

THE FACE OF IMMIGRATION IN THE NORTH OF PORTUGAL

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Abstract

This study seeks to understand the consequences of this phenomenon in the relocation of human resources from other countries to Portugal and to evaluate the impact of immigrants in northern Portugal, including help to clarify the mechanisms for determining the measures of economic policy (sectors most wanted, integration, interactions in organizations). With decolonization and later integration into the European Union, the social and cultural fabric has undergone profound changes. Portugal has become a host country.

Keywords: Regional immigration, Northern Portugal, sectors of immigration, integration
JEL Codes: F22, O18, R23

1. Introduction

This study is set within the project: “Immigration: economic, professional, socio-cultural and linguistic implications” that has been developing in CELCC (Centro de Estudos de Língua Comunicação e Cultura) at ISMAI (Instituto Superior da Maia).

A vast empirical literature reveals the phenomenon of redundancy in the labor market, and the costs in terms of unemployment and lost wages have been the most studied aspects.

This study seeks to understand the consequences of this phenomenon in the relocation of human resources from other countries to Portugal and to evaluate the impact of immigrants in northern Portugal, including help to clarify the mechanisms for determining the measures of economic policy (sectors most wanted, integration, interactions in organizations). With decolonization and later integration into the European Union, the social and cultural fabric has undergone profound changes. Portugal has become a host country.

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2. Database

We created a database with information on a number of companies (district, municipality, economic activity, legal form and management) as well as information about individual characteristics of the immigrant service staff (gender, age, education level, qualification level, occupation, wages, working hours). We opted for the use of quantitative methods (for this purpose, questionnaires were designed and applied) but also qualitative for agreeing Stiles (1993, in Gill, 2000), who argues that the purpose of qualitative methods for the condensation of human experience into words isn't the reduction in its symbolic numbers. In analyzing the content of these interviews we opted for the analysis of narrative research method that has been increasingly used, namely to study specific periods (Farrell, Rosenberg & Rosenberg, 1993, in Zilber et al, 1998), such as migrations.

Events of life may be classified as **normative** and **non-normative**, being normative those that occur to most people and not normative those that are unforeseeable.

In this framework, the "immigration" phenomenon would be classified as non-normative, since only a minority of the global population migrates due to either the lack of economic resources (mainly) or other reasons.

Immigration is a **modification** event at several **levels**:

- **relationships, routines, roles**, which might interfere with the concept that the subjects have about themselves and the world. (Schlossberg, Waters & Goodman, 1995, in Pinheiro and Ferreira, 2002).

Adaptation may be influenced by three sets of **variables**:

- the individual's perception regarding the event,
- the characteristics of pre and post immigration contexts;
- the characteristics of individuals.

Mobility, in this case immigration, constitutes a transition that can be seen and felt as a crisis, only if the subject considers it as such, (Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998), highlighting the importance of the perception of the phenomenon.

Schlossberg (*in ibid*) identifies four sets of factors that influence how people cope with transition:

- Situation (*e.g.* what has triggered the transition? did it happen in a "good" or "bad" moment? how long did it take? were there other sources of stress?);
- Self (*e.g.* socioeconomic status, gender, age, health, ...);
- Support (*e.g.* close relationships, family, friends, institutions ...)
- Strategies (*e.g.* coping strategies that change the situation, control the significance of the problem, help to deal with stress ...).

Bronfenbrenner (*in* 1986, Campos, 1990) argues that one of the moments of transition that occurs in people's lives is the passage from a micro-system to another, being this

passage considered a troubled phase. (Beard, Elmore & Lange, 1982, *in* Neville, Heppner & Wang, 1997).

Hood and Ferreira (1983, *in* Caires & Almeida, 2001) discuss the **high levels of stress** associated with changes regarding three often difficult processes:

- the geographical separation from the origin community to the host community,
- the emotional separation
- the validation of the ability to be successful (Pereira, 2004).

