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THE INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN PORTUGAL

Brandyn Bok



Introduction

Over the past 20 years, immigration has significantly altered the socioeconomic landscape of Portugal. Today, immigrants work alongside locals in many occupations while traditional Portuguese cities and towns continue to grow in cultural diversity. As a case in point, on the soil of Maravilha Farms in Odemira, Portugal, workers from across the world—from Brazil, Morocco, Thailand, and Nepal—harvest berries and supervise agricultural activities for the fruit producer Reiter Affiliated Companies (RAC). Despite the company's best efforts to provide long-term employment for locals willing to work on its farms, a yearlong nationwide hiring campaign left managers disappointed as it resulted in only 40 Portuguese hires, all of whom quit within one week of working on the farm. RAC is not the only company relying on immigrant workers to fill jobs that many Portuguese natives choose not to hold, as over 60 percent of the 5,000

farm workers in the Odemira southern coastal region are foreigners (Minder). Immigrants filling job openings characterize a variety of occupations across industries, extending throughout the country and beyond the private sector. Even Portugal's public Ministry of Health is searching abroad for doctors because the National Health Service is experiencing a shortage of Portuguese physicians. Currently, foreign doctors—whose origins range from neighboring European countries to Brazil, China, and Uruguay—comprise 10 percent of authorized medical practitioners in Portugal ("Foreign Doctors..."). Clearly, immigrants have emerged as an active part of the Portuguese work force.

Widespread immigration to Portugal is a relatively recent phenomenon, first gaining notice only in the latter half of the twentieth century and becoming an essential part of the economy just within the past two decades. Portugal has one of the highest proportions of non-European foreigners working inside its

borders, with a diverse amalgam of immigrants from outside the continent comprising 31 percent of the immigrant workforce in the country ("Portugal"). In addition to experiencing more rapid growth in the proportion of immigrants in the labor force than most other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries since 1995, Portugal currently holds the #2 ranking worldwide for effective policies promoting the social and economic integration of immigrants into society (Perista and Cabrita; "Migrant Integration Policy Index"). Portugal's diversity of immigrants and their gradual integration into society stem from recent national policy advances that represent a great stride toward a more humanist approach toward immigration. With the 2007 Immigration Law, the Portuguese legislature enacted measures to allow for the freer movement of peoples into its borders, increasing the ease with which foreigners with a valid work or residence permit can settle in the country. Additionally, this legislation established social programs to aid in integrating immigrants into society by providing housing, employment resources, and language-learning services to newcomers ("Plan for Immigrant Integration").

Although open immigration policy is well intentioned, it may not be viewed favorably by some citizens who perceive immigrants as an economic threat. The ostensible costs of immigration appear more acute in light of many Portuguese still feeling the consequences of the recent economic crisis, with an unemployment rate climbing above 15 percent in 2014 and an economy still trying to bounce back from austerity ("World Bank Databank"). Of all EU countries, Portugal has historically demonstrated the most negative perceptions toward immigrants during times of high job competitiveness, when job openings in Portugal are limited and locals are unable to find suitable employment (Simões, p. 25). Although immigrants can be a convenient scapegoat for economic problems, especially high unemployment, in the recent years since the economic crisis, Portuguese support for immigrant integration actually remains

strong ("Migrant Integration Policy Index"). Moreover, the hardships facing the Portuguese working class largely result from deeper macroeconomic issues, including the overall structure of the labor market and generous national worker benefit programs that induce Portuguese citizens to work only in high-wage jobs. Therefore, the widespread employment of immigrants, especially in positions that locals refuse to occupy, may reveal the inadequacy of Portugal's labor market in employing its own citizens. Immigration policy thus may have a significant impact on the economy in helping to fill this need for workers.

For the purposes of this article, immigrants are considered to be all foreign-born residents living in Portugal, regardless of their possession of legal documents, although most data only count "regular" immigrants legally documented by a valid work visa or residence permit. I refer to those documented immigrants simply as "immigrants" and to those undocumented immigrants as "irregular immigrants." It is important to acknowledge this latter group because recent research shows the prominence of immigrant labor in the informal economy (Fonseca and McGarrigle, p. 56). Because their undocumented status makes it difficult for public officials to accurately count them, however, most of the numerical analysis in this article does not fully account for irregular immigrants.

