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Portuguese Immigration Policy and its Effects on Labor Force Integration: A Mixed-Methods
Analysis

Portugal's post-troika journey, through interviews, policies
appealing to foreigners, and labour adaptation.

Individual part of the Work Project including the common parts.

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Portuguese Immigration Policy and its Effects on Labor Force Integration: A Mixed-Methods Analysis¹

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the immigrant labor force integration in Portugal during the 21st century using a mixed-methods approach. First, a theoretical and historical analysis of immigration trends in Portugal reveals that policies have shifted focus overtime from the regulation of migrants to their integration. Next, a quantitative analysis from the Portuguese Labor Force Survey data reveals an employment gap between immigrants and natives that narrows after several years of residency, as well as a salary gap that varies based on migrants' region of origin. Finally, semi-structured interviews with policy experts and immigrants offer additional insights about the existing policy-implementation gap.

As part of the requirement, the individual parts are the following chapters and sub-chapters:

4.3, 4.6, 4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.6.3, 4.6.4, 6.3.1, 6.5.3. *The rest is therefore to be considered as the common parts.*

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1. Introduction³

Individuals and families choose to migrate to other countries for countless reasons. On the one hand, migrants might feel ‘pushed’ out of their country due to declining economic conditions or political instability. On the other hand, they might also feel ‘pulled’ into another country due to higher salaries, better living conditions or favorable health care (Simpson, 2022). When making the decision to migrate, individuals face a constant trade-off between leaving behind their home and starting a new life somewhere else.

Government policies towards immigration and the labor market can have significant effects not only on the number of migrants who come, but from which countries they come from and which skills they bring to the job market. Countries with exclusionary policies regarding foreign degree accreditation, for example, will lead to a more restrictive labor market for foreigners. On the contrary, countries that offer accessible visas to skilled workers or straightforward paths to residency will expect to see an increase in migration, particularly from highly educated individuals.

In Portugal, there is a large mix of migrants, including workers, refugees, and students. For example, by 2018, more than 17,000 originally Indian individuals were registered as Portuguese citizens according to SEF (Neto & Neto, 2022). Most of these migrants reside around the Lisbon metropolitan area. Furthermore, by 2016, Brazil, Ukraine, and Cabo Verde were the top countries of origin (see Appendix A; Marques et al., 2019). In 2020, around 450,000 third-country nationals (TCNs) resided legally in Portugal (Reis, Sousa & Machado, 2021). Furthermore, the number of Ukrainian migrants has only grown after the activation of the temporary protection directive on March 4, 2022 (Guild & Groenendijk, 2023). More

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specifically, the UNHCR regularly updates the number of refugees coming from Ukraine and noted 6,225,700 Ukrainian refugees in Europe as of November 18, 2024. Many of these refugees end up in Poland and Germany, although they also spread over other countries in Europe and beyond (UNHCR, 2024). An explanation for the rise of migrants from CPLP countries is due to the various agreements Portugal has established over the years with its former colonies.

Of course, there has also been a concurrent wave of Portuguese citizens who choose to emigrate to other countries, such as Luxembourg, Switzerland, and ex-colonial countries (Albert, 2021; Augusto et al., 2022). However, this paper mainly considers migrants coming to Portugal rather than emigrants.

Due to its complexity, immigrant labor force integration is a topic that is best studied from a multi-disciplinary approach. Therefore, the following research question is proposed:

“What factors have driven the surge in immigration to Portugal in the 21st century, especially in the last 10 years, and how have government policies influenced labor market outcomes and social integration for both migrants and the native population?”

Following this research question, the paper aims to analyze the impact of government policies on social outcomes of immigrants in Portugal and their integration into the labor force. Portugal’s immigration system, like any other, has chosen to prioritize certain types of migrants, which in turn affects the composition of the labor force. For example, the special visa offered to immigrants from lusophone countries indicates an immigration system that favors immigrants from countries with a shared language and historical ties. In addition, Portugal has prioritized granting visas for family reunification, a policy which is justified through promoting social cohesion (Council Directive 2003/86/EC). Throughout this paper, decisions like these

will be studied from a variety of qualitative and quantitative lenses to gain a holistic understanding of the current state of immigrant labor force integration in Portugal.

In the pages that follow, the various migration trends in Portugal are discussed from theoretical, historical, statistical, and personal lenses. more specifically in relation to the Portuguese labor market and to the policies and legislation introduced by the Portuguese government over the last several decades. There is an emphasis on the rise of major migrant groups, such as immigrants from Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe and lusophone countries, as their experiences within the work force vary in significant ways. The paper demonstrates a clear shift from the regulation towards more integration of incoming migrants. The data will show insights regarding the persistence of gaps in employment and wages between immigrants and Portuguese nationals. The conducted interviews exhibit a clear policy-implementation gap with insight from various migrants residing in Portugal.

To answer the questions presented before, the thesis is structured as follows. In the first section, the available literature on this topic will be discussed. This includes the reasons why people choose Portugal, various theories shaping the labor market dynamics, and an overview of the immigration policy timeline in Portugal. Then, the Labor Force Survey (INE) data will be examined with statistical analysis. This will be followed by qualitative research consisting of interviews with relevant migrants and institutions. Finally, the paper will present the limitations and recommendations for future research of this study, while also offering policy recommendations. The main themes of the dissertation will be highlighted at the end.

2. Portugal as a Destination⁴

Each year, many people decide to migrate for reasons such as political instability, economic difficulties, family reunification, or the pursuit of a better quality of life. The choice of a destination ranges from a coincidental decision to a carefully calculated plan, influenced by the openness of a country's migration policies or the barriers it imposes. Although it has a large colonial history and established many agreements with other countries regarding migration, Portugal does not seem the first choice of destination. This is supported by evidence presented by Bossavie, Sánchez and Makovec (2024) who show that countries Northern Europe and Türkiye are far more likely destinations. For example, Poland and Türkiye currently hold the largest share of refugees among all migrants in Europe due to ongoing wars in neighboring countries. Although Portugal might not be the obvious choice, the country is home to a large variety of immigrants, which will be discussed in this dissertation, due to a combination of historical, legal, and lifestyle factors.

Portugal's colonial history proved to play a significant role in shaping its migration landscape. Relationships with former colonies, such as Brazil, Angola, and Mozambique, have led to specific agreements that simplify migration processes for their citizens. After the Revolution of April 25, 1974, migration to Portugal increased significantly, with notable spikes in the late 1990s as demand for labor grew and migration policies began to relax (OECD, 2008). Over time, these policies have evolved, at times allowing Brazilians to enter without a visa, for example. For migrants from Lusophone countries, the shared language and cultural ties make Portugal a natural choice, reinforced by these more flexible immigration policies compared to other European nations.

⁴ Author: common

Another important factor is Portugal's relatively lenient citizenship policy. In 2018, the country reduced the residency requirement for naturalization from six to five years, providing a faster pathway to citizenship than many other EU nations (Pinto Ribeiro, 2018). This has been especially appealing for non-EU migrants seeking both stability and access to the broader EU labor market. While this policy is advantageous, its implementation is not always straightforward. Migrants often face bureaucratic inefficiencies and lengthy delays, as explained in the migrant interview section of this paper.

Portugal also stands out as one of the few OECD countries that allow asylum seekers to enter the job market within the first month after arrival (Mantos, 2019). This policy facilitates quicker economic integration and makes the country more attractive to those fleeing crises. However, frequent changes in these policies make it difficult for migrants to stay informed and navigate the system effectively. Seasonal work opportunities and special programs like the Golden Visa (introduced in 2012) also attract migrants, especially those who seek to quickly build a life elsewhere.

For EU migrants, the decision to move to Portugal is often driven by lifestyle factors. The country's mild climate and lower cost of living compared to Northern Europe make it a popular choice, especially for those who can move freely within the Schengen Area. Many EU migrants view their time in Portugal as temporary, often planning to return to their home countries after enjoying the benefits of Portuguese weather and affordability. This was also mentioned in the conducted interviews, later discussed in the qualitative analysis section.

Despite these appealing aspects, navigating the Portuguese immigration system can be a daunting task. While Portugal's openness to migrants is evident in its policies, which is also shown in the following sections, the execution of these measures can create confusion and delays, especially for individuals reliant on specific agreements or government support.

Although the reasons for migration to Portugal are diverse, they reveal both the opportunities and obstacles that define the country's appeal. This study will explore the realities in greater detail through previous research, LFS data, and various interviews containing migrant's personal experiences. While understanding the motivations for migration is crucial, this study primarily focuses on the integration of migrants into the Portuguese labor market. Therefore, the next section starts with the theories shaping labor market dynamics.

4. From Past to Present: The Evolution of Migration in Portugal⁵

It is important to obtain a comprehensive overview of migration trends and policy changes in Portugal to analyze Portuguese LFS data and conducted interviews. Therefore, this section explores the changes that have happened in the country over time. It is important to recognize that not every small change or adaptation can be discussed as the Portuguese migratory landscape develops at a rapid pace. However, the aim is to point out some of the most important policy introductions and adjustments that have shaped migration in Portugal.

First, the section presents a historical overview, going back to early migration trends and the Revolution of April 25, 1974. The decolonization process initiated after sped up the migrations coming to Portugal from, among others, PALOP countries. In addition, a shift took place after the introduction of the Decree-Law 4/2001, regulating a new group of immigrants originating from Brazil and Eastern Europe. These migrants now take part in the Portuguese labor force in various sectors.

