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Policy Considerations regarding the Integration of Lusophone West African Immigrant Populations

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Abstract

On January 23, 2012, Resolution No. 3 enacted the National Immigration Strategy for the island nation of Cabo Verde, the first of its kind in the country. As a buffer nation to Western Europe with a rapidly developing economy and good governance indicators, Cabo Verde is transitioning from a sending and transit country to a receiving nation for African mainlanders, especially from Guinea-Bissau. How effective are these immigration policies at managing these changing mobility patterns? Are immigrants successfully integrating into host communities? How might integration be handled more effectively? This policy briefing reports integration successes and failures from ethnographic research and considers the effectiveness of Cabo Verde's National Immigration Strategy based on these findings. Cabo Verde's immigration policy targets structural reforms such as education, healthcare, and housing, while additional socio-cultural strategies encourage coexistence among neighbours. Three years out, our study observed positive effects, while also suggesting additional reforms.

Keywords: *immigration; integration; labour; policy; Cabo Verde; Guinea-Bissau.*

Introduction

For migrants with limited resources in search of a better life in a foreign land, developing economies in the global south often serve as proxies for developed countries with restricted borders and higher costs of living (Kingsley, 2016; Lundy et al., 2017). It is noted that irregular migrants are likely to spend many years in host nations and therefore it is wise for receiving countries to commit resources to effective social and structural integration (Bugre and Hirsch, 2016; Hayes et al., 2016). Initiatives for social and

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structural integration of immigrants have shown great promise for both the hosts and guests (Harden et al., 2015; Thomas et al., 2016).

The recent immigrant destination country of Cabo Verde in West Africa, however, has only limited resources to manage the influx of regular and irregular immigrants while also dealing with changing domestic mobility patterns (Carling, 2004; Jung, 2015). Various stakeholders such as national and municipal governments, police, and cultural organizations have begun to focus resources and energy on developing policies and practices that enhance the integration of foreign guests toward a more cohesive society, but are they enough? To date, stakeholders such as the national government have established a national immigration policy, granted amnesty to many irregular immigrants, supported community organising, and promoted adult education to name but a few of the on-going initiatives. Discrimination and even violence, however, still occasionally flare up (Marcelino, 2016; Pardue, 2016; Valdigm, 2010; Zoettl, 2016).

Successes and failures related to these immigrant policies and strategies for effective integration are discussed in this article by considering the case of the largest immigrant group in the country, Bissau-Guineans, who share a common heritage with Cabo Verdeans. How effective are these immigration policies at managing the changing mobility patterns of Lusophone West Africa? Are Bissau-Guinean immigrants successfully integrating into host communities in Cabo Verde? How might integration on the effected islands be handled more successfully? We consider both institutional and cultural implications of resettlement policy. While there is still room to improve how communities can better welcome and ingratiate their guests, overall findings indicate improving conditions for immigrants over the last several years with fewer incidents of discrimination and violence.

Methodology

Over a 20 day period of data collection through intensive fieldwork in May-June 2015, we set out to explain why and how Cabo Verde is becoming a final destination for immigrants from mainland Africa (particularly Guinea-Bissau), how Bissau-Guineans are experiencing resettlement in Cabo Verde, and the impacts that increasing immigration is having on immigrant-host relationships (Lundy and Lartey, n.d.a). A second objective was to develop an integration index based on different indicators using three theories: human security, needs assessment, and realistic conflict (Lundy and Lartey, n.d.b). Our study looked at patterns of integration and labour between immigrant groups and host communities.

Integration is generally used to refer to the levels of similarities that immigrants have in relation to members of the host community as well as recognition as being part of the receiving society (Alba & Foner, 2014). Labour integration therefore includes patterns of employment, unemployment, underemployment, and entrepreneurship of immigrant

groups and the assessment of how well they have achieved or not achieved employment status and recognition in relation to other host community members. Taking the case of labour migrants in Cabo Verde, this project evaluated the level of labour and community integration among Bissau-Guineans choosing to stay in Cabo Verde.

