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INTEGRATION OR  
RETURN?  
TOWARDS AN  
EFFECTIVE EMIGRATION  
POLICY AND PRACTICE  
FOR A NEGLECTED  
DIASPORA: THE CASE  
OF THE PORTUGUESE  
EMIGRANTS



## Introduction

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Thank you for the opportunity to be present at this conference. Today, I would like to talk a little bit about the Portuguese emigrant diaspora.

The historical movement of the Portuguese from their homeland to other nations in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia has been highly significant in world history, particularly in the sphere of European transatlantic migration. Yet, Portuguese emigrants, along with the communities which they have established throughout the world, have received relatively little attention on the part of both scholars and policy-makers. This is, no doubt, due to the unusually disadvantaged socioeconomic and educational profile of most Portuguese emigrants, which has left their communities with little political or economic power within their host countries. This same lack of political and economic clout has also led to a concomitant lack of an effective and coherent policy regarding the emigrant communities, on the part of the Portuguese government, particularly with regards to the return of these migrants to their homeland.

I will illustrate these points by covering three major areas: Firstly, I will provide a very short historical introduction to Portuguese emigration and the Portuguese diaspora throughout the world; secondly, I will discuss some of the characteristics of the Portuguese community in Canada, as a way of profiling common patterns; lastly, I will discuss the policies and practices of the Portuguese government regarding these expatriates.

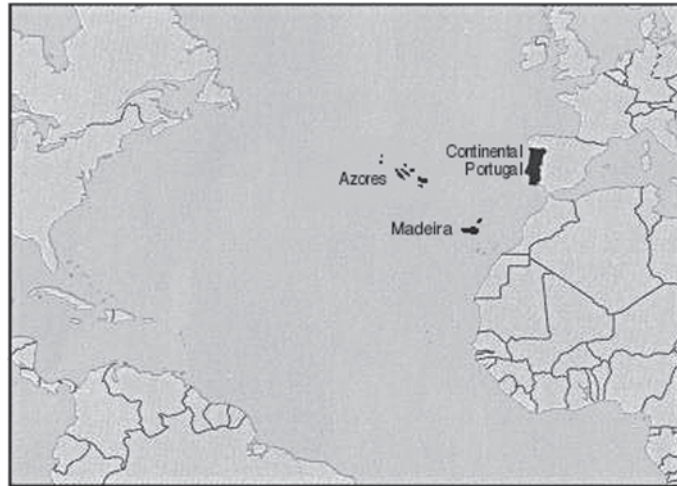
## Portugal

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Portugal is a small nation located on the most westerly point of southwestern Europe. It is comprised of continental Portugal, as well as the regions of the Azores and Madeira. The Azores, are an archipelago of 9 islands in the Atlantic Ocean, located about 1,300 km (about 800

miles) west of Continental Portugal (See Figure 1). The Madeira Islands (a group containing 2 inhabited islands) are located about 1,100 km (about 700 miles) southwest of the European Continent. Both Madeira and the Azores are politically autonomous regions of Portugal.

Figure 1  
Map of Portugal



At roughly 800 years of age, Portugal is also one of the oldest nations in Europe (with historically contiguous borders). Yet, Portugal's survival has not been easy. Historically, the Portuguese nation has found itself sandwiched between the vast Atlantic ocean to the west and by the kingdoms which eventually formed modern-day Spain to the east and north (which at various times have threatened to annex this nation). A further barrier for the Portuguese has been the presence of a fairly large expanse of unfertile, hilly terrain to the northeast, which has made large-scale agriculture in that region very difficult. For these reasons, Portugal has – throughout its history – found itself politically, economically and geographically isolated from the rest of Europe.

Southward expansion of this nation into the northernmost regions of the African continent was also effectively blocked with the defeat of the Portuguese in 1578 at an important battle in Alcacer-Kibir (in present-day Morocco), where Portugal's young King D. Sebastião also disappeared.<sup>1</sup> Thus, historically, the only possible avenue for expansion for the Portuguese nation has been to travel overseas to other countries and to the New World.

## The Portuguese Discoveries and the Empire

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As a response to its isolation, during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, Portugal initiated a great number of voyages of exploration, trade and conquest, to Africa, Asia, North and South America. Under the tutelage of Henry the Navigator, the Portuguese became the first Europeans to explore the African coast and to begin searching for a sea route to the Indies. This precipitated nearly 100 years of exploration, which made Portugal one of the world's most significant colonial powers, from the 1400s to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, after the age of the Discoveries, Portugal soon found itself with a vast empire, stretching from Asia to South America, and Africa, but with a population, which at roughly one million to three million people by the 1800s, was too small to control these regions.<sup>3</sup> In addition, as a protection against the annexationist tendencies of its Spanish neighbours, Portugal also entered into a series of alliances with the English crown, many of which ensured that this nation would become a colony to English economic interests (including the 1386 treaty of Windsor, a treaty of friendship, which is one of Europe's oldest accords). The historian E. Bradford Burns described the effects of one important treaty between the Portuguese and the English, as well as the role which Brazilian gold played in perpetuating this dependent relationship:

"It has been observed with some sagacity and a little exaggeration that the Brazilian gold mined by African slaves financed English industrialization. In 1703 Portugal had signed the Treaty of Methuen with England, agreeing to buy British manufactured goods, in return for English importation of its wine and agricultural products. The balance of trade quickly tipped in England's favour, and Brazilian gold paid the growing deficit. Freely spending Brazilian wealth, the Portuguese let the Industrial Revolution bypass them, and the influx of gold masked for some generations the unfortunate consequences of this position: economic stagnation, thwarted development, and dependence on the English."<sup>4</sup>

Thus, after the Discoveries of the late 1400s and early 1500s, a brief period in which Portugal had tremendous wealth and influence in world affairs, the Portuguese Empire slowly crumbled over the subsequent 400 years, while its domestic economy stagnated, to the point that it became a virtual non-player in later European matters.

In this fashion, by the 1800s, few economic opportunities existed for many Portuguese young people to remain in the country, and the nation became a net exporter of people. Thus, two of the constant aspects throughout

Portuguese history have been this nation's isolation, as well as the ongoing emigration of the Portuguese people.