Second, more recent developments of the Portuguese migratory landscape are also discussed. In 2007, a new Immigration Law was created simplifying processes for workers and

⁵ Author: common

battling undocumented labor. The country also shifted more towards policies that integrate, rather than just regulate, incoming migrants. In more recent years, Portugal had to overcome various crises and introduce policies that mitigate their detrimental effects. Although some had a less severe impact on the country compared to the rest of the EU (or the world), others significantly pressured immigration. Other recent developments, such as the war in Ukraine, the growth of digital nomads, and CPLP agreements, are also examined.

4.1.1 Shifts in Immigration Patterns and Regularization Efforts in Portugal: The 2001 Decree-Law and Its Impact⁶

At the beginning of the 21st century, a significant change occurred in the regions of origin of immigrants to Portugal, with various countries from Eastern Europe, particularly Ukraine, and Brazil becoming the primary sources of migrants. This change not only impacted the composition of immigrant communities but also altered the pace of migration flows, which intensified over a short period (Marques, 2018). The different forms of entry into the country—short-term visas for immigrants from Eastern Europe and no visa requirements for those from Brazil—resulted in the creation of a new group of illegal immigrants who, despite fulfilling labor needs and being integrated into the labor market, lacked rights and a proper integration policy. In response to this situation, Decree-Law 4/2001 of January 10 regulated the status of these immigrants, allowing them to obtain a stay permit to work legally in Portugal (Marques, 2018). The regularization process consisted of the temporary legalization of individuals for one year but renewable for up to five years, provided they presented a work contract and held a valid passport (Pinho, 2013). While earlier regularizations did not consider migrants' employment status, the 2001 process was limited to those already employed.

⁶ Author: common

4.1.1.1 Changing Immigration Patterns: The Rise of Eastern European Migrants⁷

The Decree-Law n°4/2001 marked a significant turning point in Portugal's immigration landscape, representing the most substantial regularization effort by the Portuguese government, which resulted in an approximate 70% increase in the legal foreign population (Marques, 2018). This legislation had a profound impact by enabling numerous undocumented immigrants to attain legal status, directly improving the lives of thousands by providing them with the opportunity to work legally and access essential social services. Furthermore, the decree contributed to the formalization of the labor market in sectors heavily dependent on immigrant labor, including construction, agriculture, and services.

Unlike the 1990s, which primarily focused on immigrants from Lusophone countries, the 2001 regularization included many migrants from Eastern Europe. In early September 2001, the number of migrants from Eastern Europe in Portugal surpassed 50.000, making up the majority of recent immigration, accounting for 53% of all foreign residents with legal status. Within this group, Ukrainian immigrants were the most prominent, representing 34.9% of the total (Peixoto, 2002). These numbers reflect a significant shift in the profile of immigration to Portugal, with Eastern Europe emerging as a key source of migrants (Peixoto, 2002). In terms of economic activity, Eastern European migrants are primarily associated with the informal labor market, with most of them working in the construction industry, as highlighted by Portella (2000). While traditional migration flows from Brazil and the PALOP countries continued, their numbers were notably lower than in previous years (Peixoto, 2002). Furthermore, the regularization, open from January to November 2001, also included immigrants who arrived during that timeframe, potentially encouraging further irregular immigration (OECD, 2008).

⁷ Author: common

4.1.1.2 Integration Challenges for Eastern European Migrants⁸

Although not politically acknowledged, this process functioned as a new form of regularization, aimed at overcoming the difficulties of legal immigration to Portugal arising from the shortcomings of the Portuguese consular network (Pinho, 2013). It is important to note that the immigration from Eastern and Southeastern Europe countries differed from previous waves (OECD, 2008). First, many of these immigrants did not speak Portuguese and lacked historical ties to Portugal, posing new challenges for integration, such as the need for language training. Second, the scale of immigration was much larger, with the number of registered foreigners from Eastern Europe growing from under 1.000 in 1998 to over 100.000 by 2002, more than doubling the foreign population in just a few years. Finally, migrants from Eastern and Southeastern Europe had higher education levels than other groups, with 28% of Ukrainians holding tertiary degrees in 2001 (OECD, 2008). Despite this, and as mentioned before, most worked in low-skilled jobs, particularly construction, leading to widespread overqualification (OECD, 2008).

By reflecting on the shift in immigrant profiles in Portugal from predominantly Brazilian and PALOP nationals to Eastern European migrants, particularly from Ukraine, it is evident that this change was not influenced by language, political, or historical ties, unlike the connections established with Brazil, PALOP countries, and even parts of Asia. One significant factor that could have some impact in this shift was Portugal's status as a new member of the European Union, which brought economic and political openness, offering Eastern European migrants a degree of accessibility prior to their countries' full EU integration. Simultaneously, Portugal was experiencing a boom in sectors such as construction and agriculture fueled by EU structural funds. This economic growth likely contributed to the influx of migrants seeking employment opportunities in these industries. Moreover, as noted by Malheiros and Baganha

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(2000), the establishment of the Schengen Area in 1995 played a crucial role in facilitating this migration. The Schengen agreement simplified the visa acquisition process for Eastern European citizens and allowed for unrestricted movement within the Schengen Zone, further enhancing their ability to migrate to Portugal. From this, one can state that the shift in the immigrant landscape reflects a complex interplay of economic conditions, EU policies, and structural changes that transformed Portugal into an attractive destination for Eastern European migrants.

4.1.1.3 A Shift Towards Integration: Policies as Essential Drivers for Integration⁹

As seen so far, the influx of migrants, particularly from PALOP, Brazil and Eastern Europe, has led to a diverse composition of labor across various sectors. Migrants have predominantly filled roles in construction, agriculture, and domestic services, often occupying positions that Portuguese nationals are less likely to pursue, commonly referred to as the secondary labor market. Despite their significant contributions, particularly in sectors facing labor shortages, many migrants remain vulnerable due to irregular status, lack of long-term contracts, and limited access to social protections. In this context, it becomes crucial to analyze how these factors shape the labor experiences of Lusophone and non-Lusophone migrants, and how government policies have either facilitated or hindered their integration into the workforce.

The need to establish public policy for immigration requires the formulation of specific measures directed at immigrants, such as legislation on nationality, among others (Cequeira, 2022). However, with the goal of integration, it is important that policies be comprehensive, addressing the entire population, including immigrants with regularized status, which allows them to access professional training, social insertion income, and other benefits (Cequeira,

⁹ Author: common

2022). Since the early 2000s, Portugal has made significant strides in crafting policies focused on the reception and integration of immigrants, due to enhanced collaboration between the State and key partners involved in policy implementation. The year 2006 stands out as a pivotal moment, marking the initiation of actions aimed at establishing structured measures for the integration and welcoming of immigrants. This effort culminated in the approval of the first “Plan for the Integration of Immigrants” (PII) in 2007, as outlined in the Council of Ministers Resolution 63-A/2007, dated May 3. The PII was effective for three years, during which the State played a central role in facilitating the integration and reception of immigrants (Cequeira, 2022). In addition to these policies, obtaining citizenship in Portugal has emerged as a crucial strategy for enhancing integration. Securing citizenship not only provides residence but also expands social and economic rights, thereby facilitating greater mobility for immigrants (Esteves, 2017). The changes in nationality law enacted in 2006 significantly contributed to this process. By reducing the minimum residency requirement for citizenship applications and slightly reinforcing the *jus soli* principle, the law led to a remarkable increase in citizenship requests. Notably, third-country nationals—who account for 97% of these acquisitions—largely coming from Portuguese-speaking countries, benefited from this shift, highlighting the law's impact on promoting integration within Portuguese society. According to Padilla and Franca (2016), Portugal prioritizes migration management over integration, but the PII introduced in 2007 emphasized key principles such as legislation, public opinion, and community empowerment (European Commission, n.d.). The PII was updated and reintroduced several times, reflecting a broader shift from regulation toward integration within Portuguese society.

4.3 The Economic Crisis and Troika Intervention (2011–2014)¹⁰

In 2011, Portugal found itself amid a severe economic crisis, forcing the government to seek a €78 billion bailout from the European Commission, European Central Bank (ECB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—a collective group known as the Troika (IMF, 2019).

The bailout came with strict conditions, including austerity measures designed to rein in the country's soaring debt. These measures included public spending cuts, wage freezes, tax hikes, and the privatization of state-owned enterprises (BBC, 2011; European Commission, 2024). These austerity policies, while stabilizing the economy in the short term, inflicted a heavy toll on the population. Unemployment surged to 18% by 2013 (Tremlet, 2013), public services were significantly reduced, and wages were cut. Such economic restructuring are deepening factors of social inequalities and worsened poverty levels across the country, deteriorating the level of public services delivered (Moury & Freire 2013). In June 2014, Portugal successfully concluded its three-year economic adjustment program, during which it implemented a bold reform agenda that helped restore investor confidence and return the country to economic growth. (European Commission, 2024). However, it is crucial to note that Portugal was among the countries most severely affected by the crisis, which inevitably had significant implications for migrants and their lives. Therefore, it becomes essential to examine the specific impacts of the crisis on migrants' daily experiences and their integration processes during this period of austerity.

Mobility comes with inherent costs and is not a viable option for everyone, particularly for third-country nationals residing in EU countries. Beyond legal status, mobility is also influenced by factors such as social networks and labor market demands (Castles, 2011). As a result, migrants often face the challenge of building their integration in the specific location

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where they reside. The economic crisis exacerbated these challenges by reinforcing restrictions on foreigners' access to national labor markets—especially for non-EU citizens—tightening eligibility criteria for social benefits, reducing investment in various economic sectors, and relighting debates about reestablishing internal EU borders (Esteves et al., 2018). If mobility remains a viable option, migrants often adopt various strategies to navigate challenges. These include leveraging resources from locations beyond their primary destination through networks of friends and family or obtaining multiple citizenships to circumvent restrictions on entry and residency. Such approaches demonstrate migrants' remarkable resilience and their capacity to gradually establish integration over time (Esteves et al., 2018).