I first present a historical overview of immigration in Portugal and provide a profile of immigrants currently settled in the country. Reflecting on Portuguese immigration policy of the twenty-first century, I then explore the root causes of recent immigration to Portugal. I go on to examine the role that immigrants play in the Portuguese labor market and shed light on the relationship between the failure of the labor market to adequately incentivize Portuguese citizens to work and the country's active immigrant population. Finally, through analyzing the potential economic effects of immigration in Portugal, I evaluate the efficacy of recent immigration policy initiatives in serving the nation's current needs and stimulating future prosperity.

A Brief History of Immigration in Portugal

Historically, migration has always been an integral part of Portuguese culture. From setting sail around the globe as the pioneer of exploration in the fifteenth century, Portugal established colonies across the world in South America, Africa, and Asia. Despite the country's history of venturing to sea, it was five centuries later until people from the rest of the world actively sought Portugal as a destination.

The first major modern-day inflows of immigrants set foot on Portuguese land in the 1960s, a result of Portugal's decolonization of its African colonies. These initial waves of immigrants were those sharing political, cultural, and language-speaking ties with the Portuguese homeland and its native citizens, coming to Portugal to reconnect with their families as well as to escape colonial political unrest. These immigrants to Portugal from its former colonies included both *returnados* (returners)—immigrants who had families in Portugal and thus returned after working or serving in the military in the African colonies—and African natives from the former colonies of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Cape Verde. This influx set in place the primary African migratory chains to Portugal that would continue for years (*Malheiros*). However, those without Portuguese blood ties had a difficult time acquiring Portuguese citizenship, so many of them settled in Portugal without official documented status.

The subsequent waves of immigrants came to Portugal largely for economic reasons, seeking jobs in many developing industries such as construction and manufacturing. Immigration to Portugal grew from the 1970s to the 1980s in part due to globalization's effect on the economy after the 1974 Carnation Revolution, the largely peaceful insurgency that replaced Portugal's dictatorship with a democracy. The combined democratization and globalization of Portugal created an economic boom and generated a growing need for workers in both traditional low-skilled sectors and emerging skilled job markets, which attracted large numbers of immigrants to metropolitan hubs where industry was growing most rapidly. Such abundant employment

opportunities encouraged more Africans from former Portuguese colonies to leave for Portugal to fill many jobs in construction and domestic work. South American immigrants also came to Portugal to fill jobs in some of the low-skilled sectors in commerce, hospitality, and construction. Additionally, a large number of Brazilians immigrated to Portugal to work in high-skilled niche fields, such as medicine, journalism, and engineering, filling a new need for educated positions as a result of the rapid growth of Portugal's open economy (*Malheiros*). Likewise, Portugal's joining the European Economic Community (which later developed into the European Union [EU]) in 1986 brought professionals from Western Europe and the United States to live and work in the country, continuing the trend of high-qualified immigration to Portugal.

The 1990s and 2000s saw Europe's immigrant population become even more diverse, and Portugal became a country of positive net migration¹ for the first time in its history. This shift toward immigration in Portugal was sparked by steady inflows of Western Europeans and Portuguese-speaking Africans along with the surge of new immigrants. Asian peoples, mainly Chinese, as well as Eastern Europeans began migrating to Western Europe to find employment; and many ultimately settled in Portugal because it had a large number of job openings for skilled workers (*Malheiros*). Over time, all of these groups continued to migrate to Portugal not only due to labor market demand but also to join their family members who decided to make their relocation to Portugal permanent. Interestingly, Eastern European immigrants were the first groups to settle in rural areas, filling jobs in developing sectors of agribusiness and manufacturing that relied heavily on low-wage labor. Thus,

¹Net migration is the difference between the inflow of immigrants and the outflow of emigrants, where positive net migration indicates that a country's immigration inflows exceed its emigration outflows. Prior to the 1990s, net migration in Portugal had always been negative, indicating the steady phenomenon of emigration and relatively low immigration. The trend of positive net migration since then indicates immigration becoming an essential part of the Portuguese economy through the turn of the twenty-first century.

immigrants began to serve as substitutes for native workers across Portugal's geographic landscape in labor-intensive sectors, such as construction, manufacturing, and domestic work, where they accept lower remuneration and fill the numerous jobs unattractive to many Portuguese. Furthermore, especially due to some educated Portuguese citizens looking abroad for jobs in the aftermath of the economic crisis, immigrants complement natives in high-skilled occupations, such as those of scientists, doctors, and technicians, where there is a constant need for educated workers unfulfilled by locals.