## The Twentieth Century

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From the beginning, to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Portugal came under the rule of a dictatorship, led by Antonio Salazar (the longest-running dictatorship in recent European history). Salazar's administration, which came into power in 1932, initiated what was called the "Estado Novo" or "New State," which was a corporative state with a planned economy. Salazar's rule was also heavily influenced by the dictator's personal religious beliefs, in which the virtues of poverty and the dignity of manual labour (particularly the lifestyle of the poor rural peasantry) were publicly lauded as worthy spiritual goals for the entire nation. In this fashion, the Salazar administration continued - and in some ways exacerbated - the isolation and stagnation of Portuguese economic and social development.

The result was widespread underdevelopment, rural poverty and unemployment. Up until the early 1970s, many Portuguese, particularly those in the rural and mountainous areas, were still living in conditions which more closely resembled those of 18th century Europe, than those of a modern Western European nation. For example, compulsory education in Portugal was only 4 years in 1960, and 6 years in 1967.<sup>5</sup> Even this was often difficult to enforce in most of the rural areas and many people who were born prior to the 1950s never went to school.<sup>6</sup> In 1967, only 1.4% of Portugal's gross national product was being applied to education, as compared to 8.3% in Canada. As a result, in 1968, Portugal had the highest illiteracy rate in Europe, over 30%.<sup>7</sup> In a similar fashion, many services such as telephone lines, electricity, paved roads, water distribution, medical services, sewage treatment, etc. only reached many rural areas after the 1960s and - in the case of thousands of villages of fewer than 100 people - only after the late 1970's, when the government was forced to provide these services as a result of its application for entrance into the European community (and after it was provided E.U. development funds to assist in these activities).<sup>8</sup>

This generalized underdevelopment, coupled with a lack of economic and educational opportunity meant that the majority of Portuguese young people, from the beginning of the century to the late 1960's, had little prospect of ever earning a reasonable living in rural Portugal. The country's lack of industrialization and opportunities for

education left few options available to those in the rural areas.

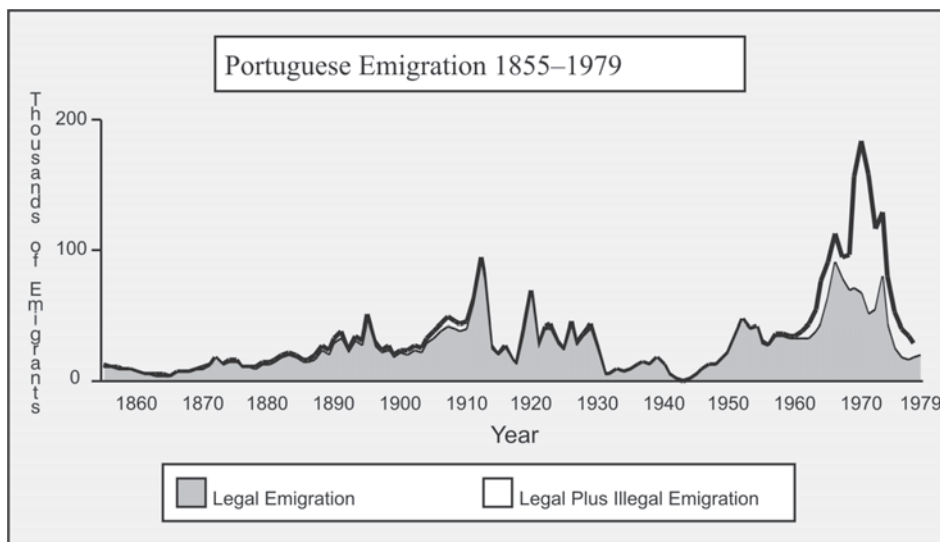
Even those who wanted to remain on the land were not guaranteed a livelihood. In traditional, rural Portuguese families, it was quite customary for the eldest son to inherit all of his parents' lands, or for land to be subdivided amongst children, into increasingly meagre plots. One son might also choose to enter the priesthood. The remaining children in these rural families had precious few other options, except marrying into property or emigrating.<sup>9</sup>

As a result, since the early 1800s, the Portuguese who have traditionally emigrated from Portugal have originated disproportionately from amongst the poorest and least educated segments of Portuguese society, mostly from the ranks of agricultural and unskilled workers.<sup>10</sup> The only exception to this was the one-time emigration of better-educated and skilled returnees from the former African colonies, following the decolonization of the late 1970s.

## The Portuguese Diaspora

Thus, there has been a historical movement of millions of Portuguese out of their country. It has been estimated that, from 1855 to 1973, approximately 4,233,000 Portuguese emigrated both legally and illegally from the country, (3,174,000 legally and 1 million illegally)<sup>11</sup> (See Figure 2).

Figure 2  
 Portuguese Emigration Levels



Source: Baganha, M. I. (1998). "A Emigração Portuguesa e as Correntes Migratórias Internacionais (1855-1974) – Síntese Histórica" [Portuguese Emigration and the International Migratory Currents (1855-1974) – Historical Synthesis]. *Estudos Migratorios LatinoAmericanos*, 13(38), pp. 29-54.