The concept of integration in Portugal during times of recession may take on diverse meanings. For some, it can involve staying in the country with a “wait and see” approach, often living in poverty or unemployment, yet without necessarily feeling disconnected from the broader society. Others might rely on networks of relatives and friends across different regions to cope (Esteves et al., 2018). Additionally, individuals with greater resources may turn to entrepreneurship as a way to counteract the lack of stable income (Oliveira & Rath, 2008). However, remaining stationary or engaging in niche entrepreneurial activities may not always provide viable solutions for migrants during a recession. For those living in Portugal, an EU Member State, holding citizenship of a European country can serve as an incentive for mobility due to the extensive economic and social rights it offers, such as freedom of movement, access to employment, social security benefits, and healthcare. In periods of economic decline, many third country-born individuals leverage their Portuguese citizenship to migrate more easily to other EU countries in search of better job opportunities (Esteves et al., 2018).

In this manner, Esteves et al. (2018) conclude that migrants develop various individual and family strategies to address the challenges imposed by a recession, demonstrating

resilience in the face of adversity. These strategies can be categorized into two main approaches: (1) “*in situ*” strategies, where migrants choose to remain in Portugal, relying on personal resources, assistance from relatives, friends, and neighbors, or by altering their consumption habits; and (2) mobility strategies, where migrants continue international movements while maintaining their official residence in Portugal. This often involves relocating to other EU countries, where mechanisms for free movement facilitate mobility, particularly prior to the refugee crisis. Such secondary migrations are frequently supported by social networks and driven by the expectation of achieving greater economic integration. The decision to adopt immobility or mobility strategies depends on a combination of individual factors, such as age, skill level, stage in the family life cycle, and legal status, along with contextual influences. These contextual factors include access to job opportunities abroad, perceived and actual cultural similarities, and the regulatory frameworks in place.

4.6 Attracting foreign investment through the channels of migration and its various effects¹¹

One aspect of Portugal's recovery strategy was attracting foreign investment through human capital and skilled workers, notably digital nomads and wealthy expatriates seeking to relocate to an appealing destination. However, it is crucial to consider the broader effects of such policies, including inequalities, their impact on local communities, and the need for government programs and adaptive measures to address these challenges. Additionally, examining how the government supported their implementation provides further insight into the strategy's effectiveness.

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*4.6.1 Golden Visas and Digital Nomads: The Dual Impact on Portugal's Economy and Society*¹²

After Portugal successfully exited the Troika program in 2014, Prime Minister Passos Coelho's government introduced a series of reforms focused on stabilizing the economy. These reforms prioritized fiscal consolidation, emphasizing austerity measures, reducing the budget deficit, and implementing labor market reforms. This marked the conclusion of the austerity period. While austerity measures were crucial in stabilizing public finances, they were also met with criticism due to their social impact, as they exacerbated inequalities and unemployment during the recovery period (Coville, 2019). Following the conclusion of the Troika program, Portugal embarked on a recovery path, led by António Costa's government, who was elected in 2015 (Charel, 2016). Costa's administration sought to propose an alternative to many of the harsh austerity measures while maintaining a firm commitment to fiscal responsibility (Lancashire, 2015). His government prioritized restoring public confidence and addressing a restructuring phase to erase the effects of the austerity measures. Despite reversing some austerity measures, Costa's government continued to focus on reducing the national deficit by strongly reducing public investment and increasing indirect taxes. Fiscal deficits plunged to 2% of GDP in 2016, and 0.9% in 2017, the lowest in Portugal's democratic history. While the quality of many public services, in the health and education sectors, faced considerable challenges and declining performance (Leitão, 2024; Centeno, 2018).

Following the 2011-2014 Troika intervention, Portugal underwent a period of economic recovery characterized by stringent austerity measures, privatization, and structural reforms aimed at stabilizing public finances and increasing long-term growth. The severity of the financial crisis necessitated the adoption of alternative economic strategies to ensure long-term stability and growth. Among the most pertinent strategies largely due to Portugal's rich history

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and pleasant climate were initiatives to promote tourism, attract foreign investment, and create immigration-friendly policies. These measures, implemented before Portugal's post-crisis recovery, changed in the economic landscape. One of the most notable developments in this era has been the rise of digital nomads—remote workers drawn to Portugal by its favorable visa schemes, tax incentives, and high quality of life. They are now estimated to be 16,000 of them declared in the city of Lisbon alone (Hogg, 2024) and could easily be estimated to be much more due to their habit of city hopping. The influx of digital nomads and other foreigners bringing in capital has been part to Portugal's economic strategy in the aftermath of the crisis. Recognizing the potential economic benefits of attracting highly mobile professionals, the government introduced the Golden Visa program and Non-Habitual Resident (NHR) tax regime as well as the D8 program. These initiatives played pivotal roles in attracting remote workers, retirees, and foreign investors, contributing significantly to the country's economic revival.

The Golden Visa program, aimed at attracting foreign investment, offered residency to individuals who made qualifying investments in Portugal. This program became particularly successful in stimulating the real estate market. Similarly, the Non-Habitual Resident (NHR) tax regime targeted talent in "high value-added activities," as well as Ultra and High Net Worth Individuals (UHNWIs) and their families (PwC, 2024). This regime provided a highly attractive tax framework for individuals, further boosting Portugal's appeal as a hub for global talent and investment. Certain policies aim at generating immediate economic benefits through foreign capital while fostering long-term growth via innovation, talent attraction, and sectoral development. By targeting key areas like real estate and technology, they create jobs, boost revenues, and enhance competitiveness. However, they often face criticism for exacerbating inequality, driving up housing prices, and displacing local communities. Additionally, reliance

on foreign investment can leave economies vulnerable to external shocks, while the commodification of residency raises ethical concerns.

Achieving a balance between economic gains and social equity is crucial to ensuring sustainable and inclusive development. To revitalize the economy and diversify its revenues, the country launched the golden visa program in 2012, this initiative offered residency to non-EU citizens in exchange for a minimum investment, often in real estate or Portuguese businesses. The program became a magnet for foreign capital, significantly revitalizing the real estate market and contributing to Portugal's economic recovery. Such a measure has contributed to the budget surplus of 2023 announced by Costa's government as it has brought up to 0.4 of gross domestic product (Goncalves, 2023). Continuing into generous policies for foreigners, the Non-Habitual Resident (NHR) Tax Regime introduced earlier but gaining traction post-Troika, the NHR regime provided tax incentives to foreign professionals and retirees, allowing them to pay a flat tax rate of 20% on Portuguese income while exempting foreign income from taxation. This attracted retirees and professionals from countries such as the UK and Ireland (Shabani, 2024). Helping to boost foreign investment and contributing to Portugal's broader economic recovery

Introduced in 2022, the D8 Visa was designed specifically for digital nomads. It allows remote workers who earn at least €3,080 per month to reside and work remotely from Portugal (Global citizen solution, 2024). Combined with the Non-Habitual Resident (NHR) tax regime, this visa has attracted thousands of high-income individuals. The NHR regime offers tax breaks for foreign residents for up to ten years, making Portugal an attractive destination for remote workers and entrepreneurs (Getnifportugal, 2024).

As a result of these policies, urban hubs like Lisbon, Porto and the Algarve have experienced a significant rise in the number of expatriates and digital nomads transforming the country into a global hub for remote workers and startups (Haeck, P., & Volpicelli, G., 2023). The

influx of these workers has contributed to the development of tech ecosystems and the growth of co-working spaces across major cities (Haeck, & Volpicelli, 2023).

However, this shift has also brought new challenges, particularly in terms of housing affordability and the impact on local communities. The rise of individuals benefiting from these generous policies has been one of the developments in Portugal's post-Troika economy. Remote workers, drawn to the country by its relatively low cost of living, mild climate, and favorable visa and tax policies, began flocking to Portugal in large numbers. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated this trend, as the global adoption of remote work made it easier for professionals to live and work from anywhere (The Economist, 2021).

These measures helped channel much-needed capital into key sectors of the economy, particularly real estate, which experienced renewed growth due to the surge in foreign investment. By creating an environment conducive to attracting both financial resources and human capital, Portugal has been able to position itself as a leading destination for digital nomads and international investors. In doing so, it has successfully diversified its growth drivers and ensured a more sustainable economic recovery.

4.6.2 Widening Inequality and Economic Disparity ¹³

While the influx of digital nomads has contributed to Portugal's economic growth, especially in the tech and startup sectors, it has also exacerbated income inequality and social tensions. Digital nomads, who typically earn significantly more than the average Portuguese worker, have driven up the cost of living in main urban centers like Lisbon and Porto, even spreading to the Algarve, leading to growing disparities and gentrification between expatriates and local residents (Askew, 2023).

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The income gap between expatriates and digital nomads and residents is stark. Digital nomads or other teleworkers must meet a minimum income requirement of €3040 per month to qualify for the D8 Visa, while the median monthly income for Portuguese workers is less than 1.000€ (Global Citizen Solution, 2024). This wide gap has pushed up prices in urban centers, particularly in housing and other essential services, making it increasingly difficult for locals to afford to live in their own neighborhoods (Askew, 2023). The consequences of these policies are simple supply and demand issues, as businesspersons operating in the real estate industry adapt according to the customers they are facing.