The Evolution of Portugal's Immigration Policy

Up until the turn of the century, Portuguese immigration policy could best be classified as reactionary, gradually responding to immigration inflows and eventually acknowledging the reality of a growing population of foreigners. In 2001, Portugal began issuing residential work permits to both newly arriving and long-residing undocumented immigrants to reduce the number of irregular immigrants in the country. This policy increased the number of documented immigrants from 200,000 to 400,000 from 2001 to 2003 (Fonseca and McGarrigle, p. 53). This rapid doubling was not caused by any tremendous increase in immigration inflows between 2001 and 2003. Rather, with Portugal's 2001 Immigration Law, temporary "stay permits" were granted to those residing in the country without documentation. This increase represented a relatively small change in the actual immigrant population but a large increase in the number of immigrants with adequate documentation, which the government could then accurately tally. The largely unrestricted granting of stay permits to immigrants reflected a significant shift in Portugal's policy toward immigration. By conferring an established legal status on immigrants, policy gradually became more humanist in recognizing that immigrants play a valuable role in the workforce, which warranted the more equal protection of their rights under the law.

Following this application of immigration policy to economic need, further immigration reform in 2003 constituted Portugal's first attempt to use public policy to control influxes of immigrants before they arrived at the border. This attempt to regulate immigration by instituting a quota system has evolved into the country's current means of regulating immigration. The quota system operates with the SEF (Border Control Service) estimating the number of immigrants needed to fill cyclical labor market demand in specific sectors each year that cannot be satisfied by Portuguese workers ("Satisfying Labour Demand..." p. 23). However, it is unclear how successful this policy has been in matching immigration with available jobs. Since the quota policy was enacted, the actual immigration inflows into Portugal have exceeded the quotas established each year, potentially due to family members of immigrant workers being allowed to accompany them and a tendency to generously grant such permits ("Satisfying Labour Demand..." p. 32). While the immigration quota system denoted a more protectionist attitude in attempting to regulate and limit immigrant inflows, this policy approach continued the forward-looking trend of acknowledging Portugal's current and future economic need for immigrants.

In addition to Portugal's initiatives attempting to regulate the inflows of immigrants, the nation has also implemented extensive policy measures for the integration of foreign residents into Portuguese society. In 2007, Portugal's High Commission for Integration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI) established social programs to move toward granting equality of rights and economic opportunities to immigrants. For instance, through such social initiatives, legal immigrants in Portugal are given employment support, assistance in finding housing, acceptance in schools, and improved access to healthcare. Moreover, many immigrants with long-term work visas, as well as those who become nationalized citizens, are entitled to employment insurance and pensions paid for by their employers or the national government. ACIDI has also put in place language training courses for immigrants and has worked with private firms to recognize the foreign

credentials of immigrant workers to prevent them from working in jobs for which they are overqualified. Nonetheless, the Portuguese government is still working to improve the integration of immigrants into society.

As a member of the EU and a signatory to the Schengen Convention, Portugal's immigration policy has also been dictated in part by a political body larger than its own government, as it is bound by legislation passed by the EU. While the Schengen Agreement allows for free movement among the participating countries, Portugal may issue visas and residence permits to its immigrants as long as these documents only permit employment and settlement in Portugal, not in other sovereign Schengen states. However, Portugal is still required to follow the Schengen requirement that EU citizens generally receive preference for the issuance of work visas and residence permits. Portugal also must follow the EU Blue Card initiative, which obliges EU nations to prioritize highly qualified workers in granting documents to non-EU foreigners for entry into the country and allows such immigrants to work freely in most EU member states. Beyond such caveats, however, Portugal is free to determine its own immigration policy as an EU member state.