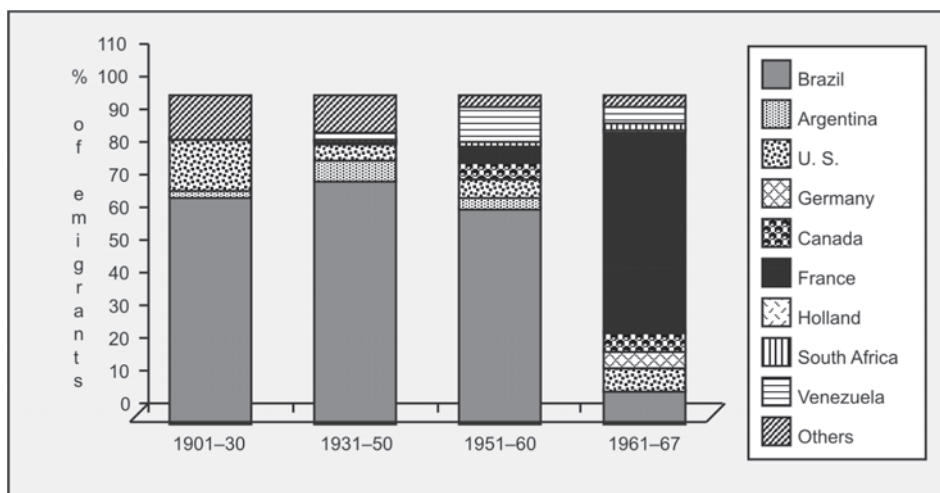
Although this does not seem like a significant number, when compared to the exodus from larger European countries, in Portugal's case, this occurred in a nation whose population until the 1800s varied from 1,000,000 to 3,000,000 people, and which only reached 10,000,000 in the mid 1970s.<sup>12</sup> From 1960 to 1979, over 1.4 million Portuguese left the country. In fact, from 1960 to 1969, the absolute population of Portugal actually decreased, as a result of the massive waves of emigration.<sup>13</sup>

Roughly 400,000 of those people emigrated from the Atlantic islands of the Azores and Madeira alone; these regions, even today, have a population that is smaller than most small cities in the world. For example, the 1991 census pegged the total population of the Azores at only 237,800 people.<sup>14</sup> In fact, by the 1990s, more Azoreans resided in North America than in the archipelago.<sup>15</sup> Thus, Portugal became, proportionately, one of the highest migratory exporting countries in Europe. Only Britain has had a comparable proportion of its population emigrate over the years.<sup>16</sup>

The traditional destinations of the Portuguese have been Brazil and the United States (see Figure 3). However, in the second half of the 20th century, immigration to Brazil began to lose its appeal, and immigration to places like France (62%), Canada (6%), and other European destinations, such as Holland and Germany, began to predominate.

This mass movement of people has created a massive, world-wide Diaspora. Today, Portuguese emigrant commu-

Figure 3  
 Destination of Portuguese  
 Emigrants 1901-1967

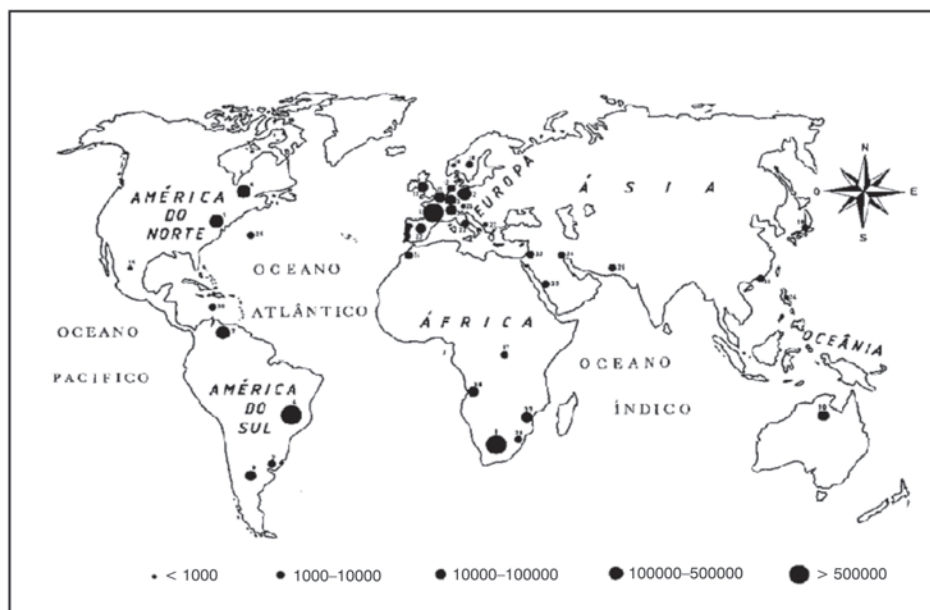


Source: Almeida, C. & Barreto, A. (1974). *Capitalismo e Emigração em Portugal*. [Capitalism and Emigration in Portugal] Lisboa: Prelo, p. 312.



nities are found throughout the world, with the largest being found in France, South Africa, Brazil and Venezuela.

Figure 4  
Map of Portuguese emigrant distribution



Nation	Emigrants
France	920,000
South Africa	660,000
Brazil	620,000
Venezuela	350,000
U.S.A.	318,000
Canada	210,000
Germany	110,000
Argentina	60,000
Other Non-European countries	35,000
Australia	30,781
Luxemburg	28,000
England	27,000
Spain	26,000
Switzerland	24,000
Zaire	20,000
Holland	17,000
Belgium	12,000
Zimbabwe	11,629
Sweden	2,000
Bermudas	2,000
Other European countries	1,500
Italy	1,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,485,910</b>

Table I  
Numbers and locations of Portuguese emigrants in the world

Source: Arroteia, J. C. (1983). *A emigração portuguesa - suas origens e distribuição* [Portuguese emigration - its origins and distribution]. Lisboa: Ministério da Educação, Instituto de Cultura e Língua Portuguesa.

These communities could conceivably form the basis of a powerful and influential lobby, with respect to the Portuguese government, as well as within their host countries. Unfortunately, these Portuguese immigrant communities are often disempowered by virtue of their humble origins and the low-status socioeconomic role which their members continue to occupy in their new lands.

## Portuguese Immigrants in Canada

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Because of their commonality in origins, by and large, Portuguese emigrants throughout the world share many similarities in terms of their economic, educational and social situation (except those in Brazil, where emigration is much older and where the emigrants share the predominant language and cultural affinities). I will use the example of Canada to profile the socioeconomic situation of one of these communities.

