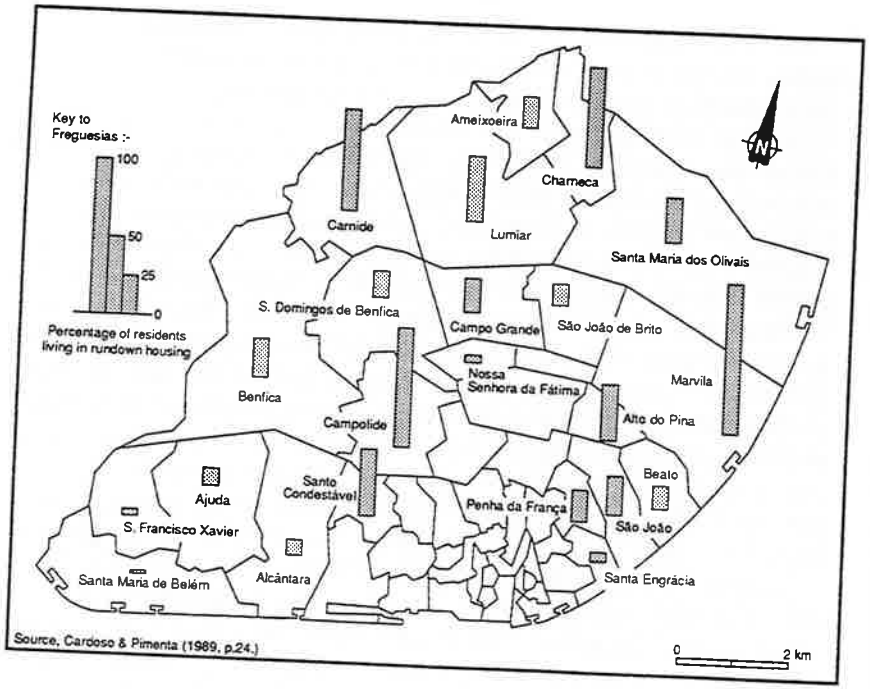

Figure 3. Urban Degradation in Lisbon, 1986.

As we know, in 1975 there was an enormous immigration into Portugal of *retornados*. Some 800,000 ex-colonials were repatriated and while a large proportion were able to manage themselves successfully within mainstream Portuguese society (Lewis and Williams 1985b), untold numbers were forced into temporary dwelling in shanties close to the airport and under motorway flyovers around the city. Today it is the black African communities who have taken over many of these slum areas with most still exhibiting typical features: shacks made from timber and corrugated iron, chronic overcrowding, poor sanitation, low levels of infrastructure. Not surprisingly, the environment can give rise to many social problems including drugs, drinking, prostitution and domestic violence – the latter physical aspect of which has been observed by the author on occasions among African workers living on construction sites near Alvor, southern Portugal. Whatever the rights or wrongs of the argument which preceded the violence, it is clear that dissatisfaction with the personal situation in which the immigrants have found themselves, contributes to the building of tensions within a family group and within the immediate community.

Given these factors, shanty towns, sometimes called *bairros de lata* in Portugal – quite literally 'tin towns' – have actually been viewed as a partial solution to the severe housing problem. To rent or buy a

house in Lisbon is often exorbitant for well-paid professionals, let alone for unemployed or low-paid African workers, thus many of the poorer elements have been forced to build and expand shanty settlements on private land. With this comes the constant threat that those homes will be demolished, as happened in 1990 in the small town of Portimão, on the southern coast of Portugal. A private landowner whose land had been squatted took the law into his own hands and evicted a number of illegals. His employees using bulldozers and escorted by the national guard, but lacking a court order, arrived to demolish a local Cape Verdean settlement. The inhabitants were given five minutes to get out of their houses. The civil governor of Faro stepped in to stop the destruction but not before thirty homes had been destroyed. Since that time, no-one has been prosecuted; those made homeless are still reported to be staying with friends and family and the problem has not gone away.

