The Changing Face of Portugal:

Immigration and Ethnic Pluralism

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ABSTRACT

The author provides a complete picture of the genesis of contemporary immigration to Portugal. She describes what happened following an influx of citizens from former Portugese colonies during the second half of the 20th century and the impact this has had on Portugese society. She then goes on to discuss recruitment strategies and the integration of immigrants.

In Portugal, international migration constitutes a fundamental element in the dynamics of demographic and socio-economic transformation observed in the last decades of the 20th century (Table 1). In the 1960s, consistently high birth rates were not enough to counterbalance the effects of emigration, leading to a 2.6% population decline. By the 1970s, in spite of the population decline induced in part by a decreasing fertility rate, the country's population grew at a rate faster than any other over the past century. This change can be attributed to three types of factors: less emigration towards Western Europe, the return of more than a half a million *retornados*[1] from the former colonies starting in 1974, and the return of a large number of emigrants from France and Germany. The 1980s were characterized by a stabilization of the country's population, with a demographic growth rate of only 0.35%. This stability resulted from the combined effects of the marked decline in the population growth rate, revitalized emigration and the increase in labour-oriented immigration coming from Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP).

Portugal's role as a country of immigration solidified in the 1990s, with net migration being responsible for 82.8% of total demographic growth observed between the 1991 and 2001 censuses (Table 1).

Table 1 – Components of Population Change in Intercensal Periods, 1960-2001

	Population at the beginning of period	Population at the end of the period	Population change	Natural increase	Net migration
1960-1970	8,889,392	8,663,252	-226,140	1,072,620	-1,298,760
1970-1981	8,663,252	9,833,014	1,169,762	794,194	375,569
1981-1991	9,833,014	9,867,147	34,133	349,549	-315,416
1991-2001	9,867,147	10,356,117	488,970	84,223	404,747

Source: INE census data (1960, 1970, 1981, 1991 and 2001); INE Demographic Yearbooks (various years)

Context of the development of immigration to Portugal

Portugal's experience as a country of immigration is a recent phenomenon. Traditionally a country of emigration, it was only in the mid-1970s that Portugal changed its position in the market of international migration from being a labour force supplier for the developed countries in Europe to being a host for foreign workers.

The 1960 census counted 29,428 foreign residents in Portugal, with 19,794 being of European origin (11,713 of them from Spain) and 6,357 Brazilians. The amount of foreigners was relatively stable for some years, though showing signs of growth by the end of the '60s. The wave of immigration at this time in history was of a dual character. The reinforcement of economic relations with the most advanced European economies after joining EFTA, the opening-up to foreign investment and the development of tourism in the Algarve region all served to attract to Portugal managers and highly skilled professionals who worked in transnational corporations/multinationals, but also retirees, namely Britons settling in the Algarve region. On the other hand, industrial development and urban growth set in the context of a colonial war along with a strong labour-orientated rural exodus to developed Western European countries (mainly France and Germany) established employment opportunities in the construction sector and unskilled services for the first wave of immigrants from Cape Verde.

In the period of African de-colonization (1974-1976) approximately 600,000 people arrived in Portugal from the former colonies. Although the wave mainly comprised Portuguese-born and those of Portuguese descent, it also included a considerable number of Africans, namely from Cape Verde and Angola. Their arrival played a very important role in the growth of the number of economic migrants coming from the PALOP countries, as these "repatriates" of African origin facilitated

the development of inter-personal knowledge networks that supported the settlement of new immigrants.

The de-colonization process also led to an important change in the citizenship law as far PALOP-born individuals' access to Portuguese citizenship was concerned. Fearing a huge wave of African immigrants to Portugal after the independence of the colonies due to the political crisis and civil war in Angola and Mozambique, the aforementioned law established that all people from the newly independent territories overseas would lose their Portuguese citizenship. Exceptions were made for descendents of Portuguese citizens born in Portugal up to the third generation, as well as for those who, by 25 April 1975, had been living for more than five years in Portugal. Therefore, many Africans residing in Portugal with Portuguese passports were considered foreigners from that moment onwards.