Portuguese-Canadians first began arriving in Canada in large numbers in the early 1950's.<sup>17</sup> Today, they comprise approximately 350,000 people, or about 1% of the total Canadian population.<sup>18</sup> They are concentrated mainly in Ontario and Quebec, where they make up the 5th and 11th largest ethnic group in the Toronto and Montreal Metropolitan Areas.<sup>19</sup> However, there are proportionately large Luso-Canadian populations in regions as diverse as: Vancouver, Prince George and Kitimat (British Columbia); Halifax (Nova Scotia); Sudbury, London and Kingston (Ontario); and Quebec City (Quebec).<sup>20</sup>

The vast majority of the people in these communities have found stability and overall economic security. This is reflected in the fact that the Portuguese in Canada are generally underrepresented amongst the ranks of those living in poverty and the unemployed.<sup>21</sup> They also have very high rates of home ownership.

Yet, despite its 50-year presence in this country, the Luso-Canadian community faces a series of unique problems. It is characterized by disproportionate numbers of people with exceptionally low education levels. In fact, Portuguese-Canadians have the lowest education levels of any minority group in Canada, with the exception of the Aboriginal and Inuit populations.<sup>22</sup> Luso-Canadian youth also have one of the highest dropout rates of any minority in the city of Toronto.<sup>23</sup> In consequence, Portuguese-Canadians are disproportionately concentrated in unskilled and low-skilled occupations and underrepresented in professional or management positions.<sup>24</sup> They have lower average income levels than other groups, and are second only

behind Aboriginal Canadians (and equal to the Black/Caribbean community) in the low proportions of individuals who earn above \$60,000 a year.<sup>25</sup> The community also has a negligible (in proportion to its size) class of professional individuals, with the knowledge and skills to seek the resources to address its problems.<sup>26</sup> Portuguese youth are further disadvantaged in not being a designated group within the Federal Government's Employment Equity Act.<sup>27</sup>

As a consequence, Luso-Canadians have traditionally found themselves socially, politically and culturally isolated from the affairs of their adopted country, and often from those of modern-day Portugal.<sup>28</sup> Their community today continues to project a minimal political, economic and cultural profile within mainstream Canadian society, while their language, as well as their cultural and economic activities continue to be largely ignored by most Canadian business, educational and media institutions.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, they remain largely underserved and underrepresented in this country's social and political structures. This is particularly the case with Portuguese from the Azores, who - while they comprise approximately 60% to 80% of all Luso-Canadians - are underrepresented to an even greater extent, than those from mainland Portugal. This isolation has resulted in a tendency towards "clannishness," a turning inwards towards the family, and has even given rise to a negative image of the Portuguese in Canada.<sup>30</sup> In 1997, Edite Noivo, a Luso-Canadian sociologist stated:

...after twenty-five or more years in the "land of opportunity" the overall socioeconomic conditions of Portuguese immigrants remain well below the national average. Moreover, this longstanding situation does not appear to be changing, as this group is not represented in Canada's political, cultural, or economic platforms, and shows minimal participation in mainstream society.<sup>31</sup>

The situation of the Portuguese in Canada should not be overstated. This community has made a great deal of progress over the past decades, by integrating into the many facets of mainstream Canadian life. Nonetheless, community members themselves have recognised that much more needs to be done, in order to improve this situation. For example, one common fear of people in a 1998 national study was the low educational achievement of the community's youth and how this is bringing about the social reproduction of Luso-Canadian young people, in the same low-status socioeconomic roles of their parents.<sup>32</sup> This sentiment was also echoed by Noivo, in her study of Portuguese immigrant families in Montreal.<sup>33</sup> In

recognizing the need to confront the community's marginalization, one community participant in the 1998 national study declared:

"There is a very great need to really assert our presence; or, in other words, to say 'we are living, we are here, there is much which has to be done.'"<sup>34</sup>

With the exception of Brazil, the Portuguese emigrant communities throughout the world share much of the same profile, and many of the same handicaps, as the Portuguese in Canada; ostensibly as a result of their common origins and emigratory profiles, but also because they occupy similar socioeconomic roles, in their host nations. Indeed, the situation of Portuguese immigrants in countries like the United States and France is very similar to that of Canada.<sup>35</sup>

The limited educational and economic capital of these communities, is also accompanied by relatively low levels of political influence, in both their host countries and with respect to the Portuguese government. In a speech to the Council of the Portuguese Communities, Jorge Sampaio, the Portuguese President of the Republic in 2001 stated:

"The Portuguese have always known how to become well-liked in the societies where they have been received. By their sobriety, by their capacity for work, by their civility. But, it has only been slowly and with some timidity that they have been affirming themselves socially and politically in these societies. Through you, I would like to send an appeal, to all the Portuguese who live in foreign countries: organize yourselves, participate in the political and social lives of the societies in which you're living, make your voice be heard, so that your contribution may be valued and recognised."<sup>36</sup>

## The Policies of the Portuguese government

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Yet, despite the President's concern with the lack of political involvement, the politics of successive Portuguese governments towards emigrants have themselves reflected the realities of this marginalization and their lack of political clout. Successive governments have often glorified the emigrants as ambassadors of the Portuguese culture. For example, the Secretary of State for the Emigrant Communities, José Cesário has called emigrants involved in community life the "representatives of Portugal..." who "...maintain alight the flame of the Lusian Culture."<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Jorge Sampaio, the 2001 President of Portugal has praised "...the important contribution that [Portuguese emigrants] provide in providing prestige to the name of Portugal, throughout the world."<sup>38</sup> Yet, the political rhetoric about the important role of its diaspora communities has

masked the reality that the policies of Portuguese governments, from the beginning of the dictatorship to the present day, have done little to promote or support the maintenance of the Portuguese language and culture amongst the emigrant communities, or the relocation of emigrants back to their homeland.

## The Salazar Regime

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In 1947, the Salazar government created the “Junta de Emigração,” ostensibly in order to assist and regulate emigration. However, the statutes of the “Junta” illustrate that it occupied itself very little with the protection of the emigrants. Its main function was to police the emigrant flow. It is reported that there were delegates of the PIDE (secret police) amongst its ranks, whose main function was to ensure that young men of draft age did not emigrate to escape serving in the army.<sup>39</sup>

In fact, the Portuguese dictatorship found itself in a contradictory position, with regards to emigration. The continuing massive movements of young Portuguese to other countries was an embarrassment for the Fascist government, which tried, at times to curb its flow. However the government was dependent on the remittances of emigrants, and on the outflow of excess labour to forestall domestic unrest.<sup>40</sup> So the officially-controlled media, as well as the centralized education systems, began to portray emigration not as a consequence of economic or political conditions in the homeland, but rather as a natural, historical vocation of the Portuguese people.

