

Immigrants' place in the institutional discourses in Portugal

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Contextualization:

- This communication is a preliminary analysis that is inserted within the broader context of a European project (*Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation - PIDOP*), which involves 8 countries.
- The main objective of the project refers to the understanding of psychological social and cultural processes that may inhibit or enhance the civic and political participation of minorities groups at risk of exclusion (e.g.: youth, women, migrants and minorities). In the Portuguese case, the groups will be: Angolan and Brazilian
- The project will be based on *methodological pluralism* (Barker e Pistrang, 2005), combining qualitative and quantitative methods.

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- **In-depth interviews;**
 - **Documental analysis;**
 - Focus Group;
 - Questionnaires.
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Justification for this study (preliminary analysis)

The phenomenon of migration has assumed a prominent place in the discussion of citizenship and democracy, with an impact on European and national policies and a growing importance attached to encouraging immigrants engagement and participation.

It is claimed that the institutional and political opportunities of the host countries strongly influence the participation of immigrants (Teixeira and Albuquerque, 2005; Sardinha, 2007).

But

there is also a growing recognition of suspicion by the immigrants on the State (see Marques and Santos, 2000; Marzia Grassi, 2009)

The study objective...

Recognising the conflict previously presented:

- this study examines the political discourses found in documents (and interviews) produced by Portuguese public (State) and private (NGOs) entities to identify the consistencies and tensions between the two discursive levels.
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Documents and interviews analysed produced by...

Public entities (State):

- ACIDI-IP Activities Report 2007;
 - Law 23/2007 of July 4 - Republic Assembly;
 - Plan for the Integration of Immigrants - Presidency of the Council of Ministers - the Council of Ministers Resolution No. 63-A/2007;
 - National Action Plan for Inclusion (PNAI) 2006-2008;
 - Activities Plan 2009 - Foreign and Borders Service (SEF).
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Documents and interviews analysed produced by...

Private entities (NGO's):

- AidGlobal – Activities Plan 2009
 - Programme for the triennium 2006-2008 (Centre for Information and Documentation Amílcar Cabral)
 - Immigrant's Guide (Anti-racist Front);
 - Immigration, Integration and Diversity (Institute of International Strategic Studies)
 - Immigrant Solidarity Association (Associação Solidariedade Imigrante) - *interview with the leader of the association;*
 - International Solidarity Association (Associação solidariedade Internacional) – *interview with the leader of the association;*
 - SOS Racism (SOS Racismo) - *interview with the leader of the association.*
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Discourse of the Public Entities...

The discourse of the public entities emphasized mainly 3 themes:

- **Legal Status;**
 - **Social Cohesion/ Inclusion;**
 - **Immigrants' involvement in immigration policies.**
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Discourse of the Public Institutions...

Legal Status

“In immigration policy adjusted to the new context, Portugal, appropriate national legislation to recent EU directives, thereby seeking to, among others, to assign legal status to aliens the same as the Portuguese citizen, simplify and make more transparent the process of legalization and increasing protecting victims of trafficking in human beings” (**PNAI, 2006-2008**, p. 69)

“It is created a unique type of visa that allows its holder to enter Portugal for residency, it is facilitate legal immigration, extends to the allocation scheme for a residence permit without a visa, are established mechanisms for defense and support to victims of trafficking, to create generic limits to expulsion. Among others, transposed to Portuguese legislation various EU directives, particularly with regard to the status of long-term resident” (**ACIDI-IP**, 2007, p. 9) – *referência à Lei nº23/2007*

“Action to promote registration of all eligible immigrants to political participation in municipal elections” (**Plan for the Integration of Immigrants** , 2007, p. 13)

Discourse of the Public Institutions...

Social Cohesion/ Inclusion

- “Ensure the active inclusion of all by promoting participation in employment and combating poverty and social exclusion of people and marginalized groups” (**PNAI 2006-2008**, p. 7)
- “Contribute to the improvement of living conditions of immigrants and working in Portugal with a view to integrating them with dignity, with equal opportunities to all nationals” (**ACIDI-IP**, 2007, p. 16)
- “Taking aim at a qualitative and effective policies for the reception and integration of immigrants, intends to improve, with different structures, from the State and civil society, to work together for a Portugal more caring and inclusive” (**Plan for the Integration of Immigrants**, 2007, p. 1)
- “Prevention of recurrence of deviant behavior and criminal activity by young people of immigrant descent protected by the Directorate General of Social Reintegration” (**Plan for the Integration of Immigrants**, 2007, p. 9)
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Discourse of the Public Institutions...

Immigrants' involvement in immigration policies

“Promote dialogue with immigrants' associations in Portugal, in accordance with Decree-Lawn.º 251/2002” (**ACIDI IP**, 2007, p. 118)

“Option of participation and shared responsibility of immigrants in the design, development and evaluation of immigration policies, considering the immigrant associations as an expression of the first participation of immigrants” (**Plano para integração dos imigrantes**, 2007, p. 1)

Discourse of the Private Entities (NGO's)...