Table 2 illustrates the growth of documented foreign citizens living in Portugal between 1975 and 2003. The number of immigrants holding a residence permit grew from 31,983 to 250,697, with the 2003 figure being eight times higher than that in 1975. If one also considers the number of immigrants holding a permanence permit or a study or work visa, there were around 450,000 immigrants legally living in Portugal by the end of 2003, accounting for 4.3% of the resident population in 2001.

Table 2 – Evolution of The Number of Foreigners Holding a Residence Permit in Portugal, 1975-2003

Year	Number	Year	Number
1975	31,983	**1990**	107,767
1976	32,032	**1991**	113,978
1977	35,414	**1992****	123,612
1978	41,807	**1993****	136,932
1979	47,189	**1994***	157,073
1980	50,750	**1995**	168,316
1981	54,414	**1996**	172,912
1982	58,674	**1997**	175,263
1983	67,484	**1998**	178,137
1984	73,365	**1999**	191,143
1985	79,594	**2000**	207,607
1986	86,982	**2001**	223,976
1987	89,778	**2002**	238,944
1988	94,453	**2003**	250,697
1989	101,011		

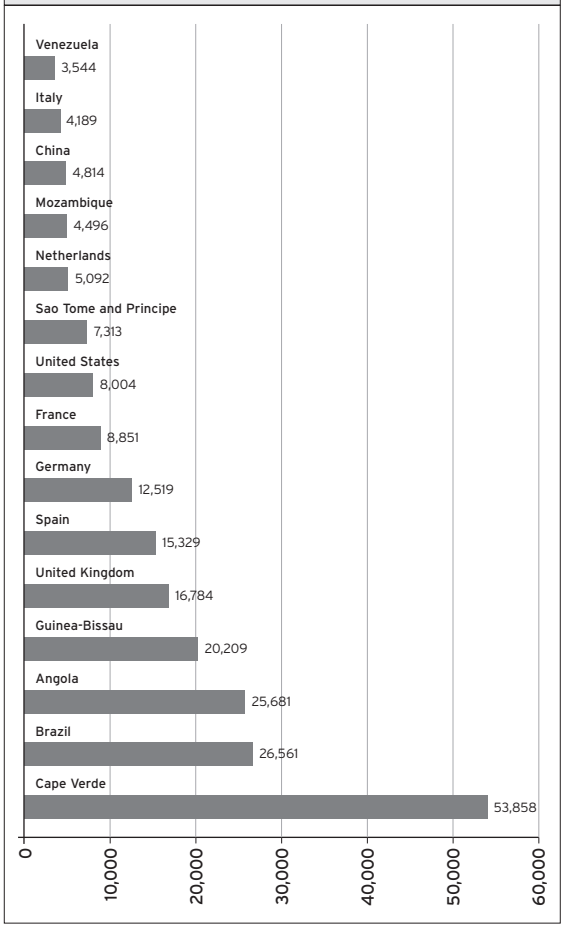
* The 1994 data includes the figures from the extraordinary regularisation processes of 1992-93.
** The 1992 and 1993 data show slight variation in different tables published in official statistics.
Source: INE Estatísticas Demográficas, 1980-2001; Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (Foreigners and Borders Office)

With the arrival of new immigrants, mainly from the PALOP countries, economic immigration grew more intense. Many immigrants either entered or stayed in the country undocumented. To legalize their situation, two extraordinary regularization campaigns were organised in the 1990s – the first one in 1992-93 and the second in 1996.

In 2003, Africans were the largest group of foreign residents in Portugal holding a residence permit (47.3% of the total foreign population). EU citizens, though decreasing in absolute numbers in the total foreign population, are increasingly keeping pace with the Portuguese economy's process of internationalization and its integration in the EU. They were the second largest group in 2003 with 69,805 individuals. Central and South Americans occupy the third position in the list of foreigners' areas of origin (13% of the total). The Asian community is still quite small, but has been growing quickly, mainly due to the arrival of Chinese, Indian and Pakistani citizens. North Americans hold a slightly smaller share compared to Asians (10,124 individuals, or 4% of the total), their presence corresponding both to the linkages generated by previous flows of Portuguese emigrants and to the immigration of highly-skilled professionals involved in American investments in Portugal.