The wealthier expatriates settling in Portugal have accelerated gentrification in cities like Lisbon and Porto. Traditional working-class neighborhoods have been transformed as property values rise, leading to the displacement of many lower-income families. As these areas become more expensive, local businesses are often replaced by upscale stores and services catering to the new residents. The benefits of economic growth, though apparent in certain sectors, have not been evenly distributed, leaving many locals marginalized and fueling resentment (Askew, 2023).

Wealthier expatriates spend money on accommodation, food, and services, which boosts the economy, although these benefits are concentrated in certain industries like tourism and real estate. Furthermore, such expenditures do not get passed down to the average Portuguese person. Even though it may boost the economy to bring in relatively wealthier individuals, their lifestyles would tend to be above the average Portuguese citizen as their income is higher and therefore are incentivized to consume more goods and services. Due to the income requirements—earning at least four times the Portuguese minimum wage (€3,080 per month as of January 2024)—the visa predominantly appeals to individuals from countries with higher average incomes. Consequently, a significant number of digital nomads in Portugal come from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and other Western European

nations, whereas the Portuguese minimum wage is at 820 euros in 2024 (Barnes. A, 2024). Parallely, they are also blamed for fueling housing shortage due to short term holiday rentals (Wilkinson, 2024).

As golden visa beneficiaries and digital nomads bring in higher capital, businesses will raise prices, creating an inflationary cycle that affects housing, and therefore puts a burden onto natives. The benefit of their capital injection in the economy is therefore not felt by most Portuguese locals, therefore, this creates dissatisfaction and hinders integration into the labor market, ultimately contributing to the formation of a parallel society to some extent.

Although these policies were successful in attracting foreign investment, the incoming of individuals looking to relocate themselves, they also laid the groundwork for future social and economic disparities, particularly in the housing market, as real estate prices began to rise sharply due to increased demand from foreign buyers. Such policies may have externalities and attract individuals with touristic intentions. By reasoning this way, we can foresee that an unregulated surge in property development and tourism in Lisbon and Porto may have boosted growth and lowered unemployment rates, but the real beneficiaries has been certain groups such as real estate companies or tour operators, even multinationals such as Uber or Airbnb have been benefiting from the surge in demand for services due to the tourist influx, thus undermining neighborhoods of their historical inhabitants (Coville, 2019).

4.6.3 Labor integration in the tourism sector ¹⁴

The services sector is the largest component of Portugal's economy, contributing approximately 66.09% to the GDP in 2022 (O'Neill, 2022). Within Portugal's services sector, tourism stands out as a significant contributor to the nation's economy. In 2023, tourism-related activities accounted for 16.5% of Portugal's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), highlighting its

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substantial impact (Reuters, 2024). The country welcomed over 26.5 million international tourists in 2023, marking a substantial increase from previous years (INE, 2024). This upward trend continued into 2024, with a record 2.3 million foreign visitors in August alone, a 5.3% rise compared to the same month in the previous year (Reuters, 2024). Recently, as of 2024, the Portuguese Tourism's agency has launched a program in which 2.5 million euros will be injected into training programs providing for migrants, refugees in the hotel and tourism industries. It has been announced by the ministry of the economy that approximately 1.000 people will be trained via a network of tourism schools in the first phase of the plan. Businesses that participate in the initiative will provide professional internships. The goal is to prepare trained workers for these industries and improve the integration circumstances for refugees and migrants by bringing in both professionals and non-professionals to a training and integration project. Offering training to youth from Portuguese-speaking nations (Brazil, Cabo Verde, Angola, and others) is one of the initiative's primary objectives. A vital industry for the country's economy, lodging and restaurant services employed about 360 000 people in March 2024, according to Statistics Portugal (European Commission, 2024). A new initiative was started by the Portuguese government to assist immigrants who are enrolled in the country's Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP, 2024). The *Programa Integrar* is a broader strategy that further go in the sense of the integration of labor in the market. It targets those who wish to change careers, acquire vocational training, or are unemployed or searching for their first job. *Programa Integrar* provides training, support for identifying skills, and help in finding a job. Through an initial diagnosis. The 'basic' necessity to 'welcome and integrate the immigrant population, considering the ageing of the population and the dearth of workers in many professional areas and vital sectors of the economy' is acknowledged the administration said. (European Commission, 2024)

4.6.4 Policy Shifts¹⁵

In response to the growing social and economic challenges brought about by the influx of digital nomads and the resulting housing crisis, the Portuguese government has begun to revise its policies to better balance foreign investment with the needs of local communities.

An example, the Golden Visa program is undergoing reforms. Stricter eligibility criteria are being introduced to curb foreign speculation in the real estate market, which has been one of the primary drivers of housing inflation. By tightening the rules, the government hopes to prevent further increases in property prices and ensure that real estate investment benefits the local economy rather than exacerbating social inequalities (Askew, 2023).

These policy adjustments reflect the government's recognition of the need to strike a balance between fostering foreign investment and protecting the interests of the local population. While foreign capital has played a key role in Portugal's post-Troika recovery, it has also led to deep social divisions. Moving forward, the Portuguese government will need to carefully manage this balance to ensure that the economic benefits of digital nomadism and foreign investment are more equitably distributed across society.

6. Qualitative Research¹⁶

The literature review and quantitative data provide a comprehensive overview of the policies implemented in Portugal and the general experiences of migrants. However, to gain a deeper understanding, it is essential to consider the perspectives of migrants themselves – those who have lived through the experiences and can offer valuable context. This section of the

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paper presents a qualitative analysis based on interviews from diverse backgrounds. The aim is to capture a broad spectrum of experiences, and as such, eight interviews were conducted with individuals from various countries and regions. Some areas, particularly Brazil and the EU, are represented by more than one participant, and these are combined into specific subsections for clarity. In addition, the final section also presents an interview with IEFPP, providing valuable insights from an institutional perspective.

This section begins with an explanation of the methodology behind the qualitative analysis. This is followed by a discussion of the data collection techniques, including a description of the interview process structure. The validation of data collection instruments is also addressed, ensuring the reliability and accuracy of the gathered information. However, it also recognizes the limitations of this approach. The migrant interviews are then examined based on the migrant's region of origin, with a focus on the themes that emerged from each group's responses. This is followed by the explanation of involved organizations and institutions in Portugal, and the interview with IEFPP.

6.1 Methodology¹⁷

Given the objectives of this study, the quantitative methodology is complemented by the incorporation of a qualitative approach, enriching the depth and scope of this dissertation. Quantitative research primarily aims to identify relationships between variables, describe phenomena through statistical data analysis, and test theories (Ferreira, 1998). However, this method has certain limitations, as previously discussed in this dissertation. For instance, it is subject to self-selection bias, and it excludes informal and illegal work from its analysis. In contrast, qualitative research employs descriptive methods for data collection, with subsequent analysis often relying on persuasive interpretation. As noted by Bogdan and Biklen (1994),

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qualitative research draws directly from natural environments as primary data sources, with the researcher serving as the main instrument of data collection. The authors also highlight challenges inherent to this approach, such as its time-consuming nature, the difficulty of synthesizing data, the lack of standardized procedures, and the challenges of studying large populations. While the quantitative analysis provides a broad understanding of migration trends and patterns in Portugal's labor market, a qualitative analysis through interviews is included to explore the lived experiences, motivations, and challenges faced by migrants and institutions, which cannot be fully captured by numerical data alone. Given these considerations, a combination of both methodologies—quantitative and qualitative—was identified as an effective way to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

The qualitative component of this study aimed to gain deeper insights into the experiences of individuals and institutions, exploring processes occurring within specific contexts. Interviews were employed as the primary tool for qualitative data collection, focusing on specific cases to address the study's objectives directly. Additionally, these interviews sought to compare the perspectives of different stakeholders, including immigrants from diverse regions of the world – such as Brazil, Cabo Verde, Bangladesh, Ukraine, The Netherlands, Belgium, Iran – and an institution working directly with migrant-related issues – more specifically, IEFP.

6.2 Data Collection Techniques - The Interview¹⁸

The degree of structuring in interviews can vary significantly. Structured interviews require maximum control over their content, progression, analysis, and interpretation. Conversely, unstructured interviews lack predetermined question formulations or sequences, leaving these

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entirely to the interviewer's discretion. There is also the option of partially structured or completely unstructured interviews (Monteiro, 2011).

Given the nature and objectives of this research, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary method for qualitative data collection. This approach ensures the collection of comparable data across different participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994). To facilitate this, interview guides were developed (Appendixes C & D). These interview guides were tailored differently for migrants and institutions, but the same approach was applied to both. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer is aware of the key themes that need to be addressed, but the phrasing and sequence of questions are left to their discretion. As such, the interview guide served as a flexible tool rather than a rigid script, with questions sometimes posed in a different order than initially outlined (Monteiro, 2011).

In line with the recommendations of Carmo and Ferreira (1998), interviewees were contacted in advance to confirm their availability and to clarify the reasons for their selection. The general objectives of the study and the importance of their participation were also communicated. The interviews were conducted in November 2024 and participants were informed of the average duration (30 minutes) and the location (either online via Zoom or Teams, or face-to-face). To ensure transparency and comfort, participants were provided with the interview questions in advance, allowing them time to prepare and feel at ease. Confidentiality was assured for all participants, and interviews were transcribed immediately after completion to ensure the reliability of the collected data. Some interviews were conducted with a team of two, where one member led the conversation while the other took detailed notes on participants' responses, whereas others were carried out by a single team member. Throughout the process, careful attention was given to active listening and allowing adequate

time for participants to express themselves fully. This approach ensured that the interviews were both thorough and respectful of the participants' perspectives.