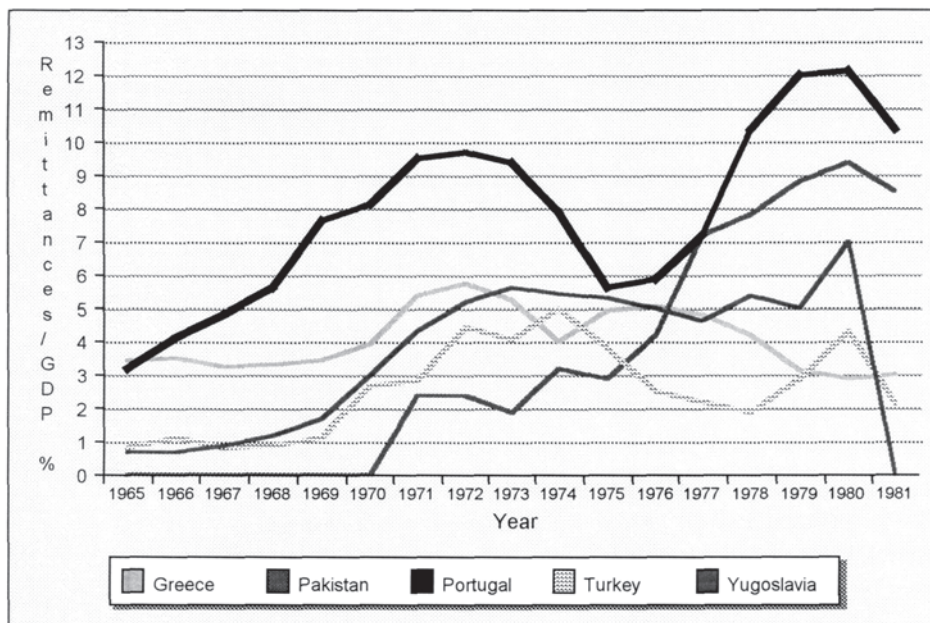
## The Importance of Emigrant Remittances

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Subsequent Portuguese governments have historically had a similarly high stake in maintaining the emigrants in their countries of residence, as they have also benefited quite importantly from the remittances of these emigrants, to cover their external trade deficit. During the wars of liberation in Portuguese-controlled Africa of the 1960s and 70s, the remittances of emigrants guaranteed the foreign exchange necessary to stabilize the value of the Portuguese currency, the escudo, and to make up for the lack of growth of the agricultural and industrial sectors.<sup>41</sup> Following these colonial wars and the 1974 Portuguese revolution, remittances also helped to make up for the gap in domestic savings, which the country needed for economic development, and to compensate for the country’s consistently negative trade balance.<sup>42</sup> In fact, Portugal was unique

Figure 5  
 Chart of Remittances versus  
 GDP, From Chaney p. 95

amongst many of the labour exporting countries in the world, in having the highest remittance to Gross Domestic Product ratio of any other labour-exporting nation, throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s (See Figure 5).<sup>43</sup> The ratio of remittances in the early 1980s was approximately 12% of Gross Domestic Product, a level that was unmatched even by countries like Pakistan, Yugoslavia and Turkey.



Source: Chaney, R. (1986). *Regional Emigration and Remittances in Developing Countries: The Portuguese Experience*. New York: Praeger, p. 94.

Emigrants' remittances were particularly important in sustaining regional development or - better stated - in forestalling regional decline. For example, in 1979, these remittances represented approximately 30% of total household income in the rural, interior and northern regions of Viana do Castelo, Bragança and Guarda, 25% in Vila Real, and 20% in Castelo Branco and Viseu.<sup>44</sup>

Remittances dropped off substantially during the years after the Portuguese revolution. However they rose substantially once again after Portuguese banks opened offices in the emigrants' host countries in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Interestingly enough, many Portuguese banks had not understood the importance of emigrant remittances to their business, and had opened up these branches to capture foreign investment.<sup>45</sup>

After a small drop in the beginning of the 1980s, remittances skyrocketed once again in the late 1980s, from



\$2 billion to \$3.5 billion in 1989.<sup>46</sup> However, the effects of these remittances were lessened in the 1990s by money transfers for regional development from the EEC. More recently, Portuguese emigrant remittances totalled approximately 3.7 billion Euros in 2001, and represented 3.7 per cent of Portugal's Gross Domestic Product.<sup>47</sup>

### The Lack of a Policy on Emigration and Return

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What have been the effects of these remittances upon the politics of subsequent Portuguese governments towards its emigrant populations? The evidence indicates that the 1970s, 80s and much of the 1990s were characterized by the lack of a coherent policy regarding emigration and particularly concerning the return of emigrants and Luso-descendants. One author, Luis Miguel Seruya, stated this position more clearly, when writing about Portuguese emigration policy of the 1970s:

"In other words, the total absence of an emigration policy constituted, in fact, the real political attitude of the Portuguese authorities... With the 25<sup>th</sup> of April of 1974 [the Portuguese revolution which overthrew the Salazar dictatorship] this situation did not change. On the other hand, the great wave of returnees to the mother country following decolonization, the increase in unemployment, the lack of a significant absorption of new emigrants on the part of European countries, the return of emigrants who had previously emigrated, all of these have contributed to the maintenance of the basic attitude of the Portuguese authorities with regards to emigration - the official policy translates itself, in practical terms, as the absence of an emigration policy, reflecting in this equation, the decisive influence of short term considerations."<sup>48</sup>

Seruya described how the main focus of government policy towards emigrants in the 1970s was the signing of various bilateral accords between Portugal and the host countries. Before the revolution of the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1974, these accords centred around the recruitment, placement and transport of Portuguese workers overseas. The accords signed after the 25<sup>th</sup> of April focussed on assuring that Portuguese emigrants and their families would be afforded the same rights and privileges as the national workers of the host country<sup>49</sup> (ex. regarding pensions).