Our ethnographic methodology included 57 surveys and two focus group discussions with Bissau-Guineans living and working in twelve different communities on two islands (Boa Vista and Santiago) that were purposively selected based on their large immigrant populations. Once we achieved data saturation (Mason, 2010), we concluded the study and began our analysis using descriptive statistics, thematic analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis using partial least squares path modelling.

Findings indicated that a majority of the Bissau-Guinean immigrants had stable, fulltime work, and even began families and joined community organisations. Additionally, the majority of observed friction stemmed from disenfranchised domestic youth, although this seemed to lessen as integration improved. Findings also revealed the applicability of combining the three theories mentioned above into an aggregate integration score, validated through confirmatory factor analysis using partial least squares path modelling. In this particular case, the findings paint a complex picture of successful immigrant integration that, though not always intentional, was bolstered through effective policies, good governance, and successful policing efforts (Lundy and Lartey, n.d.b). Some of these policies are discussed below together with recommendations based on the findings reported elsewhere (Lundy and Lartey, n.d.a; Lundy and Lartey, n.d.b). The remainder of the article is divided into a brief overview of the context of immigrant integration in Cabo Verde, a review of the national immigration policy, policy analysis and recommendations, and a conclusion.

Context of Integration in Cabo Verde

Cabo Verde, once serving as a migration transit country into Europe and the United States, is becoming a final destination for some West African immigrants for various reasons including increased border controls into developed countries and the country's sustained economic development (Jung, 2015). Traditionally and historically, Cabo Verde is considered a country of emigration, whose diaspora plays an important role in its development (at the economic, cultural, and educational levels) (Åkesson, 2016). However, since the 1990s, it has increasingly become a country of destination, due to factors such as steady economic growth, lopsided bilateral and multilateral agreements, and facilitated entry for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Devillard et al., 2015; Lundy and Lartey, n.d.b). Cabo Verde is grappling with the management of immigrants, both regular and irregular.



In 2007, Cabo Verde was one of only three countries to graduate from a least developed country (LDC) to a developing country category according to the United Nations (UN) classification based on poverty, human resource weakness, and economic vulnerability (UN News Centre, 2007). These factors together influence the mobility of people in the direction of Cabo Verde, representing a significant increase of immigration flows coming from other countries, especially the West African coast (Jung, 2015). In managing immigrants in Cabo Verde, successfully integrating them into Cabo Verdean society is critical; strategies that enhance such integration efforts should be encouraged and promoted.

An understanding of on-going integration endeavours can form the basis for policy reform that enhances integration. Studies explain integration as instances when host communities and immigrants maintain a cultural integrity while participating together in a social project (Berry, 1997; Padilla and Perez, 2003; Lundy and Lartey, n.d.a). Integration can occur faster and more successfully when the host community desires to embrace the immigrant group especially when they share the same cultural and political heritage (Lundy, 2012, 2016; Lundy and Lartey, n.d.b). Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau do in fact share the same cultural heritage; they fought for and achieved independence from the Portuguese at the same time, share culture heroes (e.g., Amilcar Cabral), and speak the same creole language. Cultural transitions should be smoother in such instances (Berry, 1997). Integration has also been classified as structural and social (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013). In structural integration, migrants are incorporated into larger structures of society such as the labour and education sectors. Within Cabo Verde, policies in the National Immigration Strategy and findings from our research show that efforts are targeted at the structural (educational and economic) integration of immigrants within the larger society of Cabo Verde. A look at the National Immigration Strategy of Cabo Verde is next.

Review of Cabo Verde's National Immigration Strategy

The Cabo Verdean National Immigration Strategy was adopted for the first time in the country's history in 2012. According to this document, immigration policy must respond to the necessities of social, economic, political, and cultural realities of society (National Immigration Strategy, 2012). These realities and associated necessities were defined by the government in 2010, based on four pillars:

- (1) Migratory fluxes;
- (2) Dialogue, solidarity, and partnerships;
- (3) Economic growth and social integration; and
- (4) Coherence of migration policies.

The national immigration strategy combines measures, initiatives, and policy responses to the challenges imposed by immigration that are based on a set of guiding topics such as regular migration, visas and residence, and labour

migration among others. An examination of the management of migration fluxes is discussed within the national immigration strategy. Some of the issues addressed include visas, entry, and admission; permanence and residence; regular migration; labour migration; and undocumented migration.