6.2.1 Validation of Data Collection Instruments¹⁹

In this study, the interview guides were reviewed by the academic supervisor and the institutional supervisor from the World Bank. This review aimed to validate the content, ensure clarity of language, and confirm alignment with the research objectives. Based on the feedback provided by these experts, the guides were revised and refined to enhance their quality and effectiveness.

It is important to note that the sample of interviewees is not necessarily representative of all migrants in Portugal, presenting a risk of overgeneralizing their experiences. Each individual has their own unique journey, which may not always reflect the broader patterns observed within the larger migrant population. Nevertheless, their personal stories and insights are invaluable in providing a contrasting perspective to the quantitative data and existing literature. These perspectives not only enrich the understanding of migration in Portugal, but also offer important considerations for future research and policymaking.

6.3 Content Analysis - Interviews with migrants²⁰

In the following sub-sections, the most important findings of the interviews with migrants will be highlighted. There was the opportunity to conduct eight interviews with individuals from various areas of the world, currently residing in Portugal. The countries include Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Iran, the Netherlands and Ukraine. As seen

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in the explanations, certain experiences strongly contrast the earlier presented conclusion about implemented policies. There seems to be a clear policy-implementation gap, where especially Portugal's bureaucratic side appears to be an issue. Although some interviewees note progress in the Portuguese migration systems, most have a rather pessimistic view about Portugal's future. One concern is the use of the 5-year to citizenship policy by foreigners who do not intend to stay in Portugal after obtaining Portuguese citizenship. Furthermore, there are clear distinctions between migrants' experiences who come from different areas. They seem to have different struggles based on their country of origin.

6.3.1 Ukraine²¹

This interview reviews the integration journey a Portuguese national of Ukrainian origin. Born Ukrainian, he moved to Portugal in 2007 due to geopolitical and economic challenges in Ukraine. The following analysis focuses on the adaptation process within Portugal's labor market, the role of individual agency, and systemic support mechanisms, offering insights into broader migration and integration themes.

Originally from Ternopil, Ukraine, he arrived in Portugal in 2007 at the age of 10. His family's migration was driven by the ongoing conflict and economic instability in Ukraine, coupled with the promise of better opportunities abroad. Initially, the plan was a short-term economic migration aimed at remitting money back to Ukraine, but over time, Portugal became their permanent home. Our interviewee migrated to Portugal with his family, including his parents, who were both qualified doctors in Ukraine.

Having spent a significant amount of time in Portugal, he has achieved a smooth transition into the labor market. A passionate and hardworking individual, he now works across three distinct vocations: the medical profession, teaching, and acting. His resilience and

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dedication have allowed him to navigate the challenges of migration and build a diverse and fulfilling career. He successfully transitioned into the Portuguese labor market by building a diversified career across three primary fields which are the medical profession, teaching and acting. After completing his education in Portugal, he secured easier access to local certifications and employment pathways. Currently, he works as a freelance doctor in emergency services, dividing his time between public and private hospitals. His achievements include a decent salary, high job mobility, and secure career prospects. Alongside his medical profession, he teaches clinical and introductory topics at the University of Lisbon (FML), a strategic decision to enhance his credentials and diversify his professional activities. Teaching serves as a supplementary role rather than a primary focus, complementing his medical profession. Lastly, while he is pursuing acting opportunities, he faced limited success due to the competitive and underdeveloped Portuguese film industry. Acting remains a secondary pursuit, with potential plans to explore this field further abroad.

Although he did not face significant challenges, the same cannot be said for his parents. Despite their medical expertise, they faced significant deskilling upon arrival due to language barriers and the lack of certification in Portugal—a challenge that highlights potential rigidity in the system for integrating skilled migrants. This has been mentioned as part of our interview with IEFP workers. They affirmed that skilled migrants had to take low skill jobs until they could get their official certifications up to date and recognized within Portugal. To support the family, his father had to take on low-skilled jobs in construction and gardening upon arrival, while his mother worked in hotel services. Nevertheless, both parents remained determined and worked tirelessly to prepare for their medical equivalence exams, striving to reclaim their professional status.

Unlike his parents, who had to undertake low-skilled jobs before getting their medical equivalence certificate to finally work as doctors, our interviewee did not encounter several challenges upon integrating into the Portuguese labor market since most of his education has been completed within the country. Initially, adapting to Portuguese culture and refining his language skills, including his accent, were hurdles to blending professionally but not major issues. Within specific industries, breaking into the medical field proved not so challenging since doctors are always needed. He also emphasized the importance of being willing to be integrated into the Portuguese society. In contrast, limited opportunities in the nascent Portuguese film industry made pursuing acting difficult. However, teaching presented fewer obstacles due to his academic qualifications and the structured pathways available. Additionally, Portugal's economic climate hindered growth opportunities, particularly outside the medical profession. Moreover, his parents' successful reintegration as doctors provided him with both motivation and a strong professional support network. Collectively, these factors contributed to his smooth transition and professional growth.

Our interviewee has achieved significant professional and economic mobility in Portugal, with a diversified career that reflects his adaptability and resilience in navigating the labor market. He plans to remain in Portugal as a doctor due to promising career prospects, although he is also considering relocating abroad to pursue acting opportunities given the limited scope of the industry in Portugal. This case highlights broader implications, emphasizing the need for better support mechanisms in non-structured professions and the critical role that local education plays in facilitating labor market access for migrants. Additionally, Portugal's economic challenges underscore the importance of diversifying career paths and making strategic choices to overcome systemic barriers and ensure long-term success.

6.5 Involved organizations and institutions²²

The previously discussed literature presents the various policies that should be implemented regarding migration. However, institutions or organizations are necessary to carry out the actual adoption of policies. That said, the distinctions between these many organizations can be unclear, especially to migrants who desperately need precise information. In this section, the paper attempts to show an overview of some of the involved organizations. Some are supported by the government while others seek to emphasize specific issues or are international organizations active in multiple countries. In addition, there is a specific part describing the shift from SEF to AIMA. Finally, there was the opportunity to speak to two employees of IEF, providing further insights into this institution and working methods.

6.5.1 Description of involved organizations²³

The involved organizations and institutions are active in Portugal across three levels: international, national, and regional (or local). Consular services are not included here as they have locations outside of Portugal to help foreigners as well as Portuguese expatriates. They provide services to Portuguese nationals abroad and act as the first point of contact for those seeking visas to visit, live, or work in Portugal (Livingstone, 2023). These services fall under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Portugal (Portal Diplomático, 2024).

At the national level, important organizations include the ACM, AIMA (previously known as SEF), and the OM. Although more will be discussed about the shift from SEF to AIMA later, the *Agência para a Integração, Migrações e Asilo* prioritizes the documentation of foreign citizens as a crucial first step toward fostering regular, safe, and orderly migration. The High Commission for Migration (ACM, *Alto Comissariado para as Migrações*) is the

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Portuguese public institution that manages migration flows, specifically focusing on the integration of immigrations and encouraging the return of Portuguese emigrants. This institution is integrated within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and ensures that crosscutting policies regarding migrants are developed, implemented, and evaluated (High Commission for Migration (ACM), n.d.). The *Observatório das Migrações* (Migration Observatory, OM) is an institution focused on studying and analyzing migration trends, patterns, and impacts in Portugal. Its primary mission is to provide data, research, and insights to inform public policies and to offer a better understanding of migration issues governed by the ACM.

At the regional level, crucial institutions include CNAI, CLAIM, and IEFP. The National Migrant Support Centers (CNAI, *Centros Nacionais de Apoio ao Imigrante*) gather various services from different institutions and support offices such as the Ministry of Education, and Immigration and Border Services. It is an initiative of the ACM, founded in 2004, to help foreigners adapt to society in Portugal (National Immigrant Support Centre (CNAI) Lisbon, n.d.; Lisboa Acolhe, 2021). Backstrom (2014) also explained that this organization is known internationally for its exemplary structure which helps immigrants integrate in the community, offering the tailored services that they require. The CNAI is used as a part of the one-stop-shops to provide various services migrants under one roof to make them more easily accessible (European Commission, 2004). There is a CNAI available in Lisbon, Porto and Faro (Shareit, 2012). Additionally, the Local Support Centers for Migrant Integration (CLAIM, *Centros locais de Apoio a Integração de migrantes*) were established in 2003 with a mission to simplify the reception and integration of migrants (Local Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants Network, CLAIM Network, n.d.). There are currently over 150 CLAIMs, including on the Portuguese islands of Madeira and Açores, with free-of-charge services. IEFP (*Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional*) is a national public employment service institution with as mission to promote quality employment and fight

unemployment by implementing policies focused on job preparedness and placement (*Instituição - IEFP, I.P., 2024*). Although it is governed at the national level, the IEFP operates with regional delegations decentralized among five regions (North, Central, Lisbon, Alentejo, and Algarve), with 29 employment and professional training centers. In one of the following sections, the conducted interview with IEFP will be evaluated.

At the international level, the IOM and ILO are also involved with migration in Portugal and other countries in Europe. The International Organization of Migration (IOM) is a part of the UN system with offices in over 10 countries including Portugal and is an intergovernmental organization. Its goal is to promote ‘humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all’ by helping governments provide services to migrants (IOM Portugal, 2024). The organization was founded in 1951 and has been working in Portugal since 1976 and has transitioned from a focus on helping Portuguese emigrants moving abroad to an increased focus on integrating immigrants in Portugal. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is part of the United Nations and advocates for social justice bringing together different parties to set labor standards and establish policies. Although its headquarters is located in Switzerland, it is present in various regional offices and field operations worldwide (ILO, n.d.; United Nations, n.d.).