Venâncio (2000) considers that this is a moment of "crisis", at which the existing balance is questioned because there is a need for personal and relational re-organisation, that leads to the development of new structures and strategies which are appropriate for the new situation: the experience of family and friends separation, the contact with different cultures, the enlargement of social networks, the establishment of closer relations and the management of dimensions such as time and money. (Ferreira & Hood, 1990; Sprinthall & Collins, 1994; Caires, 1997; Caires & Almeida, 1998, *cit. in* Caires & Almeida, 2001).

Furnham (1997, *in* Samutelela, 2001) considers that the main difficulties for migrants are the **adaptation to a new culture** and the **feeling of nostalgia** for the family and the home country.

Fisher and Hood (1987) define homesickness as a nostalgia which is characterised by a strong worrisome concerning home and family, a need to return home, a feeling of regret (pain) towards home and family and, moreover, a frequent feeling of unhappiness, discomfort and disorientation in the new place.

Meeting **the new culture** can create some anxiety that results in the **loss of signs and reference points**, such as social norms and rules to guide their actions and to understand the behavior of others. One must realize that factors such as **ethnicity, culture and ethnic identity** socially shape the individual.

According to Yeh and Hwang (2000), the ethnicity concerns the cultural characteristics of a particular group, *i.e.*, its standards, values, attitudes and typical behaviours of a given ethnic group that result from a common culture that is transmitted over generations.

According to those authors, the concept culture sets norms, values, behaviors and attitudes of a group that may not necessarily be based on ethnic background. Ethnic identity, in turn, refers to knowledge, beliefs and expectations about the ethnic group (all people have an ethnic identity) and that works as a reading grid of cognitive information processing, through which a person perceives and defines objects, situations, events, other people and provides a basis for behavior. Uba (1994, *in* *ibid*) believes that ethnic identity is evident in aspects such as:
- Awareness - of belonging to an ethnic group. (Knowledge of cultural characteristics based on ideological grounds (habits and beliefs) and bases behavioral)

- Adoption - of ethnic identity (ethnic incorporation of behavior, standards, values and beliefs)
- Ethnic identity - the unconscious ability to behave based on schemas of ethnic identity.

The feelings of cultural identity are constituted from a dynamic process throughout life, and the encounter with other cultures an opportunity for refresher cultural identity, knowing and re-re-updating feelings of belonging to a particular culture.

The confrontation with another culture, especially when it comes to live in a strange country, implies a questioning of self and other, a process which necessarily conflicts occur, be they personal, interpersonal or social. Yet it is within this challenging situations occurring personal or social development.

Pacheco (1996) argues that "the representations of the host society marked as a " filter ", the strategies taken by immigrants, strategies, ranging from accommodation, in order to save the" bonds of the past ", which plan to resume a future that is expected to close, assuming a mode of relationship that allows them to relate to others without profound identity transformations, especially with regard to cultural identity. However, a longer stay in the host country may lead to strategies of accommodation give rise to strategies of acculturation and even assimilation.

Cardoso (1996, in Brito, 2001), argues that cultural integration is a social process in which minorities freely confirm its identity, since this does not conflict with the majority, ie, to accept aspects of culture minority that are adjustable to the dominant culture and rejection of those aspects that are not. Note that "Portugal has been increasingly recognize cultural diversity therein." (Souta, 1997 p.36, in Brito, 2001)

Pinheiro and Ferreira (2002) draw attention to the importance of perceived social support. The authors define this concept as the expectations that support or support there if we need it. They claim that, in literature, social resources in general and perceived social support in a specific manner have been hailed as the enablers of personal and social adaptation of individuals in a variety of experiences.

Thus, according to several authors (Chickering & Schlossberg, 1995; Cutrona, 1982, 1986; Cutrona, Cole, Colangelo, Assouline & Russell, 1994; Russell & Cutrona, 1984, 1987; Schlosseberg, Chickering & Lynd, in *ibid*), the existence satisfactory interpersonal relationships and perceived social support may be obtained from them the enablers of adaptation.