Many of the accords which were signed after the 1970s continued this trend and were intended to facilitate the continued residency of Portuguese emigrants in their host countries, as well as to preserve cultural, linguistic and economic links with the mother country. For example, this included such measures as: A Dual Nationality law with Canada, in the early 1980s; agreements regarding

pensions; cultural programmes; scholarship opportunities for Luso-descendants; summer seminars in Portuguese universities; and Portuguese government support for the teaching and maintenance of the Portuguese language in Europe.

Absent from these accords was the lack of a concerted policy towards the reintegration of return emigrants into Portuguese society. For example, a 1983 study examining the return of emigrants to mainland Portugal pointed to the absence of a policy to assist returning emigrants in their integration into Portuguese life, as one of the major problems to be overcome.<sup>50</sup> The politics of the Portuguese government concerning the return and reintegration of Portuguese emigrants during the 1970s and 1980s may be summed up by a comment made by Dr. Manuela Aguiar, the 1984 Portuguese Secretary of State for Emigration, in a Conference on return emigration:

“...one of the top priority sectors must be support for the emigrant workers and their families in what concerns their return and reintegration. It is not a question, as I have stressed, of deliberately encouraging their return. Such an approach would not be in general [...] a very realistic one, considering the present economic situation of Portugal and the difficulties which that situation is causing in every sector of the Portuguese society. On the other hand, our policy is not to discourage their return. It is, however, considered essential to give the emigrant complete, exact, correct and always updated information, and this is one of the main principles of the whole action of support to the Portuguese emigrants.”<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, during the late 1970s and 1980s, many critics of the government charged that government officials would often speak forcefully to emigrant gatherings about Portugal's need for the return of skilled emigrants and Luso-descendants (ostensibly to help modernize the country) yet do nothing to bring about the conditions necessary to promote the return of working age migrants. For example, in a 1981 Conference organized by the CGTP-IN (one of the largest Portuguese labour unions), participants described how the Portuguese economy was not producing new employment at the level which was needed to promote the return of many emigrants. It was estimated by the CGTP that it would be necessary to create 40,000 jobs a year, simply to allow for the employment of each new Portuguese worker entering the workforce (not counting the returning emigrants).<sup>52</sup> However, the government's own figures for this period showed only 5,000 new posts created.

Similarly, regional investment in infrastructure for industry, public services and public infrastructure was at a



very low level, until the entrance of Portugal into the European Economic Community. This constituted a particularly grave impediment to the return of the immigrants since Portuguese returnees tend to return to their rural villages (unlike in other countries, where returning emigrants settle in urban areas).<sup>53</sup> Those emigrants returning to their village, during the 1970s and 1980s were thus returning to the very same conditions from which they had emigrated to escape. They also condemned their foreign-born, urbanized children to a rural lifestyle which was totally alien to them.

Another problem in dealing with the issue of emigrant reintegration has been the lack of reliable statistics and studies showing the exact number of emigrants who have returned, as well as their demographic and socio-economic characteristics.<sup>54</sup> In commenting on an IED report on Return Emigration and Regional Development in Portugal, Porto mentions how, despite the enormous importance of emigration to this country, both emigration and the return home have not been given the attention that they both deserve, by Portuguese researchers.<sup>55</sup>

The available information indicates that return migration has not reached the levels which had earlier been forecast. It is estimated that approximately 182,000 emigrants returned to continental Portugal, between 1974 to 1981.<sup>56</sup> Indirect assessments have shown that there was a constant increase in the return of these emigrants to mainland Portugal, from the 1960s to the 1980s (7,000 yearly in 1960, to 13,000 in 1970, and reaching approximately 60,000 in 1980).<sup>57</sup> However, these numbers were much lower than the earlier estimates of 32,000 to 64,000 per year, for the period 1971–75.<sup>58</sup> Many of these were individuals who were returning to retire in Portugal. However, an unknown number of former Portuguese child emigrants and Luso-descendants also appear to be returning to their parent's homeland, to find work in multinational corporations, or in Portuguese industries where knowledge of a second-language is an asset.

### Government Policy at the Turn of the Millennium

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The 1990s and 2000–2001 saw the development of a more coherent approach to the emigrant diaspora, on the part of successive Portuguese governments. In the latter years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Portuguese politicians ceased their public appeals for the return of skilled emigrants and Luso-descendants (ironically enough, at a time when unemployment hit its lowest point in decades, and when

the need for foreign-trained individuals rose higher than ever). They also became much more straightforward in verbalizing that the central goal of their diaspora policy was the promotion of the integration of emigrants into their host countries. In fact, by 2002, the Government of Portugal had explicitly spelled this out in their foreign policy document:

“Portugal will undertake actions which will promote the social, political and civic integration of Portuguese citizens in the countries where they reside. Linkages to these communities will be reinforced and valued, particularly between the Luso-descendants and Portugal, through the teaching of the [Portuguese] language, promotion of the culture, and valorization of the heritage and support to the means of communication directed towards Portuguese citizens living abroad.”<sup>59</sup>

Thus, the policy of this government has centred around such aspects as: The preservation and promotion of the Portuguese language and culture (through granting support to the teaching of the Portuguese language); the protection of the rights of Portuguese in their host countries; improvement of consular services and a lessening of bureaucracy; maintenance of linkages to the communities; promoting Portuguese associations; and maintaining links to Luso-descendants.<sup>60</sup> In the early 1990s the Government also created the “Instituto Camões,” to advance the study of the Portuguese language, mainly by supporting its teaching in foreign universities. Also of note was the inauguration of the world-wide television and radio networks, RTPInternational and RDPInternational, to link communities together (although the former is now facing the spectre of looming budget cuts).