6.5.2 *From SEF to AIMA*²⁴

In 2023, Portugal adopted a new approach to immigration policy, marked by the separation and restructuring of the Aliens and Borders Service's (SEF) police and administrative functions. This organizational change assigned SEF's police, border control, and investigative responsibilities to the Public Security Police (PSP), the National Republican Guard (GNR), and the Judicial Police (PJ). Meanwhile, administrative duties were entrusted to

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a newly established body, AIMA, in collaboration with the Institute of Registries and Notaries (IRN) (Costa, 2024).

The division between police duties and the responsibility for processing immigrant documentation had been outlined in the program of the previous PS government. However, it was following the death of a Ukrainian citizen at SEF's facilities at Lisbon airport that the former Minister of Internal Affairs, Eduardo Cabrita, announced the service's restructuring. (Lusa, 2023). AIMA officially began operations on October 29, 2023, taking on an accumulation of 347,000 pending cases (the exact number varies according to the source). Among its various responsibilities, the agency oversees the regulation of the entry and stay of foreign nationals in Portugal, the delivery of extensions for stays, residence permits, renewals of residence permits, residence cards, and permanent residence cards for family members of EU citizens from third countries (Portugal, 2023). Additionally, it handles the issuance of permanent residence certificates for EU citizens and residence titles for British nationals covered under the Withdrawal Agreement between the United Kingdom and the EU (Portugal, 2023).

Furthermore, the new agency has absorbed functions previously managed by the High Commissioner for Migration (ACM), including efforts to combat racism and discrimination and to promote the integration of ethnic groups (Portugal, 2023). As the dissolution of SEF and the transition to AIMA occurred very recently in relation to the development of this dissertation, and since our statistical data only covers the first quarter of 2024, drawing concrete conclusions about the impact of this transition on the integration of migrants into the Portuguese labor market remains challenging. As Luis Goes Pinheiro, the first president of AIMA, stated, the full impact of this new framework "will only become evident after a significant period of time." (Advogados, 2024).

Nevertheless, as highlighted by Ana Costa (2024), this reform represents a significant milestone in immigration management and carries symbolic importance. Previously, requiring immigrants to resolve administrative and documentation matters through a security service like SEF perpetuated the perception that immigration is inherently a risk, danger, or crime. However, the way this transition has been managed raises concerns. It dehumanizes migrants, undermines social cohesion, and creates procedural gaps within the responsible services. This, in turn, has led to an increase in the number of immigrants in irregular situations (Costa, 2024). For instance, many residency appointments had to be rescheduled due to the redistribution of tasks and delays caused by the transition. Such circumstances impede migrants' access to their fundamental rights and public services, as essential aspects of their lives—such as freedom of movement within the Schengen Area, employment, and securing housing contracts—remain dependent on the granting of a valid residence permit (Costa, 2024).

According to Lusa (2024), the lack of responsiveness from the relevant services has compelled thousands of immigrants to pursue legal action, forcing AIMA to address their cases. This surge in administrative legal proceedings overwhelmed the courts to such an extent that the Ministry of Justice established a dedicated team to handle them. At the same time, the government expanded the CPLP mobility visa, emphasizing its priority for Lusophone citizens, while ending the *manifestação de interesse* process—a decision that sparked controversy.

Migration expert Thais França noted that while the dissolution of SEF was long overdue, as "immigration is not a policing issue," the creation of AIMA lacked adequate investment. Furthermore, Portugal's decision to divide responsibilities for immigration services and border control is consistent with the actions of other European countries like France, Germany, and Italy (Moniz & Vindrola-Padros, 2023). França highlighted that AIMA was established without the necessary technological infrastructure or resources. Combined

with existing accumulation of processes, frequent changes to immigration laws have exposed a lack of consistency in Portugal's migration policies (Lusa, 2024).

6.5.3 Content Analysis - Interview with IEFP²⁵

The IEFP is Portugal's public institute responsible for employment services and vocational training aimed mostly at adults. It aims to promote job creation, reduce unemployment, and enhance workforce qualifications through various programs and initiatives. The IEFP provides services such as job matching, vocational training courses, support for entrepreneurship, and financial incentives for employers to hire individuals from underrepresented groups. It serves as a bridge between job seekers and employers while fostering skill development to meet labor market demands (IEFP, 2024).

Including a national institution that also operates on a local level has greatly enhanced our understanding of certain trends during our research process. The interview with two IEFP workers provided an excellent opportunity to ask questions and gain valuable insights.

The first professional who was interviewed has been working at the IEFP for 19 years. For the last 9 years, she has been the director of guidance and placement units, a part of the employment department. This unit is responsible for providing job centers with guidelines on employment information and managing migration-related issues. The second professional has been at the organization for 27 years, also in the employment department within the guidance and placement direction. Their focus has been on immigration and mobility subjects, combining field experience with strategic and policy-oriented work.

Their mission is to match job offers with job demands by identifying job seekers in the labor market, which forms the core of their work. Over time, the role has evolved to focus more intensely on specific work with migrants due to changes in the labor market and migration

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policies. According to their insights, there is a significant increase in migrants from third-world countries registering for employment, many of whom are entitled to unemployment benefits. This has led to a shift in their responsibilities, emphasizing integration support for migrants already in the country.

It was noted that their role has evolved over time. Previously, their task was limited to conducting a Labor Market Test. This test determined if vacancies could be filled by nationals or European citizens, giving these groups priority. However, since October 2022, the Labor Market Test has been discontinued, according to our interviewees. The focus has shifted towards supporting companies in recruiting abroad through Labor Agreements.

It was additionally acknowledged that most migrants do not enter the country with work permits but as tourists or with non-immigrant visas. These individuals often begin working and later apply for necessary documentation. While there are special vacancies enabling companies to recruit from specific countries like Morocco, migrants still residing abroad, such as in Afghanistan or Morocco, cannot apply directly to job postings via the institute's website. To enter the labor market, they observed, one of the biggest mobility challenges for migrants in Portugal is the language barrier, particularly for those not from CPLP countries. Over 60% of nationals registered in IEFP job centers are from CPLP countries, which explains why Brazilians often find it easier to secure jobs in Portugal. However, for migrants from countries like Pakistan, the language barrier is much greater. To address this, IEFP provides free Portuguese language training for migrants, whether they are employed or not, and sometimes companies even request these courses for their employees. It's important to note that IEFP is not the only entity offering such training.

Another significant challenge for migrants entering Portugal without work permits is the lengthy process of obtaining the necessary documentation to regularize their status. This delay prevents them from starting work legally in Portugal. Additionally, many migrants are

unfamiliar with Portuguese living standards, such as the rising costs of accommodation, local laws, working conditions, rights, obligations, and entitlements, including working hours and vacancies. This lack of awareness often leaves them more vulnerable to abuse.

A further obstacle is the recognition of qualifications. Some migrants arrive without school diplomas and cannot prove their level of education, while others who bring diplomas face a long and bureaucratic recognition process in Portugal which reflects what has been mentioned in the case of our Ukraine interviews, where we recall that the interviewees parents had to work low skilled professions until they could prove the validity of their foreign obtained diplomas. As a result, even highly skilled migrants are often forced to take on low-skill positions, which is far from ideal. For instance, a migrant who was highly skilled in construction in their home country may find that their qualifications do not align with Portuguese standards. They would need additional training to meet these requirements. This mismatch between what companies need and what migrants can offer further complicates their integration into the labor market. Migrants often start working in sectors where nationals are less willing to accept jobs. These include construction, agriculture, hotels and restaurants, customer service, home care and elderly care, and public transport – sectors that are characteristic of the secondary labor market. The tourism industry also employs a significant number of migrants. In addition to these areas, there is a noticeable presence of Brazilians in higher-skilled roles, particularly in IT and engineering. Specifically, programs that the IEFP can ensure so all legal migrants can access the labor market, training, and job-matching services without discrimination. One of their notable initiatives is a program aimed at recognizing informal skills to enhance migrants' formal qualifications. However, a limitation of this program is that it is only available in Portuguese, which can pose a challenge for non-Portuguese speakers.

The recently launched Integrar Program (September 2024) focuses on integrating migrants into the labor market through two key approaches. It begins by assessing migrants' existing skills, identifying gaps, and providing targeted training to address those deficiencies. Simultaneously, the program collaborates with employers and employment associations to map out vacancies and the specific skills required. Tailored training courses are then developed to equip migrants with the competencies employers need. This approach ensures a better alignment between migrants' skills and labor market demands, effectively bridging employment gaps through strong partnerships with employers.

When asked about how IEFP measures the success of its programs with regard to immigrant employment outcomes, they observed that success is measured by their actual integration and retention in employment. IEFP collects statistical data categorized by nationalities, enabling them to identify areas with higher concentrations of migrants, often forming communities that require targeted support. They monitor job center performance, engage with companies to identify vacancies, and follow up to ensure migrants remain employed.

On a more personal side, when asked about their opinions on whether the current policies are effective, they affirmed that changes in migration policies, such as ending the labor market test, have made Portugal more welcoming to migrants but have also introduced challenges. These policies attract migrants without regulating the sectors or skills needed, leading to overcrowding in professions that are not in demand in the labor market, emphasizing a harsher competition to secure a job for natives. The lack of effective integration policies has resulted in many migrants remaining in low-skilled positions, hindering their full integration. However, efforts are being made to better support those already established in the country.

Another challenge arises when migrants legalize their status in Portugal and attempt to move to other European countries, facing restrictions on free movement that create confusion.