One solution to this and, indeed, to the whole of Portugal's housing shortage, has been the suggestion of increased use of council housing (see Reis and Passos 1991 for details). Unfortunately, the waiting lists for such homes are now so long that they have actually been closed and newcomers are not therefore being added to it. Lisbon's Metropolitan Council is trying to tackle the problem. It built 10,500 new houses in 1989 (INE 1990b, p. 57) and is planning to build 10,000 new houses over each of the next five years, but it is unlikely that this will be enough to satisfy the current, let alone the growing, demand among Lisbon's inhabitants or *imigrantes ilegais* (illegal immigrants). Criticism has been heaped upon one attempted solution – the Short Term Rehousing Plan for Lisbon [PIMP] with the suburb of Chelas being singled out and labelled an 'urban desert' (Ferreira 1989) and yet, at the same time, few alternative answers have been suggested.

Of those council houses in existence, many are rundown and empty, particularly blighted are the *freguesias* (parishes) of Carnide, Campolide, Charneca and Marvila (see Figure 3). Those buildings that are not squatted in, are left to rot. At the very least they can be called slums and are often the only physical interface between the poverty-stricken immigrant and mainstream Portuguese society – an interface in the sense that they are physical evidence of the presence of ethnic minorities (with their own basic human rights), all living within a supposedly 'modernizing European' country.

Many Africans have responded by using the skills learned on the construction sites to build for themselves. In a number of celebrated cases, local councils have given the immigrants land and provided a basic level of infrastructure within which homes can be established. These are the exceptions rather than the rule. Current estimates suggest that there is a shortage of 800,000 new homes and to keep up with the demand, 130,000 new homes will have to be constructed each year

during the 1990s. The National Institute for Habitation is responsible for relieving the problem and is planning to build just 70,000 per annum (Kaplan 1991). Clearly, the problem of *as casas clandestinas* (illegal housing) is an intractable one for Portugal and poverty based on this disappointing provision of shelter (without radical alterations to the funding and supply of homes) is set to continue.

Racial discrimination

In atheoretical terms, it usually takes two sides to create racism; racial discrimination, on the other hand, is normally controlled by the ruling majority and this can quickly create a climate where racism is fostered. In this example, Portuguese nationals hold sway over a small, but increasingly important minority. In interviews with the author, many immigrants have complained bitterly of being rejected for housing, being despised as a single parent, or considered inferior on the perceived grounds that they are foreign and/or black. Many echo feelings of informal segregation when travelling on public transport, for example. Portuguese nationals will only sit in an empty seat next to the black person when there is no other choice.

It is a sad state of affairs, but one that needs to be set in context. At the national level, the black African population is a negligible element (accounting for, and now estimated at, between 0.5 and 1 per cent of the total Portuguese population of 10.3 million in the provisional results of Census 91). Only when the immigrants congregate together in local areas do they come to be perceived as a threat and in that situation, so long as they can be contained (in shanty towns or on construction sites, for example), they are generally tolerated by the larger host community.

As mentioned earlier, the average Portuguese person believes that the present Portuguese society is one which accepts the immigrant influence and that the difficulties have been blown up out of all proportion. Indeed, it is fair to say that a small (6 per cent – INE 1990a, p. 258) proportion of the economically active immigrants registered in Portugal and coming from Africa have professional skills and talents – Eusébio (the footballer) being a prime example. Furthermore, and in their defence on the issue of housing, Lisbon City Council denies that there is any discrimination in the way that houses are allocated – the criterion they use is the waiting list – those who have been waiting the longest are rehoused first, whether they be African, South American or Portuguese.