Visas, Entry, and Admissions

Since the majority of the immigrants in Cabo Verde are from ECOWAS countries, the government manages visas, entry, and admission to the country based on specific clauses of Article 8 of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment. Of particular focus is the possibility of re-negotiating particular clauses of the ECOWAS protocols relative to free movement, residency, and right of establishment. Some of the clauses include reviewing the visa system and establishing clear procedures on the transmission of visas to different categories of candidates, according to the motivations of entry into Cape Verde.

Also, preparing and adopting a law on entry and exit of foreigners, and simplifying and implementing efficient procedures for the entry and control of immigrants are part of the government's strategy for managing immigration to Cabo Verde. Under this strategy, the government recognises that measures must include better border control, collection of data, and exchange of information. While not getting into the details of how it intends to accomplish this renegotiation, the government has recognised that a majority of its immigrant population comes from the ECOWAS region and that it needs to step up measures to manage this influx. Such initial considerations are commendable because it affords Cabo Verde an institutional framework within which to manage the influx of immigrants that come not only from its internal measures, but from external controls as well.

Permanence and Residence

Under policy considerations regarding permanence and residence, the national immigration strategy recognises that a number of foreigners enter Cabo Verde and stay beyond the legally permitted timeframe (in the case of ECOWAS, 90 days). This begs the need for the development of a comprehensive legal administrative framework that addresses undocumented foreign residents (National Immigration Strategy, 2012). One policy response is to establish clear requirements, conditions, and criteria for the different states of residence, as well as indicating the institutions that deal with these processes. Also, developing a concept scheme for the registration of foreigners with or without residence permits is another policy response to the issues relating to permanence and residence. Other responses include applying and improving the national legislation and the procedures related to the residence of foreigners intending to remain in Cabo Verde for different reasons and installing a system for monitoring the capacity to control foreigners holding residence permits. These measures suggest that



undocumented immigration can be kept to a minimum, by regularizing the stay of undocumented immigrants within the system and cutting off immigrants that try to enter Cabo Verde illegally.

Regular Migration

Cabo Verde's government recognises that economic development, political, and social establishment has resulted in the country becoming an investment hub for foreign companies (National Immigration Strategy, 2012). As such, the government views the management of immigrants that enter Cabo Verde for different reasons—employment, tourism, education, business, and others—as important and demands careful measures and actions, in a way that benefits the country and minimizes risks to the economy. Some of the policy responses include evaluating the needs of the country and the impact that the admission of various groups of immigrants could have in Cabo Verde as well as developing criteria and conditions relative to temporary and permanent immigrants.

Labour Migration

With labour immigration, the government of Cabo Verde notes that economic needs along with the lack of job opportunities elsewhere in the West African region has resulted in the number of people looking for work exceeding opportunities for work in Cabo Verde. The Cabo Verdean economy needs qualified workers in the area of construction and tourism. Cabo Verde's Work Code 2008 gives the right to work to legal residents (National Immigration Strategy, 2012). Furthermore, employers have used undocumented immigrant workers as a source of cheap labour. One policy response is to reinforce the capacity of services involved with the management of labour issues and of social security in terms of monitoring, control, and protection. Other policy responses include evaluating the needs of the labour market and establishing criteria for the recruitment and employment of foreign labour through a specialized law and evaluating the proposal of institutionalizing work permits instead of the practice of validating work contracts (National Immigration Strategy, 2012).

Undocumented Migration

According to Cabo Verde's national immigration policy, undocumented immigration has gradually increased (National Immigration Strategy, 2012). Undocumented immigration in Cabo Verde ranges from evasion of entry control, utilising false documents, and staying longer in the country than the permitted time (Marcelino, 2016). Some policy responses include adopting a legislative framework that prevents and combats undocumented immigration and reinforces the capacities of relevant agencies for more effective border control, in particular, at sea and on the coast (National Immigration Strategy,

2012). In this instance, the police and immigration officials have critical roles to play in managing immigration fluxes in Cabo Verde.