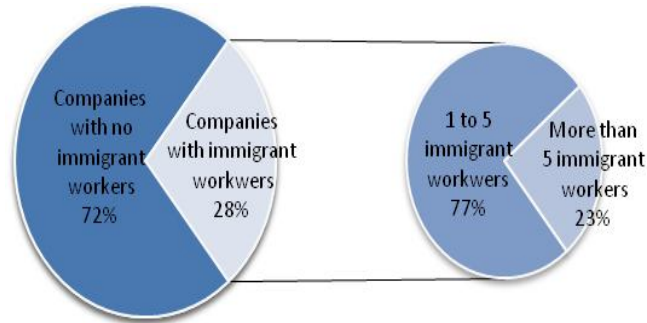
3. Study Results

The investigation which is taking place led to acquisition of information related to immigrant staff, who in the first semester of 2011 was working for a significant set of companies located in the North of Portugal, more specifically in Maia municipality. The gathering of these data allowed the profiling of these immigrants regarding their nationality, gender, age, educational level, professional category, among others. For the gathering of these data we selected enquiries sent to the respondents through the internet,

and for which we received 46 answers. In this communication we present the first results of this study.

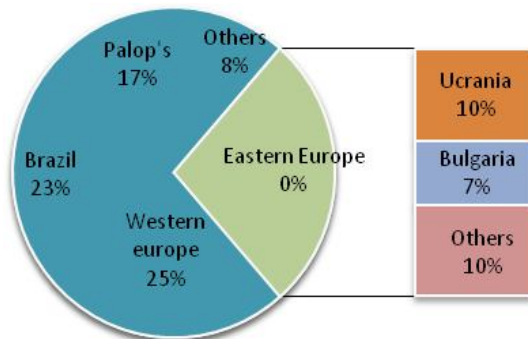
In the obtained sample we verified that only 28% of the respondent companies have immigrant workers among their staff. As shown in **Figure 1**, 23% of these companies stated having more than 5 immigrants at their service, while the rest have an inferior number.

Figure 1 – Percentage of the companies with immigrant workers



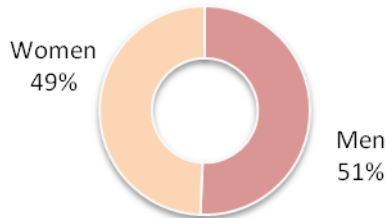
The analyses regarding the origin of these immigrants allowed us to conclude that their majority is from Europe (52%), as shown in **Figure 2**, standing out the Eastern European countries (27% of the total), followed by the Western European countries (25%). Nevertheless mind that Brazil by itself represents the third major source of immigration (23%). Also, the African Countries which have Portuguese as their official language (PALOP'S) represent an important immigrant source (17%). Finally, the remaining immigrants (8%), working for the respondent companies, come from other countries like the USA or Zimbabwe.

Figure 2 – Immigrant workers origin



The analysis carried out by country allowed us to detail this conclusion revealing the importance as an origin country – after Brazil – of Spain (11%), Angola (10%), Ukraine (10%), Bulgaria (7%), France (7%) and Russia (5%).

Figure 3 – Immigrant workers by gender

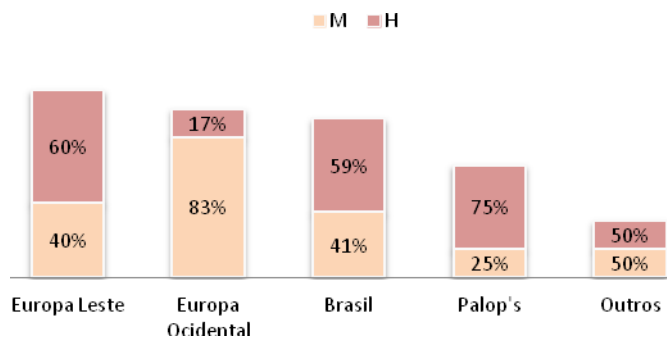


The profile of the immigrants in this study according to the gender factor (**Figure 3**) allowed us to conclude that there is an almost equitable distribution among men (51%) and women (49%).