Conclusion

On the basis of this article, it is difficult to come to a firm conclusion. Is discrimination genuine, as it seems, or is the perception one of false persecution (on the part of the blacks) and gross misrepresentation (on the part of the Portuguese)? Have things really changed, since the dark days of the early slave trade or is history merely repeating itself? It is certainly not a clear-cut picture, since some foreign residents have fared substantially better than others (and, indeed, a foreign English view of this problem stands in stark contrast to that of a Portuguese opinion on the matter). A number of black immigrants have fulfilled their dreams and those achievements should not be lost sight of, when seeking to castigate the less successful efforts of a majority of illegal immigrants. Who is to say that given time, money and cooperation as well as opportunity those illegals will not consolidate their individual positions and that of their immediate families? A tolerance of their predicament and a greater understanding of their needs should therefore be firmly fixed to the agenda, particularly when one becomes aware of the many contradictions in Portuguese society.

In addition to those already noted in the text, we should recognize that the tendency to declare illegal housing, for example, as a characteristic of the blacks is unfair. The situation is more complicated, since many of the second homes built by Portuguese nationals in the Algarve, as well as houses constructed in their absence by *regressos* (returning Portuguese migrants from northern Europe) throughout the country, have no prior planning permission (Lewis and Williams 1984). Yet, this pattern is allowed to carry on unhindered by the Portuguese authorities. The same explanation can be made for the proliferation of second homes built by British ex-patriates in the Algarve and so a great deal more research is required before a firm summation on this subject can be attempted.

What is clear is the suspicion that the Portuguese government neither condones nor condemns the presence of illegal immigrants in Portugal. As a result, it monitors their communities fairly closely; willing to reap the benefits that their collective labouring skills bring, but quick to attack those individuals reduced to prostitution, gambling, drug-pushing and profiteering.

The official line is the one held by the Director General for Foreigners and Border Services, who claims that when the immigration service find irregularities, they try to persuade the individual to leave Portugal – voluntarily! Deportation is very much a last resort and the figures would seem to bear this out. In 1990, 250 people were ejected when found without an *autorização de residencia* (a residence permit).

There is little chance of escape from state bureaucracy which says that all of the Portuguese population must have some form of identifi-

cation. For nationals this is in the guise of an identity [ID] card and this has to be produced for tasks as diverse as getting a place at school to one as mundane as cashing a cheque in a bank. Without an ID card, one is liable to be deported and yet the low figure of 250 deportations mentioned earlier can be looked at in a number of ways. It can be argued that the police have neither the time, ability, money nor inclination to chase up illegals: it could be that the network of safe houses in the shanty towns is too good; it might be that employees are too clever to get caught; or it might simply be that the Portuguese state privately views the illegals as a positive element in society. Remember Kaplan's (1991, p. 168) statement earlier, which described Portugal as having an easy relationship with the black Africans? Yes, it is easy, easy for the Portuguese, since illegals are now a vital cog in the development of the country: a more than useful labour force, one with few financial strains on the economy, and a community which is relatively obedient and law-abiding.

However, despite the 'peacefulness' of the Portuguese discrimination it is still a distressing and absurd position for many of the individuals involved. It is a situation best summed up in the words of Sr Vasco Franco (councillor for housing in Lisbon, 1991): 'They [the illegals] represent an ironic situation – because they are helping to build this city, but they don't have houses to live in'. The sheer size of this folly now makes it one of the most urgent problems for the Portuguese government to solve. There is a clear need to define the position of illegals, perhaps through the granting of a general amnesty, as happened in Italy in 1990. There are, however, problems associated with that regularization process, because rather than identifying the illegals already stationed within Portugal, it may simply encourage more immigrants to enter and officially register.