A Profile of Immigrants Living in Portugal Today

Portugal has one of the lowest overall immigrant populations in the entire EU, with foreign-born people comprising 7.2 percent of Portugal's population compared with the EU average of 9.3 percent ("Portugal"). Portugal's late democratization after the repressive policies of the Salazar regime combined with its continual struggle as a lower-income country in the EU offers a potential explanation for such a small relative proportion of immigrants. Nonetheless, Portugal's extended coastal reach into the Atlantic Ocean and its contemporary colonial ties can account for the vast diversity of origins in its existing immigrant population. As of 2011, Portugal's immigrant population consists of many nationalities, including 115,000 EU immigrants with free movement from the Schengen Agreement; approximately 85,000 Eastern Europeans, mainly from

Ukraine, Romania, and Moldova; 100,000 immigrants from former Portuguese colonies in Africa; more than 90,000 from Brazil; and 25,000 from Asia, mainly China and India ("Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries"). The gender distribution of immigrants in Portugal is approximately equal, with a 51:49 ratio of women to men. Moreover, 72 percent of immigrants to Portugal stay in the country for at least 10 years. As for the age distribution of immigrants, 19 percent are younger than 25, seven percent are over age 65, and 74 percent are ages 25 to 65—with working age people comprising a preponderance of the immigrant population ("Database on Immigrants...").

Of the working age immigrant population in Portugal, 77 percent are active in the workforce compared with a 62 percent national average for the Portuguese (Fonseca and McGarrigle, p. 56). Immigrants in Portugal are also much better educated than their native-born counterparts. More than 44 percent of immigrants in Portugal have secondary education, or the equivalent of a high school diploma, and 19 percent have tertiary education, with undergraduate degrees or higher ("Database on Immigrants..."). That the average academic qualification of immigrants surpasses that of the native Portuguese population illustrates why, in addition to their willingness to work in labor-intensive jobs, immigrants are so effective in high-skilled sectors and aid in contributing to the growth of the knowledge economy.

A profile of immigrants in the Portuguese workforce reveals that immigrants occupy a wide array of occupations. Only 15 percent of foreign workers in Portugal have unskilled jobs as laborers in construction or domestic service, and those more qualified serve as trade workers and service workers, representing 18 percent and 14 percent of immigrant employment, respectively. Beyond these low-skilled sectors, 14 percent of immigrants work as professionals, such as scientists, engineers, teachers, and medical practitioners. Overall, immigrants comprise almost 15 percent of the national labor market in these educated fields. Furthermore, 13 percent of immigrants work as technicians or associates, those doing technical or administrative work assisting professionals

("Database on Immigrants..."). The significant representation of immigrants in both low-skilled and high-skilled occupations shows the value of foreign workers at the various levels of the Portuguese labor market.

In addition to the documented immigrants in Portugal, empirical evidence suggests that there exists a significant informal economy in which irregular immigrant workers play a substantial part (Fonseca and McGarrigle, p. 56). Specifically, these irregular immigrants are generally low-skilled workers who entered the country legally through temporary work visas and then overstayed without renewing their stay permits. The persistent phenomenon of overstaying is validated by immigrants who indicate that it is very difficult to enter the EU without any documentation whatsoever, but Portugal makes it relatively easy and safe to remain in the country without consequences (Fonseca and McGarrigle, p. 52). The substantial presence of immigrant workers in the informal economy results in their potential exploitation by employers because they have no legal protection. Moreover, their presence in well-established industries reveals the problem of Portuguese labor markets in attracting adequate numbers of Portuguese citizens to jobs that are in demand.

Portugal's Need for Immigrants

Although immigrants comprise a relatively small proportion of Portugal's population, immigration has served as the country's main source of demographic growth for the past two decades (Fonseca and McGarrigle, p. 52). Emigration has continued to reduce the number of Portuguese citizens in Portugal's labor market, especially in skilled occupations, with a growing wave of educated students leaving the country.² Moreover, the fertility rate in Portugal is at an all-time low of 1.3 births per woman, representing a 56 percent replacement rate of the native-born in the country ("World Bank Databank"). These two factors have caused a decline in the native Portuguese population at a crucial time of

job growth. As a result, Portugal requires an external population boost via immigration to satisfy the economy's demand for labor across various occupations.