In a more detailed analysis, by country of nationality, one can observe that 53.3% of foreigners holding a residence permit in 1993 came from the PALOP countries and Brazil, suggesting a strong association/link between immigration and Portugal's colonial past (Fonseca *et al.*, 2002). As we shall see, this migratory framework is only altered in the late 1990s with the arrival of immigrants from Eastern Europe. Cape Verde, Angola and Guinea Bissau are the more representative nationalities from Africa (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Main Nationalities of Foreign Citizens Holding a Residence Permit in Portugal, as at 31/12/2003



Total number of immigrants: 250,697 / Top 15 nationalities: 217,754 (86.9%)
Source: Fonseca and Ormond, 2004

The Brazilian community is the second largest, with 10.6% holding a residence permit. Among the EU citizens living in Portugal with residence permits, the three largest communities are those from the United Kingdom, Spain and Germany.

The new wave of immigrants at the turn of the century

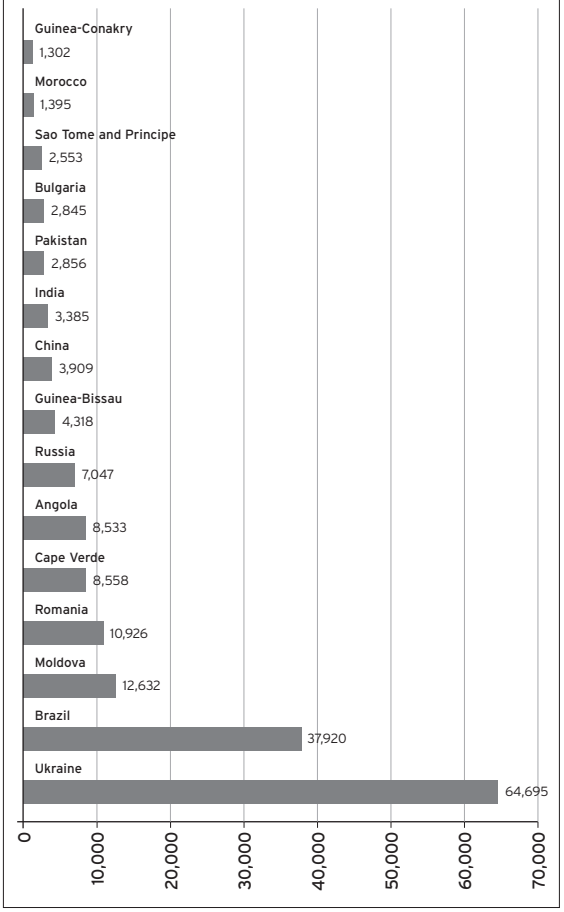
In addition to rapid growth in immigration at the turn of the century, immigrants' geographical origins have grown increasingly diverse, as evidenced by the emergence of a migratory wave from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union that is made up of skilled professionals whose migratory process was organized by recruitment, transportation and job placement networks (Baganha and Fonseca, 2004).

The distribution of permanence permits issued in 2001, 2002 and 2003 under the regularization law for undocumented foreigners working in Portugal emphasizes the importance of this flow from Eastern Europe, namely from the Ukraine, Moldova, Romania and Russia. The citizens from these four countries correspond to 51.9% of the total number of permanence permits issued in 2001-2003 (Figure 2).

Besides immigration from Eastern Europe, the rapid growth in the number of Brazilians who have recently arrived in Portugal to work is also noteworthy. This community comes in at second place in terms of the number of permanence permits issued by the Portuguese authorities in 2001-2003.

Source: Fonseca and Ormond, 2004

Figure 2 – Permanence Permits Issued in 2001, 2002 and 2003, According to the Top 15 Countries of Origin



The enlargement of international labour force recruitment areas of immigrants to Portugal is also visible in the growing number of Asian communities, namely from China, India and Pakistan, and also from North Africa, mainly from Morocco, as difficulties/barriers imposed by Spain to immigrants become more extensive.

Demographic structures and spatial patterns of immigration to Portugal

The resident foreign population in Portugal at the time of the last census in 2001 is largely male and is characterized by an age structure in which young people of working age predominate. Some 67.1% of the population is aged between 15 to 44 years.