After a review of Cabo Verde's National Immigration Strategy, policies and findings from the research suggest that focusing on strategies that encourage structural integration of migrants within Cabo Verde, is effective, because integration can be targeted at the core institutions of Cabo Verdean society. The policy analysis and recommendations given by the authors are targeted toward the police, municipality, and general policy changes that can enhance Cabo Verde's national policy on migration management and integration of migrants as a whole. Simultaneously, we do not overlook socio-cultural factors that impact successful immigrant integration including areas related to history, identity, livelihood, and politics. These areas are covered in the National Immigration Strategy in Section 6.2, Culture, Religious Practices, and Tolerance with four associated policy responses including cultural adaptation programs, civics courses, mechanisms for immigrants to express their cultural and religious heritage, and awareness campaigns and intra- and inter-cultural events.

Policy Analysis and Recommendations

The policies on integration are discussed with regards to the National Immigration Policy of Cabo Verde and in relation to examples from the research conducted by the authors. Recommendations are linked to the findings and are broadly divided into recommendations for the police, municipality, and policy changes that can enhance the existing policies on immigration in Cabo Verde.

Community Partnerships and the Police

Findings from the research show that trust in the police was high and immigrants perceived the police as responsive. One leader in the Guinean Community Organisation of Boa Vista stated, "we are always in contact with the police chief who listens to our advice when it comes to resolving issues within our community" (May 17, 2015). In terms of the National Immigration Policy, Cabo Verde recognises that integration of immigrants is challenging and cuts across many sectors. Cabo Verde police, for example, are making efforts at policing immigrant settlements where conflicts might occur. Such efforts include building a modern police post situated next to a mixed neighbourhood in Boa Vista where both hosts and guests regularly interact. Based on observations and survey data, below are some additional proposed recommendations that could reinforce the positive inroads the police are already making among the immigrant communities of Cabo Verde.

Community policing is a concept that supports partnerships and problem-solving strategies aimed at addressing concerns of public safety such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (COPS, 2012). Integration literature suggests that collaborative partnerships between law enforcement agencies and the



individuals or communities they serve helps to increase trust and develop collaborative solutions to problems like crime, fear, and social disorder (COPS, 2012). As domestic youth delinquency increases in Cabo Verde (Zoetl, 2016), the police could workshop community policing and possibly train a gang taskforce to address these issues. These efforts can be achieved through continued external partnerships. For example, “The United States supports Cabo Verde in its fight against crime and drugs through provision of training for Cabo Verdean armed forces and law enforcement, financial and technical assistance for the Ministry of Justice’s Financial Investigative Unit, and through sharing law enforcement information” (U.S. Department of State, 2016).

Furthermore, we suggest expanding police-community partnerships even further based on sentiments expressed by survey respondents. Berry et al. (2006) showed that youth who seek integration report the least amount of discrimination. As community partnerships are formed between immigrants and domestic youth, discrimination decreases and integration levels are increased. An example of community partnerships could be sports leagues where the police serve as referees similar to the National Association of Police Athletic/Activities Leagues, Inc. (PAL) in the United States, whose mission is “promoting the prevention of juvenile crime and violence by building relationships among kids, cops and community through positive engagement” (<http://www.nationalpal.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1185703>). Findings from the research show that immigrants who belonged to soccer teams perceived that they integrated well into Cabo Verdean society (Lundy and Lartey, n.d.a).

Municipality

According to the national immigration strategy of Cabo Verde, local municipalities constitute key stakeholders in the management of immigration (National Immigration Strategy, 2012). Some of the responsibilities include public services that extend to foreign guests and returnees. An official in Boa Vista’s Immigration Office in the City Hall explained, “So now we have this task force here made up of representatives from the city hall, social security services, and the police who work to get immigrants the proper information about what documents they need” (May 25, 2015). While a community organizer emphasized, “Our community works closely with the city hall... We want to emphasize our good relationship with them. Annually we count on their financial support” (May 24, 2015). Furthermore, another community organizer highlighted, “We try to support those who are unemployed. We get their names and take them to the city hall office so they can be added to a list where people are recruited for public works. We also participate in public health campaigns such as raising awareness about sanitation problems” (May 25, 2015).