However, there is no homogeneity in this distribution when we consider the immigrants nationality (**Figure 4**). This way, we ascertained that Men represent 60% of the immigrants natives of Eastern Europe, value not very different from the percentage of Men in the total of the Brazilian nationality immigrants (59%).

This result counterpoints with the distribution seen in the case of the immigrants who come from Western European countries, in which Men represent only 17% of the total. Also in contrast is the case of immigrants who come from the PALOP'S, in which Men represent 75% of the total.

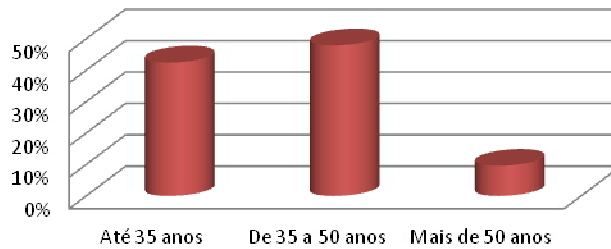
Figure 4 – Immigrant works according to their nationality and gender



The observation of the data obtained through the enquiries also allowed the immigrants label considering the age factor (**figure 5**). This way, we ascertained that 42% of the foreign workers working for the respondent companies are no more than 35 years old. We

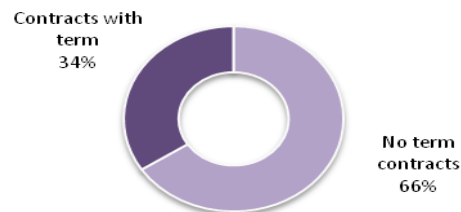
also ascertained that 48% of those employees are aged between 35 and 50. Finally, the remaining 10% are more than 50 years old.

Figure 5 – Immigrant workers by age



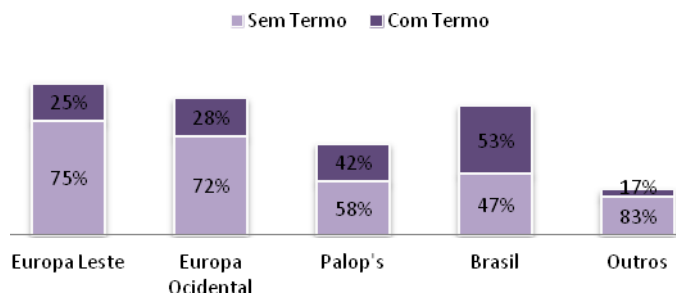
This study also tried to identify the working association among the immigrant workers and their employers showing that 34% of these immigrants are in a term agreement situation while the remaining 66% have agreements without a defined term.

Figure 6 – Immigrant workers by labour agreement



The crossing of this information with the one concerning the employees nationality allowed us to conclude that, except for the brazilian immigrants, most of the workers are in an effective agreement situation, regardless their origin. As shown in **Figure 7**, three quarters of the eastern europeans (75%), 72% of the remain europeans and 58% of the immigrants coming from the PALOP’S have no term contracts, while only 47% of the South America immigrants are in the same situation.