In analyzing immigrants by geographic origin, significant differences between immigrant groups can be observed both in terms of sex ratio and age structure. EU citizens and North Americans have higher percentages of elderly people due to the international retirement migration phenomenon. As regards economic migrants, the age structure varies in function with the phase in the migratory cycle in which they find themselves. The proportion of 0-14 year-olds is greater in the case of immigrants from the PALOP than in the case of Brazilians, Asians and Eastern Europeans, as the family reunification process more greatly affects immigrants having settled in Portugal for a longer period of time.

As far as the gender composition of immigrant flows is concerned, the recent changes in requests for residence permits illustrate a tendency towards increasing the feminisation of migratory flows. New demands for residence permits illustrate this trend. Whereas women represented 36.4% of the total inflow in 1992, they corresponded to 53% of the new requests in 2002.

As regards the spatial patterns of settlement in Portugal, one can see with the large concentrations in the districts of Lisbon, Faro, Setúbal and Oporto that these districts combined were home in 2003 to 83.1% of the total foreign population holding a residence permit in the country. In addition to these areas, the remaining coastal districts of mainland Portugal and the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira are also important sites of settlement. Few foreigners are located in the country's interior, though relatively high growth has been observed in recent years, especially due to the new wave of immigrants from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

This pattern follows the employment opportunities generated by large investments in the public construction sector, not only due to the demand by labour-intensive industrial sectors, such as the textile, garment and footwear industries or agriculture in regions where the availability of Portuguese labour is clearly insufficient. The need for workers is due to the ageing of the population and also to the migration of younger workers to better paid, less strenuous and more socially-valued jobs, or even to other regions within and outside of Portugal with

higher wages.

The colonial heritage and European integration

In Portugal, immigration policy is a recent construction and is based on three essential pillars:

- Duties resulting from European integration;
- International dispositions that protect the rights of immigrants in the framework of the European Council, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations; and
- Colonial heritage.

After the post-colonial measures that limited the access of PALOP-born citizens to Portuguese citizenship, the first law seeking to regulate elements of the immigration influx was published in 1981 (Decree-Law No. 264/81 on Entry, Stay and Expulsion of Foreigners).

By the beginning of the 1990s, as a result of integration into Europe (Portugal became a full member of the EEC in 1986) and of the growth in immigration after the mid-1980s, immigration acquired relevance in the national political agenda. Important changes were introduced in the law regulating the entry, stay and expulsion of foreigners from Portuguese territory, in the citizenship law and in asylum regulation, making them more restrictive and closer to the mainstream norms applied in other EU countries. In spite of this, the legislation also contained some signs of Portugal's colonial heritage, expressed in positive discrimination measures towards immigrants coming from PALOP countries and Brazil, when compared with foreign citizens from non-EU countries (Fonseca; Caldeira and Esteves, 2002; Fonseca, Malheiros, Esteves and Caldeira, 2002).

As far as the rights of immigrants are concerned, Portuguese law can be considered extremely positive. In Articles 13 and 15 of the Portuguese Constitution, the principle of equality among citizens is recognized and Portuguese and legal foreign residents are treated equally and have similar civil, social and economic rights – except for the right to political participation. Moreover, Law No. 134/99 of 28 August forbids discrimination based on race, nationality or ethnicity.

The right to political participation is considered in the Portuguese Constitution, making it is possible to give active (the right to be elected) and passive (the right to vote in the elections for local authorities) rights, always under the condition of reciprocity. Presently, EU citizens as well as nationals from Cape Verde and Brazil can vote for local elections as long as they have legally resided in Portugal for more than two years. Nationals from Argentina, Chile, Israel, Norway, Uruguay and Venezuela may also do so, provided they have legally resided in Portugal for over three years. European Union, Cape Verdean and Brazilian nationals can be elected to local government posts if residing in Portugal for over four years, whereas Peruvians and Uruguayans have to be living in Portugal for more than five years.

Institutionalization of immigration policy[2]

The increase in immigration and the heightening of social problems that immigrants, especially those coming from the PALOP countries, face (e.g. poverty, poor housing conditions, clandestine working situations, etc.) became increasingly visible in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. In the second half of the 1990s, the first outbursts of inter-ethnic conflict as well as several racist and xenophobic protests emerged onto the scene. At the same time, the collective mobilization of immigrant associations and other agencies in Portugal's civil society that fight for the rights of immigrants and their descendents, changed gradually from a clear intervention based on immediate assistance, to a wider sphere of the social and political.