The discourse of the private entities emphasized mainly 3 perspectives:

- **Welfare perspective about immigration;**
 - **The perspective of immigrant as a victim; and**
 - **Critical perspective on the immigration policies at national and European level.**
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Discourse of the Private Entities

(NGO's)...

Welfare perspective about immigration

Emphasize the idea of integration through a mechanism mainly welfare, where the central concern is 'support', 'support', 'give', 'promote', 'allow' and 'form'. Provide technical support to the associations and immigrants, inform migrants about rights and obligations, and promote the Portuguese language and culture and interculturalism are the main objectives that have dominated the activities in the area of immigration- ***AidGlobal (Action and Integration for Global Development), Activities Plan 2009***

“two of the more general aims, therefore, of the ASI mission are precisely the intervention on the inclusion of disadvantaged people and ethnic minorities or social minorities (...) Then when the immigrant participates in the project and comes here to the service, we use, in the treatment, the strategy of empowerment (...) It is providing technical support to immigrant associations (...) is aware, too, the civil society and particularly some institutions, particularly which are involved in social work, to equality issues and immigration, that is, is not enough to empower the audience itself, but we must also open eyes of the other people who are involved in the context” - ***ASInternacional (association leader)***

Discourse of the Private Entities *(NGO's)...*

The perspective of immigrant as a victim

“Solving the numerous problems encountered within the Portuguese society, related to Racism and Xenophobia (...) denouncing all forms of exclusion and exploitation that migrants are subject in Portugal” – ***Front anti-racist, Immigrant's guide, 2007,p. 3.***

“There is no half citizens with more or less rights. Rights are not divisible: if the immigrants are citizens they should have all the rights” – ***SOS Racism (association leader)***

“Carry stigmas that affect its effective participation. There are special programs for immigrants that stigmatize them. Are looked at not as people but as immigrants. Attitudes are conditioned (...) the welfare constrains the immigrants' participation, because fosters dependency rather than autonomy” – ***Solidarity Immigrant Association (association leader)***

Discourse of the Private Entities

(NGO's)...

Critical perspective on the immigration policies at national and European level

“The European Union knows that immigrants are important, yet they also know they have to do 'realpolitik', because they have to pacify the spirits of those who think we are being invaded by immigrants (...) makes no sense to politicians wielding titles residence to children who were born here. It's short-sighted policy ” – **SOS Racism** (*Association Leader*)

“Modern slavery still exists. The law, immigration policies has much to walk. The government encourages illegal work, to the extent that people are only possible to legalize if they have employment contracts” – **Solidarity Immigrant Association** (*association leader*)

The document of the **Institute of Strategic and International Studies - Immigration, integration and diversity** makes an analysis of European immigration policies. This analysis emphasize three key ideas: first, most comprehensive and inclusive of the others, is the **immigration as a factor of concern**; the second the idea of the **immigrant-instrument**, as a possible enhancer of the economy; and third, the idea of the **immigrant-problem**.

Discourse of the Private Entities (NGO's)...

Immigration as a factor of concern

“Although the vast majority of migratory flows (60%) continues to register among countries and regions in the Southern Hemisphere, the last decades of the twentieth century are an example of a reversal in the direction of migration: Europe is to welcome, more than exporting migrants. This is important information that helps to raise community concerns regarding the regulation of immigration” (p. 1)

Discourse of the Private Entities

(NGO's)...

Immigrant-tool

“The management of legal immigration in Europe based on the concepts of 'selective immigration' (immigration choisie) already evident in some member states, notably France and the UK” (p. 4)

Immigrant-problem

“The French case was in this respect exemplary. Disturbances in a violent neighbourhood on the outskirts of Paris that marked the end of 2005 also marked the end of an integration model that could no longer respond to changes in migration patterns. The events, broadcast live across Europe, came to reveal a weakness and an inability to actually absorb the social and economic benefits of immigration” (p. 3)

Consistencies and tensions between the two discursive levels...

Consistencies:

The importance of developing interventions, policies and legislation that promote effective participation of immigrants. Immigrants are seen as a **disadvantaged group that needs support in order to promote their social inclusion.**

Consistencies and tensions between the two discursive levels...

Tensions:

Although the public discourse highlight the inclusion, **‘the perspective of immigrant as a victim’** emphasizes that the immigrant is "victim" of racism, xenophobia and stigmas that lead him to a place of exclusion. The immigrant is not a full rights citizen (as presupposes the affirmation's leader of the association SOS Racism in saying that **“There is no half citizens with more or less rights. Rights are not divisible: if the immigrants are citizens they should have all the rights”**). The **‘critical perspective on the immigration policies at national and European level’** presents a critical stance in relation to national and European policies on immigration, which does not effectively opposes to the places of exclusion that immigrants are subject. It is suggested, on the contrary, that the maintaining of the situation may be intentional, which makes **"realpolitik"** to calm the spirits of those who oppose the immigration.

Orientation...

- This analysis will be deepened through others analysis of focus group with young immigrants and more interviews with subjects of various social contexts (e.g.: parents, peer groups, media, etc.), which will enable us to cross the various discourses involved promoting a more comprehensive and profound analysis about them in relation to various dimensions that improve or inhibit the immigrant's participation.
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Thank you for your attention

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