Figure 7 – Immigrant workers by nationality and labour agreement

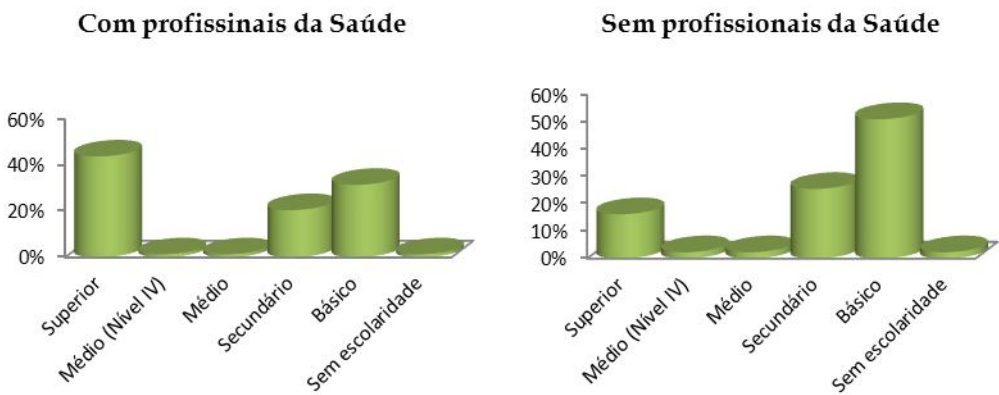


In this work we also tried to characterize the immigrants concerning their educational level (**Figure 8**).

The results obtained allowed us to conclude that 44% of the workers of the respondent companies completed their college education, 32% the basic education, 21% highschool, 2% medium and 1% haven't got any kind of studies. These results, however, are very different if we exclude from the sample the Healthcare professionals.

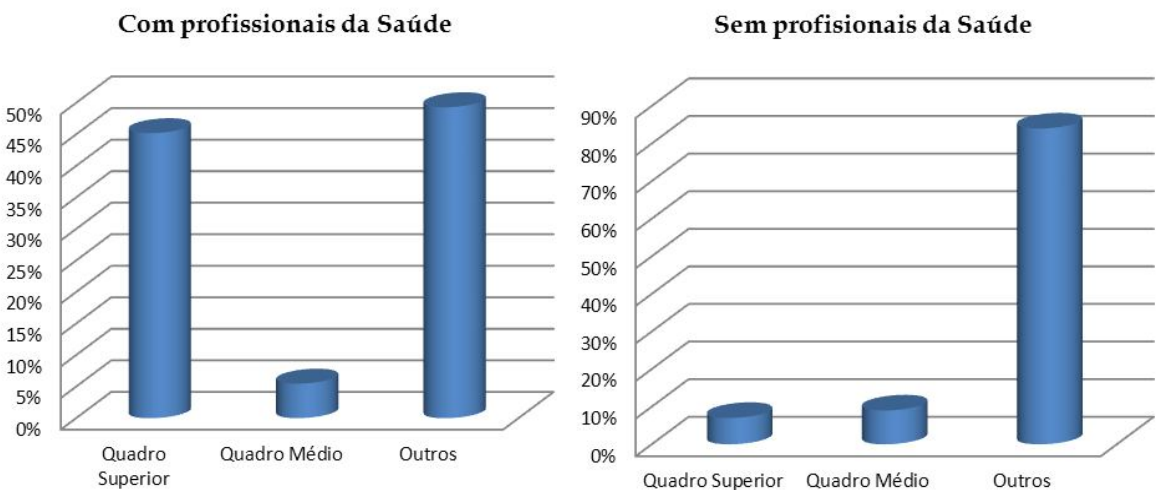
In this analysis the values obtained for the basic education and highschool go up to 51% and 26% respectively, while the percentage of immigrants with college education completed goes down to 16%.

Figure 8 – Immigrant workers by educational level



in senior positions (7%) is much inferior when comparing to the one shown in the previous analyse.

Figure 9 – Immigrant workers by professional category



4. Conclusions

As shown in Figure 1, 23% of these companies stated having more than 5 immigrants at their service, while the rest have an inferior number.

The analyses regarding the origin of these immigrants allowed us to conclude that their majority is from Europe (52%), as shown in Figure 2, standing out the Eastern European countries (27% of the total), followed by the Western European countries (25%). Nevertheless mind that Brazil by itself represents the third major source of immigration (23%). Also, the African Countries which have Portuguese as their official language (PALOP'S) represent an important immigrant source (17%).

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