While our study demonstrates that the situation is improving for Bissau-Guinean immigrants in Cabo Verde, there is still much that needs to be done

(Pardue, 2016). At some point during their time in Cabo Verde, 41 of the 57 survey respondents had experienced or encountered intolerance, prejudice, or discrimination. Research findings showed that West African immigrants in Cabo Verde were often referred to by their hosts as “Manjaco,” a derogatory term indicating a foreigner from the mainland with a dark complexion. Ten survey respondents indicated that they had been called by this name at least once (Lundy and Lartey, n.d.a).

As such, we propose that information campaigns organized by the government together with non-governmental partners (National Immigration Strategy, 2012) focus on anti-discrimination campaigns. These campaigns could encourage the benefits of establishing a “welcoming culture” intended to create communities that are receptive to immigrants. Again, they could even partner with external initiatives such as Welcoming America, which partners with non-profits and local governments toward integrating immigrants. Welcoming America is a non-profit, non-partisan initiative that leads inclusive communities by welcoming immigrants through programs and events towards integration (<https://www.welcomingamerica.org/>).

Anti-discrimination campaigns should establish a respect for diversity that encourages liberal and social values (Goodman, 2010). Studies show that a particular form of integration, civic integration, promotes functional autonomy by focusing on the diversity of immigrants (Goodman, 2010). As such, the anti-discrimination campaigns could promote the diversity and uniqueness of immigrants as well as the host communities, instead of focusing on differences that enhance discrimination and cultural divisions. We found, for example, radio programs aired on the Day of Africa and cultural events at local schools where immigrants were encouraged to showcase their home culture to be already underway on the island of Boa Vista to great success (Lundy and Lartey, n.d.a).

Next, the Cabo Verde National Immigration Strategy stipulates that “The number of foreigners that enter Cape Verde and stay beyond the legally permitted timeframe demands the development of a comprehensive legal administrative mechanism that addresses undocumented foreign residents” (2012:13). With regard to improving the procedures related to undocumented foreigners desiring to reside in Cabo Verde for various reasons as well as registration of foreigners with or without residence permits, we encourage the local governments to continue lobbying to extend the period for acquisition of residence permits. During the research period, participants noted that they did not have enough time to acquire documents necessary for the application of residence permits during an amnesty period that had just concluded (Lundy and Lartey, n.d.a).

Studies on migrant integration show that one widely recognised indicator for successful integration is immigrants’ participation in the labour market (Entzinger and Biezeveld, 2003). When immigrants have legal jobs, they are able to integrate faster and with less associated stressors. This period of



acquiring documents may need be extended to a year or more to legitimise many immigrants' precarious positions and to improve their job prospects as legal residents, especially for Bissau-Guineans whose unstable home government is slow to supply necessary documentation. Many from ECOWAS had simply overstayed and were now left to the whims of unscrupulous employers (Lundy and Lartey, n.d.a; Marcelino, 2016). Also, having valid work permits (see above policy on institutionalizing work permits under labour migration) could help with having legal documents which could then increase legal residency resulting in more successful integration.

Furthermore, there is an expressed need to develop health infrastructure and parks that can attend to the needs of immigrants and domestic citizens alike with regard to their overall health and wellbeing. In our survey, accessible health services was the number one thing (22/57 survey respondents felt insecure or extremely insecure) mentioned as lacking in the research communities. Studies indicate that immigrant access to publicly funded health care is lower than the domestic populations (Derose et al., 2007) and even when migrants have access, healthcare providers face major challenges like resource constraints in the delivery of care to immigrants (Suphanchaimat et al., 2015). Therefore, it would not be enough to develop health infrastructure and parks, but policymakers would also need to ensure access.