Recent administrations have also initiated a limited number of programmes that are designed to support the economic reintegration of returning emigrants in Portuguese society. These include such things as apprenticeship programs, incentives to emigrant entrepreneurs, youth (first employment) programs, etc.<sup>61</sup> Because of the lack of information on emigrant returns, the impact of these measures is difficult to gauge. However, in a 2001 Conference of Luso-descendants, it was reported that the 2000 program “Estagiar Em Portugal” (Internship in Portugal), which provided support and incentives for young Luso-descendants to work temporarily in Portugal, received 1380 applications for 1,000 positions.<sup>62</sup>

As the Portuguese communities have grown in economic and political importance, and as direct foreign investment in Portugal by groups of emigrant entrepreneurs have increased, some attempts have also been initiated to better include the emigrants in the political and economic

decisions of Portugal. One of these, was the creation of the Secretary of State for the Portuguese communities, (Secretaria de Estado das Comunidades Portuguesas) a government department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the responsibility to liaise with the immigrant communities, and implement the emigrant-relevant policies of the Portuguese government.<sup>63</sup> Another measure was the establishment of four parliamentary seats, which were assigned specifically to represent the Portuguese communities; two seats for European representatives, the remaining two for the other regions of the world. Finally, in early 2001, Portuguese emigrants were also allowed to vote directly for the President of the Republic.

### The Council of Portuguese Communities

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In 1996, the Portuguese government also created an elected body called the “Council of Portuguese Communities”.<sup>64</sup> This is a consultative body, which advises the Portuguese government and Parliament on national and regional policies concerning the emigrant communities, and which promotes closer ties between Portugal and the emigrant communities.<sup>65</sup> The 1996 body replaced an earlier, government appointed Council, which did not receive much support from the emigrant communities.

Over the years, the Council has struggled to make itself better known to the Portuguese in their own constituencies. The mandate and activities of this body are still not very widely understood by the emigrant populations at large and interest in Council elections is often quite low (as is interest amongst emigrants in voting for the Portuguese parliament, in general, particularly in North America).<sup>66</sup> The Council also faces problems with political infighting amongst its European representatives, who mostly align themselves along Portuguese party lines.<sup>67</sup> For example, after the opening plenary session and election, a court challenge was raised which led to the need to hold a second election.

A more serious problem appears to be that Portuguese politicians and government officials do not appear to be consulting this body, in formulating decisions concerning the emigrants. For example, the North American representative to the Council related how, at a dinner to proclaim a new law directing Consular services, the Portuguese Ambassador to Canada had jubilantly presented him with the ratified law, apparently oblivious to the fact that it had been drafted and passed without any consultation with the representative or the Council.<sup>68</sup> In a Portu-

guese-Canadian newspaper article, this same representative (who is a Medical Doctor) glibly wrote about his “first consultation”, (i.e. the first time that he had been formally consulted by the Government on any matter). In addressing the Secretary of State for the Portuguese Communities he wrote:

“It was for me a pleasant surprise to witness that, after five years and one month, as a member of the Council of the Communities, a ‘consultative organ of the government’ I was finally consulted. We are, at last, at the end of our mandate, consultants who are consulted.

As you must have been informed by the officials at the Secretary of State, the counsellors in Canada have, throughout the years, manifested their opinions about many matters of relevance to our community, in the form of various documents, numerous letters and even consultations undertaken in the Portuguese communities, from Vancouver to Quebec City, passing through Winnipeg, Southwestern Ontario, Toronto, Montreal and Kingston.

As I have publicly affirmed, as much in my weekly column in the newspaper VOICE, as in numerous interviews to other newspapers and various radio and television stations, the dialogue which the Canadian counsellors have tried to establish with the Secretary of State has never happened, such that the only response that we have received has been silence.

I hope that the fact of the Secretary of State finally consulting the Council of the Communities will be the harbinger of a new era of dialogue between the Counsellors and the Portuguese authorities.”<sup>69</sup>

## Conclusion

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There can be no doubt that the recent Governments of Portugal have been following the path of greatest expediency, in focussing on the integration of Portuguese emigrants into their host countries. A small nation like Portugal would have much to lose by the return of massive numbers of working-age emigrants. Not only would the government forfeit a great proportion of the emigrant remittances, but also the need to integrate large numbers of people into the nation’s social and economic structures would pose difficult problems for the country’s economy. This was evident in the unemployment and housing problems which plagued Portugal’s largest cities, following the movement of hundreds of thousands of refugees, from the former African colonies, after the decolonization of the late 1970s.

However, with the passage of time, and with a greater integration of the subsequent generations of Luso-descendants into the host countries, the prospect of massive

numbers of emigrants returning, en-masse, to live and work in Portugal has greatly diminished. This has made this particular aspect of the government's foreign policy less relevant and has allowed it to focus on openly promoting the integration of the diaspora communities into their host societies, without the fear of appearing to be rejecting the emigrants' return to the homeland. In focusing openly upon the promotion of integration, the Government also seems to be reflecting the feelings of community members, who have named the lack of integration as an important problem to be overcome (for example, in the 1998 Portuguese-Canadian national study).<sup>70</sup>

Yet, although recent Portuguese administrations have shown a vast improvement in effort over those of Governments in the 1970s and 80s, these have yet to mobilize significant resources to achieve their declared goals. For example, although one of the government's stated aims is to support emigrant associations, one of the major complaints in the 1998 national study in Canada was the lack of support of the Portuguese government for the maintenance of the work of community associations.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, their support for the teaching of the Portuguese language is still woefully inadequate, particularly in North America, where this language has a very weak presence in secondary schools and universities (and where it is often not considered a qualifiable language of instruction), even in comparison to less spoken languages.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, the government's inability to effectively consult and liaise with the elected Council of the Portuguese Communities illustrates both the Portuguese government's lack of experience in utilizing such grass-roots organizations, as well as the continuing weak political influence of the diaspora Portuguese communities.

Yet another problem now looming for the government is how to promote a better inclusion of the Portuguese emigrants into their host societies while simultaneously attempting to preserve their Portuguese language, culture and socioeconomic ties with the ancestral homeland. With the passing of the first generation, and the decrease in Portuguese emigration, in the past decade, Luso-descendants have taken on an increasingly significant importance in perpetuating the diaspora communities. In fact, recent years have seen an increasing focus of government activities directed towards Luso-descendants, (ex. yearly conferences, attempts to bring young people to the front of Portuguese community organizations, etc.). How well the Portuguese government can negotiate this paradox could very well determine the future of the diaspora com-

munities, as well as the nature of the ties of the Luso-descendants to the ancestral homeland.