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When the Socialist party came into power in October 1995, the first steps towards a more holistic and inter-related integration policy were taken:

- The High Commissariat for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities (ACIME) was established in February 1996, a body responsible for promoting improvements in immigrants' and ethnic minorities' living conditions;
- The Second Extraordinary Regularisation for Undocumented Immigrants was under taken in 1996;
- A series of public policies on social inclusion meant to benefit many immigrants, especially those of African origin, were developed;
- Immigrant associations were recognised as relevant partners in the definition of immigration policy, and the Consultative Council for Immigration Affairs (COCAI) was established in 1998. The COCAI, in operation since March 1999, is chaired by ACIME and includes representatives from recognised immigrant associations, NGOs, business associations and major trade unions, as well as the State Secretary for the Portuguese Communities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs); and
- The issues of xenophobia and discrimination were addressed in a specific anti-discrimination law (Law No. 134/99 of 28 August) that expressly prohibited discriminatory practices based on race, colour, nationality and ethnic origin (Esteves *et al.*, 2003).

The recent massive increase of immigration to Portugal, especially the new migratory influx from Eastern Europe, has made waves in the media and has prompted a great national debate about immigration policy. Portuguese immigration policy, from 2000 onwards, was based upon three fundamental pillars: 1) the promotion of legal immigration according to the country's labour market needs; 2) the effective integration of immigrants; and 3) the fight against illegal immigration.

In January 2001, the immigration law was changed by Decree-Law No. 4/2001 of 10 January. The new piece of legislation instituted the *permanence permit* for foreigners present in the country not in possession of legal documents yet in possession of a valid work contract. This permit enables its bearer to legally remain in the country for one year (and can be renewed annually for four more years).

In addition to this, Decree-Law No. 4/2001 also introduced a new element in the system of recruitment of foreign workers – the requirement of an annual report to be put together by the government, predicting the number of foreign workers needed in the various branches of economic activity each year.

The government that took power in April 2002, formed by a coalition between the Social Democratic Party (PSD)[3] and the Popular Party (PP), brought about important changes to the juridical regime of entry, stay, departure and expulsion of foreigners from Portuguese territory, as evidenced by Decree-Law No. 4/2001 of 10 January. The new law (Decree-Law No. 34/2003) regulating the above-mentioned actions was published on 25 February 2003.

Among the concrete changes that were introduced, the following are noteworthy:

- Permanence permits, instituted in 2001, were done away with;
- The new law stressed status differences between the types of immigrants settled in Portugal, assuming that only residence permit holders were effectively "residents." Consequently, the set of rights (established by law and effectively used as practical normative devices in the daily functioning of services and institutions dealing with immigrants) attributed to holders of residence permits is larger and stronger than the one attributed to permanence permit holders (or holders of work visas), who are clearly placed in a more vulnerable position;
- The provisions concerning family reunification have been clarified and the rights of family members somewhat widened (e.g. the possibility to work in Portugal has been extended to the family members of more categories of immigrants);
- The system providing information to immigrants has expanded (direct telephone lines, leaflets in several languages, the establishment of national and local information points associated with or directly dependent on ACIME, etc.); and
- The formal penalties applied to traffickers, transport companies that carry irregular immigrants and employers of irregular workers have become heavier.

As far as the normative element is concerned, a few new steps have taken place in the second half of 2003 and in 2004. First, a bilateral agreement between Portugal and Brazil has opened up the possibility for the regularisation of irregular Brazilian immigrants fulfilling certain requirements. Secondly, a specific piece of legislation finally regulated that which was put forth by Decree-Law No. 34/2003. Within its norms, a few direct and indirect advances towards the extension of immigrants' rights have taken place. For instance, irregular foreign workers who contributed to social security during a certain period of time are now entitled to regularise their situation. Another piece of legislation has facilitated the formal registration of children of irregular migrants in Portuguese public schools.

> The increase in and the diversification of migratory fluxes towards Portugal, as observed in the last five years, have been reflected in the strengthening of the associative movement by immigrants and has fostered a growing interest in the defence of the rights of non-EU citizens and in the provision of different forms of assistance for their inclusion in the host society

In addition to governmental institutions, different types of actors seeking to foment the discussion in order to influence political decision-making and develop action in the area of immigration can be distinguished:

- Political parties;
- Trade union organisations and professional associations;
- Immigrant associations;
- Churches and associations of a religious nature;
- NGOs that, either directly or indirectly, are involved in offering assistance to immigrants and ethnic minorities;
- University institutions that are dedicated to research in the area of international migration.