Certainly, the immigrant groups (thanks to their economic development contribution) deserve to be treated in a more sympathetic fashion by the Portuguese authorities and the population at large. Portugal is not a 'structurally racist society' (as Rex 1988 suggests, is the case in the UK), but the majority of ethnic communities (especially in Lisbon – see Glebe and O'Loughlin 1987 for a comparison with other European cities) are at a distinct socio-economic disadvantage. One hesitates to suggest that the wage labourers identified in this article can be fully termed 'new slaves' or 'unfree labour' (see Cohen 1987 and Miles 1987 for further discussion of the nature of this debate) because their position in Portuguese society is relative. They are certainly definable as informally contracted wage labourers and as such, perform in a largely 'hidden' capacity in the Portuguese labour market. Nevertheless, the accusation of slavery is inaccurate because many immigrants tacitly accept the conditions of their employment, satisfied with the remittance value of their wages and safeguarded in the shanty towns away from the

authorities who, by and large, avoid confrontation. A major problem remains, however, because with a sensitive post-election period now being negotiated (*Economist* 1991) and the recent trials and tribulations of the Euro-Presidency (Halliday 1992) still fresh in the mind, these immigrant matters are likely to be put at the bottom of Portugal's political agenda.

In one sense this is an unfortunate piece of timing because many of the immigrants will have to face up to fresh challenges as the Single European Market of early 1993 comes into effect. The EC is seeking a common immigration policy and the removal of internal border checks. Portugal agreed to join the Schengen Area in late 1991, thus committing itself to free passage for all individuals. This process will almost certainly lead to a strengthening of the external frontiers and, clearly, clandestine immigrants will find it much more difficult to enter Portugal. 'Fortress Europe' is a term popularly used to describe this strengthening process (Gordon 1989) and this could well lead to a halt in any further immigration from Portugal's ex-colonies affecting still further the spatial division of labour in that country. Non-citizens already living in Portugal will also face fresh dilemmas. They will be forced to make new decisions, to decide on their status as Africans, Portuguese, or Europeans and will be expected to make their way in the world accordingly. It is a tricky dilemma for all concerned and with research and discussion on this aspect still in its infancy (see Leitão and Correia 1991), the period running into the next century will be a crucial one for Portugal's handling of its increasingly 'world' population.

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Notes

1. The Schengen Agreement allows for the gradual abolition of border checks and freedom of passage across the frontiers of Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Portugal (see Fontaine 1992, p. 14).
2. One should also remember that freedom of movement for Portuguese labour was a special condition of the country's accession to the EC in 1986 and that this provision will no longer be effectively applied after 1 January 1993.
3. In 1986 when the (white and English) author applied for his residence permit, he satisfied neither of the first two criteria and has no idea whether or not, or how, he might have been judged 'socially acceptable'. Significantly, the said permit was acquired, with only minor inconvenience (a waiting period of about four months) from a relatively disinterested foreigner's service in Coimbra, central Portugal. Again, informal conversation with black immigrants suggests that even the lucky ones have to wait for consider-

ably longer periods than that. The evidence is clearly circumstantial, but the suspicion of discrimination on the grounds of race does remain.

4. For a fuller appreciation of the migrant's legalization process in Portugal, see Céu Esteves (1991, pp. 77–102) and in the context of western Europe, see Layton-Henry (1990).

5. The Instituto de Apoio ão Retorno de Nacionais [IARN] was an organization devoted to the short-term relief and long-term re-integration of *retornados* (ex-patriates) into Portuguese society, following their ejection from former African colonies in the mid-1970s (see Lewis and Williams 1985b for details of the relative success of that exercise.)

6. Significantly, the hardships now suffered by African immigrants to Portugal were mirrored two decades ago by Portuguese moving illicitly to France. Castles and Kosack (1985, pp. 34–35) indicate that

> the Portuguese are usually brought across the Pyrenees by smuggling gangs, which charge about £200 per head. Once in France their ignorance . . . and their weak legal position make them easy victims for exploitation. Agents help them to get papers and to find work and accommodation in return for large fees. Many French employers take on 'clandestines' because they can be forced to take lower wages than other workers.

The situation has now turned a full circle and the same pattern is repeating itself in Portugal, only this time, it is the illegal black immigrant who is struggling.

7. In this case, the word 'intolerance' can be interpreted as a journalist's euphemism for bigotry.

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