Unfortunately, there are few indicators that the Portuguese government has developed either a plan, or a vision, to chart their future relationship with the Luso-descendants. With the exception of the support for the teaching of Portuguese language in Europe, the government's activities and supports to this population seem piecemeal, at best. Furthermore, it is still not entirely clear what part, if any, the Portuguese language, culture and homeland will play in the lives of Luso-descendants, whether these will continue their parent's practice of making deposits in Portuguese banks, or even if they will invest in the Portuguese domestic economy.

These issues point to the need to conduct more research on the phenomenon of Portuguese migration. In particular, there is a great need to conduct research on the children of emigrants and their contributions to Portuguese society. Such an increase in research will hopefully lead to more knowledge about the benefits which Portuguese emigrants have brought to their host societies, and to the Portuguese ancestral homeland. This will hopefully also lead to a more effective and responsive policy, on the part of the Portuguese government and to a new relationship with the Diaspora.

## FOOTNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> This defeat led to 60 years of Spanish rule over Portugal, the seizure of many of this nation's overseas possessions, by Spain's enemies, and precipitated the eventual decline of the Portuguese influence in the world.

<sup>2</sup> Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia (1996). *Portugal*. Microsoft Corporation & Funk & Wagnalls Corporation.

<sup>3</sup> Canny, N. (1994). *Europeans on the move: Studies on European migration, 1500-1800*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 269-270.

<sup>4</sup> Burns, E. B. (1993). *A history of Brazil*, (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 68-69.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (1973). "Public Expenditures on Education," *Statistical Yearbook, 1972*, Paris: Unesco. Cited in Anderson, G. & Higgs, D. (1976). *A Future to Inherit*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, p. 141 (note 1).

<sup>6</sup> My own mother, for example, received only 2 years of schooling, and only because her father believed that it was important for women to learn to read. This attitude was not shared by many men in rural Portugal at the time.

<sup>7</sup> Anderson & Higgs, *A Future to Inherit*, p. 141, (note 1).

<sup>8</sup> For example, my grandfather's village, in the centre-northeast of continental Portugal only received electric service and a gravel road lead-

ing into town, in the late 1970s. As for water supply, the villagers themselves had to collectively run a pipe from a local spring to communal taps, at their own expense.

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- <sup>10</sup> Arroteia, J. C. (1983). *A Emigração Portuguesa - Suas Origens e Distribuição* [Portuguese emigration - its origins and distribution]. Lisboa: Ministério da Educação, Instituto de Cultura e Língua Portuguesa; Rocha Trindade, M. B. (1973). *Immigrés portugais* [Portuguese immigrants]. Lisboa: Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Política Ultramarina; Serrão, J. (1972). *A Emigração Portuguesa* [Portuguese emigration]. Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, pp. 127-145.
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- <sup>12</sup> Canny, N. (1994). *Europeans on the move*, pp. 269-270.
- <sup>13</sup> Chaney, R. (1986). *Regional Emigration and Remittances in Developing Countries: The Portuguese Experience*. New York: Praeger, p. 80.
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- <sup>15</sup> Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia, (1996). *Azores*.
- <sup>16</sup> Higgs, D. (1982). *The Portuguese in Canada*. Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, p. 3.
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- <sup>18</sup> Statistics Canada, 1996 Census data, reprinted in Pendakur, R. & Hennebry, J. (1998). *Multicultural Canada: A Demographic Overview*. Strategic Research and Business Planning, Multiculturalism, Department of Canadian Heritage.
- <sup>19</sup> Pendakur, R. & Hennebry, J. (1998). *Multicultural Canada*.
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- <sup>23</sup> Ornstein, M. (2000). *Ethno-Racial inequality in the City of Toronto*.
- <sup>24</sup> Nunes, F. (1998). *Portuguese-Canadians From Sea to Sea*.
- <sup>25</sup> Nunes, F. (1998). *Portuguese-Canadians From Sea to Sea*. pp. 10-11; Ornstein, M. (2000). *Ethno-Racial Inequality in the City of Toronto*.
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- <sup>27</sup> Employment Equity Act (An Act Respecting Employment Equity). (1995). § c. 4, Government of Canada. Cited in <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/E-5.401/43300.html>.



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- <sup>31</sup> Noivo, (1997). *Inside Ethnic Families*, p. 33.
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- <sup>64</sup> Law n<sup>o</sup> 48/96, September 4, 1996, *Diário da República*, n<sup>o</sup> 205-4-9-1996, pp. 2938-2943.
- <sup>65</sup> The Council is composed of 100 members, who are elected for a term of 4 years by the people registered in the Portuguese consulates throughout the world. Every 4 years, the council meets in Portugal, in a plenary session.
- Within the council are also 5 regional Sections. One each for: Africa; Asia & Oceania; North America; Central and South America; and Europe. These meet on a regional basis approximately once a year. The regional sections are further subdivided into national and local (ex. regional or municipal) sections, according to need.
- The Council also has a Permanent Council of 15 members, (maximum 2 from each country) who meet yearly, and who liaise on a regular basis with the Government and the Assembly of the Republic (The Portuguese Parliament) to undertake the ongoing business of the Council. This Permanent Council, includes a President and Vice-President, who along with the other 15 members, are elected at the plenary sessions, from amongst the members of the wider Council, by these members. The Council is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but the division of the funds are apportioned by the Council members themselves at each plenary session.
- <sup>66</sup> This disinterest is rooted in the low education levels of most first-generation Portuguese emigrants, as well as in the legacy of the dictatorship. The older generations have little tradition of political involvement and voting in elections, while the younger generations are not attuned to the issues of their ancestral homeland.
- <sup>67</sup> Personal Interview with the North American Representative of the “Conselho das Comunidades,” Dr. Tomás Ferreira, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002.

- <sup>68</sup> Tomás Ferreira, Personal Interview, (May 7, 2002).
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Fernando Nunes  
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