Many immigrants may obtain Portuguese visas and work permits, expecting them to be easier to access and planning to use them as a steppingstone to move to other EU countries. However, since these permits do not automatically grant trans-European work rights, migrants can find themselves stuck in Portugal. This situation can lead to disappointment and frustration, potentially resulting in migrants leaving the country altogether, which undermines their contribution to the economy. Others may struggle to secure suitable jobs due to overcrowding in the labor market or become demotivated by the lack of opportunities that match their skills and aspirations. As observed by the IEFP professionals, in terms of economic fluctuations affecting migration, during the Troika period, migration levels in Portugal were relatively low, and many Brazilian migrants returned to Brazil. In recent years, however, migration patterns have shifted, with more people coming from regions like South Asia. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on migrants, as they were among the first to lose their jobs. While many contributed to social security, they were not entitled to employment benefits due to a lack of legal documentation beyond their NISS and NIF numbers.

As observed, many migrants initially work illegally as it is often the only way for them to start employment. To address this, our IEFP sources has told us that they take measures to convince companies that they can employ undocumented migrants by assuring them that legalization processes are underway in case of inspections.

To support integration, the IEFP encourages migrants to settle in Portugal's interior regions, which have fewer employment opportunities but offer better integration policies. Lastly, when asked about the importance of bilateral agreements, it was stated that many medium-sized companies in Portugal face challenges in planning their human resource needs in advance and hiring workers from abroad is a time-consuming and difficult process. Often, these companies approach IEFP with urgent requests, such as needing an electrician "immediately," leaving little time for proper planning or waiting for migrants to arrive. This

urgency highlights their dependence on quick workforce solutions to establish themselves in the Portuguese market. Labor agreements are particularly beneficial for highly skilled sectors or companies requiring a large number of workers. These agreements make companies more accountable, as they invest in covering the costs of travel and supporting migrants upon their arrival. This financial commitment encourages companies to be more engaged in the integration of the workers. However, there is an inherent risk: if a migrant struggles to adapt or fails to meet expectations, the company's investment may not provide the expected return.

By the end of this interview, valuable comments were made that shed light on the challenges in supporting migrant integration in Portugal. One of the IEFP professionals highlighted the need for institutions to collaborate, emphasizing that no single entity can manage the complexities alone and pointing out that organizations like AIMA must coordinate with others to streamline procedures and better serve migrants. The other professional noted that crises often bring institutions closer, creating a more unified approach. However, both interviewees acknowledged that overly complicated and slow administrative processes are a major issue, arguing that these inefficiencies reflect poorly on the government and leave migrants in difficult situations, underlining the need for faster and simpler solutions.

7. Discussion

7.1 Limitations²⁶

In terms of limitations, this part highlights some of the challenges encountered while writing the dissertation. First, writing as a group requires constant aligning and refining of research in a deliberate and cohesive manner. This process can introduce a natural bias in the way certain research details are presented. Even though much effort was put into the alignment of the overall topic, slight diversions were not uncommon throughout the process.

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Another limitation is the specific focus on certain events, such as the Syrian migrant crisis, with particular emphasis on policies or programs. This could be interpreted as a reflection of external influences on the thesis, given that the thesis group consists of students in contact with a significant number of individuals who have come to Portugal to pursue a specific program of study that is not reflective of the typical migrant experience. The discussion covered a broad range of migration-related issues in Portugal, limiting the ability to deeply analyze specific topics. Even the focus on labor integration was approached broadly, touching on challenges like workforce integration, documentation, and sector-specific labor needs. While comprehensive, a more focused approach on topics like labor agreements or skill recognition could provide deeper insights and targeted solutions.

Additionally, the overrepresentation of certain migration crises and politics in the media, as well as the discussions that we have engaged in during our courses may introduce saliency bias in our analysis. This may explain certain choices that were made in the paper regarding which topics to focus on while excluding other issues that do not receive as much public attention. This bias may orient the analysis within a distorted scope and lead us to exclude certain trends. Similarly to what has already been mentioned in the data overview section, certain assumptions had to be made in the data analysis.

Furthermore, the rapidly evolving and often unclear Portuguese migrant system did not benefit the research of this topic. There were often challenges finding accurate data, especially regarding recent developments and migration trends. This also increases the understanding of difficulty an individual must encounter migrating to Portugal, which was also highlighted in the conducted migrant interview. Basic information about migrant documentation and visa requirements are often not centralized nor widely available.

Moreover, there was an imperfect categorization of who is considered an immigrant, and the data collected did not provide as much information about foreign nationals compared to Portuguese citizens. Additionally, the data focuses exclusively on the formal sector, leaving gaps in understanding the broader immigrant population. Significant challenges were encountered in obtaining accurate and representative information, primarily due to the rapid pace of systemic and legislative changes. This constant evolution made it especially difficult to extract precise data and identify the most reliable and up-to-date sources of information, underscoring the complexity of navigating such a dynamic landscape.

The integration of interviews that were made as part of the research is a valuable method for gathering in-depth insights, but they come with several limitations that can affect the validity and generalizability of the findings. A key limitation is the reliance on small sample sizes, often dictated by time, cost, and logistical constraints, which makes it challenging to ensure the data is representative of a broader population. As a result, there is a risk of overgeneralization, where conclusions drawn from a small, non-representative group are inaccurately applied to a wider context. Additionally, the subjective nature of responses poses another challenge, as participants' answers are influenced by personal experiences, emotions, and personal biases, which may not reflect universal truths. Researchers might mistakenly extrapolate these subjective views, ignoring their context-dependent nature. Furthermore, researcher bias may have played a significant role; the framing of questions or interpretation of responses may unintentionally align with the researcher's preconceived notions, leading to skewed findings and flawed generalizations. An overemphasis on anecdotal evidence is a notable limitation, as compelling individual stories can dominate the analysis and be mistakenly seen as representative of the entire group. These limitations highlight the importance of cautious interpretation and triangulation with other research methods to ensure reliable and balanced conclusions. Another aspect on the limitations side is news article. News

articles offer timely insights and real-world examples, making them valuable for analyzing current events, case studies, or societal debates. They simplify complex topics, capture public sentiment, and reflect diverse perspectives, which can enrich research and contextualize findings. However, their lack of academic rigor, potential biases, and emphasis on immediacy over depth can reduce their reliability. As secondary sources, they often prioritize accessibility over accuracy and are not subjected to the thorough expert review of peer-reviewed research.

Finally, there is significant ambiguity surrounding the roles and responsibilities of various organizations, leading to confusion not only for migrants but also for those trying to understand the system, including ourselves. This lack of clarity is compounded by overlapping responsibilities among organizations, making it challenging to determine who is accountable for what. Addressing this issue would require clearer delineation of roles and improved communication to ensure both migrants and stakeholders have a better understanding of the support framework.

7.2 Future Research²⁷

While this analysis contributes to understanding migration and labor market integration in Portugal, the limitations have highlighted open and valuable avenues for future research. A prominent area for further investigation involves the diverse backgrounds of migrants and the specific challenges they encounter. For instance, migrants from Arab countries may face discrimination rooted in cultural biases, while those from Lusophone countries may benefit from linguistic and cultural familiarity but still struggle with underemployment or the non-recognition of foreign qualifications.

Similarly, the issue of degree and skill recognition remains critical. A deeper exploration of how systemic barriers, such as the non-recognition of professional

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qualifications, disproportionately affect migrants from specific regions or with certain educational profiles, could provide nuanced insights into labor segmentation. This includes evaluating whether migrants who possess advanced qualifications are more likely to accept positions below their skill levels due to structural barriers, thereby perpetuating underemployment and economic inefficiency in host societies. Policies to streamline credential recognition and provide skill-matching initiatives could be analyzed in greater depth to identify their efficacy. To go deeper into this, more granular data would be needed regarding the type of position each individual currently has in the Portuguese labor market.

Another essential area for future research is the evaluation of Portugal's five-year residency requirement for citizenship. While the policy appears progressive compared to other EU countries, its actual impact on long-term integration remains ambiguous. Are naturalized citizens more likely to stay in Portugal and contribute to the local economy, or does the policy incentivize short-term migration aimed solely at acquiring EU citizenship as a gateway to other member states? The limitations in the available data—such as inaccuracies in identifying who is considered a migrant or the lack of granularity regarding post-naturalization mobility patterns—underscore the importance of more comprehensive longitudinal studies. Tracking the migration trajectories of naturalized citizens would shed light on whether citizenship fosters stability and integration or merely serves as a steppingstone for broader EU mobility.

The role of migrant networks also warrants closer examination, particularly in addressing issues of misinformation. This study identified the potential for networks to both support and misguide migrants through anecdotal evidence, yet more empirical work is needed to identify the mechanisms by which these networks operate. For example, do they exacerbate labor market segmentation by perpetuating misinformation about job availability or credential recognition? Do they unintentionally steer migrants toward oversaturated sectors or precarious roles due to incomplete or outdated information? Future research could explore interventions

to improve the accuracy and accessibility of information provided to migrants, including the role of digital platforms and government services in filling these gaps.

Additionally, this study's broad scope limited its ability to deeply investigate specific events, such as the Syrian migrant crisis or the rise of digital nomads in Portugal. Overrepresentation of certain crises or media-driven narratives may have introduced saliency bias into the analysis, highlighting some migration patterns while overlooking others. Future research could adopt a more focused lens, perhaps concentrating on how Portugal's policies impact smaller, less visible migrant groups, such as those arriving through irregular channels or under temporary protection schemes. Moreover, research could address the rapid pace of systemic and legislative changes, which created significant challenges in obtaining reliable and representative data. Investigating how policy evolutions impact migrant experiences over time would be especially valuable in understanding the gaps between policy intention and implementation.