Political parties, especially those represented in Parliament, play a significant role in the discussion on immigration policy, not only in parliamentary debates and within the party structures, but also through the contacts that they maintain with authoritative bodies, local powers (municipalities and parishes), immigrant associations, trade unions, employers' associations, non-governmental organisations, etc., as well as by way of their participation in discussion forums sponsored by other actors interested in this issue.

Both union federations (UGT and CGTP-IN) have gained a more active role in the discussion on immigration policy, as the participation of immigrant workers has grown increasingly more important in national

employment figures, particularly in the private building sector. The UGT and the CGTP-IN have directed their energy towards ways to combat illegal employment of foreign workers and to fight against conditions of exploitation by employers and labour traffickers to whom many immigrants – especially undocumented immigrants – are subject.

The increase in and the diversification of migratory fluxes towards Portugal, as observed in the last five years, have been reflected in the strengthening of the associative movement by immigrants and has fostered a growing interest in the defence of the rights of non-EU citizens and in the provision of different forms of assistance for their inclusion in the host society – especially for those most in need – by a host of NGOs as well as welfare and religious institutions, namely those related to the Catholic Church.

In Portugal, however, the different levels of inter-institutional dialogue (NGO/NGO, NGOs/public authorities, researchers/political decision-makers/civil society institutions) remain very limited and, because of this, the effectiveness of some policy measures as well as the influence of scientific knowledge on the formulation of immigration policy is still relatively tenuous.

How immigrants are perceived in Portuguese society

The results from a 2002 survey of a representative sample of the Portuguese population on social perceptions of immigrants revealed contradictory and ambivalent imagery (Lages and Policarpo, 2003). The percentage of Portuguese people believing that immigrants are fundamental for the economic vitality of the country is equal to that of those who disagree with the statement. Nevertheless, most people recognize that immigrants do the work that Portuguese themselves do not want to do, and a very high percentage of people are aware that foreign workers are exploited and earn less than Portuguese performing the same work.

A very positive aspect that merits attention is the agreement regarding the need for protection of immigrants against exploitation by their employers. However, 60% of Portuguese people believe that immigrants should be required to return to their countries of origin if they cannot find work and that undocumented immigrants should be repatriated.

Furthermore, a large portion of the Portuguese population feels that immigrants constitute a threat towards their safety/security, particularly as regards immigrants of African origin. News about isolated acts of violence propagated by the media has played an important role in shaping collective notions about immigrants. These acts are especially emphasized by the press and on television when they have been committed by non-whites who are identified as "immigrants" though they may be Portuguese citizens and serve to spread feelings of insecurity resulting from the formation of stereotypes associating violence and aggression with behaviours characteristic of blacks.

More recently, along with the new wave of immigrants coming from Eastern Europe, the notion of immigration as threat to safety/security is increasingly connected to fears about rising organised crime, associated with the international development of illegal labour migrant trafficking networks that operate from the countries of origin and are oftentimes organized by former military officers from these countries (Fonseca, 2003).

Unlike other more developed European countries with deeper-rooted immigration traditions, in Portugal there are no political parties or ultra-nationalist movements with xenophobic or racist features. However, the existence of skinheads and clashes between young Portuguese from ethnic minority groups, mainly in the Lisbon area, are clear signs of an increase in racial tension and are cause for growing concern among politicians and citizens. Moreover, in daily social practice, the association often made between immigrants and ethnic minorities, and between non-whites and foreigners, reveals a collective discriminatory attitude, mainly among the elderly and the less educated (Valente Rosa *et al.,* 2000).

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Notes

1 Retornados is the term used to describe Portuguese citizens having lived in the colonies that returned to Portugal once the colonies gained independence.

2 This paragraph is extensively based on previous works: Esteves; Fonseca & Malheiros, (2003) and Fonseca; Malheiros; Esteves & Caldeira, 2002).

3 Despite the name 'Social-Democratic', we are referring to a liberal party that is not a member of (or even a close partner to) Socialist International.