In terms of policies regarding labour migration, hotel tax credits could be encouraged in the tourism sector, since Cabo Verde is a hub for tourists, mostly from Europe. Many Bissau-Guinean migrants working in the hotel industry expressed a desire for contracts that ensured employment beyond five years to entitle them to benefits and continuing education and training. Our findings showed that several international hotels already offered language training to their employees (including immigrants) and that these strategies were highly valued by the hotel employees. Employers might also want to consider hiring quotas for domestic youth and immigrants to avoid enflaming more resource conflicts. Hotels that adopted these policies could then qualify for tax credits. This recommendation aligns with other studies that show that migrants are increasingly participating in the tourism sector of host nations in meaningful ways and that their presence has considerable impacts on the culture, economy, and environment of the host nation (Gosling and Schulz, 2005; Joppe, 2012; National Immigration Strategy, 2012). Some benefits include presenting a cheaper alternative to impending labour and skills shortages and contributing to sectors of tourism and foreign direct investments.

Policy Changes

Based on the frequent use of the term "Manjaco" and other discriminatory references toward immigrants from mainland Africa, strong anti-discrimination laws should be considered. Cabo Verde could benefit from

strong anti-discrimination laws that discourage direct discrimination and discriminatory practices against immigrants. Although the national immigration strategy recognises the benefits of integration of immigrants across multiple sectors of society, no approach is offered to achieve this. Having strong anti-discrimination laws serves as practical deterrents to combat racism and xenophobia. It also introduces an element of seriousness into an otherwise rhetorical dialogue. In a study that revealed the potential of using anti-discrimination laws to achieve migrant integration, it was shown that instances of discrimination place immigrants in disadvantageous positions, which ultimately limits integration, a viscous cycle (Añón, 2016). These anti-discrimination laws could form the basis for a more robust immigrant integration policy for Cabo Verde.

Cabo Verde could also encourage entrepreneurship incentives. Instead of massive public works projects such as the waning “housing for all” fiasco (Lundy and Lartey, n.d.a; Lundy and Lartey, n.d.b), the national government could instead promote and invest in low-risk micro-credit and lending schemes so that immigrants become proactive stakeholders in their communities and eventual homeowners, thus promoting a sense of integration, ownership, and entrepreneurship. This measure would likely require an urban planner and/or a city-housing engineer who could be consulted by community residents when needed to legitimise and stabilise the informal housing boom. The extent of homeownership among immigrants may be seen as an indicator of integration (Kauppinen et al., 2015), although integration and wealth acquisition is gradual and not every immigrant achieves this status (Maroto and Alysworth, 2016). Bearing this in mind, the national government should be prepared to view migrant homeownership both as a process and a long-term goal, in order to enable immigrant integration, upward mobility, and overall community development.

Other Recommendations

A final recommendation based on our study is to continue encouraging adult literacy among immigrants. Cabo Verde recognises that the education sector is critical in integrating new immigrants (National Immigration Strategy, 2012) as they are readied with basic education in order to improve job prospects. From our research, we found that Cabo Verde has adult language literacy programs for immigrants who lack basic education. In the process of integration, literature points to the need for language literacy programs that overcome the challenge of limited language proficiencies (Garefino, 2009; Hayes, 2016; Kallenbach et al., 2013). In this measure, the Santiago youth should also be included and encouraged/incentivised to participate to help educate and train immigrants and locals alike, side by side.



Conclusion

This policy briefing analysed policies aimed at combatting the challenges of immigration and immigrant integration into Cabo Verdean society including, entry, admission, residence, and labour policies. Recommendations were given based on findings from the research and these underlying policy objectives. Lessons that can be linked to integration include increased time for document processing for acquiring residency on the part of immigrants, thereby improving job prospects and increasing integration. Also, enhancing efforts of the different sectors of society especially the police and the municipality by encouraging immigrants in the labour market, increasing trust in the police, and having anti-discrimination campaigns should also increase integration. Finally, moving towards a migrant integration policy as well as encouraging homeownership and entrepreneurship among migrants can increase integration levels of immigrants in Cabo Verde. Overall, strategies that include not only immigrants within the fabric of Cabo Verdean society, but also include measures targeted at the domestic youth, local and foreign investments, and the local community as a whole need to be encouraged. Managing the increasing influx of immigrants within Cabo Verde therefore demands a more holistic, multi-faceted approach to social and structural integration that can be modelled by other nations.

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