Finally, the ambiguity surrounding the roles and responsibilities of various organizations involved in migrant integration deserves further scrutiny. Migrants, as well as researchers, often face confusion when navigating overlapping responsibilities among government agencies and support organizations. Future studies could assess the efficacy of current frameworks and recommend clearer delineation of roles to reduce redundancy, enhance coordination, and improve accessibility for migrants. Understanding how these institutional challenges intersect with migrants' lived experiences would provide a more comprehensive picture of the integration process and inform actionable policy recommendations.

In conclusion, while this study laid the groundwork for understanding migration and labor market integration in Portugal, future research should address its identified limitations by adopting more focused and granular approaches.

7.3 Policy Recommendations²⁸

Based on the comprehensive evidence that this paper has presented regarding the recent history and current state of Portugal's immigration system as it relates to social and labor force integration, several successes and failures of Portugal's immigration policies have emerged. After summarizing these consequences, policy recommendations will be presented based on the research.

In terms of its successes, Portugal has been able to leverage cultural and linguistic ties to attract large numbers of migrants from CPLP countries to fill its labor shortage, such as through the CPLP Mobility Agreement. In addition, it has developed a highly liberal naturalization policy, with a residency requirement of only five years to achieve citizenship and all the social and economic benefits that come with it. Portugal is also quick to grant asylum seekers permission to work as soon as they arrive and has made incomplete but significant efforts to improve the information access available to migrants related to labor force integration through initiatives like PII (*Plano para a Integração dos Imigrantes*). In addition, the government has developed programs offering targeted visas for students, investors, remote workers, and retirees, all of which help attract foreign investment.

However, these well-intentioned immigration policies have contributed to or created challenges of their own that Portugal has failed to adequately address. First, Portugal has relied too heavily on ex-post regularizations, choosing to regularize large groups of undocumented immigrants *en masse* rather than investing more capacity in legal channels like consular networks and AIMA, where migrants often face extended wait times for appointments (Malheiros & Peixoto, 2023). Second, Portugal's immigration policies have contributed to a segmented labor structure, where many immigrants and Portuguese workers are stuck in jobs

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with temporary contracts and low wage mobility (Centeno & Novo, 2013). Third, the rise in immigration has contributed to increased rent prices and overloaded public services ranging from government offices to the national health system, which harms both immigrants and locals. Additionally, there has been an increase in human trafficking in Portugal, largely for labor exploitation, which indicates failures to properly vet and protect migrants (Lusa, 2024). All these shortcomings and more play a role in limiting the success of the integration of immigrants in Portugal's labor force, which leads us to present the following recommendations:

First, to address inefficiencies in Portugal's residency process, increasing investment in migration-related agencies such as consular networks and AIMA is crucial. Currently, the backlog and extended processing times for visa and residency applications create significant barriers for immigrants, particularly those seeking to enter the labor force or reunite with family members. Expanding the capacity of these institutions through staffing, training, and digital infrastructure improvements will reduce bottlenecks and improve service delivery. Simplifying bureaucratic procedures, such as consolidating application requirements would also minimize delays and improve transparency.

Second, building on the Plan for Immigrant Integration (PII) and similar initiatives, Portugal should enhance programs aimed at helping immigrants integrate into the labor market. Key measures could include job matching programs that expand partnerships between private employers, public employment agencies, and NGOs to create databases that match immigrants' skills with job vacancies. Portugal should also establish streamlined processes for recognizing qualifications earned abroad, focusing on fields with acute labor shortages like healthcare and education. In particular, the IEFP should invest in increased training targeted at high-demand sectors and provide language courses to ensure immigrants can thrive in Portuguese workplaces.

Third, Portugal should leverage national and EU-wide immigration and labor market data for policy monitoring and evaluation purposes. It should also increase the scope of data collection initiatives like the LFS to include more immigrants. In addition, increased data collection is needed for the informal economy to address gaps in knowledge about its working conditions and contributions, as well as to prevent potential human-trafficking violations and exploitation.

Fourth, Portugal should align work permits and legal migration pathways with the country's economic needs and labor market demands. To achieve this, Portugal can actively adopt and implement the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum adopted in May 2024, which provides a comprehensive framework for addressing migration challenges. (European Commission, 2024). In particular, focusing on "embedding migration in international partnerships" could be instrumental to this process. By strengthening collaborations with countries that have skilled labor pools matching Portugal's sectoral shortages—such as healthcare, technology, and agriculture—Portugal can create targeted legal migration pathways such as work visa programs or bilateral agreements. To operationalize this agenda, Portugal could leverage the Technical Support Instrument (TSI) Flagship Initiative, which provides access to EU-level technical expertise and capacity-building resources. This support can be tailored to Portugal's unique challenges, such as addressing inefficiencies in the work permit system, enhancing local-level implementation, and streamlining visa processing.

Lastly, the Portuguese government should reconsider policies that contribute to Portugal's segmented labor market. For example, the current policy of offering employers the option of granting permanent contracts that are overprotected coupled with under-protected temporary contracts further segments the labor market and creates a lower-growth economy. Reducing segmentation will promote greater productivity while improving labor market equity for both immigrants and Portuguese nationals.

Ultimately, it is impossible to look solely at the issue of immigration in Portugal without also considering what has driven large numbers of Portuguese to emigrate in recent years. Inevitably, many immigrants living in Portugal will also consider leaving Portugal in search of a better life in a different EU country once they obtain citizenship, unless employment opportunities and bureaucratic hurdles improve for all.

8. Conclusion²⁹

Over the course of this paper, the aim was to address the question of which factors drove the rise in immigration to Portugal since the beginning of the 21st century, with a focus on the last ten years. After understanding these general trends, the paper centered the analysis on which specific government policies and institutions influenced labor market outcomes and social integration for migrants as well as the native population. The question was addressed using a mixed-methods approach that employed both qualitative and quantitative analysis. First, the paper set out to understand the national and international theories that define migration patterns to Portugal and dynamics within the Portuguese labor market between immigrants and natives. Next, the historical context of these migration policies was examined, particularly since the mid-2010's. Then, data from the Portuguese labor force survey was analyzed to identify trends in employment status, salary, contract type, and sector of work, not only between Portuguese nationals and immigrants, but between different immigrant groups based on their region of origin. Next, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a diverse array of immigrants and with representatives of organizations in Portugal connected with their integration.

Using this approach, this paper revealed several insights. Initially, the paper utilized theoretical frameworks including the push-pull model, segmented labor market theory, and

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social network theory to underscore the structural and economic factors driving migration to Portugal. These models identify how immigrants in Portugal often fill labor market gaps in secondary sectors such as construction and agriculture, highlighting persistent segmentation between native and migrant workers.

From the historical analysis, it is shown that Portugal's immigration policies relied until recently on regularizing undocumented migrants to meet economic demand while also attracting CPLP migrants through colonial and linguistic ties. Beginning with the 2007 Immigration Law and the subsequent integration plans such as PII, there had been a gradual transition toward inclusivity and family reunification, though have been inconsistencies and inefficient implementation. The recent transition from SEF to AIMA and the continued backlog in immigration case processing offers a recent example of implementation failures.

Furthermore, the LFS data confirms the existence of an employment gap between immigrants and natives which is narrowed after extended residency. Wage disparities exist and vary greatly based on the migrant's region of origin, where all groups other than EU-15 migrants earn less than Portuguese nationals on average.

Qualitative insights from interviews with migrants and policymakers reveal significant discrepancies between policy intentions and lived experiences. Migrants highlighted challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, linguistic barriers, negative stereotyping, limited access to integration resources, and difficulties navigating the labor market. Policymakers acknowledged the need for improved coordination and practical reforms to address these issues.

To conclude, a theme that has emerged persistently throughout this research is the gap between the intention of immigration policies and their actual effects on employment and social integration. That is, there is a persistent gap between these policies' intended and real impacts.

It is evident that while Portugal's immigration policy has improved in many ways since the beginning of the 21st century, there remains many challenges to integration for immigrant groups, some of which are shared while others are specific to certain groups.

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Appendix

Appendix C. List of Interview Questions (migrants)

1. How long have you been in Portugal? Date/Year of arrival
2. What was the reason you moved to Portugal?
3. Did you come by yourself or with your family?
4. What do you do professionally? / What has your path been from entering the country to now (labor market focus) / Did you move to a better professional position after your arrival? Have you experienced any salary progression since your arrival in Portugal?
5. What were the biggest struggles you had in entering Portuguese labor market?
6. Did you rely on personal or professional networks (friends, family, community organizations) to find a job?
7. Are you better today than if you have stayed in your country of origin?
8. Do you think the services/ institutions/government helped you enough to integrate in the labor market?
9. Are you planning to stay/move to another country or go back to your country of origin?

Appendix D. List of Interview Questions (IEFP)

1. What position do you have inside IEFP? And how long have you been working at IEFP
2. What is your role in the integration of migrants in Portugal? And has this changed over time?
3. What are the primary challenges IEFP observes that immigrants face when trying to enter the labor market? (e.g., language, lack of networks, recognition of qualifications)
4. How does IEFP assess and match immigrant skills to the needs of the Portuguese labor market? Are there specific sectors where immigrant labor is most in demand?
5. What specific programs or initiatives does IEFP offer to support the integration of migrants into the labor market?
6. How does IEFP measure the success of its programs with regard to immigrant employment outcomes? Are there any recent trends in immigrant employment and economic contribution that IEFP can share?
7. Do you consider current labor and migration policies in Portugal effective in facilitating migrants' integration into the labor market? Why or why not?
8. In your opinion, how have economic fluctuations (such as recessions or labor shortages) impacted the integration of migrants into the labor market? (in covid, during troika period, etc)
9. Do you consider that bilateral agreements between Portugal and other countries play an important role in facilitating migrant labor integration?
10. Other comments, ideas?