However, the recent declining native population is not the only cause of immigrants taking up so many jobs in Portugal, for the employment of immigrants exceeds what would be necessary just to fill the labor demand unmet by the Portuguese working population. This increase in immigrants taking up jobs while many nationals remain unemployed indicates the labor market's inability to employ Portuguese citizens. This problem is exemplified through the numerous cases of immigrants filling jobs originally intended to employ Portuguese locals, such as the agribusiness jobs at Maravilha Farms in Odemira. Thus, given Portugal's generous worker-protection policies of high unemployment insurance, social security benefits, and employment contract rigidities, immigrant workers in Portugal help keep the labor market efficient.

Immigrants today represent a valuable part of the Portuguese workforce across skill levels. Historically, Portugal's persistent demand for low-skilled labor in the construction, domestic services, agricultural, and manufacturing industries has attracted immigrant workers. Although these sectors are vital to the economy, many Portuguese citizens are hesitant to take such jobs because they offer less secure labor contracts and only basic employment benefits. Increased government funding as a result of joining the EU has given rise to significant construction projects throughout Portugal. In response, immigrants have stepped up to take many of these jobs, aiding Portugal in building its infrastructure. Moreover, exports account for more than 40 percent of GDP in the past decade, with a substantial portion of the products exported produced in the manufacturing and trade sectors ("World Bank Databank"). Unskilled immigrant workers performing these low-wage, labor-intensive jobs play a significant part in filling labor demand and increasing the country's competitive advantage in these industries, thus strengthening the Portuguese economy.

²For an analysis of the recent trends of emigration in Portugal, see Michael Gallucci's article in this volume of Perspectives.

As a consequence of globalization and technology development across Europe, immigrants currently play an equally valuable role in many skilled and educated occupations in the Portuguese labor market. With immigrants on average more educated than native citizens, Portugal is gradually beginning to rely on importing workers into its budding knowledge economy. Approximately 27 percent of immigrants occupy high-qualification jobs as professionals, associates, and technicians; and with an increasing number of native college graduates leaving Portugal to seek better employment opportunities abroad—because jobs in Portugal offer low wages to its citizens compared to what they could receive working a similar job in another EU country—there exists a growing need for educated foreign workers to come to Portugal to occupy jobs in these fields.

Immigrants Ask, “Why Portugal?”

Although Portugal’s economy has recently remained stagnant compared to its more thriving EU neighbors, it has one key advantage in attracting immigrant workers—a flexible immigration policy largely regarded as welcoming toward foreigners. This can at least partially explain the large atypical immigration flows (i.e., the relatively high proportion of immigration of peoples from non-EU and non-Lusophone countries with which Portugal shares no direct social or political links). As noted previously, Portugal has focused on the integration of immigrants since its most recent immigration policy revision in 2007, and this legislative shift to be more accepting and supportive of foreigners has shaped immigrants’ views of Portugal as a hospitable receiving country.

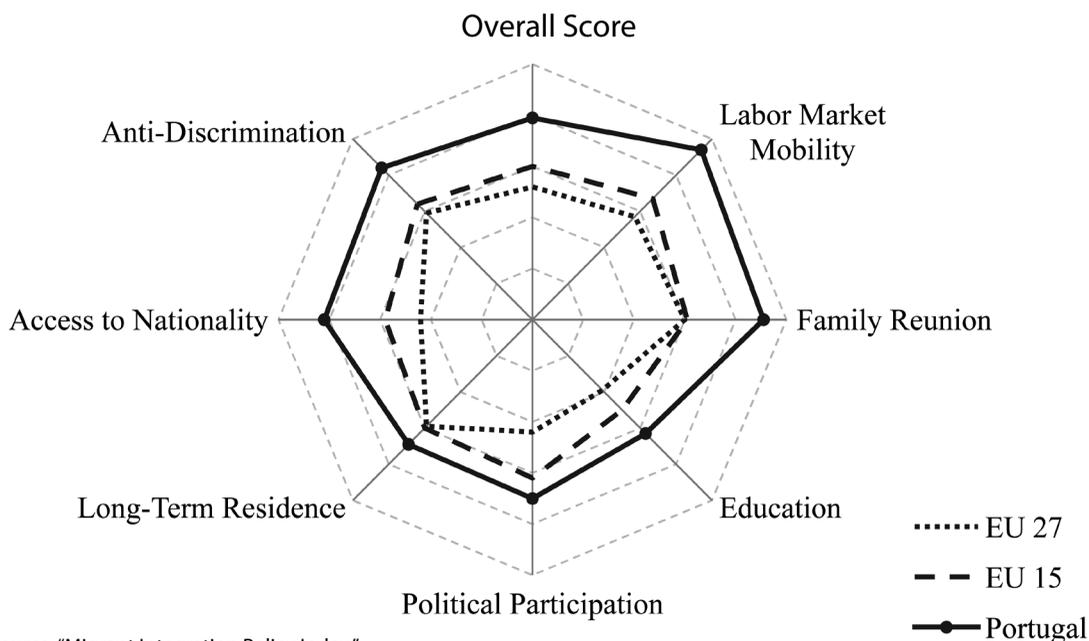
Even before these policy initiatives actively promoting integration, however, many immigrants sought out Portugal as a place of refuge from political unrest, as evidenced by the influx of Eastern Europeans and Asians coming to the country from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. Today, a positive perception of Portugal continues to bring work-seeking immigrants to its shores. For instance, immigrant workers on Maravilha Farms admit there is less racism toward foreigners in Portugal than in many

other European countries (Minder). This firsthand insight from immigrants signals the effectiveness of integration policies and a social climate of tolerance as important driving factors behind immigrants’ decisions to settle within Portuguese borders. Although the individual outlooks of locals may vary, an espoused public attitude of acceptance toward immigrants is ingrained in society because Portugal’s Constitution is one of the few in the world to grant equal human rights to foreigners within its borders. Article 15, Section 1, of the most recent revision of the Portuguese Constitution explicitly states, “foreigners and stateless persons who find themselves or who reside in Portugal shall enjoy the same rights and be subject to the same duties as Portuguese citizens” (Constitution of the Portuguese Republic). Hence, an atmosphere of equality alongside active immigrant integration policies may serve as some immigrant workers’ chief motivations for choosing Portugal as a destination.

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a scale measuring the effectiveness of immigrant integration policies across countries, in which the Migration Policy Group surveys various policy indicators with the aim of measuring the extent to which “all residents are guaranteed equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities” (“Migrant Integration Policy Index”). The MIPEX can serve as a useful tool for examining the integration practices and tolerance with which Portugal treats its immigrant population in order to provide insight into the various reasons immigrants might seek Portugal as a destination. Portugal currently ranks second out of all developed countries, with a score of 79 out of 100 on the MIPEX III based on 2010 data (“Migrant Integration Policy Index”). Such a high score indicates that Portugal’s current policies are more effective than those of most developed countries in integrating immigrants into society and cultivating immigrant accessibility to Portuguese employment opportunities.

Portugal’s current immigration policy protects immigrant rights through allowing reunification for all kinds of families, instituting laws against discrimination and racial profiling, and having foreign credentials

Figure 1
2010 MIPEX Results



Source: "Migrant Integration Policy Index."

equally recognized by Portuguese employers. Further, Portugal has taken active measures to establish positive social programs, such as setting up facilities to teach the Portuguese language to immigrants and giving immigrants and their children access to education and vocational training. The goal of all of these initiatives is to aid in the social, political, and economic integration of immigrants into society. Interpreting the MIPEX data, Portugal's policy has been largely effective in integrating immigrants and providing them with adequate social support in helping to position them where they can most effectively benefit the country as a whole. Portugal's effective provision of a supportive environment for immigrants within its borders can help explain the various motivating factors, in addition to economic opportunity, for bringing people to Portugal.

The radar chart in Figure 1 depicts the degree of freedom of immigrants across the measured MIPEX dimensions, with points radially further from the center of the chart along each axis representing a higher score and

thus a greater degree of rights and opportunities for immigrants in a specific area of integration. When compared alongside both the EU-15 and the EU-27,³ Portugal has noticeably more equitable policies for immigrants, on average, than its European counterparts. In fact, the degree of freedom and equality Portugal grants to its immigrants is greater than either EU average in all measured dimensions.

Since its inception in 2007, Portugal's revised immigration policy has been particularly effective in improving immigrant access to long-term residence and nationality as well as supporting family reunion and labor market mobility for immigrant workers, evidenced by the high MIPEX scores of each of these key dimensions in Figure 1. Portugal has a MIPEX score of 69 for long-term residence and 91 for

³The EU-15 refers to the 15 original member countries of the EU: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The EU-27 includes Portugal and encompasses all member countries of the EU in 2010, the year of the most recent MIPEX survey at the time of this writing.

family reunion, which reflects Portugal's open practice of allowing immigrants with stable work contracts lasting at least 5 years and those with family in the country to obtain long-term residence permits. Most of those applying for such permits to live and stay in Portugal, especially those with family members settled in the country, receive them; and there are few barriers preventing immigrants who want to stay from doing so. Also, Portugal's 2006 Nationality Law reduced the requirements for immigrants to obtain Portuguese citizenship. Based on the 82 MIPEX score for access to nationality, long-term immigrants have a relatively secure opportunity for citizenship ("Migrant Integration Policy Index"). Moving away from offering preferential treatment to immigrants from countries sharing past political ties with Portugal, naturalized citizenship is now available to all immigrants with no serious criminal record who speak basic Portuguese and who have legally resided in the country for six years. Such ease of gaining legal access to Portuguese residence and nationality may cause immigrants to choose Portugal over other countries because they see it as a more certain permanent destination.

Although the MIPEX conveys the numerous ways in which Portugal may attract immigrants for social, cultural, and political reasons, it also reveals one key economic dimension that is a critical consideration for immigrants—labor market mobility, for which Portugal has a MIPEX score of 94 out of 100. According to the Migration Policy Group, Portugal's high score for labor market mobility positively reflects the following policy indicators in the country: immigrants' immediate access to employment upon arrival, equal treatment and support in job placement compared to nationals with respect to recognition of work experience and education qualifications, and protection of immigrant workers' rights in equal access to suitable working conditions and social benefits. Based on these indicators, Portugal effectively grants more labor market mobility to its immigrants than any other country in the world except Sweden. This employment equality for immigrant workers relates directly to the primary aspiration of most immigrants—to settle in a land with the

opportunity to work to build better lives for themselves and their families. Hence, Portugal provides just this prospect of an improved livelihood to its immigrant population through equal treatment in job opportunities unparalleled by most other countries. Specifically, Portugal's 2007 immigration policy prevents employer discrimination and requires that employers regard foreign qualifications as equal to equivalent local qualifications and hence helps immigrants to find suitable jobs based on their skills and experience ("Migrant Integration Policy Index"). Beyond the benefit to immigrants of receiving better employment opportunities, such support for immigrant workers helps ensure that the foreign-cultivated human capital is not disregarded but rather can be used to its maximum potential in Portugal's workforce. Consequently, immigrants from across the world are drawn into Portuguese borders as the prospect of achieving a better life becomes more attainable via the legal rights and social protection affording them equal economic opportunity.

Conclusion

In essence, Portugal's recent immigration policy regards immigrants as members of the national community rather than outsiders. Immigrants in Portugal possess significantly more social rights and economic opportunities than in most other developed countries. This ongoing positive treatment of immigrants represents a conscious shift on the part of the Portuguese government to take a more humanist approach to immigration. Beyond providing an accessible route to satisfying labor demand through immigration, Portugal's open immigration policies also provide a basis for future social development and economic growth. With over 70 percent of immigrants settling in Portugal permanently and serving as the country's main source of demographic growth in the twenty-first century, a policy focus on the integration of immigrants is a direct investment in the country and its future.

Implementing social programs to give immigrants the basic tools they need to live among Portuguese citizens—whether access

to employment, housing assistance, or legal protection against discrimination—allows them the opportunity to provide for themselves and their families in a self-sufficient manner. Only then can immigrants effectively go forward to contribute to the country in a way that would not otherwise be possible. Thus, immigrants themselves benefit immensely from Portugal's open immigration stance and active policy approach to integration by gaining social rights and economic opportunities to

live better lives. It is equally important that Portugal and its citizens also benefit through the equitable treatment of immigrants by allowing them to serve as full members of society, thus giving them the means to work to their full potential. Through helping to satisfy the demand for labor to capitalize on the country's available resources, immigrants are able to contribute to the collective project of furthering Portugal's social and economic well-being.

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